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ABSTRACT

This paper studies how the gender division in time spent on housework is associated with relationship dissolution among Danish couples. The use of time diary information on the actual time spent on housework for both partners, leads to more precise measures than in previous studies. With Denmark being one of the most gender egalitarian societies to date, the results provide a reference point to contrast other societies against in terms of division of household labor and relationship stability. Two waves of the Danish Time Use Survey (DTUS; http://cssr.surveybanken.aau.dk/webview/) provided data on 3,434 respondents. This data was linked to information from the Danish administrative population registries to observe union dissolution. Semi-parametric Cox proportional hazard models were estimated to analyze how men's contributions predicted dissolution risk after controlling for couple specific time-constant and time-varying covariates. The results show that unions are the most stable when men perform roughly 40% of the routine household tasks. Couples with the most unequal division of housework were the least stable. The conclusion is that even in a gender egalitarian society, women still perform most of the housework in order for relationships to be stable. Whether this is due to men being reluctant to contribute equally or women compensating for breaking traditional gender roles by performing more paid labor should be tackled by future research.

INTRODUCTION

Dissolution of relationships affects people's economic, social, and emotional wellbeing (Amato, 2000; Chung & Hunt, 2014; Hauser, Burkhauser, Couch, Bayaz-Ozturk, & Tech, 2016; Leopold, 2018; Leopold & Kalmijn, 2016; McManus & DiPrete, 2001; Smock, Manning, & Gupta, 1999; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009). Unsurprisingly, relationship dissatisfaction is an important predictor for relationship dissolution (Gottman, 2014). Perceived and actual gendered division of household labor plays an important role in relationship satisfaction among couples (for an overview of research before 2000, see: Coltrane, 2000; Frisco & Williams, 2003; Greenstein, 2009; Oshio, Nozaki, & Kobayashi, 2013; Stevens, Kiger, & Mannon, 2005; Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Few studies have examined how gendered division of household labor translates into increased relationship dissolution risk. Those who did, found that perception of inequity in time spent in household labor relates positively to dissolution risk (Frisco & Williams, 2003), that men's contributions to household labor implies more stable relationships (Cooke, 2006; Mencarini & Vignoli, 2017) and that common beliefs about division of household labor moderate the association between female paid employment and divorce risk (Hohmann-Marriott, 2006). Yet, no study has used measures of actual division of time spent on housework between partners to examine how this division relates to the risk of partnership dissolution. Furthermore, at least in Northern Europe, division of household labor has moved toward equity in recent decades (e.g., Dribe & Stanfors, 2009; Evertsson & Nermo, 2007), but it is unknown whether the relationship between division of household labor and union dissolution risk has changed as well.

In this study, we examine how within-couple division of *actual* time spent on household labor predicted relationship dissolution across a decade in Denmark. To obtain information on actual time used on housework, we use detailed time diaries obtained from the 2001 and 2008/9 waves

of the Danish Time Use Survey that included information for both spouses for one full weekday and one full weekend day (Bonke, 2002). To increase the observation window, we link the two survey waves to administrative population data that allowed us to follow all surveyed couples for five years after they participated in the survey without any attrition beyond death and migration. Using late-entry Cox proportional hazard models, we estimate the association between division of time spent on actual household labor and later relationship dissolution risk.

Our study offers four substantial contributions to the literature on the division of household labor and relationship stability. First, we use time diary information on the actual time spent on housework for both partners, leading to more precise measures than previous studies have been able to. Second, we circumvent issues of selective attrition often found in longitudinal surveys by linking the cross-sectional survey information on time use to longitudinal administrative data on relationship stability. Third, by using two waves of the time use surveys, we are able to assess changes that occurred over a decade, rather than at one point in time. Last, as Denmark is one of the more gender egalitarian societies to date (Esping-Andersen, Boertien, Bonke, & Gracia, 2013), our results provides an upper bound reference point to contrast other societies against.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Division of Household Labor and Relationship Stability

The extant literature acknowledges three dominant theories that can be used to explain why the division of household labor affects relationship stability (Cooke, 2006). First, specialization theories as were constructed in economics (Becker, 1985, 1991) and sociology (Parsons, Bendix, & Lipset, 1953) predict that relationship stability is improved by a couple's mutual dependence. Anything that poses a threat to the benefits from specialization, increases the risk of divorce (Becker, 1985). Women's employment reduces women's dependence on men (Oppenheimer,

1997). In turn, men's participation in the household is assumed to decrease gains from specializing in paid labor, therefore also increasing dissolution risks (Cooke, 2006).

Second, bargaining models assume that the division of labor (both paid and unpaid) is the result of a negotiation process between spouses that leads to a unique equitable distribution (Cooke, 2006). Increased relative bargaining power through alternatives to the relationship, for instance women's greater economic independence, allow them to bargain for a more favorable distribution of household labor (Breen & Cooke, 2005). If such a more equitable division of housework cannot be reached, the possibility of divorce becomes larger. Opposite to the specialization models, bargaining theories then predict a lower divorce risk where male participation in the household work is greater (Cooke, 2006).

Third, additional predictions can be made from gender role theory. On the one hand, division of domestic work is related to the perception of certain tasks being typically male or female (Berk, 1985; Shaw, 1988). Deviating from normative gender roles in the division of household labor has been found to be related to higher relationship instability, but only in couples with differing attitudes and expectations about these roles (DeMaris, 2007; Oláh & Gähler, 2014). On the other hand, gender theory also hypothesizes that relationship instability increases when women out-earn men (Schwartz & Gonalons-Pons, 2016). Furthermore, couples where women earn more than men have been shown to display more traditional norms in the division of housework (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003). If we extend this reasoning, keeping in mind the role of homogenous gender attitudes, we can assume that men have ex-ante preferences to do part of the housework, but that there are thresholds in how large a share they are willing to take up. Unlike for income, where parity is a clear point when women threaten men's gender role of breadwinners, these thresholds are not likely to be equality but rather dependent on society's and the individual's

views on gender egalitarianism. The more egalitarian, the closer the share of housework that men are willing to do is to 50%, independent of resources.

Concerning evidence for these theories, few studies have ventured into the sphere of relationship dissolution. Based on event-history analysis of panel survey data, Cooke (2006) found a positive linear relationship between husband's contributions to household labor and relationship instability in West-Germany, but a quadratic one in the United States. As husband's contributions to housework increased, the risk of divorce decreased, but only until men did 30% of the housework and women earned 30% of the household income. This finding for the U.S. is consistent with the theoretical approach we suggest, that there are thresholds for how much work men do before divorce risks rise. Linking these results to policy, Cooke (2006) argued that the male breadwinner model is most stable in West-Germany as it is institutionally supported, while the U-shaped relationship is found in the United stated because there is no support. Based on panel data, (Ruppanner, Brandén, & Turunen, 2018) found a positive relationship between women's share of the housework and relationship dissolution in Sweden. Apart from these two, no other empirical studies on the relationship between performed household labor and dissolution exist to date.

Other studies provide only circumstantial evidence. Mencarini and Vignoli (2017) found that a decline in Italian women's time availability was related to increased dissolution risks only when men's contributions in housework were limited. Iturrate and Domínguez-Folgueras (2018) found only partial support for their hypothesis that an equal sharing of the entire workload (both paid and unpaid) was beneficial for union stability. Additional insight can also be obtained by looking at research into relationship satisfaction. Most empirical studies find positive associations between the proportion of household labor performed by men and marital satisfaction (for overviews, see: Coltrane, 2000; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). An important caveat is that unhappy couples

do not necessarily terminate their relationship. "*Everyone knows of very unhappily married couples who continue to stay together for a variety of reasons."* (Gottman & Levenson, 1992, pp. 222).

As was argued by Cooke (2006), welfare states might have an important influence on the relationship between the division of household labor and relationship dissolution. It is therefore important to provide some background on the setting of our research: Denmark.

The Danish Context

Denmark has a long history as one of the frontrunners of progressive family policies, both in terms of access to divorce (Rosenbeck, 2018), female labor force participation (Olivetti & Petrongolo, 2017), and overall gender equality (EIGE, 2017; Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015). Routed in a social-democratic welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990) with general access to cheap, quality child care for small children (Esping-Andersen et al., 2012), Danish women now only lag four percentage points behind men in terms of employment rate (Statistics Denmark, 2019). In terms of norms, there is also generally strong support for one-and-a-half to dual fulltime earner relationships (Edlund & Öun, 2016). Yet, men still out-earn women with roughly 15 % (Kleven, Landais, & Søgaard, 2018) and division of household labor has yet to reach parity although the average gender gap in time spent on household labor is lower than in most other western countries (Altintas & Sullivan, 2016; Craig & Mullan, 2010).

Defining Housework

There is much debate on how housework should be measured. These discussions mainly focus on three topics: absolute versus proportional measures, the inclusion of care for children, and the

use of survey or time diary data. First, as mentioned above, gender theories predict that the division of household labor reflects gender ideologies, i.e. how individuals define for themselves what is 'male' or 'female' (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). When couples hold more traditional male-breadwinner beliefs, the division of chores will therefore reflect this and vice versa. However, (Greenstein, 2000) found that these predictions generally only hold when using relative measures of housework – the proportion of work done by the male/female partner, rather than total amount of time spent on household labor. He therefore argued that proportional measures more likely capture equity aspects and are therefore preferred.

Second, scholars disagree on whether taking care of children should be measured as housework. Adams and Coltrane (2005) explicitly distinguish between the two by analyzing the effect of interaction with children on father's percentage of housework performed. The argument here is that the nature, processes and predictors of both differ substantially (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010; Sullivan, 2013).

Third, previous studies have shown a discrepancy in the measurement of time spent in housework between questionnaire-based and time diary surveys (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010) as well as across gender (Kamo, 2000). The double-counting of simultaneous activities is one of the proposed explanations for the alleviated reports of time spent on housework in questionnaires as opposed to time-diaries (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). However, time-diaries usually only ask respondents to indicate their primary activities, making them fit to analyze the hours spent on housework, but not necessarily the workload (Bianchi et al., 2000; Kan, 2008). Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard (2010) argued that time-diary information should be preferred over questionnaires because of their accuracy and the ability to construct absolute as well

as relative measures of housework. In addition, previous work has also found that when reporting only on relative division of housework, men are likely to overreport (Kamo, 2000).

We followed Greenstein (2000) by computing proportional measures of time spent on household labor. In addition to the described benefits, we circumvented the problem of outsourcing, as we measure partner's share of the total amount of work, regardless of how big the actual workload was. Finally, in line with previous research, we did not measure time spent with children as housework.

Hypotheses

The theoretical background, empirical findings, Danish context and methodological issues allow us to test the following hypotheses. First, in view of the Danish context of gender egalitarianism and its tradition of supporting female labor force participation, we predict that the bargaining model best fits the relationship between the proportion of household labor performed by men and the risk of relationship dissolution for Denmark. If this hypothesis holds, that relationship will be U-shaped (H1a). Because Denmark is more actively egalitarian than the United States (cf. Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015), we expect the minimum of this U-shape (i.e. the division at which the risk of dissolution is lowest) to be closer to parity in the division of household labor for Denmark than the 30% of housework performed by men that was found for the United States (Cooke, 2006) (H1b). We also expect this relationship to be persistent after controlling for other factors that are related to dissolution risks such as the presence of children, age, and duration of the relationship (H2). Furthermore, we hypothesize that the U-shaped relationship is not affected by controlling for other factors time availability and relative resources (H3). However, since the surveyed division of household labor occurs at one point in time, but dissolution risks are observed

five years afterwards, we expect the within-samples relationship to be weakening over time due to possible renegotiation of the division of housework (H4). Finally, as gender egalitarianism is an ongoing process, and norms and expectations are constantly shifting, we expect the U-shaped relationship to be stronger in the 2008/9 sample than the 2001 sample. (H5)

DATA AND METHODS

Data

We analyze the gendered division of actual household labor using two waves (2001, 2008/9) of the Danish Time Use Survey (Bonke, 2002).We include all survey respondents who were in a relationship at time of survey and where both partners filled out a time diary for a week day and for a weekend day. To account for the fact that there are five weekdays in a week, and only two weekend days, we generate an estimate for hours of housework performed per week by multiplying the time spent during weekday with five and the time spent during weekend day with two. We include the following activities as housework: shopping/errands, cooking, dishwashing, cleaning, washing clothes, misc. housework, garden work, other practical work, and transportation related to housework. We then generate a measure of division of household labor by dividing the estimate of male hours of housework with the total hour of housework performed by both partners. Using two specific days to generate a weekly estimate makes us subject to measurement error if the surveyed days does not represent standard days. It is feasible that the measurement error is classical in nature, because the survey randomly assigned days to respondents. Thus, our estimates based off the male share of housework measure are likely to be biased toward zero. To address time constraints on the days of the survey, we also included a control variable capturing the male share

of all time spent on paid work and studies. For couples where neither partner worked nor studied any time on the surveyed days, we set the share to equal .5.

Time is measured in yearly intervals, starting at the moment of the survey and spanning the five years afterwards. The observation window has been restricted because we only observe the division of household labor at one point in time. As time goes on, the division of housework within a couple likely changes. We explicitly control for this diminishing relevance of the survey by interacting the share of housework performed by men with the separate observation years.

To obtain information on relationship status as well as time varying covariates that likely confound the association between division of household and partnership dissolution, we link the survey respondents to the Danish administrative population registries. To obtain our dependent variable *union dissolution* we use annual information of end of year household composition supplied by Statistics Denmark for the five years following the survey. Statistics Denmark defines a union as a household that includes two individuals who share a dwelling at the apartment-level and are (a) married, (b) in a registered partnership, (c) have a joint child, or (d) of opposite sex, unrelated, age gap not higher than 15 years, and the parents of any other adults in the household. We define a union dissolution at end of year *t* as both members of a couple remaining alive and in country but no longer sharing a dwelling. We right censor couples where a spouse dies or migrates. From the administrative registries we also obtain following annual information on both partners: age, educational level (time-constant), share of year full time employed, salary, retirement status, marriage, and whether the couple had any joint children. For the 2008/9 survey, the first "end of year" year is 2009. In the analysis, we run separate models controlling for whether a respondent couple participated in the survey in 2008 or in 2009, but it did not alter results.

Methods

We estimated semi-parametric Cox proportional hazard models to analyze how men's share of household labor predicted dissolution risk after controlling for couple specific time-constant and time-varying covariates. For a detailed discussion of these models, see Kleinbaum and Klein (2010) and Hosmer, Lemeshow, and May (2011). For n couples (*i*), we assume the data generating model:

$$\log \mathrm{H}\left(\mathrm{t_{ij}}\right) = \log \mathrm{H_0(t_j)} + \mathrm{x_{ij}}\beta'$$

where $\log \mathrm{H}\left(\mathrm{t_{ij}}\right)$ is the log hazard of relationship dissolution at time *t* for couple *i*, $\log \mathrm{H_0(t_j)}$ is the unspecified general baseline log hazard function, and β' is a vector of regression coefficients for the covariates, x_i. The baseline hazard, which determines the general shape of the hazard function, corresponds to an observation where all covariates are 0.

These estimations yield cumulative hazard functions for all values of the covariates where the ratio of these functions is constant in time, for instance:

$$\frac{\mathrm{H_0(t_j)e^{\beta_1}}}{\mathrm{H_0(t_j)}} = \mathrm{e^{\beta_1}},$$

The interpretation of hazard ratios is similar to that of odds ratios in logistic regression. The hazard function is based on relationship duration at the time of the survey. Couples become at risk at the time we observe their division of household labor. Parameter estimates are then interpreted as a deviation from the baseline hazard.

The model rests on a set of assumptions. First, it assumes that there are as many log hazard functions as there are combinations of values that all covariates can have. Second, it assumes that each of these log hazard functions has an identical general shape. Third is the assumption of proportional hazards, which means that the log hazard functions are equidistant in time, so that the

ratio of the hazard functions remains constant over time, i.e. that these log hazard functions are parallel. We test the third assumption in the results section. Further, we also test the robustness of our findings using a piecewise constant hazard model estimated using logistical regression, as well as by excluding couples where one partner reported doing 100% of the housework.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the 2001 and 2008/9 surveys separately, as well as subdivided by whether the respondent experienced a partnership dissolution during the five-year period following the survey response. 15% of couples in the 2001 sample, and 19 % of couples in the 2008/9 sample dissolved their union within five years of the respective surveys. In the 2001 sample, the share of housework performed by the male partner is larger for couples who experience union dissolution than for couples who do not, although the difference is not significant at any standard significance level. For the 2008/09 sample, couples who dissolve their union report a significant ($p<.001$) higher male share of household labor than couples who remain together for the next five years. Dissolving 2008/09 couples also have higher standard deviation on division of household labor than couples who remain together. For both samples, couples who dissolved their unions had been together for a shorter period, were younger, less employed, earned less, more likely to be lower educated, less likely to have joint children, and less likely to be married. In 2001 sample, couples with the same levels of educated were less likely to have dissolved their union, where the opposite was the case for the 2008/9 sample.

[Table 1 about here.]

Figure 1 shows the associations between the proportion of housework performed by the male partner and the relationship dissolution risk during the five years following the respective surveys. We report results both from a fitted quadratic curve with confidence intervals and a flexible lowess curve to test for forms not captured by polynomials. For both survey years the lowess curve closely resembles the quadratic fitted curve, indicating that the quadratic form is a good fit of the actual response. The curve-linear slope is steeper for the 2008/09 sample than for the 2001 sample. For both years, dissolution risks are lowest if women spent slightly more time on housework than men, and highest when men account for all the time spent on housework. The calculated minima show that dissolution risks were lowest when men performed 37.5% of the total time spent on housework for the 2001 sample and when they performed 39.9% of the housework in the 2008/9 sample. Conditional on the significance of the quadratic function in the full models, this confirmed the second part of our first hypothesis, that the minimum of a U-shaped relationship would be closer to parity in Denmark than it was in the United States, although it is still well below parity (H1b).

[Figure 1 about here.]

Multivariate results

Table 2 shows the parameter estimates for three models for each of the two survey waves and their respective 5-year follow-up period. The first model includes only our main indicator of interest, the linear and quadratic function of the share of household work performed by men. For the 2001 sample, although the shape of this quadratic indicator reflects what was theoretically expected, the parameter estimates are not significant (model 1). The same model for the 2008/9 sample did yield parameters that were jointly significant at the .001-level (model 4). This confirmed our first hypothesis (H1a), that the relationship between share of household work

performed by men and dissolution hazards is U-Shaped, but only significantly so for the 2008/9-sample.

[Table 2 about here.]

The second model controlled for other indicators that have been found to be associated with both the risk of relationship dissolution and the division of household labor. For the 2001 sample, none of the control variables were significant Given the 2008/9 sample is almost twice as large than the 2001, this could be due to power issues. For the 2008/9 sample, we observe several significant associations. From model 5, we see that female annual salary level was associated with a higher risk of divorce. The same is the case in couples where he has a high school degree, but she does not have education above compulsory level. Being married lowered the hazard but having children (conditional on other observables) increased the dissolution hazard rate. The latter finding is in accordance with previous studies on divorce and dissolution in Denmark (e.g., Svarer and Verner 2008). The results from the 2008/9 confirmed our hypotheses, that the U-shaped relationship between the male share in the household work and relationship dissolution is robust after controlling for sociodemographic characteristics (H2), and indicators of time-availability and relative resources (H3). We do not include either spouse's ages because doing so resulted in a violation of the proportional hazard assumption. In the first two columns in Table A1 in appendix we do report results from model 2 and 5 with age included. As can be seen, this does not change our results, but the proportional hazard assumption no longer holds for the 2008/9 sample, likely due to multicollinearity between age and the baseline hazard rates.

The third model allowed for the relationship between share of male household work and dissolution do vary over the 5-year observation period. These interactions were small and not significant at the 5 percent level in both samples, although in the latter sample, the signs of these

parameters are opposite to those of the main effects, as one would expect if the relationship between the division of housework measured at one point in time becomes less relevant during the following years. Thus, we do not find robust support for the U-shape becoming less and less outspoken over the course of the 5-year follow up period as expected in our fourth hypothesis (H4).

The full models for both survey samples show that the effect of household work is larger in the 2008/9 sample than in the 2001 sample, which is in line with our expectations. The association has become stronger over time, which confirms our fifth and final hypothesis (H5). Last, by taking the first derivative with regard to the estimates for male share of household work, we are also able to provide an estimate for at what division of housework relationships appear most stable. In our preferred models (2 and 5), that share is located at around men doing 40 percent of the housework.

Robustness

To ensure that our findings are not contingent on choice of statistical models, columns 3 and 4 in Table A1 in the appendix present findings from a model with piecewise constant hazards for relationship length (included as dummies) estimated with a logit model. Beyond the first derivative with regard to male share of household work being slightly smaller, we do not observe any substantial differences between the alternative model and the proportional hazard results.

A second concern is that our findings may be driven by couples with extreme values of division of household labor (i.e., one partner does everything). Such couples may be true specializers, or it may simply be a function of the way the data is sampled using time diaries for only two days. In Table A2 in appendix, we present results from the 2008/9 survey, where we first exclude all couples that report that the man performs 100% of the housework, the couples where the man

performs 0 % of the housework, and then couples at both end of the extreme. Although estimates become insignificant in the latter model, the general shape of the relationship remains. Holding in mind that we already are likely to have estimates biased towards zero due to classical measurement error from the random sampling of days reported on, we believe our findings to be robust.

DISCUSSION

The combination of increased female labor force participation and changing attitudes towards gender equality has led to a renegotiation of the way couples divide household labor. Inability to reach a consensus has been shown to be associated with more instable relationships (Coltrane, 2000; Frisco & Williams, 2003; Greenstein, 2009; Oshio et al., 2013; Stevens et al., 2005; Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Since relationship dissolution has widely been found to be negatively related to various indicators of individual wellbeing (Chung & Hunt, 2014; Hauser et al., 2016; McManus & DiPrete, 2001; Waite et al., 2009), it is important to uncover how the division of housework and relationship stability are linked.

In our analysis of the association between the division of household labor and dissolution risks in Denmark, we found that the risk of dissolving a relationship during the 5 years following the surveys is lowest when men account for around 40% of the total time spent on routine household tasks. Of the three theoretical frameworks we described, the bargaining model fits the Danish case the best. Couples negotiate the division of housework, which leads to a unique equitable distribution. However, due to the deviation from normative gender roles, the optimal distribution is not at the point of parity, although it is higher than the 30% that was found for the United States (Cooke, 2006). We attribute this to the fact that Denmark is a more gender egalitarian society.

These findings are in line with what was expected based on earlier research (Cooke, 2006; Frisco & Williams, 2003; Hohmann-Marriott, 2006; Mencarini & Vignoli, 2017), but from more detailed data. They inform us that even in one of the most gender egalitarian societies such as Denmark, relationships are not the most stable when housework is shared at almost parity. There are several possible explanations for this. First, the division of household labor might follow the same gendered pattern as wives' earnings, but with a lower minimum. Previous research has found that relationship stability improves when women earn more, but that it deteriorates from the moment women out-earn their spouses (Schwartz & Gonalons-Pons, 2016). The same might be possible for household labor. Men are willing to take up some of the work that was traditionally seen as women's work, but only up until a certain threshold. Second, it has been found in previous studies that women do not necessarily perceive a division of household labor where they do more than their male spouse as unfair (Baxter, 2000; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994). This might be because women are willing to trade-off a more equal distribution for their spouses' satisfaction. Another explanation is that women display gender as a result of a clash between adhering to normalized roles and deviating from them, for instance by working more hours or out earning husbands (Baxter, Hewitt, & Haynes, 2008; Bittman et al., 2003). Men may also simply overestimate their share of the household chores (Kamo 2000), causing union dissolution to be least likely when they contribute less than half.

Although we use refined data, there are still some notable limitations to our study. First, the number of relationship dissolutions in the 2001 sample is somewhat low at 185 events, especially when compared to the 526 events in the 2008/9-sample. This might explain why the estimated relationship is more outspoken and significant in the latter sample. Second, we are unable to account for the outsourcing of household labor. On the one hand this could be considered

problematic, but on the other hand, since our information stems from diaries, we do observe the total amount of work that was performed at that household. If some of the housework is then done by third parties, this would not show up in the total amount of housework performed.

Third, although we control for several confounders, we are not able to make causal claims due to possible endogeneity issues. Omitted variable bias is indeed a possibility. For instance, long- (or even short-) term illness or disability is related to both one's share of household work and the risk of dissolution.

CONCLUSION

Although not definitive, relationship satisfaction is an important predictor of relationship stability, whether it be marriages or cohabiting unions. Couples are constantly negotiating in order to reach satisfying compromises on subjects ranging from what's for dinner to how to raise their children. Failure to reach consensus on these issues results in a decline of subjective wellbeing or even termination of the partnership.

The evolution from male breadwinner to dual earner societies in most industrialized countries has led to a shift in the way housework is being divided among spouses. With more and more women participating in paid labor, couples can either renegotiate the distribution of housework, outsource part of it, or end their partnership. Theories of gender egalitarianism and bargaining both predict that with women's increased (financial) independence comes a more equal sharing of the burden of housework. Yet, it remains unclear whether or not equality in the amount of time spent in unpaid labor or earnings would result in an equal amount of time spent on household chores.

Earlier research had found that for the United States, marriages were the most stable when men performed around 30% of the housework (Cooke, 2006). We have extended this research by using

detailed time-use information a registry data for one of the most gender egalitarian countries, Denmark. We find that when men take up about 40% of the time spent on housework, the probability of relationship dissolution is lowest. Though closer to parity than the United States, the most stable relationships are still those were women carry a greater burden in household labor than men.

Our results provide family researchers with several topics for future research. First, it offers a reference point to which other societies can be compared. Second, we did not include care for children in our analyses. While there is considerable debate on whether or not childcare should be considered housework, it would be interesting to see how this division is related to relationship dissolution, not only in Denmark, but in other societies as well. Finally, it would be interesting to see how this unequal division is related to either men's reluctance to depart from traditional gender norms, women's tendency to display gender when deviating from said norms, or a combination of both.

In any case, the study of relationship satisfaction remains necessary as relationship dissolution is strongly related to the financial, emotional and social wellbeing of the former spouses, but also that of their children. Studying how couples organize their daily lives should be an integral part of this research.

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Table 1
Descriptive statistics for the first observation year of the 2001 and 2008/9 sample and subdivided by whether or not relationship dissolution was experienced during the five year observation window.

	2001						2008/9					
	Full sample		Ever dissolved within five years				Full sample		Ever dissolved within five years			
			No		Yes				No		Yes	
	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	Sd
Dissolved union within 5 yrs	.15	.36					.19	.39				
Length of relationship[a]	12.18	5.56	12.65	5.32	9.54	6.12	16.28	8.12	17.45	7.28	11.34	9.48
Age of male	44.70	12.93	45.33	12.45	41.18	14.92	5.52	13.08	5.89	12.61	48.96	14.81
Age of female	42.34	12.38	42.94	11.91	39.00	14.32	48.19	12.75	48.55	12.32	46.69	14.32
Male working fulltime[b]	.71	.43	.71	.43	.66	.45	.61	.47	.61	.47	.59	.47
Female working fulltime[b]	.69	.42	.70	.41	.64	.43	.62	.45	.63	.45	.59	.46
Male annual salaryc	36.24	26.39	37.23	26.30	3.67	26.24	37.98	34.12	38.35	33.63	36.41	36.10
Female annual salaryc	25.52	17.74	26.04	17.54	22.55	18.61	29.96	24.15	3.13	23.93	29.25	25.04
Has children	.73	.44	.77	.42	.53	.50	.77	.42	.78	.41	.68	.47
Married	.78	.42	.81	.40	.62	.49	.82	.38	.85	.36	.71	.45
Male education: Lower	.31	.46	.29	.45	.43	.50	.26	.44	.25	.44	.29	.46
Male education: High school	.35	.48	.35	.48	.31	.46	.44	.50	.44	.50	.43	.50
Male education: University	.35	.48	.36	.48	.26	.44	.30	.46	.31	.46	.28	.45
Female education: Lower	.26	.44	.25	.43	.33	.47	.28	.45	.27	.44	.33	.47
Female education: High school	.43	.50	.43	.50	.39	.49	.36	.48	.36	.48	.37	.48
Female education: University	.31	.46	.31	.46	.29	.45	.36	.48	.37	.48	.31	.46
Educational homogamy[d]	.36	.48	.36	.48	.32	.47	.56	.50	.54	.50	.64	.48
Share of work/study by male	.55	.30	.56	.30	.51	.33	.52	.31	.53	.31	.50	.32
Share of HH-work by male	.41	.27	.41	.26	.44	.29	.42	.31	.41	.29	.48	.37
N	1222		1037		185		2738		2212		526	

Note: [a]Right-truncated at maximum 17 (2001) or 24 (2008/9) years. [b]Working fulltime is measured as the proportion of the year the respondent held fulltime employment. [c]Annual salary is measured in 1000 EUR. [d]Homogamy captured as identical levels of education.

Table 2. Proportional hazard models for union dissolution

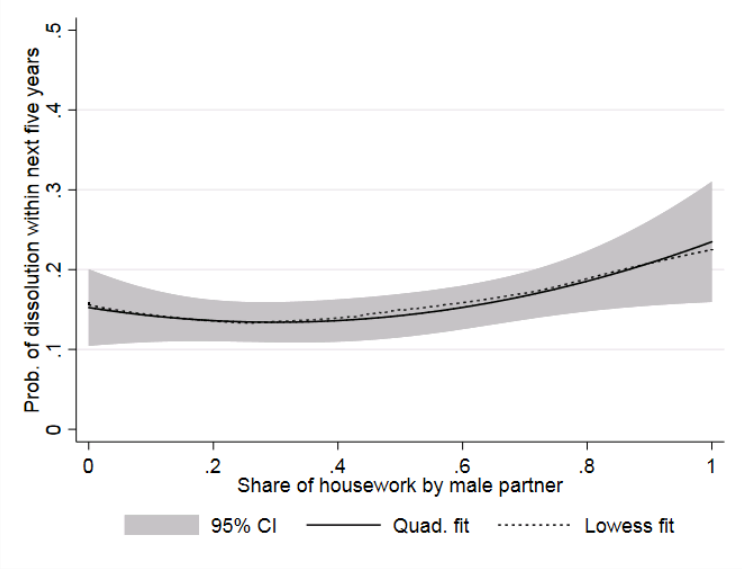
Survey	2001			2008/9		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Male fulltime work		-0.347	-0.339		-0.125	-0.124
		(0.306)	(0.306)		(0.131)	(0.131)
Female fulltime work		-0.155	-0.170		-0.181	-0.173
		(0.388)	(0.387)		(0.144)	(0.145)
Male annual salary		0.002	0.002		0.000	0.000
		(0.004)	(0.004)		(0.002)	(0.002)
Female annual salary		0.010	0.011		0.005*	0.005*
		(0.009)	(0.009)		(0.002)	(0.002)
Male HS, Female No Edu.		0.214	0.186		0.366*	0.377*
		(0.369)	(0.371)		(0.159)	(0.160)
Male Coll., Female No Edu.		-0.214	-0.240		0.088	0.102
		(0.485)	(0.486)		(0.255)	(0.255)
Female HS, Male No Edu.		0.511	0.501		0.176	0.187
		(0.327)	(0.327)		(0.177)	(0.178)
Female Coll., Male No Edu.		0.377	0.370		-0.112	-0.101
		(0.428)	(0.429)		(0.225)	(0.226)
Female HS, Male HS		-0.134	-0.147		-0.020	-0.019
		(0.347)	(0.347)		(0.120)	(0.120)
Female HS, Male Coll.		-0.484	-0.505		0.055	0.065
		(0.425)	(0.425)		(0.198)	(0.199)
Female Coll., Male HS		-0.257	-0.281		-0.128	-0.119
		(0.488)	(0.489)		(0.170)	(0.170)
Female Coll., Male Coll.		-0.210	-0.231		-0.163	-0.158
		(0.352)	(0.489)		(0.131)	(0.131)
Married		-0.206	-0.241		-0.306***	-0.301**
		(0.232)	(0.234)		(0.092)	(0.092)
Has Children		-0.277	-0.267		0.190*	0.182*
		(0.219)	(0.219)		(0.092)	(0.092)
Share of work/study by male		-0.498	-0.492		-0.073	-0.067
		(0.302)	(0.301)		(0.113)	(0.115)
Share of HH work by male	-1.294	-0.920	-0.247	-1.190**	-1.150**	-1.769**
	(0.970)	(1.002)	(1.294)	(0.406)	(0.409)	(0.578)
(Share of HH work by male)2	1.575	1.181	0.564	1.422***	1.435***	2.051***
	(1.027)	(1.068)	(1.524)	(0.401)	(0.405)	(0.606)
Share of HH work by male*ln(t)			-0.883			0.778
			(1.096)			(0.487)
(Share of HH work by male)2*ln(t)			0.816			-0.784
			(1.447)			(0.559)
Test of proport. haz. assump	p=.875	p=.366	p=.340	p=.358	p=.155	p=.307
∂y/∂[Share of HH-work by male]	0.411	0.390	0.219	0.418	0.401	0.431
N	5499	5499	5499	12499	12499	12499

*p <.05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001. Standard errors in parentheses.

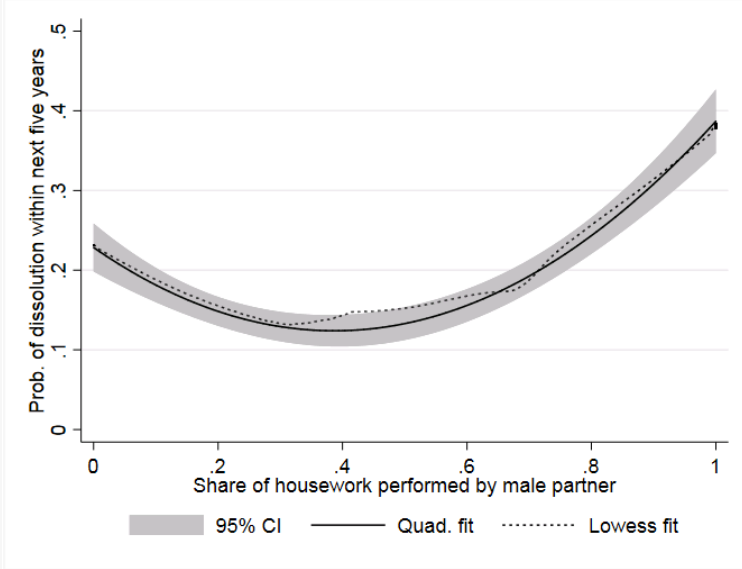
Notes: Full time work measured as the share of year an individual receives salary for at least 37 hours. Salary measured in 1,000€. Derivatives calculated at time = 1 for models 3 and 6. Reference category for education combination is both partners without high school degrees. *t* measures years since survey.

Figure 1
Fitted lowess and quadratic curves with 95% confidence intervals of the probability of dissolution in the next five years from survey response by the share of housework performed by male partner.

2001



2008/9



APPENDIX

Table A1. Proportional hazard models and piecewise constant logit models for union dissolution including age of partners

Survey	PH model		Logit model[a]	
	2001	2008/9	2001	2008/9
Male age	-0.019	-0.010	-0.020	-0.014
	(0.022)	(0.009)	(0.022)	(0.010)
Female age	-0.025	0.005	-0.027	0.004
	(0.023)	(0.009)	(0.024)	(0.011)
Male fulltime work	-0.545	-0.168	-0.589	-0.266
	(0.307)	(0.133)	(0.320)	(0.148)
Female fulltime work	-0.359	-0.214	-0.380	-0.345*
	(0.390)	(0.146)	(0.403)	(0.172)
Male annual salary	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.001)
Female annual salary	0.012	0.005*	0.013	0.008**
	(0.009)	(0.002)	(0.009)	(0.003)
Male HS, Female No Edu.	0.388	0.376*	0.406	0.417*
	(0.374)	(0.160)	(0.390)	(0.188)
Male Coll., Female No Edu.	-0.189	0.100	-0.203	0.068
	(0.486)	(0.255)	(0.502)	(0.281)
Female HS, Male No Edu.	0.603	0.187	0.644	0.178
	(0.332)	(0.177)	(0.346)	(0.203)
Female Coll., Male No Edu.	0.451	-0.112	0.482	-0.123
	(0.430)	(0.170)	(0.449)	(0.249)
Female HS, Male HS	-0.041	-0.003	-0.040	-0.011
	(0.355)	(0.121)	(0.366)	(0.168)
Female HS, Male Coll.	-0.399	0.078	-0.416	0.053
	(0.429)	(0.199)	(0.439)	(0.223)
Female Coll., Male HS	-0.123	-0.122	-0.139	-0.168
	(0.495)	(0.170)	(0.507)	(0.197)
Female Coll., Male Coll.	-0.094	-0.157	-0.097	-0.273
	(0.355)	(0.131)	(0.366)	(0.174)
Married	-0.026	-0.283**	-0.025	-0.375***
	(0.241)	(0.094)	(0.248)	(0.113)
Has Children	-0.514*	0.178	-0.553*	0.220
	(0.233)	(0.093)	(0.240)	(0.120)
Share of work/study by male	-0.521	-0.082	-0.551	-0.227
	(0.302)	(0.113)	(0.315)	(0.142)
Share of HH work by male	-0.974	-1.153**	-1.063	-1.281**
	(1.003)	(0.410)	(1.042)	(0.453)
(Share of HH work by male)^2	1.268	1.434***	1.377	1.779***
	(1.073)	(0.405)	(1.114)	(0.447)
Test of proport. haz. assump	p=.661	p=.008		
Control for piecewise hazard			X	X
∂y/∂[Share of HH-work by male]	.384	.402	.385	.360
N	5499	12499	5499	12499

*p <.05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Notes: [a] Specification includes piecewise constant hazards for relationship length (estimates not shown) and standard errors clustered at couple level. Full time work measured as the share of year an individual receives salary for at least 37 hours. Salary measured in 1,000€. Reference category for education combination is both partners without high school degrees.

Table A2. Estimates for dissolution hazard excluding extreme observations of male share of household work for 2008/9 sample.

Survey	2008/9		
	Excl. male share of HH work =1	Excl. male share of HH work =0	Excl. male share of HH work ={0,1}
Male fulltime work	-0.139	-0.252	-0.242
	(0.143)	(0.140)	(0.158)
Female fulltime work	-0.256	-0.103	-0.157
	(0.158)	(0.173)	(0.202)
Male annual salary	0.001	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female annual salary	0.006*	0.003	0.004
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Male HS, Female No Edu.	0.258	0.576***	0.558*
	(0.179)	(0.179)	(0.221)
Male Coll., Female No Edu.	-0.062	0.378	0.334
	(0.291)	(0.285)	(0.345)
Female HS, Male No Edu.	0.223	0.285	0.462
	(0.189)	(0.205)	(0.345)
Female Coll., Male No Edu.	-0.256	0.246	0.191
	(0.250)	(0.250)	(0.296)
Female HS, Male HS	-0.112	0.149	0.150
	(0.150)	(0.144)	(0.209)
Female HS, Male Coll.	0.051	0.266	0.376
	(0.219)	(0.218)	(0.258)
Female Coll., Male HS	-0.183	0.167	0.236
	(0.187)	(0.188)	(0.227)
Female Coll., Male Coll.	-0.317	0.007	0.067
	(0.163)	(0.154)	(0.217)
Married	-0.380***	-0.282**	-0.416***
	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.125)
Has Children	0.128	0.139	-0.020
	(0.108)	(0.104)	(0.130)
Share of work/study by male	0.019	-0.257	-0.074
	(0.148)	(0.146)	(0.197)
Share of HH work by male	-1.068*	-1.311	-0.691
	(0.531)	(0.689)	(0.870)
(Share of HH work by male)^2	1.305	1.669**	0.982
	(0.669)	(0.576)	(0.899)
Test of proport. haz. assump	p=.390	p=.463	p=.567
∂y/∂[Share of HH-work by male]	.409	.393	.352
N	11407	10495	9403

*p <.05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001

Notes: Full time work measured as the share of year an individual receives salary for at least 37 hours. Salary measured in 1,000€. Reference category for education combination is both partners without high school degrees.