

Religion and Housework Division: The Interplay Between Religious and Gender Identity

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Abstract

This article focuses on the connection between religion and gendered division of housework, approaching the relationships based on individual and contextual religious dimensions. Building on social identity theory, the paper looks at how religious practice and identity connects with housework division and what happens in countries with high religious heterogeneity. The research hypotheses are tested using multilevel regression models, employing data from International Social Survey Program 2012 and from the Quality of Government dataset and they are partially supported by the data. The results show that religious identity matters for housework division, but the effects differ depending on religious denomination.

Keywords: housework division, religious identity, religious diversity, quantitative methods

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Despite the significant advancement toward more gender equality in most countries around the globe, the division of housework still remains unbalanced, with women doing a significantly greater part of the lion share as compared to men. Although empirical data proves that women's employment has grown in the last decades in virtually all societies (Wilensky 2005), and people believe more and more in gender equality (Inglehart 2018), at home, women continue to spend more time doing routine work, such as cooking, cleaning, buying groceries, and doing the laundry (Dotti Sani 2014; Geist and Cohen 2011).

The existing literature employs individual as well as contextual factors to explain the persistence of a significant gender gap in chores division. First, one can include the unbalanced power relations within the couple (Davis and Greenstein 2013), with men holding stronger positions in negotiating their contributions to housework division due to their better positions in the labor market, higher incomes, and better education (Parkman 2004; Bianchi et al 2000). An alternative explanation emphasizes the time available for doing housework, which again favors men who usually spend more time at work and less time at home as compared to their female partners (Geist 2005; Presser 1994). A third approach stresses the contribution of gender ideology in explaining this gender gap, with attitudes and value orientation being responsible for the way

couples divide tasks at home (Fuwa, 2004; Geist 2005). Among the contextual factors, the existing literature refers to gender equality at the macro level (Fuwa and Cohen 2007; Geist 2005), for example, in the welfare regime and social policies, by instance universalist welfare regime stimulating the equal share of housework, while the post-communist one having the opposite effect (Hook 2006). Although research on the topic covers a wide range of factors, the existing literature tends to neglect the contribution of cultural factors in shaping housework division.

Besides socio-demographic variables and macro level factors, the literature considers also the role played by culture in shaping housework division among partners, religion being one of them. Religion and family are very closely intertwined, and literature provides strong evidences for how they support each other (Roebuck Bulanda 2011; Wilcox and Jelen 1991; Yadgar 2006). While family socializes the next generation in a culture promoted by a given religious tradition (Houseknecht and Pankhurst 2000), most established churches support traditional family values and emphasize traditional gender roles and gender ideology (Friedland 2002). Thus, one can expect that religiosity and religious organizations endorse an unbalanced housework division due to their preferences for traditional gender ideology. However, many other aspects related to the connection between religiosity and housework division need to be addressed and explained.

The current paper focuses on two aspects related to religiosity and religious culture and their nexus with chores division, namely, the individual religious identification and the level of religious diversity in a country. To my knowledge, no other study approaches these two topics in a comparative perspective and, therefore, the current research aims at answering two questions. First, is there any connection between religious identity and housework division? Second, what is the impact of a country's level of religious diversity on the gender gap in housework? The paper builds on the idea of the intersectionality between gender identity and religious identity and claims that individuals "do gender" because they want to "do religion," and they want to prove their belonging to a certain religious denomination by behaving according to the norms prescribed by that religion (Avishai 2008). On the other hand, living in a country with a high religious diversity may threaten the survival of the religious groups (Voicu, Voicu, Strapcova 2009) that support and strengthen the pro-fertility norms (Inglehart 2018) that reside in traditional gender roles and the rejection of gender equality. Therefore, one can expect that a higher religious diversity goes hand in hand with an uneven gender division of housework.

I test the research hypotheses using data provided by the International Social Survey Programme's module "Family and Changing Gender Roles IV," collected in 2012, and by the Quality of Government dataset in 2013. The first dataset provides survey data collected at the individual level informing about housework division, religious identification, and religious behavior, while the second dataset offers information about the religious diversity in a country. After controlling for the effect of gender ideology and church attendance, the multilevel regression models employed in the current analyses support the research hypotheses, showing that both Catholic and Muslim religious identities are significantly associated with a gendered division of housework. At the same time, the higher the religious diversity in a country, the more uneven the division of housework.

This paper consists of four parts. The first part presents the theoretical background approaching the nexus between religiosity, religious diversity, and housework division and formulating the research hypotheses. The second part introduces the data and variables used in the analyses and methods employed. The third part is dedicated to the results and their interpretation, while the final section draws several conclusions based on the empirical findings and suggests some ideas for further research.

Review of the literature

Theoretical framework

The existing literature points out the contribution of two types of factors in explaining the variation in housework division: individual- and country-level factors.

The approaches focused on individual factors are usually divided into three categories: relative resources, time availability, and gender ideology. First, the relative resources, or the economic dependence, model assumes that housework is unpleasant, and people try to avoid it (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010). Thus, those with more resources and higher bargaining power use these elements in negotiating their share of housework within the couple (Knudsen and Waerness 2008). Education and position in the labor market play an important role here, with the partner having the higher income and human capital performing less housework (Fuwa 2004; Greenstein 2004; Presser 1994). Consequently, employed women do less housework as compared to housewives because they have a higher bargaining power (Fuwa 2004; Knudsen and Waerness 2008).

Second, the time availability approach builds on the idea that the housework division is the outcome of the rational decision-making process within the couple (Becker 1993), and the time dedicated to housework depends on the time availability of each partner (Geist 2005; Presser 1994; Ross 1987). Therefore, the partner who spends less time in the labor market can devote more to chores. The empirical research points out that the time spent at work has a greater impact on chores division as compared to employment status (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010).

Third, the gender ideology perspective explains the patterns of housework division by the values and attitudes shared by the partners (Voicu, Voicu, Strapcova, 2009). Traditional gender ideology allots the lion's share of the housework to women, with the female partner traditionally in charge of cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry, while the male partner is supposed to be the breadwinner of the household (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010). The modern gender ideology that allots similar roles to both genders tends to reduce the gender gap in performing housework. The gender construction, or "doing gender," perspective derives from the gender ideology model (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010). This approach holds that individuals behave according to their gender ideology (West and Zimmerman 1987) and they "do gender" to express their identity. This perspective is rooted in the symbolic interaction theory and holds that gender roles and gender identities are created through social interaction and explains why couples keep a traditional pattern of housework division when the relative resources and time availability models would predict a more even chores division (Erikson 2005; Knudsen and Waerness 2008).

Several other factors are employed to explain how couples divide the housework, among them the household's structure. Larger households accommodating a bigger number of members, as well as the presence of young children, make the domestic work more demanding and increase the time spent on housework (Presser 1994). In addition, age has a significant impact; people belonging to older cohorts are more inclined to share domestic tasks in an uneven way, with women doing more than men (Hank and Jürges 2007).

Both a country's institutional arrangements and its prevailing cultural norms play a role in shaping the pattern of housework division (Treas and Lui 2013). First, in countries, where women are empowered and have similar positions as men in the social structure, a smaller gender gap exists in housework divisions, as it happens in Sweden or Denmark (Balatova and Cohen 2002). In addition, political factors, such as welfare regimes in conservative and post-communist countries, have a less balanced division of housework (Fuwa 2004; Geist 2005), while the national pattern of female employment proved to be relevant too (Treas and Tai 2012). The cultural norms refer to factors like tolerance toward divorce or cohabitation (Balatova and Cohen 2005).

Religion and housework division

The connection between religion and family is well documented in the literature, emphasizing the association between religious beliefs and practices and the preference for traditional gender ideology and gender roles. (Christiano 2000; Roebuck Bulanda 2011; Wilcox and Jelen 1991; Yadgar 2006). While family socialises the next generation into the ingroup's religious culture (Houseknecht and Pankhurst 2000), religion promotes traditional gender ideology and supports the survival of the traditional family model (woman = homemaker, man = breadwinner) (Goldschneider and Goldschneider 1988; Porter and Emerson 2013). Thus, the institutions of family and religion support each other, each reinforcing the social norms and behavior needed for the successful survival of the other.

However, the relationship between religion and family is complex, and its influences occur through various channels. Roebuck Bulanda (2011) shows that there is a direct relation between religiosity and family behavior, as well as gender ideology, and this also holds true in the case of housework division. Religiosity is a multidimensional concept covering different aspects, such as religious identification, religious beliefs, and religious behavior (Stark and Glock 1968). The relation between religious beliefs, church attendance and housework division are moderated by gender ideology, as religious beliefs are strongly associated with traditional gender ideology (Voicu, Voicu, Strapcova, 2009), which, in turn, makes people adopt a traditional pattern of housework division. Moreover, church attendance ties the individual to the religious community and increases the community's social control over individual family behavior, which points to a direct effect of religious behavior on housework division.

On the other hand, the relation between religious identity and housework is a direct one but more complex and varies from one denomination to another. Religious identity is strongly interconnected with gender identity. According to identity theory, the self includes multiple identities, which cover three different layers: person identities, role identities, and group identities,

and which determine how an actor behaves in various social contexts (Carter 2014). Gender identities are diffuse and crosscut all three layers of self, masculinity and femininity being involved in any type of human interaction (Carter 2014). Gender identity is achieved during the first years of life and becomes a reference for behaving in different contexts. Thus, gender provides a stable repertoire of actions that an individual can use in various social contexts, a toolkit like the one provided by culture for individual life strategies (Swindler 1986). Therefore, an individual can select actions related to their gender identity and use them when performing role identities or when behaving according to social identities.

By design, religious identity is a social identity and helps actors create social bonds with their fellows. Moreover, religious identity is dynamic and actively constructed by social actors in response to internal conflicts and external pressures (Peek 2005). According to the concept of “everyday lived religion,” religiosity is not restricted only to formal church religious practices (McGurie 2008). Instead, religiosity is embodied in various daily life practices that contribute to the production of religious identity and play the role of identity markers. Moreover, when individuals identify strongly with their ingroup, they act as group members (Ellmers 1993). Thus, by performing the actions prescribed by religion in daily life, individuals “do religion,” and this distinguishes religious and nonreligious persons (Avishai 2008).

Thus, religious identity can employ gender and tools related to gender identity to stress an individual’s belonging to a certain religious group. For instance, Islam prescribes domestic roles for women and places them at home as housekeepers, which keeps women from the MENA region outside the labor market. In this case, the women assume a traditional gender role because they want to stress their religious identity (Hayo and Caris 2013). In the same way, people behave at home according to what their religion prescribes regarding gender roles and divide the domestic work accordingly to stress their belonging to a religious community. Thus, one can say that people “do gender” because they “do religion”.

Moreover, “doing gender” implies that individuals act according to the prescribed norms and gender expectations of their ingroup culture. However, these norms can vary from one group to another and from one culture to another because gender norms are not universal but are culturally dependent (McInnes 1998). Therefore, “doing gender” can lead to different results in the case of different religious groups. Although all great religious traditions emphasize traditional gender ideology, different denominations stress different aspects of traditional gender ideology (Roebuck Bulanda 2011). Therefore, “doing gender” might have different outcomes depending on religious denomination. For instance, Catholics stress the role of mother as caregiver (Christiano 2000), Evangelical Protestants emphasize the male authority within the family (Bartowski 2001; Ellison and Bartowski 2002), and Orthodox Christians promote female obedience (Voicu, Voicu, Strapcova, 2009).

On the other hand, Islam encourages the traditional gender ideology similar to other religious traditions but differs in one respect that may have significant consequences for “doing gender.” While Christian denominations emphasize the ideological and moral aspects of religiosity, Islam is more focused on “doing religion” as a “way of life” rather than a collection of

theological writings (Alghafli et al. 2014; Jeldtoft 2011). Thus, being Muslim is not only a question of belonging but also of question of behaving as Muslim and, consequently, “doing gender” is more important for Muslims as compared to other denominations.

However, beyond individual religiosity, a country’s religious culture may have an impact on the gender division of housework too. Religious diversity impacts national patterns of housework division in several ways. Social diversity challenges social identities by dividing societies into “us” and “them” and fosters potential threats to ingroup cultures and social identity (Steele et al. 2002). Moreover, religious diversity creates impermeable intergroup boundaries because religious identity is acquired early in life, and it is strongly bound to individual identity. Further, religious conversion is not very easy or undertaken very often (Brubaker 2013). According to the social identity theory, when intergroup boundaries are impermeable, people tend to behave as group members, which boosts social identities (Ellemers 1993). Thus, a higher religious diversity makes individuals behave as group members and protect their ingroup culture, which, in turn, impacts family behavior and domestic practices, because family transmits the ingroup culture to the next generation via cultural transmission mechanisms (Bisin and Verdier 2000).

Thus, the effect of religious diversity is twofold. Literature points out that housework, especially food preparation, is an important means of expressing the ingroup culture for ethnic groups (Perry-Jenkins et al. 2011; Pinto and Coltrane 2009), and religion shares similar features with ethnicity regarding cultural maintenance and heritage identity (Ward 2013). Therefore, in context of higher religious diversity, people may follow the prescriptions of their own religious group regarding domestic practices and housework, to preserve their own culture. In this case, the effect of diversity on housework division is a direct one. However, in the case of higher religious diversity, housework can be an identity marker used by individuals to show their belonging to a specific religious group. Accordingly, the connection between religious diversity and housework division is moderated by individual religious identification.

Consequently, one can expect, based on the literature review presented above, that:

- (H1) *Religious identity is associated with a traditional division of housework, even after controlling for the effect of gender ideology.*
- (H2) *The association differs depending on the religious denomination, with the impact of Muslim identity being stronger as compared to the Christian religious denominations.*
- (H3) *The housework division is more traditional in countries with a higher level of religious diversity.*
- (H4) *Religious identity associates significantly with an uneven housework division in countries with a higher religious diversity.*

Data measurement and methods

Data and methods

The analyses included in this paper are based on data from the International Social Survey Programme module “Family and Changing Gender Roles IV” carried out in 2012 in 38 countries. The questionnaire provides information about the housework division within the couple and about

religious identification and religious practices, as well as other relevant control variables like the sociodemographic background of the respondent and his/her partner. Due to the missing data on some relevant variables included in the analysis (some countries did not ask all the questions included in the master questionnaire), as well as on religious diversity in several countries, the current paper makes use of 28 countries. The list of countries and the sample size by country is provided in Table 1. The country-level variables were retrieved from the Quality of Government dataset, and they provide relevant information for 2012. The sample used in the analysis includes only people living as a couple (no matter the legal status). The dataset does not provide information regarding the sex of the partner, and I assumed that all couples are heterosexual ones. Listwise deletion of missing data was employed in all models. The final sample size at the individual level was 8564.

Because testing the research hypotheses involves both individual- and country-level variables, the paper makes use of multilevel regression models run in SPSS 23. Six different models have been estimated. The first model is the empty model, which includes only the dependent variable. The purpose of this model is to assess the amount of variance existing among countries. The second model contains only the individual-level variables, excepting gender ideology, while the third model includes only the individual variables but includes gender ideology. The purpose is to assess the mediation effect of gender ideology on religious identity and religious practice on one side, and the target variable on the other. The fourth model tests for the cumulative effects of the individual- and contextual-level variables, while the fifth model includes cross-level interactions between individual religious identity and religious diversity at the country level. The last model checks the random slopes for two independent variables.

Dependent variable

The ISSP 2012 questionnaire provides information about the tasks performed by the respondent or the partner in the household. This analysis focuses on four tasks that are routine work usually performed by women, such as preparing dinner, cleaning, shopping for groceries, and doing laundry (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010). The respondents were asked to indicate whether these tasks are always performed by the respondent, usually performed by the respondent, about equally by the respondent and the spouse/partner, usually performed by the spouse/partner, or always performed by the spouse/partner. Tasks performed by a third person were recoded as having an equal share among the partners. I followed Geist and Cohen (2011) in recording the scale to tap the gender gap in housework. Thus, I assigned the value of -2 if a task was always performed by women and -1 if the task was usually performed by women. Equal share tasks and those completed by a third person were recoded as 0. Tasks usually done by men were assigned the value of -1, and those always completed by men the value of -2. The resulting scale ranges from -8 to +8, with negative values pointing to an uneven division of housework where women performed more than men, while positive values indicated that men assumed a higher share than women.

Independent variables – individual level

Several dummy variables capture the effect of religiosity, one standing for the monthly church and other three for the effect of religious identification with Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Muslim denominations. Gender ideology is captured by an index built as the average score of the individual's answers to the four items measured on a five-point Likert scale. The four items are "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works" / "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job" / "A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children" / "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family." The scale ranges from 1 to 5. Higher values point to greater support for gender equality and have a good cross-country reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha having an average of 0.714 and a standard deviation of 0.08 and ranging from 0.828 in Germany to 0.441 in India.

Three dummy variables allow controlling for the effect of relative resources: one recording the woman's employment status, one the man's status, and the third pointing out if the woman has a higher income compared to her partner. The effect of the time availability model is checked by two variables. A dummy variable indicates whether the woman works longer hours than her partner, while the answer to the question "How often during the past three months did you come home from work too tired to do the chores that needed to be done?" was measured on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 "several times a week" to 4 "never" to capture the pressure exerted by the regular working schedule outside home.

Several additional variables control for the effect of sociodemographic background, such as age measured in years, gender tapped by a dummy variable (in which the value of 1 indicates a male respondent), number of persons in the household, and number of toddlers in the household. The effect of education is checked by a variable ranging from 0 to 6, namely, from no formal education to upper-level tertiary education (Master's, PhD). This variable is derived from the country-specific scales measuring education based on the ISCED-97 grid (additional information is available in the ISSP Background Variables Guidelines (<http://www.gesis.org/issp/issp-background-variables/>)).

Independent variables – country level

Religious diversity is measured using fractionalization indexes proposed by Alesina et al. (2003). The index indicates the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a given country will not belong to the same religious groups and ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a higher diversity. The Gender Equality Index is based on the Gender Inequality Index proposed by United Nation Development Program (additional information can be retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>) and points out the effect of a general level of gender equality in a country and takes into account three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. The index ranges from 0 to 1 and was recoded so higher values indicate a higher level of gender equality. A dummy variable stands for the effect of living in post-communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
<i>Individual level</i>				
Housework	-2	2	-0.86	0.78
Church attendance	0	1	0.34	
Catholic	0	1	0.42	
Muslim	0	1	0.02	
Orthodox	0	1	0.02	
Gender (male=1)	0	1	0.48	
Woman employed	0	1	0.54	
Man employed	0	1	0.70	
Woman works longer	0	1	0.43	
Woman has higher income	-3	3	-0.83	1.49
Age	15	96	49	15
Education	0	6	3.27	1.58
Too tired from work	1	4	2.60	1.05
Persons in household	1	27	3.50	1.88
Toddlers in household	0	9	0.36	0.73
Gender ideology	1	5	3.05	0.98
<i>Country level</i>				
Religious fractionalization	0.14	0.86	0.42	0.21
Gender Inequality Index	0.05	0.62	0.22	0.15
Eastern Europe	0	1	0.25	

Results

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that, in every country included in the current analysis, women do more housework than men. However, the disparity is not the same everywhere. Northern Europe displays the most equalitarian pattern of housework division between the two genders, while the difference between time allotted by men and women to do chores was the lowest in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland, as well as in Canada, Austria, and Venezuela. One should notice, however, that in Venezuela, the dispersion is among the highest in the countries included in the study, which points to a very big heterogeneity and the absence of an established national pattern.

Table 2. Sample size and housework division between men and women by country mean and standard deviation

	Mean	SD	Sample size
Argentina	-0.924	0.796	223
Austria	-0.677	0.699	342
Canada	-0.642	0.694	93
Chile	-0.997	0.864	164
Croatia	-1.061	0.700	228
Czech Republic	-1.081	0.719	533
Finland	-0.660	0.617	398
France	-0.958	0.748	629
Germany	-0.884	0.717	461
Iceland	-0.630	0.635	440
India	-0.283	0.812	95
Ireland	-0.822	0.797	332
Israel	-0.816	0.734	356
Japan	-1.266	0.703	298
South Korea	-1.127	0.807	327
Latvia	-0.868	0.737	237
Lithuania	-0.874	0.606	231
Mexico	-0.777	1.070	183
Norway	-0.642	0.630	553
Philippines	-0.974	0.881	247
Poland	-1.067	0.648	246
Slovakia	-1.070	0.614	282
Slovenia	-0.976	0.660	244
South Africa	-0.985	0.825	208
Sweden	-0.563	0.690	354
Switzerland	-0.899	0.725	411
United States	-0.711	0.813	241
Venezuela	-0.668	1.021	208

At the opposite end are the Asian countries, namely, Japan and South Korea, and several countries from Central and Eastern Europe, such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Croatia. The data also confirms previous findings, which suggest that, despite the higher level of economic development, Asian countries still lag behind Western Europe and North America when it comes to gender equality (Inglehart, 2018; Schutz Lee et al., 2010). Moreover, the results point clearly to the persistence of the communist legacy in Central and Eastern Europe, where, due to

the policies promoted by the former communist regime, women gained rights equal to men in the labor market, but not at home (Gal and Klingman, 2000; Heitlinger, 1985). Consequently, although the female employment is quite high in the region, the pattern of housework division is still a traditional one. India is an outlier, displaying the lowest level of gender disparity, although the literature does not document a very modern gender ideology, and further investigation is needed regarding the pattern of housework division in this country. Although India seems to be an outlier, the results of the multilevel regression models (available on request) do not change if India is excluded.

Table 3. Unstandardised coefficients for multilevel linear regression models: dependent variable housework sharing between women and men

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Intercept	-0.878 ***	-0.675 ***	-0.938 ***	-0.961 ***	-0.962 ***	-0.859 ***
<i>Individual level</i>						
Church attendance		-0.046 **	-0.031	-0.036 *	-0.036 *	-0.033
Catholic		-0.066 ***	-0.047 *	-0.050 *	-0.051	-0.047
Muslim		-0.224 ***	-0.227 ***	-0.225 ***	-0.593 **	-0.574 **
Orthodox		-0.019	-0.001	0.004	0.004	-0.006
Gender (male=1)		0.355 ***	0.362 ***	0.363 ***	0.363 ***	0.373 ***
Woman employed		-0.042	-0.050	-0.039	-0.039	-0.027
Man employed		0.108	0.112	0.120	0.120	0.083
Woman works longer hours		0.163 ***	0.156 ***	0.156 ***	0.155 ***	0.148 ***
Woman higher income		0.061 ***	0.059 ***	0.058 ***	0.058 ***	0.063 ***
Age		-0.009 ***	-0.008 ***	-0.008 ***	-0.008 ***	-0.008 ***
Education		0.061 ***	0.052 ***	0.052 ***	0.053 ***	0.050 ***
Tired from work		-0.015 *	-0.021 **	-0.021 **	-0.021 **	-0.023 ***
Persons in household		-0.032 ***	-0.029 ***	-0.030 ***	-0.030 ***	-0.031 ***
Toddlers in household		-0.014	-0.023	-0.024 *	-0.023	-0.021
Gender ideology			0.082 ***	0.083 ***	0.083 ***	0.081 ***
<i>Country level</i>						
Religious diversity				-0.290 *	-0.296 *	-0.406 ***
Gender inequality index				0.795 ***	0.802 ***	0.860 ***
Eastern Europe				-0.200 **	-0.199 **	-0.269 ***
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>						
Muslim*Religious diversity					0.916	.901
Catholic*Religious diversity					0.004	.009
R ₁ ²		.208	.204	.251	.251	
R ₂ ²				.526	.525	
BIC	70353	21062	19794	19775	19774	19704
<i>Random effects</i>						Variance components
Gender ideology						0.006 *
Gender (male=1)						0.032 **

*** p <.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05; valid N level 1= 8564, valid N level 2 = 28; for empty model F Test = 574, p <.001

The results of the multilevel regression models, shown in Table 3, indicate that there is a significant variance among countries with respect to housework division. The F Test for Model 1 (empty model) is highly significant (F Test = 574, p <.001); therefore, multilevel regression models are appropriated for testing the research hypotheses. Model 2 includes individual-level independent variables, and the variance explained by these variables is only about 20%. One should note that Model 3 tests for the effect of individual-level independent variables, but it also controls for the effect of gender ideology. This extra control does not result in an increase in the explained variance, which remains 20%, as in the previous model. Model 4 controls for the cumulative effects of individual- and country-level independent variables, while Model 5 includes

cross-level interactions between individual religious identity (Muslim and Catholic) and the country's level of religious diversity. The interaction with the Orthodox identity was omitted because the main effect of Orthodox identity on the target variables is not statistically significant. The variance explained by the country-level variables is approximately 52%, whereas, the variance explained by the individual independent variables has slightly increased too. One should mention that adding the cross-level interactions does not result in an increase in the variance explained, as long as the effect of the two interactions proves to be very weak and not significant. The last model employs random slopes for gender and gender ideology based on the Schwarz's Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), which went down from Model 1 to Model 6. Thus, one can say that the last model has the best fit.

Hypothesis one states the connection between religious identification and housework division. The effect of religious identity varies depending on religious denomination, as expected. The effect of Catholic identity is significant in Model 2 but diminishes once we control for the effect of gender ideology and becomes not significant when we control for the interaction with religious diversity at the country level. The results point out that, in the case of Catholic denomination, traditional gender ideology, which comes with religious socialization, plays a leading role in shaping the domestic pattern of housework division. Identification with the Orthodox denomination has a very weak effect and is not significant in any model, thus, it has no effect on the way couples belonging to this denomination divide the chores. Hence, one can say that Catholics "do gender" because they acquire traditional gender ideology as part of their religious socialization but not because they want to show their religious identity, while the Orthodox denomination does not exert any influence, either direct or moderated, on gender ideology by how their believers divide the housework.

As stated in the second hypothesis, Muslim identity has a strong significant effect on housework division even after controlling for the effect of gender ideology and for the interaction between Muslim identity and the country's religious diversity. In fact, the effect of Muslim identity doubles after controlling for the cross-level interaction. The results provide clear evidences that Muslims "do gender" to stress their religious identity and not only because their religion emphasizes traditional gender ideology. Moreover, religious diversity does not interfere with their identity, as long as the effect of interaction is weak and not significant. No matter how diverse the country is, Muslims will display their gendered behavior to stress their belonging to the Muslim denomination. In other words, they "do gender" to "do religion".

Model 4 to Model 6 provide clear evidences that a country's religious diversity impacts the way men and women divide the chores. As expected, people living in countries with a higher religious diversity practice an uneven gender division of housework. The effect persists even when the control for gender ideology is included, showing that it is not only the gender ideology effect that matters but also the fact that individuals tend to protect their ingroup culture from external threat by employing traditional practices related to that culture. They "do gender," not only because their religious group supports the idea that women and men have different roles at home, but because "doing gender" is part of the ingroup culture, is a cultural practice, and they use it to

protect their culture. The third hypothesis is fully supported by the data. However, the interaction between religious identity and religious diversity is not significant for Catholics or Muslims. The effect of religious diversity is, therefore, not moderated by an individual's religious identification, but is a direct effect of people "doing gender" in the context of a high religious diversity, not to show off their identity, but to preserve their ingroup culture.

The effect of control variables related to religiosity partially confirms the findings reported in the literature. Although the effect of church attendance is statistically significant in Model 2, it decreases and becomes not significant when controlling for the effect of gender ideology in Model 3. This shows that church attendance per se does not influence the pattern of housework division, but gender ideology does. Church attendance only exposes people to a traditional gender ideology, but the social control expected due to the closer connection with a community of religious believers who practice traditional gender roles division does not have the expected effect.

The effect of other control variables is similar to that reported by previous studies. Thus, households where the woman earns more than her male partner practice an even distribution of housework, as predicted by the relative resources theory. However, the partner's employment status does not exert a significant effect on the target variables. On the other hand, if the female partner spends more time in the labor market, the chores division is more even, which provides support to the time availability approach. Moreover, if the respondent considers his or her engagement in the labor market a burden and has no time to do the chores, then the division of the housework is uneven. Other individual sociodemographic variables behave in the expected way, with men reporting a significantly more equal division of housework than women. Moreover, education seems to reduce the gender gap in housework, while age has the opposite effect, as well as the number of members in the household, due to the increase in the total time needed for the chores in larger households. The number of toddlers, however, has no significant effect.

At the aggregate level, the results provide findings consistent with those reported by the previous research. The overall level of gender equality in a country matters significantly for the way people divide housework, with countries scoring high on gender equality promoting an even division of housework. As expected, the dummy variable tapping the effect of communist legacies has a significant negative impact on housework division, proving that, even two decades after the communist regime vanished, the policies promoted for half a century have an imprint on the private lives of former communist citizens.

Conclusions

This article focuses on the connection between religion and the gendered division of housework, approaching the relationships based on individual and contextual religious dimensions. Building mainly on social identity theory, the paper looks at how religious practice and religious identity connects with housework division and what happens with chores division in countries with a higher religious heterogeneity. The research hypotheses are tested using multilevel regression models and employing data from the ISSP 2012 module "Family and Changing Gender Roles IV," and from the Quality of Government dataset.

The research hypotheses are partially supported by the data. The current results show that religious identity matters for housework division, but the effects differ depending on religious denomination. Orthodox identity has no connection with housework division, while the negative effect of Catholic identity vanishes after controlling for the cross-level interaction with religious diversity. Muslim identity proved to have the most significant impact on chores division, as predicted by hypothesis two. This effect becomes even stronger after controlling for gender ideology, contextual factors, and their interaction with religious diversity. Thus, according to our results, Muslims “do gender” to “do religion,” and not simply because their religious teachings assign different roles to men and women. “Doing gender” is, in the case of Muslims, a way to show off belonging to their religious group, an identity marker similar to the dress code promoted by their culture.

The results show that, in the case of Muslims, religious identity intersects with gender and reinforces traditional gender roles. Thus, the intersection between religion and gender makes a significant contribution to the preservation of a traditional gender division of work among Muslims. Moreover, the effect is not moderated by the religious context, and it persists even after controlling for contextual variables, which means that Muslim identity has an imprint on gendered behavior not on the contextual influences related to the country’s level of gender equality or degree of religious heterogeneity.

However, the current sample does not include countries with Muslims religious majorities. With only a few exceptions, the countries considered were Christian. If one considers the minority-majority interplay as a trigger of religious identity, the impact of Muslim identity on housework division may be the outcome of the minority status shared by Muslims in these countries. The same rationale can be employed for explaining why Christian religious identities do not lead to using gendered practices as religious identity markers. Basically, people belonging to Christian denominations do not need to show off their identity to preserve and protect their ingroup culture because they represent the majority, and their identity is not under threat, while Muslims are religious minorities in these countries. Further research should also include countries where Muslims represent the majority and check the impact of Muslim identity on housework division.

On the other hand, the data shows that a country’s religious diversity is associated with an uneven division of housework. As stated by the third hypothesis, the relationship is a direct one, with people practicing a traditional division of housework to preserve the culture of their religious ingroup. The results do not provide support for the fourth hypothesis because religious identity did not prove to be a moderator between religious diversity and housework division. Thus, people use housework to preserve their ingroup culture and, by “doing gender,” they transmit to the values and behaviors promoted by their religious tradition to the next generations. However, they do not “do gender” in the social context of a higher religious heterogeneity to show off their religious identity and, not simply because they believe that private areas belong to women, and men should not interfere.

The current research represents a snapshot that depicts the connection between religious diversity and housework practices at one moment in time, but the modern world is very dynamic

and, due to international migration flows, a country's religious composition may change over relatively short periods of time. The political events in the last few decades, such as the falling of Berlin Wall and the strong influx of non-European migrants in Western Europe and North America, together with the continued secularization of highly advanced Western democracies, had a significant impact on the religious composition of the Western world. On one hand, traditional Christian denominations lose ground due to secularization, while international migration flows bring significant influxes of people of non-Christian denominations. In this context, religious diversity increased in Western Europe and North America, and this puts pressure on the institutions of traditional families and religious groups. Thus, further research should look at the connection between religious diversity and housework division from a longitudinal perspective and analyze the overtime changes. Moreover, the substantive content, and not just the amount, of diversity should be considered too, as in the case of the current study. Namely, future studies should look at the substantive differences existing among religious groups and analyze whether the cultural distance among religious groups matters for family life and family behaviors.

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