

The Division of Household Labor in Germany and Israel

We compare the patterns of household division of labor in Germany and Israel—two countries that share key elements of the corporatist welfare regime but differ in their gender regimes—and evaluate several hypotheses using data from the 2002 International Social Survey Program. Although time constraints and relative resources affect the division of household labor and women's housework in both societies, we find that in Germany the gender order of household labor is more rigid, whereas in Israel the spouses' linked labor market status exerts distinctive effects. We also find significant relationships between gender ideology and the division of household labor. We discuss the theoretical advantages of approaching the comparative study of gender inequality from the vantage point of family and gender regimes.

Despite a remarkable rise in female labor force participation and a persistent, albeit sluggish, movement toward greater gender equality in society, household work remains highly segregated and predominantly a woman's responsibility. Over the past decades, women have reduced

somewhat the amount of time spent on household tasks, yet, they still do considerably more than their male spouses (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Shelton & John, 1996). Moreover, routine activities essential to household functioning are typically performed by women, and only a minority of couples share the responsibility for household tasks (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991; Presser, 1994; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2000).

Recent studies using comprehensive data analysis have made some progress in integrating and articulating a number of sociological perspectives on the household division of labor (Baxter, 1997; Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Coltrane, 2000), but our understanding of this phenomenon and its persistence is still rather rudimentary. At the microlevel the issue is typically framed in terms of the *implicit contract* between the spouses, which is partially dependent on their personal attributes and labor market activities. On a broader level, family division of labor is addressed in terms of the societal factors that impact on the organization of the household. These include the relationship between family, market, and state, as well as cultural norms. The latter concern is best addressed by means of comparative analysis that permits the examination of structural factors associated with different patterns of household organization.

This article aims to enhance the understanding of the household division of labor and the antecedents of the egalitarian gender regime in several ways. First, by studying the patterns of housework in Germany and Israel, we aim to contribute

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to the small but growing body of research that focuses on the social context of the gendered division of household labor. Second, we evaluate the time constraints and the resource dependence perspectives as well as the gender ideology argument concerning the housework of working women. Third, by examining the time devoted to housework by both spouses as well as the extent of sharing daily household tasks, we provide a detailed account of the correlates of the household division of labor.

Generalized Explanations of the Division of Household Labor

Sociological approaches to the household division of labor can be grouped into two broad classes. One class of explanations is framed in terms of microrelations and includes several variants of exchange theory. According to this approach, the actual practices followed by spouses are viewed as negotiated agreements that take into account differential resources as well as extrafamilial activities in which spouses are engaged (Bianchi et al., 2000; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Brines, 1994). A second class of explanations is premised on the idea that the household division of labor is not merely an agreement struck between two social actors. Rather, it reflects societal gender ideologies and socialization processes. Furthermore, its enactment serves to institutionalize gender distinctions (Berk, 1985; Hochschild, 1989; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Resource dependence and time constraints. Two theoretical explanations are often invoked to describe intrahousehold arrangements from the microrelations perspective. The resource dependence perspective suggests that the division of household tasks largely reflects the differential power of the spouses within the household and this in turn is determined by their relative social statuses. This approach involves the assumption that spouses prefer not to engage in housework and therefore the spouse that can muster a greater amount of resources or can threaten to withdraw resources in spousal negotiations will carry less of the household burden (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Brines, 1994; Maret & Finlay, 1984). To the extent that women are less able than their spouses to secure valuable resources for the household (e.g., income and symbolic rewards), they will carry most of the responsibility of household chores. Increasingly, studies have

focused on a particular form of resource-power relations that views the division of labor as a function of economic dependence "... best defined in terms of one spouse's reliance upon the other for his or her current income standard" (Brines, 1994, p. 657).

Other factors may enter into or may affect the exchange relations between the spouses. Market work, of course, imposes time constraints on the amount of time available for housework. Hence, the former should be negatively related with the latter, irrespective of resource dependence (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003). From the perspective of time availability, spouses' employment patterns may thus have a direct effect on the time they devote to housework, although not necessarily on gender segregation of household chores. Life course factors such as transitions to marriage, childbearing, and aging also influence the division of household labor. Having more and younger children increases the demand for housework (Coltrane, 2000; Cowan & Cowan, 1992), and this typically affects women's housework more than men's (South & Spitze, 1994). Younger women tend to spend less time doing housework and to share more with their spouses than older women (Hersch & Stratton, 1994), reflecting both cohort and life course changes.

An important mechanism for coping with time constraints is the outsourcing of domestic tasks, as in the case of frequently eating out or employing a third party to do housework. Studies have uniformly found that such outsourcing is associated with higher family income (Bittman, Matheson, & Meagher, 1999; Van der Lippe, Tijdens, & Ruijter, 2004) and is positively related to relative power of the female spouse (Cohen, 1998). Although it is commonly believed that outsourcing saves time, only a few studies have actually estimated its effect on the amount of time couples spend on housework. Brines (1994) has shown that the relative expenditure on restaurant meals was negatively related to wives' (but not husbands') housework time, whereas Van der Lippe et al. (2004) have reported that both domestic help and take-away meals were negatively associated with women's housework and the latter had a weak negative effect on men's housework as well. Outsourcing, then, appears to be an intervening factor leading to a reduction of time spent on household chores by wives with relatively ample resources. Yet, although outsourcing involves the delegation of certain household tasks to a third person and generally reduces the time

spent by the wife on housework, it still requires engaging a third person, as well as scheduling and supervising the work. In view of the fact that outsourced tasks are typically considered a female domain, the responsibility for them still lies primarily with wives.

Family roles and the social construction of gender. Although the exchange/dependency perspective and its derivatives are generally conceptualized as (gender neutral) microdecisions, the second class of arguments can be defined as the gender construction proposition. Better known as “doing gender,” this proposition suggests that social differences between women and men are constructed by means of “... a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micropolitical activities ...” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). Once constructed, they are used to reinforce gender differences. Hence, the performance of daily activities in the household and the emergent division of labor reproduces gender as a social category and reinforces male and female roles, identities, and attitudes. The division of household labor, then, is not only about productivity but also about the “production” of gender and gender relations through “everyday performance” (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Greenstein, 2000).

With changing patterns of employment and family formation, the traditional model has given way to a variety of alternatives, and some researchers have predicted growing individualization whereby male and female roles become “de-complementary” (Burns & Scott, 1994) and families shift from “a community of need” to “an elective relationship” (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). To the extent that the household remains a locus of gender production, however, we might expect that the gender division of household labor would not be fully accounted for by resource dependence relations or by time constraints. Such gender distinctions are likely to materialize not only in the time spent on housework but in the division of responsibility for household chores as well. Even when quantitative differences in the time spouses devote to housework are small, women tend to bear the main responsibility for daily household activities. Indeed, both the time and responsibility dimensions are necessary for capturing the gendered division of household labor.

Past research has indicated that the extent to which household labor is gendered is related, in part, to the attitudes held by the spouses. Blair

and Lichter (1991) found that more egalitarian attitudes were related to lower family/work segregation, and Greenstein (1996) reported that husbands’ contribution to domestic labor was affected by the interaction of both spouses’ gender ideologies.

One may further deduce the import of cultural factors in structuring household division of labor from counternormative spousal arrangements. Although many studies have found a negative relationship between wives’ economic dependence and the time they spent on housework, several studies have reported a more complex—curvilinear—relationship according to which, when the wife is the main provider, there is a tendency for men to reduce their share of housework while that of their spouses is increased. Acknowledging the normative powers at work in these cases, Greenstein (2000) interpreted this phenomenon as *deviance neutralization* used by spouses to cope with what, in view of prevalent social norms, might still be considered deviant identities.

The Relevance of Societal Context

The rationale for comparative analysis was succinctly described over a decade ago by Kalleberg and Rosenfeld (1990) who pointed out that “... differences in how men and women are able to integrate these two kinds [*labor market and family*] of work may reflect national variations in macroscopic institutions, labor markets, culture, and ... policies designed to integrate family and work roles” (p. 334). On the basis of this idea, several studies set out to examine whether the division of household labor is more egalitarian in societies characterized by greater gender equality in the public sphere. Baxter (1997), for instance, argued that Scandinavian countries have achieved greater legal, political, and economic gender equality and therefore hypothesized that husbands and wives would display more egalitarian gender relations in the domestic division of household labor. Her findings, however, did not support this conjecture and led to the conclusion “... that the gender division of labor in the home is not closely tied to broader levels of gender equality” (p. 225).

More intricate conclusions were reached by Calasanti and Bailey (1991), who used the same data to compare the division of household labor in Sweden and the United States from a socialist-feminist perspective. The socioeconomic regimes

in the two countries constitute, according to the authors, different forms of patriarchal capitalism. Consequently, they expected different levels of household division of labor and varying effects of spouses' characteristics on the organization of housework in the two countries. Although they found some differences in the effect of individual-level factors on the spousal division of responsibility for household chores (most notably the greater importance of spouses' relative income in the United States as compared to Sweden), these were small relative to the effect of gender in both societies. The division of household labor did not come close to parity even after taking spouses' and family characteristics into account and in this respect "... little significant difference [was found] between the U.S. and Sweden, despite progressive legislation in the latter country" (p. 49).

More recent studies examined a wider range of nations and employed more sophisticated methodology to flesh out the underlying relationships between macrolevel attributes and the division of household labor. These studies examined a variety of social-context attributes including gender empowerment (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Fuwa, 2004), economic development, welfare regimes (Fuwa, 2004), and family-oriented policies (Hook, 2005; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2006) and illustrated the complex ways in which the relationships between household division of labor and spouses' attributes are conditioned by country-level characteristics. Other studies have also found that the institutional or ideological context tends to affect the way men and women interpret their roles in the household and the likelihood of deviation from "normative" gender arrangements (cf. Bittman, et al., 2003; Evertsson & Neramo, 2004; Greenstein, 2000).

In contrast to much of the comparative research on household division of labor emphasizing differences that stem from the social context of diverse welfare regimes, the rationale guiding the present study focuses more directly on what Crompton (1999) termed "gender order" or "gender regime." The concept of gender order encapsulates the idea that gender relations are constructed in particular social contexts and that the structuring of these relations is complex as they evolve from a multiplicity of origins. The gender order is pervasive throughout society, but "... the major dimension structuring the gender division of labor has been the gender coding of caring and market work" (Crompton, 1999, p. 204). Hence, for a vari-

ety of reasons, societies might differ in their dominant form of gender organization, ranging from the historic male breadwinner – female carer model to the yet unattained dual earner – dual carer model (Gornick & Meyers, 2003).

The German and Israeli settings. Israel and Germany provide a promising and as yet unexplored setting for a comparative study of household division of labor. They have enough in common to provide a basis for comparison, and yet, they differ in some important respects that make this comparison valuable (Lewin-Epstein, Stier, & Braun, 2000). Both countries are, generally speaking, capitalist with fairly extensive welfare systems. Israel shares with Germany some key elements of the corporatist welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Stier, Lewin-Epstein, & Braun, 2001). Yet, the two countries differ considerably in family characteristics and in mothers' employment behavior.

In many respects, the Israeli family exhibits more traditional features than the German family. The median age at first marriage is 24.6 for women and 26.8 for men. Divorce rates are also low compared to most Western countries and the rate of cohabitation is less than 4% (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005a). Israel is also characterized by low rates of childlessness and the highest total fertility rate among the industrialized countries (2.9 for the entire population and 2.6 among Jews). These patterns are supported by social and welfare policies that promote both high fertility and female employment (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2000). Israel has long established pronatalist policies that include child allowances, tax deductions in accordance with number of children, and subsidized housing loans for young married couples and single mothers (Doron & Kramer, 1992).

The situation in Germany is quite different. The median age at first marriage is considerably higher than in Israel, 28.8 for women and 31.8 for men, in 2002. As to the stability of marriages, one third of all marriages in Germany will end in divorce (Bundesinstitut fuer Bevoelkerungsforschung, 2004; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2004). The rate of cohabitation is substantially higher in Germany as well, and in 2002, 10.5% of all couples were cohabitating (ZUMA, 2006). Differences between the two countries are also evident with respect to fertility. The total fertility rate in Germany is 1.3, and over 20% of women born after 1960 are childless (Statistisches

Bundesamt, 2004). Indeed, Germany is among the countries with the highest rate of childless women in the world (Dorbritz & Gartner, 2003). Although child allowances and tax deductions based on the number of children exist in Germany, a greater tax break is provided when one of the partners—usually the female spouse—is not working (irrespective of presence of children). Maternity leave is not fully paid, and re-employment is guaranteed up to 3 years after giving birth. No arrangements for shorter working hours with pay are available for working mothers.

In Germany, child-care facilities for small and very small children are not well developed, and full-day care is rare (Deutsches Jugendinstitut, 2002). Approximately 10% of children under 3 years of age are enrolled in formal child care (5% in the west and 34% in the eastern part of Germany, which accounts for about one fifth of the German population). Among 3–5 year olds, 77% are enrolled in kindergarten (Gornick & Meyers, 2003). Once again, coverage is higher in the east (87.5%) than in the west (74.6%). These numbers are in line with recent research indicating that although homemaking is in decline in Germany, German women are still most likely to exit the labor market in conjunction with motherhood (Grunow, Hofmeister, & Buchholtz, 2006).

Paid maternity leave in Israel is similar to that in Germany. Guaranteed re-employment is limited, however, to 1 year following the birth of a child so that women tend to return before long to the labor market. Mothers of young children are entitled to shorter working hours with full pay and “sick” leave on account of ill children. Most importantly, a fairly extensive kindergarten and day-care system in Israel provides child-care facilities for working women. Just over 20% of children younger than 3 are in daycare and over 90% of children 3–5 years old are enrolled in kindergarten (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005b, Table 8.6; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2006). Indeed, the dual-earner model is the modal form of family organization and the state facilitates women’s combining family and employment responsibilities. Nonetheless, about one third of employed women still hold part-time jobs.

Germany and Israel, then, appear to differ in family structure and with respect to policies and resources regarding family-work nexus. The traditional relationship between family and work is upheld in Germany by means of welfare and tax policies. Labor market policies also strongly encouraged labor market exit of mothers and

reduced labor supply of wives. This approach is also evident in the fact that over 40% of women who work hold part-time jobs (ZUMA, 2006). Although families in Israel are generally more “traditional” (i.e., relatively early marriage, low divorce, and high fertility), they are quite modern in economic orientation, as both spouses tend to participate in the labor force. Hence, although one might still characterize the prevailing gender regime in Germany as closer to the male breadwinner–female carer arrangement (cf. Rosenfeld, Trappe, & Gornick, 2004), the family-work model in Israel lies somewhere between the dual-earner-female part-time carer type and the dual-earner-state carer type.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical considerations outlined above, we hypothesize that in both Germany and Israel the division of household labor and women’s hours of housework will be related to microlevel characteristics such as time constraints, relative resources, and gender attitudes. We further hypothesize, however, that the distinct social and institutional contexts of the two societies will lead to different levels of investment in housework. Specifically, Israeli women will spend less time than German women in housework and the division of household labor in Israel will be more egalitarian. The latter proposition stems from the different societal views of women’s roles in the two societies. The dual-earner model that characterizes Israeli policies and practices is likely to legitimate less effort in housework and a less rigid gendered division of labor.

With regard to the relationship between microlevel attributes and the organization of the household, we expect that Germany and Israel will differ in several respects. Specifically, we hypothesize a stronger relationship between the extent of labor market employment and time spent on housework among German women than Israeli women and that husbands’ hours of market work will have a positive effect on the amount of housework done by women in Germany but not in Israel. We derive these hypotheses from our discussion of the societal contexts, which indicated that both ideology and social policies in Israel encourage the dual earner–female carer family model, whereas in Germany labor market policies largely support the male-breadwinner model.

We also expect that when children are present in the household, Israeli men will increase their share of housework more than German men. The former favor relatively large families and share with women a child-centered ideology. The breadwinner model of household organization in Germany, however, is likely to limit the perceived responsibility of men for meeting the increased demand for household labor generated by children.

We expect no differences between the two countries in the extent to which gender attitudes are egalitarian (Lewin-Epstein et al., 2000). Yet, the predominance of the male-breadwinner family model in Germany and the greater rigidity of family roles are likely to pose more difficulty in affecting the household organization even when espousing egalitarian gender attitudes. We thus hypothesize a stronger relationship between attitudes and the division of housework in Israel than in Germany.

METHOD

Data Sources

To examine the hypotheses outlined in the previous section, we make use of data sets collected as part of the International Social Survey Program in 2002. Questionnaires were administered to full probability samples of the population aged 18 and over. Although a large part of the questionnaire addressed family and gender-related attitudes, it also included factual information on the division of household labor and the amount of time spent on housework. In Germany, data were collected from 1,367 individuals. The population of the former East Germany was oversampled. We, therefore, weighted the German sample to obtain proper representation of the two regions. In the analysis, we considered the possibility that as a result of past experience and persistent differences in childcare arrangements, significant differences in the response variables may exist between East and West Germany. To evaluate the validity of using the combined sample, we tested our multivariate models against models that interacted the east-west distinction with all independent variables. The models did not differ significantly suggesting that the patterns of relationship are quite uniform.

In Israel the sample included 1,207 individuals (1,018 drawn from the Jewish population and 189

from the Arab population). The Arab population is socially and culturally very different from the Jewish population, and its sample size was too small to carry out separate analyses. For this reason, the present study includes only the Jewish population.

Because all respondents provided information on the household as well as details of their own and their spouses' education and employment, it was possible to construct a "couples" file, which contains household information and individual-level data for each of the spouses. A major aspect of the gendered division of household work has to do with its relationship to labor market activity. We, therefore, excluded from the data set households that did not consist of a heterosexual couple (either married or cohabiting) and households in which both spouses were older than 65. As a result of the above decisions, we were left with approximately 60% of the original samples in the two countries (814 couples in Germany and 613 in Israel).

Variables and Measurement

Three dependent variables capture the division of household labor. The extent of segregation in household labor or, conversely, the extent of spousal sharing in household tasks, is measured as the average of responses to four items that represent major tasks of daily household maintenance: doing laundry, cleaning, preparing meals, and shopping. The scale for each item ranges from 1, *only wife is responsible for the activity*, to 5, *only husband is responsible for the activity*. The lower the score on the combined measure, the more female centered is the arrangement of housework. High scores on the measure indicate that the male spouse is mostly responsible for traditional household chores. Such spousal arrangements, however, are rare, and for the most part the scores on the scale range from low scores, indicating that the wife is mostly responsible for household tasks, to intermediate scores, indicating a more egalitarian division of household labor.

A sixth category on these items captured a second dimension and was marked if the task was mostly carried out by a third person rather than by either of the spouses. To keep these cases in the analysis, we imputed a score on the spousal household task responsibility scale, recoding them to indicate that the task was mostly the responsibility of the wife (in between *wife only*

responsible and responsibility equally shared by both spouses). The rationale for this decision is that although both spouses were relieved of performing the chores, one would still have responsibility for arranging and overseeing the activity and this would most likely be the wife. Although outsourcing may alter somewhat the household division of labor, its gendered nature is unlikely to disappear. To evaluate the sensitivity of the results to the coding decision, we also evaluated a coding scheme according to which tasks performed by a third person were recoded to indicate equal (lack of) responsibility of spouses for the task. The results of the analysis were not substantively altered, and because such coding is less compatible with the gendered nature of household responsibility, we believe the former coding scheme is more appropriate. Additionally, a dummy variable was constructed to indicate whether any of the household tasks was performed by a third person, and we introduce it into the analysis as a proxy measure of outsourcing. Two additional variables measure, separately, the total number of hours per week spent on housework by the wife and the husband.

The central independent variables are spouses' relative resources, time availability, and gender ideology. We employ two measures for relative resources. First, to capture economic dependence, we utilize a measure originally suggested by Sørensen and McLanahan (1987) and later adopted by Brines (1994). The measure defines income dependency of wives as the difference between the spouses' relative contribution to family income, as can be seen in the following formula:

$$\text{Depinc} = [\text{earnh}/(\text{earnh} + \text{earnw})] - [\text{earnw}/(\text{earnh} + \text{earnw})],$$

where *earnh* refers to husband's and *earnw* to wife's earnings. A value of 0 indicates *no economic dependence*. A value of 1 indicates *total dependence* of the wife on husband's income and -1 indicates the opposite.

A second measure of relative resources pertains to spouses' education. We constructed four dummy variables indicating whether the wife has higher education than her spouse, whether the husband has higher education, whether both have high school or lower education, and whether both have postsecondary education (the reference category).

Time availability was conceptualized in terms of spouses' labor market activity and the presence of children in the household. Market activity was measured by hours of work, separately for the wife and the husband. Because spouses' labor market choices may be linked (see Moen & Sweet, 2003) and the effect of either's employment pattern on household organization is likely to be contingent on the other's, we also included two dichotomous variables: one indicating whether this was a dual-earner household and a second, identifying households in which neither spouse was employed. In essence, the two dichotomous variables contrast dual-earner couples and nonworking couples with single-earner arrangements. Although additional combinations of spouses' labor market status could possibly be of interest, the relatively small sample size precluded further partitioning. Regarding children, two dummy variables indicated whether children younger than 6 and whether children aged 6–17 were present in the household (*no children younger than 18 in the household* is used as the reference category).

Gender ideology was measured based on the degree of agreement with the following statements: "A pre-school 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 alright, but what most women really want is a home and children," "Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay," and "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family." The answers ranged from 1, *strongly agree*, to 5, *strongly disagree*. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that all items scored highly and approximately equally on one factor. The mean score was calculated for the five items so that a high score on the combined measure represents a more egalitarian disposition. Unfortunately, the measure is available only for one spouse (for similar use, see Blair & Lichter, 1991). Although studies have typically found attitude similarities between husbands and wives, the correlations are only moderate (e.g., Byrne & Blaylock, 1963). Indeed, Greenstein (1996) found interaction effects of wives' and husbands' gender ideologies; therefore, one would prefer information for both spouses. To partially cope with this limitation, we include an interaction term of gender of respondent and gender ideology in the multivariate analysis to take account of the differential effects gender ideology has on the

household division of labor for female and male respondents. Finally, all our models control for age and gender of respondent. The latter variable serves as a control for possible bias introduced by the fact that the information was reported by only one respondent per household. For a related discussion, see Kamo (2000).

RESULTS

The Organization of German and Israeli Households

We begin our analyses by evaluating three measures of household division of labor in Israel and Germany (Table 1). Means and standard deviations are presented for the extent to which responsibility for traditionally female household chores is shared by spouses and the amount of time women and men spend on housework. Taking account of the concerns raised above over the fact that the information was reported by only one respondent per household and that respondents tend to overestimate their own effort or underestimate that of their spouse, we present the figures separately for female and male respondents as well as for the total sample.

The figures presented in the first row of Table 1 reveal some differences between the two countries: According to females' and males' reports alike, Israeli couples are slightly more egalitarian than German households (for the total sample, 2.12 vs. 2.02, respectively, on a scale ranging from 1 to 5). The difference is rather small but statistically significant at $p = .05$. With respect to time devoted to housework, three results are noteworthy. First, in both countries men devote far fewer hours to housework than do women. The difference between the genders is larger in Germany than in Israel, but

in proportional terms there appears to be no difference. In both Germany and Israel, we find that for every hour husbands devote to housework, their spouses spend an average of 2.8 hours. Although our expectation that Israeli wives would spend less time on housework than German wives is supported by the data, Israeli couples do not appear to be more egalitarian than German couples with respect to time devoted to household chores. This issue is further addressed in the multivariate analysis.

A second point is that Israeli couples invest fewer hours in housework than their German counterparts. The average combined time devoted by Israeli spouses is under 23 hours a week, whereas German couples jointly spend almost 27 hours on housework. Third, on average, respondents' reports regarding the time spent by their spouses doing housework are somewhat lower but generally consistent with self-reports of women and men. Israeli men, for example, reported spending an average of 6.3 hours a week doing housework, whereas female respondents reported that their spouses spent an average of 5.8 hours doing housework. Similarly, German men reported an average of 7.3 hours of housework per week and German women reported an average of 7.0 for their spouses. Because men's and women's reports share a similar tendency, we used the pooled (couple) file in subsequent analyses, controlling for possible gender differences.

Why do Israeli women and men invest fewer hours in housework and why is housework more segregated in Germany? One possible answer is that the two countries differ in important socio-demographic characteristics that usually affect couples' housework. Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics as well as household attributes for the two populations. Differences

Table 1. Mean Scores for the Division of Household Labor and Spouses' Housework (Standard Deviations) in Germany and Israel (N = 1,427)

Variables	Germany			Israel		
	Female Respondent	Male Respondent	All Reports	Female Respondent	Male Respondent	All Reports
Division of hh labor	1.90 (.62)	2.16 (.63)	2.02 ^a (.64)	2.00 (.74)	2.26 (.71)	2.12 (.74)
Wife's hh hours	20.45 (14.5)	19.1 (13.24)	19.77 ^a (13.87)	17.07 (13.42)	16.25 (13.52)	16.76 (13.45)
Husband's hh hours	6.97 (6.07)	7.31 (7.46)	7.14 ^a (6.8)	5.75 (7.4)	6.25 (6.05)	5.95 (6.9)

Note: hh = household.

^aDifferences between Germany and Israel are statistically significant at $p = .05$.

Table 2. *Demographic and Household Characteristics in Israel and Germany (N = 1,427)*

Variables	Israel ^a		Germany	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age in years	43.20	12.02	44.57	11.95
Wife's years of education	13.65	3.03	11.24	3.45
Husband's years of education	13.77	3.58	11.91	3.92
Wife in the labor force (1 = <i>yes</i>)	67.3		51.4	
Husband in the labor force (1 = <i>yes</i>)	75.9		77.1	
Wife's weekly market hours	22.72	18.48	18.25	19.70
Husband's weekly market hours	35.24	23.46	35.02	21.40
Children < 6 (1 = <i>yes</i>)	33.9		17.2	
Children 6 – 17 (1 = <i>yes</i>)	46.3		33.8	
Income dependence [(H income – W income)/(H income + W income)]	.27	.53	.37	.48
Gender ideology (5 = <i>less traditional</i>)	3.20	.84	3.39	.94
Outsourcing housework	.21	.4	.04	.2

^aAll differences between Israel and Germany are statistically significant at $p = .05$ except for husbands' labor force participation and age.

between German and Israeli couples are clearly evident. Israelis are significantly more educated; the mean number of years of schooling for both women and men in Israel exceeds 13 years, compared to fewer than 12 years in Germany. Concomitant with the educational differences, Israeli wives are more likely than German wives to participate in the labor force (67% and 51% in the two countries, respectively). Israeli couples are twice as likely as German couples (34% vs. 17%) to have preschool children and are also more likely to have older children at home.

Three additional household characteristics for which information is available are the extent of the wives' economic dependence on the husband, gender ideology, and the outsourcing of housework. In line with the finding regarding labor force participation, income dependence of wives is greater in Germany than in Israel (.37 as compared to .27). The mean score on the gender ideology scale is 3.20 and 3.39 for Israel and Germany, respectively. Although this difference is rather small, it is statistically significant, revealing an unanticipated result. Although Israeli mothers participate more in economic activity, it appears that traditional familism still has a hold in Israeli society.

Israeli couples are much more likely than their German counterparts to outsource housework and to report that a third person is responsible for at least one of the major household chores (21% vs. 4% in the two countries, respectively). The figures for Israel are similar to those reported

recently by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2002) according to which 23% of married Jewish respondents hired household help. These observed differences appear to reflect a real sociocultural difference in the organization of the household in the two countries and may help explain the relationship between the market position of the spouses and the division of household labor.

Investigating the Correlates of Household Division of Labor

To study the factors associated with the organization of housework and to test the hypotheses we outlined concerning differences between Germany and Israel, we derive coefficient estimates for pooled regression models using the combined samples from Germany and Israel. The analysis is repeated for three dependent variables: the extent of sharing responsibility for household chores, wives' weekly hours of housework, and husbands' weekly hours of housework. For the purposes of this analysis, the values (hours per week) of the latter two variables were transformed by taking the natural logarithms (\ln) of each value. This procedure results in a less skewed distribution of the dependent variables and has the added advantage that the regression coefficients can be interpreted as the proportional change in time spent on housework resulting from a unit change in a given predictor variable. For each of the three dependent variables, we

estimate two models. The first model includes all independent variables as well as a country indicator. It calculates coefficient estimates under the assumption that the same relationships between household characteristics and the dependent variables hold in Germany and Israel. It only permits the two countries to differ in the mean levels of the dependent variables. The second model adds interaction terms between country and household characteristics to directly evaluate the hypotheses concerning differences between Germany and Israel. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 3.

Sharing responsibility for household chores. We turn first to the issue of sharing responsibility for traditionally female household chores (first two columns in Table 3). Low scores indicate that such chores tend to be the sole responsibility of the wife. Outsourcing of housework is not included as a predictor in this model because the indicator was derived from items constituting the dependent variable in this analysis (see description of variables). Hence, by definition the two variables are at least partly correlated.

Results of the analysis (first column) reveal that the amount of time women spend in market work has a positive and significant effect on the sharing of essential household tasks ($b = .007$). Time spent by the husband in market work has the opposite effect, and longer hours are associated with greater segregation of household tasks ($b = -.004$). In addition to measuring the effect of each of the spouses' hours of market work, we also evaluate the effect of "linked" decisions of the spouses on household outcomes. Results of the analysis reveal that neither dual-earner nor no-earner couples differ significantly from single-earner couples with respect to the sharing of household tasks, once hours of market work are taken into account.

Although the household chores that constitute the measure of task sharing do not include child-care, one might expect that the presence of children would generally increase the demand for housework (e.g., cleaning, laundry, meal preparation) and may also alter the division of labor between the spouses. The findings in this respect are mixed. We found no statistically significant effect of the presence of preschool children on spousal division of household tasks, but the presence of school-age children has a negative effect; a larger number of school-age children is associated with greater segregation of housework.

Turning to the relationship between spouses' resources and sharing responsibilities for household chores, we find that it is not so much the relative education of spouses but rather the education of the wife that matters. Compared to the situation of two highly educated spouses, when the wife is less educated (regardless of the education of the husband) the household division of labor is more female centered. In contrast to the effect of education, income dependence is not significantly related to the division of household labor.

Respondents who reported a more egalitarian gender ideology were more likely to share household tasks with their spouses. As noted in the Method section, only one spouse was interviewed in each household. To evaluate differences in the average effect of women's and men's attitudes on the actual organization of household tasks, we added an interaction term with gender of respondent. Women's attitudes were strongly and positively related to the extent of sharing household tasks. That is, greater sharing takes place among couples when the wife holds more egalitarian views ($b = .158$). The interaction of gender ideology and gender of respondent is negative and significant ($b = -.103$), suggesting a weaker—but still positive—relationship between men's attitudes and the actual sharing of household chores ($.158 - .103 = .055$). One might interpret these findings as indication that gender ideology makes a difference for the organization of household work and women's attitudes are more important than men's for shifting to more equitable household arrangements. This finding was also examined in separate analyses for female and male respondents, and although the gender ideology coefficient was positive, in both cases it was stronger and statistically significant in the female sample.

We also note that age has a negative effect on the dependent variable and that controlling for couples' attributes, the coefficient for country is negative and significant. This result is in line with the finding in Table 1 that household chores are somewhat less segregated in Israel than in Germany, even after controlling for compositional effects. Turning now to the model containing interactions (second column from the left), we observe that none of the interaction coefficients are statistically significant. Additionally, the coefficients for school-age children and for country that were significant in the first model are no longer statistically significant.

Table 3. OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) Regression Coefficients (Standard Errors) for Models Predicting Household Division of Labor (N = 1,360)

Predictor Variables	Sharing Household Tasks		Wife's Hours in Housework (ln)		Husband's Hours in Housework (ln)	
	Main Effects	Country Differences	Main Effects	Country Differences	Main Effects	Country Differences
Time availability						
Women's market work hours	.007* (.002)	.009* (.002)	-.003 (.002)	.002 (.003)	.005* (.002)	.008* (.003)
Men's market work hours	-.004* (.001)	-.004* (.002)	.001 (.001)	.000 (.002)	-.009* (.002)	-.014* (.003)
Dual-earner couple	-.055 (.057)	-.049 (.080)	-.166* (.069)	-.294* (.096)	.069 (.088)	.248* (.123)
Both not working	.001 (.070)	.044 (.105)	-.059 (.084)	-.119 (.125)	.069 (.108)	.033 (.160)
Household attributes						
Preschool children	-.018 (.046)	.040 (.059)	.254* (.054)	.335* (.070)	.252* (.070)	.467* (.090)
School-age children	-.078* (.036)	-.052 (.053)	.255* (.043)	.253* (.063)	-.019 (.056)	-.053 (.081)
Outsourcing housework			-.310* (.067)	-.325* (.068)	-.146 (.087)	-.173* (.087)
Relative resources						
Wife more educated	-.096 (.063)	-.092 (.063)	.181* (.075)	.188* (.075)	.024 (.097)	.059 (.096)
Husband more educated	-.132* (.056)	-.122* (.056)	.141* (.067)	.139* (.067)	-.026 (.087)	-.001 (.086)
Equally low education	-.135* (.043)	-.137* (.044)	.184* (.052)	.181* (.053)	-.103 (.067)	-.077 (.068)
Income dependence	-.066 (.042)	.066 (.042)	.176* (.050)	.181* (.050)	.031 (.064)	.064 (.065)
Gender ideology						
Gender ideology (female respondents)	.158* (.026)	.184* (.036)	-.179* (.031)	-.191* (.043)	-.024 (.040)	.031 (.056)
Gender ideology (gender differences)	-.103* (.039)	-.090* (.039)	.161* (.046)	.158* (.047)	.119* (.060)	.124* (.060)
Age	-.008* (.002)	-.009* (.002)	.015* (.002)	.014* (.002)	.007* (.003)	.006* (.003)
Germany versus Israel	-.073* (.037)	.302 (.171)	.213* (.046)	.110 (.204)	.406* (.059)	.588* (.261)
Interactions						
Germany × Women's Market Work Hours		-.005 (.003)		-.000* (.004)		-.003 (.005)
Germany × Men's Market Work Hours		.001 (.003)		.002 (.003)		.010* (.004)
Germany × Dual Earner		.012 (.119)		.288* (.142)		-.352* (.182)
Germany × Both not Working		-.093 (.142)		.112 (.169)		.119 (.216)
Germany × Preschool Children		-.056 (.073)		-.019 (.086)		.043 (.111)
Germany × School-Age Children		-.150 (.084)		-.199* (.100)		-.511* (.128)
Germany × Gender Ideology		-.049 (.043)		.033 (.051)		-.066 (.066)
Constant	1.992* (.134)	1.825* (.154)	2.307* (.159)	2.345* (.183)	1.219* (.205)	1.016* (.235)
Adjusted R ²	.181	.190 ^a	.224	.233 ^a	.108	.13 ^a

Note: All models control for respondent's gender.

^aDifferences between the base model and the model with interactions are statistically significant at $p = .05$.

* $p < .05$.

What then might we conclude from this analysis concerning the sharing of household chores? In both countries, greater sharing is positively associated with time constraints of the wife, as measured by spouses' market work, and negatively associated with those of the husband. It is also related to the education of the wife (when the wife is better educated the couple tend to share more) and to spouses' gender attitude and age. A small difference appears to exist between the two countries as the second model achieves a significantly better fit adding 1% to the variance explained. As none of the interaction coefficients is significant, we take this to mean that, after controlling for individual and household attributes, some unexplained difference still remains between the countries.

Time devoted to housework. We turn now to the time allocated by spouses to housework, and we start with wives' weekly hours of housework reported in the two middle columns of Table 3. The time constraint hypothesis posits that the amount of time the wife spends on housework is inversely related to time spent in market work and is positively related to market work of the husband. Framed in these terms, the hypothesis ignores the interdependence of spouses' work patterns and the effect a particular pattern might have in and above the number of hours each spouse spends in the labor market. Our findings, indeed, reveal more complex relationships. Specifically, the time a woman spends doing housework is primarily affected by whether she is part of a dual-earner couple. Employed women whose husbands are also employed spend almost 17% ($b = -.166$) less time doing housework than women in single-earner couples (typically the husband is the earner). Transforming the proportionate difference into hourly figures for women with average characteristics, we find that women in dual-earner couples perform approximately 1.5 fewer hours of housework than women in single-earner couples. Controlling for the employment pattern of the couple, however, the actual number of hours women spend in the labor market does not have a significant effect on women's housework.

The presence of children—preschool and school age—in the household is associated with a greater amount of time spent on housework by wives, regardless of the number of hours of market work. Outsourcing of housework has the opposite effect; in households where a third per-

son is responsible for at least some household chores, women spend 30% ($b = -.310$) less time on housework than women with no such help. This percentage represents a difference of 4 hours of housework per week between the average woman with and without help from a third person.

Turning to the effect of spousal resources on the amount of time women allocate to housework, we find that when spouses differ in their level of education (one has postsecondary education and the other does not) or when both spouses have lower education, wives tend to spend more time doing housework compared to couples in which both are highly educated. This is truly an interaction effect according to which only when both spouses are highly educated (compared with all other permutations) women spend less time in housework. As hypothesized, income dependence has a positive and significant effect on women's housework. The greater the dependence, the more hours women spend doing housework. One obtains a clear interpretation of this finding when focusing on the lower end of this relationship; that is, *ceteris paribus*, when the woman is least dependent on her spouse, as measured by the relative earnings gap, she is likely to devote less time to housework than otherwise. A squared term, added to test the nonlinear relationship between income dependence and women's housework, was not statistically significant and was dropped from the final model.

We now turn to gender ideology and remind the reader that the model includes an interaction of ideology with gender of respondent. Hence, the coefficients estimate the average effect of women's gender ideology and the difference in the effect of ideology between women and men. Both coefficients are significant and have opposite signs. We interpret the results to mean that the more liberal the wives' attitudes, the less time they spend on housework. The coefficient ($b = -.179$) indicates a difference of 2.5 hours between the average woman with a score of 3 on the gender ideology scale and an otherwise similar woman with a score of 4. The effect of men's gender ideology on women's housework can be determined from the sum of the two coefficients ($-.179 + .161$), which is close to 0. Hence, there is practically no effect of men's attitudes on the time their spouses spend on housework.

Two additional findings emerge from the model: a positive effect of age on women's

housework and a significant difference in the amount of time German women spend on housework compared to Israeli women even after taking into account compositional differences between the populations. Every additional year of age is associated with an increase of over 1% on average in women's workload ($b = .015$), which amounts to almost 2 hours difference between, say, women 30 and 40 years old (with otherwise similar characteristics). We also note that German women report one fifth more ($b = .213$) weekly hours of housework than their Israeli counterparts.

As noted earlier the baseline model is estimated under the assumption that individual and household characteristics have similar patterns of relationship with women's housework in Germany and Israel. To address the hypotheses regarding differences between the two countries, we estimate a second model (Column 4 of Table 3) in which we include interactions for country and selected individual-level variables. We note a modest improvement in the overall goodness of fit, which indicates that a model that allows different patterns of relationships in Germany and Israel is preferable to the model that assumes uniform patterns in the two countries.

Several interaction terms are statistically significant. Two relate to time constraints associated with the family-work nexus and a third has to do with the effect of school-age children in the household. The interaction term for hours of market work and country is significant and negative, whereas the main effect of women's market hours in Model 4 is not statistically significant. Because Israel is the comparison category in the country dichotomy, this finding means that longer hours of market work are associated with reduced housework among German women but not among Israeli women. Yet, when considering the effect of the joint work decision of spouses, we find a more complex pattern. The interaction of the dummy variable for dual-earner couples (as compared with single-earner couples) and the country variable is significantly related to women's housework.

In interpreting the interaction effect, we note that the main effect of dual earner in the country differences model (Model 4) is negative and statistically significant ($b = -.294$). This finding indicates that Israeli women in dual-earner couples do less housework (29% less) than Israeli women in single-earner couples. For Germany, the effect of dual earners is determined by com-

binning the main and the interaction effects ($-.294 + .288$), and we find that it is close to 0. Controlling for the number of market hours, German women in dual-earner couples spend the same amount of time on housework as other German women. Evidently, in Israel the crucial factor is employment status, whereas in Germany it is only when women spend many hours in the labor market that this is compensated by a small reduction in housework (every additional hour in the labor market is associated with a reduction of two thirds of 1% [$.002 + (-.009)$] in time doing housework). For a German woman with average characteristics, an increase of 10 hours of market work would result in an average reduction of 1 hour in housework.

Finally, a significant interaction is also found with respect to the presence of school-age children in the household. The coefficient for the interaction term is negative and somewhat lower in magnitude than the main effect, which has the opposite sign ($b = -.199$ and $b = .253$, respectively). We interpret the results as indication that the presence of school-age children increases women's housework in Israel but has only a weak effect on women's housework in Germany. One possible interpretation of the finding is that, on average, a larger number of school-age children are present in Israeli households resulting in greater demand for housework.

Turning now to husbands' contribution to housework, we find that the models do considerably less well in predicting husbands' housework than they did for wives. This is in line with a large number of previous studies. According to the baseline model (Column 5), the amount of time husbands spend in market work is negatively associated with time spent in housework ($b = -.009$) and is positively associated with wives' market work, although the latter relationship is weaker ($b = .005$). Husbands' contribution to housework is somewhat responsive to household demands and is positively affected by the presence of preschool children ($b = .252$). We also find that the extent of husbands' housework is related to gender ideology. The more egalitarian the husbands' attitudes, the more time they devote to housework. As in the case of women, we find a positive relationship between age and housework among men, and German men spend more time, on average, on housework than Israeli men.

As was the case with the other dependent variables, we next investigate a model with interaction terms (the rightmost column in Table 3). This model improves upon the base model (adjusted R^2 increases from .11 to .13) and reveals some systematic differences between Germany and Israel. First, there is a stronger relationship between men's market work and housework in Israel ($b = -.014$) than in Germany ($-.014 + .010 = -.004$), and the difference is statistically significant. For Israeli men with average characteristics, the expected difference in contribution to housework between those who work 45 and 35 hours a week is about half an hour, whereas for average Germans the expected difference is only a quarter of an hour. In accordance with our hypothesis, we interpret this as reflection of the stronger adherence in Germany to the normative male-breadwinner model where division of labor between the spouses is more clear-cut and therefore variation in men's market activities only weakly affects housework.

Although there is no difference between Israel and Germany in the responsiveness of men's housework to the time their spouses spend in market work (the interaction term is not statistically significant), being part of a dual-earner couple has different implications for men's housework in the two countries. In Israel, employed men do more housework when their spouses are also employed than is true for other Israeli men ($b = .248$), whereas in Germany the joint market status of the spouses has a much weaker and opposite effect [$.248 + (-.352) = -.104$]. This result further underscores the difference between the male-breadwinner and the dual-earner model in Germany and Israel, respectively.

One curious finding is that the presence of school-age (but not preschool) children in the household tends to reduce men's contribution to housework in Germany but has no such effect in Israel. This pattern could be explained by a greater tendency of German children to assist in household chores compared to Israeli children, thus relieving the husband (but not the wife) from some housework. We have no independent data, however, to suggest that this is actually the case.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

We began with the proposition that the division of labor would be more egalitarian in Israel than in Germany, and that Israeli women would spend

less time in housework, because of the predominance of the dual-earner model in Israeli social organization of family and work. The results only partly confirm these expectations. Israeli couples (women and men alike) indeed spend less time doing housework than German couples, but the ratio of time spent by women to that of men is identical in both countries. Israeli couples report slightly less segregation in the division of household labor. The difference, however, is too small to render a conclusion that the organization of household chores differs in the two countries.

Israeli women face more severe time constraints than German women. A larger proportion of Israeli women are engaged in market work, and they are more likely to have children at home. Furthermore, in a society that encourages women (including mothers) to take part in economic activity, the status of breadwinner is of symbolic as well as practical importance. Its relevance for the organization of housework goes beyond the actual number of hours devoted by women to market work. Results from the pooled regression analysis revealed that in Israel, dual-earner couples displayed a different pattern of housework than other couples. Women in the former situation spent less time doing housework than other wives, whereas the opposite is true for husbands. This was not the case in Germany, however, where the relationship between market work and housework followed gender-specific patterns. Women who deviated from the norm and spent long hours in market work reduced their housework independent of their spouses' labor market situation. A similar negative relationship was found among German men, but this relationship was significantly weaker in Germany than in Israel. This pattern suggests a more rigid distinction between market and household responsibility for men in Germany.

Israeli couples are much more likely than German couples to have children present in the household, and this of course has implications for the demand for housework, even beyond the time required for childcare (not measured in this study). In both Germany and Israel, the presence of preschool children was associated with more time spent on housework by both spouses, but it did not affect the division of responsibility for household chores. The two societies differ, however, with respect to the effect of school-age children on the organization of the household, and they appear to cope differently with their presence. The time

demand posed by school-age children in Germany is considerably weaker than in Israel. It does not seem to result in greater housework for German women and appears even to have a substitution effect in the case of German men who spend less time doing housework when older children are present. We can only speculate on the explanation for these findings and suggest that both the difference in number of children between Germany and Israel and their divergent family roles may account for the observed patterns.

The division of household labor is related to some extent to wives' resource dependence. Other things equal, women spent more time doing housework when they were more economically dependent on their spouses. Yet, such dependence was not associated with sharing of household chores. That is, economically dependent and independent wives similarly faced the major burden of traditional household chores. We consider education as another type of resource that may affect spousal relations and therefore examined the effect of the spouses' relative level of education on the division of household labor. The education of the wife appears to be the primary driving force in this regard. Controlling for other factors, in both Germany and Israel, spouses are more likely to share responsibility for household chores when the wife is better educated irrespective of husband's education. More highly educated wives spend less time on housework, especially when their husbands are highly educated as well. One exception to this is that when women are better educated than their spouses, they spend more time doing housework than when their spouses are as highly educated as themselves. This might represent a case of what Greenstein (2000) described as deviance neutralization, which is used by the wife to alleviate threats to her spouse's identity.

A central finding of the present study is the consistent effect of gender ideology on the division of household labor in both Germany and Israel. The patterns are essentially similar as no interaction effects were confirmed in the analysis. As expected, more liberal attitudes are associated with greater spousal sharing of household chores and fewer hours of housework performed by women. It is noteworthy that the time men and women devote to housework is affected by their own gender attitudes, but not those of their spouses. The degree of sharing household responsibilities is primarily affected by women's

gender attitudes, although husbands' attitudes also have a positive effect on sharing.

That gender ideology has a distinctive effect on the way households are organized in both Germany and Israel bolsters the sometimes contested view that cultural factors are important in and of themselves for the understanding of gender-based household division of labor. In fact, our findings show that men's and women's attitudes have differential importance for various aspects of household organization. Because data were collected from only one spouse, we could not evaluate the interactive effects of wives' and husbands' gender ideologies. This is unfortunate because Greenstein (1996) has shown such interaction patterns to be significant for the organization of housework. Comparative research will benefit from study designs that include both spouses in the sample. Such procedures are becoming more common at the national level (especially in the United States) but are still rare in multinational studies.

What might we conclude from the findings with regard to similarities and differences between Germany and Israel? First, the extent of similarity is greater than we had hypothesized. Overall the division of household labor in the two countries does not differ much. There were no differences in the effects of gender ideology. We expected that the presence of children would have a stronger effect on husbands' contribution to housework in Israel than in Germany, but the findings revealed no country differences with respect to preschool children. As to older children, their presence did not affect the time husbands spent on housework in Israel but reduced the time that German husbands spent on housework. This was unexpected and we can only speculate that some substitution may take place in Germany as older children may take some responsibility for household chores.

The findings appear to support two propositions regarding differences between the two countries. First, Israeli couples invest less time in housework compared to Germans and are much more likely to outsource household chores. Second, the nature of the family-work nexus appears to differ in the two countries. In Israel, the status of a dual earner as contrasted with single-earner couple is associated with reduced housework of wives and increased contribution of husbands even after controlling for hours of market work. This is not the case in Germany where the linked labor market

status of the couple has only a minor effect and husbands' contribution to housework is not related to the extent of market activity.

Researchers have devoted considerable thought and resources to the development of theoretical arguments concerning the differential effects of welfare regimes not only on the magnitude of gender inequality but also on the relationship between market work and the organization of the household. In particular, the distinction between the social-democratic welfare regime epitomized by Sweden and the liberal welfare regime epitomized by the United States were proposed as highly relevant for societal differences in the household division of labor (Baxter, 1997; Calasanti & Bailey, 1991; Evertsson & Neramo, 2004; Kalleberg & Rosenfeld, 1990). Although some differences in household organization were found in several studies, the welfare context did not seem to dramatically alter the division of household labor (Baxter, 1997).

The argument we put forward is that decommmodification policies associated with different types of welfare regimes are only one possible source of influence on the gender organization of the household. Normative precepts that buttress the gender order are another source, and by focusing on countries with fairly similar welfare regimes, their nuanced effects should be revealed. Crompton (1999) suggested a continuum of gender relations ranging from the male breadwinner – female carer model to the dual earner – dual carer model, as an organizing construct for comparing gender systems. Yet, her proposal only briefly sketched the substantive differences between them. The present study, we believe, makes a twofold contribution to this endeavor by focusing on countries that have been rarely studied in cross-national research. First, we delineated the characteristic household division of labor in corporatist welfare states; second, we highlighted the differences in household division of labor that are associated with different models of the family-work nexus. Although the lion's share of housework in both societies is still performed by women, our findings lend some support to Crompton's (1999) argument regarding the gender division of labor and emphasize the importance of culture in determining the level of equality within the household.

NOTE

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