

Dependence Within Families and the Division of Labor: Comparing Sweden and the United States

This article assesses the relative explanatory value of the resource-bargaining perspective and the doing-gender approach for the division of housework in the United States and Sweden from the mid-1970s to 2000. The data used are the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and the Swedish Level of Living Survey. Overall results show that housework was truly gendered work in both countries during the entire period. Even so, the results indicate that, unlike Swedish women, U.S. women seem to increase their time spent in housework when their husbands are to some extent economically dependent on them, as if to neutralize the presumed gender deviance on the part of their spouses.

It is evident that the strict gendered division of labor between paid market work and unpaid housework has decreased over the past three or four decades in almost all Western countries. Despite this, women still do the lion's share of all housework (e.g., for the United States, see Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; for Sweden, see Bygren, Gähler, & Nermo, 2004; Evertsson, 2001). Thus far, most research in this field has used national data, which means that we have little knowledge about cross-national variation in the gender division of unpaid labor

and its determinants (see, however, Baxter, 1997; Calasanti & Bailey, 1991; Kalleberg & Rosenfeld, 1990). Further, to our knowledge, no earlier studies have focused on the relative value of theories in explaining this division of work across countries at different points in time.

The overall purpose of this article is to study the explanatory value of two theoretical frameworks, *the relative resource-bargaining perspective* and *the doing-gender approach*, for the division of housework in the United States and Sweden from the mid-1970s until the end of the 20th century. On one hand, according to the relative resource-bargaining perspective, the spouses' division of housework is determined by the relative resources (e.g., wage income and human capital) that each spouse possesses. The spouse with the greater resources is most likely to negotiate away all or parts of the housework. A doing-gender approach, on the other hand, suggests that housework functions as an area within which gender is symbolically created. Hence, according to this approach, gender is a more important factor in predicting the division of housework than are any resources. The two approaches are discussed in more detail below. Before we proceed, however, we will define a few central concepts. Economic dependence is used as a relative resource in our analyses and is an indicator of the individual's contribution to the couple's income from earnings (Sørensen & McLanahan, 1987). Gender display is a term originally coined by Goffman (1976). Here, however, we concentrate on the

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way in which Brines (1994) used the term. She argued that economically dependent husbands display gender when they respond to their dependency on their wives by avoiding housework in order to reclaim their constitutive masculinity. Greenstein (2000) argued that both women and men take part in gender deviance neutralizing behavior; that is, they exaggerate behaviors that contradict a deviant economic identity (e.g., breadwinner wife and supported husband). In these unconventional families, women do more housework than predicted by their labor market work hours and relative resource models, whereas men do less.

The reason for choosing the United States and Sweden as the two countries of our study is that they both follow the above-noted trend regarding the overall development of men's and women's housework. They are also recognized as having high rates of female labor force participation (e.g., Spain & Bianchi, 1996). Even so, policies and incentives for women's labor force participation differ considerably between them, as do public attitudes toward gender equality. In other words, we are here able to study the shape and development of the association between the division of unpaid work and relative resources within couples in two different institutional and cultural settings. Our key questions are: (a) Do the mechanisms that govern the gendered division of housework differ between Sweden and the United States? and (b) To what extent has the relative importance of these mechanisms changed over time? We begin with a brief description of essential differences between Sweden and the United States regarding views on women's employment and the division of care and unpaid work.

A UNIVERSAL BREADWINNER STRATEGY VERSUS AN EARNER-CAREGIVER STRATEGY?

Despite a similar increase in female labor force participation, different strategies have developed in the United States and Sweden to deal with the resulting work-family conflict for women. Whereas Sweden has relied to a greater extent on political solutions, state policies, and legislation, the United States has relied to a greater extent on market solutions (e.g., Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2002; Mayers, Gornick, & Ross, 1999). Sainsbury (1999) conceptualized this difference by referring to the United States as having a universal breadwinner

strategy, and Sweden as having an earner-carer strategy. The former strategy is characterized by a positive attitude toward women's and men's equal rights in the labor market and a legal system that covers and safeguards these rights. The latter strategy more actively sets out to ease the work-family conflict for women through state policies and social legislation. Examples of such policies are heavily subsidized public child care, long parental leave periods with high income replacement levels (where the leave can be equally shared by the parents), and the legal right to work part time while the child is under 8 years old. In the United States, the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) regulates time off from work after childbirth. According to the FMLA, private employers with more than 50 employees, and all public agencies, are obliged to grant an employee up to a total of 12 work weeks of unpaid leave in connection with the birth of a child. Apart from that, however, the arrangement of care for children in two-earner households is regarded as a private family responsibility (Appelbaum et al.). As a consequence, the work-family conflict for American women is exacerbated.

If policies regarding the work-family conflict shape people's views about domestic gender equality, the above strategies might also affect the gender division of unpaid housework. It has not been empirically shown, however, that attitudes are directly linked to the division of domestic labor (see Baxter, 1997; Calasanti & Bailey, 1991; Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003), although Baxter and Kane (1995) found a positive association between gender-egalitarian attitudes and women at low levels of economic dependence. In their study, compared with the United States, Sweden was classified as a low-dependency country. These results are relevant because economic dependency is regarded as an important factor in explaining the gendered division of housework.

EXPLAINING THE DIVISION OF UNPAID WORK

Explanations for the gendered division of housework are usually divided into three overarching frameworks: (a) the time-availability perspective, (b) the relative resource-bargaining perspective, and (c) the gender perspective (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2000; Coverman, 1985). In this article, we do not explicitly test the time-

availability theory. Gendered family decision making often precedes and determines the actual amount of time that women and men spend in paid work. Consequently, it is hard to determine whether women do the majority of the housework because they spend fewer hours in paid labor, or whether they spend fewer hours in paid labor because they have to do the majority of the housework. Even so, it is important to control for both spouses' time spent in paid work when analyzing the division of housework. If not done properly, the division of housework will partly reflect time availability (cf., Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003).

The relative resource-bargaining perspective includes at least two different theories. According to the first, proposed by Blood and Wolfe (1960), the amount of domestic work performed by each spouse is determined by the distribution of relative resources between the spouses. Implicit in this perspective is the assumption that most people want to avoid housework. Consequently, the more resources a person has at her disposal, the more likely she will negotiate housework away. The mechanism through which relative resources become valid in spousal negotiations involves their importance as portable resources in the event of a divorce (cf., England & Kilbourne, 1990; Hobson, 1990; Lundberg & Pollak, 1996). Actual resources are often indicated by relative wage, income, education, and occupational status. Much research has been conducted to test this hypothesis (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2000; Bittman et al., 2003; Nermo & Evertsson, 2004; Presser, 1994). The conventional finding is that the difference in the amount of housework that each spouse performs decreases as the spouses' relative resource-gap decreases (e.g., Bianchi et al.; Nermo & Evertsson; Presser). The relative resource-bargaining perspective has been contested in relation to unconventional families—that is, families in which the woman has greater resources than does the man (e.g., Bittman et al.; Brines, 1994; Greenstein, 2000; Tichenor, 1999). We return to this issue below.

The second relative resource framework derives from Becker's (1981, 1985) theory on specialization. According to Becker, the division of paid and unpaid work in the household mirrors rational family decision making, the aim of which is to maximize family utility and output. Given the same amount of leisure time, the

theory of specialization predicts whether spouses will spend their next productive hour in housework or in market work. The theory of specialization cannot predict the difference in time spent in housework between men and women once we control for time spent in paid work.

Finally, according to the doing-gender approach, housework is seen as a symbolic enactment of gender relations. Here, focus is turned toward unconventional families in which the woman has the higher income or the job with greater status (Bittman et al., 2003; Brines, 1993, 1994; Greenstein, 2000). With respect to these families, theories of time availability and relative resources seem to have low explanatory power and instead, "gender trumps money" (Bittman et al.). According to some, this is because housework is so traditionally linked to women and women's work that it functions as an area in which gender is symbolically created (Fenstermaker Berk, 1985; Goffman, 1976; West & Zimmerman, 1987). When men have difficulties in sustaining their traditional family roles (i.e., being the main breadwinner, working the most hours, or being employed at all), both women and men may act in a way that neutralizes this presumed violation of gender norms. A common way of testing the doing-gender hypothesis is to include an indicator of the woman's contribution to the household income, together with its squared term, in a regression model where time spent in housework is the dependent variable. A significant squared term indicates that the division of work in unconventional families does not follow the predictions from the relative resource perspective (see the description of economic dependency below for details). On one hand, Brines (1994) found that when American men were economically dependent on their wives, they "displayed gender" by lowering their time in housework. On the other hand, Greenstein found that both men and women act to neutralize a nonnormative provider role when they do housework; that is, they take part in what Greenstein termed "gender deviance neutralizing" behavior. Bittman et al. found that Australian women increase their time spent in housework when they are the main providers, whereas the time that men spend in housework is virtually unaffected. Their conclusion was that the difference between their results and those of Brines's (1994) study on American data is partly explained by the fact that it is more common for women with

children in the United States to work full time. In other words, gender deviance might be more common in the United States than in Australia, and thereby plausibly more accepted.

The difference between the United States and Sweden in this aspect of female labor market behavior is not trivial. About 74% of Swedish mothers with children under 7 years old worked for pay in 2000. The corresponding figure for the United States was 62% in 1999 (see also Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003). Moreover, about 90% of all 3- to 5-year-olds in Sweden spend time in child care (Statistics Sweden, 2003). According to our calculations from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, slightly more than 55% of all American families with children 3 to 5 years of age paid for child care in the year 2000 (although in some cases, the stated amount paid was very low, probably indicating that few hours were spent in child care or that relatives provided the care). The dual (public and private) child-care system in the United States produces large inequities in quality, accessibility, and affordability (Urias Levy, & Michel, 2002). As a consequence, in the United States, there is still debate on the advisability of mothers working and spending time away from small children. Disagreement among women and men about mothering roles also appears to inhibit movements away from traditional gendered family roles (Badgett, Davidson, Folbre, & Lim, 2000). A comparison between Sweden and the United States would therefore suggest that the doing-gender approach is more salient in the United States. It is worth noting that the above-described differences between the United States and Sweden largely emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Consequently, the difference in the explanatory value of the doing-gender approach for the division of housework in the two countries is therefore likely to be most discernible during the past decades.

In the empirical analyses, three indicators of relative resource are used: relative level of education, relative occupational status, and respondent's economic dependence (see the section Variables in the Analyses for details). The analyses also include a set of control variables. Age is used because we assume that older couples might have a more traditional division of work than younger couples. Because earlier studies have found that having small children (i.e., below school starting age) increases time spent in housework, we also control for the

presence of young children. In addition, we include an indicator of the number of children below 18 years of age because the relation between relative resources and housework might differ depending on the number of children the couple has. In the analyses of data from the United States, race of husband is used. The reason for including race is twofold. First, earlier studies have found that the amount of time spent in housework differs for Blacks, Whites, and others. Second, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) initially oversampled low-income households, and Whites have a lower probability of living in such a household. We also control for the level of income in the household, and thereby the ability to purchase household services (not shown). Finally, we include an indicator for self-employed because we assume that, to a greater extent than most employees, they can have problems separating their work time and their leisure time. They may also work long hours without paying themselves a corresponding wage.

METHOD

The data for Sweden come from the Swedish Level of Living Survey for the years 1974, 1981, 1991, and 2000. All of these surveys are random samples of 1/1,000 of the Swedish population between 18 and 75 years of age. The nonresponse rates vary between 11% in 1974 to about 23% 2000. The analyses are based on the roughly 2,500 respondents who lived together with a spouse (married or cohabiting) for each survey year. For the United States, the sample is restricted to married or cohabiting couples. Data from the PSID are used for the years 1973, 1981, 1991, and 1999. For 1973, 1981, and 1991, information on income and work hours was collected the year after the interview ($t+1$). For 1999, however, information about income and work hours was collected in 2001 ($t+2$). This is worth noting because it most likely lowers the reliability of work hours and economic dependence in 1999 as compared with earlier years.

All analyses are based on ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions. The respondents were between 18 and 65 years of age. Early retired persons, disabled persons, and students were excluded in all years (this reduces the sample of couples by about 10%), except for women in the United States for 1973. In this year, no information about wives' employment

status was obtained in the PSID. In addition, partly to exclude the most temporary cohabitations and partly as a consequence of the character of the data, only respondents who were cohabiting the year before the survey year ($t-1$) until at least the year after the survey year ($t+1$) are included in the analyses for the United States (this reduces the samples by another 10%–15%). For 1999, however, this means including couples who had been cohabiting at least 2 years before the survey year ($t-2$), and 2 years after the survey year ($t+2$) because of the lack of annual data from 1997 and later. For Sweden, the ability to restrict the sample to couples who were cohabiting both the year before and the year after the survey is limited. When we have been able to test this restriction for a subsample of couples, it did not change the main conclusions.

Variables in the Analyses

The dependent variable in the analyses is the *number of weekly hours spent in housework*. In the Swedish data, housework is defined as shopping, cooking, doing the dishes, and cleaning. In the American data, housework is defined as time spent cooking, cleaning, and doing other work around the house. Although the wording of this question is different and traditional male duties are more likely to be included in the U.S. data, it still mainly refers to indoor and traditionally female work. A bigger problem might be that information about the time spent in housework in the Swedish Level of Living Survey is obtained through three different questions, whereas in the PSID, it is estimated using one overarching question. The likelihood of underestimating the time spent in housework is larger when only one question (instead of two or more) is meant to capture all time spent in this work (we thank Suzanne M. Bianchi for pointing this out to us). Hence, comparisons between the average weekly hours spent in housework in the two countries at different points in time should be interpreted with caution.

Relative level of education refers to the husband and wife's level of education in relation to each other and includes three categories: (a) both husband and wife have at the most secondary education (at least 12 grades or a completed high school degree in the United States, and a total of 12 years for Sweden; the reference

category), (b) both husband and wife have some education above the secondary level, (c) the husband but not the wife has some education above the secondary level, and (d) the wife but not the husband has some education above the secondary level.

Relative occupational status is coded in a way similar to education. The reference category is (a) couples in which both the husband and the wife have about equal occupational status and are either blue-collar workers (unskilled or skilled) or lower white-collar workers (i.e., sales workers or clerical and related workers), or are both out of the labor force (less than 1% of all couples). The second category (b) is composed of households in which both are intermediate or higher white-collar workers (i.e., professional technical and related workers, or managers and administrators). In the third category (c), the man has higher occupational status than the woman, and in the fourth category (d), the woman has higher occupational status than the man.

Degree of economic dependency is based on total earnings before tax. The measure is adapted from Sørensen and McLanahan's (1987) original measure of a wife's economic dependency.

$$\text{Income transfer} = \frac{(\text{OEARN} - \text{SEARN})}{(\text{OEARN} + \text{SEARN})} \quad (1)$$

This measure applies to both wives and husbands, where OEARN refers to the respondent's own annual earnings, and SEARN refers to the spouse's annual earnings. The degree of economic dependency is included in the analyses as a continuous variable ranging from -1 to 1 , where -1 indicates that the respondent is fully economically dependent on the spouse (i.e., the spouse provides all the household income), and 1 indicates that the respondent is the economic provider for the spouse (i.e., the respondent provides all of the household income). When economic dependency is 0 , both spouses contribute equally to the household income. The economic dependency variable is also included as a quadratic term, *economic dependency*², ranging from 0 to 1 , indicating any gender display or gender deviance neutralization. A significant positive estimate for the quadratic term indicates a U-shaped association between economic dependency and time spent in housework. For

women, this indicates that they perform more housework when they are either economically dependent on or economically provide for their spouses. Consequently, women do less housework if their contribution to the household income is about as large as their spouse's. A reverse U-shaped relationship between economic dependency and housework is what we would expect for men if the doing-gender approach receives support. This would indicate that men do less housework when they either economically provide for or are economically dependent on their spouses. Hence, if the division of housework is unrelated to traditional gendered family roles, the quadratic term should not be significant, and instead, women and men would spend about equal amounts of time in housework once we include the linear term of economic dependency together with other indicators of relative resources.

Age is included as a continuous control variable. Having (at least) one *child younger than 7* years of age for Sweden and a *child younger than 6* years of age for the United States are dummy variables that separate those with children below school age from others. Although many Swedish children in the year 2000 start school at the age of 6, the dominant school-starting age in Sweden during the period since 1974 has been 7 years of age. A continuous variable of the *number of children below 18* years of age is also included in the analyses. *Number of hours per week spent in paid labor* refers to

the average amount of weekly hours spent in paid employment for the woman and the man, respectively. Race of husband is included as a control variable that distinguishes between *Whites* (reference category not shown), *Blacks*, and *Others* (see the analyses for the United States). A dummy for the *self-employed* is also included. To control for the level of income in the household, we include 10 levels of the *total household earnings* before tax based on the decile values of the distribution of earnings (not shown).

THE DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK
BY GENDER BETWEEN
1973 AND 2000

It is obvious that the time that Swedish and American women spend in housework has decreased since the mid-1970s, and that men in the two countries have increased their number of hours spent in housework (see Figures 1 and 2). Still, in the years around 2000, Swedish and American women spent 10 and 13 more hours on average, respectively, in housework each week than did men.

The main factors of interest in the following OLS regression analyses are relative resources as indicated by relative education, relative occupational status, and degree of economic dependency. The quadratic term of economic dependency included in Model 2 indicates any gender display or gender deviance neutralization.

FIGURE 1. AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS SPENT IN HOUSEWORK FOR SWEDISH WOMEN AND MEN FOR THE YEARS 1974, 1981, 1991, AND 2000

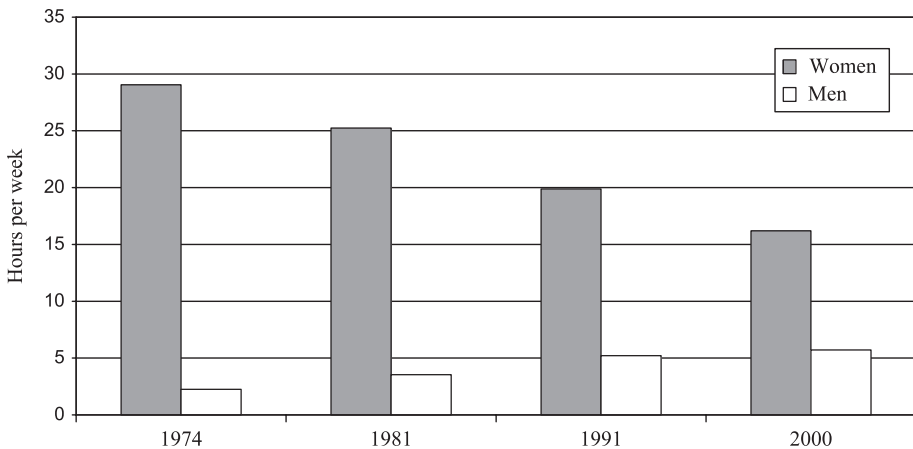
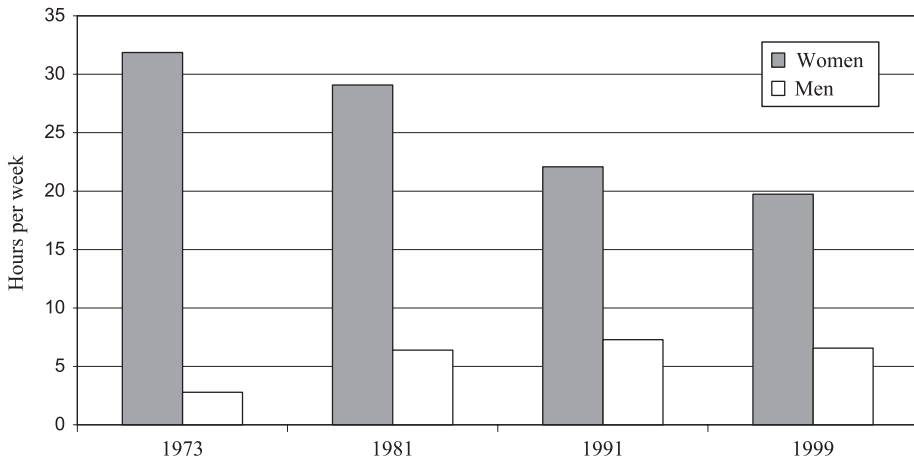


FIGURE 2. AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS SPENT IN HOUSEWORK FOR AMERICAN WOMEN AND MEN FOR THE YEARS 1973, 1981, 1991, AND 1999



Housework in Sweden, 1974–2000

Tables 1 and 2 present results for Swedish women and men for 1974, 1981, 1991, and 2000. The analysis in Table 1 for women shows that the linear term for economic dependency (Model 1) is significantly negative for all years. Hence, the less economically dependent a wife is on her husband, the less housework she performs. This provides some initial support for the relative resource perspective. Looking at relative level of education for 1981 and 1991, women living in couples in which both spouses are higher educated perform less housework than do women in couples in which neither spouse has more than 12 years of schooling. Given work hours we would not, according to the relative resource perspective, expect these categories to differ because the spouses have comparably equal levels of education in both categories. It is notable that effects from the spouses' relative occupational status for 1991 follow a similar pattern. A second finding for 1981 and 1991, also inconsistent with the relative resource perspective, is that women in couples in which at least one spouse (no matter who) has higher education do less housework than do women in couples in which both have at most 12 years of schooling. In all, no clearly linear pattern can be discerned from either relative education or occupational status in any of the years. Instead, the relative resource perspective, as defined here, only receives strong support from the economic dependency

indicator. In other words, the more the woman contributes to the total household income, the less housework she performs.

In Model 2 for all years, the squared term of economic dependency is added. Because the squared term does not reach significance, we conclude that gender deviance neutralization, as tested here, is not a valid explanation for the time that Swedish women spend in housework in any of the years.

For Swedish men, the economic dependency term is significantly negative for all years (Table 2, Model 1), which indicates that men also perform less housework the more they economically provide for their wives. Although this gives initial support for the relative resource-bargaining perspective, effects from other indicators of relative resources, such as relative educational level and relative occupational status, do not follow the predicted pattern. Effects from relative occupational status are only found for 1974 and 1981. Here the analysis shows that men in couples in which both spouses have high occupational status do more housework than do men in couples in which both have low status. A similar result, but valid for 1981, 1991, and 2000, indicates that higher educated men living with higher educated women perform more housework than do men in couples in which both spouses have at most 12 years of schooling. In accordance with the relative resource perspective, however, for 1991 and 2000, the analyses also indicate that lower educated men with higher educated wives actually

TABLE 1. OLS REGRESSION OF WOMEN'S WEEKLY HOUSEWORK HOURS ON RELATIVE RESOURCES 1974–2000 FOR SWEDEN

	1974		1981		1991		2000	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	33.89***	33.74***	18.71***	18.54***	11.98***	12.00***	9.04***	8.93***
Age of respondent	-0.30***	-0.30***	-0.07**	-0.07**	0.12***	0.12***	0.14***	0.14***
Children < 7 years of age	1.74**	1.75**	2.49***	2.53***	2.68***	2.68***	0.61	0.61
# of children	2.86***	2.86***	4.22***	4.22***	2.67***	2.67***	2.45***	2.45***
The woman's # of hours in paid labor/week	-0.10***	-0.10***	-0.06***	-0.06***	-0.17***	-0.17***	-0.14***	-0.14***
The man's # of hours in paid labor/week	0.09***	0.09***	0.08***	0.08***	0.06**	0.06**	0.08***	0.08***
Wife self-employed	-1.44	-1.54	0.19	0.13	3.43***	3.44***	1.96*	1.82
Both secondary education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Both higher education	-1.44	-1.83	-5.39***	-5.44***	-2.49***	-2.48***	-0.56	-0.60
Husband higher education	-0.44	-0.49	-2.36**	-2.38**	-1.38*	-1.38*	-1.93**	-1.93**
Wife higher education	-2.44*	-2.48*	-2.48**	-2.52**	-2.51***	-2.50***	-0.64	-0.66
Both low-med. occup. status	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Both high occup. status	0.10	0.07	-1.08	-1.21	-2.38***	-2.38***	-0.51	-0.60
Husband higher occup. status than wife	-0.15	-0.24	0.51	0.37	-0.32	-0.31	0.51	0.41
Wife higher occup. status than husband	-0.06	-0.12	-0.85	-0.92	-2.45***	-2.44**	-1.17	-1.21
Respondent economic dependence	-4.88***	-4.41***	-2.30***	-1.27	-3.14***	-3.17***	-1.87**	-1.56
Respondent economic dependence ²		0.84		1.70		-0.09		1.36
R ²	0.29	0.29	0.34	0.34	0.26	0.26	0.21	0.21
n	2,390		2,219		2,201		1,545	

Note: Controlling for total household earnings (not shown).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

do more housework than do men in couples in which both have at most 12 years of schooling.

The quadratic form of the association between housework time and degree of economic dependency is added in Model 2. For 1981, the linear effect of economic dependency is no longer significant, and instead, the squared term is negative and significant. Hence, for 1981, this initially indicates that a man is likely to do more housework when he and his spouse have equivalent earnings, as compared with when he either provides for or is economically dependent on his wife. We should be cautious when interpreting this effect, however. An additional analysis not presented shows that the significant squared term of economic dependency is highly dependent on outliers. If the 15 most economically dependent men are excluded, the squared term is no longer significant. Hence, according to this test of the gender display model, the model does not receive any robust support among Swedish women and men.

In sum, the models for Swedish men in Table 2 show that the relative resource perspective, as indicated by economic dependency, receives some support in 1974 and 1981. In 1991 and 2000, however, this perspective receives somewhat stronger support when relative education is considered. Still, it is worth noting that, for all years, women do more housework than do men, independent of work hours and the relative resources controlled for. The difference in time spent in housework is particularly large in families with children. Hence, the prevalence of children appears to promote gender-typical behavior among women and men, and consequently, housework is not gender-neutral work even in Sweden.

Housework in the United States, 1973–1999

Tables 3 and 4 present results for American women and men for 1973, 1981, 1991, and

TABLE 2. OLS REGRESSION OF MEN'S WEEKLY HOUSEWORK HOURS ON RELATIVE RESOURCES
1974–2000 FOR SWEDEN

	1974		1981		1991		2000	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	2.22**	2.18**	6.68***	6.81***	8.50***	8.51***	8.50***	8.45***
Age of respondent	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04**	-0.04**	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.02	-0.02
Children < 7 years of age	0.53*	0.52*	0.07	0.04	0.94***	0.94***	0.09	0.12
# of children	0.36***	0.35***	0.57***	0.57***	0.59***	0.59***	0.80***	0.80***
The man's # of hours in paid labor/week	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05***	-0.05***	-0.08***	-0.08***
The woman's # of hours in paid labor/week	0.04***	0.04***	0.04***	0.04***	0.03**	0.03**	0.04***	0.04***
Husband self-employed	-0.80*	-0.77*	-2.04***	-1.96***	-1.43***	-1.42***	-0.95**	-0.98**
Both secondary education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Both higher education	0.54	0.52	2.41***	2.46***	1.20***	1.20***	1.22***	1.21***
Husband higher education	-0.13	-0.15	0.74	0.77	0.18	0.18	0.61	0.60
Wife higher education	-1.27**	-1.28**	0.39	0.43	1.06**	1.06**	1.20***	1.19***
Both low-med. occup. status	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Both high occup. status	1.71***	1.70***	0.71*	0.82*	0.14	0.14	0.33	0.29
Husband higher occup. status than wife	0.42	0.40	0.03	0.15	-0.18	-0.18	0.21	0.18
Wife higher occup. status than husband	1.13*	1.12*	0.46	0.54	0.79*	0.79*	0.68	0.65
Respondent economic dependence	-1.13***	-1.26***	-1.49***	-0.50	-1.39***	-1.37**	-1.34**	-1.49**
Respondent economic dependence ²		0.28		(-1.61*)		-0.07		0.54
R ²	0.09	0.09	0.14	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.13	0.13
n	2,390		2,219		2,201		1,545	

Note: Controlling for total household earnings (not shown).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

1999. For women for the year 1973 (Table 3), none of the relative resource indicators seems to have any relevance to the amount of time that women spend in housework. For 1981, 1991, and 1999, the linear term of economic dependency in Model 1 is significant and negative, indicating that the less economically dependent the wife is on her husband, the less housework she performs. The relative resource perspective also receives some support from the estimates for relative occupational status because women whose occupational status is lower than that of their husbands spend more time in housework than do women whose occupational status is on par with that of their husbands. This is partly explained by the fact that some of these women are out of the labor force (housewives and persons outside the labor force have the lowest occupational status). Although we control for work hours, this result is significant and distinct. Still, women whose occupational status is

higher than that of their husbands do not appear to be able to use this status (or potential power) to negotiate a lower housework burden (see 1999 for an exception). This is also true for highly educated women. Instead, for 1991 and 1999, women who live with a higher educated spouse tend to do less housework than women who live with a spouse who has at most secondary education. This might be because highly educated individuals more often hold gender-egalitarian attitudes (cf., Kane, 1995; Knudsen & Wærness, 2001; Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983). Several studies have found that highly educated men tend to do more housework than less educated men (e.g., Coverman, 1985; Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003; Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). In the analyses here, however, higher educated American men do more housework than do other men in 1973 and 1981, but not in 1991 and 1999 (see Table 4). Consequently, it seems as though the wives' lower

TABLE 3. OLS REGRESSION OF WOMEN'S WEEKLY HOUSEWORK HOURS ON RELATIVE RESOURCES 1973-1999 FOR THE UNITED STATES

	1973		1981		1991		1999	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	26.92**	25.31***	21.84***	19.93***	16.98***	12.40***	9.14***	7.34***
Age of respondent	0.06	0.05	0.17***	0.17***	0.21***	0.20***	0.25***	0.25***
Black	-4.14***	-4.05***	-3.53***	-3.45***	-3.22***	-3.00***	-1.46*	-1.38
Others	-1.49	-1.54	-1.58	-1.64	3.49***	3.60***	6.90***	6.93***
Children < 6 years of age # of children	3.90***	3.78***	2.07**	2.07**	2.43***	2.35***	1.89**	1.90**
The woman's # of hours in paid labor/week	-0.29***	-0.25***	-0.22***	-0.18***	-0.17***	-0.09***	-0.12***	-0.09**
The man's # of hours in paid labor/week	0.05	0.05*	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03
Wife self-employed	-	-	0.41	0.18	0.02	-0.63	-1.81	-1.98*
Both secondary education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Both higher education	-3.38***	-3.36***	-2.19**	-2.15**	-3.14***	-3.14***	-3.38***	-3.36***
Husband higher education	0.89	0.91	-0.53	-0.58	-2.90***	-2.95***	-3.27***	-3.25***
Wife higher education	-2.51	-2.49	-0.34	-0.36	-1.40	-1.41	-0.18	-0.11
Both low-med. occup. status	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Both high occup. status	-2.91	-2.87	-0.57	-0.54	0.46	0.36	-1.45	-1.37
Husband higher occup. status than wife	1.13	0.60	5.02***	4.63***	3.81***	3.06***	3.45***	3.20***
Wife higher occup. status than husband	-1.50	-1.46	0.45	0.20	0.55	0.10	-2.01*	-2.07*
Respondent economic dependence	-1.91	0.10	-3.69**	-2.83*	-5.17***	-3.73***	-2.93**	-2.62**
Respondent economic dependence ²		4.22		3.21*		6.83***		2.20*
R ²	0.24	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.30	0.27	0.29
n	2,141		2,595		3,602		1,945	

Note: Controlling for total household earnings (not shown).
p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

housework burden in the latter years is because couples in which the man is higher educated spend less overall time on housework than do couples in which both have at most secondary education. One reason for this might be that the former couples buy household services to a greater extent than do the latter (this is, however, less common in Sweden mainly because of the high cost of employing private cleaners and maids). Even so, the lower amount of time spent in housework for women with higher educated husbands is not in line with predictions from the relative resource-bargaining perspective.

In Model 2, the squared term for economic dependence is added. This term indicates support for the doing-gender approach for 1981, 1991, and 1999. Hence, women in households in which the man is economically dependent on his wife do more housework than do women in households in which the woman and the man

have equivalent earnings. To test the robustness of these results, the analyses for these years were rerun after 3% of the most dependent men were excluded. When Gupta (1999) reestimated Brines's (1994) analysis, he found that excluding the 3% most dependent men caused the curvilinear effect for men to disappear. This reestimation did not affect our results, however.

Whereas Brines (1994) found a curvilinear effect for men, she did not find one for women. For 1981, we are able to replicate her analysis (estimates are available from the authors on request). When we do, we find a curvilinear effect for women also when Brines's model is used (applying the same selections as detailed above, and following Brines in restricting the sample to Whites and Blacks). Apart from using a different year from Brines (who used the PSID for 1985), the major difference is that we use couples who were cohabiting 1 year (instead of

TABLE 4. OLS REGRESSION OF MEN'S WEEKLY HOUSEWORK HOURS ON RELATIVE RESOURCES 1973-1999 FOR THE UNITED STATES

	1973		1981		1991		1999	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	5.60***	6.43***	7.98***	7.18***	10.17***	8.74***	5.52***	5.10***
Age of respondent	-0.01	-0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.02	0.02
Black	0.27	0.23	0.72*	0.75*	-1.14**	-1.06**	-0.14	-0.12
Others	0.03	0.06	2.25**	2.22**	0.91**	0.96**	1.33*	1.33*
Children < 6 years of age # of children	0.63*	0.70*	1.47***	1.46***	0.74*	0.71*	0.55	0.56
The man's # of hours in paid labor/week	-0.30***	-0.30***	-0.09	-0.09	0.48***	0.45***	0.72***	0.71***
The woman's # of hours in paid labor/week	-0.02*	-0.03*	-0.05***	-0.05***	-0.07***	-0.07***	-0.05***	-0.05***
Husband self-employed	0.00	-0.02	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.04**	0.05***	0.05***
Both secondary education	-1.32**	-1.25**	-1.32**	-1.40**	-2.03***	-2.10***	-0.87*	-0.89*
Both higher education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Husband higher education	1.93***	1.92***	1.16**	1.18**	0.48	0.48	0.39	0.39
Wife higher education	1.43***	1.42***	1.48***	1.46***	0.71	0.69	-0.19	-0.19
Both low-med. occup. status	1.07*	1.06*	1.10	1.09	0.53	0.52	0.54	0.56
Both high occup. status	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Husband higher occup. status than wife	0.09	0.07	-0.69	-0.68	0.33	0.30	-0.65	-0.64
Wife higher occup. status than husband	0.32	0.60	-1.57***	-1.73***	-0.38	-0.60	-0.38	-0.43
Respondent economic dependence	0.26	0.24	1.40*	1.29*	0.22	0.07	-0.12	-0.13
Respondent economic dependence ²	-2.43***	-1.35	-0.90	-1.28*	-1.32**	-1.82***	-0.15	-0.22
R ²		-2.21*		1.35		(2.15***)		0.49
n	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05
	2,141		2,595		3,602		1,945	

Note: Controlling for total household earnings (not shown).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

2) before the survey. In addition, Brines does not appear to have restricted her sample to couples in which information was available for both spouses (see Brines 1994, Tables 2 and 3).

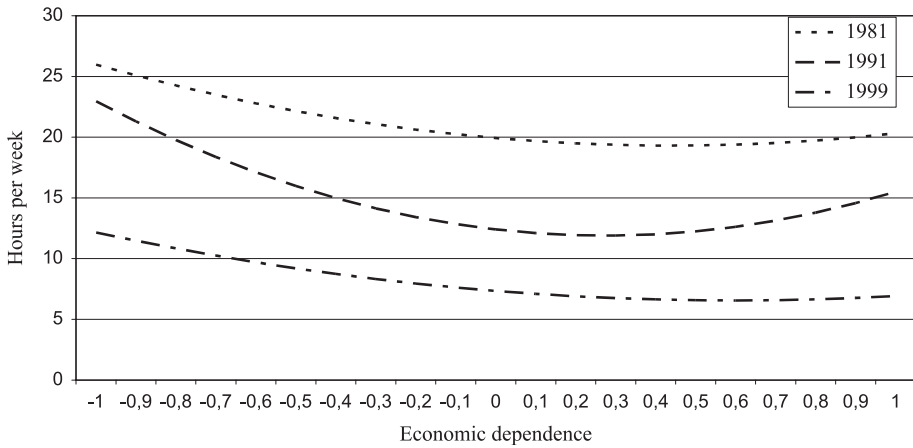
Because relative education, occupational status, and economic dependency are correlated (although not highly), analyses were performed separately for the three relative resource indicators. When only economic dependency was used, the curvilinear effect for each year was stronger than when relative education and occupational status were added to the model. In a similar way, the effects of relative education and occupational status were strongest when analyzed separately. In no case, however, did the separate analyses change the effect in a decisive way in comparison with the model in which all three indicators were included.

Finally, to rule out the risk that the results are a consequence of not using weights for different

ethnic and racial groups in the regression analyses, the analyses were rerun including Whites and Blacks only. For all years, the curvilinear effect was strengthened, and in no case did the results call into question any conclusions drawn from the models presented in Table 3. As a consequence, we assume that gender deviance neutralization is a significant mechanism for explaining American women's time spent in housework in unconventional families—that is, in families in which the wife is the main breadwinner and the husband is to some extent economically dependent on her. To some degree, these women appear to act so as to neutralize gender deviance on the part of their spouse by doing more housework than would be expected given their work hours and their resources vis-à-vis his.

The U-shaped association between weekly hours spent in housework and degree of economic dependence for 1981, 1991, and 1999 is

FIGURE 3. THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HOUSEWORK AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE FOR WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES 1981–1999



Note: Controlling for total household earnings, age, children <6, number of children, number of hours in paid labor/week for both spouses, self-employed, relative education, and relative occupational status.

graphically depicted in Figure 3. Worth noting is the rather weak curvilinear effect for 1981 and 1999. When the 3% most dependent men are excluded, however, the curvilinear estimates for these years actually increase (see also the tests performed above).

Turning to American men in Table 4, the picture is more mixed. For 1973, the linear term for economic dependency is negative and significant in Model 1. When the quadratic term is added in Model 2, however, the linear effect disappears, and instead the quadratic term is significant. Excluding the 3% most dependent men does not reduce the effect of the quadratic term for this year. Hence, in 1973, a man spends more time on housework when he and his spouse have equivalent earnings, as compared with when he either provides for or is economically dependent on her. Estimates for 1973 and 1981 also indicate that higher educated men spend more time in housework than do men in couples in which both have at most a high school degree (cf., the results for women). For 1981, relative occupational status plays a role partly consistent with predictions derived from the relative resource perspective; that is, men with higher occupational status than that of their wives spend less time in housework than do other men. For this year, however, neither economic dependency nor its squared term is a significant predictor of the amount of time men spend in housework.

For 1991 and 1999, neither relative occupational status nor relative educational level is significant with respect to predicting the amount of time that American men spend in housework. The only relative resource indicator that appears to be important is degree of economic dependence in 1991. When the squared term for economic dependency is added in Model 2, the doing-gender approach receives some support. Still, when the 3% most dependent men are excluded from the sample, the quadratic term is no longer significant.

In all, few of the studied factors seem to affect the amount of time that American men spend in housework. For 1973, the doing-gender approach receives the clearest support, whereas for 1981 and 1991, the relative resource perspective receives some support. For 1999, neither of the theories appears to explain the amount of time that men spend in housework. Worth noting, however, is that, just as in Sweden, men spend less time in housework than do women, independent of work hours and relative resources. This indicates that the production of goods and services to some extent parallels the production of gender in almost all families, not just unconventional ones (cf., Fenstermaker Berk, 1985).

Finally, it is worth noting that even though we find significant effects in some of the estimates for the different perspectives for men, the

findings are inconsistent (especially for the United States) and the actual change in their housework time is small compared with that of women. In the conclusion, we therefore focus on the results for women.

CONCLUSION

Women have increased their participation in paid employment considerably during the past 30 years, but men have not increased their participation in housework to the same extent. The aim of this article is to test the explanatory value of the resource-bargaining perspective and the doing-gender approach for the division of housework in the United States and Sweden in the period from the early 1970s to the end of the 20th century. These countries are both recognized as having high female employment rates. Still, social policies and incentives for women's labor force participation differ considerably between them. If these policies are related to people's views about domestic gender equality, they may also be indirectly related to the gender division of unpaid housework. Our initial key questions were: (a) Do the mechanisms that govern the gendered division of housework differ between Sweden and the United States? and (b) To what extent has the relative importance of these mechanisms changed over time?

The empirical analyses show that the relative resource perspective, as indicated by economic dependency, receives the most support in Sweden, whereas the doing-gender approach receives the clearest support in the United States. This means that American women perform less housework in couples in which the spouses have equivalent earnings than in households in which the man is either economically dependent on or provides economically for his wife. Hence, in the United States, gender-deviant identities or behaviors (e.g., breadwinner wife and economically dependent husband) in one arena appear to be compensated for by exaggerated gender-typical behavior in another. Consequently, our first research question is answered in the affirmative: The mechanisms that govern the division of housework do appear to differ between the two countries. Nevertheless, to prove that relative economic resources are more important than gender, one would need to show that women and men spend equivalent amounts of time in housework given their levels of economic dependency and their work hours in paid

labor. This is not the case even in Sweden, which means that gender is still an important factor for explaining the division of housework in both countries, although in Sweden, time spent in housework does not appear to function as a gender-deviance-neutralizing mechanism.

The answer to the second research question is that the relative importance of the resource-bargaining perspective (for Sweden) and the doing-gender approach (for the United States) is fairly stable over time. On one hand, economic dependency is significant for explaining women's time spent in housework in Sweden for all years, and consequently, the relative resource-bargaining perspective receives support there. In the United States, on the other hand, the importance of the doing-gender approach is also rather stable throughout the studied period. In 1973, however, this approach receives no support. Hence, the relative explanatory value of the doing-gender approach in the United States appears to be somewhat greater during the latter years.

It is worth noting that American women are economically dependent on their husbands to a greater degree than Swedish women in all years (see Evertsson, 2004). Consequently, the presumed gender deviance may be greater when an American man is economically dependent on his wife than when a Swedish man is. This may cause American women to increase their time spent in housework when they are the main breadwinner so as to compensate for the gender deviance. In addition, although we cannot determine here whether the presented country differences are related to differences in policies regarding the work-family balance, the analyses suggest, at least indirectly, that the social policies promoting women's independence adopted in Scandinavia may also indirectly foster more egalitarian attitudes toward the division of housework.

NOTE

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