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Towards the golden age of gender equality? A cross-national analysis on couples' allocation of homework in Post-industrial societies

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Abstract

What triggers the emergence of more collaborative partners in post-industrial societies? This paper explores this question with a multi-dimensional approach which takes into account micro and macro factors influencing men's decision to participate in homework: he and his partner's position in the labour market and bargaining resources, socially prevailing gender values and the institutional context, conceptualised here as pluralisation of household and family relations and as degree of gender empowerment. The latter dimensions capture women's capacities to 'walk away' from unwanted relationships or to negotiate a fair sharing of domestic activities.

We use the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP 1994, 2002) to draw a comparative map of men's participation in domestic tasks in Eastern and Western countries. To examine trends in male cooperation in housework we use 2004 European Social Survey (ESS) data. These include information on 29,389 married or cohabiting individuals from 26 European countries. The analysis relies on multi-level regression techniques. The chapter concludes with a discussion on current methodological challenges to the study of domestic division of labour due to the nature of the problem, and the multiple interrelations connecting men, women, the family, the labour market and the institutional context.

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Introduction

The golden age of the male-breadwinner family is about to vanish for the young cohorts in most post-modern industrial societies. This model, which became widespread after the World War II, imposed rigid gender roles whereby men were supposed to be in the labour market and women in domestic and caring activities. We see now that the ‘mid-(twentieth) century social compromise’, as termed by Colin Crouch (1999), has been severely modified, as this model appears to be particularly unrealistic and hard to sustain in societies with growing economic and family uncertainty. The economic instability arises from the labour market deregulation and the flexi-economy (i.e. short-term contracts, self-employment, irregular schedules and so on), whereas the family uncertainty is associated with the increase in marital dissolution, shorter duration of partnerships, higher rate of re-unions and cohabitation. Altogether, the gains from gender specialisation in market or home-production have become less clear and risky in modern societies.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the conditions under which high degrees of gender equality emerge within young-adult couples in post-industrial societies. The indicator here selected for ‘gender equality’ is men’s share of domestic activities. We rely on two main theoretical approaches, the first largely economic or material, the second largely normative, but we also expand the analysis into a third dimension, which is the national institutional context. This is conceptualised here as the instability of household and family relations, the prevalence of traditional family values, and national patterns of female employment. We build on current explanations, which interpret men’s participation in domestic activities as the result of women’s earnings potential relative to their male partners (bargaining theory) and of her and his working conditions (structure of opportunities). In addition, we also acknowledge more recent research on the role of men’s perception concerning women’s capacity to ‘walk away’ from unwanted relationships, and people’s attitudes on the gender division of paid and unpaid work. This paper aims to offer a comprehensive multi-level and cross-national explanation on how men’s and couple’s characteristics increase their participation in unpaid work.

The chapter is structured in four large sections. The first section reviews main theories explaining trends in domestic division of labour from a comparative perspective. The second section reviews recent empirical studies on gender division of housework, provides a general overview on men’s domestic participation in housework using the International Social Survey Programme (1994, 2002), and discusses different methodological approaches to estimate housework. The third section describes the theoretical model proposed for this paper which aims to explain the emergence of more equal sharing of domestic work in modern societies. This section is based on the European Social Survey (ESS), 2004. The chapter concludes with a discussion on current methodological challenges to the study of domestic division of labour due to the nature of the problem, and the multiple interrelations connecting men, women, the family, the labour market and the institutional context.

1. Couple's Domestic Division of Labour: Main Theoretical Explanations

This chapter is mainly motivated from the fact that changes in the gender division of domestic work have been relatively modest, despite women have significantly increased their working time in the labour market. This section attempts to critically summarise this debate as a necessary step before presenting a theoretical model in the following sections. In order to structure the extensive work been conducted since the early 1970s, we have summarised different approaches according to the main explanatory device used by their proponents.

1.1 *The relative resources and bargaining models*

Since the 1960s, neo-classical economics were concerned with the issues confronted by men and women in allocating their time and wealth so as to maximise family well-being. The basic model assumes that there are considerable efficiency gains to the traditional division of labour in which the husband specialises in market work and the wife in home work (Becker, 1981). In this specialization model the main goal of the family is to maximise its' joined utility or satisfaction. Specialisation would be based on the idea of the relative comparative advantages for home and market production of each partner, estimated by their relative market earning power. This approach, however, neglected relevant issues such as the non-economic benefits of marriage associated with companionship or affection, women's financial dependency through the process of specialisation, institutional 'distortions' due to the unequal access to market opportunities or normative gender roles or the fact that the comparative advantage of an individual does not necessarily remain the same over the life cycle (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 2001). It further assumed a normative concept of rationality without considering the variation in social norms or ideologies, the extent to which the notion of rationality is itself subject to change (Duncan & Edwards 1999) or the very infeasible premise that women share homogeneous pattern of actions and orientations regarding family and waged work throughout all Western societies (Pfau-Effinger 1998).

In addition, nowadays family consumption and production decisions are, more than in the past the result of a bargaining process between partners who aim at maximising their personal interests. Women's raising earning opportunities have profoundly altered their bargaining power in the household, at least in some. Bargaining models, proposed by economists and based on game theory, deploy the notion of 'threat point'. Divorce threat point (or external threat point) models emphasize that bargaining within marriage is conducted in the shadow of the possibility of divorce (Bittman *et al.* 2003) The bargaining power of each partner is then determined by the level of well-being that each would attain, if he or she cannot reach a cooperative solution within the partnership. This point is normally imposed by the partner with more ability to 'walk away' from the marital deal (Blau, Ferber and Winkler 2001). Another version of the bargaining model (Lundberg and Pollack 1993) considers a threat point internal to the marriage. Here the spouse can use economically based bargaining power to get the other

partner to do housework. Thus, in the traditional division of labour, women would have a weak 'threat point', whereas women are progressively attaining more 'voice' to exert their preferences. Yet, male participation in domestic activities changes very slowly. In this perspective, gender affects the doing of housework only indirectly, through its effect on relative resources.

1.2 Gendered norms, attitudes and values

A second sociological view on household allocation of work looks how gender influences the division of labor. The socialization-in-gender-attitudes theory suggests that people socialized to believe in gender segregated work and roles will conform to those norms. In other words, gender attitudes and roles are consequences of the socialization process.

The gender ideology/socialization perspective is also a leading account of change over time. For instance, Gershuny *et al* 1994 propose a 'lagged adaptation' arguing that the gendered division of labor will change across generations as women's increased employment encourages more egalitarian childhood experiences and socialization practices. Since these changes are observed to be slow, other explanations have risen. Since the 1980's there is a strand of research that emphasizes two facts: most women continue to perform more family work than their partners, and most of them are happy with their marriages and partnerships, despite of an unequal distribution of family work. These facts have contributed to the rise of preference theory as developed by Hakim (2000). Hakim argues that women can be classified into three different preference groups: home-centered, adaptive and work-centered women. Women in the first and second group may be happy doing more homework than their partner, since family life and children are their main priority in life or they are at least during a certain period of their life cycle. Women's differentiation according to diverging preferences and lifestyles is seen as a product of free choice in the context of affluent modern societies.

Psychological theories grasp further down into individual attitudes formation. From a psychological perspective Major (1993) proposes several mechanisms that may explain the acceptance of a gendered division of homework. She argues that the absence of a conflict about family work may be explained by three general psychological mechanisms, that produce for women and men different senses of entitlement or deservingness about what they should put into and receive in an intimate relationship. The first mechanism is about differences in comparison standards: men and women tend to compare themselves with same-sex others than with their partner, normative standards to which men and women compare are different, and women may compare their situation with the alternative of being single instead of finding a more cooperative men. The second mechanism is about the legitimacy of an unequal distribution of family work: if women believe that the division of unpaid labour is the result of a fair negotiation with the partner, if women perceive other needs than men or if they think that men provide other important goods instead. The third mechanism simply refers to gender differences in preferences and values..

Other sociological approaches reject the idea that women can be distinguished according to their preferences and go beyond the passive role of individuals proposed by socialization theories. Drawing on symbolic interactionist, phenomenological, ethno-methodological and feminist understanding of everyday life, they suggest that household work has a symbolic significance and is embedded in complex and shifting patterns of social relations (Coltrane, 2000, 1209). Men and women have different gender identities, and they want to be recognized as a “competent member of a sex category with the capacity and desire to perform appropriately gendered behaviours” (Coltrane 2000: 1213). This means that many sociologists have discarded the traditional norms, attitudes, and “individual choices” arguments in favour of new perspectives such as “doing gender”, and the “multilevel effect of gender relations”.

The main idea of “doing gender” is that individual behaviour is affected by expectations held by the others. Individuals “do” and produce gender in everyday activities. This view of gender (West and Zimmerman 1987, Connel 1987), which focuses on social interactions and accountability to other expectations, reject the assumption that people are automatically socialized into rigid gender roles. Wives perform housework in order to enact symbolically their femininity, while husbands avoid it for symbolic masculinity reasons. According to authors, such as Brines (1994), the more a husband relies on his wife for economic support, the less housework he does, in order to compensate symbolically for this non-traditional economic relation. In the same way argue Bittman et al. (2003), using data from Australia and United States. They show that “gender trumps money” when women provide more income than their husband, in opposition to what bargaining theory predicts. The violation of gender norms lead either the wife or the husband (or both), to “gender display” (Goffman, 1976), moving towards more traditional behaviour in order to neutralize the deviance. According to this “doing gender” perspective, the gender division of labour is mainly a social practise, which is created and reconstructed by women and men, as well as by social institutions, such as, family, the welfare state and labour market (cfr. Daly and Rake, 2003, p.38).

Gender scholars have emphasized this multilevel effect of gender and they have identified several ways in which national state and institutional contexts, through its politics, policies, laws or, broadly defined welfare state, influence gender relations and are in turn influenced by gender relations (cfr. Bittman et al. 2003). Recent integrative approaches treat gender itself as a social constructed stratification system (Risman, 1998; Connell, 2002). According to Risman (2004) gender can be defined as social structure, which differentiates opportunities and constraints based on sex-category. According to Risman this has consequences at three different levels: 1) at individual level, for the development of gendered selves; 2) during interaction, as men and women face different cultural expectations; 3) at institutional level, where explicit regulations regarding resource distribution and material goods are gender specific. This means that in explaining the gendered allocation of housework it is important to study expectations at the cultural level (i.e. the differential expectations attached in a given society to being a mother and a father, a husband and a wife) and to the institutional level, where explicit regulation regarding resources distribution, organizational practices, ideology and legislation are gender-specific. Gender

thought as social structure means that we analyse the way in which gender is embedded at the individual, interactional, and institutional dimensions of our society.

As Bittman et al. argues we are not able to ascertain whether observed processes that cannot be predicted from relative resource theory operate through “internalised assumptions, preferences, or values, as in the traditional view of internalized norms, or through pressures to render oneself “accountable” by doing gender. But either view suggest pressure for women to do and men to avoid housework” (2003, p. 191). For this reason it seems promising to focus on men and women who break with gender norms. Many women may have at some point of time home-centred preferences, but there are also many couples who have conflicts about family work, and women who are not satisfied with the division of unpaid work in their intimate relationships, and even women who avoid or exit a relationship due to conflict about this. In addition, there are men who cooperate in relatively equal terms with their female partner in family work. Thus, not all women prefer to do more homework than their partners and not all men do less domestic work than their wives. This is why preference theory and gender role attitudes cannot simply replace economic and exchange perspectives, and the latter continue to be applied to domestic work research.

1.3 *Integrative approaches: individual and contextual factors influencing gender division of domestic work*

A very recent integration of bargaining and preference theories is the model proposed by Breen and Cooke (2005). They develop a game theoretical approach to family bargaining, in which the division of domestic work depends on gender ideology and women’s economic capacity to threaten with divorce. They use a typology that accounts for heterogeneity in preferences for homework among men and women. They argue that only *Autonomous* women, i.e. women with strong preferences for autonomy, can negotiate with their partners a more equal division of the domestic work, because they can threaten more credibly with exit from the marriage. On men’s side, only *Cooperators* and *Adjusters* will contribute to domestic tasks, the latter only if their female partners are *Autonomous* women. Since this theoretical proposition on the couple level is not yet testable, due to a lack of adequate data, they propose an aggregation mechanism and test the latter with cross-national survey data.

They predict that on a country level the societal division of domestic labour will be more evenly distributed across gender, if the proportion of female *Autonomous* and male *Cooperators* and *Adjusters* reach sufficiently large proportions. They test this idea with ISSP (1994) data for 22 countries, and find a significant effect of the interaction of the national proportions of *Adjusters* and *Autonomous* regressed on the national rates of men participating in domestic tasks¹. This

¹ We note that domestic tasks in ISSP 1994 were the following: laundry, shopping for groceries, looking for ill family members, repairs and responsibility for dinner. In our view these indicators

approach offers an explanation through economic bargaining mechanisms in couples and preference heterogeneity among women and men. Bargaining would be more important for some couples and less for others, depending on the preference and ideology type each partner pertains to. In the game theoretical model the authors emphasize the importance of ideology in the case of *Traditional* men and women. In the case of *Transitional* women gender ideology and the absence of divorce as possible threat are considered decisive factors. Instead, for *Autonomous* women the main factor is that divorce is used as an economically feasible bargaining resource, in addition to a different ideology. In this model ideological and economic factors are interwoven, since some preference types are necessarily paired to given resources. Yet, in the empirical test, only gender ideology is taken into account. In our view there is a contradiction between the theoretical model and the empirical test, and a limited theorization about how economic resources and gender ideology relate to each other. Are there economically *autonomous* women who have *traditional* preferences with respect to domestic work, and economically *dependent* women happen to have *autonomy* preferences?

We agree that economic resources and gender ideology are both important factors that influence the division of domestic work, but attitudes and preferences are not a fixed outcome from socialization. On the contrary, they change alongside opportunity structures and life cycle events. In other words, contextual and institutional factors also alter the relative economic power between men and women, for instance depending on public support for single mothers. This would explain the fact that Cooke and Breen find more Autonomous women in Norway, Sweden and Canada than, for instance, in Great Britain, where, according to Hakim, women enjoy a “new scenario” of enlarged options and opportunities. Is it simply a different cultural context with different family and gender socialization patterns or have women in the first countries more opportunities to develop a non-traditional ideology and men fewer chances to reproduce traditional patterns?

According to what can be defined an institutional theory, individual’s and couple’s choices on family and employment arrangements depend not on individual’s and couple’s preferences, but depend on the whole set of social, economic, institutional and normative arrangements, which delineate the opportunities and constraints of one’s action. This means that preferences are socially structured (McRae, 2003) and gender is actually constructed through socially and culturally institutionalized gender arrangements. First, there is evidence that people change their gender model during their lifetime depending on their couple situation, job situation and the presence of children. In a cross-national study about female doctors and bank managers Crompton and Harris (1998) conclude that women’s biographies are shaped by complex and variable orientations to employment and family life, which at the same time were structured by occupational, individual and national contexts. A similar conclusion is reached using different methods and data by Gershuny, Bittman and Brice (2005). In their cross-national study on the adaptation of spouses to changes in the wife’s employment situation, they found that entering a full-time job decreases

are not very good for assessing routine domestic work (Coltrane 2002), because they mix care with housework and it is not asked for cleaning.

the wife's time spent in domestic work and increases the husband's participation in it, through a process of lagged adaptation to the new context. This view is in line with a theoretical framework, which argues that the institutional context, the family, the labour regimes, welfare regimes and politics still matters in understanding social action and the gender division of labour (Crompton 2006).

So far individual and contextual factors leading to a higher male participation in domestic activities have been discussed. Next section aims to provide a general picture of country variations in the gender division of unpaid labour. Is there a particular pattern related to national welfare regimes or family policies? Which patterns are they?

2. Mapping Cross-National Differences in the Gender Division of Domestic Work

So far there are a few studies which situate and sometimes try to explain the gendered division of housework at micro level within the broader macro-level system. Batalova and Cohen (2002) analyse the division of domestic labour in 22 countries with data from the ISSP (1994)². They find that the several micro-level factors are associated with higher men's cooperation in domestic work: having a non-traditional gender ideology³, being younger than 47, having higher education, wives earning more money than their husbands, husbands not working full-time and wives working full-time. Having cohabited before marriage has also a positive effect on cooperation across all countries, yet of varying intensity by country. According to their multi-level model applied, context variations accounts for "a greater share of the variance in housework division of labour across countries than do the controls" introduced at the couple level. Married couples share household tasks more in countries with high cohabitation rates and high female empowerment in society compared to countries, which score less on these national measures. The authors point out that they cannot know, if these national factors are due to institutional differences related to culture, gender ideology or politics, or are due to composition effects of couples' characteristics not accurately measured in the models. In addition, they are aware that cohabitation may have different causes across countries, as it might be true for western European countries compared to eastern countries.

In a 13 country comparison on the division of household labour Davis and Greenstein (2004) also find important cross-national differences in the

² They only study currently married couples and do not perform separate analyses for men and women, but control for gender. They measure housework as index of four "female" household tasks (laundry, caring for sick family members, shopping and planning dinner). In the cases other family member or domestic workers did the task (1% of cases), the authors assumed that husband and wife contributed equally to it.

³ They use an index of three attitudes towards gender roles.

participation of men in domestic work⁴. This study reveals that results of comparisons diverge according to whom is informing about the couples' situation. First of all, because women are less likely to report that their husbands perform at least half of the domestic work and secondly, because the multivariate analyses shield different results if male and female are sampled separately. With respect to individuals' characteristics this study finds support for the hypothesis that wives with the same education level than their husbands are more likely to have a more egalitarian distribution of housework, while this is not the case if the woman has a higher education than her husband⁵. A lower economic dependency of women on their husbands also increases the probability of having a more equal distribution of unpaid work⁶. Additionally, a full-time employment of the women also increases the probability of a more gender neutral housework distribution⁷. The authors put less effort in interpreting the cross-national differences they find. To explain Japan's "traditionalism" they argue in terms of a strong diffusion of "separate spheres" ideology, some eastern countries "traditionalism" is interpreted as a regressive reaction back to traditional stereotypes in face of political and economic changes. The most "egalitarian" pattern in other eastern countries is interpreted mainly as an outcome of high rates of female employment and public support for low-cost child care facilities. However, these are only general ideas, which are not tested.

Fuwa (2004) using ISSP 1994 data shows that macro-level political and economic gender inequalities (measured by the Gender Empowerment Measure, GEM⁸) limits the effect of individual level variables (relative resources, time availability and gender ideology) on the division of household labour in 22 countries. The most egalitarian countries (Canada, US, Norway, Sweden and East-Germany) were the ones with higher GEM index, while the less egalitarian (Japan, Italy and Ireland) were the ones with a lower index. More importantly, she found that the effect of two out of three individual-level factors—time availability and gender ideology—are stronger for wives in gender-egalitarian countries. That means that women's employment situation and gender ideology have stronger equalizing effects on the gender division of household labour in countries where there is less gender inequality in the labour market and political spheres. The study suggests that changes in individual level factors may not be enough to achieve an equal division of housework, without the reduction of macro-level gender inequality in economic and political power.

4 This article analyses married couples and it excludes those where the housework is performed by another family member or a paid employee. Housework is defined as cooking, cleaning and laundry (p. 1263). Ordinal logistic regressions with individual, couple characteristics and country dummies are performed separately for men and women.

5 This applies to the female sample, but not to the male sample, where the domestic labour is more equally distributed if the women have a higher education than the husband.

6 Again differences emerge between the male and the female samples. Only in the male sample this relationship can be observed. This may be due to differences in perceptions by gender.

7 The effect is greater in the male sample than in the female one.

8 The GEM index (UNDP 1995) is constructed from the combination of the % of parliamentary seats held by women, the % of professional and technical workers who are women, and women's share of earned income compared to that of men.

Geist (2006) shows that micro-level processes, such as time availability, relative resources and gender ideology are important determinants of division of housework. However, these micro-level patterns are not sufficient for understanding macro-level differences in the division of household. According to Geist Welfare States might create a framework that is more conducive to specific arrangements of domestic labour. Using data from 1994 ISSP Program the author investigates how micro-level patterns of division of domestic work are associated with broadly defined welfare regime across 10 countries. Countries with conservative regimes have a lower level of equal sharing, and there are higher levels of equal sharing in social democratic countries. The liberal regime is more heterogeneous (differences between, on one hand, Great Britain and New Zealand with less equal sharing and, on the other hand, USA and Canada with higher equal sharing). Welfare States structure the effect of individual characteristics on the division of housework, although the individual level determinants (gender ideology, response capacity and relative resources) are stronger in liberal regimes than in social democratic and conservative regimes and different for men and women. The question of which is the “more specific causal mechanism” remains open (2005: 25).

Fuwa and Cohen (2006) analyze the effects of social policy regarding women’s employment and work-family conflict on the division of household in 33 countries. They classified policies in two groups: equality of access policy (affirmative action and absence of discriminatory policy) and substantive benefit policy (childcare and parental leave). The authors, using ISSP data, integrate micro-level factors in multi level contexts, showing how social conditions, and especially social policies, influence the negotiation over housework. Latvia, Poland, the Slovakian Republic and Denmark have the most equal housework hour ratio between husband and wife, while Japan, Portugal, Cyprus and Spain the most traditional. The authors argue that social policy is one of the key contextual elements that shape economic power between men and women in the labour market. Also, political rules that reduce or encourage the traditional division of labour, and cultural norms regarding who is responsible for caring the family are important factors. Social policy not only contributes material and ideological support for a given division of household labour, but also affects how well women can use the economic assets in individual negotiations.

Crompton (2006) takes also an institutional perspective and studies 6 countries with ISSP data from 2002. She obtains some variation in the ranking of countries depending on the measure of household work, but nonetheless domestic work is most equally shared in the United States, Norway, Great Britain and Finland compared to France and Portugal⁹. She points to the fact that, despite important differences in the institutional contexts of the two Scandinavian countries and the two Anglo-Saxon countries, they have the least traditional division of domestic work. In the first countries governments have promoted politics that encourage men to share more domestic work, while in Portugal such policies have been

⁹ Firstly, she calculates women’s reported share (reported by her or by her partner) of household work in relation to men’s for all respondents. Housework does not include childcare and leisure time activities. Secondly, Crompton constructs an index from five questions about who usually performs the task (laundry, shopping for groceries, cleaning, preparing meals) and considers only respondents in full-time employment.

inexistent. In the case of France politics have emphasised in the last decade the objective of attaining gender equality and there is a generous offer of child-care policies, but this does not seem to have increased a more equal housework sharing. In France full-time workers report higher levels of work-life conflict compared to Norway and Finland. Crompton suggests that the French state's support for childcare may have relieved fathers from the obligation to cooperate in domestic and care work. Yet, she also alerts about the discrepancies in men's and women's reporting of domestic work and suggests that in some countries men might be over-reporting their participation and this might create a statistical artefact. Following Windebank (2001), she suggests that British men's higher cooperation in domestic tasks may be a consequence of more flexible labour markets, and lower public support for childcare, which, on the one hand, enables them to do more homework and, on the other hand, forces them to it. At individual level, Crompton finds that having a lower education, having a child in the household, being married, being older, not having a liberal gender role attitude and women not working full-time increases domestic traditionalism¹⁰. In another piece of research on Britain, the Czech Republic and Norway with ISSP data for 1994 and 2002, Crompton et al. (2005) find similar results in a model with country dummies. This time they include a couple variable, men earns more than women, which in all three countries increases the probability of a traditional division of domestic work¹¹.

Cooke (2007) analysis for the USA shows the extent to which policy affects relative gender power within the household. Particularly she illustrates how public policy can alter the "relative gender power". After having controlled for women's individual resources, she finds that laws and policies enhancing women's economic power in the event of divorce (i.e. receipt of transfers, child support, etc.) predict that men in couples perform a greater share of household tasks.

This review of the state of the art reveals important shortcomings of cross-national studies. First, as illustrated in

Table 1, cross-national country groupings differ, in particular when classifying liberal and former soviet countries. Notice, for instance the discrepancy locating Great Britain or Poland which are both placed in three different positions according to the classification used. This may be the result of diverging definitions of domestic work and differences in the types of couples included in the analysis. This problem is difficult to solve, because, contrary to paid employment, there is no international standard about how to measure household work in international surveys. For the time being, researcher can only be very explicit about what is measured and which sample of people they use.

10 She performs a multiple regression with a pooled sample with all six countries that predicts a traditional division of domestic work.

11 The problem in this study is the restricted definition of domestic work the authors use (washing, ironing and caring for sick family members task only).

Table 1. International country classifications gender division of housework, early-mid 2000s

Male cooperation	Batalova & Cohen (2002)	Davis & Greenstein (2004)	Fuwa (2004)	Geist (2006)	Fuwa & Cohen (2006)	Crompton (2006)
+	Canada East Germany Great Britain Israel New Zealand Norway Sweden USA	Estonia Hungary Czechoslovakia Russia	East-Germany Norway Sweden USA Canada	Social Democratic countries	Denmark Poland Slovakian Republic Latvia	Finland Great Britain Norway USA
Medium	Australia Bulgaria Russia Slovenia The Netherlands West Germany	UK United States		Liberal regime countries		
-	Austria Czech Ireland Italy Japan Northern Poland	Slovenia Japan West Germany Poland	Ireland Italy Japan	Conservative regime countries	Cyprus Portugal Spain Japan	Portugal France

Second, hypotheses about the causal link between macro and micro level factors are relatively new and difficult to test statistically. Some researchers find that Welfare States differences are related to cross-national differences in housework division, but with some important exceptions. Other researchers specify the context effects more and look for the influence of specific social and gender policies (child care, parental leave, affirmative actions, female employment regulations, policies for divorced women). Some of these works show that micro level factors affect housework division differently depending on the context. This means that bargaining processes on the couple level and the role of individual preferences do not necessarily work and influence housework division in the same way in all countries. In this piece of work we want to contribute to development of macro-micro link hypotheses with new ideas and new empirical evidences.

Recent international trends (1990s and 2000s) in men's and women's participation in housework: evidence from the ISSP and ESS

From the discussed comparative analysis five challenges and open questions for comparative studies have emerged. First, it is not the same to include all couples, only married couples or only couples where both work. Second, for the classification of a country it makes a difference what is defined housework and

how people are asked for in surveys (all housework, routine housework, care work, specific tasks, etc.). Third, housework participation of each partner may be measured in absolute terms (number of hours of housework or task) or in relative terms. In the latter case, it can be measured as a categorical variable (who does usually a given task) or as a continuous variable (proportion done of total housework or task). Fourth, women and men do normally not give the same response when asked about their division of housework. Fifth, some survey ignore the fact that housework is externalized by some households and do not ask for it, while others include it explicitly.

In this descriptive part, we want to look closer at the mapping of cross-national differences in the gendered division of housework. We will not be able to solve all five questions in an adequate way with the existing data, but we make two contributions to the comparative methodology debate. We compare responses given by men with those given by women and interpret them in terms of a possible social desirability bias. We compare married and living as married people together but only if both partners are economically active. In this way we control for the type of couple living arrangement and, more importantly, for the differences in economic activities across countries. In addition, we do not consider older generations in those countries which have underwent a very rapid modernisation process in the last decades, as in Spain, Greece and Portugal. We use two comparative surveys, the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP 1994 and 2002) and the European Social Survey (ESS 2004), because they measure the division of housework in different ways. In addition, the first one allows for a limited comparison across time (1994-2002).¹²

We have taken one question that was asked twice, in 1994 and in 2002 in the ISSP survey to show country and gender differences. In 1994 five questions were made about household work: who does the laundry, small repairs, cares for sick, shops for groceries and decides what to have for dinner. The first, second and last questions point to tasks traditionally done by women. The second has been mainly of domain of men and the fourth is a domain where men participate more than in others. Lastly, the fifth question is about a mental and organization task, which is to be differentiated from more time intensive tasks and which to a large extent has been maintained as a female domain. In 2002 the first four tasks were asked in a similar way again, instead of decision about dinner a question on who prepares the meals was introduced and, in addition, a question about who does the household cleaning was introduced.¹³ Given this data, we have decided to focus on two time-intensive and traditional female housework tasks: laundry and cleaning. The latter is very relevant, because it also constitutes the most often externalized housework task.

Figure 1 allows very different interpretations at once. It permits to establish a classification of countries according to their aggregated level of male participation in unpaid laundry work taking into account variations in time. Then it allows

12 The ISSP was also carried out in 1988, but it did not include data on housework. In the later waves, some questions were asked in the same way, others were omitted and not all countries participated in all waves.

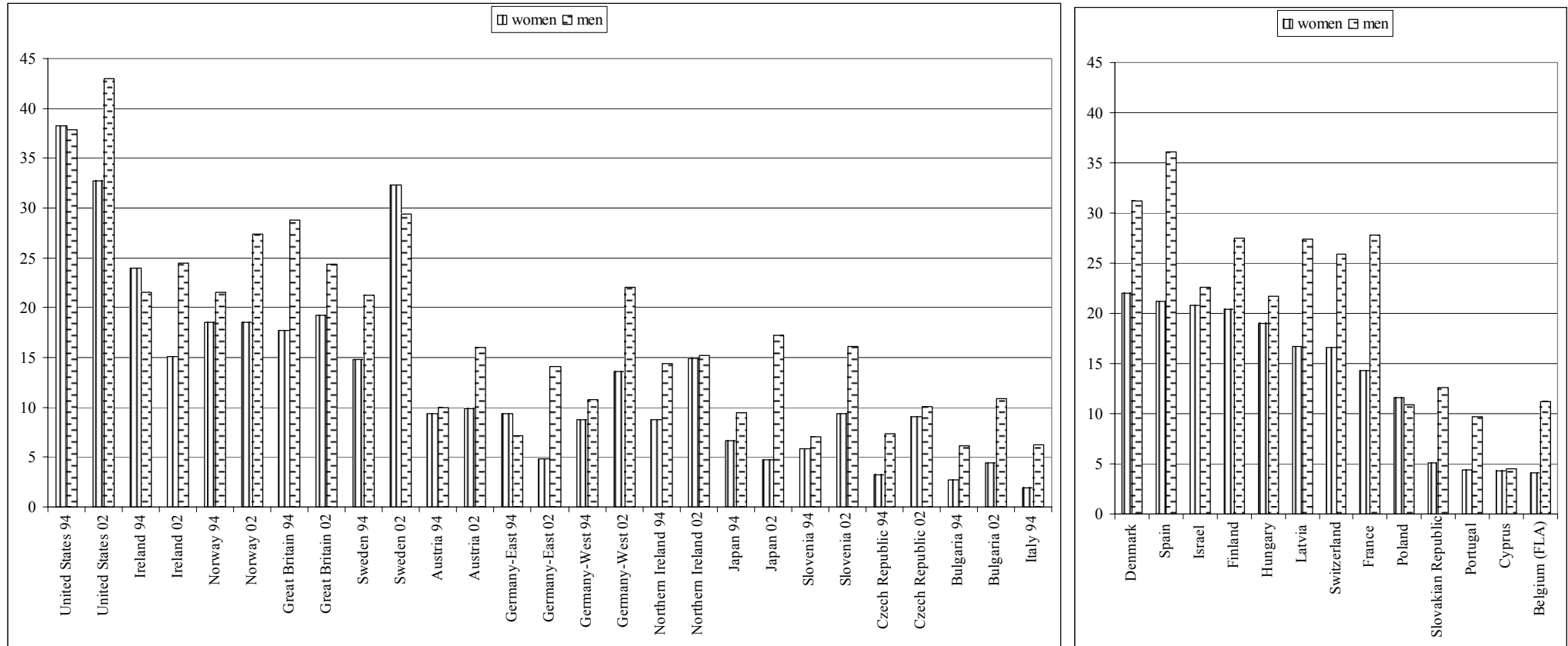
13 In addition in 2002 two categorical questions about absolute time in hours spent at household work were introduced.

posing the question about gender differences in the perception of how unpaid work is divided within the household and, finally, it is the contrast for other comparisons with other indicators and other survey data. In which national proportions do men half or more of the laundry housework according to the ISSP respondents? According to economically active female respondents, in 1994 more than 30% of women asked in the United States said that her male partner did half or more of the laundry work. Between 15 to 25% of women in Ireland, Norway, Great Britain and Sweden said so. From 5 to 14% of women in Austria, East-Germany, West-Germany, Northern Ireland, Japan and Slovenia affirmed the same. Less than 5% could say the same in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Italy. In 2002, eight years later, in seven of the analyzed countries more female respondents affirmed that they had a cooperative partner. Six countries were exceptions to this general advancement in gender equality. In Norway and Austria the proportions remained the same, while in the United States, Ireland, East-Germany and Japan female respondents reported less often than in 1994 to have cooperative men. Does it mean that in these last countries men were doing less or that women perceived them as doing less? That is difficult to answer, but in any case it shows an inverse trend to what most social scientists tend to state, namely that household work division is becoming more equal with time. How about the 2002 ranking? Are the respondents from the United States still the forerunner in sharing household work?

Yes, in 2002, according to women's affirmations, laundry work is shared in 33% of the couples in the United States compared to the second best performer, Sweden (32%). At 10 per cent point distance are Danes (22%), the Finish (20%), Norwegians (19%), Britons (19%), Spaniards (21%), Israeli (21%) and Hungarians (19%). Cooperative men are reported by 10 to 15% of women in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Austria, France and Poland. Less than 10% but more than 5% of women say they have a cooperative partner in West and East Germany, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and less than 5% in Bulgaria, Japan, Portugal, Cyprus and the Flemish part of Belgium. Now, we turn to what men say about themselves.

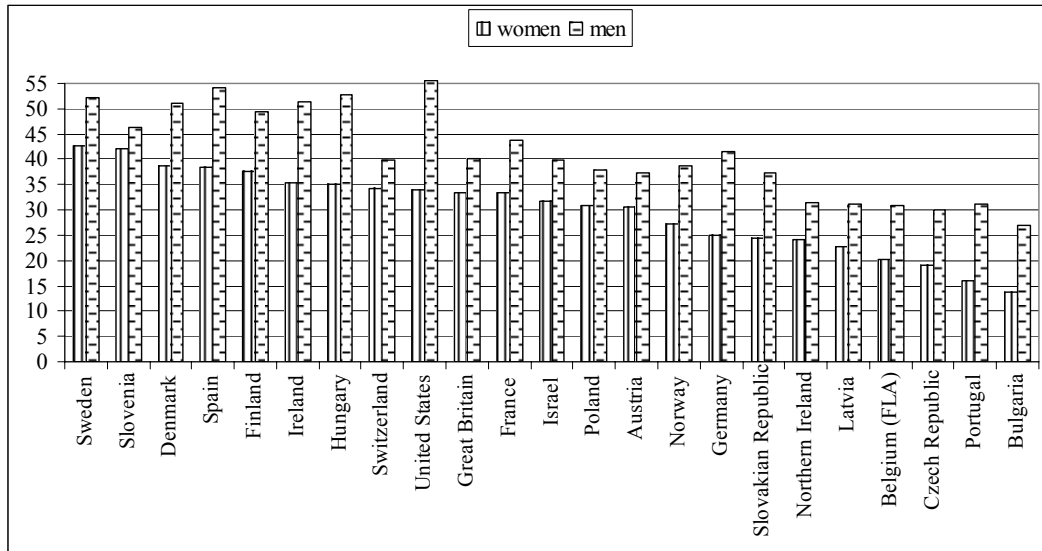
If one looks at what male respondents tend to say about their participation in laundry work, two results are important. First, in 2002 nearly in all countries men perceived themselves as much more cooperative than women did perceive their male partners, this is particularly true in Spain, France, the United States, Norway, Denmark, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Austria and in Great Britain. Second, in some countries women and men did not answer very differently, such as in Sweden, Slovenia, the Czech Republic or Poland. Despite these gender differences, the international classification of countries would only suffer minor changes in comparative terms. The most cooperative men, according to their self-perceptions would be men in the United States, Spaniards and Danes followed by Britons, Norwegians, the Finish, the Latvians, the French and the Swiss. Both classifications, coming from female or male respondents, generate an unexpected map of cross-national differences, since these classifications do not overlap with national variations in religious denominations predominant in a country, nor with an East-West or South-North divide, nor with most used Welfare Regime distinctions. Thus the female and even more the male data of the

Figure 1: Men Does Half or More of the Laundry by Respondent's Gender and by Country, ISSP 1994/2002
ISSP 1994 and ISSP 2002



Note: Bi-active couples, weighted ISSP 94 and ISSP 02 samples (country samples in 2002 go from a minimum of 133 cases to a maximum of 426). Question was posed to people married or living as married: “In your household, who does the following things? Who does the laundry”. We have added the categories “about equal or both together”, “usually the man” and “always the man” into one and compared it to the some “always the woman” and “usually the woman”. The missing values and those who answered “a third person” were not taken into consideration.

Figure 2: Men Does Half or More of the Cleaning by Respondent's Gender and by Country, ISSP 2002



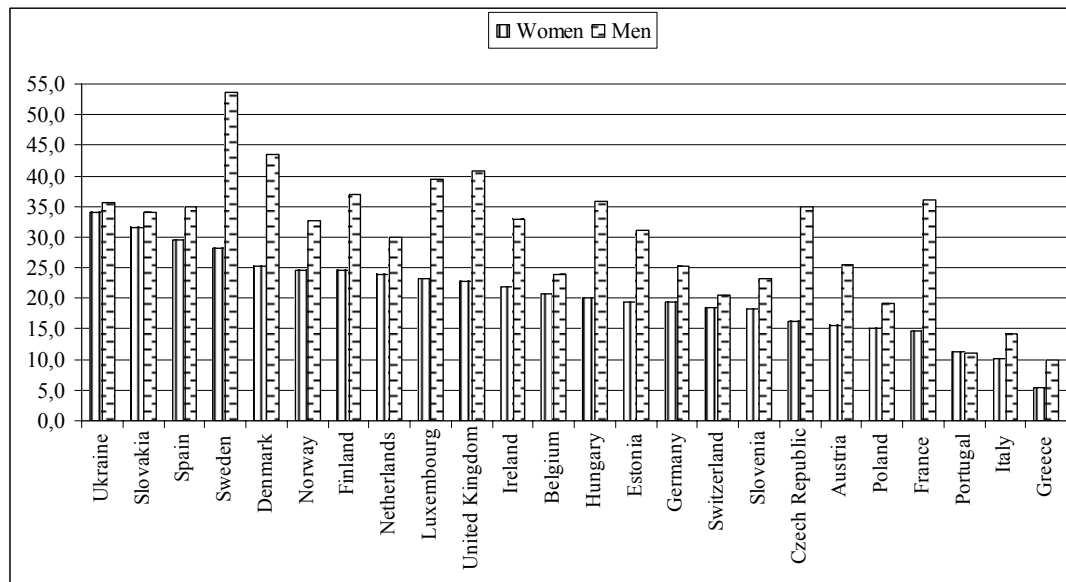
Note: Bi-active couples, weighted ISSP 2002 sample (country samples go from a minimum of 126 cases to a maximum of 398). Question was posed to people married or living as married: "Who does the household cleaning?". We have added the categories "about equal or both together", "usually the man" and "always the man" into one and compared it to the some "always the woman" and "usually the woman". The missing values and those who answered "a third person" were not taken into consideration.

ISSP 2002 seem to generate interesting empirical facts for comparative welfare, capitalism and family research. Before stating this seriously, we have to offer some other empirical results.

Compared to the laundry figures for 2002, in general more men cooperate in cleaning than in laundry (Figure 2). The forerunners are those countries where 35% or more of the economically active women say that their partners do half or more of the cleaning work: Sweden, Slovenia, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Ireland and Hungary. Between 25 and less than 35% of cooperative men are found in Switzerland, the United States, Great Britain, France, Israel, Austria, Norway and Germany. Lastly are those where between 10 and 25% of the men are said to be cooperative: the Slovakian Republic, Northern Ireland, Latvia, the Flemish part of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Bulgaria. When the results for men's own perception of their cleaning work are looked at, it can be seen that the cross-national comparison would change slightly in terms or relative position of the country. The forerunner with 50 to 55% of co-operators would be the United States followed by Spain, Hungary, Sweden, Ireland and Denmark. At the other end would be the same countries as in the female classification: Northern Ireland, Latvia, the Flemish part of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Bulgaria. The outstanding fact here is that much more men than women state in each country that the couple is formed by a cooperative man. Compared to laundry, in cleaning men perceive themselves everywhere much more often as co-operators than women do. Probably, if they do a part of the cleaning, they already consider being very cooperative, while women need more cleaning work done by her partner before giving them the status of being a cooperative partner. In addition there are some champions in giving socially desirable answers in both, laundry

and cleaning work, as are men, particularly, in the United States, Ireland and Spain (cfr. Coltrane, 2000). According to Lennon and Rosenfeld (1994, cited in Coltrane, p. 12239), couples do not use 50% as an “equity point”, as discussed in revising Major’s study (section 1). Men find the division of labour to be fair when they contribute 36% of time devoted to household time and women contribute 66% of total.

Figure 3: Men Does the Same or More of Total Housework then Women by Respondent’s Gender and by Country, ESS 2004



Note: Bi-active couples where respondent is younger than 56 years, weighted sample (country samples go from a minimum of 137 cases to a maximum of 439).¹⁴

The European Social Survey does not include the United States, but includes more Eastern and Southern European countries than the ISSP 2002. Thus, the cross-national classifications resulting from both sources have to be necessarily different. Nonetheless, the most important result from all these comparisons is that some countries are always the forerunner. In Figure 3 the ESS classification for bi-active couples where the respondent is under age 56 is displayed. Forerunner in cooperation of male partners, as informed by women, are those where 25 to 30% of men are said to do the same or more than the women: Ukraine, Slovakian Republic, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. Not far away are the countries where cooperators represent 20 to 24% of male partners, that is the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium and Hungary. More than 11% but less than 20% of cooperative men are found in Estonia, Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Austria,

¹⁴ The question in the ESS is about the total housework and it is not asked about paid domestic service. “I’d now like to talk about housework, as described on the card. By housework, we mean things done around the home, such as cooking, washing, cleaning, care of clothes, shopping, maintenance of property, but not including childcare and leisure activities. On a typical weekday about how many hours, in total, do people in your household spend on housework for your home? About how much of this time do you spend yourself? The answer categories were: None or almost none, up to a quarter of the time, more than a quarter, up to a half of the time, more than a half, up to three quarters of the time, more than three quarters, less than all of the time, all or nearly all of the time.

Poland and France. At the end of the classification appear Portugal, Italy and Greece with 11% or less of male cooperators.

If this classification is compared to the previous two ISSP classifications, it is possible to make two concluding remarks concerning countries' placing in the international map of gender division of household work. In all classifications Sweden, Denmark and Finland are among the forerunners. Spain displays an unexpected top position, which is repeated in all three classifications. Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the United Kingdom change their position according to how these geographical unities are included into the surveys. If one looks only at Great Britain, than the country is a forerunner, but when Northern Ireland is included into the country, that is the United Kingdom, than it is position shifts into the middle field. Ireland is once among the forerunners, in laundry, but otherwise it belongs also to the middle field.

Five eastern countries are in both surveys, the Czech and the Slovakian Republic, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland. The first two countries are classified in nearly all cases among the laggards, with the exception of the Slovakian Republic, which in the ESS appears among the forerunners. Hungary appears mostly in the upper middle field, while Slovenia and Poland change position in different classifications, from forerunner/middle field in ISSP "cleaning" to laggard in ESS.

The central European countries with German traditions, Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the middle field of the classifications, with the exception of Switzerland in "cleaning", where it is among the forerunners. France is in the middle-field in ISSP and Flanders among the laggards. Instead in the ESS France is among the laggards and Belgium, that is including Flanders and Wallonia are in the middle field. The Southern European countries (except Spain) are in several classifications among the laggards, Greece included (2004).

After all comparisons and taking always the greatest samples as the most reliable ones, a first international mapping of gender inequalities across European countries can be drawn. The most egalitarian division of work is found among the Scandinavian countries and Spain. A middle position is taken by the United Kingdom, Ireland, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France and Belgium. The less cooperative men are found in the Czech and Slovakian Republics, in Slovenia, Poland, Italy, Portugal and Greece. To conclude, this classification seems to be related to Welfare Regime differences, East-West and South North divides, while it does not seem to relate to clear religious differences. In addition Spain and Hungary seem to be exceptions in these relations that have to be better understood. The multivariate analysis conducted in next section sheds more light on this mapping and about possible explanations of the cross-national differences in the gender division of unpaid work. It is shown that the countries' position in the international ranking changes, if some individual and couple composition effects are controlled for.

3. Under which Conditions Do Egalitarian Men Emerge? Theoretical Model,

Hypotheses

Research on cross-national variations in the gender division of domestic work is quite recent and, as shown above; empirical facts have not yet been established in a methodologically well-thought form. There are particular national configurations which favour more equal sharing of domestic work, but there are also different factors operating within the couples which determine the final gender division of housework. Therefore, gender division of domestic work should be approached in a multi-dimensional research model accounting for individual, couples and country factors. We intent to capture empirically these three dimensions.

As previously discussed, some authors argue that advanced capitalism has brought about women's opportunity to choose the division of domestic work according to their preferences. Yet, it is difficult to know the extent to which these preferences simply reflect an adaptation to the individual life circumstances. We do not have longitudinal data to test the role of preferences in the gender division of labour. The aim of this paper is to control for gender attitudes while capturing as best as possible women's opportunity structures to negotiate the organisation of domestic work. In our view, the ideal theoretical model should acknowledge the role of preferences at both micro (individual or couples) and macro level (societal) as well as women's chances to live autonomously and bargain within the couple which is also a multi-dimensional indicator which can be approximated at the macro-level by diffusion of marital breakdown and the degree of gender empowerment; and at the micro level by women's earning or labour market position.

On the individual and household level, we propose the following hypotheses:

1. The **relative resources** of the partners, as measured by the proportion of each partner's income with respect to the total household income, influence the division of housework. We will find more equitable men in households where women's income is equal or higher than men's income.
2. As time availability is an important determinant of housework, we hypothesize that in partnerships where the women face important **time-constraints** due to long working hours men will be more cooperative.
3. If at least one partner expresses egalitarian gender values, there is a higher chance that the male partner is either cooperative or equitable than in partnerships where one of the partners has a clear preference for a traditional division of household work.
4. In partnerships where the division of housework provokes **conflict** men will be more prone to be cooperative than in those with absence of conflict, since housework division is thought to be constantly negotiated in young couples, except in those where a clear role segregation exists and it is consented by both parts.

Micro variables are not isolated as women's capacity to negotiate with the partner is very much related to their ability to make a living. Besides, men's

legitimisation to deny an equal share of domestic activities is very much related with the general context in which they live. Thus, if the majority of men in his birth cohort are very seldom sharing domestic activities, they have fewer incentives to change. Therefore, we need to introduce some controls at the macro level. On the context level we propose the following hypotheses:

1. In countries with a high level of alternatives to marriage, because of high rates of divorces and of consensual unions, women will **perceive** the break down of the relationship as a quite normal alternative to problems in the couple and men will be more aware of this female exit option. This context situation may strengthen women's power relation and weaken men's position in negotiations on the couple's housework division (**family instability perception hypothesis**).
2. In countries where employment of mothers with small children is institutionally supported through wide-ranging child-care facilities a more gender-egalitarian culture is to be supposed, which may also affect the negotiation of housework within couples (**childcare services hypothesis**).¹⁵
3. In addition in countries where female full-time employment in the central life stage is strongly diffused, more couples will tend to implement a cooperative or egalitarian division of housework (**dual full-time work context hypothesis**).
4. In countries where traditional gender roles and values prevail, men have less incentives to perform a large proportion of domestic tasks (**traditional family culture hypothesis**).

Data

The section is based on the European Social Survey (the ESS). This survey has been designed as a time series data (collection takes place every two years) representative of all persons aged 15 and over resident within private households. The questionnaire consists of a 'core' module relatively constant from round to round plus 'rotating' modules which focus on specific themes. The second round provides relevant information for our analysis on 'Family, Work, and Well-being' (26 countries participated in round 2). This module explores in particular atypical work, spouse's employment, and spouse's contribution to household chores.

Dependent variable

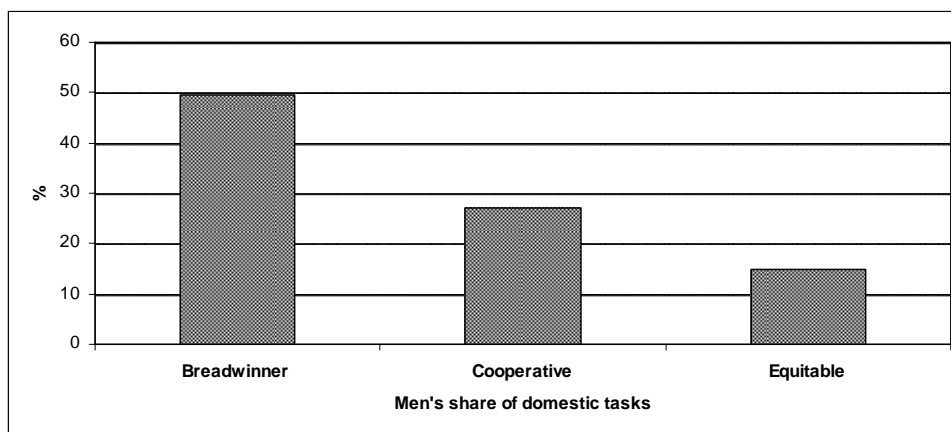
Domestic work is captured in the survey by the question: 'On a typical weekday about how many hours, in total, do people in your household spend on housework for your home?'; which is then followed by another question for each of the

¹⁵ This hypothesis has been tested in some statistical models, which we do not present here. Its effect was positive and similar for traditional and equitable men. Since parsimony of multi-level models is important, we decided to use only macro variables which clearly distinguish between groups.

partner concerning the fraction of time that each of them assumes.¹⁶ Looking at both partners we have created a new variable consisting of the fraction of household work assumed by the male partner. Therefore, the dependent variable is the relative amount of housework that men assume as compared to his female partner's. It has been coded into three large categories (see Figure 3):

1. *Breadwinner male role*: they do much less homework than his partner.
2. *Cooperative male role*: they do only a bit less homework than his partner.
3. *Equitable male role*: they do half or more homework than his partner.

Figure 4. Distribution of male partners aged 18-64 according to their contribution to the domestic tasks (work done in relation to his female partner), 2004 (all countries included)



Countries included: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine. Data: European Social Survey, 2004 (weighted data)

Independent variables

In order to predict men's share of domestic activities, three main analytical levels are included in the regression analysis for a sample of men aged 18 and 65 years who are living with a partner:

- Individual male characteristics determining his propensity to participate in domestic tasks such as *age* (dummy variable: young (18-35), central age (36-45) and mature (45 and over)); *labour market situation* (dummy variable: in paid work, unemployed or inactive); *education level* (dummy variable: basic education, secondary education and tertiary education); *household structure* (two variables capturing age of youngest child (dummy) and number of children (continuous variable)); *gender values* measured by the agreement with the statement 'A woman should be

¹⁶ The options are: none or almost none; up to a quarter of the time; more than a quarter, up to a half of the time; more than a half, up to three quarters of the time; more than three quarters, less than all of the time; all or nearly all of the time.

prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family’ (dummy variable where the reference category is to agree with the statement); *conflict organising domestic work* measured by the question ‘how often do you and your husband/wife/partner disagree about how to divide housework?’ (dummy variable where ‘never disagree’ is the reference category). It should be noted that the last two variables do not capture men’s gender values or conflict, but the fact that any member of the couple express his or her agreement with this statement.

- Couples’ characteristics determining men’s propensity to participate in domestic tasks such as *couple’s labour market situation* measured as the main economic role (active, inactive or retired) of each of the partners; and *couple’s educational resources* which is meant to reflect their social position (dummy variable according to the higher educational attainment of any of the partners).
- Female partner characteristics determining men’s propensity to participate in domestic tasks such as *women’s contribution to the household income* (a dummy variable measuring the fraction of income provided) and *women’s working hours* (dummy variable where the reference category is not employed).
- Institutional context measured by the country’s *marital instability context* (country dummy variable with the crude rate of divorce)¹⁷; *traditional gender values context* (percentage of men aged 25-45 who agree with the statement that woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family’); and *women’s economic role* measured by a dummy variable with the percentage of women in partnerships who work more than 35 hours a week.

Methodology

The analysis is always conducted in a pool model in which all countries are included as a contextual variable. We systematically control for the fact that information about the dependent variable - men share of domestic activities – may be directly provided by the male respondent or may also be provided indirectly by his female partner. Estimations about the domestic work may change according to who is providing this information given that male and female perceptions about ‘domestic contribution’ might be gendered due to different socialisation in the gender division of labour.

The analysis excludes other family responsibilities such as care work. Domestic chores may cover a wide range of activities, which have to be differentiated in terms of their work load, personal gratification and gender identity implications. Research has shown that care activities have to be separated from domestic work (Coltrane 2000 and Gershuny, 2000, p. 180), while child care and elderly care are

17 To capture exactly family instability the best would have been to measure marriage and consensual union disruptions. Unfortunately the latter indicator is not available cross-nationally. We have tried to use an indicator of consensual unions in addition to divorce, but had to choose only one of both at the end to ensure a parsimonious statistical model.

also very different in its requirements and implications. Coltrane distinguishes between different types of domestic work tasks, those which are routine work, very time-intensive and less pleasant and those which are of occasional nature and tend to be more rewarding. He names the first “routine” housework and the second occasional housework.¹⁸ The ESS data do not permit to distinguish between different household tasks, but it allows making the distinction - which we have respected - between care and housework.

3. Main results of Statistical Models

Given the nature of the dependent variable, we have chosen a multinomial logit model (MNL). This model is normally thought as the estimation of simultaneous binary logits. In our models the dependent variable, men’s share of domestic tasks, is interpreted as a nominal outcome with three categories: 1 to behave as a male breadwinner partner, 2 to be a relative cooperative male partner; and 3 to contribute in an equitable way to housework, that is to make as much or more as the female partner. Thus, for each independent variable we can examine the effect on the dependent variable by estimating three binary logits where each logit is based on a different sample. For instance, in the logit comparing category 1 with 3, those in category 2 are dropped. The output from MNL is divided in two panels: the first column corresponds to the breadwinners’ category, and the second column corresponds to the equitable partners. The cooperative category is the base outcome. Therefore, the first column presents coefficients (relative risk ratios) from the comparison of breadwinners with cooperatives, while the second column holds the comparison of cooperative with equitable partners.

The sample includes people, women and men¹⁹, who live in a couple and his/her partner lives in the same household. The models follow a threefold logic. First, a model with individual level variables is run, controlling for country of residence (Table 2). Second, couple-level variables are included. Third, the countries are replaced by theoretically significant macro variables. Next, we present the results of the first model (Table 2)

¹⁸ Gershuny (2000, p. 180), who speaks of unpaid work time distinguishes 5 distinct group of activities. The first one, similarly to Coltrane, is named routine housework (house – and clothes cleaning, tidying, and organizing); the other four are: cooking, childcare, shopping and odd jobs.

¹⁹ Half of the sample consists of men who inform about him and to some extent about his female partner, and the other half are women who do the same. We know, and it has been shown above, that men overestimate their participation in housework. The advantage of a pooled sample of men and women is the increase of cases, which permits to perform a more complex model.

Table 2. Results for multinomial Logistic Regression (relative risk ratios) Predicting Men's Share of Domestic Activities: individual variables

	Breadwinner	Equitable
	RRR	RRR
Men's age:		
18-35	0.75***	1.02
36-45	0.93	1.15
46 an older	--	--
Men's labour market situation:		
Paid work	--	--
Unemployed	0.62**	1.76***
Inactive	0.65***	1.56***
Missing	1.40**	1.29
Who provides the information:		
She tells about him:	0.91	0.62***
Children at household?		
Childless	--	--
Youngest 0-3 years old	1.44**	1
Youngest 4-12	1.16	1.01
Youngest >13 years old	1.1	0.97
Number of children	0.96	0.84**
Attitudinal values: ^a		
Agree to cut down work	--	--
Neither	0.69***	0.93
Do not agree	0.60***	1.15
Missing	0.81	1.03
Men's education:		
Up to first stage of basic education	--	--
Secondary education	0.79**	1.11
Tertiary education	0.58***	1.1
Missing	1.2	2.05
Contextual variable		
France	--	--
Austria	0.92	1.01
Belgium	0.89	0.73*
Switzerland	1.46**	1.06
Czech Republic	0.58***	0.98
Germany	1.19	0.92
Denmark	0.54***	1.23
Estonia	0.45***	0.88
Spain	1.63***	1.66**
Finland	0.43***	0.87
United Kingdom	0.9	1.19
Greece	2.34***	0.48***
Hungary	0.8	1.12
Ireland	1.49**	1.41*
Iceland	0.44***	0.71
Italy	1.69**	1.82**
Luxembourg	1.70***	2.11***
Netherlands	1.08	0.95
Norway	0.54***	0.9
Poland	0.61***	0.57***
Portugal	2.48***	0.91
Sweden	0.46***	1.62***
Slovenia	0.55***	0.82
Slovakia	0.50***	1.14
Turkey	1.49**	0.48***
Ukraine	0.30***	1.13

Continues

	<i>Continuation</i>	<i>Table 3</i>
Constant	3.13***	0.88
Pseudo R-Square	0.07	
N. of cases	22584	
chi2	2173	
P	0.0000	

*Significant at $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.001$. -- Reference category

Data: ESS, 2004 (weighted data).

NOTE: Reference category for the equation is "Cooperative".

^a Statement: A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family.

In the first model, family values of the respondent and men's labour market situation are the main independent variables, which are controlled by basic demographic variables: men's age and education level, gender of respondent, number of children and age of the youngest child. Family values has been operationalised through the agreement/disagreement of the respondent's with the statement a "Woman should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family". The results confirm our third micro-level hypothesis about values, since those respondents which do not agree with this statement, that is those with the most egalitarian attitudes and those who are unsure about the statement, have a lower relative risk to be in a couple where the men takes a traditional breadwinner role and thus does nearly not cooperate in housework. On the side of men's time availability, due to his labour market position, the results show that unemployed and economically inactive men display a higher propensity to participate on equitable terms and a lower tendency to participate in a breadwinner role, both compared to cooperative men. This supports once more the well-established time-availability hypothesis.

The control variables show that younger respondents have a lower relative risk to behave in a male breadwinner way and the same applies to men with secondary and tertiary education. These variables exert no significant effect on the relative risk of taking an equitable role, mainly due to the fact that in these aspects both groups, the cooperative and the equitable men are very similar. With respect to children results differ for breadwinner and equitable male partners. To have small children, up to age 3, increases the risk of taking a male breadwinner role. On the other hand, the more dependent children a couple has the lower the propensity of men to perform an equitable share of housework. The country differences correspond to our previous descriptive findings when we compare breadwinner patterns with cooperation patterns, but it is quite puzzling for the comparison of the latter with equitable participation of men. To live in a North-European country diminishes the relative risk of performing a traditional breadwinner role compared to Central-European countries. In fact, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark decreases this risk compared to France, Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary and the United Kingdom. A similar result is found for those living in Ukraine, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Estonia and the Czech Republic. Traditionalism is more present in Southern European countries compared to the central ones, that is in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and also in Switzerland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Turkey. This classification corresponds with our expectations, but it is more difficult to interpret the influence of the country context on equitable domestic work sharing. First of all, country differences do not

matter so much any more. The most favouring contexts are: Luxembourg, Italy, Spain and Sweden compared to France and other central European countries, while the most difficult country context is found in Greece, Turkey, Poland and Belgium. Country differences may diminish once we include all the set of theoretically relevant variables, because some of these country differences may be the result of composition effects.

Table 3. Results for multinomial Logistic Regression (relative risk ratios) Predicting Men's Share of Domestic Activities: individual and couples' variables

	Breadwinner	Equitable
	RRR	RRR
Men's age:		
18-35	0.73***	1.04
36-45	0.92	1.02
46 an older	--	--
Children at household?		
Childless	--	--
Youngest 0-3 years old	1.16	0.97
Youngest 4-12	1.27**	1.01
Youngest >13 years old	1.03	0.9
Number of children	0.98	0.92*
Who provides the information:		
She tells about him:	1.59***	0.61***
Attitudinal values: ^a		
Agree to cut down work	--	--
Neither	0.81***	0.99
Do not agree	0.73***	1.13*
Missing	0.85	1.07
Disagree about homework: ^b		
Never	--	--
Several times a month or less	0.74***	0.70***
Once a week or more	0.85**	0.66***
Missings	0.89	0.98
Couple's characteristics		
Couple's labour market situation:		
Both active	--	--
One earner (active+inactive)	1.23***	0.86*
Both inactive	0.53***	0.98
Both retired	0.47***	1.54***
Others+missing data	0.67***	1.41***
Couple educational resources:		
Both basic education	--	--
Basic+secondary	0.94	1.28*
Both secondary/tertiary+basic	0.78**	1.15
Secondary+tertiary	0.64***	1.06
Both tertiary	0.51***	1.17
Female partner characteristics		
Women's income contribution:		
Her earnings=0	--	--
Her earnings<1/2	0.69***	0.72***
Her earnings about 1/2	0.53***	1.02
Her earnings>1/2	0.55***	1.58***
Women's working hours:		
She is not employed	--	--
She works <35 hours	0.66***	1.11
She works 35-40 h	0.45***	1.37***
She works 41+h	0.48***	1.69***
Constant	7.78***	0.89

Continues

Continuation Table 3

	Breadwinner	Equitable
	RRR	RRR
Contextual variable		
France	--	--
Austria	0.76*	1.01
Belgium	0.81	0.81
Switzerland	1.06	1.11
Czech Republic	0.64***	0.98
Germany	0.93	1.1
Denmark	0.55***	1.31*
Estonia	0.50***	0.86
Spain	1.22	1.68**
Finland	0.48***	1.01
United Kingdom	0.79	1.36*
Greece	1.60***	0.49***
Hungary	0.67**	1.11
Ireland	0.9	1.2
Iceland	0.46***	0.68
Italy	1.01	1.76**
Luxembourg	1.3	2.21***
Netherlands	0.79	1.25
Norway	0.55***	1.02
Poland	0.55***	0.55***
Portugal	2.04***	0.84
Sweden	0.52***	1.72***
Slovenia	0.58***	0.68*
Slovakia	0.47***	1.01
Turkey	0.78	0.61**
Ukraine	0.35***	1.03
Constant	0.76*	1.01
Pseudo R-Square	0.13	
N. of cases	21243	
chi2	5550	
p	0.0000	

*Significant at $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.001$. -- Reference category

Data: ESS, 2004 (weighted data). NOTE: Reference category for the equation is "Cooperative".

^a Statement: A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family.

^b Question: Using this card, how often do you and your husband/wife/partner disagree about how to divide housework?

The results of the second model, which includes couple-level variables, show clearly such composition effects, because many countries do not display any significant effect any more or the effect becomes smaller (Table 3). This is only the case for the relative risk to take a breadwinner role compared to a cooperative role. As can be seen the country effects of Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Turkey are not more significant compared to model 2. This means that men living in these countries have the same relative risk to behave as breadwinners as men living in France, the reference category, and as men living in other Central European countries, as for instance Germany and the Netherlands. Thus, composition effects of the couple variables were responsible for some country effects in model 1. In Greece and Portugal the country effect persist, but it is smaller than in model 1. On the contrary, there are no composition effects that makes country effects vanish away for the equation of equitable men compared to cooperative men and compared to model 1. We have to postpone this question to model 3.

The couple variables of model 2 (see Table 3), are all highly significant for explaining the relative risk of a men to behave as breadwinner instead of cooperating. First of all, those who have no traditional family values or who do not have a clear opinion on women's role with respect to family and paid work, have now an even lower risk to behave as breadwinner, compared to model 1. Those who have conflict about how to divide housework have a lower relative risk to behave as breadwinner, probably because a traditional division of housework is an arrangement which results from a clear option for it and afterwards leaves no space for discussions about how to divide housework. This interpretation is supported by the effect of the variable on couple's labour market situation. The chance for a breadwinner arrangement increases significantly for one-earner couples compared to dual-earner couples. We have looked at the composition of the couple in terms of educational capital as a proxy for couple's social class²⁰. Those couples where both have secondary education or at least one of them has a tertiary education have a lower risk that the men takes a breadwinner role compared to couples where at least one has basic education. Thus, we may say that the higher the social class, the less probable it is to find a non-cooperative men at home. As expected, all couples where the women has a paid job, display a lower risk to have a traditional housework division compared to those where the women does not work for money.

In this model we find the most interesting factors which help to explain the conditions that makes it more likely to find an equitable division of housework compared to a cooperative one. This is the case when the respondent does not agree with the traditional family statement, and when the couple is composed of two economically inactive or retired partners compared to dual-earner couples, that is values and time availability are important factors. The relative resources and time availability of the female partner are also very relevant determinants, since couples where women earn more than half of the total household income and where she works 35 hours a week or more have a higher relative risk of having an equitable housework sharing.

²⁰ Other possibilities to measure social class would have been through individual's position on the labour market and his/her occupational position. In these cases we had to face important missing data problems, so that we opted for education as a proxy for social class position.

Table 4. Results for multinomial Logistic Regression (relative risk ratios) Predicting Men's Sharing of Domestic Activities (couple men): individual, couples and macro-level variables

	Breadwinner	Equitable
	RRR	RRR
Male age:		
18-35	0.72***	1.03
36-45	0.93	1.02
46 an older	--	--
Children at household?		
Childless	--	--
Youngest 0-3 years old	1.22*	0.96
Youngest 4-12	1.29**	0.98
Youngest >13 years old	1.01	0.87
Number of children	0.96	0.92*
Who provides the information:		
She tells about him:	1.57***	0.61***
Attitudinal values^a:		
Agree to cut down work	--	--
Neither	0.83***	0.98
Do not agree	0.75***	1.12*
Missing	0.76	1.04
Disagree about homework^b:		
Never	--	--
Several times a month or less	0.71***	0.69***
Once a week or more	0.81***	0.66***
Missings	0.82	0.95
Couple's characteristics		
Couple's labour market situation:		
Both active	--	--
One earner (active+inactive)	1.18**	0.83**
Both inactive	0.52***	0.96
Both retired	0.43***	1.42***
Others+missing data	0.62***	1.34***
Couple educational resources:		
Both basic education	--	--
Basic+secondary	0.82*	1.31*
Both secondary/tertiary+basic	0.61***	1.13
Secondary+tertiary	0.50***	1.03
Both tertiary		
Female partner characteristics		
Women's income contribution:		
Her earnings=0	--	--
Her earnings<1/2	0.68***	0.70***
Her earnings about 1/2	0.52***	0.99
Her earnings>1/2	0.53***	1.51***
Women's labour market situation:		
She is not employed	--	--
She works <35 hours	0.65***	1.13
She works 35-40 h	0.47***	1.35***
She works 41+h	0.49***	1.63***

*Significant at $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.001$. -- Reference category

Continues next page

Continuation Table 4

Context variables		
	Breadwinner	Equitable
	RRR	RRR
Crude divorce rate:		
<1.5 per 1000	--	--
1.6-2.9 per 1000	1.09	1.39***
>3 per 1000	0.79***	1.18*
Family traditional values:		
<25%	--	--
26-45%	1.49***	0.9
46-60%	1.48***	0.97
>60%	1.45***	0.79*
Partnered women in full-time employment:		
<25%	--	--
26-40%	0.93	0.9
>40%	0.73***	0.89
Constant	6.34***	0.96
Pseudo R-Square	0.11	
N. of cases	21243	
chi2	5015	
p	0.0000	

*Significant at $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.001$. -- Reference category

Data: ESS, 2004 (weighted data). Model controls for country effect (26 countries included).

*Significant at $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.001$. -- Reference category

NOTE: Reference category for the equation is "Cooperative".

^a Statement: A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family.

^a Question: Using this card, how often do you and your husband/wife/partner disagree about how to divide housework?

The question remains, why some countries represent more favourable contexts for such patterns than others. In model 3 (Table 4) we have tested the macro-level hypotheses to explain cross-national differences. We have used different macro-variables to operationalise these hypotheses, but have finally chosen only three of them, the most significant to explain differences and those which are not correlated with each other. The results show that in contexts with high divorce rates and with a low prevalence of traditional family values, we find a higher probability to find equitable housework arrangements compared to cooperative ones. And the contrary is true for traditional arrangements, which are more likely in contexts with low divorce rates and a high prevalence of traditional family values. In addition, in contexts where the national proportion of women who work 35 or more hours per week is high, it is less likely to find traditional arrangements compared to cooperative ones (see annex for the ranking of the countries for the three macro variables). Thus, the family instability perception hypothesis, the traditional family culture hypothesis and the dual full-time work context hypothesis find support in the statistical analysis.

4. Conclusions

The aim of this paper has been to look at cross-national differences in the division of housework by gender, because they are large and because they are interesting for theoretical reasons. We know that unpaid house and care work is a very relevant barrier to increase substantive gender equality and it also represents a very important social function of the family for guaranteeing people's well-being and for the socialization of the future generations. One of the most relevant social trends in the post-industrial societies of the last decades is the increasing female participation in paid work. This has challenged the traditional male breadwinner family with high a specialization of women in unpaid work. Men have been pushed into unpaid house and care work, but not everywhere they participate now significantly more in it than some decades ago. Within this perspective, we have posed two questions. Where and under which conditions do men share more equally housework with their female partners? Why do we find more cooperative and egalitarian men in some countries and less in others?

First we have shown that cross-national classifications of patterns of housework division by gender vary greatly depending on definitions, data sources, forms of measuring housework and according to whom we include in our samples. Despite the fact that borders along country groups change accordingly, we have shown that there are countries with more egalitarian housework division patterns and others with more traditional specialization patterns. Interestingly, country groups follow in general geographic divides. So, North-European countries display more egalitarian arrangements, followed closely by most East-European countries, while Central Europe and Southern Europe are the most traditional countries. The United Kingdom belongs more to the first group, while Ireland is found in the second. We have also shown that, if the focus lies on bi-active couples and on egalitarian arrangements, some countries change their position in this cross-national ranking.

Second, we have looked at those individual and couple conditions that favour a more egalitarian reorganisation of housework. The 2004 European Social Survey data on 26 countries confirm again some of the most well-established sociological explanations. When men have more labour-free time and their partners have less, when their income resources are more equal compared to their female partner's ones and when the couple has less traditional family values, men tend to participate in more equitable terms in housework.

Third, important country differences remain when one controls for country composition effects related to people's individual and couple characteristics. That is, even if in some countries there are more men of the "egalitarian" sort than in others and women's relative resources and time availability situation is taken into account, country differences remain. Thus, there are other context particularities which influence the probability to find a more or less equitable participation of men in housework. Why this is so, is the most difficult question to be answered and the one we have still to work on. We have centred our interpretation on three general context features. Two can be thought of in terms of women's empowerment in society. First, we have proposed to see family instability as an indicator of a higher degree of alternatives and exit options of women, that is women with a dual burden because of the combination of paid work with a traditional division of unpaid housework, have more options to exit such a dual-

burden couple situation in some countries than in others. These exit options are also very relevant for the bargaining position of women who do not want to exit the couple but want to change their male partner's behaviour. Second, we think that in some countries family culture is still more firmly anchored in the traditional gender division of work and family than in others. Third, national patterns of women's incorporation into paid work differ importantly across countries. On one hand we find those where women have entered the labour market in a similar way to men, that is they have a high participation and it does not diminish at central ages, and on the other hand are the countries where women reduce their paid work participation in central ages due to family reasons.

Some important future tasks remain. We have to see if our findings hold if we perform our statistical models only for female respondents and separately for the different groupings of countries. We know that women think that their male partners do less housework than they affirm to do. It has to be seen if this gender difference refers only to the degree of participation or if male's patterns of participation differ according to the respondents gender. Similarly, we have to perform different statistical models for those countries which pertain to the same country cluster, since it may be that conditions of participation differ according to context, as has been found by some previous research. It may be that the micro mechanisms of housework participation are not universal but context-related and different from one context to the other. In addition, we have to explore technically more elaborated ways to link micro and macro variables, probably using more sophisticated multi-level models.

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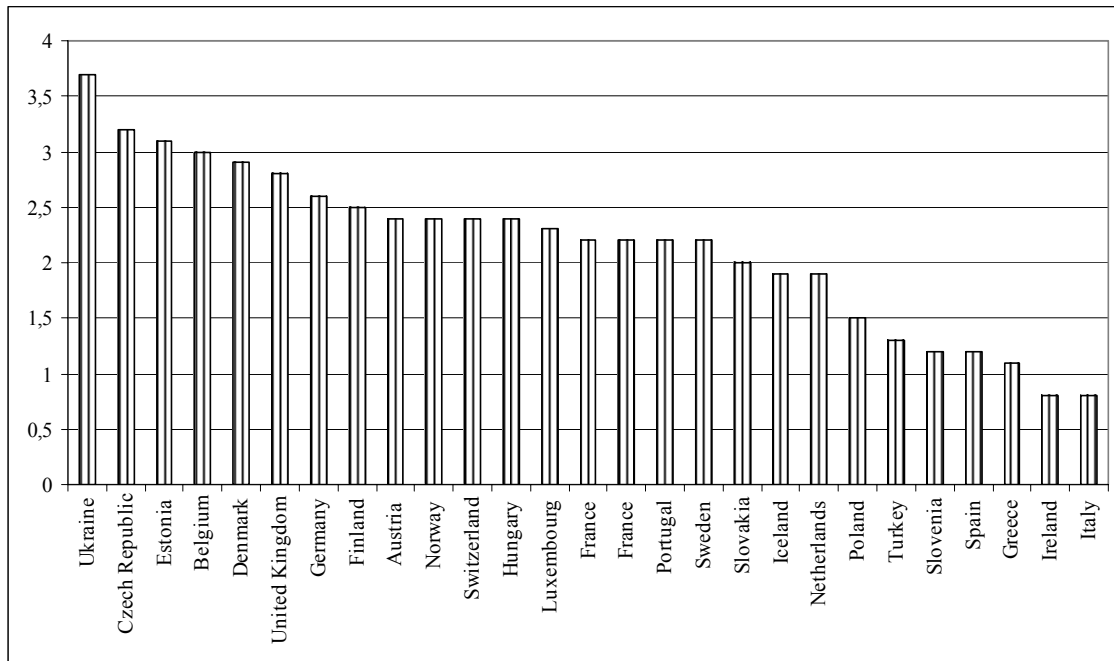
6. Annex

Table 5. Distribution of male aged 18-64 living with a partner according to their contribution to the domestic tasks and sample size: countries participating in the European Social Survey (ordered by the percentage of equitable male partners)

Country	Breadwinner	Cooperative	Equitable	Total	Sample size (unweighted)
Sweden	26.4	31.5	42.1	100.0	995
Denmark	29.9	33.9	36.2	100.0	798
Ukraine	27.4	39.0	33.6	100.0	870
Slovakia	34.2	35.1	30.7	100.0	714
Finland	30.3	39.8	29.9	100.0	1,025
Norway	33.7	37.9	28.4	100.0	991
United Kingdom	47.3	26.4	26.3	100.0	784
Estonia	36.3	37.5	26.2	100.0	863
Luxembourg	58.4	15.5	26.1	100.0	855
Czech Republic	41.0	32.9	26.1	100.0	1,364
Hungary	46.9	28.1	25.0	100.0	749
Iceland	33.3	42.9	23.8	100.0	327
Slovenia	40.1	36.6	23.4	100.0	647
Italy	58.5	18.3	23.2	100.0	645
Spain	61.5	16.6	21.9	100.0	772
France	52.5	26.0	21.5	100.0	886
Netherlands	52.4	26.9	20.8	100.0	943
Austria	52.7	26.6	20.7	100.0	1,040
Germany	55.6	24.6	19.8	100.0	1,384
Belgium	49.2	31.1	19.7	100.0	896
Ireland	62.1	18.9	19.0	100.0	1,081
Switzerland	63.0	19.8	17.3	100.0	980
Poland	47.3	36.3	16.4	100.0	894
Portugal	79.1	12.2	8.7	100.0	902
Turkey	73.4	19.3	7.3	100.0	1,072
Greece	78.8	15.4	5.8	100.0	1,028
Total	49.8	27.6	22.7	100.0	23,505

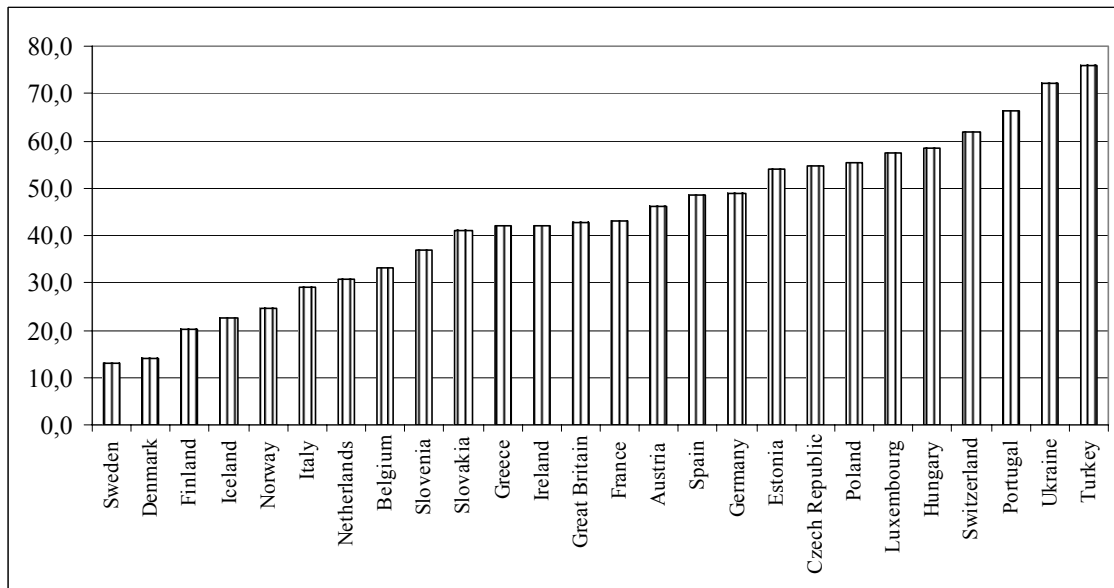
Source: own elaboration with ESS, 2004.

Figure 5: Crude Divorce Rate, 2004.



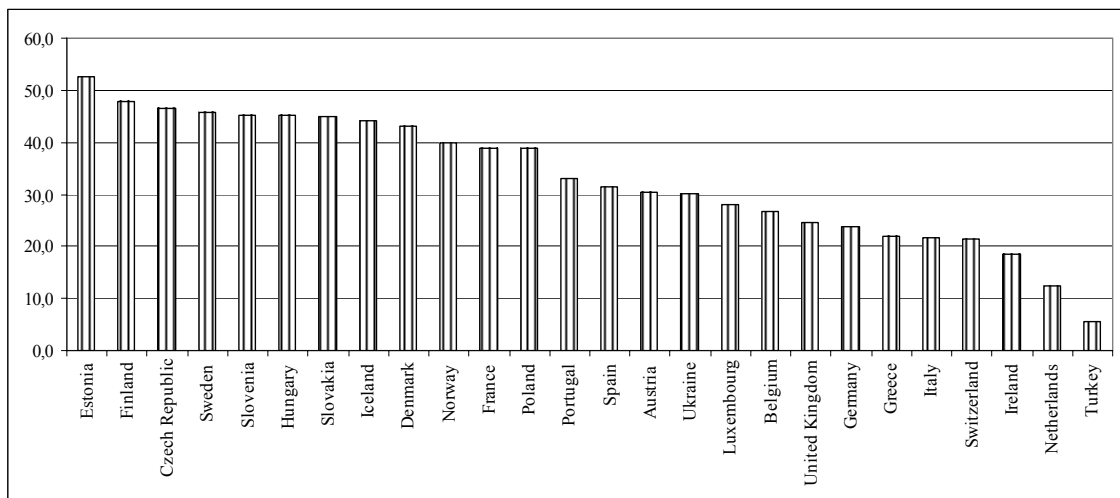
Source: own elaboration with Eurostat internet database, February 2008.

Figure 6: Traditional Family Values of Men Aged 25 to 45, ESS 2004



Source: own elaboration with ESS 2004 weighted sample and statement "A women should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family".

Figure 7: Proportion of Women in Partnership Working 35 hours or more per Week from All Women Living in Partnership, ESS 2004



Source: own elaboration with ESS 2004 weighted sample.