

PARTNERSHIP SATISFACTION IN GERMANY AND JAPAN: THE ROLE OF FAMILY WORK DISTRIBUTION AND GENDER IDEOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

Parenthood changes things. The birth of a child alters the way in which individuals define themselves – and for couples, it also has an effect on the way partners interact with and perceive each other. New roles are assumed within the relationship: The person who was your significant other not long ago is now also the parent of your child and vice versa. These new roles and the requirements they bring along affect the new parents' relationship in various ways: through basic rearranging of personal time allotment (Milkie, Raley, and Bianchi 2009; Moller, Hwang, and Wickberg 2008), changes both in regard to paid and unpaid labor commitments (Aassve, Fuochi, and Mencarini 2014; Becker 1991; Oppenheimer 1997), and the necessity to compensate for the additional financial burden of the new family member (e. g. Brines 1994).

It is often found that the transition to parenthood has a negative effect on partnership satisfaction (e. g. Lawrence et al. 2008; Twenge, Campbell, and Foster 2003). Even though findings vary as to the magnitude and duration of this effect (Kohn et al. 2012), it can hardly be denied that the many changes occurring in a couple's life at this point will in some way or other influence them in regard to how satisfied they feel within the partnership. However, while the transition to parenthood surely represents the greatest disruption across this stage of the life course, parents are continuously faced with new challenges and differing requirements also in the following years. Arguably, these changes have the greatest impact on parents' everyday lives until their children enter elementary school and are integrated for several hours a day into a well-organized, mandatory system of institutionalized care and education and children start needing less intensive care-work. Thus, we focus on relationship satisfaction of parents in Japan and Germany, with at least one child below school age. We consider relationship satisfaction to be an integral part of the study of parental well-being as a whole. Indeed, the variables for overall life satisfaction and relationships satisfaction are moderately correlated in our study¹.

¹ Correlation after Pearson: $r = .518$, $p < .001$ for the whole sample.

A topic that has been of particular scholarly interest within the study of satisfaction in partnerships (especially marriages) is the distribution of housework (e. g. Coltrane 2000; Fuwa 2004; Oshio, Nozaki, and Kobayashi 2013). Perhaps unsurprisingly, childbirth has been identified as “the leading event that triggers a more traditional division of labour” among married couples (Grunow, Schulz, and Blossfeld 2012: 303) and most researchers, such as Baxter, Hewitt, and Haynes (2008) agree that the gender gap among couples considerably widens after childbirth. The term ‘housework’ usually refers to *routine* housework tasks, meaning repetitive chores which have to be carried out daily or several times a week as opposed to *intermittent* (or occasional) housework, such as home repairs or preparing a festive meal for relatives and friends (e. g. Barstad 2014; Coltrane 2000). Fulfilling routine household chores is perceived as least pleasurable and most time-consuming (Robinson and Milkie 1998), and especially for women, who generally shoulder the lion’s share of this type of tasks, there seems to be a direct link to partnership satisfaction: housework share is often considered a primary factor negatively influencing wives’ satisfaction in marriage or even their overall happiness (e. g. Frisco and Williams 2003; Mencarini and Sironi 2010).

Several studies take aspects of gender ideology or gender role attitude into account – when focusing on the distribution of housework (e. g. Evertsson 2014) or when linking housework and partnership satisfaction (e. g. Greenstein 1996, 2009; Qian and Sayer 2016). Gender ideology here refers to “an individual’s level of support for a division of paid work and family responsibilities that is based on the notion of separate spheres” (Davis and Greenstein 2009: 89). These studies argue that different levels of gender ideology on a personal or societal level influence whether specific distributions are perceived as fair, which in turn affects couples’ partnership satisfaction.

Since the majority of studies on partnership satisfaction do not specifically focus on parents, childrearing is usually left out or included only under the umbrella of ‘housework’ or ‘domestic work’. Thus housework and childrearing are often treated the same even though they are distinctly different concepts and despite evidence that the perception of a fair distribution of childrearing tasks might be just as important for partnership satisfaction as a fair distribution of housework (Chong and Mickelson 2016). Research focusing on partnership satisfaction of parents with children up to school age, who are most strongly confronted with matters of time and work-allotment, is even harder to find. Many studies broadly include children of all ages, sometimes reflected in grouped dummy variables (e. g. Vanassche, Swicegood, and Matthijs 2012; Kaufman and Taniguchi 2009) or through a variable expressing simply the presence and

number of minors in the household (e. g. Pedersen et al. 2011; Oshio, Nozaki, and Kobayashi 2013). By focusing in detail on individuals with at least one child under school age the present study allows to make comparisons between mothers and fathers in different cultural settings yet at similar life stages in order to analyze differences in what influences their partnership satisfaction.

Several theories try to make sense of the distribution of labor between couples to determine which kind of model is most suitable to create economic and marital stability. The *specialization model* (Becker 1991) assumes that a marriage is most efficient and stable when the wife specializes on work at home, and the husband on work outside the home, as both become experts in their respective field without each having to juggle the responsibilities of two dimensions of labor. The model also emphasizes the interdependence produced by this specialized division of labor and the resulting stability of the dyad. Similarly, the *independence hypothesis* argues that marital unions become less stable as women work outside the home, gain greater economic resources and are thus in a better position to resolve a marriage (e. g. Cherlin 1992; Oppenheimer 1997). Of course, if making it easier to leave a marriage results in divorce then this might not speak for a happy relationship in the first place. In contrast, the idea of *role homophily* (Simpson and England 1981) argues that partners who occupy comparable societal roles, meaning both participating in household labor and paid labor, will be happier in their relationships as they share experiences from a similar perspective and derive corresponding values from these experiences. From a less harmonious perspective, *bargaining models* are based on the idea that housework is something both partners would rather avoid and which they negotiate over. In this negotiation, those with greater income or a more prestigious position in the labor market will have greater bargaining power. From this perspective, the specialization of one partner on household labor creates a high level of dependence upon the status and income of the other and a significant imbalance of power within the relationship (e. g. Antman 2014; Lundberg and Pollak 1994). This concept, however, cannot be as readily applied to childcare, since parents are more likely to derive some sort of enjoyment or sense of fulfilment from taking care of their children's needs, and mothers might not want to bargain out of these responsibilities (Bianchi et al. 2012: 60).

In our analysis, we focus on the distribution of both housework *and* childrearing – as two aspects of 'family work'. Furthermore, we will consider the effect individual gender ideology has on the association between the respective shares of family work and partnership satisfaction. We are aware of no other study having tackled this matter in an in-depth

comparative analysis of Germany and Japan. Our analysis consists of group comparisons and correlation analyses and uses a dataset from two surveys in these countries, each including about 2000 mothers and fathers, as outlined in the chapter by Huber in this volume (Huber 2018). Before delving into the analysis, however, we start with making some observations on differences between Japan and Germany regarding the understanding of partnership and parenthood by providing an overview of the existing research and presenting some official data on housework distribution in the two countries.

PARTNERSHIP AND PARENTHOOD IN JAPAN AND GERMANY

Parenthood and partnership can assume varying forms in different societies, due to the interplay of cultural characteristics and historical processes. Within the European context, Germany is a country where these concepts follow relatively gendered lines (Dirksmeier 2015), and the same can be said for Japan within the East Asian context (Chung, Kamo, and Yi 2010; Qian and Sayer 2016), adding to the comparability of these two countries.

One of the greater differences between the two societies is the particularly strong connection between parenthood and marriage found in Japan as opposed to Germany. It is striking how “the strong norm of avoiding extramarital birth” (Iwasawa 2004: 90) stands out in Japan. Whereas OECD data for 2015 shows that fertility rates are similarly low in both countries (1.5 in both Germany and Japan), the proportion of extramarital births in Japan was only at 2.3 percent in the same year, while in Germany that rate was about 15 times higher, at 35 percent (OECD 2016). Hertog (2008) argues that economic and legal discrimination of unmarried mothers does not solely explain these small numbers of extramarital births in Japan and that the influence of social norms can still be considered crucial in this respect. Indeed, there exists “a normative pressure for ‘normal’ men and women to think that marriage is culturally required rather than a matter of individual choice” (Tokuhiro 2010: 27). For women, marriage is also strongly connected to leaving the workforce. Even when considering marriage as separate from parenthood, it has an extremely high value in Japanese society. According to Iwasawa, before the 1980s “for almost all [Japanese] people, it was extremely hard to obtain financial stability, social trust, emotional satisfaction, and so on without being married” (2004: 90). This has changed to a large degree, but marriage can still be considered the norm (Tokuhiro 2010: 2) and it is comparatively rare to be living together as a couple for a longer period without being married.

Until today, cohabitation is still extremely closely associated with marriage or seen as a step towards marriage in Japan.

In Germany, partnerships with children which are not formalized by marriage are by far more common and having children before marriage is not nearly as socially sanctioned as it is in Japan (Hertog 2008, 2009). As a result, when speaking of parents' partnership satisfaction in a Japanese context we are almost exclusively speaking of spousal or marital satisfaction, while in the case of Germany we are speaking both of married and unmarried couples. In 2011, of all German households with children, roughly 32 percent were cohabiting households, where the partners are neither married nor living in a civil or registered partnership (OECD 2016). The OECD does not provide such data for Japan, in itself suggestive of the social reality and desirability of cohabitation. As for the numbers of marriages and divorces, the crude marriage rate (marriages per 1000 people) is slightly higher in Japan (5.1) than in Germany (4.8), while the opposite is true for crude divorce rates (divorces per 1000 people), where a slightly higher rate is observed in Germany (2.1) as opposed to Japan (1.8) (OECD 2016, data from 2014).

While cohabitation, parenthood, and marriage are largely independent life choices in Germany, they are certainly intertwined in Japan. A 'simple' decision to 'move in together' has a much bigger impact on the lives of young Japanese couples and on how they are perceived by society. For women this decision can mean to simultaneously give up an entire career, to be able to fit the demands of the traditional role expected of her. For more detailed information on the impact of childrearing on a mother's career, see Nagase (2018) in this volume.

HOUSEWORK, CHILDCARE, AND PARTNERSHIP SATISFACTION

Partnership satisfaction is a subjective measure (Diener 1984), its terminology in the academic literature ranging from partnership satisfaction (e. g. Keizer, Dykstra, and Poortman 2010) to partnership well-being (e. g. Nelson, Kushlev, and Lyubomirsky 2014), marital happiness (e. g. Elmslie and Tebaldi 2014; Kaufman and Taniguchi 2009), and marital well-being (e. g. Pedersen et al. 2011) to marital satisfaction (e. g. Bradbury, Fincham, and Beach 2000; Jackson et al. 2017; Lawrence et al. 2008). The focus on marital unions is often driven by the easier applicability of standardized research designs to formalized relationships, of which official records exist.

A large number of studies try to explain marital satisfaction by focusing on three general dimensions: (1) economic and employment factors, such as husband's income (e. g. Brinton 2017), household income (e. g.

Oshio, Nozaki, and Kobayashi 2013), husband's and wife's employment (e.g. Kaufman and Taniguchi 2009), or working hours (e.g. Fursman 2009), (2) emotional aspects and intimacy, such as emotional connectedness and communication (e.g. Taniguchi and Kaufman 2013), sexual satisfaction (e.g. Chung, Kamo, and Yi 2010; Elmslie and Tebaldi 2014), husband's respect, concern, and appreciation for his wife (e.g. Kawamura and Brown 2010), and (3) the labor distribution between the partners, especially unpaid labor such as housework. It is this third dimension which is the focus of the present chapter.

As stated above, several studies have been analyzing the role of housework distribution in relationships (e.g. Kaufman and Taniguchi 2009; Oshio, Nozaki, and Kobayashi 2013; Taniguchi and Kaufman 2013). There seems to be an underlying assumption in Western literature that unequal distribution of housework is an important factor when it comes to marital satisfaction, with particular focus on the negatively affected satisfaction of wives (e.g. Coltrane 2000; Mencarini and Sironi 2010). Other studies emphasize that it is not actual distribution but perceived fairness of housework which matters most (e.g. Greenstein 2009; Chong and Mickelson 2016). Yet housework is only one form of family work. Childrearing is often omitted from studies on partnership satisfaction or simply included into housework. Thus, studies about the influence of childrearing are sparser (e.g. Yamato 2001; Sagara, Ito, and Ikeda 2008). Yet in order to talk about partnership satisfaction of parents, it is crucial to make this distinction and look at both (Coltrane 2000; Pedersen et al. 2011; Sullivan 2013). One example for this difference is the possibility to bargain when it comes to housework (e.g. Lundberg and Pollak 1993, 1996), which is greatly reduced in the case of childcare. If one partner does not participate in a particular housework task, the other might simply reduce his or her share in that task and see where things go from there. At least for a while, housework can be left undone – which is hardly the case when it comes to putting one's children to bed or taking them to the doctor (Bianchi et al. 2012: 60; England and Folbre 2002).

Internationally, husbands' participation in routine housework is generally found to lower wives' likelihood to suffer from burnout and depression i.e. to have a positive effect on marital satisfaction (Coltrane 2000; Erickson 1993). In Japan, too, women are sometimes found to be happier when their husbands do more housework (e.g. Kaufman and Taniguchi 2009: 79). In fact, Kaufman and Taniguchi suggest that the spouse's housework is the key mediator in the relationship between gender and marital happiness for Japanese women (ibid.). Yamato (2008) differentiated between housework and childrearing tasks and between female employment patters: She found husbands playing with their chil-

dren to have the ability to increase the marital satisfaction of non-working wives, whereas for employed wives, husbands had to participate both in childrearing and housework to increase their marital satisfaction. Yet no negative effect of Japanese women's own housework share on partnership satisfaction was found in studies by Kaufman and Taniguchi (2009) and Qian and Sayer (2016).

Adding yet another layer to this phenomenon, that of age, Brinton (2017) finds a negative effect of their housework share only for Japanese women older than 35. As for the effect of housework distribution on men (for which fewer studies exist), usually it is not the amount of work their partners do, but their own, as they are less happy in their partnerships when they perform more housework (e. g. Qian and Sayer 2016).

A large body of research exists on the distribution of housework in Germany and there are also studies on the effect of gender role attitude on this distribution, but less research on the subject of marital satisfaction has been conducted. Hofäcker, Stoilova, and Riebling (2013) compare distribution of paid and unpaid work between East Germany, West Germany, and Bulgaria. They note that childcare distribution is generally slightly less gendered than housework. Their results also imply that women's employment is somewhat less effected by marriage and family formation in East Germany than in West Germany, but nevertheless they found a strongly gendered division of labor overall.

The Generations and Gender Survey, or GGS, conducted in Germany since 2005, also includes questions on the distribution of family work. Wengler, Trappe, and Schmitt (2008) have produced a detailed research report on this first wave of the survey. They found, for example, that among German women and men those living in households with a less traditional separation of spheres/distribution of work were more satisfied with the distribution of both housework and parental tasks (2008: 41). In a later analysis of the second wave of the GGS, comparing the German population with Turkish Migrants in Germany, housework is also identified as a source of conflict having a negative effect on partnership satisfaction (Gründler 2012).

Meuwly et al. (2011) surveyed double-earner couples in Switzerland and assume their results to be valid also for Germany. They found that the *subjective assessment* of family work was more strongly connected to conflict and partnership satisfaction than *actual distribution*. Lower satisfaction with the distribution of housework and childcare was connected to lower partnership satisfaction through the amount of conflicts within the relationship. While a gender difference was found in regard to housework, which had a stronger effect on women's satisfaction, results on childcare produced no comparable gender effect.

In a study involving data from Austrian, German, and Swiss married women, greater *perceived fairness* of housework contribution is found to be clearly and positively associated with marital satisfaction (Bodi, Mikula and Riederer 2010). The authors identify the absence of fathers as well as “other kinds of family work like childcare” (2010: 64) as limitations of their study. We take up this criticism and therefore specifically address these two aspects and include them into our analysis.

Gender ideology

Effects of family work on partnership or marital satisfaction differ by gender and culture. Various studies show that women’s workshare does not influence their partnership satisfaction equally in different places (e. g. Greenstein 2009; Qian and Sayer 2016) and a majority of research produces dissimilar results for men and women (e. g. Frisco and Williams 2003; Kaufmann and Taniguchi 2009). It seems likely that this is somehow connected to what people in a certain social environment believe is the right distribution of responsibilities between men and women – a matter of gender roles and gender role attitude. For example, Pedersen et al. (2011) find that childcare hours are positively associated with fathers’ ‘marital burnout’ but not with that of mothers. To explain this, the authors suggest that gendered expectations of family life influence this effect, meaning that women and men tend to assess their current situation based on what they believe to be appropriate for members of their gender (2011: 308). This is also connected to national context, because people tend to compare themselves to others in the same environment and this shapes their own opinions about what distribution of housework they consider fair. Greenstein (2009) and Fuwa (2004) have analyzed this from a macro perspective with a focus on national differences in gender equity. König and Langhauser (2016) look at the gendered division of housework in Germany with a focus on the role of self-employment. They also take into account gender role attitudes and connect their findings to the question of applicability of the bargaining theory (relative resources approach). They argue that German men use the greater autonomy of self-employment to concentrate on their work sphere, while women might enter the more autonomous form of self-employment exactly because they might want to (or have to) reconcile the two spheres of work and family without reducing their own share of housework. Thus, the bargaining model does not seem to apply to self-employed women in Germany as much as their employed counterparts. They also find that higher relative income of German women was connected to a lower share in housework – but they did not find gender role attitudes to have any significant effect on this associ-

ation (König and Langhauser 2016). Yet, the connection between an individual's personal gender ideology and that person's partnership satisfaction is still insufficiently studied for both Germany and Japan, let alone in a comparative perspective.

Two exceptions (although not including Germany) are the works by Qian and Sayer (2016) and Kaufmann and Taniguchi (2009). The latter find that Japanese women are "less happy [with their marriages] when they hold egalitarian attitudes", which the scholars explain with unmet expectations of wives toward their husbands (2009: 82). However, this effect is weakened when husbands perform more housework, speaking for an interaction between gender role attitude and spouse's housework contribution (2009: 79). Qian and Sayer (2016) compare housework distribution, marital satisfaction, and the influence of gender ideology with samples from urban China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. However, their only significant finding in respect to gender ideology was among Taiwanese women, where lower marital satisfaction was associated with a more egalitarian gender ideology. No comparable results were reported for Japan.

For our study, based on the presented literature, we have formulated three complementary pairs of hypotheses. In our analysis we divide mothers and fathers into groups based on their personal gender ideology, as we expect it to affect the connection between involvement in family work and partnership satisfaction. Thus we anticipate mothers with a more traditional gender role attitude to perform a bigger share of family work and show a greater acceptance of these inequalities (i. e. support for the gendered separation of spheres) (**H1a**). Additionally, we expect the negative effect of family work involvement on partnership satisfaction to be smaller for mothers who hold a more traditional attitude (**H1b**). Conversely, we expect less involvement in family work on the part of egalitarian mothers, and a greater negative effect of family work on their partnership satisfaction, when their expectations are not met and they do have to shoulder the lion's share of work at home (in line with Kaufmann and Taniguchi 2009: 73–74).

In the case of fathers, we expect the opposite. We expect gender conservative fathers to perform less family work than egalitarian fathers (**H2a**) and we expect their partnership satisfaction to be affected negatively and more strongly by their involvement in family work compared to their egalitarian counterparts (**H2b**).

As for the direct association between gender ideology and partnership satisfaction, we expect mothers to be more satisfied when they hold a more traditional gender ideology. For them, the reality of unequal work distribution aligns more closely with their own ideals (**H3a**). We anticipate fathers, on the other hand, to be more satisfied in their relationship when they hold a more liberal gender ideology (**H3b**). We assume that

fathers whose gender role attitude somewhat diverts from a traditional form of domestic labor distribution will be more satisfied, in line with research conducted in the 'West' as well as in Japan (e. g. Fuwa and Tsutsui 2010; Taniguchi and Kaufman 2013). Before we introduce our own study and move on to testing these hypotheses, let us draw a quick picture of the distribution of these tasks in the two countries as reflected in a large-scale international survey.

Housework and childrearing distribution in Japan and Germany

As can be seen from the literature review above, distribution of housework differs significantly by country or region, and depends on cultural and historical factors, as well as on the structure of the labor market or political realities (e. g. Fuwa 2004). In the ISSP survey from 2012, Japanese women reported to spending an average of roughly 18 ½ hours per week on household labor, (Japanese) men reported roughly 4 hours. In Germany, women spent roughly 14 to 15 hours on housework and men around 8 to 9 hours, with the smaller gender gap observed among East-Germans (ISSP Research Group 2016).

As for childcare, the ISSP data draws a similar picture: Japanese men report spending about 7 hours per week with taking care of their children (or elderly, disabled, and ill family members who were included in the survey question), while women devoted about 18 hours to this task. The numbers for fathers in East- and West-Germany ranged from 15 to 11 hours, and for mothers from 19 to 22 hours respectively (ibid.).

These numbers show that the distribution of family work is considerably more one-sided in Japan, especially when it comes to housework. Even compared to China, Taiwan, and South Korea, Japan has the most strongly gendered division of housework by far (Qian and Sayer 2016). The situation is noticeably more levelled when it comes to childcare, but Japanese women still report to spend more than twice as much time taking care of their children than Japanese men do.

DATA AND VARIABLES

The sample used in this study consists of mothers and fathers in German and Japanese households with children before their enrollment into elementary school, so between the ages of 0 and 6 (see Huber 2018 for details). The surveys were conducted in 2009 (Germany) and 2012 (Japan) and in both countries sub-samples of larger master samples were used, reflecting residence, gender, nationality, and social stratification. In Ger-

many, 1002 fathers and 1050 mothers participated, the Japanese sample consists of 1033 fathers and 1103 mothers. The total sample is 4188. 8 cases had to be excluded from our analysis due to missing data for some questions. For details, see Table 2 below.

The main variables used in the analysis are listed as follows:

Partnership satisfaction

Respondents in both surveys were asked to report their overall satisfaction with their partnership on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10.

Relative involvement in housework

Parents were asked who was currently responsible for each of seven household tasks: preparation of meals, laundry, cleaning (only in Japan), doing the dishes, shopping, finances, staying in contact with friends, and homerepair chores. The respondents could choose from the following valid answers: (1) him-/herself, (2) their partner, (3) both alternatingly, or (4) both jointly. In addition, we also worked with an index-measure of involvement in *routine* household work. As our main interest lies in understanding the distribution of constant and day-to-day housework, this index includes the four routine housework tasks of preparing meals, shopping, doing the laundry, and doing the dishes.

To create the index, we allotted points for each of the above answers. The distribution of points can be seen in Table 1. If a respondent reported to be the one mainly responsible for all four tasks, he or she would receive 4 points (4×1). If one of those tasks was carried out by the partner, the respondent would receive 2 points ($3 \times 1 + (-1)$). The resulting measure with a range from -4 to 4 was then rescaled into a measure ranging from -1 to 1 (i. e. divided by the number of items used to create the measure), where positive values express greater involvement on part of the respondent, and negative values signify greater involvement by the partner. A score of 0 points means that either the distribution of work within the tasks is equal (the partners do the tasks jointly or alternatingly) or the amount of tasks each partner is responsible for is equal.

Table 1: Index creation

Answer	Yourself	Spouse/ partner	Taking turns with your spouse/partner	You and your spouse/partner jointly
Points given to respondent	1	-1	0	0

Relative involvement in childrearing activities

Analogous to the questions on housework, respondents were asked about the distribution of certain childrearing tasks i.e. activities with their child(ren), in particular focusing on the interactive dimension of childrearing. These items covered the areas of doing housework with the children, reading to them, helping them with studying, spending time on handicraft or singing with them, playing games or video games with the children, watching TV, or going outside with them. The answer categories were analogous to the housework items presented above. We also created an index from this. Due to high missing values of the item on playing video games, it was excluded from the index. The index – created in the same fashion as above – thus consisted of 6 items and ranged from -6 to 6 before being rescaled into a measure from -1 to 1. The index represents the respondents' involvement in childrearing activities relative to their partner with positive values expressing greater involvement on part of the respondent and negative values stating the opposite.

Assessment of own time

Respondents were asked how they felt about the time they spent on both housework and involvement with children. Possible answers were 'not enough', 'just right' and 'spending too much time'.

Gender ideology

The measure that we used as a proxy to represent gender ideology, or gender role attitude, was included in a battery of statements assessing the respondents' ideal father image, asking: 'As for being a good father, which of the following items below do you think are important?'. The item in question was phrased 'To concentrate on his work and leave childcare to his wife'. The item covers two main dimensions of the respondents' gender role attitude, namely the "primacy of the breadwinner role" and the "belief in gendered separate spheres" as described by Davis and Greenstein (2009: 90). Based on the original four ordinal response categories (which will be used for correlation analysis), we also created a second, dichotomous variable, separating parents into two groups of those with a more egalitarian attitude (those who chose "Totally unimportant" and "Not really important") and a more traditional attitude (those who chose "Important", and "Very important").

Breadwinner-model

Respondents were asked to identify the main earner within the household and could choose between themselves, their partner, or both. We then created a dichotomous variable differentiating between the male-breadwinner-model (partnerships where only the father is reported to be main earner) and a model where the mother or both parents are considered main earners.

DESCRIPTIVES

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Fathers		Mothers	
	Japan	Germany	Japan	Germany
Partnership satisfaction, mean	7.16 (2.09)	8.73 (1.51)	6.27 (2.58)	8.33 (1.84)
Marital status (percent of those married)	99.5	73.2	96.4	66.6
Age of the youngest child, mean	3.39 (1.93)	3.63 (2.04)	3.26 (1.89)	3.43 (1.88)
Main earner: wife/both are breadwinner (%)	19.4	16.2	17.1	14.6
Male main breadwinner (%)	80.6	82.9	86.8	85.4
Gender ideology (%)				
Egalitarian	87.20	54.40	88.00	55.90
Traditional	12.80	45.60	12.00	44.10
Routine housework involvement (4 items, (+) more than spouse, (-) less than spouse, range -1 to 1)	-0.55 (0.41)	-0.44 (0.37)	0.85 (.26)	0.54 (.35)
Childcare involvement (6 items, (+) more than spouse, (-) less than spouse, range -1 to 1)	-0.19 (.29)	-0.19 (.27)	0.43 (.35)	0.28 (.28)
N	1031	1000	1103	1046

Note: Standard deviation reported in parentheses where appropriate.

Partnership satisfaction is lower in Japan and lower for mothers than fathers in both countries. On a scale from 0 to 10, Japanese mothers had the lowest average (6.27), and German fathers the highest (8.73). The average score of German mothers was 8.33, for Japanese fathers 7.16. The fact that marriage is almost a prerequisite of parenthood in Japan

is clearly reflected in our dataset, with 99.5 percent of Japanese fathers and 96.4 percent of Japanese mothers reporting to be married. In Germany, these numbers are roughly 30 percentage points lower: 73.2 percent for fathers and 66.6 percent for mothers. Average age of youngest child was 3.26 and 3.63 years, with a large standard deviation, reflecting that parents of children of all ages between 0 and 6 are included in our sample.

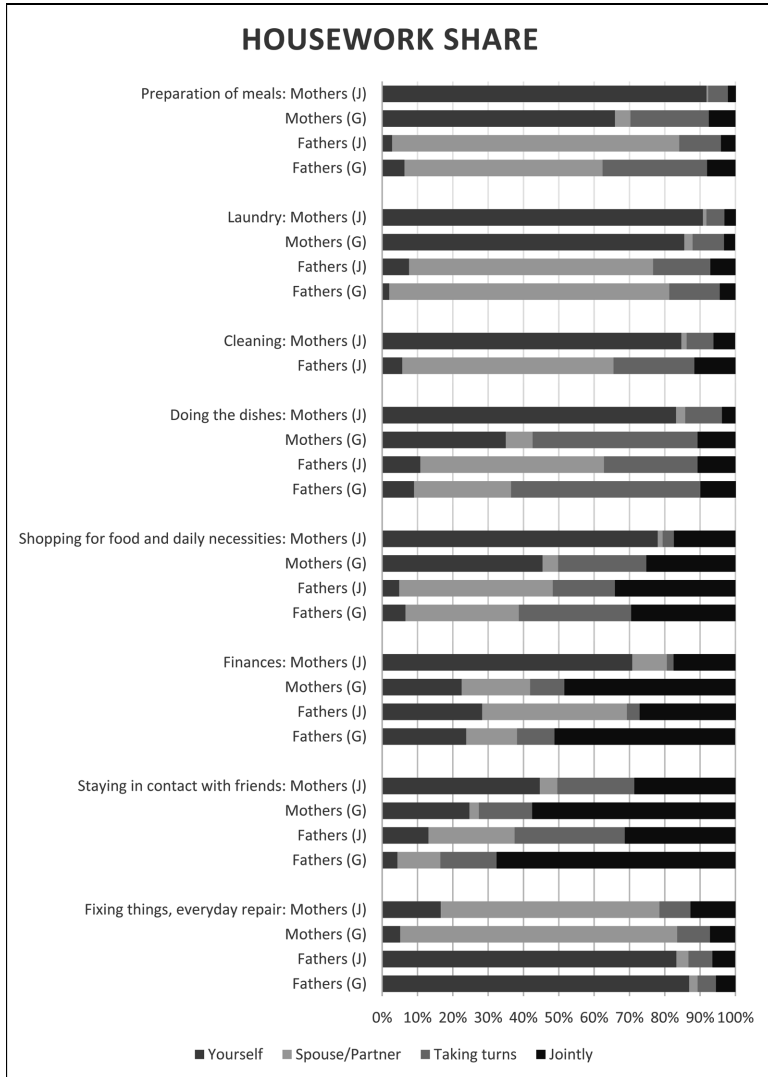
In over 80 percent of cases in both countries the father was considered the sole main earner. Yet gender ideology and lived reality seem to divert significantly. As expected, women's involvement in family work is greater than that of men in both countries. At the same time, Japanese mothers (.85) report to be doing a greater share of housework than German mothers (.54). Similarly, fathers in both countries report to be doing considerably less housework than mothers both in Japan (-.55) and Germany (-.44). In regard to childrearing, German and Japanese fathers consider their level of responsibility to be equally high (-.19), but Japanese mothers believe to be doing considerably more (.43) than German mothers (.28) relative to their partners. The parents' personal assessment of their own contribution to housework and involvement with their children will be addressed later (meaning whether they consider their share as appropriate, too much, or too little, see Table 3).

Housework chores

Figure 1 shows respondents' answers to the questions regarding the distribution of individual housework items, separate by gender and country. The most repetitive routine housework tasks like cooking and doing the laundry are mainly performed by mothers. Repairs around the house, as an intermittent task, are strongly gendered as well, but in both countries are predominantly attended to by fathers. Staying in contact with friends is the item most often done together (a much higher percentage in the case of Germany) or in turns (higher occurrence in Japan), in total more than 50 percent among all respondents. In Germany, responses regarding finances are similar to those on staying in contact with friends, but we can see that in Japan, it is predominantly women who are in charge of financial matters.

Laundry, shopping, and preparation of meals, as well as fixing things are the most gendered tasks in both countries. Fathers report more sharing of tasks ('doing together' and 'jointly' combined) than mothers. The larger discrepancies between statements from fathers and mothers can be found in Japan, in particular for the items on doing the dishes, shopping,

Figure 1: Housework by individual tasks

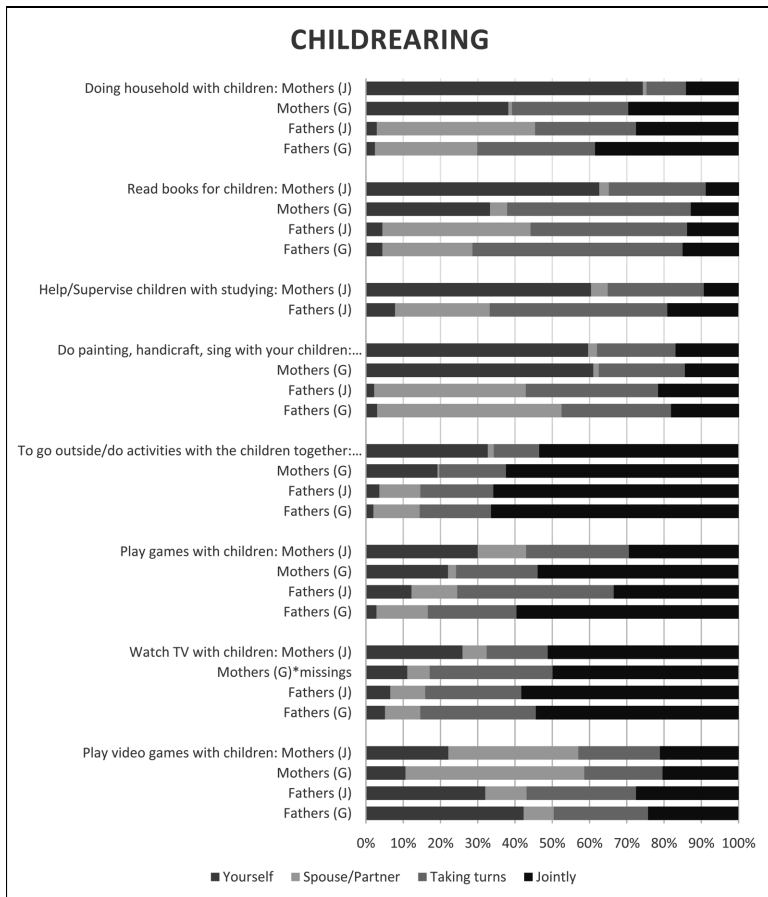


and laundry. In total, we see that German mothers and fathers more often do household chores together or alternately than is the case for Japanese parents, although this observation is less valid in the case of routine housework.

Childrearing activities

Overall, childrearing activities are differently distributed between the partners than housework tasks (see Figure 2). Fewer parents report to be solely responsible than is the case for household chores. We note that outdoor activities seem to be understood as family events where both partners spend time with their children. Indoor activities, however, are still clearly female-dominated, especially in Japan and in particular when it comes to doing housework with the children. An exception to this is watching TV, which is also a joint family activity.

Figure 2: Childrearing by individual tasks



Playing games or video games are the only tasks where fathers show more involvement than mothers and where they consider themselves primarily responsible. Playing games is more of a family activity in Germany than in Japan, but it is playing video games which particularly shows these striking gender differences. More than 30 percent of Japanese fathers and 40 percent of German fathers stated to be solely responsible.

In total, if we compare parents' perceived distribution of childrearing activities between the countries, with the exception of doing painting, handicraft, or singing with the children, mothers in Japan do much more by themselves than German mothers. And, with the exception of playing video games, mothers in both countries do much more than the fathers. Furthermore, slightly more childrearing-collaboration seems to be taking place in Germany, where more parents report to jointly engage in activities with their kids.

Self-assessment of time spent on housework and children

To determine if the distributional inequalities are reflected in the way how parents think of the time they spend on housework and childrearing, parents were asked to assess the time they spend on housework and with their children. Results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Self-assessment of time spent on family work (%)

		Housework			
		Not enough	Just right	Too much	N
Japan	Fathers	48.3	49.6	2.1	1027
	Mothers	18.5	68.2	13.3	1074
Germany	Fathers	30.7	60.5	8.8	944
	Mothers	16.5	55.1	28.3	903
		Childrearing			
		Not enough	Just right	Too much	N
Japan	Fathers	39.8	59.1	1.1	1028
	Mothers	21.4	74.5	4.1	1075
Germany	Fathers	32.7	63.6	3.7	957
	Mothers	12.5	79.1	8.4	905

We have already established that Japanese fathers participate in family work to a lesser degree than German fathers, and the least in most instances among all four groups. Interestingly, Japanese fathers are quite aware of their relatively passive role within the household. Almost half of

all Japanese fathers (48.3 %) have the impression that they do not participate enough in housework, as opposed to slightly less than one third of German fathers. The remainder of fathers feel that the time they spend on housework is just right, while only 2.3 percent in Japan, and a larger proportion of German fathers, 9.2 percent, believe to be spending too much time on housework. When it comes to childrearing, Japanese fathers are only slightly more critical in their self-evaluation than German fathers, reflecting the results presented in Table 2, where fathers in both countries had an equal score on the childrearing-index. The slightly more critical assessment of Japanese fathers might, however, be connected to mothers' responses in Japan.

Among mothers, the percentage of those who feel that they are not contributing enough to housework is much lower than for fathers (18.5 % of Japanese and 16.5 % of German mothers). Most mothers report to be spending an appropriate amount of time on housework, yet this portion is conceivably larger in Japan (68.2 %) than in Germany (55.1 %), while over twice as many mothers in Germany report to be spending too much time on housework in comparison to Japan. Mothers in Japan are more critical with themselves of the time they spend with their children: 21.4 percent believe not to be spending enough time with them, as opposed to 12.5 percent in Germany. Also, twice as many German than Japanese mothers reported to be spending too much time with childrearing (8.4 and 4.1 %).

INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY WORK RELATIVE TO ONE'S SPOUSE OR PARTNER

In summary, mothers are responsible for household tasks – especially routine housework – to a much higher degree than fathers, both in Germany² and in Japan³ (see Table 2). German fathers report significantly higher housework involvement than Japanese fathers⁴ and Japanese mothers report higher involvement than German mothers⁵. In regard to childrearing, means for subgroups by country and gender align with the findings for housework involvement. The index reflects the overall picture that emerged from the individual items: Mothers in Germany are much more so responsible for carrying out activities with their child(ren)

² T-test conducted with $t(1664) = -54.877, p = .001$

³ T-test conducted with $t(1667) = -92.268, p < .001$

⁴ T-test conducted with $t(1841) = -6.370, p < .001$

⁵ T-test conducted with $t(1435) = 21.612, p < .001$

than fathers⁶, and again this gender difference is even more pronounced in Japan⁷.

Japanese mothers report to be responsible for childrearing activities to a greater extent than German mothers⁸. No significant difference between Japanese and German fathers' assessment of their own involvement in childrearing activities was found. However overall, fathers in Germany⁹ as well as Japan¹⁰ are significantly more involved in childrearing than in household labor.

To put it differently, most Japanese mothers seem to be prepared to manage the household and take care of the children almost single-handedly, and a considerable percentage thinks it would be better to put even more time into family work. These numbers reflect the high expectations Japanese mothers direct toward themselves when it comes to their child-rearing duties (Hertog 2008). These expectations are likely to be related to the dominant image of motherhood in Japanese society. Thus, Japanese mothers – who are actually comparatively more involved in activities with their children – still tend to be more critical of their childcare involvement than German mothers.

The results imply that a 'traditional' image of motherhood still has a great effect on Japanese mothers. Despite that, Japanese respondents display a more egalitarian gender role attitude than their German counterparts when answering our proxy item for gender ideology, namely their ideal father image. It is possible that the common image of what it means to be a father in Japan is changing at a faster rate than the expectations directed towards mothers – either by themselves or by the society surrounding them.

PARTNERSHIP SATISFACTION

There are striking between-sex and between-country differences in regard to partnership satisfaction. Japanese mothers of young children are noticeably less happy in their partnerships than fathers are, with the latter averaging 7.16 on a scale from 0 to 10 versus a mean score of 6.27 for

⁶ T-test conducted with $t(1224) = -30.246, p < .001$

⁷ T-test conducted with $t(1331) = -36.139, p < .001$

⁸ T-test conducted with $t(1276) = 8.348, p < .001$

⁹ T-test conducted with $t(574) = -16.945, p < .001$

¹⁰ T-test conducted with $t(707) = -22.676, p < .001$. Females accordingly report to be less responsible in both countries. Germany: $t(559) = 16.712, p < .001$; Japan: $t(677) = 30.674, p < .001$.

mothers – a difference of 0.89 points¹¹. This is in line with the findings in the literature (e. g. Chung, Kamo, and Yi 2010; Kamo and Hori 2014; Qian and Sayer 2016).

Similarly, mothers are also less satisfied with their relationships in Germany, with an average score of 8.33 as opposed to 8.73 for fathers¹². The difference in Germany, however, is smaller overall, German parents report higher satisfaction values¹³. This might be partially explained by an often noted tendency of Japanese respondents to report lower satisfaction scores on Likert-scales (Chen, Lee, and Stevenson 1995, Lee et al. 2002; Uchida, Ogihara, and Fukushima 2015). However and more importantly, this does not limit the cross-national comparability of associative measures and group comparisons conducted separately by country.

Married parents in both countries are more satisfied with their relationships than unmarried parents.¹⁴ As for the predominant breadwinner model, its relationship to partnership satisfaction is more varied. While German fathers are significantly more satisfied with their relationship when they are the main earner¹⁵, Japanese fathers' partnership satisfaction is higher among those where the mother is also a main earner¹⁶. This clearly contrasts with the findings for Japanese mothers, who show significantly higher means of partnership satisfaction when they are not contributing to the household income on an equal basis¹⁷. The question whether this comes from the fact that Japanese mothers who *are* employed still have to shoulder most of the burden at home in what has been termed a "second shift" (Hochschild 2012), or whether fathers' views are more progressive than those of mothers remains unanswered.

¹¹ T-test conducted with $t(2051) = 8.641, p < .001$

¹² T-test conducted with $t(1732) = 5.113, p < .001$

¹³ T-test conducted for fathers with $t(1863) = -19.247, p < .001$ and for mothers with $t(1931) = -20.569, p < .001$

¹⁴ T-test for Japanese parents conducted with $t(2101) = 4.235, p < .001$, and for German parents with $t(1843) = 3.600; p < .001$

¹⁵ T-test conducted with $t(206) = 2.780, p = .006$ (father is sole main earner: $M = 8.82, SD = 1.421$; father is not sole main earner: $M = 8.41, SD = 1.761$)

¹⁶ T-test conducted with $t(1016) = -1.934, p = .053$ (father is sole main earner: $M = 7.10, SD = 2.078$; father is not sole main earner: $M = 7.42, SD = 2.070$)

¹⁷ T-test conducted with $t(143) = 2.368, p < 0.05$ (father is sole main earner: $M = 6.36, SD = 2.514$; father is not sole main earner: $M = 5.69, SD = 3.004$)

Partnership satisfaction and family work

In order to understand the connection between the measures of relative involvement in the two areas of family work with partnership satisfaction, we conducted correlation analyses after Pearson. They reveal significant negative associations between greater housework involvement (relative to spouse) and partnership satisfaction for Japanese mothers¹⁸, and a significant yet negligible association in the case of German fathers¹⁹. No significant associations were found for Japanese fathers and German mothers. As for childrearing involvement and partnership satisfaction, we again find negative associations for Japanese mothers²⁰, and also for both parents in Germany²¹. No significant results were found for Japanese fathers.

As outlined in the introduction, we expected the degree of involvement and also the associations between involvement and partnership satisfaction to be influenced by gender ideology. For that, we first conducted correlation analyses after Spearman²². Table 4 reports correlation coefficients between gender ideology (original measure with 4 steps, where higher values express a more traditional gender ideology) and involvement in the two dimensions of family work (where higher values express stronger personal involvement relative to spouse).

Table 4: Association between gender ideology and family work

Correlation analysis (Spearman Rho, two-tailed)		Routine housework	Childrearing
Gender ideology (4 = most traditional)	Japan	Fathers	-.153** (985)
		Mothers	.165** (1028)
	Germany	Fathers	-.327** (830)
		Mothers	.187** (769)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; N reported in parenthesis.

The first and most important thing to note is that gender ideology is indeed related to the way couples share housework and childrearing re-

¹⁸ Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient $r = -.178$, $p < .001$

¹⁹ Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient $r = -.095$, $p = .006$

²⁰ Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient $r = -.251$, $p < .001$

²¹ Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient $r = -.269$, $p < .001$ and $r = -.132$, $p = .001$ respectively

²² As opposed to the measures of involvement in family work (i.e. housework and childrearing) as well as the scale of partnership satisfaction, the measure of gender ideology will be treated as an ordinal variable, calling for non-parametric correlation procedures.

sponsibilities. Involvement in both types of family work are significantly associated with gender ideology in three of four subgroups. While mothers do more family work relative to their partner the more traditional their gender role attitudes (positive correlation), fathers are less invested in family work the more importance they attribute to a traditionally gendered separation of spheres (negative correlation). Japanese mothers, where this connection is only found for housework, are the only exception. While their housework involvement is indeed related to their gender role attitude, as was found for the other three groups, they either choose to or end up having to do the same amount of childrearing no matter what their opinion on the separation of spheres between men and women. Overall, the connection between gender ideology and participation in both types of family work is greater for German than for Japanese fathers²³, implying that Japanese fathers might have greater inhibitive factors on either a personal or a structural level than is the case for German fathers. Moreover, in the case of German men, we find that the connection between gender role attitude and participation in housework is stronger than in regard to childrearing activities²⁴.

Partnership satisfaction and gender ideology

As for the connection between partnership satisfaction and gender ideology, correlation analyses reveal significant results in only one of the four subgroups. Solely in the case of Japanese fathers we see partnership satisfaction negatively associated with holding a more traditional gender role attitude. Tests for the other three groups do not yield significant results²⁵.

But how are the associations between distributions of family work and partnership satisfaction connected to gender ideology? In order to arrive at an answer to this question, correlation results are compared based on the dichotomous variable of gender ideology. Table 5 shows the associations between the measure of partnership satisfaction and the two indices of family work for the total sample and after separating by gender ideology.

²³ Housework: Fisher's $z = 3.925$, $p < .001$; childrearing: Fisher's $z = 1.857$, $p = .032$

²⁴ Fisher's $z = 2.558$, $p = .005$

²⁵ Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient $r = -.176$, $p < .001$, Group comparison using the dichotomous variable of gender ideology supported this by producing a significant result only in the case of Japanese fathers: Marital satisfaction of fathers who adhere to a traditional gender ideology is significantly lower than that of fathers who follow a more egalitarian gender ideology. T-test: $t(160) = 3.830$, $p < .001$.

If we separate parents by gender ideology, then almost all of the associations reported in the left column of Table 5 remain significant for the group of “gender egalitarians”, while quite the opposite is true for those with a more conservative or “traditional” gender ideology.

Table 5: Association between partnership satisfaction and family work by gender ideology

Correlation analysis (Pearson, two-tailed)			Partnership satisfaction		
			Total	Traditional	Egalitarian
Routine housework	Japan	Fathers	.011 (983)	.156 (126)	-.025 (856)
		Mothers	-.178*** (1026)	.040 (125)	-.199*** (900)
	Germany	Fathers	-.095** (854)	-.051 (381)	-.083 (442)
		Mothers	-.057 (801)	-.064 (345)	-.036 (421)
Child- rearing	Japan	Fathers	-.023 (719)	-.162 (95)	-.101 (623)
		Mothers	-.251*** (689)	-.161 (92)	-.267*** (597)
	Germany	Fathers	-.132*** (630)	-.118† (276)	-.153** (328)
		Mothers	-.269*** (598)	-.249*** (262)	-.291*** (313)

Note: ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; † $p = 0.051$; N reported in parenthesis.

Involvement in family work only has a negative effect on the partnership satisfaction of gender-egalitarian minded mothers in Japan, but there is no effect on the satisfaction of women with a more traditional attitude, despite being even more involved in housework and childrearing. For German mothers this moderating effect of gender ideology was not found as there is no indication for their housework involvement to have an effect on their partnership satisfaction in the first place. At the same time, a disproportionally large involvement in childrearing (relative to their partner) has a negative effect on German mothers’ partnership satisfaction irrespective of their gender ideology.

German fathers report lower partnership satisfaction when their childcare involvement is higher, regardless of gender ideology. The negative association of housework and fathers’ partnership satisfaction is rendered non-significant through splitting the sample by gender role attitude. Thus, regardless of gender ideology as a possible mediator, no connection between either type of family work and partnership satisfaction was found in the case of Japanese fathers. We can thus conclude that the influence of parents’ gender ideology on the connection between their distribution of family work and their partnership satisfaction is gendered in itself and not identical across the two countries in our analysis.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the first comparison of partnership satisfaction among parents with young children in Germany and Japan. Moreover, other than the majority of studies on satisfaction and family labor distribution, which only consider total time spent on housework, this study differentiates between various individual household tasks. The descriptive analysis illustrates how diverse results can be when household tasks are considered separately – and the same is true for childrearing activities which are included in even fewer research designs.

While most housework tasks are primarily performed by mothers in both countries (especially shopping, cooking, and doing the laundry), there are some subtle variations. For example, couples in Germany tend to share routine household tasks to a higher degree. Also household finances tend to be in the hands of mothers in Japan, while German parents are more likely to share this responsibility. This possibly reflects the argument that household finances have a special significance in Japan, where it is also a way for wives to exercise power in the relationship (Lee and Ono 2008). The intermittent household task of doing repairs is ‘male-dominated’ in both countries, and equally underlines the continuation of the gendered division of household labor.

Childrearing activities are found to be less gendered than routine housework. Parents are especially likely to do outdoor-activities with their children together rather than having only one partner do it. Indoor activities, such as reading to one’s children, are more often the mothers’ domain in Japan than they are in Germany. Watching television is also a more “typical” family activity and when it comes to video-games, fathers are more likely to be responsible. Overall, childrearing too is more gendered in Japan than in Germany, where parents have a slightly greater tendency to be active with their children together as a couple.

Despite similar tendencies in these responses on family work distribution, we find differences in fathers’ and mothers’ responses for most of the surveyed items. While bearing in mind that we are not dealing with dyadic data, responses could be expected to align more strongly between the genders. We thus argue that a certain over- and/or underestimation-bias is included in the respondents’ answer behavior when they talk about family work distribution. The differences are more pronounced in Japan, which suggests that couples in Germany have a more realistic picture of what their partner does in the house.

As for the way parents assess the time they spend on family work, high societal expectations directed toward Japanese mothers are reflected in the fact that despite their great share of family work, many still believe

to be spending too little time on housework and childrearing. German mothers seem to be more in accord with their own expectations of themselves. At the same time, both German and Japanese fathers seem to be aware of the unequal distribution of family work, many of them reporting to be doing too little.

The fact that close to 40 percent of Japanese fathers state that they are not spending enough time with their children implies that 'willingness' might not be what keeps them from participating. Future research should more closely consider structural conditions which have a detrimental effect on Japanese fathers' involvement in family work, such as the *seishain* labor contracts with their inflexible work hours and the high likelihood of women to terminate these contracts upon marriage or childbirth (Nagase 2018; Takaoka and Sun 2018). While our paper focuses on the unequal distribution of housework, we should not forget that the distribution of paid work is often similarly unequal. While German fathers in our study were actually happier in their relationship when they were the sole main earner, the opposite was the case for Japanese fathers, who seem to appreciate it when their wives contribute more strongly to the household income. Japanese mothers' partnership satisfaction, however, was lower among those who considered themselves a main earner. For more detailed accounts of the effect of workplace environment on Japanese fathers' childrearing participation, we refer to the chapter by Olbrich (2018) in this volume and the work of Ishii-Kuntz (2013).

Using the indexed measures of *routine* housework and childrearing activities we found large gender differences in family work in both countries, corroborating previous studies (e. g. Chung, Kamo, and Yi 2010; Greenstein 2009; Mencarini and Sironi 2010). This is especially the case for Japan, where the gender gaps in both types of family work are significantly larger than in Germany – a finding which is also in line with existing research, pointing out the striking inequality of domestic work in the Japanese context (Qian and Sayer 2016, Tsuya et al. 2012).

Including gender ideology into our analysis, we found that parents' involvement in family work differs by how much importance they attribute to a gendered separation of spheres, identifying one group with rather egalitarian and one group with more traditional gender role attitude. This distinction mattered more in Germany than in Japan, implying greater flexibility in familial arrangements for parents living in Germany, who can more easily structure their work-distribution according to their own values. In both countries, fathers in the more traditional group take on fewer responsibilities of housework and childrearing than more egalitarian fathers (support of hypothesis H2a). In fact, gender ideology makes the biggest difference for the group of German fathers. As gender

roles and social norms towards fathers are less confining in Germany than in Japan, our findings might reflect that relative role-freedom of German fathers as opposed to German mothers as well as to both mothers and fathers living in Japan. Conversely, mothers in the traditional group perform more childrearing in Japan and more housework in Japan and Germany (partial support of H1a). German mothers' childrearing involvement, however, does not seem to be tied to their personal gender role attitudes. This might be due to the mentioned difficulty or the reduced desirability to bargain out of childcare activities. Despite this exception we can still infer from this that the way parents in both countries share responsibilities within the family and the home aligns to some degree with their personal values.

Regarding partnership satisfaction and how the distribution of these two types of family work are connected to it, several results are of interest here. The first finding, in line with most literature on this subject, is that women reported to be significantly less satisfied in their partnerships than men. Secondly, this gender difference in partnership satisfaction was found to be greater in Japan. Results presented in this chapter imply that unequal distribution of housework share and involvement in childrearing can offer a parsimonious explanation for lower satisfaction – albeit that this explanation is not as unequivocal as one might assume. Again gender role attitude has to be considered.

It was found that for Japanese mothers shouldering an (even) greater share of routine housework is associated with lower partnership satisfaction²⁶. This was not the case for fathers in Japan or parents in Germany, regardless of gender. In the case of childrearing, however, Japanese mothers, as well as German mothers and fathers, were less satisfied with their relationships the greater their own share of responsibilities.

Analyzing how gender role attitude influences this connection between distribution of family work and parents' partnership satisfaction yielded mixed results. Only in the case of Japanese mothers do we find the expected moderating effect of gender ideology. The negative association found for mothers' partnership satisfaction and childrearing on the one hand as well as housework involvement on the other hand, is only found in the group of egalitarian mothers. The connection disappears for the group of mothers with a more traditional attitude.

At the same time, the negative association between both types of family work and German parents' partnership satisfaction is not affected by the inclusion of gender ideology. Thus hypothesis H1b is only confirmed

²⁶ The association was also significant for German fathers, but the strength of the correlation was negligible.

in the case of Japanese mothers and hypothesis H2b is rejected. It is however supported that Japanese fathers are less satisfied with their relationships the more conservative their stance in regard to a gendered separation of spheres (support of H3b in the case of Japan, but not Germany). No such effect of gender ideology was found for women in either country (lack of support for H3a).

Thus, gender role attitude was shown to have an effect on the connection between partnership satisfaction and family work only in the case of Japanese mothers. In their case, the different expectations of mothers who deem a gendered separation of spheres important, are in accord with their large share of family work. For more egalitarian mothers in Japan, the discrepancy between the large amount of family work they have to shoulder and the amount they would consider appropriate is considerable and has a negative effect on their partnership satisfaction. So while it might be true that wives in Japan favor the specialization model (see Lee and Ono 2008), this does not mean that they gladly carry out any amount of family work. Many would prefer more support (from their partners, external help, or institutions), even among those who hold more traditional attitudes and whose partnership satisfaction is unaffected by family work distribution.

Japanese fathers' involvement might be so small relative to the mothers' that the amount of family work they do does not impair their partnership satisfaction, simply because it does not take up a considerable portion of their day and is not so much part of their life. On the contrary – fathers' self-assessment of time used on housework and childrearing suggests that for many fathers, additional involvement in childrearing (and housework) might be desirable.

Our findings also suggest that for the partnership satisfaction of German parents the way in which childrearing activities are distributed is more relevant than the distribution of housework. In fact, their partnership satisfaction seems to be influenced only by the former and not by the latter. Thus we argue that dissatisfaction arising from uneven shares of childrearing among German mothers may not come from a general sense of unequal labor distribution, but from expecting their partner to spend more quality time with their children. This is connected directly to the mentioned difference between housework and childrearing to which we want to add another aspect: It might be that childrearing does not only offer a sense of fulfillment which can hardly be derived from housework, but that the personal bond between one's partner and one's children is also considered part of a fulfilled family life influencing partnership satisfaction. We thus support the notion that housework and childcare are very distinct concepts (Chong and Mickelson 2016; Sullivan 2013) which can have varying effects on part-

nership satisfaction of parents of young children. Future research should include not only a more detailed inquiry into different tasks performed as part of raising children, but also apply qualitative methods to improve our understanding of parental partnership satisfaction.

One last and unexpected finding warranting consideration is the much greater percentage of parents holding a traditional gender role attitude (people who believe a gendered separation of roles between parents to be important) in Germany than in Japan. This is neither in line with the general findings on gender equality for the two countries (e. g. Greenstein 2009), nor does it reflect the actual distribution of family work we observed in our surveys. Of course it is necessary to separate parents' culture and conduct on an analytical level (La Rossa 2012; as for the differences in fathers' attitudes and behaviors see the chapter by Olbrich (2018) in this volume), but this could also mean that the subject of gendered spheres is not considered as important by Japanese parents simply because this is still the default situation. Conversely, it should not be ruled out that the younger generation of Japanese parents is undergoing a value shift away from traditional norms while political and economic structures facilitating them to act accordingly still lag behind. The fact that a great number of Japanese fathers assess their own time spent on family work as insufficient, or that Japanese fathers whose partner makes a large contribution to the household income report higher partnership satisfaction, could be reflections of this circumstance. All of this indicates that many of the factors influencing parental well-being and partnership satisfaction in particular arise from structural conditions of the Japanese labor market as well as the availability of childcare facilities.

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