

Division of Labor, Perceived Fairness, and Marital Quality: The Effect of Gender Ideology

This study assesses the relations between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality by comparing three ethnic-religious groups in Israel that reflect traditional, transitional, and egalitarian ideologies. The findings, based on structural equation modeling (SEM) methodology, show that sense of fairness mediates the relation between division of labor and marital quality and gender ideology moderates these relations for women but not for men. Perceived fairness is related to the division of labor for women in egalitarian and transitional families but not in traditional ones. For egalitarian women, a more segregated division of labor is linked directly with lower marital quality whereas for women in transitional families it is mediated by sense of fairness. The findings are discussed on two overlapping levels—conceptual-theoretical and sociocultural—with implications for understanding families in cultural transition.

In the past decade, there has been growing interest in the causes and consequences of the way in which household tasks are allocated. A large vol-

School of Social Work and the Center for Research and Study of the Family, University of Haifa, Mount Carmel, Haifa 31905, Israel (lavee@research.haifa.ac.il).

*Department of Human Services and the Center for Research and Study of the Family, University of Haifa, Mount Carmel, Haifa 31905, Israel.

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ume of research has focused on predictors of the allocation of household tasks, demonstrating its association with a host of factors including employment and relative earnings of husbands and wives, as well as cultural norms and beliefs. In his review of research on the division of household labor during the 1990s, Coltrane (2000) concluded that although men's relative contributions have increased, women still do at least twice as much routine housework as men. Inequality in the division of household labor, in turn, is associated with women's sense of unfairness, depression, and marital dissatisfaction, whereas men's participation in routine repetitive chores is the primary predictor of marital satisfaction (Coltrane, 2000).

In regard to the link between division of household labor and outcome measures such as marital satisfaction, two hypotheses have been posited: (a) *The mediating hypothesis of perceived fairness* states that inequality in the division of household labor affects marital satisfaction mainly through perceptions of unfairness; and (b) *the moderating hypothesis of gender role ideology* states that gender ideology shapes the perception of fairness of the division of labor and the extent to which perceived fairness is linked to marital satisfaction, thereby moderating the associations between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality. Although both hypotheses have received some empirical attention, findings regarding the mediating effect of perceived fairness are mixed and inconclusive. Additionally, research on the moderating effect of gender ideol-

ogy has typically been discussed in terms of traditional and egalitarian gender ideologies with only scant attention given to families in transition, who are located somewhere in the middle.

In concluding his review, Coltrane (2000) recommended that future research should specify in more detail "how the performance of housework in different families is implicated in various cultural, economic, and gender-reproductive processes" (p. 1227) and how gender ideology influences fairness evaluations and individual well-being. Along this line, the present study extends previous research by examining both the mediating and moderating hypotheses through a comparison of three ethnic-religious groups in Israel that reflect traditional, transitional, and egalitarian family patterns.

DIVISION OF LABOR AND MARITAL QUALITY: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED FAIRNESS

Despite the tendency of both women and men to report that the division of labor is fair, research shows significant associations between various characteristics of the division of household labor and perceived justice. In particular, the greater the men's contribution to household tasks, especially those typically relegated to women (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Demo & Acock, 1993; Sanchez, 1994), and the more balanced the relative contribution of husbands and wives to such tasks (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996; Hawkins, Marshall, & Meiners, 1995; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994), the higher the sense of fairness in regard to division of labor.

In turn, the sense of fairness impacts on the perception of marital quality. If the division of labor is felt to be unfair, then negative consequences for the marriage may be manifested in more marital conflicts (Kluwer, Heesink, & Van de Vliert, 1996) and less marital satisfaction (Blair, 1993, 1998; Greenstein, 1996a; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Ward, 1993). Given that the allocation of household tasks is associated with perceived fairness and perceived fairness is associated with marital outcomes, a number of researchers have considered fairness as a mediating variable between the division of household labor and marital satisfaction (Coltrane, 2000).

However, the mediator hypothesis has received only partial support. Robinson and Spitze (1992) found that perceived unfairness mediates between the proportion of time spent in household chores and marital satisfaction for wives but not for hus-

bands. Likewise, Wilkie, Ferree, and Ratcliff (1998) reported that the division of labor affects marital satisfaction mainly through perceptions of fairness, although what is considered as "fair" varies for husbands and for wives. In contrast, Voydanoff and Donnelly (1999) found that perceived unfairness is negatively related to marital quality but they found no evidence that it mediates the relation between time spent in activities and marital happiness.

The present study tests the mediator hypothesis of perceived fairness for men and for women by using Baron and Kenny's (1986) analytic strategy. It examines the division of labor in a wide range of family tasks including routine housework, child-care tasks, and other household labor (e.g., car and yard maintenance, financial management), and explores its direct and indirect effects (through perceived fairness) on marital quality by analyzing a structural equation model.

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF GENDER ROLE IDEOLOGY

Gender role ideology may influence the links between the division of labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality in a number of ways. First, the division of labor itself is dependent on the gender role orientation of the spouses. The stronger the endorsement of traditional gender role orientation by the couple, the more unequal the participation of women and men in household tasks (Greenstein, 1996b; Shelton & John, 1996; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Second, gender role ideology may shape the perception of fairness or injustice of the division of labor. According to the distributive justice framework (Major, 1993; Thompson, 1991) women do not perceive gendered division of housework as unfair if it (a) corresponds to what they are socialized to value in a relationship (outcome values), (b) matches their social and normative standards (on the basis of comparison referents), and (c) is perceived as justifiable or legitimate. In addition, different cultural groups may attach different symbolic meanings to housework, which in turn are reflected in the perception of fairness (John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995). Third, gender role ideology may shape the association between perceived fairness and marital quality. A number of studies have found that the perception of unfairness affects reported marital quality more strongly for egalitarian wives than for traditional wives (Greenstein, 1996a; Kluwer, Heesink, & Van de Vliert, 1997).

Researchers who studied the moderator effect of gender role ideology have typically analyzed and discussed this concept in terms of two ideological groups—traditional and egalitarian—based on gender role ideology scores (Greenstein, 1996b; Kluwer et al., 1997; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). What must be recognized, however, is that gender ideology falls along a continuum, making this dichotomy somewhat arbitrary. Some individuals (and families) are neither purely traditional nor purely egalitarian. Greenstein (1996a), for example, divided his sample into three groups including a *transitional* group of women whose gender role ideology scores fell between those with traditional and egalitarian ideologies. However, his analyses did not reveal how this transitional group differed from the other two with respect to the relations between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality.

In line with Greenstein's (1996a) conceptualization, the present study includes transitional families in its exploration of the relations between these variables. Unlike Greenstein's sample and others, however, this group is not defined by gender role ideology scores. Instead, the focus is on a social group whose family patterns are shaped by both traditional and egalitarian values. This transitional state may characterize, for example, immigrant families in Western countries (cf., Roer-Strier, 1996; Silverstein & Chen, 1999) or minority ethnic groups in predominantly Western societies (Haj-Yahia, 1995). Although such families typically have traditional origins and maintain traditional family patterns, they are exposed to egalitarian values and norms and may adopt attitudes of their surrounding social environment.

The present research attempts to use a *natural laboratory* in order to assess the relations between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality by comparing three ethnic-religious groups in Israel—Moslems, Christian Arabs, and Jews—that reflect traditional, transitional, and egalitarian ideologies, respectively.

THE ISRAELI SCENE: ETHNIC-RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND FAMILY PATTERNS

The population in Israel is composed of two main groups: Jews, who make up the majority (80%), and Arabs, who are divided among several religious groups: Moslems (75%), Christians (16%), and others (9%). Despite their different religious affiliations, Moslem and Christian Arabs share a

similar historical background, speak the same language, and operate a separate educational system (Smootha, 1993).

Whereas the Jewish population encompasses a large variety of family patterns and lifestyles, the mainstream Israeli family is most often described as Western, resembling family patterns in other industrialized countries (Lavee & Katz, in press). The Arab population, on the other hand, is generally described as being in the midst of a social change. Although Arab families have adopted many Western standards and aspirations, they nevertheless have retained traditional values and family patterns (Al-Haj, 1989, 1991). Consequently, many Arab families today live in an atmosphere of opposing forces: modernization and change, on the one hand, and conservatism and traditionalism on the other (Haj-Yahia, 1995).

However, Arab families have not been uniformly influenced by Western norms and values. One of the most important factors in shaping change among Arab families is their proximity to and involvement with the Jewish (primarily urban) population. On the whole, Christian Arabs, more than their Moslem counterparts, tend to live in urban settings and are more exposed to a modern way of life. In particular, Christian Arab women in Israel have experienced a more extensive and rapid pace of change in status than Moslem women and have adopted more egalitarian values (Abu-Baker, 1985). As a result, Christian Arab families are characterized as being in a state of transition, whereas Moslem families are more inclined to maintain traditional values and norms.

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

This study examines two hypotheses regarding the link between division of household labor and marital quality: (a) The mediating hypothesis, namely, that the effect of inequality in the division of household labor on marital relationships is mediated by perceived fairness; and (b) the moderating hypothesis, namely, that gender role ideology moderates the links between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality. In other words, it was expected that the effect of the division of labor on marital quality and the mediating effect of perceived fairness would differ for the three ethnic-religious groups. With respect to division of labor, we expected no difference between the two Arab groups (Moslem and Christian), both of whom would have a higher level of gender-segregated division of labor than the Jew-

ish group. Perceived fairness was expected to be more negatively associated with division of labor among Christian Arab (transitional) families, especially women, who face a gap between the traditional division of labor and egalitarian attitudes, than among Moslem (traditional) and Jewish (egalitarian) families, whose division of labor more closely corresponds with their gender role attitudes. As a consequence, we expected that marital quality would be lowest, and most negatively associated with perceived fairness, among Christian Arabs.

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted of 450 Moslem Arabs (225 men, 225 women), 214 Christian Arabs (106 men, 108 women), and 460 Jews (228 men, 232 women). The sample of Arab respondents was drawn from four residential communities: a small all-Moslem Arab village, a larger mostly Moslem town, a mixed Moslem-Christian Arab city, and a mixed Jewish-Arab city. The sample of Jewish respondents was drawn from four representative communities: a village (*moshav*), two small towns, and a city. Selection of respondents in each residential community was based on area probability sampling by using the Central Bureau of Statistics sampling map. The criteria for inclusion in the study were that respondents be married and have at least one child living at home.

Men's ages ranged from 22 to 59 ($M = 39.6$, $SD = 8.1$), and women's ages from 19 to 56 ($M = 36.6$, $SD = 8.3$). No significant difference was found between the three groups in men's age, but Jewish women were somewhat older than Arab women in both the Christian and Moslem groups. The median Jewish respondent had a post-secondary education, as compared to an elementary education among Moslem men and women, and a high school education among Christian men and women. Differences in women's labor force participation were also found. The majority of Jewish women (63.4%) were employed full time, as compared to 42% and 18% of Christian and Moslem women, respectively. These differences in educational level and employment patterns correspond to available national statistics (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2000).

Measures

Division of household labor. The division of household labor was measured by a list of 15 tasks. Respondents were asked to check whether each task was performed by the wife only, primarily by the wife, by both spouses equally, primarily by the husband, or by the husband only. Respondents could also mark "Not Applicable" for items that were not relevant for them (e.g., child was beyond the age at which routine child-care tasks are onerous, the family did not own a car, etc.), which were coded as missing. A factor analysis indicated three dimensions of household labor: *routine housework* (e.g., cleaning, meal preparation, laundry, dishwashing; *child-care tasks*; and *other household tasks* (e.g., paying bills, running errands, taking care of official business, and attending to home, yard and car maintenance). These three factors correspond with Coltrane's (2000) conceptualization of household labor. The internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach alphas) of the three subscales were .87, .69, and .70, respectively.

Given that traditional and egalitarian family patterns are characterized by the degree to which household labor is segregated or shared between husbands and wives, we constructed a measure for the *degree of household labor segregation*. For this purpose, the items were recoded on a scale ranging from 0 (*the task is shared by both spouses*) to 2 (*the task is performed by one spouse only*). A factor analysis of the recoded items indicated that the factor structure of the original scale was retained. Thus, the subscales reflect the *degree of segregation* in each area of household labor, ranging from 0 (*fully shared*) to 2 (*fully segregated*).

Sense of fairness. Sense of fairness was measured by a single item similar to that used in the first wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH-I). Following the list of household tasks included in the division of labor scale, respondents were asked, "To what degree do you feel this division of labor is fair?" Response categories ranged from 1 (*very unfair to me*) to 5 (*very unfair to my spouse*). This item correlated significantly ($r = .38$, $p < .01$) with the item measuring satisfaction with the division of labor in the marital quality scale (see the next section). An examination of the distribution of responses revealed that only 2.1% of women and 3.9% of men perceived the division of labor to be

unfair or very unfair to their spouses. In a sensitivity analysis, these respondents were found to be similar in terms of their division of household labor and marital quality to those who perceived the division of labor to be fair. At the same time, a significant difference in marital quality was found among women who perceived the division of labor to be fair, unfair, and very unfair to them. On the basis of these analyses, the item was recoded into three categories: very unfair to me, unfair to me, and fair.

Marital quality. Marital quality was measured by the short version of Enriching Relationship Issues, Communication, and Happiness (ENRICH; Fowers & Olson, 1992), a 10-item Likert-type scale that assesses the perceived quality of one's marriage across 10 dimensions of the relationship (spouse's personal traits, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexuality, parenting, relationship with the extended family, division of household labor, and religious practices). Fowers and Olson report good reliability estimates of the short ENRICH scale, as well as high concurrent and predictive validity. Similar estimates have been found in the Hebrew version (Lavee, 1995). This scale has been extensively used by Israeli researchers in both Hebrew and Arabic. In the present study, the division-of-labor item was excluded from the total score. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the marital quality scale was .84.

In addition, a single-item measure for *egalitarian attitudes* was included. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement, on a 5-point scale (1 = *do not agree* to 5 = *fully agree*), with the statement: "When a woman works full time outside the home, both spouses should equally share household chores." This measure was not included in the analyses and served only to validate the classification of ethnic-religious groups into traditional, transitional, and egalitarian families.

Procedure

Respondents were interviewed in their homes by research assistants (Arab and Jewish graduate students). The questionnaires were administered in Hebrew for the Jewish respondents and in Arabic for the Arab respondents.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

The data were analyzed in a number of phases. First, we examined gender and group differences

in gender role attitudes, as well as level of segregation in the division of labor, in order to validate the classification of the three ethnic-religious groups into traditional, transitional, and egalitarian gender ideologies. Group and gender differences in perceived fairness and marital quality were also examined. In the second phase, we analyzed a structural equation model in order to test (a) whether perceived fairness functions as a mediator between the division of labor and marital quality for both men and women; and (b) whether the relations between division of labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality are moderated by ethnic-religious affiliation.

Descriptive Statistics and Analyses of Group and Gender Differences

The means and standard deviations of all measures for male and female respondents in the three religious-ethnic groups are presented in Table 1. With respect to gender role attitudes, the data show both group and gender differences. In all three groups, women hold more egalitarian values than men. Additional analyses revealed a significant difference between the three religious-ethnic groups among both men, $F(2, 564) = 43.49, p < .01$, and women, $F(2, 570) = 28.09, p < .01$. Among men, post-hoc contrast (Scheffé) analysis indicated significant differences in gender role attitudes between groups, with Jews holding the most egalitarian values and Moslems the most conservative ones. Among women, the analysis indicated that Jews and Christians hold similar values, which are significantly more egalitarian than those of their Moslem counterparts.

The data regarding segregation in the division of labor indicate that for all tasks combined, as well as for housework and child-care tasks, there are significant group differences. Inspection of the raw data revealed that housework and child-care tasks are performed primarily by women in all three groups. However, the groups differed in the extent of men's participation in these tasks. Post-hoc contrast (Scheffé) analysis indicated that (a) the two Arab groups (Moslem and Christian) are similar in the level of segregation in housework and child-care tasks; and (b) the division of labor in these groups is significantly more segregated than in Jewish families. No group differences were found in other household tasks, which are performed more often by men in all three groups.

The findings regarding gender role attitudes and division of labor confirm the classification of

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF RESEARCH VARIABLES AND ANALYSES FOR GROUP AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

	Moslem Arabs		Christian Arabs		Jews		ANOVA (<i>F</i>)		
	Men 225	Women 225	Men 106	Women 108	Men 228	Women 232	Group	Gender	Group × Gender
A. <i>M</i>, <i>SD</i>, and ANOVA									
Egalitarian attitudes	3.26 (1.27)	3.85 (1.21)	3.80 (1.09)	4.30 (0.91)	4.29 (1.13)	4.55 (0.84)	71.43**	41.13**	2.60
Segregation (total)	1.24 (0.40)	1.18 (0.40)	1.14 (0.46)	1.15 (0.47)	0.77 (0.34)	0.78 (0.34)	155.21**	0.33	1.18
Housework	1.74 (0.43)	1.72 (0.43)	1.57 (0.54)	1.59 (0.54)	0.77 (0.44)	0.84 (0.49)	491.76**	0.72	1.09
Child-care tasks	1.11 (0.61)	1.04 (0.59)	1.00 (0.72)	1.01 (0.69)	0.52 (0.42)	0.59 (0.49)	103.12**	0.03	1.86
Other tasks	0.97 (0.54)	0.86 (0.53)	0.88 (0.54)	0.88 (0.55)	0.88 (0.44)	0.83 (0.42)	1.65	2.79	1.00
Marital quality	4.20 (0.63)	4.25 (0.66)	4.19 (0.71)	4.00 (0.75)	4.25 (0.61)	4.27 (0.59)	5.20**	1.00	2.59
							χ^2		
							10.77*	34.15**	(a,b)
B. Distribution (in percentages) of perceived fairness by group and gender									
Sense of Fairness									
Very unfair to me	3.4	7.0	0.0	11.0	0.9	1.8			
Unfair to me	7.3	13.0	3.7	24.8	6.3	11.4			
Fair	89.3	80.0	96.3	64.2	92.8	86.8			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			

Notes: Pearson χ^2 for gender differences within groups: Moslems 7.61*, Christians 35.70**, Jews 2.17. Pearson χ^2 for group differences within gender: Men 7.25, Women 19.40**.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

the three religious-ethnic groups into traditional, transitional, and egalitarian gender ideologies. Moslems appear to be most traditional, Jews are most egalitarian, and Christian Arabs tend to be located somewhere in the middle. In particular, the gender role attitudes of Christian women are similar to those of Jewish women; yet, the division of labor in their families is as segregated as in Moslem families.

The distribution of perceived fairness (Table 1, Part B) shows both group and gender differences. Men report greater fairness in the division of labor than women, and both Jews and Moslems report a higher sense of fairness than Christians. Among men, there are no significant group differences; however, Christian women depict the division of labor as significantly less fair than either Jewish or Moslem women. Nearly 36% of the Christian women report that the division of labor is unfair or very unfair to them, as compared to 13.2% of the Jewish women and 20% of the Moslem women.

Last, analyses for group and gender differences in perceived marital quality show significant group differences but no gender differences. Post-hoc contrast (Scheffé) analysis for group differences indicated no significant differences between the three religious-ethnic groups for men, $F(2, 567) = .56, p > .50$, but a significant group difference for women, $F(2, 571) = 7.16, p < .01$. Specifically, Christian women report a significantly lower level of marital quality than either Moslem or Jewish women.

The Mediating Effect of Perceived Fairness

In order to test the mediating effect of perceived fairness, we analyzed a structural equation model (see Figure 1). In this model, segregation is a latent variable specified by the three factors that compose it: routine housework, child-care tasks, and other household tasks. Sense of fairness was specified by a single indicator consisting of a three-level ordinal variable. Because the residual (error variance) of a single indicator cannot be estimated by the program, we constrained the error variance of this variable to .20, on the basis of reliability estimates in studies where fairness was measured by multiple items (e.g., Hawkins et al., 1995). Marital quality was specified by two indicators—MQ1 and MQ2—constructed by randomly splitting the items of the marital quality scale. Given that the scale is *randomly* split, both subindices are assumed to be expressions of the

same basic latent construct (e.g., see Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996). The correlation between these indicators is .76 ($p < .01$).

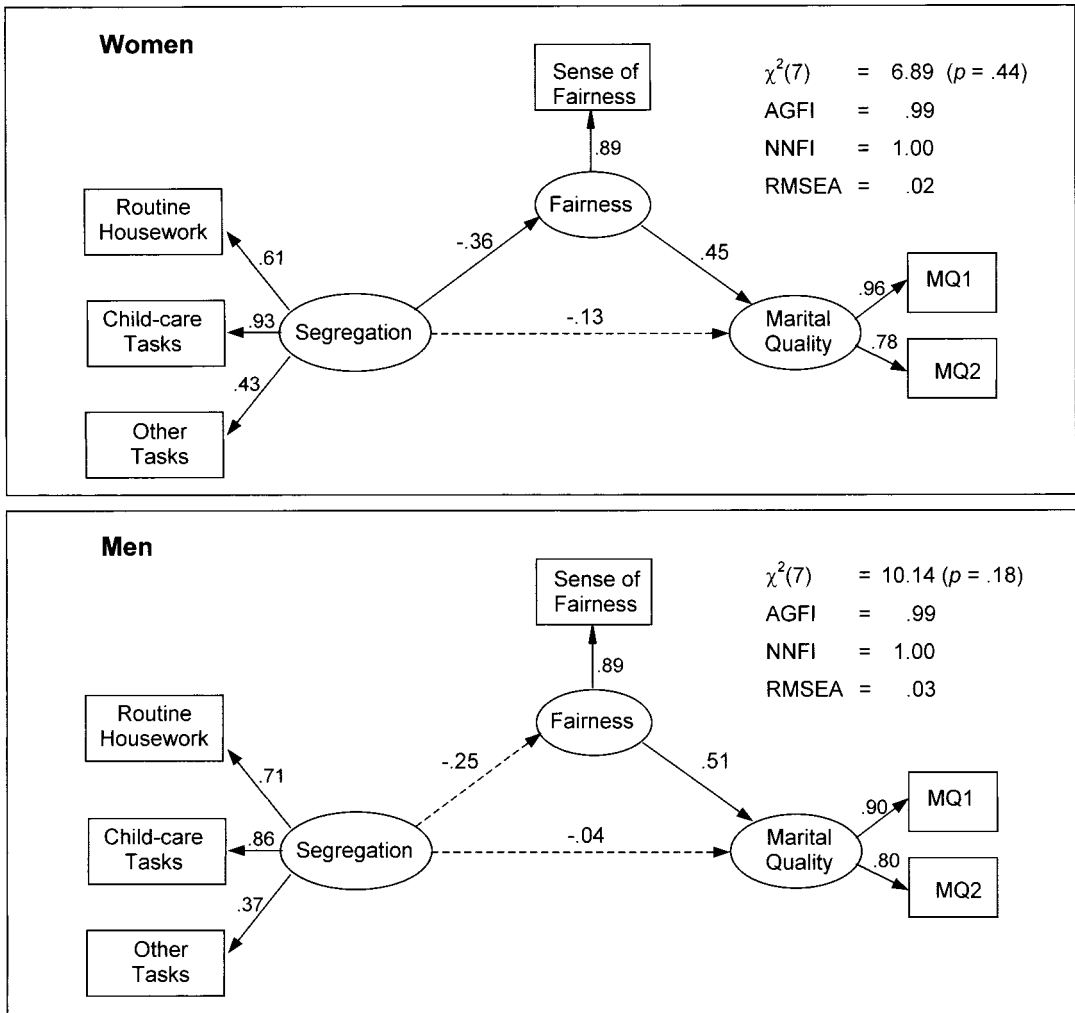
The mediating effect of perceived fairness was examined by analyzing the data of each gender separately. For each gender group, a product-moment/polyserial correlation matrix and an asymptotic covariance matrix were produced from the raw data by using the PRELIS 2 program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). This was needed for the analysis of the model because sense of fairness was measured on an ordinal scale and its distribution was highly skewed. The model was estimated by LISREL 8, using a Weighted Least Square (WLS) method.

On the basis of the analysis strategy of Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating effect of fairness was tested by first examining the effect of segregation on marital quality without sense of fairness and then analyzing the complete fairness-as-mediator model. In estimating an unmediated model, the effect of segregation on marital quality was statistically significant for both men, $\gamma = -.17, t = -2.48$, and women, $\gamma = -.30, t = -5.56$, indicating that greater segregation in the division of labor is associated with a lower level of marital quality.

The standardized path estimates of the complete (mediated) model for women and for men, along with indices of model fit, are presented in Figure 1. As the fit indices show, the model fits both the women's and men's data quite well. For women, the findings confirm the mediating hypothesis of sense of fairness: Perceived fairness is negatively associated with segregation and positively related to marital quality. Furthermore, the direct effect of segregation on marital quality is no longer significant, indicating that the link between these variables is mediated by sense of fairness. For men, however, sense of fairness does not function as a mediator variable. Although sense of fairness is positively related to marital quality, it is not affected by the degree of household labor segregation.

In view of the findings that Moslem, Christian, and Jewish men do not differ from each other in sense of fairness and perceived marital quality (Table 1), and that fairness is not a mediator variable between household labor segregation and marital quality for men, we proceeded with the analysis of the moderating effect of gender ideology for women only.

FIGURE 1. STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS FOR A MODEL OF PERCEIVED FAIRNESS AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN SEGREGATED DIVISION OF LABOR AND MARITAL QUALITY—ESTIMATES FOR MEN AND WOMEN



Note: All coefficients are significant at $p < .05$, except those shown in dashed arrows.

MQ1 and MQ2 are split halves of the marital quality scale. AGFI = adjusted goodness of fit index; NNFI = Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

The Moderating Effect of Gender Ideology

In order to examine the moderating effect of gender ideology, we conducted a multigroup analysis of the structural equation model shown in Figure 1 with the women's data (see Baron & Kenny, 1986; Rigdon, Schumacker, & Wothke, 1998). More specifically, we followed Kenny's (2000) guidelines by estimating a series of nested models in order to test which model best accounts for the data of the three ethnic-religious groups. The fit statistics of the various models are depicted in Ta-

ble 2. In Step 1 (the baseline model), all parameters—measurement as well as structural—were freely estimated for each group. In Step 2, invariance of the factor loadings was tested by constraining the relations between the latent variables and their indicators to equality across groups. This did not cause a significant change in the fit indices of the model, indicating that the three groups are similar in the relations between the factors (latent variables) and their measured indicators. Keeping the loadings invariant, Step 3 tested for structural

TABLE 2. FIT INDICES FOR NESTED SEQUENCE OF MODELS IN MULTIGROUP ANALYSIS

Step	Model	df	χ^2	χ^2/df	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA
1	All parameters free across groups	21	38.19	1.72	.96	.98	0.07
2	Invariant loadings, free error variances and structural parameters	27	46.42	1.73	.96	.98	0.06
3	Invariant loadings and structural parameters	33	81.54	2.27	.92	.94	0.09
4	Invariant loadings and measurement errors, free structural parameters	37	74.91	1.94	.95	.96	0.07
5	Invariant factor variances	43	93.83	2.01	.94	.94	0.08
6	All parameters equal across groups	49	125.15	2.27	.91	.91	0.09

Note: NNFI = Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

path invariance by constraining the relations between the latent variables to equality across groups. This resulted in a significant deterioration in model fit, as evidenced by the change in chi-square relative to the change in degrees of freedom, $\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df) = 35.12(6)$, $p < .01$, suggesting that the three groups differ significantly in the structural relations between the latent variables. Thereafter, group invariances were tested for measurement error variances (Step 4) and factor variances (Step 5), while allowing the structural relations to be free for the three groups. Each of these steps resulted in a deterioration of model fit relative to the baseline model. This set of analyses shows, therefore, that the best fit of model to data is achieved when the loadings are equal across groups, while error variances, factor variances, and structural relations are estimated freely.

The structural parameter estimates for each religious-ethnic group are presented in Table 3. The findings show that marital quality is related to segregation and sense of fairness in different ways

for Moslem, Christian, and Jewish women. For the Moslem women, much as for the men in all three groups (see Figure 1), marital quality is related to sense of fairness but neither sense of fairness nor marital quality is associated with household labor segregation. For the Christian women, sense of fairness is negatively related to segregation and marital quality is positively related to sense of fairness, so that sense of fairness functions as a mediator variable between segregation and marital quality. For the Jewish women, in contrast, segregation is negatively related to both sense of fairness and marital quality but marital quality is not related to sense of fairness. The findings thus indicate that among women, gender ideology moderates the relations between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality.

DISCUSSION

This study used a natural laboratory of three cultural groups to investigate the links between di-

TABLE 3. UNSTANDARDIZED ESTIMATES (STANDARD ERRORS) AND COMMON METRIC STANDARDIZED SOLUTION (CMS) OF STRUCTURAL PARAMETERS IN THE THREE GROUPS

Structural Parameter	Moslems		Christians		Jews	
	Estimate (SE)	CMS	Estimate (SE)	CMS	Estimate (SE)	CMS
Segregation-fairness	-0.41 (0.23)	-0.36	-0.46** (0.18)	-0.38	-0.43** (0.19)	-0.39
Segregation-marital quality	-0.04 (0.21)	-0.04	-0.11 (0.22)	-0.10	-0.48** (0.15)	-0.46
Fairness-marital quality	0.35 (0.33)	0.38	0.70** (0.25)	0.76	0.07 (0.24)	0.03
Group Goodness-of-Fit Statistics						
Contribution to chi-square		25.81%		38.93%		35.26%
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)		0.96		0.99		0.99
Root-mean-square residual		0.03		0.03		0.05

Note: Global goodness-of-fit statistics: $\chi^2 (41) = 35.34$ ($p = .71$); NNFI (Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index) = 1.00; RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) = $< .001$.

** $p < .01$.

vision of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality among people who hold traditional, transitional, and egalitarian gender ideologies. The findings may be examined on two overlapping levels: conceptual and sociocultural.

Conceptually, the study provides a further test of the mediating effect of sense of fairness between inequality in the division of household labor and marital quality, as well as the moderating effect of gender and gender role ideology on the relations between division of labor, sense of fairness, and marital quality. In this regard, the study differs from previous research in two important respects. First, whereas most previous research has examined gender ideology along the line of traditional–egalitarian ideologies, the present study included transitional families as well. Second, a natural setting was used as the basis for assessing the moderating effect of gender role ideology rather than categorizing respondents on the basis of gender-role attitude scores.

In social and cultural terms, the focus of the study is on the consequences of being in the midst of a cultural transition. In the Israeli social context, the Christian Arab population appears to be in such a state of transition, caught between Eastern and Western cultures to a greater extent than their Moslem counterparts or the Jewish majority. Notably, the concept of the transitional family here reflects not merely a midpoint between traditional and egalitarian attitudes but a state of transition between traditional family values and a more egalitarian, Western lifestyle.

Before we discuss the findings, a few caveats should be noted. First, although we refer to Moslem Arabs, Christian Arabs, and Jews as distinct groups in terms of gender ideology, it should be noted that some diversity exists within each group. There are Moslems who hold egalitarian attitudes, and there are Jewish men and women who hold traditional values. Nevertheless, as the descriptive statistics (Table 1) indicate, the mainstream family patterns and attitudes within the three groups represent traditional, transitional, and egalitarian gender ideologies.

Second, two variables (egalitarian attitudes and sense of fairness) were measured by single items, which may have somewhat limited validity. Whereas the egalitarian attitudes measure was only used for verifying the group classification and was not used in the model, the sense of fairness measure deserves some attention. Although this item has been the most commonly used measure in previous studies of fairness in the division

of household labor, including the NSFH-I project, it may create some difficulties in interpretation (Smith, Gager, & Morgan, 1998). In the present study, our confidence in the validity of this measure stems from a sensitivity analysis as well as its significant correlation with satisfaction with the division of labor. On the basis of sensitivity analysis, the sense of fairness item was recoded into three categories (see *Measures* section), and the structural equation model was specified and analyzed in accordance with its unique measurement characteristics.

The Mediating Effect of Perceived Fairness: Gender Differences

The findings show different patterns of the relations between division of labor, perceived fairness, and marital quality for men and for women. For women, the analysis confirmed the hypothesized mediating effect of sense of fairness: namely, greater sex-typed segregation in the division of labor is associated with a decreased sense of fairness, which in turn is linked with a lower level of marital quality. For men, in contrast, perceived fairness was not found to function as a mediator variable. These findings provide supportive evidence for the idea that the perception of equity is not as related to the actual division of household labor for men as it is for women (Coltrane, 2000). Possibly, women's perceived equity is related to a fair share of domestic chores, whereas men tend to lump all family tasks together, including paid work and other responsibilities, in judging the "balance of fairness" in their families (Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999; Wilkie et al., 1998). Whether perceived fairness is shaped primarily by household duties (for women) or by a more global view of family responsibilities (for men), the perception that the division of work is personally unfair leads to a lower level of perceived marital quality for both men and women.

The Moderating Effect of Gender Role Ideology

Despite differences for the men between the Jewish and the two Arab groups in the division of labor, no differences were found in reported sense of fairness or in marital quality between the men in all three groups. Conceivably, therefore, gender role ideology does not moderate the relations between division of labor, sense of fairness, and marital quality for men. However, gender role ideology does moderate these relations for women.

For Moslem Arab (traditional) women, the segregated division of household labor has no effect on marital quality, either directly or indirectly (through the perception of unfairness). Although the division of labor in their families is the most traditionally segregated along gender lines, it is not perceived as unfair but rather as equitable.

These findings may be explained in a number of ways. First, as posited by gender construction theories, men and women in these families perform different tasks because such practices reaffirm and reproduce gendered selves and gendered interaction order (see Coltrane, 2000). Furthermore, maintaining the home and caring for children bear a symbolic meaning that may lead to positive outcomes for traditional women, such as feeling appreciated, keeping peace at home, and confirming one's sense of proper gender roles (Mikula, 1998). Second, these women base their expectations on referents that are ideologically similar to themselves and thus justify the lesser participation of their husbands in the domestic sphere (Major, 1993; Piña & Bengtson, 1993; Thompson, 1991). Third, because these women tend not to be employed outside the home, their unequal contribution to the housework domain is counterbalanced by their husbands' contribution in the paid work domain. It thus appears that for Moslem women the segregated division of household labor has no bearing on their perception of justice or evaluation of their marital quality.

For Jewish (egalitarian) women, a more segregated division of labor is directly and negatively associated with both perceived fairness and marital quality. Thus, sense of fairness is not a mediating variable in the relation between division of labor and marital quality for these women. This finding is somewhat surprising and departs from previous research (Blair, 1993, 1998; Grote & Clark, 1998; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Ward, 1993), which showed marital quality to be related to sense of fairness. Although the divergent findings may be attributed to varying measures of division of labor and different operational definitions of egalitarianism, the discrepancy may also be a function of the relatively balanced division of labor in these families and the women's overall perception of the division of labor as fair. The direct (rather than mediated) link between the division of labor and marital quality suggests that egalitarian women expect a more equal sharing of household labor between husbands and wives in high-quality marital relationships. Thus, regardless of whether the division of labor is fair for

them, the very fact that family work is not segregated (but rather is equally shared) is associated with a higher evaluation of marital quality.

Last, women in Christian Arab (transitional) families perceive the division of labor as less equitable than do either egalitarian or traditional women, and their reported marital quality is the lowest. It appears that for these women a gap exists between the actual division of labor, which is shaped by traditional family patterns, and their expectations, which are influenced by egalitarian referents. Consequently, they tend to feel more deprived and to perceive the division of labor as being more unjust to them (Crosby, 1976). Because gendered division of labor is a culturally normative family pattern in Arab families, it is not directly linked to perceived marital quality as it is for egalitarian women, but is instead mediated by perceived fairness. Thus, to the extent that such segregated division of labor is perceived as personally inequitable, it has a negative effect on their marital satisfaction.

An important implication of these findings is that more attention should be directed to populations in a state of cultural transition. Although this study is based on the Israeli context, such a transitional state may also characterize families in other Western countries who retain traditional values and family patterns. It may also characterize families who immigrate to Western countries from societies where a traditional gender role ideology prevails. Rapid social change, such as migration, weakens traditional values regarding familism and may engender changes in role attitudes and role enactment, as well as shifts in the balance of power within families (Shuval, 1993; Slutzki, 1979). Furthermore, the rate of acculturation in such families may vary among family members.

Most studies have focused on the different rates of acculturation between generations; however, families in cultural transition may also experience *gender* differences in behavior and attitude change (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994). Among such transitional families, the discrepancies between more egalitarian gender role attitudes and the actual traditional patterns of division of labor, as well as the discrepancies in attitudes between spouses, may be a source of strain and interpersonal conflict and may generate marital dissatisfaction. Within this context of cultural change, it is thus imperative that family practitioners heighten their sensitivity to cultural stereotypes and increase their awareness of the conflicting forces impacting on their clients' marital quality.

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