Perceived fairness and conflicts about home tasks in a gender-equal discourse:

A typology of Swedish couples

Paper to be presented in session 15 'Gender and Family'
European Population Conference
Budapest, June 2014

Eva Bernhardt, Stockholm University
Maria Branden, Stockholm University
Leah Ruppanner, University of Melbourne

Contact: eva.bernhardt@sociology.su.se

Abstract

This paper explores the relationships between housework sharing, perceived fairness of this division, and conflicts about home tasks, using survey information from about 1000 Swedish couples. Our approach is exploratory as we develop a typology by means of latent class analysis. We identified six latent groups, two of which are characterized by an egalitarian division of housework, but where one group has high levels of conflict and the other one low levels. Two groups have a traditional allocation of housework, where the woman does most of the domestic work. Again we find one group with high levels of conflict and one with low levels. In both cases, frequent conflicts seem to be associated with disagreement about the fairness of this housework division, while agreement about the fairness is connected with non-existing or infrequent conflicts. The biggest group however was those with a semi-traditional division of housework and medium level of conflict. Finally, we found a small group with un-traditional allocation of housework, in the sense that the man did most of the domestic work. This group also had an intermediate level of housework.

Introduction

Over the past decades, the gendered division of housework is a central focus of extensive research. The persistence of women's unequal housework reflects the permanence of gender inequality (Baxter 1997, Cunningham 2005). Indeed, cross-national comparisons demonstrate that even in the most gender empowered contexts, like Sweden, women perform a larger average share of housework than do men (Makiko Fuwa, 2004, Evertsson 2014). Unequal housework divisions have serious implications for marital quality, satisfaction and sexual frequency (Barstad, 2014; Kornrich, Brines, & Leupp, 2013; PiÒa & Bengtson, 1993). Of course, housework is often contested albeit at varying levels by country-context. When situated cross-nationally, housework conflict is more common in countries supporting gender equality and divorce (Ruppanner 2009; Ruppanner 2012). Further, women perceive housework as unfair in countries with more equal gender wage ratios (Braun, Lewin-Epstein, Stier, & Baumgärtner, 2008). These cross-national multi-level results are further confirmed in single-country studies. Swedish women experience high levels of conflict between work and household demands (Strandh & Nordenmark 2006), a relationship sensitive to, but not completely alleviated by, expansive social welfare state policies (M. Fuwa & Cohen, 2007). This reflects the fact that gender equality, both at home and work, is strongly normative in Sweden, but not always matched by an equally egalitarian situation in the family (Bernhardt et al 2008). Indeed gains to Swedish women's economic resources are matched only by small increases in men's housework time (Evertsson & Nermo, 2004). In response to this persistent gender inequality, one of the four sub-goals of the Swedish Government's gender equality policy states that 'women and men should take the same responsibility for household work and have the same opportunities to give and receive care on equal terms'. Yet, little is known about how these opportunities map onto Swedish women's lived experiences.

This paper explores these relationships with particular focus on housework sharing, perceived fairness of this division and conflict over home tasks. Our research approach is exploratory as we will develop a typology using latent class analysis. Generally, young Swedish couples favor an egalitarian division of home tasks and apply this ideal in reality in a majority of cases (Bernhardt et al. 2008). Yet, men's housework time remains tied to women's work hours with men contributing larger shares only when women work full-time (Evertsson 2011). This suggests that women use their economic resources to bargain for more equal divisions of housework, a finding theoretically and empirically supported in previous

research (see Coltrane 2001 for review). Whether these allocations are perceived as fair or contested, however, highlights the tone of couples' housework negotiations. Indeed, when the sharing of housework is perceived as unfair, the level of conflict over home tasks is also likely to increase (Claffey and Mickelson 2008). The consequences of this conflict are severe, contributing to greater marital dissatisfaction (Piña and Bengtson 1993). Yet, the research on fairness adds complexity to this issue as unequal housework arrangements are not always perceived as unfair. Surprisingly, women with unequal housework divisions often report more, not less, fairness (Baxter, 2000). This paradox – inequality leading to perceptions of equity – is theorized to reflect differences in gender role ideologies and housework time (Thompson, 1991). While these theoretical contentions have been supported in single-country samples in Australia and broad cross-national samples (Baxter, 2000; Ruppanner, 2010), less is known about how these contradictions are negotiated in Sweden, a country with a strong rhetoric of gender equality.

Further, previous research has focused on the impact of housework allocations on fairness and conflict without investigating the clustering across these measures. This limitation is important in that housework allocations, conflict and fairness may reflect different types of couples rather than associations across these measures. What is more, variation in work and family characteristics may also structure how couples view housework, fairness and conflict. For example, many Swedish women employ a "combination strategy" characterized by working part-time after parental leave to maintain labor market attachment while also spending time with pre-school aged children (Bernhardt 1988). Although most Swedish women report egalitarian ideologies, this mother-centered pattern remains; currently about 40 % of working women with small children work less than full-time, a little over half of them working more than half-time (SCB 2012). These gender differences are reflected through family-responsive policy use as well. Since 1978, parents have had the legal right to reduce their working hours (with a corresponding reduction in pay) until the child reaches 8 years of age. Yet, mothers take advantage of this right much more often than do men (Larsson 2012). Women's part-time work is coupled with larger housework shares which may or may not be perceived as fair (Evertsson 2011). Indeed, women working part-time may be the most likely to contest unequal housework arrangements and perceive them as unfair. Thus, the need to understand cluster membership across a range of theoretically-motivated socio-demographic measures is essential.

We address these limitations by applying couple-level data from the Young Adult Panel Study of Swedish couples (YAPS; n=1,026). This unique data design allows us to weigh two important questions: (1) do Swedish couples cluster on their housework allocations, conflict and fairness reports?; (2) what work and family characteristics explain membership within these clusters and do these vary by gender? The application of Swedish data provides a more comprehensive understanding of housework time, fairness and conflict, expanding on previous single country-samples in less generous welfare states (Baxter, 2000). Ultimately, our results indicate that the paradoxical relationships identified in previous fairness studies reflect consistencies in housework allocations, fairness and conflict.

Housework: Theoretical Approaches

Theoretical approaches to housework are well-developed and empirically supported (see Coltrane 2001 and Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010 for review)(Coltrane, 2001; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). The *relative resources*, *time availability* and *doing-gender* perspectives focus on partners' housework divisions. Relative resources highlights each partners' resources, income and education, as tools for negotiating housework. Specifically, the spouse with more resources, relative to the other, has more bargaining power to reduce his/her housework (Blood Jr & Wolfe, 1960; Brines, 1994). Although support for relative resources is mixed for US samples (Bittman, England, Folbre, Sayer, & Matheson, 2003; Gupta, 2007), the importance of each partners' resources is established in cross-national samples (Makiko Fuwa, 2004; Geist & Cohen, 2011). Applying longitudinal data, Evertsson and Nermo (2007) find increases in Swedish women's education and earnings are associated with more equal divisions of housework. In sum, partners' resources structure housework allocations. In a second theoretical approach, the time availability perspective posits spouses negotiate housework based on competing family and work time demands (Coverman, 1985; England & Farkas, 1986). Specifically, the spouse with greater market demands spends less time in housework (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). Of course, these processes are rooted in gender role expectations. To account for housework as a gendered process, the gender-display approach identifies housework as a means for women to "do-gender" in heterosexual unions (Berk, 1985; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Housework holds symbolic value within families which explains, in part, the lingering gender gap in couples' housework arrangements. What is more, gender is consistently shown to structure housework indicating its importance as an orienting status. For example, Brines (1994) identifies a curvilinear

relationship between women's earnings and housework time. Specifically, women perform more, not less, housework when their earnings supersede men's. Although the importance of this relationship is contested (Sullivan, 2011), these striking results are replicated in additional studies (Bittman et al., 2003; Evertsson & Nermo, 2004) suggesting that housework holds symbolic meaning for heterosexual couples. Collectively, these studies indicate the importance of investigating couples' housework experiences.

Understanding housework as a gendered process is complicated when we consider reports of housework fairness. Across a range of studies, women report high levels of fairness, even when housework is traditionally divided (Baxter, 2000; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997). To explain this paradox, the *distributive justice* perspective posits that reports of housework fairness are drawn along three dimensions: outcomes, comparative referents and justifications (Thompson, 1991). Outcomes capture couples' objective housework divisions. Simply, equitable housework divisions are evaluated as fairer than inequitable divisions. Comparative referents is based on the notion that individuals weigh their housework relative to others to determine the fairness of their divisions. These evaluations reflect expectations by gender, age and occupation. Justifications reflect ideological validations for housework divisions. For example, respondents holding egalitarian gender role expectations are more likely to view unequal housework as unfair; by contrast, unequal divisions are less contested among traditional respondents. The distributive justice perspective has received cross-national support as housework allocations and gender role expectations are shown to structure perceptions of unfairness (Baxter, 2000; Ruppanner, 2010). Yet, the paradoxical findings, unequal divisions perceived as fair, require additional investigation. Specifically, the question remains: are these relationships driven by single experiences (housework divisions, gender ideologies and unfairness) or do they reflect broader groupings?

The implications of this research are clear: housework divisions structure reports of fairness and conflict. Yet, the intersection among these measures requires more rigorous investigation. Specifically, respondents who view housework as unfair may be more likely to engage in housework conflict. This conflict may deteriorate or improve quality. On the one hand, couples who conflict over housework report greater depression, stress and marital dissatisfaction, indicating this conflict deteriorates marital quality and jeopardized relationship stability (Amato, 2007; Glass & Fujimoto, 1994; PiÒa & Bengtson, 1993). On

the other hand, couples housework conflict may lead to housework equality thus improving marital satisfaction (Chrestenson 1987; Watzalwwick, Beavin and Jackson 1967; Barstad, 2014). While the consequences may be divergent, the results are clear: incorporating housework conflict is essential for understanding couples' housework experiences. Of course, cultural contexts structure housework arrangements as well. Specifically, contention is most common among married/partnered Swedes who, supported by broad social welfare programs and gender empowerment, report the most housework conflict (Ruppanner, 2010, 2012). Further, men and women report greater relationship satisfaction when housework is equitably shared in Norway, another gender empowered country (Barstad, 2014). In light of this research, gaining a deeper understanding of housework arrangements, both objective divisions and subjective reports of fairness and conflict, for a Swedish sample is warranted. In this research, we identify typologies of contention, with particular focus on women's and men's perceptions of housework inequality, unfairness and conflict.

Typologies: The Swedish Case

Informed by previous research, we expect housework allocations, fairness and conflict to form five typologies. We begin with equality in housework as theory predicts perceptions of fairness and housework conflict are tied to objective housework divisions (Thompson, 1991). We hypothesize Swedish couples will comprise five clusters. The first we expect to be most common in the Swedish case: equal sharers who report fairness and low conflict (equitable/fair/low conflict). A wealth of previous research demonstrates the importance of housework equality in the Swedish case (Evertsson 2014;Evertsson & Nermo, 2004, 2007; Makiko Fuwa, 2004). Thus, we expect those who achieve housework equality to also report fairness and low levels of housework conflict. We expect these couples to be those with the most resources – college educated, high earning and full-time workers – and those holding the most egalitarian gender role ideologies (Coltrane, 2001). The second are those who share housework more or less equally but the wife views these divisions as unfair and, as a consequence, report high conflict. We expect these respondents to be the most egalitarian and time-pressed, balancing long work hours and children. Next are those with traditional housework arrangements, where the woman performs a larger share. This allocation should produce two clusters. On the one hand, this inequality may be highly contested, reflected

through perceptions of unfairness to the woman and high housework conflict (traditional/high conflict). Informed by previous research, we expect these respondents to hold the most egalitarian gender role ideologies and have the greatest resources (Baxter, 2000; Ruppanner, 2010). On the other hand, these unequal housework divisions may be perceived as fair and thus conflict is low (traditional/low conflict). These respondents should hold the most traditional gender role ideologies and have the fewest resources (Coltrane, 2001). In a final cluster, we have the 'reverse traditional' Swedish couples. For these couples, the majority of the housework is performed by the man. As this family form is emerging and less common in other geographical contexts, the theoretical explanations for these couples are absent. This is further complicated by the gendered dimension of these arrangements. On the one hand, the distributive justice perspective, which is gender neutral, would predict that unequal housework allocations should lead to perceptions of unfairness and more conflict (Thompson, 1991). The gender-display perspective suggests that men's performance of female type chores may challenge women's ability to do-gender in heterosexual unions (Berk, 1985; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Indeed, Coltrane (1997) identified social sanctions to men's non-traditional performance of female roles. The implications from prior research are clear: men's larger housework share should be associated with greater unfairness and conflict (reverse traditional/unfair/high conflict). Alternatively, men's larger housework performance may be a welcomed reprieve from traditional housework arrangements and may thus be associated with perceptions of fairness and less conflict (reverse traditional/fair/low conflict). Our analyses weigh these relationships. Of course, this cluster is likely a select group reflecting those with the most egalitarian gender role ideologies and most educated.

Data

Analyses are performed using data from the 2009 wave of the Young Adult Panel Study (YAPS, www.suda.su.se/yaps). The YAPS is a three wave panel data set with surveys in 1999, 2003 and 2009 for respondents born in 1968, 1972, 1976 and 1980. Three groups of respondents are sampled; Swedish born individuals with Swedish born parents, Swedish born individuals with Turkish born parents and Swedish born individuals with Polish born parents. In 2009, all the 3,547 respondents who participated in any of the previous waves, 1999 and/or 2003, were again contacted to participate in a final wave of the survey. During the last survey wave (2009), respondents were asked to give their cohabiting or married partner an additional questionnaire. Out of the 1,528 respondents who were married or cohabiting at the time of the

survey, 1,074, or 70 percent, had partners who participated in the 2009 survey. After excluding respondents in same sex relations, 1,020 respondents remain for our analysis. We structure the data at the couple-level so our analyses distinguish between the man and the woman in the couple rather than between the respondent and the partner. All of our analyses apply data from the 2009 wave.

We are interested in the interrelation between (1) the sharing of housework between the partners, (2) his and her perceptions of fairness regarding the sharing of housework, and (3) how the woman and the man reported the level of conflict over housework. By using Latent Class Analysis, we examine how couples cluster based on these five characteristics, that is, their class membership. Finally we analyze how variables such as gender ideology, education, and work status predict class membership.

Variables used in the typology

The sharing of housework between the partners is measured as the man's share of total housework hours of the couple. Housework is defined as the number of hours the woman and the man report (a) buying groceries, cooking, and doing the dishes; (b) doing laundry, ironing and taking care of clothes; and (c) cleaning and tidying up. This captures the core chores that are routine, essential for household functioning, and not easily delayed (Lee & Waite, 2005) If self-reported information is missing, we use the information provided by the partner. If both self-reported and partner-reported information is missing, *and* there is only missing information for one of the three indicators, the missing value is replaced by the mean number of hours spent in that activity for individuals of the same sex (Evertsson 2014).

The perception of the fairness regarding the sharing of housework is measured by the question "Which of the following statements do you think applies to your household? (a) I do much more than my fair share of the housework; (b) I do somewhat more than my fair share of the housework; (c) I do roughly my fair share of the housework; (d) I do somewhat less than my fair share of the housework; and (e) I do much less than my fair share of the housework". We recoded the variable on a five-point scale to reflect gendered fairness ranging from: (a) the woman does much more than her fair share; to (e) the man does much more than his fair share.

The level of conflict associated with housework is measured by how often the respondent reports that the two partners disagree regarding housework. The response categories are in

descending order ranging from (a) several times a week; (b) a few times a month; (c) a few times a year; (d) less frequently; and (e) never. The frequencies for these core variables are included in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

In roughly half of the couples there is a traditional division of housework as his share of the housework is less than 40%. Close to 40% of the couples share more or less equally (40-60%), while he does the major part of the housework (>60%) in about 12% of the cases.

There is a striking difference in her and his view of the fairness of the housework division. The men are reluctant to agree that the existing housework division is unfair to the woman – while half of the woman think that the situation is very or rather unfair to them, only about a third of the men would agree with this.

On the contrary, there seems to be more agreement between women and men regarding the level of conflict about housework: about 35% say this happens 'a few times a month' or even 'several times a week', while 38% report that such conflict occurs 'less frequently' or 'never'.

Independent variables

Gender ideology is measured by two questions measured on five-point likert scales. "How much do you agree with the following statements? (a) The woman should take the main responsibility for housework; (b) the man should have the main breadwinner responsibility in the family". The likert scale varies from (1) do not agree at all to (5) agree completely. If an individual has answered (1) = 'do not agree at all' on both these statements, s/he is considered as having a strong gender egalitarian ideology. Thus, gender ideology is a dichotomous variable (egalitarian, non-egalitarian)

Housework socialization variable is based on a survey question about the distribution of housework during the respondent's childhood and adolescence, creating a dichotomous variable to capture egalitarian housework arrangements, or those in which both parents shared or the father did most (value=1), to traditional arrangements, or those in which the mother did most of the housework (value=0).

The relative income variable is based on a survey question: 'How much did you earn during 2008, compared to your cohabiting/married partner?' ('more', 'roughly the same','less').

Work status distinguishes between whether s/he is not working (engaged in paid work), working part-time, full-time, or more than full-time.

Educational achievement captures whether an individual has at least some college or university education. For the respondents, it is measured by linking register data from the educational registers to the survey data. For the partners, it is measured by the respondents' reported education of his or her partner. Measuring education differently for the respondent and the partner should not pose a problem in these analyses, as we distinguish between women and men rather than between respondents and partners.

Finally, we control for the following demographic variables: the woman's age (<30, 30-33, 34-37, 38+), the age difference between the partners (same age, he is more than two years older, she is more than two years older), partner status (cohabiting or married), and child status (childless or one or more children).

Analytical approach

Initially we perform a latent class analysis to identify typologies of sharing behavior, perceived fairness and level of conflict between the partners. Latent class analysis identifies unobservable subgroups within a population, based on individuals' values on two or more observed variables. These variables are assumed to jointly measure one underlying, or latent, construct. Most intuitively, latent class analysis can be thought of as a kind of factor analysis, but with discrete rather than continuous observed variables (Kitterød and Lappegård 2012). We use the Stata LCA Plugin, provided by Penn State University Methodology Center, (Lanza et al 2013) to estimate our models.

From the latent class analysis, each individual in our data is assigned to a certain class, or group. Class membership is determined by the class that the individual has the highest probability to belong to, based on his or her sharing behavior, perceived fairness and level of conflict. We then examine how variables such as gender ideology, work status and educational achievement predict such class membership, using multinomial logistic regressions. This modeling strategy is two-fold, first allowing us to identify groups and second allowing us to identify sociodemographic characteristics with one's assignment.

A typology of households based on couple data from the 2009 YAPS survey

We hypothesized that our Swedish couples would cluster in five groups ranging from equitable to traditional on their housework arrangements. Contrary to expectations, however, our LCA produces six groups. Judging from the percentage distributions of *His share of housework*, group 2 and group 6 can be characterized as 'egalitarian', as in more than 60% of the couples the man does more than 40 % of the total amount of housework. Group 1 and 4, on the other hand, we could characterize as 'traditional', where the man does less than 40% of the housework in more than 80% of the couples. Group 3 comes close, where the man in almost half of the couples does less than 40% of the housework. So we could label this category 'semi-traditional'. Finally, we have the outlier, group 5, where the man does the most housework in 70% of the couples. We could label this as 'reverse traditional', as this is the opposite situation to the traditional allocation of housework, where she does all or almost all housework. However, it could also be called 'modern' as this might be a pioneer group with a housework division which is rarely observed even in a gender-equal society such as Sweden.

(Table 2 in about here)

The two traditional groups, 1 and 4, differ in that in group 1 he and she agree that this division of housework is unfair to her, while the couples in group 4 tend to disagree – half of the women think this is very unfair to her, while he tends to regard this division of housework as only 'rather unfair' or even 'fair'. In the semi-traditional group, group 3, the partners tend to agree on perceived fairness – in fact, more than half regard this situation is 'fair'.

The two egalitarian groups, 2 and 6, differ in the same way as the two traditional groups in how he and she perceive the fairness of housework: in group 2 they agree that this arrangement is fair, while in group 6 he tends to think this is fair, but many female partners regard it as 'rather unfair' to her. Finally, regarding perceived fairness in group 5 (reverse traditional), the partners seem largely in agreement that this is fair or rather unfair to him.

How is this reflected in the level of conflict in the family? Clearly, both in group 4 (traditional) and group 6 (egalitarian) the fact that the partners disagree in their view of the fairness of the housework division is associated with high levels of conflict, compared to

group 1 (traditional) and group 2 (egalitarian) respectively, in which both he and she report low levels of conflict. In group 3 (semi-traditional) and group 5 (reverse traditional) both partners report medium levels of conflict.

To summarize, we have the following:

Group 1	traditional	agree unfair to her	low conflict
Group 2	egalitarian	agree fair	low conflict
Group 3	semi-traditional	agree fair/unfair	medium conflict
Group 4	traditional	disagree unfair	high conflict
Group 5	reverse traditional	agree fair/unfair	medium conflict
Group 6	egalitarian	disagree fair/unfair	high conflict

Proposed labels:
1 = trad/agree/low conflict (Traditional)
2 = egal/agree/low conflict (Equitable)
3 = semi-trad/agree/medium conflict (Semi-traditional)
4 = trad/disagree/high conflict (Rejecting)
5 = revers trad/agree/medium conflict (Modern)
6 = egal/disagree/high conflict (Time Pressed)

We hypothesized that our couples would fall into five latent categories. Our results support this claim and, in addition, we identify a sixth category (table 2). In our first cluster, we identify the traditionals, or couples with traditional housework allocations who report this division is unfair to the female partner but associated with minimal conflict. This group is the rather small however, with only 6% of our sample falling into this category. Another small group, with 6% of our sample, is the reverse traditional couples who report their husband performs the bulk of the housework, find this to be fair or rather unfair to him and moderate levels of conflict. As these results indicate, our most traditional and modern groups are the least common yet produce roughly equivalent concentrations.

Sequentially, we identify the equitables or those with equal shares of housework, consistent reports of housework fairness and low levels of conflict. We hypothesized this group would be the most populous among Swedish couples given strong support for gender egalitarianism. Counter to expectations, however, only 15% of our couples fall into this category. Rather, we find more couples report high levels of unfairness and conflict over housework. Interestingly, we find 42% of our sample occupy these contentious categories, yet these are driven by

different housework allocations. Specifically, 21% of our sample report traditional divisions of housework as unfair to her and producing housework conflict. This category is consistent with our expectations. Surprisingly, an equivalent percentage of Swedish couples, 21%, report equitable housework shares, with men reporting these are fair but women unfair to her and high levels of conflict. This group suggests that housework is highly contested even when more or less equitably divided. We expect this group to be the most time pressed, explaining these counterintuitive outcomes. Finally, our most populous category is unexpected. We find our semi-traditional group, or one where respondent report either traditional or equitable housework arrangements, perceptions of fairness and moderate levels of conflict. This group, which accounts for 28% of our sample, highlights the tendency for couples to report housework fairness even when housework is traditionally divided. Our subsequent models investigate which characteristics predict group membership, to better understand group membership.

Comparing the Couple Types

The next step in our analysis is to identify logistic regression coefficients for the independent variables, predicting class membership. For the multinomial logistic regression we have chosen the Equitable type as the reference, which means that each of the other five groups is compared to this group.

(Table 3 in about here)

In Table 3 we present the percentage distribution for each outcome, within each category of the included independent variables. In general, the distributions are fairly similar; however, we find for example that married couples are more likely than the cohabiting ones to belong to the semi-traditional type, while cohabiting couples more often end up as 'equitable' or 'time pressed'. Similarly, we find that childless couples are more likely to belong to the 'equitable' type while couples with children are more likely to end up as ''rejecting' (traditional housework division, disagreement about fairness, high level of conflict).

(Table 4 in about here)

Turning to the results of the multinomial logistic regression analysis in Table 4, we find that married couples are more likely to belong to the semi-traditional category than the equitable group but there is little effect of partner status otherwise. However, using the semi-traditional group as the reference category, we find significant negative effects of marital status of belonging to the two groups characterized by high levels of conflict (Rejecting and Time Pressed – results not shown). Moreover, having children is a definite obstacle to ending up in the Equitable category (Table 4), or in other words being childless is a strong predictor of belonging to the cluster characterized by egalitarian sharing of housework, perceived fairness and low levels of conflict. Gender ideology is also a very important factor predicting class membership, both for the man and the woman in the couple. The Equitable group, not surprisingly, is characterized by egalitarian attitudes.

What increases the likelihood that the couple will belong to the Traditional group, which is characterized by traditional allocation of housework, agreement that this is unfair to her, and low level of conflict? If he works more than full-time, and they have one or more children, and both of them have non-egalitarian attitudes then they are more likely to belong to this group. The group which we have labeled 'Rejecting' is also characterized by traditional housework division, but there is disagreement about the fairness of this arrangement, and a relatively high level of conflict. Having children makes it more likely that a couple will belong to this group as well as his working more than full-time (similar to the Traditional group). What matters is also her housework socialization: if she has grown up in a family where parents shared housework, the couple is less likely to belong to the Rejecting category.

The group which we labeled 'Time Pressed' is similar to the Equitable group in that the man and the woman share housework more or less equally, but they differ in whether they agree or not about the fairness of this distribution, and in the level of conflict. In addition to his and her egalitarian attitude and her egalitarian housework socialization, which all have negative effects on belonging to this category, there is a positive effect of his and her university education. Most likely this indicates a more demanding work situation, which justifies the label 'Time pressed' for this category and which understandably is associated with a higher level of conflict. Educational level has no effect on any of the other latent groups.

For the 'Modern' group, where he does most of the housework, it is his and her work hours that matters, with no significant effect of any of the other independent variables, not even

gender ideology which had strong effects for all the other groups. Couples, where she works full-time and he does not work or works part-time, are the most likely to belong to this group. Clearly, this is a practical adjustment to a relatively rare situation where he has more time available for housework, and not a pioneer group characterized by a more 'modern' gender ideology.

Summary and tentative conclusions

Our exploratory study of the relationships between housework sharing, perceived fairness and levels of conflict about home tasks clearly demonstrates that these three factors in combination reflect different types of couples rather than associations across these measures. We identified six latent groups, with distinct features. Contrary to our expectations, based on the strong societal support for egalitarianism in Sweden, the 'equitables', those with equal shares of housework, where both consider this allocation of housework as fair, and who reported low levels of conflict, was not the largest category – only 15% of the couples fall in this category. The largest group was the 'semi-traditional' with moderate levels of conflict (about 28%). As much as 42% of our sample occupy the contentious categories, with disagreement about fairness and high levels of conflict. We think that our results indicate that the paradoxical relationships identified in previous fairness studies reflect consistencies in housework allocations, fairness and conflict.

What work and family characteristics explain membership in these clusters? Our tentative results indicate that having children is a definite obstacle to belonging to the equitable category. Couples in the equitable group tend to be childless and have strong egalitarian attitudes. Work status also seems to matter; for example, the small latent category which we labeled 'modern', where he does most of the housework, consists mostly of couples where she works full-time and he does not work or works part-time, which suggests that couples negotiate a trade-off between market work and housework. Not surprisingly, couples where the man works more than full-time are more likely to belong either to the 'traditional' or the 'rejecting' group, both of which are characterized by a traditional allocation of housework, and which together constitute close to 30% of the couples. Clearly, the strains of work and family characteristics (such as children) impede the realization of a normative egalitarian sharing of home tasks.

References

Amato, P. R. (2007). Transformative processes in marriage: Some thoughts from a sociologist. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*(2), 305-309.

Barstad, A. (2014). Equality Is Bliss? Relationship Quality and the Gender Division of Household Labor. *Journal of Family Issues*, 0192513X14522246.

Baxter, J. (2000). The Joys and Justice of Housework. *Sociology, 34*(4), 609-631.

Berk, S. F. (1985). *The gender factory : the apportionment of work in American households*. New York: Plenum Press.

Bianchi, S. M., Milkie, M. A., Sayer, L. C., & Robinson, J. P. (2000). Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends in the Gender Division of Household Labor. *Social Forces, 79*(1).

Bittman, M., England, P., Folbre, N., Sayer, L., & Matheson, G. (2003). When Does Gender Trump Money? Bargaining and Time in Household Work. *American Journal of Sociology, 109*(1), 186-214.

Blood Jr, R. O., & Wolfe, D. M. (1960). Husbands and wives: The dynamics of married living.

Braun, M., Lewin-Epstein, N., Stier, H., & Baumgärtner, M. K. (2008). Perceived equity in the gendered division of household labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70*(5), 1145-1156.

Brines, J. (1994). Economic Dependency, Gender, and the Division of Labor at Home. *American Journal of Sociology, 100*(3), 652-688.

Coltrane, S. (1997). *Family man: Fatherhood, housework, and gender equity*: Oxford University Press.

Coltrane, S. (2001). Research on household labor: modeling and measuring the social embeddedness of routine family work. *SAGE Family Studies Abstracts, 23*(3), 275-407.

Coverman, S. (1985). Explaining husbands'participation in domestic labor. *The Sociological Quarterly, 26*(1), 81-97.

England, P., & Farkas, G. (1986). *Households, employment, and gender: A social, economic, and demographic view*: Aldine Publishing Co.

Evertsson, M. (2014). Gender ideology and the sharing of housework and childcare in Sweden. *Journal of Family Issues* 35: 927-949.

Evertsson, M., & Nermo, M. (2004). Dependence within families and the division of labor: Comparing Sweden and the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*(5), 1272-1286.

Evertsson, M., & Nermo, M. (2007). Changing resources and the division of housework: A longitudinal study of Swedish couples. *European Sociological Review, 23*(4), 455-470.

Fuwa, M. (2004). Macro-Level Gender Inequality and the Division of Household Labor in 22 Countries. *American Sociological Review, 69*(6), 751-767.

Fuwa, M., & Cohen, P. N. (2007). Housework and social policy. *SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, 36*(2), 512-530.

Geist, C., & Cohen, P. N. (2011). Headed Toward Equality? Housework Change in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73*(4), 832-844. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00850.x

Glass, J., & Fujimoto, T. (1994). Housework, Paid Work, and Depression Among Husbands and Wives. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 35*(2), 179-191.

Gupta, S. (2007). Autonomy, dependence, or display? The relationship between married women's earnings and housework. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*(2), 399-417.

Kitteröd, R.H. and T. Lappegård (2012). A Typology of Work-Family Arrangemens Among Dual-Earner Couples in Norway. *Family Relations* 61:671-685.

Kornrich, S., Brines, J., & Leupp, K. (2013). Egalitarianism, housework, and sexual frequency in marriage. *American Sociological Review, 78*(1), 26-50.

Lachance-Grzela, M., & Bouchard, G. (2010). Why do women do the lion's share of housework? A decade of research. *Sex Roles, 63*(11-12), 767-780.

Lanza, S.T. et al (2013). *LCA Stata Plugin Users' Guide*. University Park: The Methodology Center, Penn State

Larsson, J. (2012). *Studier i tidsmässig välfärd, med fokus på tidsstrategier och tidspolitik för småbarnsföräldrar* [Studies in Temporal Welfare - focusing on time strategies and time politics for families with small children]. Dissertation. Göteborgs universitet.

Lee, Y. S., & Waite, L. J. (2005). Husbands' and wives' time spent on housework: A comparison of measures. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 67*(2), 328-336.

Lennon, M. C., & Rosenfield, S. (1994). Relative Fairness and the Division of Housework: The Importance of Options. *American Journal of Sociology, 100*(2).

PiÒa, D. L., & Bengtson, V. L. (1993). The Division of Household Labor and Wives' Happiness: Ideology, Employment, and Perceptions of Support. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55*(4), 901-912.

Ruppanner, L. (2010). Conflict and housework: Does country context matter? *European Sociological Review, 26*(5), 557-570.

Ruppanner, L. (2012). Housework conflict and divorce: a multi-level analysis. *Work, Employment & Society, 26*(4), 638-656.

Sanchez, L., & Thomson, E. (1997). Becoming Mothers and Fathers: Parenthood, Gender, and the Division of Labor. *Gender and Society, 11*(6), 747-772.

SCB (2012). På tal om kvinnor och män. En lathund om jämställdhet [Women and men in Sweden 2012. Facts and figures]. Stockholm: Statistiska centralbyrån.

Sullivan, O. (2011). An End to Gender Display Through the Performance of Housework? A Review and Reassessment of the Quantitative Literature Using Insights From the Qualitative Literature. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 3*(1), 1-13. doi: 10.1111/j.1756-2589.2010.00074.x

Thompson, L. (1991). Family Work: Women's Sense of Fairness. *Journal of Family Issues, 12*(2), 181-196.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing Gender. *Gender and Society, 1*(2), 125-151.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables used in the typology (percentage distributions)

His share of the housework

<20%	10,3
20-40%	39,2
40-60%	38,1
>60%	12,5

Her view of the fairness of the housework division		**His view of the fairness of the housework division**	
Very unfair to the woman	13,7	Very unfair to the woman	4,9
Rather unfair to the woman	35,9	Rather unfair to the woman	26,7
Fair	45,6	Fair	59,8
Rather unfair to the man	4,3	Rather unfair to the man	7,0
Very unfair to the man	0,6	Very unfair to the man	1,7

Her view of the level of conflict about housework		**His view of the level of conflict about housework**	
Several times a week	7,1	Several times a week	5,4
A few times a month	28,5	A few times a month	27,8
A few times a year	26,3	A few times a year	28,7
Less frequently	24,3	Less frequently	26,8
Never	13,8	Never	11,4

Table 2. Item response probabilities for couples conditional on latent class membership (N=1020)

LCA analysis		Traditional group 1	Equitable group 2	Semi-trad group3	Rejecting group 4	Modern group 5	Time Pressed group 6
His share of housework	<20%	0,470	0,042	0,038	0,232	0,000	0,028
	20-40%	0,437	0,259	0,430	0,601	0,002	0,316
	40-60%	0,068	0,570	0,442	0,142	0,241	0,543
	>60 %	0,024	0,129	0,091	0,024	0,757	0,112
Perceived fairness_his	Very unfair to her	0,267	0,000	0,008	0,134	0,000	0,000
	Rather unfair to her	0,569	0,021	0,204	0,568	0,002	0,203
	Fair	0,121	0,894	0,775	0,263	0,363	0,714
	Rather unfair to him	0,029	0,086	0,013	0,023	0,520	0,057
	Very unfair to him	0,014	0,000	0,000	0,013	0,116	0,025
Perceived fairness_her	Very unfair to her	0,239	0,000	0,013	0,536	0,003	0,000
	Rather unfair to her	0,561	0,138	0,326	0,405	0,046	0,543
	Fair	0,189	0,804	0,654	0,059	0,465	0,432
	Rather unfair to him	0,011	0,057	0,007	0,000	0,410	0,020
	Very unfair to him	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,076	0,004
Level of conflict_his	Several times a week	0,000	0,000	0,004	0,146	0,089	0,070
	A few times a month	0,066	0,009	0,093	0,455	0,204	0,627
	A few times a year	0,161	0,091	0,475	0,250	0,354	0,221
	More seldom	0,441	0,413	0,428	0,145	0,250	0,024
	Never	0,331	0,486	0,001	0,004	0,102	0,058
Level of conflict_her	Several times a week	0,000	0,002	0,003	0,239	0,081	0,060
	A few times a month	0,061	0,005	0,067	0,508	0,097	0,672
	A few times a year	0,095	0,110	0,436	0,196	0,356	0,228
	More seldom	0,429	0,287	0,453	0,055	0,305	0,039
	Never	0,414	0,596	0,041	0,000	0,160	0,000
Class membership probabilities		6,5	15,1	28,7	21,8	6,5	21,5

Table 3. Frequencies of the background variables in the regression analysis

	Traditional	Equitable	Semi-traditional	Rejecting	Modern	Time Pressed	
Her age							
<30	4,8	12,9	32,5	20,1	5,7	23,9	100,0
30-33	4,1	12,1	32,2	19,8	8,0	23,9	100,0
34-37	5,8	12,4	32,2	23,2	3,9	21,6	100,0
38+	9,7	15,6	29,0	21,9	5,0	18,9	100,+
Age difference							
Same age	5,8	13,4	32,9	18,4	5,8	23,7	100,0
he older	6,5	12,8	31,2	22,1	6,0	21,4	100,0
she older	4,4	13,3	27,8	33,3	4,4	16,7	100,0
Her work hours							
No work	6,7	12,2	24,8	26,9	2,5	26,9	100,0
Part-time	6,9	12,1	33,6	25,4	2,2	19,8	100,0
Full-time	5,5	14,2	34,5	17,8	9,3	18,8	100,0
More than full-time	4,1	13,7	32,9	11,0	5,5	32,9	100,0
His work hours							
No work	6,5	10,9	27,2	18,5	10,9	26,1	100,0
Full-time	5,4	13,8	31,1	20,5	5,4	23,8	100,0
More than full-time	8,0	12,6	33,7	26,9	3,4	15,4	100,0
Partner status							
Cohabiting	5,7	14,7	27,4	21,8	5,9	24,6	100,0
Married	6,3	11,6	35,9	20,6	5,7	19,9	100,0
Child status							
Childless	3,9	19,3	32,5	15,4	6,9	22,0	100,0
One or more children	6,9	10,5	31,5	23,6	5,3	22,2	100,0
Relative income							
same	5,1	17,3	30,8	14,7	10,3	21,8	100,0
he more	6,4	11,7	31,4	23,9	4,5	22,2	100,0
she more	5,4	14,8	35,6	14,1	7,4	22,8	100,0
Her housework socialization							
She did most	6,0	11,5	30,3	24,1	5,4	22,8	100,0
They shared	5,6	18,6	38,1	9,8	7,4	20,5	100,0
His housework socialization							
She did most	6,6	12.9	30,5	22,2	5,2	22,8	100,0
They shared	3,4	14,6	36,4	17,5	8,3	19,9	100,0
Her gender ideology							
Egalitarian	4,9	15,0	32,8	18,6	6,6	22,2	100,0
Non-egalitarian	10,1	6,4	28,0	30,7	2,8	22,0	100,0
His gender ideology							
Egalitarian	3,9	17,6	33,9	14.9	6,9	22,8	100,0
Non-egalitarian	9,4	5,7	28,2	31,6	3,9	21,2	100,0

Her education

Secondary or less	10,7	13,4	29,8	26,1	5,1	14,6	100,0
Some university	3,4	12,9	32,6	18,3	6,2	26,7	100,0
His education							
Secondary or less	9,0	13,1	28,8	25,4	7,1	16,6	100,0
Some university	3,4	12,9	34,9	17,5	4,9	26,5	100,0
Total	6,0	13,1	31,8	21,2	5,8	22,2	100,0

Table 4. Multinomial odds ratios predicting class membership   (ref category= Equitable)

		Traditional		Semi-trad		Rejecting		Modern		Time Pressed	
Her age	(ref=under 30)										
	30-33	-0,634		-0,360		-0,358		0,105		-0,337	
	34-37	-0,284		-0,520		-0,586		-0,650		-0,536	
	38+	0,040		-0,835	*	-0,868	*	-0,717		-0,628	
Age difference	(ref=same age)										
	he older	0,022		-0,085		0,015		0,049		-0,159	
	she older	-0,256		0,343		0,918	*	-0,139		0,124	
Her work hours	(ref=full-time)										
	No work	0,105		-0,590	*	0,095		-1,570	**	0,124	
	Part-time	0,031		-0,137		0,180		-1,496	**	-0,020	
	More than full-time	-0,344		-0,106		-0,313		-0,458		0,714	
His work hours	(ref=full-time)										
	No work	0,610		0,168		0,444		1,195	*	0,472	
	Part-time	-0,978		0,671		-0,497		1,256	(*)	-0,268	
	More than full-time	0,767	(*)	0,252		0,582	(*)	-0,122		-0,409	
Partner status	(ref=cohabiting)										
	Married	-0,083		0,415	(*)	-0,032		0,385		-0,191	
Child status	(ref=childless)										
	One or more children	1,217	**	0,760	*	1,174	***	0,639		1,017	***
Relative income	(ref=he more)										
	same	-0,238		-0,421		-0,672	(*)	0,120		-0,428	
	she more	-0,034		-0,172		-0,570		-0,417		-0,264	

Table 4 (cont.)

	Traditional		Semi-trad		Rejecting		Modern		Time Pressed	
Her housework socialization										
They shared or he did most vs she did most	-0,598		-0,180		-1,333	***	-0,207		-0,608	*
His housework socializtion										
They shared or he did most vs she did most	-0,426		0,275		-0,088		0,480		-0,144	
Her gender ideology										
Egalitarian vs non-egalitarian	-1,256	**	-0,666	(*)	-0,981	**	0,062		-0,892	*
His gender ideology										
Egalitarian vs non-egalitarian	-1,700	***	-0,943	**	-1,753	***	-0,558		-1,207	***
Her education (ref=secondary or less)										
Some university	-0,448		0,366		0,339		0,521		0,878	**
Unknown	-0,042		0,851		-0,366		0,674		-0,001	
His education (ref=secondary or less)										
Some university	-0,264		0,393		0,064		-0,474		0,617	*
Unknown	-0,574		-0,774		-0,244		-13,769		0,469	

(*) 0,05< p<0.10, * 0,01<p<0,05, ** 0.001<p<0,01, *** 0,0001<p<0,001