

**Gender Roles, Household Labor, and Family Satisfaction:
A Cross-National Comparison**

(Working Draft)

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Abstract

Data from the 2002 International Social Survey Program: Family and Changing Gender Roles (III) are analyzed for 25,847 married or cohabiting adults from 34 more developed countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. We examine the associations between gender role attitudes, household labor, and family satisfaction, and include couple and individual characteristics, as well as country level measures. Overall, we find that involvement in housework and childcare is positively associated with family satisfaction. Family satisfaction is higher among those in more traditional relationships (man breadwinner, woman homemaker) relative to other family forms; yet interaction terms indicate that men report higher family satisfaction the more involved they are in housework and childcare, and the more they agree they ought to share housework and childcare. Multi-level models indicate that only 5 percent of the variation in family satisfaction is between countries, and satisfaction is associated with increased country development.

Traditionally, childcare and housework have primarily been the responsibility of women. Over time, women have entered the paid labor force and challenged traditional gender roles in the home (Cotter, et al., 2001; International Labour Office, 2009). These changing work and family arrangements influence not only the well-being of family members, but also their satisfaction with family life (Kiecolt, 2003). To further explore these relationships, we examine gender role attitudes, the division of household labor, and family satisfaction based on surveys from 34 countries.

Background

Division of Household Labor

In light of the recent trend of increased female participation in paid labor, the overarching question regarding the household division of labor is ‘who is now performing it?’ Even though research indicates greater male involvement in domestic responsibilities, gender remains the chief predictor of who performs household chores (Baxter, 2002). Numerous studies speak to the continuing predominance of women in household responsibilities as the division of domestic labor appears to remain more traditional than egalitarian, even in “egalitarian” societies (Sanchez & Thompson, 1997; Diefenbach, 2002). Not only do women spend more time than their spouses on domestic duties, traditionally female chores continue to be performed by wives (Bianchi, et al., 2000; Sanchez & Kane, 1996).

Multi-national studies find similar patterns. An Australian study found that women continue to complete the bulk of housework and even perform two-thirds of the childcare tasks and three-quarters of daily indoor household responsibilities (Baxter, 2002). A cross-national study of developed nations examining the participation of men in housework similarly found that in spite of international variation, men tend to be less involved in domestic chores than their

spouses (Coltrane, 2000). For example in China, domestic duties have remained “overwhelmingly” a female responsibility throughout the 1990s, with no indication of decrease (Chen, 2005). Additionally, a study of twenty-four countries in different stages of development found that women continue to perform more household labor than a spouse regardless of outside employment status (Diefenbach, 2002; Habib., et al., 2006). This general trend is also seen among Vietnamese, Japanese, Jewish, and Arab women (Teerawichitchainan, et al., 2009.; Strober & Chan, 1998; Kulik & Rayyan, 2003) and within traditional, transitional, and egalitarian societies (Diefenbach, 2002).

Although modern wives continue to do more housework than their husbands, overall they tend to invest less time in domestic tasks, compared to women in previous decades (Bianchi, et al., 2000). This trend naturally raises the question of who is performing the household work if women are now doing less. While research has generated conflicting conclusions as to whether husbands have increased their domestic participation, some studies conclude that men’s proportional involvement has increased not because of greater time investment but because women now invest less time (Baxter, 2002; Press & Townsley, 1998). Men generally overestimate their own domestic involvement, perceiving they are more involved in household chores than they actually are (Kamo, 2000) while their wives often make more accurate estimates of their spouse’s time in domesticity (Lee & Waite, 2005). Interestingly, the level of male involvement in domestic chores is related to economic dependence non-linearly as men married to women with about equal earnings perform the most housework (Greenstein, 2000). While it is no surprise that economically dependent wives are the most involved in domesticity, breadwinner wives invest more time and dependent husbands less time on housework than would be predicted “under an economic dependency model” (Greenstein, 2000).

Previous research has explored the relationship between gender ideology, the division of household labor and satisfaction. Findings within and between countries vary, but there is consensus that both life and marital satisfaction are affected by attitudes and gendered behaviors within the home. The question of whether traditional or egalitarian divisions of labor produce higher levels of satisfaction has been of special interest. Various studies have found that the division of labor within households is associated with family satisfaction. Stevens and colleagues (2001) concluded that satisfaction with the division of household chores is related to women's marital satisfaction, but not men's. In general, women report less satisfaction with household chores than their spouses, and desire that their husbands contribute more (Baxter & Western, 1998). As men's participation in domestic chores increases, employed women perceive the situation as more fair and respond with higher levels of marital satisfaction (Coltrane, 2000). Both men and women, however, appreciate spousal participation in responsibilities traditionally gender specific, and are more satisfied when they are not solely responsible for a given task (Grote, et al., 1996).

Other studies, focusing specifically on more traditional divisions of household labor, also find associations with family satisfaction. A study in Beirut concluded that women who primarily fulfill a more traditional role, but whose husbands also participate in domestic duties, are the happiest (Khawaja & Habib, 2007). Traditionalism has conversely been linked to lower levels of marital satisfaction (Grote, et al., 1996). Grote and colleagues (1996) found this association to be true only for females, as men report higher levels of satisfaction with a traditional division of labor. A more recent study in Taiwan suggests the opposite; that is a more egalitarian division of labor increases marital quality for both men and women (Xu & Lai, 2004). Although egalitarian ideology appears linked to greater satisfaction (Kulik & Rayyan, 2003),

other research suggests a more liberal ideology does not necessarily translate into higher marital quality unless it is coupled with egalitarian behaviors (Xu & Lai, 2004).

Gender Role Attitudes

Similar to the relationship between satisfaction and the division of labor in the home, there is a great deal of variation in the literature surrounding gender ideology and satisfaction. While most research professes the expansion of egalitarianism, a 1990s study of eleven developed countries claims it was not increasing as quickly as previously believed (Hakim, 1996). There is general consensus on the characteristics of those who are more likely to hold egalitarian views. They tend to be female (Apparala, et al., 2003; Stevens, et al., 2001; Hakim, 1996; Mensch, et al., 2003), young (Hakim, 1996; Apparala, et al., 2003), and hold liberal political attitudes (Apparala, et al., 2003). Additionally, social class appears to be positively associated with less traditional ideologies, but only for females (Apparala, et al., 2003).

Although the international trend suggests increasing egalitarian views among women, ideology appears to be more influential in gender egalitarian countries, as the assets of women in more traditional societies hold less sway in negotiating domestic labor (Fuwa, 2004). Additionally, in gender egalitarian societies, there is greater emphasis on income, which encourages the employment of women and lessens the importance of fulfilling traditional roles (Corrigan & Konrad, 2006). Research diverges when identifying the influence each partner's attitudes has on the gendered division of labor. Pyke and Coltrane (1996) found husbands' attitudes to be the best indicator of sharing domestic chores. Yet, Greenstein (1996) concluded that while the combination of husband and wife's gender ideologies is generally related to the household division of labor, the husband's attitudes are relevant only when the wife is egalitarian. Egalitarian husbands with liberal wives perform the most housework, men with traditional wives

perform the least (regardless of their own attitudes), and housework participation by traditional men with egalitarian wives generally falls in between (Greenstein, 1996).

Incongruence

There has been a substantial amount of research conducted on the division of household labor and gender ideology. Less studied are the effects of incongruence between attitudes and behavior and how family satisfaction, in particular, is influenced. Such inconsistencies generally arise when economic or social factors create discrepancies between individual behavior and attitudes (Diefenbach, 2002). For example, for some working women with traditional attitudes, employment is more important than ideology; in such instances women might be required to revise the meaning of their involvement in domestic work (Stevens et al, 2001). On the other hand, individuals may choose family activities that confirm their identity (Kroska, 1997).

According to Kroska (1997), affect control theory and identity theory help to explain the coping mechanisms used by those experiencing incongruence. These theories propose that people cope by “changing the meanings attached to some element of the work arrangement: their identity, their partner’s identity or their work activities.” Because of the malleable nature of gender attitudes, Kroska (1997) suggests we “conceptualize gender ideology as an identity rather than a set of beliefs.”

“Traditional” women’s marital quality does not suffer due to inequities associated with the “second shift” because female responsibility for household chores is consistent with her ideology (Greenstein, 1996b). Marital satisfaction for an egalitarian woman, however, is more likely to be harmed by an unequal distribution of housework because it is inconsistent with her expectations. Unsurprisingly, such women appear to be more susceptible to lowered satisfaction resulting from perceived disparity in the division of household labor (Greenstein, 1996b). Thus

marital satisfaction is not necessarily affected by the allocation of housework or the actual number of hours the wife spends on domestic chores, but whether reality is consistent with her expectations (Greenstein, 1996b). While some researchers have found that marital satisfaction is related to congruence between couple's involvement in housework and their attitudes (Apparala et al, 2003; Greenstein, 1996b), others maintains such inconsistencies are not always related to marital quality (Kroska, 1997). Kroska (1997) contends that while some marriages are hurt by such incongruence, a large percentage do not experience related conflict.

Other Factors Influencing Family Satisfaction

In addition to household labor and gender roles, other factors associated with satisfaction include family structure, gender, age, religious attendance, and education. Various studies have found gender, as well as age and educational differences in satisfaction with family life (Baxter & Western, 1998; Kiecolt, 2003). Other studies find that traditional roles promoting economic dependency, as well as the presence of children influence family satisfaction (Stevens, et al., 2001; Grote, et al., 1996). In addition to age, education levels, and the number of children, religious attendance has also been associated with happiness and satisfaction (Stark and Eshleman, 1998).

Studies have also found links between macro level factors and family satisfaction (Bradbury, et al., 2000). In terms of country-level data, previous research has found that egalitarianism is positively related to women's empowerment, GNP, and per capita GNP (Apparala, et al., 2003). Unsurprisingly, citizens of those countries with high Gender Empowerment (GEM) scores tend to have more egalitarian attitudes (Apparala, et al., 2003). Furthermore, several comparative studies have identified Eastern European countries as having low levels of happiness, well-being, contentment and general satisfaction (Ball and Chernova,

2008; Abbott and Sapsford, 2006; Blanchflower, 2001; Delamothe, 2005; Rehdanz and Maddison, 2005; Tsai, 2008; Bohnke, 2008; Hayo, 2004). Some research points to the significance of these countries being in a 'transition stage,' contending that the move toward a market economy has been an "unhappy" one that has resulted in relatively low levels of well-being (Tsai, 2008; Sanfey and Teksoz, 2005). These researchers also argue that past satisfaction levels had been higher for pre-transition Eastern European countries, but they have not yet fully recovered from a mid 1990's drop caused by governmental and economic problems. Because institutional settings can determine and limit opportunity, Eastern Europeans' life chances (and by extension happiness) depend on improving institutional, political and economic structures (Bohnke, 2008).

Existing literature equivocates, however, on the level of influence economic factors exert on happiness and satisfaction levels. In his study, Delamothe (2005) suggests there is little correlation between these variables. He found Ghana, Mexico, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States to have similar levels of satisfaction despite large cross-national variance in per capita income. Hayo (2004) also concluded that the disparity in Eastern European nations' per capita income explains only 16% of variance in happiness. In contrast, other research contends that income, overall GDP per capita, and unemployment correspond with both satisfaction and happiness (Peiro, 2006; Blanchflower, 2001; Hayo, 2004; Namazie and Sanfey, 1998; Sanfey and Teksoz, 2005). For instance, in Kyrgyzstan, as among other Eastern European nations, satisfaction was significantly associated with economic well-being (Namazie and Sanfey, 1998; Hayo and Seifert, 2003).

Interestingly, several studies attest to the importance of both relative experience as well as objective conditions in determining levels of satisfaction, happiness and well-being (Abbott

and Sapsford, 2006; Hayo and Seifert, 2003; Namazie and Sanfey, 1998; Caporale et al, 2009). Abbott and Sapsford (2006) argue that this relative experience, or how people evaluate their personal circumstances, influences their well-being as much as their actual living conditions. Similarly, a cross-national analysis of 19 European countries examining the relationship between income, relative income, and happiness found the positive relationship between income and happiness to be weakened by reference income (Caporale, et al, 2009). Taking it a step further, Ball and Chernova (2008) assert that while both absolute income and relative income are significant, changes in relative income have greater effects on happiness than do comparable changes in absolute income.

Based on this review, we examine the association between gender role attitudes and the household division of labor, and family satisfaction as reported by married or cohabiting individuals living in 34 countries. In addition, we include measures of individual and couple characteristics, as well as country level measures. We estimate individual, couple, and country factors and their association with family satisfaction in regression models, as well as variation within and between countries based on multi-level models.

Data and Methods

Sample

Data for this study come from the 2002, International Social Survey Program (ISSP): Family and Changing Gender Roles III. These data are cross-national and examine family and gender roles in 34 countries: Austria, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Flanders (Belgium), France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Philippines,

Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakian Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United States. The ISSP is an ongoing program that develops social science modules that supplement regular national surveys. Previous Family and Changing Gender Role data were collected in 1988 and 1994.

Respondents were asked about topics regarding the family, relationships with spouse or partner, marriage, child rearing, changing gender roles in the home and workplace, fulfilling family responsibilities, division of housework, management of household income, and family satisfaction. Demographic measures include sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, education, employment, family income, household size and composition, and religion. Because we are interested in the division of household labor and family satisfaction, we limit our sample to men and women living with a partner. Our analyses are based on a sample of 25,847 married or cohabiting adults.

In addition to measures in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Survey, we also examine country level measures. Various demographic indicators and family policy measures were obtained from the World Population Data Sheet (Population Reference Bureau [<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2008/2008wpds.aspx>]) and the Woman Stats Project website (Brigham Young University [<http://www.womanstats.org/>]). These country level measures were matched by country to the individual level data provided in the Family and Changing Gender Roles Survey, 2002.

Model Specifications

Our dependent variable is a scale measuring family life satisfaction (see Table 1). Survey subjects were asked, “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your family life?” Responses are based on the following scale: (1) completely dissatisfied, (2) very dissatisfied, (3)

fairly dissatisfied, (4) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, (5) fairly satisfied, (6) very satisfied, and (7) completely satisfied.

Gender role attitudes and household labor are measured by three variables – division of household labor, joint decision making, and attitudes about the role of men in household work. The division of household work is measured by responses to the question, “In your household, who does the following things?” Separate questions were then asked about individual household tasks. Based on factor analyses, the responses to the following tasks were combined to form a single scale by averaging the responses. The tasks included: laundry, caring for sick family members, shopping for groceries, household cleaning, and preparing meals. The responses to each question regarding who does each task are based on the following scale: (1) always the respondent, (2) usually the respondent, (3) about equal or both together (or a third person), (4) usually my spouse/partner, (5) always my spouse/partner. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure is .906.

Joint decision making is measured by whether or not respondents indicated they make decisions together. Based on factor analyses, responses to two questions: “Who has the final say in choosing shared weekend activities?” and “Who has the final say in buying major things for the home?” were coded 1 if the respondent indicated that they decide together and coded 0 otherwise. These dichotomies were then summed so that the final joint decision measure indicates how many of the two decisions are made jointly – zero, one, or two. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure is .705.

Attitudes regarding the role of men in household work are measured by averaging agreement to the following two statements: “Men ought to do a larger share of household work than they do now” and “Men ought to do a larger share of childcare than they do now.”

Responses to these statements are based on the following agreement scale: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. Cronbach's alpha for combining these measures is .801. Other measures of gender ideology and time spent on household chores were also examined in preliminary analyses, but were not associated with family satisfaction. For reasons of parsimony, these measures were not included in further analyses.

Incongruence between ideology and behavior was measured by creating a cross categorization of the division of household labor measure, and the measure of men's role in household work, by gender. The first variable was collapsed to indicate perceived household work participation (mostly me, both, mostly partner) and the second was collapsed to indicate expectations (agree men should do more, neither agree nor disagree, disagree men should do more). Based on the results of the cross categorization by gender of respondent, each response was assigned an incongruence value from 1 to 3. Individuals whose participation level matched their expectations (on the diagonal of the crosstab) were designated 1, "compatible." Those who reported mixed or ambiguous agreement between involvement and expectations were coded as 2 "mixed." Participation and expectation opposites were coded as 3 "incongruent." This category included women who perceived themselves as solely responsible for domestic chores and felt their husbands should be contributing more. Also in this category were men whose partners performed the household labor, but felt that they (the man) should contribute more.

Respondent characteristics include measures of gender, age, and religion. Gender is a dichotomous measure coded 1 if the respondent was male, and 0 if female. Age is measured in years and ranges from 15 to 92. Based on preliminary analyses, Catholic or Protestant religious affiliation were similarly associated with family satisfaction; thus, religious affiliation is a

dichotomy coded 1 if Catholic or Protestant (mainstream Christian religion) and 0 otherwise. Religious attendance is based on a scale from 1=several times a week or daily attendance, to 8=never attend religious services. Preliminary analyses also included measures of education, but no significant association between education and family satisfaction was found. To simplify the model, education was excluded.

Couple characteristics include a measure of employment and household type. Following preliminary analyses examining full-time work, part-time work, unemployment, and full time homemaking for respondents and partners, traditional family patterns in which the husband was employed and the wife/partner was a homemaker, were found to be associated with family satisfaction. This measure is a dichotomy coded 1 if the male in the partnership is identified as working, and the female is identified as a full-time homemaker. All other employment/family arrangements are coded as 0. In addition, various family arrangements in terms of the number of adults and children in the home were also examined in relationship to family satisfaction in preliminary analyses. Living only with a partner, or living with a partner and children were found to be similarly associated with family satisfaction. This measure is a dichotomy coded 1 if the family is nuclear (couple with or without children), and 0 otherwise (extended family).

Country level measures were obtained for levels of development, demographic indicators, and measures of family laws or policies. Following initial analyses, country level measures of development were combined to create a factored scale from low to high. The combined measure includes male and female life expectancy and the human development index (HDI). This final factor ranges from low life expectancy and development to high life expectancy and development. A measure of inequity in family law was also obtained from the Women Stats Project. This scale (2007 data), developed by McDermott at the University of California-Santa

Barbara, seeks to capture how inequitably family law is conceptualized according to gender. Intercoder reliability for this coding round was 85% (see <http://www.womanstats.org/Codebook7.30.07.htm#MULTIVAR>).

This variable is based on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 indicates a country where legal marriage is age 18, marital rape and polygyny are illegal, and abortion and divorce are legal. A value of 4 indicates a country that provides none of these protections. In addition, regional effects were also explored in initial analyses. In particular, several eastern bloc countries were found to have significantly lower levels of family satisfaction relative to other countries. A dichotomous measure indicating these countries (Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Russia, Latvia, and Slovak Republic) is included in analyses. Although East Germany, Hungary, and Poland are also former eastern bloc countries, mean levels of family satisfaction in these countries were significantly different from the other five countries and thus, these countries were not included in our measure of eastern bloc countries.

Estimation Procedure

Initial analyses were run using OLS regression to determine significant associations between family satisfaction and gender role attitudes and household labor measures, respondent characteristics, couple characteristics, and country level measures. In addition, interactions were included between gender and the gender role and household labor measures.

Following preliminary analyses multiple imputation was then used to estimate values for missing data in STATA. The idea of multiple imputation is to create multiple imputed data sets for a data set with missing values. The analysis of a statistical model is then done on each of the multiple data sets. The multiple analyses are then combined to yield a set of results. The Imputation by Chained Equations (ice in STATA) is based on each conditional density of a

variable given all other variables (Royston, 2004). In general, multiple imputation techniques require that missing observations are missing at random. All independent measures in our analyses were missing at most three percent of the cases, with the exception of religious attendance (10 percent missing), and traditional roles (husband works, wife homemaker – 6 percent missing). Thus, coefficients for these two variables require more caution in interpretation.

Our results are presented as follows: first we present descriptive statistics for family satisfaction, gender role attitudes and household labor, respondent and couple characteristics, as well as country level measures across the sample of individuals from the 34 countries. Next, we present mean differences in gender role attitudes and household labor, as well as couple and respondent characteristics by gender, and then by whether or not the couple report traditional roles – husband working, wife homemaker. We then present the coefficients for the regression models based on the multiple imputation data sets. In the regression results, the association between various factors and family satisfaction are presented in five expanding models: (1) gender role attitudes and household labor measures; (2) gender role attitudes and division of household labor, and the incongruence measure, (3) respondent and couple characteristics added; (4) country level measures added, and finally (5) gender interactions. Following the regression models reported in Table 4, results from the multi-level analyses are presented examining within and between country variation in family satisfaction.

Results

Descriptive Statistics are provided in Table 1. On the scale from (1) completely dissatisfied to (7) completely satisfied, the mean score across all respondents was 5.7. In terms of gender roles and household work, most respondents reported doing more household labor

relative to their spouse or partner – 2.7 on a scale from always the respondent (1), to always the spouse/partner (5). Household labor includes laundry, care for sick family members, shopping for groceries, cleaning, and cooking. Most respondents indicated that they made at least one major decision together (mean of 1.1 on scale from 0 to 2). The primary decisions measured were choosing joint weekend activities, and making major purchases. Expectations for male involvement in household work and childcare indicated that more respondents agreed than disagreed that men ought to be doing more (mean 2.3 on scale from strongly agree=1, to strongly disagree=5).

(Table 1 about here)

About 46 percent of respondents were men, and the average age was 47 years. Sixty-five percent said they were affiliated with either a Protestant or Catholic religion and on average, religious attendance was low (mean of 5.3 – ‘between several times a year and once a year’). Couple characteristics indicate that 36 percent of the respondents reported being in a traditional relationship – employed husband/partner and unemployed wife/partner. Seventy percent of those surveyed were in nuclear families – a couple with or without children.

Fourteen percent of the countries surveyed were identified as eastern bloc as measured in our analyses. The development factor was standardized with a mean score of 0 and standard deviation of 1.0. The mean score across countries for inequity in family law was .62 – where 0 indicates multiple legal protections (legal marriage age 18, marital rape illegal, polygyny illegal, abortion and divorce legal). A score of 1 indicates that legal age of marriage is at least 16, marital rape and polygyny are illegal, abortion and divorce are legal but laws tend to favor men in property rights (including after divorce), and abortion may not be available on demand. No

countries rated a 3 or 4 on the inequity scale in our sample, and only about 10 percent of the countries had a score of 2.

Mean gender differences in family satisfaction, gender roles, and in couple and respondent characteristics are presented in Table 2. Men report somewhat higher levels of family satisfaction relative to women, and they also indicate that their spouse or partner does more of the housework on average, relative to themselves. There was no gender difference in joint-decision making, but men were also more likely to disagree that they ought to do a larger share of housework or childcare. Demographic differences indicate that women are about four years younger than their partners on average, and slightly more likely to be affiliated with a Protestant or Catholic religion relative to their partner. Women also report somewhat higher religious attendance than men, and were also slightly more likely to be in a traditional couple arrangement (man breadwinner, woman homemaker) compared to male respondents. These gender differences suggest that on average, women do most of the household chores, but this arrangement is more satisfying in terms of family life for men, than for women.

(Table 2 about here)

These same mean gender differences are then broken down by whether or not the respondent reported being in a traditional relationship (man breadwinner, woman homemaker). Table 3 shows that both men and women in traditional relationships reported slightly higher family satisfaction on average, compared to respondents in non-traditional relationships. Women in non-traditional relationships report that their partner does more housework, than do women in traditional relationships. This pattern is also found among men, non-traditional men report that they do more housework, relative to men in traditional relationships. Non-traditional men are also slightly more likely to report making joint-decisions with their partner, compared to

traditional men. Both men and women in non-traditional relationships are somewhat more likely to agree that men ought to do a larger share of housework and childcare, relative to those in traditional relationships.

(Table 3 about here)

Men and women in traditional relationships are also much younger on average, relative to those in non-traditional relationships; this likely reflects differences in age of union formation. Non-traditional women are slightly less likely to be affiliated with a Protestant or Catholic religion, and both men and women in non-traditional relationships report lower religious attendance relative to those in traditional relationships. Men in non-traditional relationships also were somewhat more likely on average to be in a nuclear family, as opposed to an extended family, compared to men in traditional relationships. These general patterns suggest that across these countries, men and women in traditional relationships follow traditional gender divisions in household labor, and their attitudes and family satisfaction are supportive of this division of labor.

Moving to the multivariate analyses, Table 4 presents multiple regression coefficients for the five models predicting family satisfaction. Coefficients in model 1 indicate that having a spouse or partner do the majority of household labor is associated with higher family satisfaction. This relationship only strengthens as other factors are included in the analyses. The more major decisions are made jointly, the higher family satisfaction, and this relationship remains relatively stable across the models. In the first model, attitudes about the role of men in household labor and childcare indicate that the more respondents disagree that men ought to do more, the higher their family satisfaction. This relationship, however, reverses once incongruence between behavior and expectations is included in the analyses (model 2). Coefficients in the second

model indicate that if the division of household labor is compatible with the respondent's expectations, family satisfaction is slightly higher.

(Table 4 about here)

The addition of respondent and couple characteristics is provided in model 3. Respondent characteristics indicate that family satisfaction is associated with Protestant or Catholic affiliation and religious attendance. Respondents in traditional work roles (breadwinner male, homemaker female) report higher family satisfaction, relative to those in non-traditional roles. Family satisfaction is also higher among those in nuclear family arrangements compared to respondents living with extended family.

Higher national development is associated with higher family satisfaction, as shown in model 4. Surprisingly, somewhat less stringent family law protections are also associated with higher family satisfaction. In addition, respondents living in part of the eastern bloc reported the lowest levels of family satisfaction compared to those living in other countries, even after controlling for other individual factors.

Interactions, presented in model 5, demonstrate that men report higher family satisfaction the more they are involved in household labor. In addition, men indicate higher family satisfaction, the more they agree that they ought to be more involved in household work and childcare. Thus, for men in particular, increased household participation is associated with greater family satisfaction in the multivariate analyses.

Multi-level analyses were next performed to examine variation in family satisfaction within and between countries. Model 1 indicates that most of the variation in family satisfaction is within countries, with only about 5 percent of the variation being between countries. Model 2 includes the individual level measures and allows for a random constant (different intercepts).

Model 3 includes the individual level measures, as well as the country level measures. The across country percentage drops to 1.6% with the inclusion of the country level variables. Thus, what little variation in family satisfaction there is between countries is explained in part by our country level indicators. Model 4 allows for random effects (different slopes). Preliminary analyses found that joint decision making, age, and sex were significant in explaining the random effects. However, as noted in Table 5 – the across and within variation changes very little with the inclusion of random effects. Thus, the slopes vary little across countries.

(Table 5 about here)

Discussion

Based on our cross-cultural analyses, we concur with past research that women continue to do the majority of household labor relative to men, even in non-traditional families (Sanchez & Thompson, 1997; Diefenback, 2002). However, we find that family satisfaction is associated with increased involvement in family life as measured by household labor and joint decision-making. Although traditionally, women have been primarily responsible for childcare and housework, we find that the more involved men are in household labor and the more they feel they ought to be involved, the higher their family satisfaction. This is in contrast to Stevens and colleagues (2001) who found an association between the division of household chores and women's marital satisfaction, but not men's. Our findings instead provide support for the conclusion that spouses are more satisfied when not solely responsible for a given household task (Grote, et al., 1996).

Congruence between expectations and behaviors also is associated with higher family satisfaction. We found that incongruence is associated with lower levels of satisfaction among non-traditional couples compared to traditional relationships. Given that women primarily do

more household labor than men, the likelihood of incongruence is thus greater among non-traditional couples. As noted by Greenstein, (1996b), traditional women's marital quality is less likely to decrease due to gender inequities in household labor because female responsibility for household chores is consistent with their ideology. However, our measure of congruence is rather simplistic. Additional research is needed to clearly define how compatible expectations are with behaviors among spouses and the effect on satisfaction.

We found that individuals in more traditional roles (man breadwinner, woman homemaker) report higher family satisfaction relative to other relationships. This conclusion, coupled with the finding that men more involved in household labor report higher satisfaction, concurs with Khawaja and Habib (2007), who found that traditional women whose husbands helped with housework were the happiest. Among the individuals surveyed, greater religious attendance, traditional roles, and a nuclear family structure were associated with higher family satisfaction. These associations varied little across countries – as most variation in family satisfaction was found within countries. The relationship between family household arrangements and satisfaction were relatively similar across the countries surveyed.

The majority of countries included in the survey data were developed countries or countries with developing or emerging economies. The least developed countries were not part of the survey. Within this context, family satisfaction was associated with increased development, as well as less stringent family equity laws. On the family policy scale, most of the countries were ranked either 0 or 1, only three were ranked a 2. The biggest difference between these rankings is the legal age of marriage. Countries ranked 0 have a legal age of 18, whereas countries ranked 0 have a legal age of 16 (almost most marry over age 16). Countries ranked as level 2 report a higher percentage of girls marrying at younger ages. Thus, it may be

that this indicator reflects age at marriage more than differences in other family laws, such as divorce and abortion. Further study is needed to tease out these effects at the country level. Also in our study, the countries with the lowest family satisfaction levels were former eastern bloc countries, consistent with past research (Ball and Chernova, 2008; Abbott and Sapsford, 2006; Blanchflower, 2001; Delamothe, 2005; Rehdanz and Maddison, 2005; Tsai, 2008; Bohnke, 2008; Hayo, 2004); more research is needed to better understand these country specific differences.

Despite data limitations, our findings underscore the importance of the household division of labor and gender role attitudes to family satisfaction. At least in more developed countries, the involvement of men in family life is associated with great family satisfaction. Family policies that encourage and support father involvement in household responsibilities are likely to increase family satisfaction, even among couples in more traditional family roles; and this relationship appears to be consistent cross-nationally.

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Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Family Satisfaction, Gender Roles and Household Labor, Respondent and Couple Characteristics, and Country Level Measures

Characteristics	Mean	Stddev	Range
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
Satisfaction with family life	5.67	(0.99)	1=completely dissatisfied to 7=completely satisfied
<i>Gender Role Attitudes & Household Labor</i>			
Division of household labor (who does laundry, care for sick, shop groceries, clean, cook)	2.77	(1.13)	1= always respondent, 3=both or third person, 5=always spouse/partner
Final say in major decisions together (choose weekend activities, major purchases for home)	1.13	(0.86)	0=no decisions, 1=one decision together, 2= both decisions together
Men ought to do larger share of household work and childcare than do now	2.77	(1.13)	1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree
Incongruence between attitude and behavior	2.32	(0.75)	1=compatible to 3=incongruent
<i>Respondent Characteristics</i>			
Male	0.46	(0.50)	1= male, 0= female
Age	47.05	(14.58)	Ages 15 to 92
Protestant or Catholic religion	0.65	(0.48)	1=Protestant or Catholic, 0=other or no religion
Religious attendance	5.36	(2.34)	1=several times a week or daily to 8=never
<i>Couple Characteristics</i>			
Husband employed, wife homemaker	0.36	(0.48)	1=husband employed, partner/spouse unemployed, 0=other
Nuclear family	0.70	(0.46)	1=couple with or without children, 0=extended family
<i>Country Level Factors</i>			
Eastern bloc countries (except East Germany, Hungary, Poland)	0.14	(0.35)	1=Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Russia, Latvia, Slovak Republic, 0=other
Development factor (male & female life expectancy, human development index)	0.00	(1.00)	-2.65 (low life expectancy and development) to 1.13 (high)
Inequity in family law (0=protections for women to 4=no legal protections)	0.62	(0.66)	0=legal marriage age 18; marital rape, polygyny illegal; abortion & divorce legal to 2=moderate protections
[N]	[25,847]		

Source: International Social Survey Program: Family and Changing Gender Roles III, 2002

Table 2 Mean Gender Differences in Family Satisfaction, Gender Roles and Household Labor, Respondent and Couple Characteristics

Charateristic	Women	Men
Family Satisfaction	5.60	5.75***
Division of Household Labor	1.94	3.74***
Joint Decision-making	1.13	1.14
Men Ought to Do More Housework	2.23	2.44***
Incongruence	2.41	2.20***
Age	45.10	49.36***
Mainstream Religion	0.66	0.63***
Religious Attendance	5.42	5.83***
Traditional Roles	0.37	0.34***
Nuclear Family	0.70	0.70
[N]	[13994]	[11847]

Source: International Social Survey Program: Family and Changing Gender Roles III, 2002

Note: *** $p < .001$ based on two mean t-tests (two-tailed)

Table 3 Mean Differences by Men and Women in Non-traditional, versus Traditional Relationships

Characteristic	Women		Men	
	Traditional	Non-traditional	Traditional	Non-traditional
Family Satisfaction	5.68	5.56***	5.8	5.7***
Division of Household Labor	1.79	2.03***	3.9	3.7***
Joint Decision-making	1.11	1.14	1.1	1.2***
Men Ought to Do More Housework	2.29	2.19***	2.5	2.4***
Incongruence	2.45	2.40***	2.28	2.18***
Age	41.19	47.56***	44.1	52.3***
Mainstream Religion	0.69	0.67**	0.63	0.64
Religious Attendance	5.30	5.42**	5.7	5.8*
Nuclear Family	0.69	0.70	0.67	0.71***
[N]	[4818]	[8287]	[3786]	[7282]

Source: International Social Survey Program: Family and Changing Gender Roles III, 2002

Note: *** $p < .001$ based on two mean t-tests (two-tailed)

Table 4 Effects of Gender Roles and Household Labor, Respondent and Couple Characteristics, Interactions, and Country Level Measures on Family Satisfaction

Characteristics	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Gender Role Attitudes & Household Labor</i>					
Division of household labor	.077***	.074***	.082***	.084***	.134***
Major decisions	.175***	.174***	.178***	.180***	.175***
Men's share of household labor	.031***	-.016	-.029**	-.023**	.056***
Incongruence		-.084***	-.095***	-.085***	-.060***
<i>Respondent and Couple Characteristics</i>					
Male			.020	.010	.536***
Age			-.003***	-.003***	-.003***
Catholic or Protestant religion			.125***	.067***	.069***
Religious attendance			-.037***	-.031***	-.032***
Traditional work roles			.102***	.060***	.067***
Nuclear family			.094***	.088***	.084***
<i>Country Variables</i>					
Development factor				.045***	.048***
Family law inequality				.101***	.102***
Eastern bloc countries				-.324 ***	-.305***
<i>Interactions</i>					
Male * Men's share of household labor					-.126***
Male * Division of household labor					-.104***
Male * Incongruence					.031
R ²	.034	.036	.058	.075	.081
[N]				[25,847]	

Note: * p < .05 ** p < .01 ***p < .001

Source: International Social Survey Program: Family and Changing Gender Roles III, 2002

Table 5 Multi-level Models of Across and Within Country Variation in Satisfaction with Family Life (34 countries)

Variation in Satisfaction with Family Life	Model 1 (<i>random constant</i>)	Model 2 (<i>individual measures & random constant</i>)	Model 3 (<i>individual level, country level, & random constant</i>)	Model 4 (<i>individual level, country level, random effects</i>)
Across country (% of total)	.049 (5%)	.037 (4%)	.014 (1.6%)	.014 (1.6%)
Within country	.929	.883	.883	.877
Total	.978	.920	.897	.891

Source: International Social Survey Program: Family and Changing Gender Roles III, 2002