GENDER ROLES AND THE DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD LABOUR BY FAMILY TYPE IN THREE DIFFERENT WELFARE STATES

Adrienn Glázer-Kniesz – Zsuzsanna Makay

ABSTRACT

This study examines patterns of gender roles and division of household labour in Hungary, France, and Sweden, representing three different welfare regimes. The gender revolution has significantly changed the distribution of household tasks, but these changes have occurred to different degrees across countries.

The research aims to explore the patterns of household labour division and to investigate how attitudes towards gender roles and individual characteristics influence the distribution of household tasks. Particular attention is given to the differences between families with and without children.

Using cluster analysis and multinomial logistic regression models based on data from the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), we analyse the distribution of household tasks and the effects of individual factors and gender attitudes among partnered respondents aged 18–49.

The findings indicate that gender role attitudes in Sweden are more modern than in the other two countries, especially among women. Household tasks are also shared more equally in this social-democratic welfare state. In Hungary attitudes are the most traditional, while France lies between the other two countries. In Sweden individual attitudes towards gender roles do not influence the daily division of household tasks, while in the other two countries they do: women and men with more modern views tend to share household tasks more equally. The division of household labour also depends on background factors such as women's labour market status and the number of children. Even in Sweden, the presence of young children in the household pushes women to do more house-

work than if there were no children, and this is also true – to different degrees and depending on the age and number of children – in the other two countries. Despite progress in the gender revolution and greater equality in the labour market, educational attainment also continues to have a significant impact on the division of domestic tasks.

Keywords: division of household labour, international comparison, gender roles, Generations and Gender Survey

Adrienn Glázer-Kniesz
University of Pécs, Doctoral School of Demography and Sociology
E-mail: knieszadrienn@gmail.com

Zsuzsanna Makay
Hungarian Demographic Research Institute
E-mail: makay@demografia.hu

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the second demographic transition and the gender revolution, women's participation in education and employment has undergone significant changes (Goldscheider et al., 2015; Van de Kaa, 1987). This means that the time women spend on household tasks has significantly decreased, a shift that has been greatly aided by technological advancements (Bianchi et al., 2000). At the same time, gender roles and expectations have also evolved (Gubernskaya, 2010), with changes in education and labour market participation—while themselves outcomes of broader demographic processes—playing a crucial role in driving these shifts (Shorrocks, 2018).

However, while the "gender revolution" has already taken place in the public sphere (education, employment), it has not yet been fully realized in the private sphere but it remains "unfinished" (Gerson, 2009; England, 2010). This means that significant inequalities in the division of household labour persist within families and households, with women still bearing a disproportionately higher burden than men (Altintas & Sullivan, 2016). Although men's participation in household labour is increasing, there are still considerable differences between countries.

The aim of our study is to examine how opinions about gender roles and the related practices manifest themselves in the family sphere. We seek to identify the differences in attitudes and the division of household labour in Hungary,

France, and Sweden, and to determine whether more traditional or modern individual views on gender roles are reflected in the everyday lives of partnered couples with and without children. We analyse three European countries with significantly different welfare regimes, which also allows us to explore the impact of varying social contexts. Indeed, in different welfare regimes, social policies and cultural norms influence family dynamics and the distribution of household labour in different ways (Daly, 2015; Goldscheider et al., 2015; Robila, 2014). Our analyses are based on data from round 1 of the Generations and Gender Survey.[1]

Our article is structured as follows. First, we present the theoretical approaches and previous research findings related to the division of household labour and gender roles. Next, we briefly introduce the welfare characteristics of the three countries, which is essential to place our research questions in context. We then outline the research questions and hypotheses, followed by a description of the data and our methods. Afterwards, we proceed with the analyses and present the results. Finally, we discuss the findings and draw conclusions in the closing section of the article.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD LABOUR

One of the fundamental theoretical approaches to the division of household labour is Gary Becker's new household economics (1981). According to this idea, a household is not only a consumer unit but also a productive unit that combines its resources to achieve production and makes decisions based on the principle of cost efficiency (Becker, 1981; Bauer, 2016; Mencarini &Vignoli, 2017). Therefore, a household can function most efficiently when the division of labour is based on specialization and comparative advantages: household members distribute tasks among themselves according to who is most efficient at each task (Solaz, 2015; Kitterød & Rønsen, 2013; Kitterød & Lappegård, 2012). Time plays a significant role in this framework, as the time-intensive nature of household tasks and the flexibility of working hours influence how household members share responsibilities (Hofäcker et al., 2013).

Two theoretical approaches linked to Becker's ideas provide further explanations for the dynamics of household labour division. The first is the relative resources theory, which posits that the division of labour within households is significantly influenced by the resources of individual household members (Aassve

1 https://www.ggp-i.org/data/

et al., 2014; Bauer, 2016). Resources in this context include income, education, professional skills, labour market experience, and social networks (Lappegård et al., 2012). The core principle of the theory is that household members with greater resources possess stronger bargaining power, enabling them to secure a more advantageous position in the division of domestic labour. Conversely, the partner with fewer resources typically performs more household tasks due to their weaker bargaining position (Régnier-Loilier, 2015a). According to the theory, this dynamic equilibrium determines the distribution of tasks within the household, where the balance of relative resources shapes the specific form of labour division (Kitterød & Lappegård, 2012). The theory also accounts for the fact that resources can change over time. For instance, if one partner receives a promotion or acquires additional training, the division of household labour may shift as the relative balance of resources changes (Campolo et al., 2020; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010).

The theory of time allocation, also introduced by Becker, suggests that the division of household labour is primarily influenced by the amount of time each household member spends on paid work and the free time they have left (Becker, 1981; Aassve et al., 2014). The partner who spends less time in paid work generally has more time available for household tasks (Lappegård et al., 2012; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). In other words, within a partnership, factors such as education, other forms of capital, and labour market participation all influence the division of labour. At the same time, social factors also play a role in shaping how household responsibilities are distributed.

The gender ideology perspective posits that the division of household labour is shaped by traditional gender roles and societal expectations (Aassve et al., 2014; Lappegård et al., 2012). Historically, women were responsible for household chores and childcare, while men were tasked with the financial maintenance of the household (Kitterød & Lappegård, 2012). These traditional gender roles continue to exert a strong influence on the division of household labour: household members shape their identities and perform household tasks in accordance with societal expectations (Bauer, 2016). For instance, women often take on more household responsibilities because they perceive these tasks as integral to their role and identity. However, this dynamic can change with the evolution of individual attitudes, suggesting that the ongoing redefinition of gender roles has an impact on labour division (Brugeilles & Sebille, 2015).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER ROLES AND THE WELFARE STATE

Previous research on the relationship between the welfare state and gender roles has examined how welfare state policies, as structural factors, influence the development of attitudes toward gender roles. Additionally, these studies explore whether there is an ideological orientation (e.g., towards gender equality) explicitly supported by social policies. The Esping-Andersen typology of welfare states is commonly used as a framework when exploring the role of the social context in shaping demographic behaviour and attitudes toward gender relations (Neyer, 2003).

The policies of welfare states can significantly influence societal behaviour, particularly in the areas of gender equality and women's economic autonomy. Universal welfare states, such as those in Scandinavia, typically promote gender equality and support women's economic independence. In contrast, conservative welfare states tend to prioritize the preservation of traditional family models. Liberal welfare states primarily rely on the market to provide welfare services, offering minimal state support, which encourages individual autonomy and responsibility. Considering political institutions and cultural contexts is therefore crucial for understanding the effectiveness of welfare state measures (Neyer, 2003).

The transformation of gender roles and the division of household labour is fundamentally influenced by the policies of welfare states, particularly in contexts where the promotion of gender equality plays a central role. The concept of the "gender revolution," analysed by Goldscheider and colleagues (2015), is closely related to how different welfare systems encourage the active participation of both genders in the labour market and family life.

The "gender revolution" unfolds in two major stages. The first stage involves the mass participation of women in the labour market, which accelerated in the second half of the 20th century. This led to what has been termed a "second shift," as women not only worked outside the home but also remained primarily responsible for the majority of household tasks. This dual burden often delayed marriage and childbearing and created tensions within partnerships. In the second phase of the revolution, men increasingly take on a larger share of family responsibilities, particularly in childcare and household chores. This shift is particularly evident in Scandinavian countries, where welfare states actively encourage the involvement of both parents in childcare through various support mechanisms. This second stage can have a positive impact on family stability, the durability of

marriages, and fertility rates. Promoting gender equality through family policy measures not only increases women's participation in the labour market, but also encourages men to take on more responsibilities at home. Over the long term, this can lead to more stable and cohesive family units that are less prone to dissolution, as well as help stabilize or raise fertility rates (Goldscheider et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, the gender revolution remains incomplete. While equality has been achieved in many aspects of the labour market – where women are now as present as men, albeit with persistent disparities such as wage gaps –, changes in the domestic sphere have been less pronounced. Despite progress, the roles of men and women at home remain markedly different. Moreover, even in countries leading in gender equality, the proportion of women in leadership and political positions still lags behind that of men. This highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving full social equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024).

Significant differences exist in how changes in gender roles have unfolded between Western and former socialist countries. In Western European nations, the transformation of markets and the growing prominence of the service sector opened up opportunities for women to enter the workforce. Concurrently, though to varying degrees, societal attitudes toward gender roles began to shift (Neyer, 2003; Prskawetz et al., 2008). In contrast, in Hungary before the political transition, the socialist regime mandated near-universal employment for women due to economic necessity, without any genuine consideration for gender equality. After the transition, the mass disappearance of jobs led to a significant decline in women's (and men's) employment, which reinforced conservative attitudes and traditional gender roles. Blaskó's analysis (2005) highlights two distinct phases in the evolution of attitudes toward gender roles and female employment. In the first phase (1988–1994), a clear shift towards more traditional gender roles was observed, as the economic crisis and labour market insecurity led society to increasingly support the domestic role of mothers with young children. In the second phase (1994–2002), a slow modernization occurred, characterized by a growing acceptance of flexible labour divisions and part-time employment. This mild liberalization reflected a convergence toward Western European values, accompanied by a decline in support for the ideal of "full-time" motherhood (Blaskó, 2005). Between 2002 and 2013, modern family life and gender equity continued to be supported (Spéder, 2023). Due to differing historical backgrounds and societal developments, the level of gender equality continues to vary across countries, and the same applies to the division of household labour. In the following, we will examine how previous research describes the distribution of domestic work at the individual and societal levels.

DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD LABOUR, GENDER ROLES, AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

Previous research has identified a strong link between the division of household labour, attitudes toward gender roles, and relationship stability. Aassve and colleagues (2014) found that couples who value gender equality tend to divide household tasks more equitably. However, the desire for equality is typically stronger at the beginning of a relationship and tends to diminish over time. In addition, men with higher levels of education, those living in urban areas, and those in registered partnerships are more likely to seek equality in household labour compared to married men (Rault & Letrait, 2015; van Damme et al., 2022).

The time spent on household chores continues to differ between women and men and individual background still plays a role in the division of labour. Higher levels of education and women's participation in the labour market have a positive impact on more equitable task sharing and a negative effect on the time women dedicate to household chores (Evertsson, 2014; Fahlén, 2016). Additionally, in families where women contribute significantly to the household income, the division of domestic labour tends to be less unequal. This is particularly evident among well-educated, working couples, whereas the traditional division of labour is more common among less-educated couples (Kitterød & Lappegård, 2012).

In Scandinavian countries, where gender equality is more advanced, men typically take on a larger share of household chores (Aassve et al., 2014; Lappegård et al., 2012). In Sweden, the institutionalized tradition of gender equality further contributes to more equitable divisions of household labour, particularly among childless, higher-income, and well-educated couples (Bernhardt et al., 2008).

In Hungary, society is fundamentally closer to traditional gender roles, where men are primarily seen as breadwinners and women as caregivers, responsible for household tasks and child-rearing (Makay & Spéder, 2018). This remains true despite the prevalence of the dual-earner family model. Consequently, childcare and household responsibilities are traditionally seen as falling more heavily on mothers, while fathers primarily engage in interactive activities with children, such as playing together. The extended parental leave policy and limited institutional childcare options further reinforce women's roles within the family and keep them distanced from the labour market (Makay, 2023). According to the results of Murinkó (2014), the majority of Hungarian society accepts the current division of labour, which reflects the dominance of traditional gender ideologies; however, this hinders the promotion of gender equality. Although egalitar-

ian values are increasingly espoused, these often do not translate into everyday practice, leaving women with a significantly higher workload than men. Greater involvement by fathers, more flexible work opportunities, and improved childcare services would support efforts to achieve a more balanced division of labour between genders (Murinkó, 2014).

In France, a reform introduced in the early 2000s reduced the standard workweek from 39 to 35 hours, providing an opportunity to study its impact on time use. A study on the effects of the reform revealed that men primarily devoted their extra free time to flexible household tasks such as repairs, gardening, and shopping, while women spent more time on household and childcare duties like cooking and dishwashing. On weekends, men spent less time on household chores and childcare, while women increased the time they dedicated to childcare. The reform reinforced traditional patterns of gendered labour division, as men took on new responsibilities during weekdays but reverted to traditional roles on weekends (Pailhé et al., 2019).

The division of labour and gender equality are closely tied to women's educational attainment and income, as other studies also suggest. The higher a woman's level of education and financial contribution, the more equitable the division of household tasks becomes (Solaz, 2015). Although Goldscheider's theory posits that women's increased labour force participation led to relationship instability in the first phase of the gender revolution, more recent research indicates that women's employment only destabilizes relationships if women continue to perform over 70% of household chores alongside their paid work. In contrast, significant male involvement in household labour can stabilize relationships by balancing shared leisure time and household responsibilities, which, in the long term, reduces the risk of divorce (Mencarini & Vignoli, 2014, 2017).

Among families with children, couples with egalitarian attitudes were found to have a fairer and less stereotypical division of household labour. Mothers and fathers tend to share responsibilities more equally, with fathers actively participating in tasks traditionally associated with the female role (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010).

Grunow and Baur's study (2014) offers insights into how attitudes toward gender roles influence the division of household labour, with particular focus on men's participation in traditionally "female" tasks such as cooking, vacuuming, and laundry. One of the most significant predictors of men's active involvement in household chores is a positive attitude supporting men's unpaid domestic roles. However, the study also highlights that the division of household labour is not solely shaped by attitudes but also by family and household contexts. Traditional

gender role models often prevail, even when individual attitudes support equality. This research employs a multidimensional normative framework that examines not only the traditional male-breadwinner and female-homemaker model and the acceptance of women's employment but also the recognition of men's domestic roles. By doing so, it provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between gender roles and everyday practices (Grunow & Baur, 2014).

Recent research on the division of household labour between men and women has almost unanimously concluded that, despite short-term stagnation and slowdowns, the overall trend points toward a more equitable distribution of household tasks. This shift is expected to contribute to greater gender equality in the long run. The amount of time women spend on household chores has decreased, while men's participation has increased. However, the gender gap remains significant (Altintas & Sullivan, 2016; Bianchi et al., 2000; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010).

DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD LABOUR IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

The birth of a child further exacerbates inequalities in the division of household labour. Parenthood, the number of children, and their age have a significant impact on the division of labour within the family and influence the nature and intensity of parental responsibilities. These effects can persist in the long term (Régnier-Loilier, 2015b; Régnier-Loilier, 2009; Brugeilles & Sebille, 2015; Campolo et al., 2020). Household labour is distributed less equally in families with young children, as women's household burdens increase after the birth of a child. The most significant changes are observed in daily meal preparation, grocery shopping, and vacuuming. The birth of the first child has a particularly strong impact on the redistribution of tasks, while the arrival of a second child further intensifies the workload for women (Régnier-Loilier, 2015a; Zabel & Heintz-Martin, 2013). The number of children also increases women's involvement in household chores, especially in families with two or more children (Solaz, 2015). Fathers tend to participate less in daily household tasks, especially when the child is under six years old. Additionally, they are more likely to engage in leisure activities, particularly with sons, compared to daughters (Brugeilles & Sebille, 2015).

The birth of a child significantly affects women's paid and unpaid working hours, with paid work hours decreasing and unpaid work hours increasing. In contrast, for men, paid work hours increase, but unpaid work hours remain largely unchanged (Campolo et al., 2020). Greater paternal involvement in household

tasks not only contributes to relationship stability but can also increase fertility rates while enabling women to work full-time. Active participation by fathers helps ease the tension between having a second child and maintaining full-time employment, particularly in countries where female employment has traditionally been high but fertility rates are currently low. Overall, greater paternal involvement facilitates decision-making for career-oriented women regarding having a second child and supports less career-oriented women in pursuing full-time employment (Fanelli & Profeta, 2021).

Individual attitudes and satisfaction with the division of household labour play a crucial role in the concept of the household "gatekeeper." The phenomenon of maternal gatekeeping refers to the extent to which mothers regulate and influence fathers' involvement in childcare and household tasks. Allen and Hawkins (1999) found that mothers often limit fathers' participation in childcare due to various psychological and social reasons. Mothers may perceive themselves as more competent in childcare or fear that fathers may not perform tasks adequately.

Fathers' involvement is further hindered by societal expectations that place the primary caregiving role on mothers. Consequently, mothers' attitudes and behaviours significantly influence the degree and quality of fathers' involvement (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). The increasing labour market participation of women and the growing domestic role of men mutually reinforce each other, advancing the progress of the gender revolution. Promoting gender equality and implementing supportive policies are essential to maintaining and fostering these developments. Overall, changes in gender roles are beneficial not only economically but also socially, contributing to the stabilization of modern family structures (Goldscheider et al., 2015).

COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS

In this section, we describe the three countries included in the analysis, focusing on their welfare systems and gender related policies.

HUNGARY

During its post-socialist transition, Hungary established a hybrid welfare system combining conservative-corporatist elements with state intervention and market economy demands. During this transitional period, the country faced significant challenges, such as ensuring the sustainability of the social welfare

system and addressing social inequalities. Although Hungary adopted certain elements of Western welfare models, it developed a unique mixed system heavily reliant on the state's role (Ferge, 2001). Since 2010, the Orbán governments have further shaped Hungary's welfare system, aiming to create a work-based society. Welfare benefits have been increasingly tied to employment, and access to needs-based social benefits has been reduced. Additionally, the welfare system has been centralized, favouring the higher and middle class through reforms in the pension and family support systems (Makay et al., 2024; Szikra, 2014). The welfare state plays a significant role in supporting childcare, but reintegration into the labour market after childbirth remains slow (Makay, 2023). Maternity and childcare leave policies mainly encourage women to stay at home with their children for a relatively long period, while men's roles in caregiving remain less emphasized (Sainsbury, 1999).

FRANCE

France traditionally belongs to the conservative-corporatist welfare model, heavily rooted in the Bismarckian system, particularly in employment-based social insurance schemes. However, in recent decades, the country has implemented significant reforms aimed at improving the sustainability of the pension and healthcare systems while adapting to economic and social challenges. These reforms have sought to universalise the welfare state and reduce fiscal burdens, while maintaining a focus on social cohesion and reducing inequalities (Palier, 2010). The 1994 childcare support reform encouraged temporary labour market withdrawal for women, especially mothers of multiple children, by introducing three years of paid childcare leave for those with two children. As a result, labour force participation saw a sharp decline, particularly among mothers with two children, one of whom is under three years old. However, workplace absences tend to be relatively short: mothers of one child typically return to work after 18 months, while mothers of two or three children re-enter the labour market after an average of two years (Toulemon et al., 2008). Overall, about half of mothers return to work six months after childbirth, while the other half do so significantly later (Makay, 2023). This pattern reflects French family policies, which allow women greater flexibility in balancing work and family responsibilities. However, these policies may also contribute to the preservation of traditional gender roles (Toulemon et al., 2008).

SWEDEN

Sweden is a classic example of a social-democratic welfare state. The social-democratic model aims to promote universalism and social justice through high levels of redistribution and efforts to reduce social inequalities. Despite facing significant economic challenges and reforms in recent decades, Sweden's welfare state has continued to enjoy strong public support. Although attitudes have shifted due to economic crises and globalisation, leading to reforms in pension systems and unemployment benefits, social cohesion has remained robust (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Sweden's social-democratic welfare system strongly supports gender equality, primarily through universal social policy measures. Comprehensive childcare services, parental leave policies, and workplace supports enable women to become less constrained by family responsibilities and actively participate in the labour market (Sainsbury, 1999).

In summary, the welfare systems of France, Hungary, and Sweden have taken different paths, each shaped by the countries' unique historical and economic contexts. The connections between welfare systems and attitudes toward gender roles differ significantly among the three countries, highlighting the role of welfare states in shaping gender equality and economic independence.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

In our study, we aim to answer the following research questions:

(1) What patterns can be observed in the division of household labour in the three countries? Based on the literature review, we expect that the division of domestic labour between women and men is more equitable in Sweden than in the other two countries. This expectation stems from the longstanding support for such a model by Sweden's welfare state system and gender-related attitudes (Hypothesis 1).

(2) How does the division of household labour differ in families with children compared to childless families across these three countries? We hypothesize that the division of household labour is less equitable in families with children than in childless families (Hypothesis 2). Furthermore, based on the comparison of the family policy regimes of the three countries, we expect that the distribution of household tasks in families with children will vary significantly across the three countries. This expectation is based on two key factors: First, couples with children often have been together for a longer time, and as noted in the literature

review, more equitable labour division tends to be characteristic of the earlier stages of a relationship. Second, after the birth of children, couples typically experience changes in their working hours – men often work more, while women work less in paid work –, which, according to the relative resources theory, alters their bargaining positions.

(3) Do individual attitudes toward gender roles translate into everyday practices? In other words, do men and women with more modern views share household tasks more equally? We hypothesize that individuals' attitudes toward gender roles influence the daily practice of household labour division in all three countries. Couples in which either the man or the woman holds more modern, egalitarian views are more likely to share household tasks more equally. Conversely, among respondents who prefer traditional gender roles, household responsibilities are expected to remain primarily the woman's domain. This hypothesis assumes a positive correlation between egalitarian attitudes and the actual division of household labour (Hypothesis 3).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

DATA AND SAMPLE

We use data from the first round of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS). This is a large-scale follow-up survey conducted in multiple countries using a standardized questionnaire during the 2000s. Its primary aim is to describe demographic behaviour and explore the underlying factors driving recent changes.

In this study, we use data from the first wave of the GGS round I for France (2008), and Sweden (2011). The samples are representative of the population aged 18–75 in the respective years.[2] The Hungarian data are also part of the international GGS database (also known as "Turning Points of the Life Course Panel Survey"). The first Hungarian data collection was conducted in 2001, followed by four additional waves with the same respondents. In 2012 (at wave 4), the original panel sample was refreshed, and new respondents aged 18–49 were included.[3] The combined cross-sectional dataset of the original and the refreshment sample is representative of the Hungarian population aged 18–79, and we used this wave 4 database in our analysis to ensure comparability with the other two countries.

2 https://www.ggp-i.org/data-portal/

3 The new sample is not included the international database on the GGP Portal; it is accessible via the Hungarian Demographic Research Institute.

For our analysis, we included respondents aged 18–49 from all three countries who fulfilled the following criteria: They live in a cohabiting or marital union[4], as examining the division of household tasks is only meaningful in this context. We included couples who do and who do not have at least one biological child under the age of 14 in the household. It was not a requirement to have a biological child with the partner. The significance of differentiating between families with and without children has been highlighted in the previous literature review. This approach enables us to determine whether the presence of young children is as influential a factor as prior studies have indicated. In the final sample thus constructed, the number of cases in the three countries is as follows: 3,182 for Hungary; 2,596 for France; and 1,676 for Sweden.

MEASUREMENT OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD TASKS AND CLUSTERING

The GGS questionnaire includes a block of questions regarding who does the following tasks in the household5: preparing daily meals, vacuum cleaning the house, doing the dishes and laundry, shopping, doing small repairs in and around the house, paying bills and keeping financial records, organising joint social activities. The response options were as follows: Always the respondent, Usually the respondent, Respondent and partner about equally, Usually the partner, Always the partner, Always or usually other persons in the household, Always or usually someone not living in the household. These responses were first recoded as follows: 1 – Always performed by the woman; 2 – Usually performed by the woman; 3 – Shared equally; 4 – Usually performed by the man; 5 – Always performed by the man. We then transformed the variables to reflect the level of men's contribution: 1 = 0%, 2 = 25%, 3 = 50%, 4 = 75%, 5 = 100%. The transformation replicates the interval scale based on the inherent structure of the original variable. The GGS response categories form a logically ordered sequence that implicitly reflects increasing levels of the partner's contribution. Our recoding leverages this quasi-metric structure by assigning proportional values to reflect men's share of responsibility. This approach maintains the ordinal ordering while facilitating quantitative analysis and comparability across tasks.

4 We excluded same-sex couples since we examine gender relations and we only had 63 individuals who lived in a same-sex relationship. This low sample size would not have permitted to analyse their attitudes and behaviour separately.
5 The question was formulated as follows: 'Now I would like to ask you some questions about who does what in your household. Please tell me who does the following tasks in your household'.

We excluded respondents who indicated that any household task was carried out by someone else. In the case of Hungary, this represented 598 individuals; in the case of France, 759 individuals; and 197 individuals in the case of Sweden.

In the first step of our analysis, we created a typology using cluster analysis, examining how domestic labour is divided between female and male partners. Separate female and male clusters were established for each country to gain a precise understanding of respondents' experiences, and hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted to determine the optimal number of clusters. The separation of genders is fundamental because women and men perceive the amount of household work they perform differently (Geist, 2010).

Using hierarchical clustering (Ward's method), we analysed dendrograms to identify the optimal number of clusters, concluding that three clusters should be formed for female respondents and two for male respondents in all three countries. To enhance the interpretability of results and verify the identified clusters, we subsequently applied the K-means clustering method with Euclidean distance settings (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2018). Not only statistical considerations but also the necessity of ensuring meaningful differentiation among clusters guided the decision on the number of clusters. This distinction was visually evident in the cluster plots.

The adequacy of the clusters was assessed by examining the ratio of between-cluster variance (BCSS) to total variance (TSS). As shown in *Table A2*, the BCSS/TSS ratio indicates somewhat greater differentiation among male and Hungarian female clusters. The Euclidean distance values further support this observation. Beyond statistical justification, the decision to establish these clusters was also made by a research-driven approach: even if the identified clusters do not exhibit stark differences, their interpretation highlights the significance of subtle variations in household labour division.

As an outcome variable, we first analyse the clusters using descriptive analysis to highlight the key differences and similarities in the division of household labour across the three countries. Subsequently, we examine the relationships between the explanatory variables and the clusters using Spearman's rank correlation analysis (*Table A3*), as the dependent variable is categorical and the independent variables are ordinal.

Next, incorporating demographic background variables and attitudes toward gender roles, we conduct regression analysis to determine which individual characteristics influence the likelihood of cluster membership, that is, the extent to which women and men share household tasks in daily life. We estimate separate models for female and male respondents, controlling for background vari-

ables and distinguishing between families with and without young children. Additionally, special emphasis is placed on attitudes toward gender roles, for which we constructed a continuous variable based on the following criteria.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER ROLES

To examine attitudes toward gender roles, we selected six variables that measured the agreement with the following statements: In a couple, it is better for the man to be older than the woman; If a woman earns more than her partner, it is not good for the relationship; On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do; Women should be able to decide how to spend the money they earn without having to ask their partner's permission; Looking after the home or family is just as fulfilling as working for pay; A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works. Answer categories were the following: strongly agree (1), agree (2), neither agree not disagree (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5).

The selection of these variables was based on two main criteria. First, we considered their relevance to addressing our research questions. Second, we assessed how frequently these variables have been used in previous studies on similar topics. By applying these selection criteria, we ensured that the variables used in our analysis were not only relevant but also comparable to other research studies.

The scales of the selected variables did not always align with the usual "modern–traditional" distinction. Therefore, we recoded the variables where necessary, thus the values of 1 and 2 were recoded as 4 and 5, and vice versa. As a result of this recoding, a value of 1 represents traditional gender role attitudes, while a value of 5 indicates modern, egalitarian attitudes in the case of each variable. We then aggregated these six attitude variables to create a composite variable. The values of the newly constructed variable thus ranged from 6 to 30, where lower values reflected traditional gender role attitudes, while higher values indicated modern perspectives. This transformation allowed us to develop a comprehensive, continuous indicator, suitable for measuring respondents' attitudes along the traditional–modern spectrum. To ensure comparability, we rescaled the continuous variable using min-max scaling. The transformation was performed using the formula:

$$X_{scaled} = \frac{X - X_{min}}{X_{max} - X_{min}}$$

After rescaling, our composite variable of gender role attitudes ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 corresponds to the original minimum and means rather traditional gender roles, and 1 to the original maximum, meaning a more modern attitude towards gender roles.

CONTROL VARIABLES

We included a range of control variables in the analysis. We have also recoded and harmonized them, with their distributions presented in *Table A1*.

Labour market status was categorized as follows: employed; unemployed or inactive; on parental leave (included only in the female models). For educational attainment, we established three categories: low, medium, and high. Individuals with at most primary education are in the first category, while those with vocational training or secondary education were classified under the medium education level category. Those having any kind of tertiary education belong to the category of "high" level of education.

We only take into account co-resident couples and distinguish between married and not married ones. The number of the children and the age of the youngest child were recoded into one variable, where we distinguished between the following categories: no child below the age of 14 in the household; one child who is below the age of six; one child who is older than six but younger than 14; two or more children and the youngest is below 6; two or more children and the youngest is older than six but younger than 14. The literature review has indeed shown that the age and number of children are likely to shape the distribution of household chores in the couple. We also control for the age of the respondent (aged 18–25, 26–34, 35–42, and 43–49).

We applied multinomial logistic regression with cluster membership as the dependent variable, which categorized respondents into distinct groups. Multinomial regression allowed us to simultaneously assess the impact of independent variables on each category and to estimate the probability of respondents belonging to a given category compared to the reference group. The use of this method was justified by the non-ordinal nature of our dependent variable, meaning that we did not need to assume a hierarchical order among the categories. Additionally, multinomial regression offers flexibility in handling a wide range of independent variables, including both continuous and categorical predictors, enabling us to incorporate a broad set of control variables into the analysis. Estimates are presented as relative risk ratios in order to facilitate comparison across variables and models.

RESULTS

In the results section, we first compare the division of household labour across the three countries. We then present the female and male clusters, incorporating demographic variables to highlight key patterns. This is followed by the presentation of the descriptive results regarding gender roles and then results from the regression analyses.

THE DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD TASKS IN THE THREE COUNTRIES

The analysis of the division of household labour in Hungary, France, and Sweden reveals that while traditional division of work is present in all three countries, its extent and the level of male participation vary significantly (*Table 1*).

Table 1: Distribution of household chores within couples in Hungary, France, and Sweden (%)

		Hungary	France	Sweden
Who prepares daily meals?	Always the woman	43.9	37.3	6.6
	Usually the woman	29.9	30.6	41.0
	Shared equally	22.8	21.1	37.2
	Usually the man	2.2	7.7	13.8
	Always the man	1.2	3.2	1.4
Who does the dishes and the laundry?	Always the woman	35.6	24.6	3.5
	Usually the woman	28.6	20.8	24.4
	Shared equally	32.2	39.8	55.7
	Usually the man	2.6	10.2	15.2
	Always the man	1.0	4.6	1.1
Who does the shopping?	Always the woman	16.9	26.8	5.8
	Usually the woman	15.3	20.0	30.1
	Shared equally	58.2	42.6	46.7
	Usually the man	7.3	7.1	15.9
	Always the man	2.3	3.5	1.4

		Hungary	France	Sweden
Who does the vacuum cleaning in the house?	Always the woman	30.6	31.4	7.5
	Usually the woman	29.3	23.2	37.0
	Shared equally	38.3	33.1	36.6
	Usually the man	1.1	8.0	16.8
	Always the man	0.7	4.4	2.1
Who does small repairs in and around the house?	Always the woman	1.9	4.1	0.6
	Usually the woman	1.8	3.3	3.4
	Shared equally	7.9	15.8	21.6
	Usually the man	36.4	25.1	51.4
	Always the man	52.0	51.7	23.0
Who pays bills and keeping financial records?	Always the woman	18.7	30.1	11.3
	Usually the woman	12.0	10.9	14.8
	Shared equally	53.6	35.5	37.6
	Usually the man	7.1	7.9	20.8
	Always the man	8.5	15.6	15.6
Who organises joint social activities?	Always the woman	8.2	9.7	7.6
	Usually the woman	11.1	15.1	34.2
	Shared equally	73.3	69.1	53.9
	Usually the man	4.5	4.3	3.8
	Always the man	2.9	1.8	0.5
n		3,182	2,596	1,676

Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

In Hungary, household labour division strongly adheres to traditional gender roles. Preparing daily meals and dishwashing are predominantly performed by women, and cleaning also remains largely their responsibility. Shopping is often a shared activity, but women still play a dominant role. Minor repairs are almost exclusively handled by men, whereas financial management is a more shared responsibility. Organizing shared activities is more of a joint responsibility and is distributed more evenly compared to the other two countries.

In France, the division of household labour is more balanced, although the influence of traditional gender roles is still noticeable. Cooking and dishwashing are more often performed by women, but gender equality is more apparent in these areas compared to Hungary. Shopping and cleaning are still primarily associated with women, though shared responsibility is more common. Minor repairs remain predominantly a male task but are distributed more equally between partners than in Hungary. Financial management is more balanced, and the organization of shared activities is also a more evenly distributed responsibility.

In Sweden, household labour division is the most balanced among the three countries. Cooking, dishwashing, shopping, and cleaning are largely shared responsibilities, and men's participation in these activities is significantly higher than in Hungary or France. Moreover, more men are responsible for minor repairs and financial management than women. The organization of shared activities in Sweden is less balanced compared to France, but overall, household labour follows traditional gender roles to a much lesser extent.

A common pattern in all three countries is that repairs are mostly assigned to men, while cooking and cleaning remain primarily female tasks. However, while women's dominance is more pronounced in Hungary and France, Sweden exhibits greater shared responsibility in several tasks, such as dishwashing and shopping. Financial responsibility is partially shared in all three countries, though women's dominance remains evident, particularly in France and Hungary.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF CLUSTERS AND THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

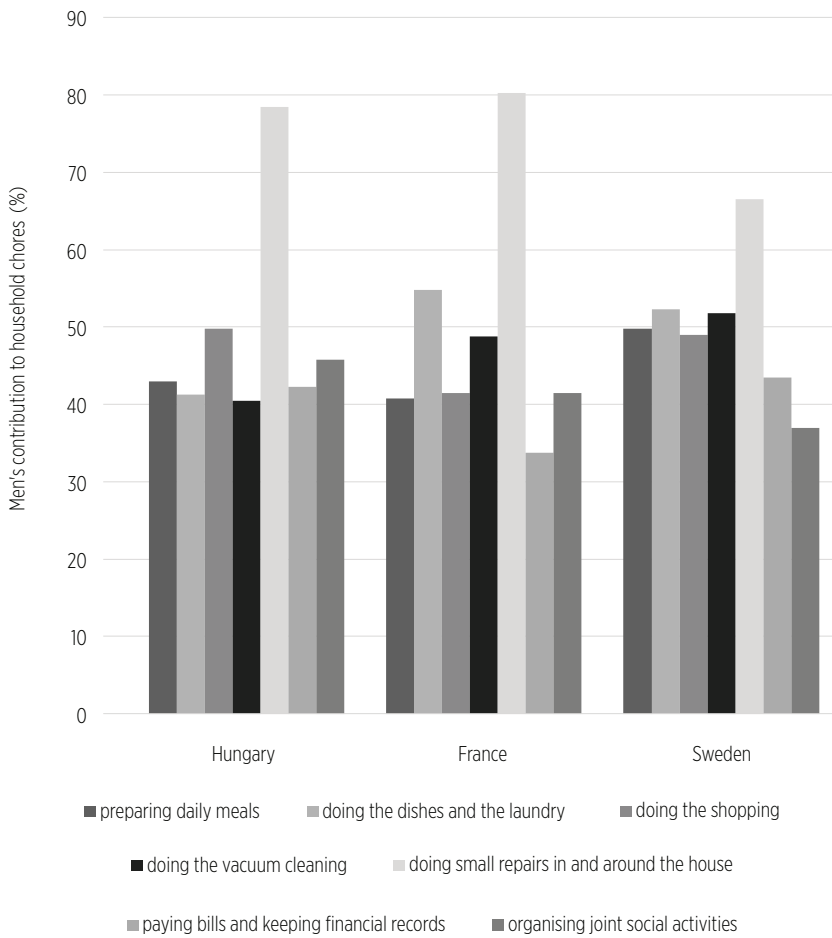
Female clusters

The cluster analysis identified three main types of household task distribution among women in Hungary, France, and Sweden: the "Shared," the "Woman dominated," and the "Men helpers" clusters. While these clusters are present in all three countries, their internal composition, prevalence, and the social profiles of women within them vary, reflecting broader cultural, social, and policy differences.

The "Shared" cluster represents (*Figure 1*) the most balanced division of household labour, where men participate more actively in domestic tasks. However, the degree of equality differs substantially. In Sweden, men are routinely involved in shopping, dishwashing cooking, cleaning, and even repair work; they almost assume half of these tasks. In France, men are mostly involved in vacuum cleaning and dishwashing (besides repairs), but cooking and paying bills

still largely fall on women. In Hungary, traditional female tasks—especially cooking and cleaning—are still primarily performed by women, even in this "shared" model. This cluster is most common in Sweden (45.2%), less so in France (36.7%), and the least frequent in Hungary (28.5%) (*Table 2*). The "Shared" cluster is most strongly characterized by higher educational attainment and employment across all three countries, but these features are particularly pronounced in Sweden. Respondents in this cluster tend to be in their late twenties to early forties, with childless households being most common in Sweden and France, while in Hungary, a slightly higher proportion have children (*Tables A4–A6*).

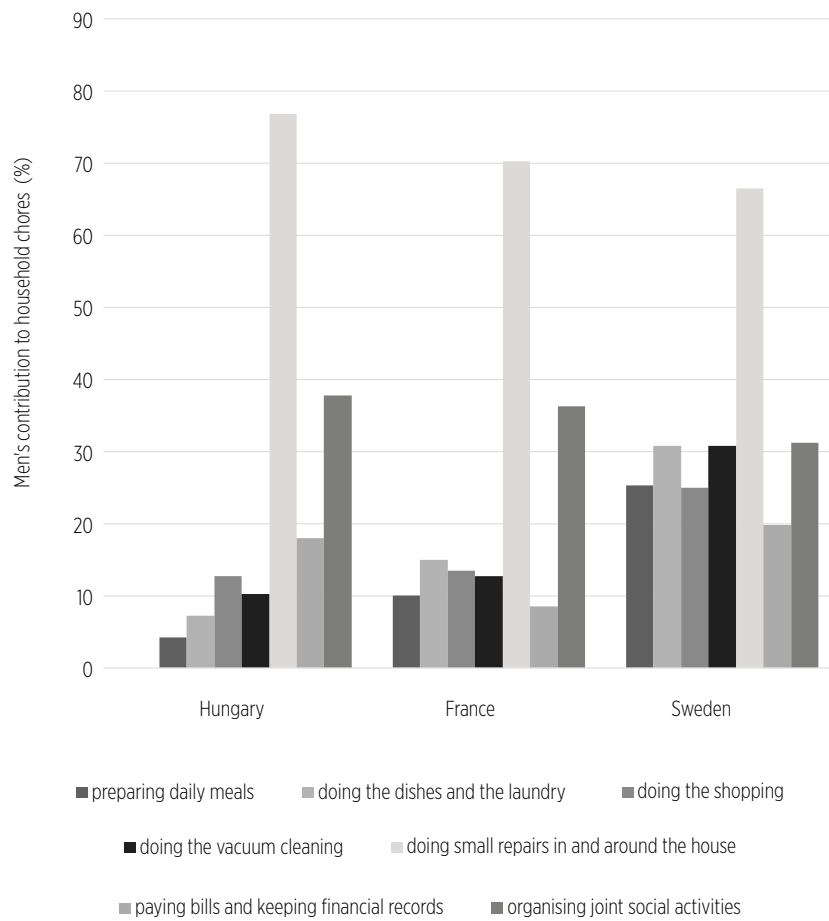
Figure 1: "Shared" female cluster by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

The "Women dominated" cluster (*Figure 2*) is defined by a strong persistence of traditional gender roles, with women performing nearly all domestic work. In Hungary and France, the participation of men rarely exceeds 10% in the traditional tasks, while it is higher when it comes to organising joint activities and doing the repairs around the house. In Sweden men's participation is between 20% and 30%, thus considerably higher than in the other two countries.

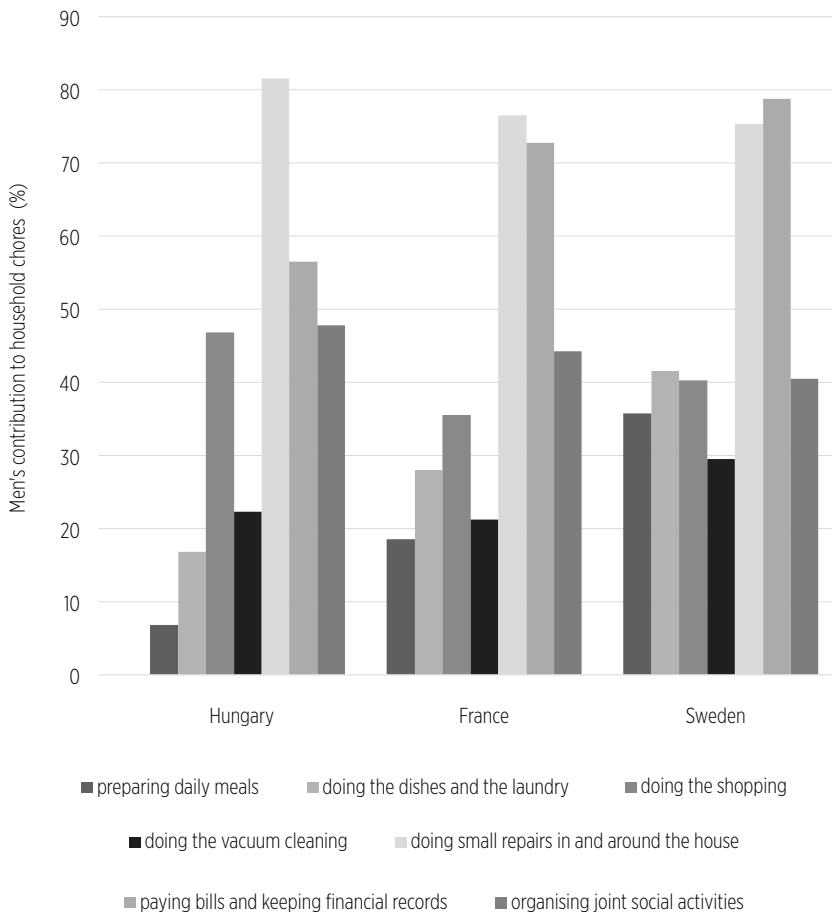
Figure 2: "Woman dominated" female cluster by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

This cluster is most prevalent in Hungary (33.1%), slightly less frequent in France (31.4%), and least common in Sweden (24.3%), indicating weaker traditional norms in the Swedish context (*Table 2*). The "Women dominated" cluster is most prevalent among women with medium educational attainment and reduced labour market participation across all three countries. This cluster is particularly associated with mothers of young children, especially in Hungary and France, where parental leave and inactivity rates are higher. Swedish women in this cluster still show relatively higher education and employment levels (*Tables A4–A6*).

Figure 3: "Men helpers" female cluster by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

In the case of the "Men helpers" cluster (*Figure 3*), men in Sweden demonstrate a higher level of involvement across all types of household chores than in the other two countries, with particularly notable participation in daily meal preparation and in doing the dishes and the laundry. In contrast, men in Hungary and France tend to be relatively more active in tasks traditionally perceived as "masculine," such as carrying out small repairs or handling bill payments, while their engagement in everyday domestic duties remains significantly lower. In Hungary, men's participation in cooking, doing the dishes and the laundry, and vacuum cleaning is especially limited, whereas their involvement in repairs and financial responsibilities exceeds 50%. France occupies an intermediate position: male participation is more balanced across various tasks compared to Hungary, yet still falls short of the levels observed in Sweden. "Men helpers" in all three countries are predominantly in their late twenties to early forties, typically married, and possess medium to high levels of education. While Hungarian and French cluster members are more likely to be on parental leave and less active in the labour market, their Swedish counterparts are overwhelmingly employed (*Tables A4–A6*).

Despite the shared typology, national variations reveal important trends. Across countries, women in the "Shared" cluster tend to be younger, more educated, while the "Women dominated" cluster is associated with older, less educated women (*Tables A4–A6*). Notably, Swedish men participate more actively in domestic work across all clusters, while Hungarian women carry a disproportionate share of tasks, even in "shared" arrangements. In France, male involvement – particularly in the "Men helpers" cluster – is more common among mothers with young children (*Table A4*), a pattern that is less evident in Hungary.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents in the female clusters

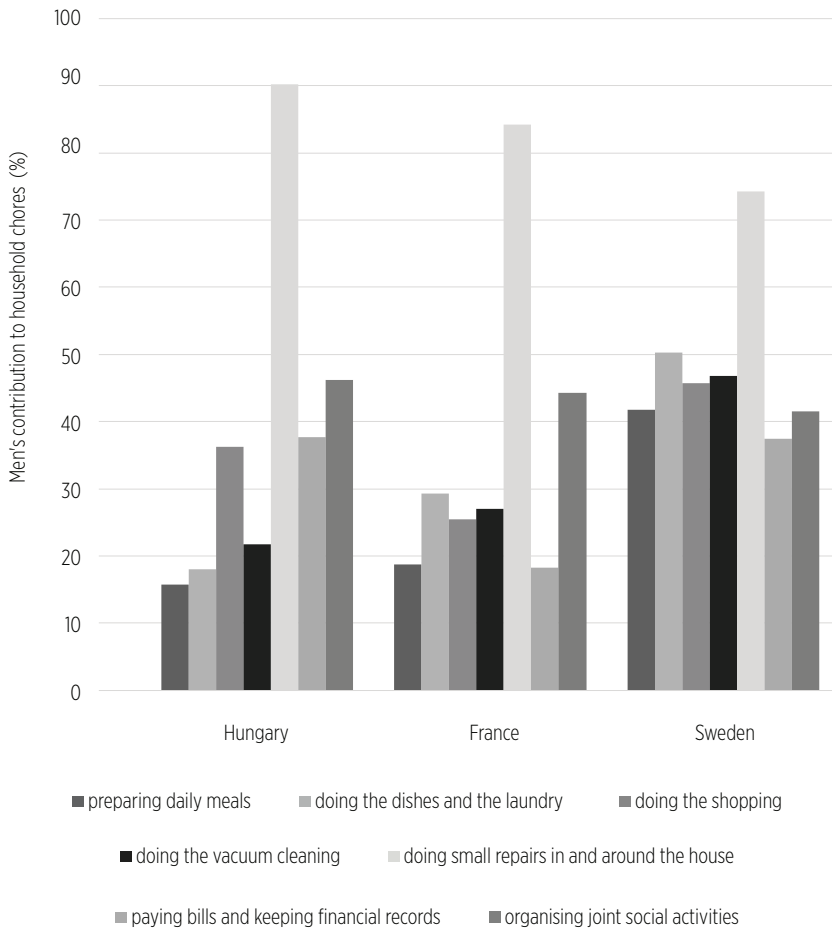
Female clusters	Hungary		France		Sweden	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Shared	470	28.5	494	36.7	419	45.2
Woman dominated	545	33.1	423	31.4	226	24.3
Men helpers	633	38.4	429	31.9	283	30.4
Total	**1,648**	**100.0**	**1,346**	**100.0**	**928**	**100.0**

Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

Male clusters

Cluster analysis among men revealed two main types of household task arrangements: the "Women dominated" and the "Participating men" clusters. While these categories appear consistently across countries, the extent of men's involvement in domestic tasks and the interpretation of "helping" vary significantly, shaped by differing social norms and expectations.

Figure 4: "Woman dominated" male cluster by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

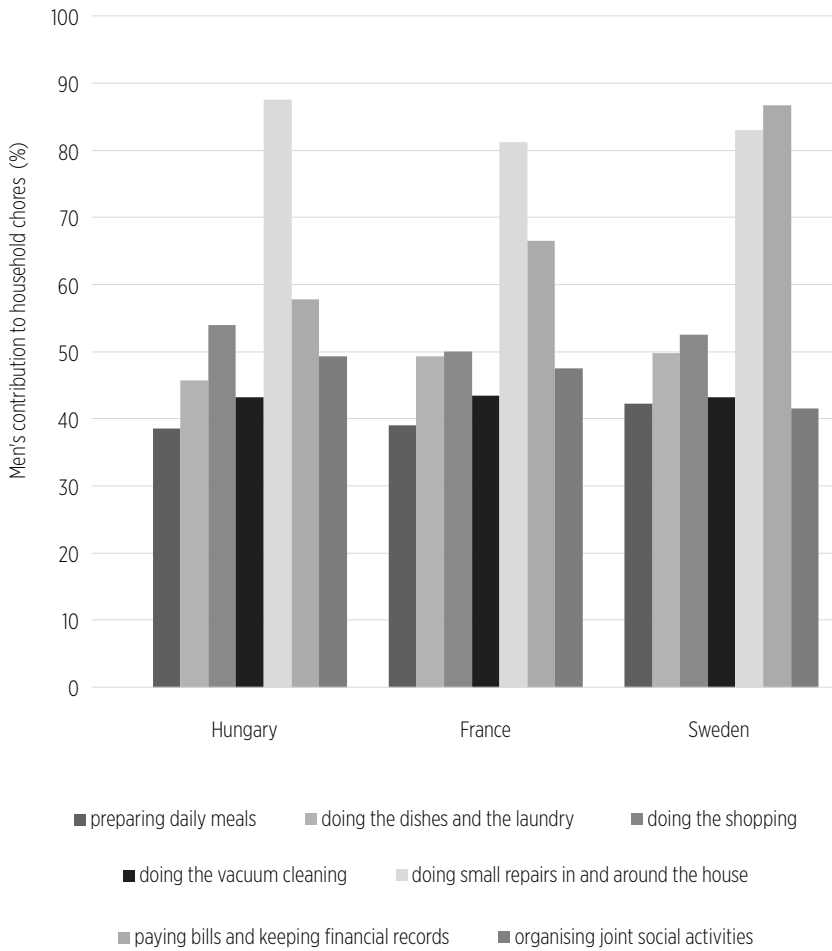
The "Women dominated" cluster (*Figure 4*) reflects a traditional gender role distribution, where household tasks such as cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning are primarily performed by women, and men's participation is largely limited to repair work. In Hungary shopping and financial management are somewhat more shared, though still leaning towards women. This cluster is most common in Sweden (56.6%), followed by Hungary (48.9%) and France (44.9%) (Table 3). Interestingly, despite Sweden's reputation for gender equality, men in this group still acknowledge women's dominant role in household labour—although they report higher participation in certain tasks, such as cooking and shopping, than their French and Hungarian counterparts. Members of the "Woman dominated" male cluster in Hungary and France are more often of lower educational attainment and are more likely to be inactive or unemployed, whereas in Sweden, the majority are employed. This cluster is also characterized by a high proportion of men raising at least two children, often including young ones (*Tables A4–A6*).

The "Participating men" cluster (*Figure 5*) represents a more balanced approach to domestic labour, where men take on greater responsibility in tasks like cooking, dishwashing, shopping, and financial management, while repair work still remains predominantly male. This cluster is most prevalent in France (55.1%), slightly less so in Hungary (51.1%), and least common in Sweden (43.4%) (*Table 3*). Overall, the three clusters exhibit strong similarities. French men in this group stand out for their active engagement in day-to-day housework, including organizational responsibilities. In Hungary, male participation is also higher than in the more traditional cluster, particularly in financial and shopping tasks, and also core chores like cooking and cleaning are more frequently shared. In Sweden, men in this cluster show the highest levels of involvement across almost all household activities (also in the other cluster, where only the indicators related to repairs and bill payments exhibit lower values), though the smaller size of the group may reflect a stricter personal standard for what constitutes "helping". Members of the "Participating men" cluster are predominantly employed in all three countries (over 80%) and typically have secondary or higher education. While some of them are raising two or more children—often younger ones—most have no children below 15 (*Tables A4–A6*).

Notably, the higher proportion of "Participating men" in Hungary and France compared to Sweden runs counter to conventional expectations about gender equality. This discrepancy may suggest that Hungarian and French men consider even occasional or selective involvement in household tasks as sufficient to regard such helping behaviour as joint work or that social desirability influences

their self-reporting. In Sweden, by contrast, a higher threshold for what counts as equal participation might explain the smaller size of the cluster.

Figure 5: "Participating men" male cluster by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

It is important to highlight that in the case of Sweden, the difference between the two clusters is minimal, with the most notable distinction being men's significantly higher involvement in financial management. Furthermore, among men, the "Participating men" cluster represents a higher level of male participation in all aspects compared to the corresponding female clusters.

In summary, while the two-cluster structure is stable across countries, the interpretation and lived reality of men's domestic involvement differ significantly. The findings highlight that quantitative similarities in cluster size may mask important qualitative differences in how "helping" and "sharing" are defined, pointing to broader national variations in gender norms, family roles, and expectations around masculinity and domestic responsibility.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents in the male clusters

Male clusters	Hungary		France		Sweden	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Woman dominated	750	48.9	561	44.9	423	56.6
Participating men	784	51.1	689	55.1	325	43.4
Total	1,534	100.0	1,250	100.0	748	100.0

Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER ROLES – DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

Next, we examine the extent to which individual factors influence cluster membership. As mentioned earlier, attitudes toward gender roles play a key role in this analysis. The distribution of individual opinions on gender roles across the three countries is presented in this section.

The continuous gender roles variable, which ranges from 0 to 1 (see the methods section for the construction of the variable), indicates that Hungary exhibits the most traditional gender role attitudes among the three countries (women: 0.527; men: 0.511). The median values are identical (0.5), indicating that half of the respondents hold more traditional views, while the other half exhibit more modern attitudes. The standard deviation is relatively high (women: 0.156; men: 0.163), suggesting greater variability in perspectives than in the other two countries (*Table 4*).

In France, the average values are higher than in Hungary (women: 0.683; men: 0.685), indicating more modern attitudes. The median value is also higher (0.667), demonstrating that most respondents lean towards more egalitarian

views. The standard deviation is about the same as in Hungary (somewhat lower among French men), suggesting a similar variability in opinions.

Sweden exhibits the most modern gender role attitudes, with the highest average values for both women (0.764) and men (0.693). This is the only country where a notable difference can be observed between the two sexes: Swedish women held visibly more modern views than Swedish men, whose views are more similar to that of French men. The median values for men are however a bit higher than in France. The standard deviation is lower than in the other two countries, implying a greater societal consensus on gender equality.

The differences among the three countries indicate that Sweden has the most modern gender role attitudes, especially in the case of women, while Hungary remains the most traditional. France represents an intermediate position, displaying more progressive views but still exhibiting some degree of gender-based variation.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on gender role attitudes in Hungary, France and Sweden

	Hungary		France		Sweden	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Mean	0.527	0.511	0.683	0.685	0.764	0.693
Median	0.500	0.500	0.667	0.667	0.792	0.708
Standard deviation	0.156	0.163	0.150	0.156	0.135	0.139

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.

Note: See the subsection "Attitudes towards gender roles" in the section "Data and methodology" for the construction of the variable.

REGRESSION RESULTS

In the following section, we present the results of the multinomial regression analyses. Our dependent variable can take three values in the case of women and it measures the likelihood of respondents belonging to the "Women dominated" or the "Men helpers" category compared to the "Shared" reference group. In the case of male clusters, the dependent variable takes two values and measures the likelihood of respondents belonging to the "Women dominated" cluster compared to the reference group of "Participating men. We included the con-

tinuous gender role attitude variable as an independent predictor, along with the demographic background variables described in the methods section. Separate models were run for each country and for women and men. For clarity and readability, the figures present only the statistically significant variables.

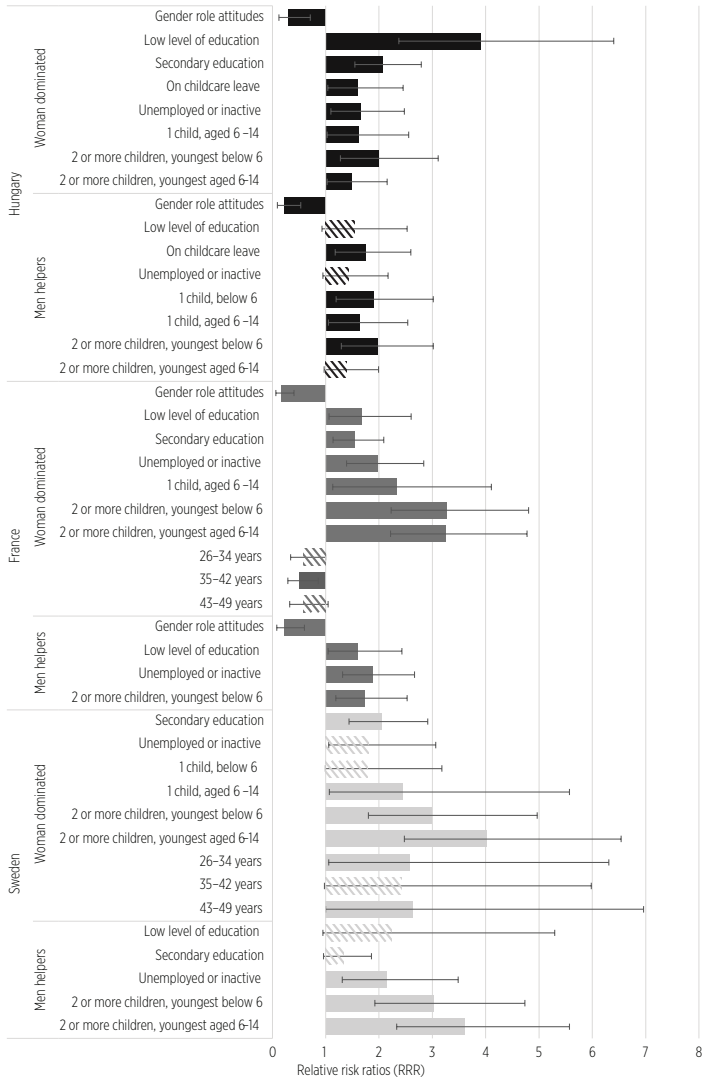
Factors influencing female cluster membership

The results show that female cluster membership is influenced by multiple factors and the impact of these factors varies across countries (*Figure 6*).

The regression results show that more egalitarian gender role attitudes, as indicated by a higher score on the gender role scale, decreases the probability of belonging to the "Women dominated" and the "Men helpers" clusters, compared to the "Shared" group. Education also plays a crucial role, as lower educated women are more likely to belong to the "Women dominated" or the "Men helpers" category instead of the "Shared" group, while women with secondary education also belong more often to the "Women dominated" category instead of sharing the tasks with their partner. Similarly, employment status has a notable effect: unemployed and inactive women, as well as those on parental leave, are less likely to share the household tasks with their partner compared to working women.

The number and the age of the children also influence cluster membership. Compared to households with no child below the age of 14, household tasks are more often shared traditionally among couples with young children in Hungary. Women are almost twice as likely to belong to the "Women dominated" or the "Men helpers" clusters as to divide the tasks more equally if there are at least two children in the family and the youngest is under 6 years old. If there is only one child aged under 6, women also have a higher probability (rrr = 1.90) of belonging to the "Men helpers" category instead of sharing the tasks. If the children are all above the age of 6, the relative risk decreases somewhat, but the probability of belonging to any other cluster then the "Shared" is still higher.

Figure 6: Factors influencing the relative risks of female cluster membership



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

Notes: Multinomial regression results (relative risk ratios and 95% confidence intervals); reference cluster: "Shared".

Interpretation of bars: Filled bars indicate variables significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$); striped bars indicate variables significant at the 10% level ($p < 0.1$).

Explanatory variables included in the analysis and their reference categories: age group (18–25 years), relationship status (cohabiting), educational attainment (high), employment status (working), number of children and age of the youngest child (no children below 15), gender role attitudes.

The effect of the number and the age of children is also visible in the two other countries and the relative risks are even higher than in Hungary. In France, the probability of belonging to the "Women dominated" cluster is 3.2 times higher if there are two or more children in the household, irrespective of the age of the youngest child. In Sweden the relative risk of belonging to any other category than the "Shared" is also three times higher if there are two or more children and the probability of belonging to the "Women dominated" category is even four times higher if there are two or more children and the youngest is older than 6. It seems that in the two countries where the household tasks are more often shared, the presence of young children has a more important effect on the gendered division of household tasks than in Hungary.

In both Sweden and France, women's age significantly affects cluster membership, but not in the same way. In France, women aged above 25 (compared to the reference group of women aged 18–25) are more than 40% less likely to be in the "Women dominated" category than to share the tasks with their partner. This result may be surprising, yet several possible explanations arise. Young women tend to take on more housework at the beginning of cohabitation, even if they strive for equality, as social norms continue to reinforce women's household roles. Additionally, they face a dual expectation: they aim for equality while also conforming to the role of the "good housewife". They may also constitute a selected group since many young women between the age of 18 and 25 are not yet in a co-resident relationship. Those who are may be less educated and hold more traditional views. In contrast, among women aged 26–49, a more balanced division of labour may develop over the course of a long-term relationship. In Sweden the results point to the opposite direction: women aged over 25 are more than two times more likely to be in the "Women dominated" category than in the "Shared". In Sweden women with secondary education (as opposed to a high level of education) are more likely to belong to the "Women dominated" or to the "Men helpers" category, while those with low education also more often belong to the "Men helpers" category. As opposed to the two other countries, there is no significant effect of individual gender attitudes on cluster membership in Sweden.

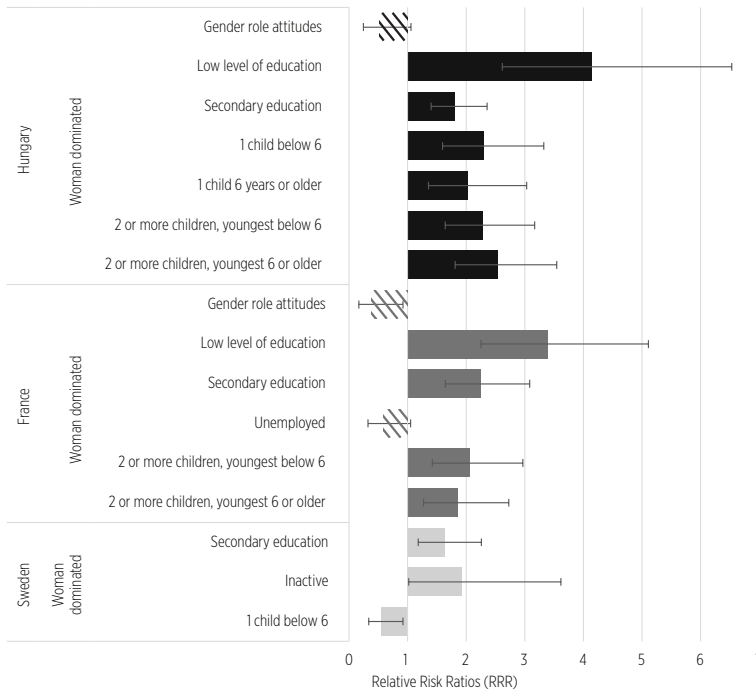
Overall, while education and employment status consistently shape household labour division in the three countries, gender role attitudes are important in Hungary and France, while women's age shapes labour market division in Sweden and France, and not in the same way. The presence of children below the age of 14 is important in all three countries, but its effect seems to be more

pronounced in the two Western countries, where these variables display the higher relative risks ratios.

Factors influencing male cluster membership

The analysis of factors influencing men's household labour division in Hungary, France, and Sweden reveals both cross-country similarities and notable differences (*Figure 7*).

Figure 7: Factors influencing the relative risk of male cluster membership



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.

Notes: Logistic regression results (relative risk ratios and 95% confidence intervals); reference cluster: "Participating men".

Interpretation of bars: Filled bars indicate variables significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). Striped bars indicate variables significant at the 10% level ($p < 0.1$).

Explanatory variables included in the analysis and their reference categories: age group (18–25 years), relationship status (cohabiting), educational attainment (high), employment status (working), number of children and age of the youngest child (no children below 15), gender role attitudes.

For Hungarian and French men, more egalitarian gender attitudes (as indicated by higher values on the gender role scale) have a negative impact on the likelihood of belonging to the "Women dominated" category, as opposed to the "Participating men" cluster. In Sweden gender role attitudes have no significant effect on cluster membership. This suggests that men with more egalitarian views tend to participate more in household chores in the first two countries. The absence of this result for Sweden does not mean the opposite; it may be explained by the fact that the overall acceptance of modern gender roles is higher and men participate more in domestic work, regardless of their gender role attitudes.

Men with primary or secondary education are also more likely than highly educated men to share housework unequally in Hungary and in France. In Sweden there is no effect of low education, while the result regarding secondary education is similar.

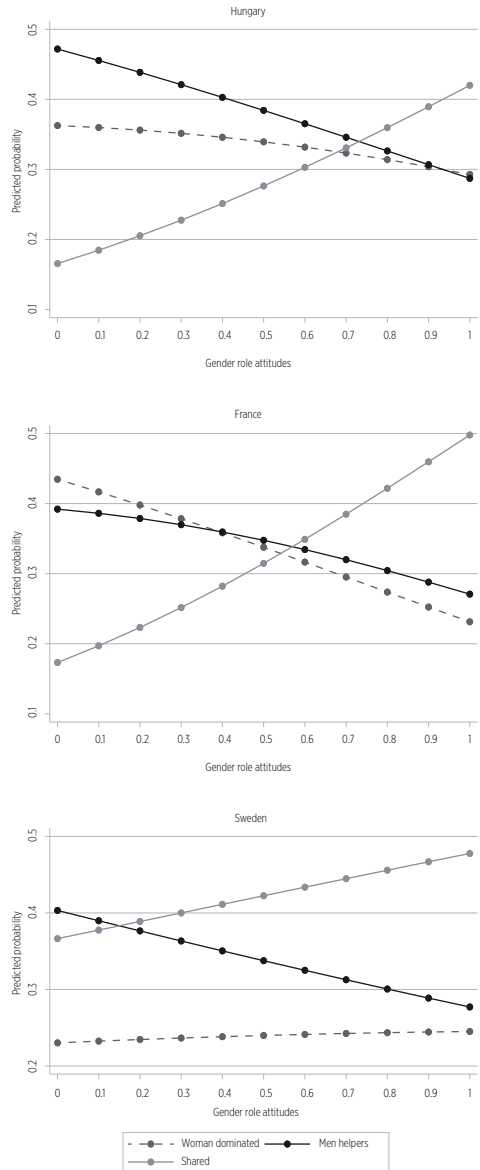
In Hungary, men's labour market status does not have any significant effect on cluster membership, while in France, unemployed men are more likely to help their partner with the housework, compared to those who are working. In Sweden, the opposite is true: inactive men, rather than those who are working, are almost two times more likely to be in the "Women dominated" category than in the "Participating men" category.

The presence and the age of children influence cluster membership in the three countries, but not in the same way. While in Sweden the presence of one child who is below the age of 6 decreases the probability of men to belong to the "Women dominated" category (which means that they are more likely to share the household tasks with their partner), the opposite is true in Hungary (rrr = 2.3). In the latter country the presence of young children increases the likelihood of being in the "Women dominated" category and this is also true in France if there are two or more children.

The influence of gender role attitudes on the division of household tasks

To better interpret the impact of gender role attitudes on cluster membership, we computed marginal effects using STATA's margins command following the regressions. The resulting predicted probabilities confirm that gender role attitudes significantly influence the division of domestic work, especially in Hungary and France.

Figure 8: Predicted probability of belonging to each female cluster according to gender role attitudes by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.
Note: Marginal effects from the regression results.

In the case of Hungary, women holding very traditional gender role attitudes (with a score between 0 and 0.1 on the gender roles continuous variable) have a probability of less than 20% to belong to the most modern, "Shared" category, while they have a probability of 36% to belong to the "Women dominated" and 46% to the "Men helpers" clusters (*Figure 8*).

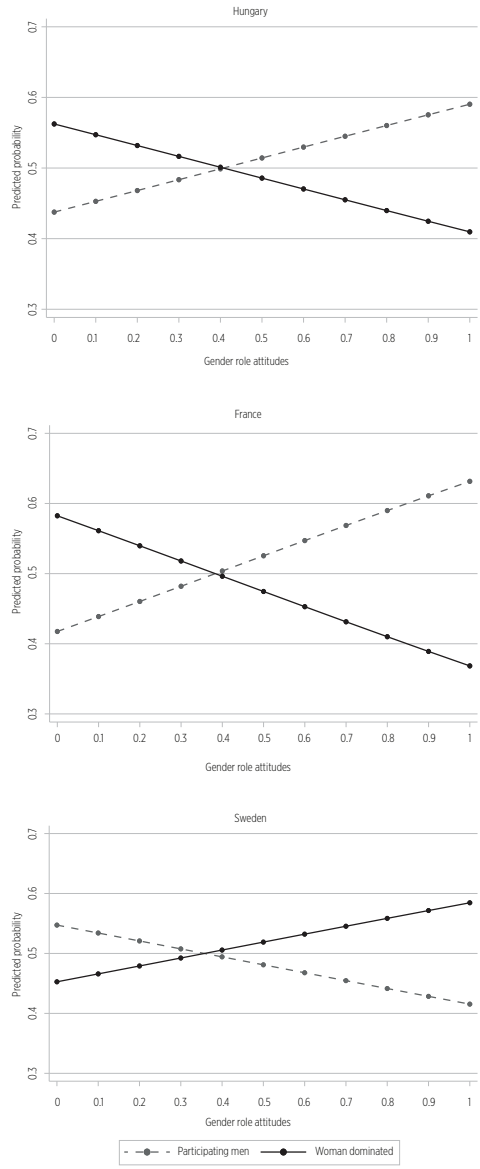
More egalitarian gender attitudes are on the other hand associated with higher probability of belonging to the "Shared" category: those having a score of 1 on the gender roles variable have a probability of 42% to belong to this most 'modern' category.

Similar results are found in France, where the traditional attitudes also increase the probability of belonging to one of the two more traditional clusters. In the meantime, there is less difference in predicted probabilities between these two groups than in Hungary. More modern views increase the probability of the "Shared" cluster membership: those scoring the highest on gender role attitudes have a 50% probability to divide household tasks more equally in the couple.

In Sweden the gender role attitudes variable do not have a significant effect on cluster membership, and the graph clearly shows that gender role attitudes scores indeed play a smaller role. The predicted probability of belonging to the most traditional cluster is overall low (below 30%), while the probability of dividing the household tasks is 37% in the case of women holding the most traditional views on gender roles, and 47% for those who are the most liberal from this point of view. This means that even Swedish women holding more traditional views tend to share household tasks more equally than Hungarian or French women.

In the case of men, the predicted probability of belonging to the two clusters by gender role attitudes is very similar in Hungary and in France (Figure 9). Men with the most traditional views have a probability of 44% to belong to the women dominated cluster in Hungary and 42% in France. The probability of belonging to the "Shared" category becomes higher than that of belonging to the more traditional category among those who reach a score of 0.5 on the gender attitudes scale in Hungary, while this is already the case among those who have a scale of 0.4 in France. Among those who express the most modern gender roles views, the probability of belonging to the "Shared" category is 59% in Hungary and 63% in France. Among Swedish men, gender role attitudes do not significantly influence cluster membership (see *Figure 7*) and the predicted probabilities show a contradictory picture of gender role attitudes.

Figure 9: Predicted probability of belonging to each male cluster according to gender role attitudes by country



Source: Generations and Gender Survey - I, own calculations.
Note: Marginal effects from the regression results.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the division of household labour in Hungary, Sweden, and France within the context of various demographic characteristics and gender roles, closely linking them to differences in welfare state systems. The analysis revealed notable differences among the three countries: Sweden is characterized by a more equal division of household tasks and a stronger presence of egalitarian attitudes, whereas Hungary remains dominated by traditional gender roles. France represents an intermediate case, where household labour is partially shared but still follows a predominantly traditional pattern.

The first part of the study provided a theoretical foundation for interpreting the results, presenting theories of household labour division, such as Becker's New Household Economics and the Relative Resources Theory. According to these theories, the distribution of household tasks is determined by the resources and time management of household members. The findings of the analysis large ly align with these theories, particularly in highlighting that women with higher educational attainment occupy a stronger bargaining position, which can facilitate a more equal division of household labour.

The interpretation and distribution of clusters confirmed that household labour is more equally shared among couples in Sweden than in the other two countries: approximately 45.1% of Swedish women belong to the "Shared" category, compared to 28.7% in Hungary and 38% in France. Moreover, even in this cluster, household tasks are more equally shared in Sweden than in the other two countries.

Regarding male clusters, the "Participating men" group represents a higher proportion in Hungary (51.5%) and in France (56.8%) compared to the "Women dominated" cluster. However, it is important to emphasize that men in no country reported being solely responsible for household tasks. The sharing of tasks rather implies a certain degree of contribution, as opposed to a complete lack of participation. Notably, Sweden has the highest proportion of men in the "Women dominated" category (54.5%), which is an unexpected finding, but if we take a closer look, we can see that the two clusters differ the least among Swedish men, which may be explained by the generally more equal distribution of household tasks in Sweden, as previously highlighted. It is also important to point out that the content of the Swedish male clusters differs slightly from the French and Hungarian ones, so this should also be taken into account when making comparisons.

According to a previous study by Herche (2010), Hungarian men's participation in household work is generally low and primarily limited to occasional, less routine-based tasks, such as minor repairs or gardening. The finding that men's involvement is often described as "helping" rather than fully taking over household responsibilities is consistent with the results of our study. Additionally, Herche (2010) also found that Hungarian men, in an international comparison, participate in household chores at a higher-than-average rate.

According to the study by Pongrácz and Murinkó (2009), traditional values in Hungary hinder the egalitarian division of labour, and men often do not perceive housework as a shared responsibility. However, this finding complements our result that Hungarian men "help out" at a higher rate compared to men in other countries. Based on the comparison of results, it appears that Hungarian men's participation in household chores reflects a change in frequency rather than a shift in responsibility—meaning that while they assist with tasks, the overall responsibility still falls on women.

The comparison of gender role attitudes across the three countries reveals significant differences. Hungary exhibits the most traditional views, with lower average values and greater variability. France represents an intermediate position, showing more egalitarian attitudes but still some degree of gender-based variation. Sweden stands out as the most progressive, especially in the case of women, while Swedish men held more similar views to French men. The difference between the two sexes is thus the most pronounced in Sweden.

The results highlight key differences in household task-sharing between Hungary, France, and Sweden. More egalitarian individual gender role attitudes reduce the likelihood of a gendered division of household tasks in Hungary and France, but not in Sweden, where the attitudes do not matter and where modern gender norms are already widely accepted. Education plays a crucial role, as lower-educated women in Hungary and France are more likely to fall into more traditional clusters, whereas in Sweden, secondary education increases the likelihood of a more balanced division.

The number and age of children influence cluster membership, as the traditional division of household tasks is more common in households with young children. This effect is present in all three countries, where the relative risks are even higher compared to childless respondents. In France and Sweden, where household tasks are generally more equally shared, the presence of young children has an even stronger impact on shifting towards a traditional division of labour than in Hungary. This suggests that, although the Swedish welfare system

strongly supports gender equality, the changes associated with having children often lead to a more traditional role distribution.

Among men, labour market status has different effects by country. In France, unemployed men are more likely to help with household tasks, while in Sweden, inactive men are almost twice as likely to be in the "Women dominated" category than to help with the household tasks. In Hungary, the presence of one or more young children below the age of 14 increases the likelihood of men falling into the traditional category, whereas in Sweden, the presence of one child below the age of 6 promotes more equal task-sharing. In France the effect is significant only in the case of two or more children, whose presence increases the domestic burden on women.

The findings support the theory of comparative advantages and Becker's New Household Economics, particularly in female regression models and – surprisingly – in the French male regression model. In the latter case, men's participation in housework is higher when they are unemployed, which in turn fosters a more egalitarian approach to household labour division. Additionally, this phenomenon can also be explained by the theory of time allocation, which suggests that the household work is primarily done by the person who has more time at home.

According to the doing gender approach, unemployed men do even less housework because their role as breadwinners is undermined, and they compensate for this by avoiding tasks perceived as feminine (Gough & Killewald, 2010). However, this pattern does not hold true for French men in this case.

Regarding the first research question about the patterns of household labour division, the findings indicate that household tasks are more equally shared in Sweden. In contrast, in Hungary and France, traditional gender roles play a stronger role in shaping the division of labour. In France, while some degree of balance can be observed, traditional task division remains prevalent. In Hungary, the "Women dominated" model is the most common, where men typically only engage in specific tasks, primarily household repairs. These results confirm that, in general, Sweden exhibits a more equal division of housework, reflecting an egalitarian approach reinforced by the country's welfare system. However, the presence of young children tends to push households towards a more traditional labour division, reinforcing gendered roles in domestic responsibilities.

Regarding the second research question, which examines how childrearing influences the division of household labour in the three countries, the following conclusions can be drawn. Women's domestic burdens are higher in all three countries in households with young children. In Sweden, men's participation in

housework is significantly higher when there is at least one child under the age of six in the household. In the Swedish female clusters, housework is relatively equally shared as long as there are no young children in the household; however, when there is, women's workload increases. In France, the division of labour becomes more traditional in families with young children, particularly in households with two children. In Hungary, both the female and male models indicate that the presence of young children strongly influences the emergence of gender inequalities in household tasks. Thus, the second hypothesis is confirmed, as childrearing contributes to a more traditional division of labour, reinforcing gendered household responsibilities.

Regarding the third research question, which investigates whether individual gender role attitudes are reflected in everyday household practices, the study's findings confirm that men and women who hold more modern, egalitarian views are generally more likely to share household tasks in Hungary and in France. In both countries this effect was observed for both men and women, whereas in Sweden, gender role attitudes had no significant effect, which can be explained by the generally higher level of gender equality.

Our study has some limitations. We analysed the division of household tasks in couples but were unable to include responses from both partners due to the lack of couple-based data. Additionally, the measurement of household task division is somewhat rough, as we could not account for the time spent on tasks or their relative importance within each household in our models. Finally, it was not possible to adopt a longitudinal approach to assess the impact of family events (e.g. childbirth or marriage) on the dynamics of household task division.

Overall, the results highlight that the division of household tasks not only depends on gender ideology but also on family status and the number of children, offering an opportunity to further develop theoretical models. Additionally, the role of educational attainment is prominent. The dissonance between attitudes and practice often reflects discrepancies between welfare systems and societal norms. These findings underscore the complex interplay between gender ideology, labour market factors, and welfare policies in shaping household labour division across different countries.

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APPENDICES

Table A1: The distribution of the sample by country and demographic characteristics

Variables		Hungary		France		Sweden	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	1534	48.2	1250	48.1	748	44.6
	Female	1648	51.8	1346	51.9	928	55.4
Age	18–25 years	328	10.3	220	8.5	104	6.2
	26–34 years	961	30.2	828	31.9	561	33.5
	35–42 years	1196	37.6	1026	39.5	751	44.8
	43–49 years	697	21.9	522	20.1	260	15.5
Relationship status	Cohabiting	1308	41.1	1025	39.5	583	34.8
	Married	1874	58.9	1571	60.5	1093	65.2
Level of education	Low	420	13.2	465	17.9	94	5.6
	Secondary	1811	56.9	1238	47.7	838	50.0
	High	951	29.9	893	34.4	744	44.4
Employment status	Working	2352	73.9	2028	78.1	1379	82.3
	Unemployed or inactive	426	13.4	480	18.5	204	12.2
	On parental leave	404	12.7	88	3.4	93	5.5
Number and age of children	No children below 15	783	24.6	739	28.5	555	33.1
	1 child, below 6	534	16.8	433	16.7	231	13.8
	1 child, aged 6–14	369	11.6	189	7.3	75	4.5
	2 or more children, youngest below 6	770	24.2	670	25.8	421	25.1
	2 or more children, youngest aged 6–14	726	22.8	563	21.7	394	23.5
n		3,182		2,596		1,676	

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.

Table A2: Differences between clusters

Differences between clusters	Total sum of squares (TSS)	Within-cluster sum of squares	Between-cluster sum of squares (BCSS)	BCSS/TSS ratio (%)	Euclidean distance
Hungarian female clusters	6549.88	5293.25	1256.63	19.2	2.189–2.929
French female clusters	10989.74	9129.19	1860.55	16.9	2.07–2.99
Swedish female clusters	4105.31	3446.93	658.38	16.0	1.878–2.388
Hungarian male clusters	6528.36	5313.62	1214.75	18.6	1.992
French male clusters	11664.17	9410.29	2253.87	19.3	2.539
Swedish male clusters	3808.83	3059.76	749.06	19.7	2.027

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.

Table A3: Spearman's rank correlation analysis between clusters and control variables

	Hungarian female cluster	Hungarian male cluster	French female cluster	French male cluster	Swedish female cluster	Swedish male cluster
Age	–0.018	0.034	–0.007	–0.030	0.026	0.017
	(0.464)	(0.178)	(0.784)	(0.255)	(0.401)	(0.647)
Relationship status	–0.002	–0.035	0.029	–0.027	0.013	–0.013
	(0.922)	(0.171)	(0.248)	(0.314)	(0.679)	(0.722)
Level of education	0.214	–0.211	0.155	–0.207	0.124	-0.093
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.011)
Employment status	0.140	–0.051	0.127	0.054	0.051	-0.101
	(0.000)	(0.046)	(0.000)	(0.042)	(0.105)	(0.005)
Number and age of children	0.007	0.034	0.004	0.039	–0.021	–0.048
	(0.770)	(0.178)	(0.882)	(0.143)	(0.515)	(0.186)
n	1,648	1,534	1,346	1,250	928	748

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.
Notes: 2-tailed significance levels in parentheses.

Table A4: The distribution of the Hungarian clusters by demographic characteristics (%)

		Female clusters			Male clusters	
Variables		Shared	Woman dominated	Men helpers	Woman dominated	Participating men
Age	18–25 years	8.7	9.4	11.0	10.2	11.4
	26–34 years	27.3	31.6	28.7	30.4	31.8
	35–42 years	42.7	37.1	39.3	36.8	34.3
	43–49 years	21.3	21.9	21.0	22.6	22.5
Relationship status	Cohabiting	40.3	41.4	43.3	38.6	41.9
	Married	59.7	58.6	56.7	61.4	58.1
Level of Education	Low	7.9	22.5	13.6	16.9	6.2
	Secondary	47.6	55.0	50.3	65.1	61.3
	High	44.5	22.5	36.1	18.0	32.5
Employment status	Working	73.4	54.2	56.1	83.8	87.4
	Unemployed or inactive	11.1	20.0	14.2	13.4*	8.5*
	On parental leave	15.5	25.8	29.7	2.8**	4.1**
Number and age of children	No children below 15	33.8	21.1	20.3	16.7	32.3
	1 child, below 6	14.4	14.0	20.7	18.4	15.9
	1 child, aged 6–15	11.4	12.4	11.3	12.4	11.0
	2 or more children, youngest below 6	16.6	26.7	26.0	27.1	22.6
	2 or more children, youngest aged 6–15	23.8	25.8	21.7	25.4	18.2

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.

Notes: * Only unemployed; ** Inactive and on parental leave.

Table A5: The distribution of the French clusters by demographic characteristics (%)

Variables		Female clusters			Male clusters	
		Shared	Woman dominated	Men helpers	Woman dominated	Participating men
Age	18–25 years	6.4	10.1	8.1	8.5	9.2
	26–34 years	33.1	31.2	32.1	29.6	33.4
	35–42 years	41.8	37.4	39.8	41.8	37.3
	43–49 years	18.7	21.3	20.0	20.1	20.1
Relationship status	Cohabiting	42.2	38.8	38.8	35.3	39.8
	Married	57.8	61.2	61.2	64.7	60.2
Level of education	Low	11.7	20.0	19.5	24.5	14.5
	Secondary	41.3	49.6	42.5	56.2	48.1
	High	47.0	30.4	38.0	19.3	37.4
Employment status	Working	77.6	62.1	63.2	91.7	87.8
	Unemployed or inactive	17.8	31.3	29.9	6.7*	8.2*
	On parental leave	4.6	6.6	6.9	1.6**	4.0**
Number and age of children	No children below 15	37.5	18.9	29.1	21.1	32.9
	1 child, below 6	18.7	8.4	16.9	16.6	19.8
	1 child, aged 6–15	7.0	8.7	8.5	6.6	6.4
	2 or more children, youngest below 6	18.3	32.6	26.5	31.2	22.9
	2 or more children, youngest aged 6–15	18.5	31.4	19.0	24.5	18.0

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.

Notes: * Only unemployed; ** Inactive and on parental leave.

Table A6: The distribution of the Swedish clusters by demographic characteristics (%)

		Female clusters			Male clusters	
Variables		Shared	Woman dominated	Men helpers	Woman dominated	Participating men
Age	18–25 years	6.5	3.0	5.0	6.4	8.7
	26–34 years	32.8	33.6	32.4	36.0	32.4
	35–42 years	43.8	45.1	47.6	44.6	43.7
	43–49 years	16.9	18.3	15.0	13.0	15.2
Relationship status	Cohabiting	35.6	33.8	35.1	34.2	34.4
	Married	64.4	66.2	64.9	65.8	65.6
Level of education	Low	4.3	3.4	6.5	7.2	6.1
	Secondary	40.8	58.1	47.1	57.8	48.5
	High	54.9	38.5	46.4	35.0	45.4
Employment status	Working	80.1	75.6	72.6	87.5	92.8
	Unemployed or inactive	12.5	15.5	17.7	2.4*	1.5*
	On parental leave	7.4	8.9	9.7	10.1**	5.7**
Number and age of children	No children below 15	44.2	23.7	27.1	34.3	29.5
	1 child, below 6	15.2	12.7	11.3	10.9	18.0
	1 child, aged 6–14	4.7	6.2	3.5	4.2	4.2
	2 or more children, youngest below 6	18.6	25.6	28.1	28.0	26.4
	2 or more children, youngest aged 6–15	17.3	31.8	30.0	22.6	21.9

Source: Generations and Gender Survey – I, own calculations.

Notes: * Only unemployed; ** Inactive and on parental leave.