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Division of House Chores and the Curious Case of Cooking: The Effects of Earning Inequality on House Chores among Dual-Earner Couples

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the division of chores at home between married, dual-earner spouses during the post-recession era using a multi-disciplinary perspective. Using Tobit regression estimations based on American Time Use Survey (ATUS), we test two dominant theories: bargaining/exchange theory and gender role theory. We find that, parallel to gender role theory, when men make less money than their wives and experience gender role threat, they do less housework regardless of the recession. However, they do not see cooking the same way. In the post-recession era, cooking does not behave the same way as the other chores. When men experience gender role threat,

men do not decrease the amount of time they dedicate to cooking. Cooking does not have the same social meaning as other house chores do.

Keywords: housework, gender, division of chores, recession.

1. Introduction

The Great Recession was predominantly a menôs recession. The post-recession era is definitely an interesting and challenging era of inquiry as many men started making less than their spouses. With the rise of women's labor force participation, the division of house chores has been an important area of contention especially among dual earner couples and a key issue for scholars (DeVault 1991; Ferree 1990; Komter 1989; Thompson 1993). As women flocked to the labor market, working long and often odd shifts (Presser 2006), the division of chores became more unpredictable. Among dual-earner couples, women have assumed more domestic duties in addition to their full-time jobs outside the home, resulting in what Hochschild refers to as the *second shift* (Hochschild and Machung 1989). In fact, many scholars argue that men reinforced the separate spheres ideology throughout modern history to encourage women to stay home and eliminate the competition in the job market (Coltrane and Adams 2005; Jackson 1992; Kimmel 1996). The attempts by women to enter the work force were often discouraged by men, who emphasized the separate spheres ideology and the importance of domestic duties for feminine identity. Throughout the modern era, different versions of the cult of domesticity were idealized for women.

Since the 1960s, the hours married women spend on housework have only declined slightly, despite the rapid increase in the number of hours that they spent working outside of the home (Coltrane 2000). At the same time, the hours men spend on housework have increased only marginally (Bianchi et al. 2000; Gershuny 2000; Hook 2006; Sayer 2005), and not nearly kept up with the growth in womenôs wages (Coltrane 2000). Starting with the 1990s, scholars have started to pay attention to the division of

house chores. House chores are important because we spend almost as much time on house chores as on our paid jobs (Robinson and Godbey 1997). Despite the time investment, work at home is often trivialized (Coltrane 2000; Crittenden 2005). Researchers have examined the division of chores among dual income couples, looking at the time spent planning, performing house chores, quality of chores and the assignment of specific tasks (Blair and Lichter 1991; Berk and Berk 1979; Berk 1985; Bielby and Bielby 1989; Starrels 1994). Today, among dual earner couples, husbands do much less housework than their wives (Demo and Acock 1993; Greenstein 2005). Women perform approximately two-thirds and men perform one-third of all the chores when both work outside the home. More importantly, this level seems to be the tipping point, where both sides consider it fair (Coltrane 2005). Despite the division of chores within the same household, menôs work is seen as ñhelp,ò while women are seen as the primary responsible party for these joint chores (Coltrane 2000)

In addition to the inequality in the amount of chores performed, the division of tasks is highly gendered (Blair and Lichter 1992; Brayfield 1992; Lennon and Rosenfield 1994; Mederer 1993). Womenôs tasks include day-to-day cooking, washing, ironing, and dishes (Coltrane 2005; Blair and Lichter 1991; Robinson and Godbey 1997), while menôs tasks involve home repairs, yard work and snow removal. Womenôs tasks tend to be more time-consuming, tedious and need to be completed by a deadline, while menôs tasks can be more enjoyable, flexible and can easily be rescheduled or delegated (Coltrane 1998; Larson, Richards and Perry-Jenkins 1994; Devault 1991; Robinson and Milkie 1997, 1998). Barnett and Stern (1997), characterize womenôs chores as low-schedule control chores, with strict deadlines such as putting food on the table at dinner time, while menôs tasks tend to be more ñhigh schedule control tasksò (see also Bird and Ross; Ross and Mirowsky 1992). The gendered meaning of these tasks is pervasive: economist Heidi Hartmann characterized the family as «a primary arena where men exercise their patriarchal power over womenôs labor» (1981:377). Coltrane (2000) argues that house chores are especially central in this power struggle. The struggle over chores, while might appear trivial, is very important in understanding the power struggle. Previously, the division of chores were explained by the economic dependency

theory, which argues that women perform house chores because they are economically dependent on their husbands (Brines 1993), however such a view fails to account for the unequal division of chores among dual earner couples. Today, many researchers argue for resource bargaining in determining house chores (Blair and Lichter 1991; Ferree 1992; Kamo 1998). However, house chores are not simply a result of resource negotiations between couples, but are attributed deeper social meaning (DeVault 1991; Dresser Fassinger 1993; Hays 1996; Hochschild 1989; Walzer, 1989).

Traditional approaches ï as seen in bargaining and social exchange theories (Blau 1960; Blood and Wolfe 1960) would suggest that the amount of time men spend on housework should increase as their income relative to that of their spouseôs decreases. Among women, for instance, Gupta (2007) finds that the more money a woman earns, the less housework she does, perhaps by using additional economic resources to opt out of additional housework. These bargaining and exchange models have also led a number of researchers to argue that spousal time use is largely complementary: when one spouse spends more time on an activity like housework or leisure, the other does as well (Sullivan 1996; Hammermesh 2000; Hallberg and Klevmarken 2003; Jenkins and Osberg 2005). This could be because of outside factors impacting both partners in a marriage similarly, or even because of individuals selecting partners with similar tastes in how they spend time (Lam 1988).

However, these traditional approaches may overlook the gendered meaning of these tasks and their symbolic meanings within the household (Legerski and Cornwall 2010; Greenstein 1995; Brines 1994; Arrighi and Maume 2000); many scholars have noted the complex nature of chore negotiations is not directly linked to income and work (Bittman et al. 2003; Brines 1994; Greenstein 2000). In fact, studies have shown that women do more housework when they earn more than their husbands do (Atkinson and Boles 1984; Thebaud 2010) or when their husbands are unemployed (Brayfield 1992). Bittman et al (2003) find that the degree of gender inequality in housework decreases as the wife makes more money, but only up until she makes as much as he does. After that point, however, couples tend to resume traditional divisions of housework. They argue that this odd effect is the result of the violation of gender norms that comes along with

the wifeôs increased income, with the husbandôs reduced housework as a mechanism for resolving the inequality in gender roles, what Greenstein (2000) calls ñdeviance neutralizationò and Bittman et al (2003) expands into ñgender deviance neutralization.ò However, there does seem to be some question as to how widespread the effects are. Gupta (1999) argues that the curvilinearity in the relationship ï the decrease in menôs housework as they earn less relative to their wives ï is driven by a small number of households at the extreme end of the income inequality distribution.

However, the analysis of time diary data from industrialized countries around the world has led researchers to the conclusion that these effects are far from universal. Hook (2006) found that the increase in menôs housework had less to do with the individual circumstances of the household than the aggregate female employment rate in the country. Larger-scale gender roles, it seems, were more important to the hours men spent on housework. Because traditionally, house chores are equated with womenôs work (Crittenden 2006), therefore by doing house chores, women and men are doing gender (Berk 1985; West and Zimmerman, 1987). So, while gender roles within the household matter in the division of household labor, so too do gender roles within society as a whole: men may feel that they have to avoid certain types of work around the house in order to reinforce their masculinity, but they should only do this to the extent that the culture treats the activity as gendered.

This paper examines the effects of income inequality in pay between spouses and its effects on the division of chores. We focus in particular on men whose wives earn more than they do and explore the effects of relative pay on the division of chores. The division of house chores among dual earner couples is a very important topic and a timely one. The recent economic recession resulted in important economic and social changes. Many women started to out-earn their spouses and have become the primary breadwinners. In this paper, we focus on the division of chores at home in the post-recession era. This is a timely analysis that captures the changes in the division of chores in the aftermath of the recent economic recession, in which men ï more than women ï lost jobs or income, leaving them with lower income relative to their spouses.

However, this study is limited in that it does not include single-earner households, including households in which men have lost their jobs. This limitation is in place for two reasons. First, families in which one spouse or the other have lost their jobs are in transition, and the norms of those households don't necessarily tell us about how they normally function. Second, a complete analysis of these households would require us to fully account for the amount of time that individuals spend looking for work, a category that isn't clearly accounted for in the extant data.

2. Data and Measures

For the purposes of this paper, we focus exclusively on dual-earner, married couples. To measure the effects of relative income on the division of chores, we use American Time Use Study (ATUS). ATUS is a part of the ongoing census update, in which thousands of randomly selected Americans are asked to record exactly how they spent the previous day, minute by minute. The goal of this study is to examine work habits, searches for work, and the like, but we can also use it to see how much time Americans spend doing all kinds of things, including housework. Surveys are carried out throughout the year, and with additional interviews carried out on weekends, to ensure that the data includes approximately equal numbers of weekdays and weekends. The pooled data used here is comprised of more than 112,000 cases from 2002 to 2010. This ATUS has been used in the past to study the division of work in the household, including housework and childcare (Connelly and Kimmel 2009; Kimmel and Connelly 2007).

The measure of housework used by the ATUS corresponds with that used in previous time studies, such as Bittman et al's (2003) study of Australian time diaries: it includes interior cleaning, and not much else. Taking care of the yard or of vehicles is treated separately. This distinction also makes sense for our purposes: for the last hundred years, at least, interior cleaning has been regarded as the domain of women, and so has particular symbolic power. Correctly or not, doing dishes is seen as women's work ï the sort of action that a man seeking to assert a threatened masculinity would seek to avoid.

We also analyze the amount of time men spend cooking ï and activity similar to housework, but without the same fraught gendered meaning. In the ATUS, cooking is

defined as any activity relating to food preparation, not including the clean up afterwards. It includes indoor and outdoor cooking, for all meals of the day and snacks. We separate out cooking and housework because previous studies of the topic have focused exclusively on housework, and thereôs no guarantee that the amount of time spent cleaning follows the same patterns. Our measures allow us to attempt to replicate previous findings in the area with regard to housework, then test to see if those findings apply to cooking as well.

Measures of income and other demographic characteristics of the individuals and households are drawn from linked CPS datasets. Our analyses differ from some previous work in that we make use of actual income levels rather than ratios of income within a couple (as in Bittman et al 2003). Our purpose in this is twofold. First, it is mathematically impossible to include both the incomes of both members of the couple and the ratio of their earnings in a single regression equation, as they are necessarily perfectly collinear. Since the actual earnings of each member of the couple, when interacted, contain all of the information about the ratio, and the reverse cannot be said, we err on the side of including more information. Second, we expect the degree of gender role threat experienced by men to be a function of both their relative and absolute income. A pure ratio approach would hold that men are equally threatened by wives who make twice as much as they do, whether the actual amount earned by the wife is very little or a great deal, while we would argue that the two cases are very different, with a high-earning wife being more threatening, even if the ratio of earnings is the same. This measure of income is the only indicator of work used: while job prestige is present for some cases in the CPS data, it is highly correlated with the main variable of interest, weekly earnings.

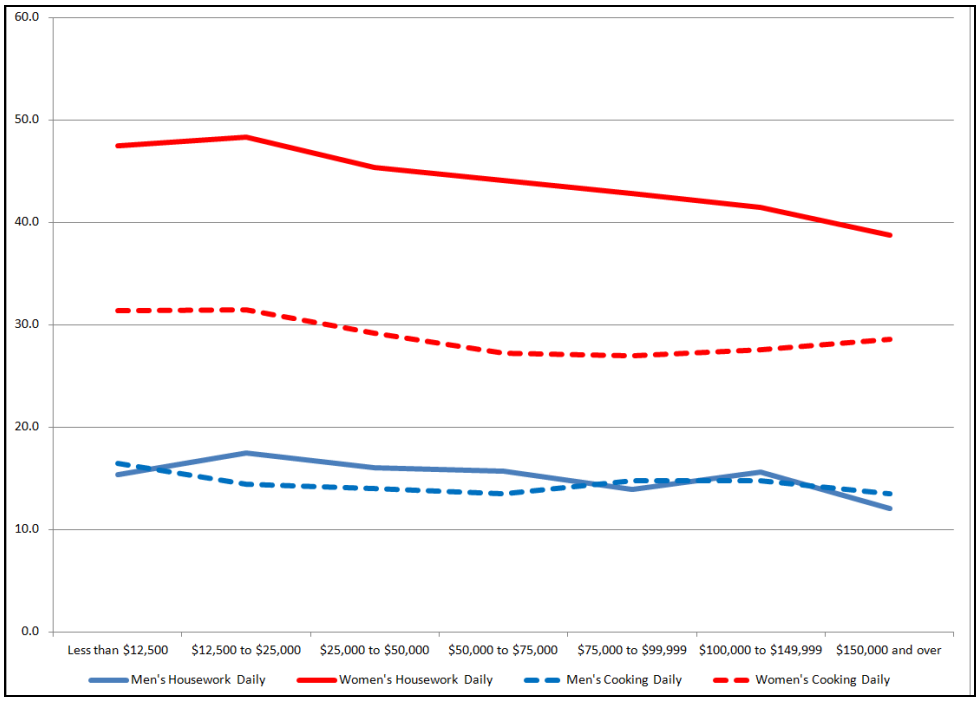

Figure 1- Mean number of minutes spent on housework and cooking per day by income group, for men and women.

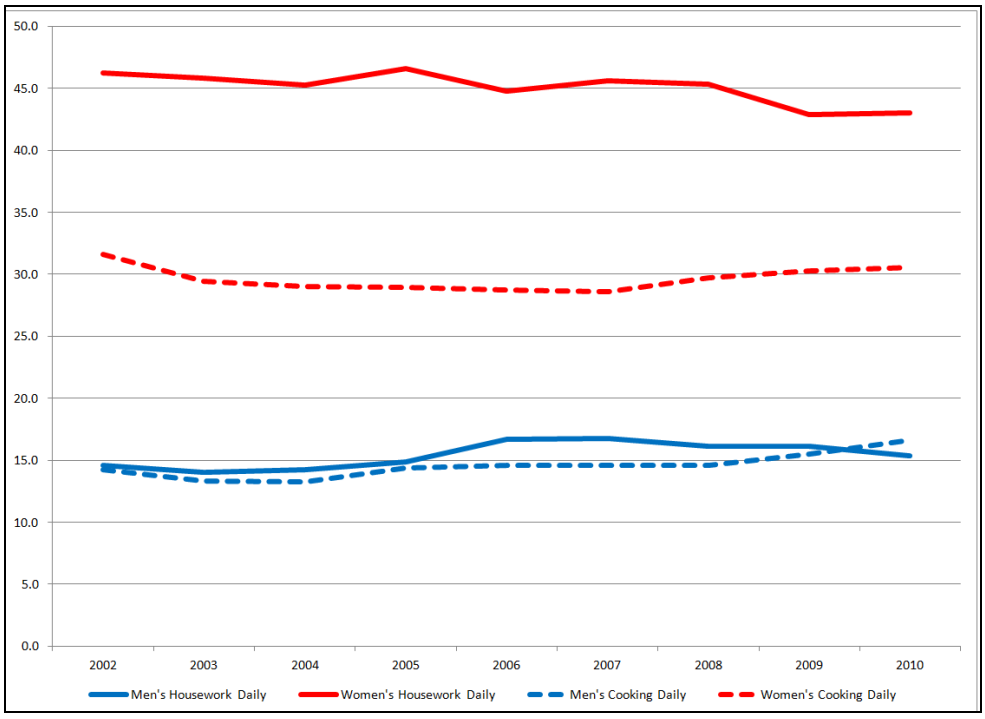

Figure 2 - Mean number of minutes spent on housework and cooking per day by year, for men and women

Looking at the mean values for men and women gives some indications as to the dynamics of these measures. Our measures, like those in previous studies, seem to indicate that income decreases the amount of time women and men spend on housework, but doesnôt seem to reduce the amount of time spent cooking. Looking at the changes over time, there seems to be some change concurrent with the onset of the economic crisis in 2008, with the amount of time women spend on housework dropping slightly in 2009 and 2010 by about 2 minutes, compared with 2008 (in which most of the data was gathered before the recession fully struck), and the amount of time men spend on cooking increasing slightly in the same period.

In addition to these main variables of interest, we make use of a number of control variables. These include the age of the individual in years, whether or not the individual has children (coded as a dummy variable, 0 if the individual does not have children present in the household, 1 if they do have children at home), whether or not the individual is white (another dummy variable coded 0 if the individual is non-white or is Hispanic, or 1 if the individual is white and not Hispanic), education (coded in years, ranging, in the data, from 8 to 18) and, of course, gender (again, a dummy variable coded as 1 if the individual is male, and 0 if the individual is female). Weekly income is coded in dollars, and relative income is another dummy variable, coded as 0 if the individual earns the same amount as the spouse or more, and 1 if the individual makes less than their spouse.

There are, of course, some factors that cannot be fully accounted for within the data. For instance, the fact that the analysis only looks at married Americans in dual-income households means that it cannot account for the many cultural differences that could be driving differences in housework.

3. Hypotheses

As the functional definitions of housework and cooking are set by the ATUS, our major task is to operationalize the degree of gender role threat faced by men. Following past studies of bargaining and exchange models in housework, we focus on the relative and absolute amount of income earned by men and their wives. Absolute income is defined

simply as the amount of weekly income earned by the husband and his wife, in dollars. Relative income is simply who earns more money ï the husband or the wife ï regardless of how much more or less they earn.

While we do expect menôs relative income to be important in determining how much cooking and cleaning men do around the house, past research has consistently shown that the more money women in a marriage earn, the more housework their husbands will do.

H1. The more a manôs wife earns, the more time he will spend on cooking and housework.

However, when gender role threat is a factor, we expect that the time men spend on housework and cooking will be determined by how much they earn relative to their wife. In general, we expect that the greater the degree of gender role threat created by the wifeôs income, the less housework men will do. This leads to hypotheses two and three. Hypothesis two deals with the effect of relative income.

H2. Controlling for absolute income, men who earn less than their wives will do less housework and cooking than men who earn more than their wives.

Next, hypothesis three deals with the degree of the gender role threat created by the wifeôs income. While relative income is important, a wife who earns more than her husband, but doesnôt earn very much in an absolute sense, is less threatening than a wife who earns more than her husband, and earns a lot of money.

H3. The larger his wifeôs absolute income, the larger the difference will be between men who earn more and less than their wives.

4. Housework

More than three-quarters of American men (77 percent) did no housework at all on the documented day ï in contrast, 55 percent of women did some housework that day. Men did an average of 15 minutes of housework (median of 0 minutes, standard deviation of 44 minutes) per day, while women averaged 45 minutes per day (median of 10 minutes, standard deviation of 71 minutes); neither of these averages have moved much since data collection started in 2003. Richer Americans of both genders do less housework

than poorer ones: in the lowest income groups, women spend about 47 minutes a day on housework, while men spend about 15 minutes. In the highest income group, menôs contribution goes down to about 12 minutes per day, and womenôs time drops to about 39 minutes.

American women also seem to do more housework than women in other countries. The nearly 4.4 hours a week that American women spend on housework (the weekly and average daily figures donôt quite match up because the daily averages oversample weekends) outstrips the amount of time spent by women in all other countries for which time series data is available. The closest competitor is the three hours spent a week by women in Australia and the 2.9 hours for women in Latvia. In contrast, Spanish women only spend about an hour and a half a week on housework, Brazilian women spend only 1.6 hours a week, and French women spend almost no time on housework at all. French men, on the other hand, spend 1.2 hours a week on housework, well more than the .8 hours a week spent by American men. Japanese and Slovenian men do the most housework, at 1.3 and 1.4 hours a week, while British and Bulgarian men spend less than 15 minutes a week on housework (figures from Fisher and Johnson 2011).

These averages are interesting, but weôre interested in how menôs time spent on housework changes when their traditional masculine role is threatened in some way. The most obvious source of threat to menôs traditional role in the home is the money earned by their wives. If men are expected ï and expect themselves ï to be the chief breadwinners, they may well be threatened if their wives make more money than they do, especially if the wife makes a lot of money. The clearest threat to a manôs economic dominance in the home would come from unemployment, and thanks to the great recession, there are lots of unemployed people in the dataset. Unemployment alone, though, doesnôt decrease the amount of time that men spend on housework: employed men average about 15 minutes a day of housework, and that figure goes up by about 6 minutes a day for unemployed men. When women become unemployed, they spend an extra five minutes a day on housework, going from 45 to 50 minutes a day, on average. It isnôt surprising, though, that unemployment doesnôt decrease menôs time spent on housework: unemployment alone isnôt necessarily a threat to the manôs role in the household. Short-term unemployment, or unemployment when the wife isnôt working

either, doesnôt represent a threat: that would come if the unemployment is prolonged, or if the wife is making much more money than the now-unemployed husband is.

To look for a housework based response to gender role threat, then, we want to look at the relative income of husbands and wives: men should be threatened when their wife makes a lot of money, and they make less than that. Things get more complicated because we have to control for other factors that lead men to do more or less housework: things like children (having children means an extra 19 minutes of housework a day), race (whites do 12 minutes a day more than non-white Americans), age (every ten years of age adds about 4 minutes of housework a day), how much the husband makes (one minute less for every $100 a week of income) and education (every extra year of education shaves off about a minute a day). Controlling for all of these factors, and for the fact that most men donôt do any housework at all, we can see the effect of a wifeôs relative and absolute income on menôs housework, and the effect is enormous. Because individuals cannot do less than zero minutes of housework in a day, and many individuals do exactly zero minutes, the data requires that we make use of Tobit regression analysis, which controls for the censoring of the data ï that is, the fact that we canôt observe differences between individuals who spend no time on housework in the course of the day. The driving factor in this regression analysis is the three-way interaction between gender, absolute spousal income (expressed in terms of weekly income), and relative spousal income (whether or not the spouse makes more money than the individual whose time is being studied). Incidentally, in cases like this, Tobit regression also allows values of the dependent variable to go below zero ï allowing us to differentiate between people who do no housework at all, as some of them are closer to doing some housework than others.

Of course, the use of Tobit regression does require certain assumptions. In this case, Tobit regression requires that the process that generates positive values ï leading individuals to do housework ï also generates the negative values ï the lack of housework. Thankfully, this assumption is supported by the theoretical framework underlying the analysis. The analysis is based on the idea that men perform housework in the face of relative lack of gender threat, and fail to perform housework when gender

role threat is present, giving us the same underlying process for both the positive and (unobserved) negative values of the dependent variable.

As this three-way interaction ï like any three-way interaction ï is difficult to conceptualize initially, it may be useful to break down the expected effects of the components of the interaction effect on the amount of time spent on housework. First, holding constant how much the husband makes, the more money the wife makes, the more housework the husband does ï which makes sense. If the wife is the prime earner in the relationship, the husband should take up some of the slack at home. But whatôs interesting here is the difference between men who make more than their wives, and men who make less than their wives. Men who make less money than their wives are much less responsive to their wifeôs earnings: they increase the amount of housework they do, but not by much: a wife who earns an extra thousand dollars a week can only expect her husband to do an extra 11 minutes a day of housework if she makes more than he does. If she makes less than he does, adding an extra thousand dollars a week means that heôs going to do an extra 27 minutes of housework a day.

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t
Age	**0.390**	**0.093**	**4.2**
Children?	**18.831**	**1.980**	**9.51**
Race: White?	**12.314**	**2.532**	**4.86**
Years of Education	-0.628	0.387	-1.62
Weekly Income	**-0.009**	**0.002**	**-4.15**
Gender: Male?	**-89.281**	**5.530**	**-16.15**
Spouse's Weekly Income	0.002	0.002	1.04
Makes less than Spouse?	-0.440	4.746	0.09
Male x Spouse's Weekly Income	**0.010**	**0.004**	**2.15**
Male x Makes Less	12.794	7.466	1.71
Spouse's Income x Makes Less	0.0003	0.006	0.05
Male x Spouse Income x Makes Less	**-0.016**	**0.008**	**-1.93**
Constant	1.724	16.174	0.11
Sigma	107.564	0.839	

Table 1 -Tobit Regression Model for Amount of Time Spent on Housework.

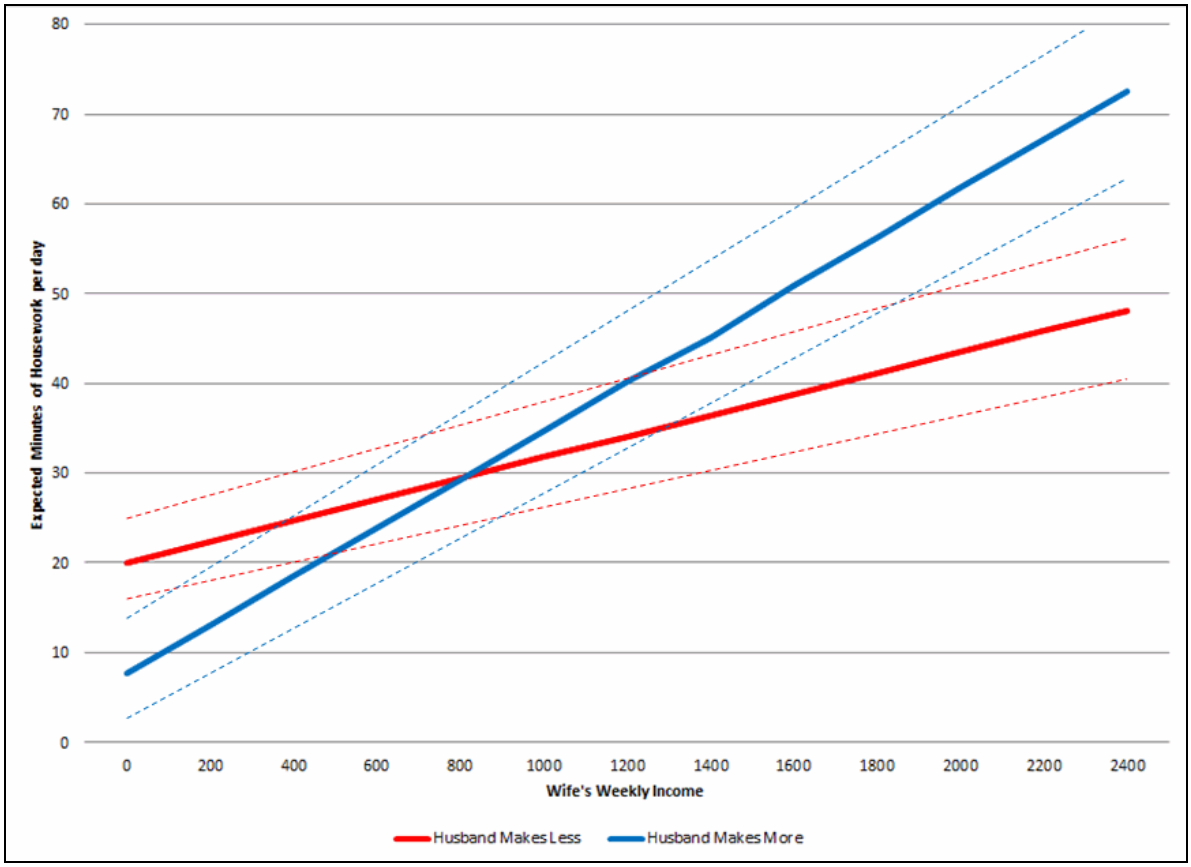

Figure 3 - Expected minutes per day spent on housework by married men, by their wifeôs absolute and relative income (dotted lines indicate estimated standard errors).

Second, consider couples who make very little money. Even if the husband makes less than the wife, his wifeôs meager income isnôt enough to present a serious challenge to his gender role: he winds up doing quite a bit of work around the house. As the wifeôs income increases, though, his gender role is under increasing attack, and he compensates by doing much less housework than he would if he made more money. A women who makes $1,000 a week (the mean for women in the dataset is $655, with a standard deviation of 496; men, on average, earn about $945 a week, with a standard deviation of $648), with a husband who earns less, can expect her husband to spend 32 minutes a day cleaning. If her income doubles to $2,000 a week, she can only expect 44 minutes a day out of her husband. If that $2,000 a week was less than her husband, heôd be doing 62 minutes a day. So long as heôs making more than the wife is, her financial success doesnôt threaten his identity.

Now, it isnôt entirely fair to blame these results on the men. If their gender identity is threatened by their wifeôs financial success, they may want to do less housework: but their wives are enabling this behavior. The results also indicate that women who earn more money than their husbands tend to do a little more housework that women who make less money than their husbands, all else being equal. The extra housework they do isnôt equivalent to the decrease among their husbands, but itôs enough to offset some of the losses in housework. The husbands might be doing less housework, but their wives are making it possible.

Of course, this is also entirely at odds with what men probably should be doing: picking up the slack at home. In households where the husband is the sole breadwinner, itôs expected that the wife is going to do nearly all of the housework. When the situation is reversed, though, itôs a threat to menôs gender identity, one that they seem to resolve, in part, by doing less around the house, while their wives do a little more in order to compensate.

There is sufficient data within the set to divide up the analysis into periods of equal size: 2002 to 2004, 2005 to 2007, and 2008 to 2010. The third era corresponds to the onset of the economic crisis, and while it includes some cases from before the full onset of the crisis, this would serve to mute rather than exaggerate any differences. Dividing up the data into equal periods with roughly equal sample sizes ï about 8,000 cases in each ï also ensures that differences are not due to increased sample size in one or another of the periods.

	2002-2004			2005-2007			2008-2010		
Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Coefficient	Std. Error	t
Age	0.233	0.151	1.54	**0.407**	**0.165**	**2.47**	**0.579**	**0.168**	**3.44**
Children?	**15.572**	**3.122**	**4.99**	**23.802**	**3.589**	**6.63**	**18.504**	**3.696**	**5.01**
Race: White?	**11.145**	**4.300**	**2.59**	**9.938**	**4.404**	**2.26**	**15.715**	**4.481**	**3.51**
Years of Education	-0.907	0.633	-1.43	-0.870	0.672	-1.29	-0.026	0.714	-0.04
Weekly Income	-0.004	0.004	-1.17	**-0.012**	**0.004**	**-3.18**	**-0.010**	**0.004**	**-2.77**
Gender: Male?	**-102.055**	**8.598**	**-11.87**	**-99.007**	**9.003**	**-11.00**	**-108.858**	**8.830**	**-12.33**
Spouse's Weekly Income	-0.0034	0.011	-0.31	0.0010	0.010	0.10	0.0037	0.009	0.42
Makes less than Spouse?	7.215	8.087	0.89	-8.184	8.559	-0.96	-5.753	8.380	-0.69
Male x Spouse's Weekly Income	**0.029**	**0.013**	**2.24**	0.022	0.012	1.85	**0.029**	**0.011**	**2.64**
Male x Makes Less	8.524	12.625	0.68	5.616	13.364	0.42	26.027	13.394	1.94
Spouse's Income x Makes Less	0.0035	0.011	0.31	0.0020	0.010	0.20	0.0009	0.009	0.10
Male x Spouse Income x Makes Less	-0.011	0.015	-0.74	-0.011	0.014	-0.77	-0.025	0.013	-1.89
Constant	19.892	27.454	0.72	15.87	29.41	0.54	-32.837	30.999	-1.06
Sigma	105.33	1.36		108.61	1.46		108.83	1.56	

Table 2 - Tobit Regression Model for Amount of Time Spent on Housework, divided by year of survey.

However, while the standard errors of the effects are much larger when the data is divided by period ï a function of the smaller sample size more than anything ï the magnitude and direction of the effects is about the same across the periods. The findings reached about the relationship between spousal income levels and the division of housework would apply equally well at any time during the period studied.

5. The Case of Cooking

The amount of time that men spend cooking follows a rather different pattern than the amount of time that men spend on housework. According to the ATUS, 56 percent of Americans spend some time cooking each day (including 40 percent of men and 72 percent of women). Both men and women who do cook spend about 40 minutes a day doing so. Unlike housework, an area in which American women do more than women in almost any other country, American women spend less time cooking than in any other country studied, about 5 hours a week. Canadian women spend more than twice as much time in the kitchen at 11.1 hours a week, and Turkish women spend about 17 hours a week cooking. In contrast, the 2 hours a week that American men spend cooking is less than the approximately 3 hours, on average, for men in Australia and Canada, but about equal with the time spent in most of Europe (Fisher and Johnson 2011).

Also, in a finding that lends some support to the argument that cooking has become less gendered in recent years, the amount of time men spend cooking his generally been increasing over the last several years. In 2002, men spent about 14 minutes a day cooking, on average, a figure which increased slowly to almost 17 minutes by 2010. Among American women, on the other hand, thereôs been no clear trend, falling by about three minutes between 2002 and 2007, then recovering nearly all of that loss by 2010.

Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t
Age	**0.337**	**0.038**	**8.88**
Children?	**9.734**	**0.811**	**12.01**
Race: White?	**-3.403**	**1.021**	**-3.33**
Years of Education	-0.283	0.158	-1.79
Weekly Income	**-0.002**	**0.001**	**-2.56**
Gender: Male?	**-33.248**	**2.052**	**-16.20**
Spouse's Weekly Income	0.0004	0.002	0.15
Makes less than Spouse?	**5.635**	**2.018**	**2.79**
Male x Spouse's Weekly Income	**0.007**	**0.003**	**2.56**
Male x Makes Less	-5.349	3.015	-1.77
Spouse's Income x Makes Less	-0.0027	0.002	-1.09
Male x Spouse Income x Makes Less	0.002	0.003	0.69
Constant	**15.876**	**6.884**	**2.31**
Sigma	47.843	0.307	

Table 3 - Tobit Regression Model for Amount of Time Spent on Cooking.

	2002-2004			2005-2007			2008-2010		
Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Coefficient	Std. Error	t
Age	**0.313**	**0.062**	**5.02**	**0.440**	**0.068**	**6.48**	**0.251**	**0.067**	**3.74**
Children?	**8.311**	**1.286**	**6.46**	**11.046**	**1.477**	**7.48**	**10.098**	**1.484**	**6.81**
Race: White?	-2.645	1.742	-1.52	**-4.497**	**1.794**	**-2.51**	-2.983	1.774	-1.68
Years of Education	-0.355	0.261	-1.36	-0.264	0.277	-0.95	-0.224	0.286	-0.78
Weekly Income	-0.002	0.002	-0.97	-0.002	0.001	-1.32	**-0.004**	**0.001**	**-2.57**
Gender: Male?	**-38.163**	**3.525**	**-10.83**	**-33.637**	**3.725**	**-9.03**	**-28.864**	**3.544**	**-8.14**
Spouse's Weekly Income	-0.007	0.005	-1.52	-0.002	0.004	-0.49	0.006	0.004	1.69
Makes less than Spouse?	2.826	3.433	0.82	6.211	3.660	1.70	5.688	3.539	1.61
Male x Spouse's Weekly Income	**0.0151**	**0.005**	**2.85**	**0.0097**	**0.005**	**1.98**	**-0.0003**	**0.004**	**-0.07**
Male x Makes Less	1.3959	5.171	0.27	**0.0097**	**0.005**	**1.98**	**-12.346**	**5.339**	**-2.31**
Spouse's Income x Makes Less	0.0049	0.005	1.05	-0.0010	0.004	-0.22	**-0.008**	**0.004**	**-2.09**
Male x Spouse Income x Makes Less	-0.0085	0.006	-1.34	-0.0014	0.006	-0.24	**0.012**	**0.005**	**2.32**
Constant	**22.764**	**11.326**	**2.01**	9.807	12.147	0.81	17.303	12.422	1.39
Sigma	46.724	0.510		48.526	0.540		48.211	0.547	

Table 4-: Tobit Regression Model for Amount of Time Spent on Cooking, divided by year of survey.

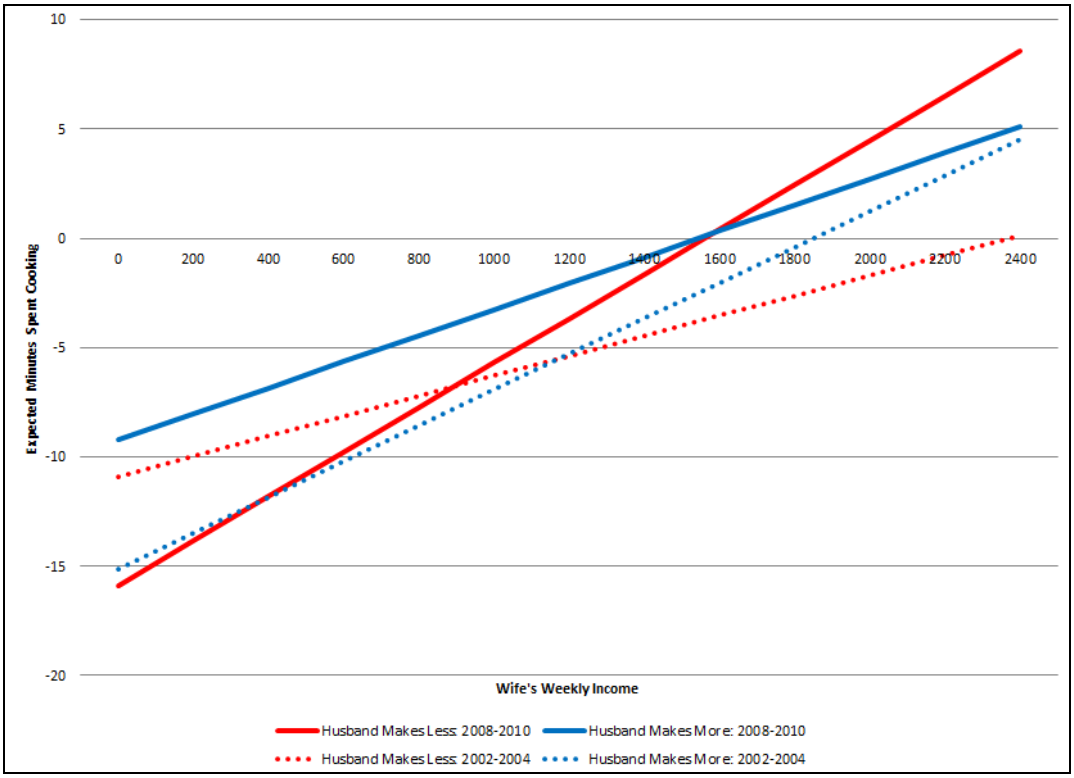

Figure 4 - Expected minutes per day spent on cooking by married men, by their wifeôs absolute and relative income, 2002-2004 and 2008-2010.

Again using Tobit regression to analyze the data, we find that the significant three-way interaction effects that structure the results for housework are absent in the overall analysis. When we take all of the years together, there are significant effects of spousal income on men, and relative income ï but both of these effects are positive, indicating that men who make less than their wives do a bit more cooking than they would otherwise, and that the more money his wife makes, the more cooking a husband is expected to do. The more money his wife makes, the more time a husband spends cooking: about 1 extra minute for every $150 dollars his wife earns in a week. This sounds about right: when women earn more, their husbands should be doing more of the cooking (among women, on the other hand, time spent cooking goes down significantly as husbandôs earnings increases, by about 1 minute for every $1000 of weekly income). While earning less than their husbands leads women to cook more than they would otherwise, by about 4 minutes, earning less has no real effect on how much time men spend cooking. When all of the effects are taken into account, men who earn less than

their wives do spend less time cooking: but only by about 10 seconds, far too small an effect to be considered a significant difference. Other characteristics of the household are much more important ï children add an extra ten minutes a day, whites spend 3 minutes a day less ï than the relative income is. In sum, the results seem very close to what we would expect from bargaining and social exchange theories: when their wives make more money, men do more cooking, but there just doesnôt seem to be any effect of gender role threat leading them to reduce the amount of time they spend in the kitchen.

More interesting, though, are the results of dividing the analysis by period. When the analysis of housework was divided by period, there were no significant differences. Here, though, the story in the early and more recent periods couldnôt be more different. In the first period, between 2002 and 2004, the coefficients on most of the interaction effects do no rise to conventional levels of statistical significance, but they follow the exact same pattern as the results for housework. In the second period, between 2005 and 2007, the pattern is the same, but the magnitude of the effects is smaller. By the last period, from 2008 to 2010, we see almost a complete reversal. As in the overall analysis of housework, all of the interaction effects are significant, including the vital three-way interaction between gender, relative income and absolute spousal income, but the direction of these effects is entirely reversed. From 2002 to 2004, husbands who make less than their wives are less responsive to their wivesô increased incomes, leading them to do increasingly less cooking than men who make more than their wives as the spouseôs income increases. This is exactly the pattern evidenced by men with regard to time spent on housework. In the most recent period however, taking place immediately before, during and after the recession, men who make less than their wives are significantly more responsive to their wivesô increased income. When their wives donôt make much money, men who make less money do less cooking than men who make more. As wivesô income increases, though, the relationship changes, and when the wife makes a lot of money, men who earn less do more cooking than men who make more. This seems like a rational response: if a woman makes a lot of money, her time is more valuable, so her husband picks up the slack, especially if he makes less.

	Men who make less than wives	Men who make more than wives
Wives with low income	**fewer** hours spent on cooking	**more** hours spent on cooking
Wives with high income	**more** hours spent on cooking	**fewer** hours spent on cooking

Table 5 - Relative Time Men Spend Cooking in the 2008-2010 Period

6. Results

Our first hypothesis is derived straight from bargaining and exchange theories of how couples determine the share of chores they do around the house. In these models, men married to women who make more money should do more work, as the wife is able to exchange additional income for a reduced share of the household labor.

In both cooking and housework, the more money his wife earns, the more time the husband spends on the task. When the wifeôs weekly income increased by $500, holding all else equal, the husband does about 9 minutes more housework, and about spends an extra three minutes cooking.

When it comes to housework, however, our findings are very similar to past findings of how couples negotiate chores around the house, as in Bittman et al (2003), though we present the results rather differently. Men who earn less money than their wives, regardless of how much money they and their wives earn in an absolute sense, spend less time cleaning than men who earn more than their wives. Itôs in this area that we see big differences between cooking and housework. The overall analysis of cooking doesnôt seem to display any differences based on relative income, but when the analysis is divided by period, we see the effects that dominated the amount of time spent on housework entirely reversed. After the recession hit, men do take account of their spouseôs relative and absolute income in the amount of time they spend cooking, but by doing more cooking as their spouse makes more, and more cooking if they make less than their wives.

The final hypothesis deals with the interaction between the wifeôs absolute and relative income. While men do less housework when they earn less than their wives, the size of the effect is greatest when women earn a lot of money. When the wifeôs weekly income is around the mean of a bit less than $700 a week, the manôs relative income has almost no effect on the amount of housework he does. However, as her income increases, the amount of time her husband spends on housework goes up at much different rates depending on his relative income. If he makes more than she does, he does an extra 2.7 minutes of housework for every extra $100 she earns. If he makes less than she does, that same extra $100 of spousal income only leads to an extra 1.1 minutes of housework. So, while spousal income doesnôt matter much when the wifeôs income is around the mean, if the wifeôs income is around the 95th percentile of about $2,400 a week, men who earn more than their wives wind up doing almost an extra half hour a day of work around the house. Again, this finding is very similar to that seen in Bittman et alôs (2003) work ï but the results diverge significantly with regard to cooking, where the hypothesized three-way interaction effect is present, but in the opposite direction.

7. Discussion

The results point to the complexity of inter-household negotiations over household chores. Itôs typically been assumed that increases in married womenôs income, both in an absolute sense, and relative to their husbandôs earnings, would lead to greater gender equality in the share of household work done. For some tasks, like cooking, this does seem to be the case: as married women earn more, their husbands spend more time in the kitchen. Cooking, for instance, is similar to housework in that both involve domestic labor and potentially take time away from work outside of the home. However, cooking is not seen as being as intertwined with masculinity as housework. Preparing food can easily involve the use of specialized equipment and techniques, a craft that men can be proud of their prowess in. Unlike housework, Hollows (2003) argues that cooking can be seen and experienced as « recognizably manly,» and disassociated from labor ï but is rather a leisure activity (see also Aarseth and Olsen 2008). Other approaches cast

cooking as a necessary skill for well-rounded men to learn (Mechling 2005). And thatôs when it doesnôt involve grilling: any meal involving meat ï and thatôs all « proper » Western meals ï can be seen as recognizably masculine (Julier and Lindenfeld 2005). Cleaning, on the other hand, rarely involves any equipment more advanced than a vacuum cleaner, and thatôs not something that men are likely to be terribly excited about, or be able to brag to their friends about their skill with it. As such, American men donôt need to avoid cooking to bolster their gender identities in the same way that they avoid cleaning.

Research shows that, during high employment times for women, men invoke traditional divisions of chore when threatened by womenôs rising labor force participation and increased competition for jobs (Jackson 1992; Kimmel 1992). For many husbands, the greater income of their wives may be seen as a threat to their gender identity. Their relative aversion to greater amounts of housework can be seen as a way of preserving their gender identities in the face of this threat: «I may have lost my role as primary breadwinner,» we can imagine them thinking, «but Iôm not a maid.» The findings even show some indications that women who earn more than their husbands are doing additional housework in order to compensate for the potential damage to their husbandôs gender identity, echoing Bittman et alôs (2003) findings. However, our findings argue that the major driver of the difference isnôt womenôs increased housework, but rather husbandôs greatly reduced time on housework.

While we cannot conclusively link the change in how cooking is seen by men to the economic crisis that hit in 2008, it seems probable that there is some connection. Past research has shown the extent to which culture structures the division of housework within a couple, and the economic realities of the recession mean that menôs jobs and incomes were increasingly at risk, and more and more men are making less than their wives. Bargaining theories would lead us to believe that men should therefore do more work around the house, but our results seem to indicate that gender identities lead men to resist putting in that extra time in the form of housework. Instead, they seem to be spending more time cooking, an activity that doesnôt threaten their gender identity in the same way.

It seems likely that not all men experience their wivesô greater earnings as a threat to their identities: to the extent that men have other ways in which they can compensate for the threat to their gender identities, they may not have to compensate by doing less housework. For instance, men might embrace alternatives to the hegemonic masculinity that would allow them to focus on roles as homemakers or fathers or partners (as in Kimmel and Connelly 2007). Alternately, they could potentially compensate by embracing political or religious beliefs that stress male dominance. We would expect that the results presented here are conditional on these sorts of individual level characteristics, but, unfortunately, there is no way to ascertain this from the data available in the ATUS. Additional research on this point, and data which includes detailed time diaries and in-depth sociological indicators, is sorely needed.

These findings also give us some reason to be hopeful about the future of gender equality within the home. Time spent cooking, unlike housework, doesnôt seem to be subject to the sort of gender role threat, and research on the topic suggests that this is a recent phenomenon. In the space of 20 years or less, it seems, food preparation has made the transition from womenôs work to something in which men can find pride and mastery. Certain aspects of cooking ï like grilling ï may always have been menôs work, but cooking in general seems to have become largely degendered. This is hopeful because it points out the possibility of degendering other aspects of inequality within the household: if cleaning, emotion work and childcare can be degendered as well, we could be on our way to a much more equal life within the home, and within society in general.

8. Conclusion

This paper focuses exclusively on the division of chores at home between married, dual-earner spouses. Using Tobit regression estimations, we test two dominant theories: bargaining/exchange theory and gender role theory. We find that, parallel to gender role theory, when men make less money than their wives and experience gender role threat, they do less housework. However, they do not see cooking the same way. Especially when breakdown by year, the post-recession years show that while men decrease their

house chore contributions when they make less than their wives do regardless of the recession. However, post-recession era, cooking does not behave the same way as the other chores. When men experience gender role threat, men do not decrease the amount of time they dedicate to cooking. Cooking does not have the same social meaning as other house chores do. For future research, it is important to uncover the social meaning of cooking from the perspectives of the actors.

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