11 The noneffects of class on the gendered division of labor in the home

The central objective of this chapter is to explore systematically the empirical relationship between *the location of households in the class structure* and *gender inequalities in performance of housework.* Since the middle of the 1970s, class analysts interested in gender, particularly those rooted in the Marxist tradition, have placed domestic labor at the center of analysis. In a variety of different ways, they have argued that the linkage between the system of production, analyzed in class terms, and the domestic division of labor, analyzed in gender terms, was at the heart of understanding the social processes through which gender relations were themselves reproduced (or perhaps even generated) in capitalist societies. Sometimes this argument took a rather reductionist form, particularly when the performance of unpaid domestic labor by women in the home was explained by the functional requirements of capital accumulation.[1] In other cases, the argument was less reductionist, emphasizing the nature of the class-generated constraints imposed on strategies of men and women as they negotiated gender relations within the household rather than the functional fit between capitalism and patriarchy.[2] And in still other analyses, the possibilities

[1] The debate over the functional relationship between capitalist exploitation and unpaid domestic labor by housewives came to be known as the "domestic labor debate" in the 1970s. The essential argument of the class-functionalist position was: (1) that unpaid domestic labor had the effect of lowering the costs of producing labor power; (2) that this had the effect of increasing the rate of capitalist exploitation since capitalists could pay lower wages; (3) that in an indirect way, therefore, capitalists exploited housewives; and (4) that the basic explanation for the subordination of women – or at least, for the reproduction of that subordination – lay in the ways such domestic production fulfilled functions for capitalism. For a review of this debate see Molyneux (1979). Some of the main contributors to the discussion were Gardiner (1975), Secombe (1973), Hartmann (1981) and Barrett (1980).

[2] For a particularly cogent elaboration of this approach, see Brenner and Ramas (1984).

of systematic contradictions between the logics of capitalist class domination and patriarchal male domination were entertained.[3] In all of these analyses, in spite of the differences in theoretical argument, the role of domestic labor in the linkage between class relations and gender relations was a central theme.

With this theoretical preoccupation, it might have been expected that there would have developed a substantial body of research exploring the empirical relationship between the domestic division of labor and classes. This has not happened. While there are historical and qualitative case studies which examine the domestic division of labor and a few of these attempt to explore the class variations in such patterns, there is almost no research that tries to map out in a systematic quantitative manner the relationship between class and the gender division of labor in the household.[4]

A number of reasons might explain the lack of such research. Quantitatively oriented sociologists who have engaged with the problem of housework have not been particularly interested in class analysis or the dialogue between Marxism and feminism. At most, class enters the analysis in the form of occupation as one variable among many rather than as the central focus of investigation.[5] Marxists, who are centrally concerned with class and its effects, have generally posed the problem of class and gender at the abstract macro-structural level of analysis as the relationship between "capitalism" and "patriarchy." This tends to push offstage more micro-level problems concerned with the relationship between variations in class location and gender relations. Feminists, who are often deeply committed to the investigation of concrete, micro-level processes, have generally not taken class very seriously. And both Marxists and feminists have generally been quite hostile to quantitative research.

The basic objective of this chapter, then, is to explore empirically the relationship between class and the gendered domestic division of labor. More specifically, we will examine how the proportionate contribution by husbands to housework in dual-earner families varies

[3] The possibility of such contradictions between capitalism and patriarchy plays an important role in Heidi Hartman's (1979a) influential essay, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism."

[4] For examples of the historical perspective on the gendered division of labor in the household, see Cowan (1983) and Strasser (1982).

[5] Limited treatments of the relationship between occupationally defined class categories and the domestic division of labor can be found in Pahl (1984: 270–272), Berk (1985), Presser and Cain (1983), Coverman (1985).

across households with different class compositions. We will not attempt to develop a comprehensive multivariate explanatory model of gender inequalities in housework. Our object of explanation, therefore, is not strictly speaking the gender division of housework as such, but the relation between class and the gender division of labor. While it would be desirable to situate the problem of class and its effects on housework within such a comprehensive model, the data we will use in this analysis lack a number of critical variables needed for such an endeavor. In any case, before worrying about how class might be linked in a complex multivariate relationship to the various other determinants of gender inequalities in housework, it is important to establish as systematically as possible the class effects themselves. This is the task of the present analysis.

11.1 Theoretical expectations

As in Chapter 10, because of limitations of available data for spouses' class and because of limitations in sample size, the empirical investigations of this chapter will rely on a class concept which distinguishes only three categories: the self-employed (consisting of employers and petty bourgeois), "middle class" (employees who occupy a managerial or supervisory position within authority structures and/or are employed in a professional, managerial or technical occupation) and working class (all other employees). This simple three-category class variable in principle yields nine family-class locations. Unfortunately, again because of the relatively small sample size, there were two few people in family-class locations involving the self-employed to be able to differentiate all five of these categories. As a result, for families involving self-employment we will not distinguish between the husband and wife being self-employed. The resulting family-class categories are presented in Table 11.1. Our empirical task, then, is to explore how inequality between husbands and wives in housework varies across the categories of this family-class composition typology.

While neither Marxism nor feminism has a well-developed body of theory about the *variability* of the domestic division of labor across households with different class compositions, nevertheless there are some general expectations within class analysis and feminism that point toward certain broad hypotheses about this relationship. We will explore five such hypotheses.

Table 11.1. *Family-class composition matrix*

		Husband's job class		
		Self-employed	Middle class	Working class
Wife's job class	Self-employed	1	2	3
	Middle class	2	4	5
	Working class	3	6	7

Categories which we will distinguish in the family class composition matrix:

1 = pure self-employed family
2 = self-employment + middle class
3 = self-employment + working class
4 = pure middle-class family
5 = middle-class wife + working-class husband
6 = working-class wife + middle-class husband
7 = pure working-class family

Proletarianization and gender equality

The best-known discussion of the gender division of labor in classical Marxism is found in Frederick Engels' study, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Engels 1968 [1884]). Engels argued that male domination within the family was rooted in male control of private property. The pivot of this linkage was the desire by men to ensure that their property was inherited by their children. To accomplish this, men needed to control the fertility of women. Given the power and status they had by virtue of controlling property, men were able to translate this desire into practice. The broad institutions of male domination, Engels argued, are built upon this foundation.

On the basis of this reasoning, Engels argued that male domination would wither away in the households of porpertyless proletarians:

> Here, there is a complete absence of all property, for the safeguarding and inheritance of which monogamy and male domination were established. Therefore, there is no stimulus whatever here to assert male domination ... Moreover, since large scale industry has transferred the woman from house to the labour market and the factory, and makes her, often enough, the breadwinner of the family, the last remnants of male domination in the proletarian home have lost all foundation ... (Engels 1968 [1891]:508)

Engels' reasoning leads to two basic hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis 1. Working-class egalitarianism.* The more proletarianized is a household, the more housework will tend to be equally divided between husbands and wives. The homogeneous working-class family, therefore, should have the most egalitarian distribution of housework.
>
> *Hypothesis 2. Petty bourgeois inegalitarianism.* Households within which private ownership of the means of production remains salient will have a more inegalitarian division of housework. The homogeneous petty bourgeois household should therefore have the least egalitarian distribution of housework.

Sexism and class cultures

One of the persistent images in popular culture is the contrast between the middle-class husband with an apron helping in the kitchen, and the working-class husband tinkering with the car or drinking in a bar with his friends. There are many possible mechanisms which might underwrite this contrast. The premium placed on physical toughness and male solidarity in manual labor may constitute a material basis for an exaggerated masculine identity in the working class. In line with the arguments of Melvin Kohn (1969) about the relationship between work and values, the greater cognitive complexity of middle-class jobs may encourage a more flexible and open set of attitudes toward gender roles. Regardless of the specific mechanism, this image leads to a specific prediction about class and the gender division of labor:

> *Hypothesis 3. Class cultures.* Working-class men will, in general, do proportionately less housework than middle-class men. Homogeneous working-class households should therefore have the most inegalitarian distribution of housework, while homogeneous middle-class households should be the most egalitarian.

Class and power within the family

An important theme in the sociology of gender is the problem of bargaining power between men and women within households. Particularly in an era in which gender roles are being challenged, the division of labor in the household should not be viewed as simply the result of a script being followed by highly socialized men and women. Rather, the amount of housework done by husbands should be viewed as at least in part an outcome of a process of contestation, conflict and bargaining.

The class location of husbands and wives bears on their respective power in the household in two ways. First, as in any bargaining situation, the resources people bring to household bargaining affect their relative power. In these terms, class inequalities between men and women would be expected to be translated into power differentials within the household. The more economically dependent a wife is on her husband, the weaker will be her bargaining position within the household and thus the more inegalitarian the gender division of labor is expected to be.[6] This would imply that when wives are in more advantaged class locations than their husbands, housework should be more equally divided. Second, quite apart from sheer material resources, status differentials are likely to play a role in bargaining situations (Coverman 1985). To the extent that wives occupy lower status in the labor force than their husbands, they are thus also likely to be in a weaker bargaining position within the household. Taking these two issues together leads to the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 4. Class bargaining power.* In households in which the wife is in a more privileged class location than her husband she will have greater relative bargaining power and thus her husband is likely to do more housework. Households with middle-class wives and working-class husbands are thus likely to be the most egalitarian.

[6] Examples of this kind of argument can be found in Blumstein and Schwartz (1984) and Hood (1983). Becker (1981) also argues that women will specialize in housework because of the wage gap between men and women, but he does not see this as affecting housework because of the implications of wage differentials for power within the family. Instead, he sees this simply as a rational allocation of labor time given that male leisure time is more valuable for the economic welfare of the family as a whole.

Autonomy of gender relations

One of the core feminist theses about gender relations in capitalist society is that they have a certain degree of real autonomy with respect to other causal processes. On the one hand, this means that gender is socially constructed rather than a mere expression of biological processes. On the other hand, it means that in the social processes within which this construction takes place, gender is not reducible to any other social phenomenon, particularly class or the economy. While there may be important causal interactions between class and gender, gender relations are not mere functions of class or anything else, and in this sense they have some genuine autonomy.

An implication of relatively strong versions of the gender autonomy thesis is that the amount of housework men do will be primarily determined by the nature of gender relations and gender struggles, not by such things as class. While this does not mean that class would have no effects at all, these effects should be fairly muted. This suggests the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 5. Gender autonomy.* The degree of equality in the gender division of labor will not vary very much across households with different class compositions.

11.2 Results

As in Chapter 10, we will explore this problem comparatively in Sweden and the United States.[7] Sweden and the United States are almost at opposite poles among developed capitalist countries in terms of economic inequalities in general and the gender dimension of inequality in particular. The Swedish state has poured much greater resources into public childcare, paid parental leaves and other programs which might impact on the gender division of labor within families.[8] A comparison of inequalities in housework in the two countries, therefore, may give some insight into the extent to which

[7] There have been few cross-national comparisons of housework, and those which do exist have not discussed class. For other comparative analyses of housework see Robinson, Andreyenkov and Patrushev (1988) and Szalai (1966a, 1966b; Szalai et al. 1972).

[8] For a discussion of these family policies in Sweden, see Moen (1989: 24–28) and Ruggie (1984).

this egalitarianism in the public sphere is reflected in greater egalitarianism in the private sphere.

We will present the results in three steps. First, we will examine briefly the overall distributions of housework in the two countries. This is mainly to provide a background context for the rest of our analysis. Second, we will examine the overall patterns of class variation in husbands' performance of housework. Finally, we will examine how these patterns are affected when various other variables are included in the analysis. In particular, we will be concerned to examine the effect of including education in the equation, since it might be thought that what at first looks like class differences in housework performance could in fact be education differences.

Overall distributions

Table 11.2 presents the basic distributions of husbands' percentage contribution to housework as reported by the male and female respondents to the surveys in the United States and in Sweden. There are a number of features of these distributions worth noting.

First of all, the basic contours of the distributions in Table 11.2 are similar to those reported in other studies. Most research indicates that in families within which both husbands and wives are in the paid labor force, men do between 20% and 30% of housework. This is roughly what we find here.[9]

Second, it is also worth noting that while the reports of husbands' contributions to housework are consistently higher by our male respondents than by our female respondents, the rank orders of husbands' contributions to different tasks based on male and female reports are identical in the US and nearly identical in Sweden. For routine housework tasks, in both countries husbands make the least contribution to laundry and the most contribution to grocery shopping.

Third, overall, Swedish husbands in two-earner households appear to do a somewhat greater proportion of housework than their American counterparts.[10] On the basis of the female reports of husbands'

[9] The proportion of housework men do is reported in other studies as follows: Pleck (1985; 30–31): 20.3%, and over 30% where childcare is included; Berk (1985; 66): 27%; Walker and Woods (1976): 21.6%, and with childcare, 20.7%; Robinson (1977; 63): 17.5%, and 20.7% with childcare; Meissner et al. (1975): 20.7% including childcare.

[10] This finding is consistent with the findings of Haas (1981) that Swedish households involved a more egalitarian gender distribution of labor than American households.

contribution, with the exception of childcare, Swedish men contribute more to housework than American men on every household task. Taking all of these tasks together, Swedish men in two-earner families do on average just over 25% of the housework whereas American men only do about 20%.

If anything, this is an underestimate of the real difference between the two countries in gender inequality in housework, since a much higher proportion of Swedish married women in the labor force than of American married women are part-time employees. The average number of hours worked per week by the wives in our sample is 30.9 in Sweden and 39.9 in the United States. If we adjust for differences in hours of paid labor force participation, then the difference in husbands' contribution to housework between the two countries is even more striking. A Tobit[11] regression of wife's hours of paid labor force work on husband's percentage contribution to housework generates following equations for Sweden and the United States:

Sweden: Husband's contribution = 16.01 + 0.563 [Wife's hours]
US: Husband's contribution = 3.32 + 0.418 [Wife's hours]

On the basis of these equations, in two-earner families in which the wife works 40 hours a week, her husband would be expected to do about 20% of the housework in the United States, whereas in a comparable family in Sweden, the husband would be expected to do over 38% of the housework.[12] While the data do indicate that housework remains unevenly divided in both countries, the degree of gender inequality in the household is clearly greater in the United States than in Sweden.[13]

Variations in husbands' housework across class locations

The dependent variable in our analyses of the relationship between class and housework is the variable "total housework" in column 8 of

[11] For technical reasons, it is preferable to use Tobit regressions rather than OLS regressions in the analysis of housework because of the large number of zero values on the dependent variable. The rationale for this technique is presented in the methodological appendix.

[12] These estimates are basically the same if OLS regressions are used instead of Tobit regressions.

[13] Of course, the fact that wives are more likely than husbands to be part-time workers in Sweden is itself a result of qualitative aspects of the gender division of labor. Swedish policies which facilitate part time work and more flexible career structures (through parental leave and other arrangements), therefore, may not by themselves challenge gendered divisions of labor as such, but they do appear to underwrite less gender inegalitarianism within the domestic sphere of work itself.

Table 11.2. *Distribution of husband's contribution to housework in the United States and Sweden*

Percentage of housework done by husband	1 Routine cleaning	2 Cooking	3 Meal cleanup	4 Grocery shopping	5 Laundry	6 Total routine housework[a]	7 Childcare	8 Total housework[b]
United States								
Women's reports								
0%	43.7	46.1	44.0	42.3	68.9	19.8	5.1	12.1
1-10%	9.1	18.4	12.2	10.4	8.3	23.5	1.5	23.5
11-30%	17.6	14.2	13.2	10.0	7.0	37.4	32.3	42.5
31-49%	6.3	3.1	2.0	3.8	1.9	13.1	18.7	15.4
50% or more	23.2	18.2	28.5	33.6	13.9	6.2	42.4	6.5
Mean	20.8	17.0	21.7	24.7	11.3	18.9	37.8	20.5
Weighted N	276	279	273	278	276	281	133	281
Men's reports								
0%	26.2	34.4	22.6	31.9	50.0	11.6	0.0	3.9
1-10%	12.3	21.5	18.0	12.3	10.3	17.8	2.1	21.7
11-30%	27.1	17.1	15.0	12.9	14.0	36.2	26.6	37.8
31-49%	6.6	4.9	10.3	4.6	3.8	24.4	23.9	26.8
50% or more	27.9	22.1	34.1	38.4	21.9	10.0	47.4	9.8
Mean	25.9	21.8	28.5	30.0	20.1	24.6	41.0	26.2
Weighted N	259	266	259	264	261	266	149	266
Ratio of women's mean to men's mean	0.80	0.78	0.76	0.82	0.56	0.76	0.92	0.78

Table 11.2. *(Continued)*

Sweden								
Women's reports								
0%	29.4	21.8	31.0	14.2	52.0	4.3	16.9	3.7
1-10%	11.7	27.3	14.8	16.3	9.5	20.7	15.8	18.7
11-30%	22.4	22.2	20.7	20.4	15.6	40.5	24.3	44.5
31-49%	7.4	3.8	2.1	9.2	3.1	25.1	9.0	24.1
50% or more	29.1	24.9	31.4	40.0	19.7	9.4	33.9	9.0
Mean	26.2	23.1	24.5	32.4	17.1	24.6	28.2	25.1
N	299	293	290	240	294	299	177	299
Men's reports								
0%	19.0	13.5	29.7	8.5	39.0	3.4	6.6	3.2
1-10%	15.8	27.4	14.8	11.3	23.3	14.9	22.3	13.2
11-30%	22.1	22.8	20.1	23.9	13.7	40.4	29.9	42.4
31-49%	7.2	6.9	5.5	8.9	4.4	29.2	9.5	30.7
50% or more	35.9	29.4	29.9	47.4	19.8	12.0	31.8	10.6
Mean	30.5	27.6	25.7	37.4	19.1	28.2	30.8	28.5
N	348	347	344	293	344	349	211	349
Ratio of women's mean to men's mean	0.86	0.84	0.95	0.86	0.90	0.87	0.92	0.88

a. "Total routine housework" is a weighted sum of columns 1 through 5. The weights are: routine cleaning = 0.27; cooking = 0.32; cleaning up after meals = 0.12; groceries = 0.14; laundry = 0.15.

b. "Total housework" is equal to "total routine housework" for people without children under 16 living in the household, and is a weighted sum of columns 6 and 7 for people with children. The weights are: 0.84 for routine housework and 0.16 for childcare.

Table 11.2. The details for the construction of this variable are presented in the methodological appendix to this chapter. This scale is available for both our male and female respondents. We will present the results for all respondents combined and for the women respondents taken separately.[14]

Table 11.3 presents the mean amounts of housework performed by husbands within families of different class compositions. Table 11.4 then presents the Tobit regressions corresponding to Table 11.3. In these regressions, the pure middle-class household is the omitted dummy variable. The coefficients in the equation are thus differences between a given family-class location and the pure middle-class family.[15]

Before looking at specific class differences, it is worth looking at the overall analytical power of these equations. As Table 11.4 indicates, the R^2 from the OLS regressions corresponding to the Tobit equations is very low in both countries: for the women respondents' equations, only about 0.02 in the US and 0.04 in Sweden. This is not simply because the dependent variable is measured badly, for in the second equation reported in Table 11.5 the R^2 for the equation for Swedish women increases to 0.28 and for US women to 0.18. What the low R^2 in Table 11.4 therefore indicates is that very little of the variation across households in the relative contributions of husbands to housework is attributable to the class composition of the household in either country.

Class differences might not matter a great deal for the entire population, and yet certain contrasts across classes could still be quite large. Let us look first at the households within which both spouses are employees (i.e. cells 4–7 in Table 11.3). Two general results stand out: first, there are generally bigger class differences across these locations in Sweden than in the United States, and second, even in Sweden the class differences are not very striking. For the women respondents, in

[14] For reasons explained in the methodological appendix, the reports of wives about the proportion of housework done by their husbands are probably more accurate than the reports given by husbands about the proportion of housework they themselves do. For this reason, we will generally not discuss the separate results for the male respondents. These results are presented at the end of the methodological appendix.

[15] One technical note on interpreting these results: since the equations in Table 11.4 are based on Tobit regressions (rather than OLS regressions), the coefficients in these equations are not precisely the same as the differences in means between cells in Table 11.3.

the United States the proportion of housework done by husbands is virtually indistinguishable across the four employee class locations, whereas in Sweden, husbands in the pure middle-class household do a significantly greater proportion of the housework than do husbands in any of the other employee households (5.0–7.6 percentage points more than other family-class locations in Table 11.3). In terms of the actual numbers in Sweden and the United States in Table 11.3, the big difference between the two countries occurs in the pure middle-class households: Swedish middle-class husbands in pure middle-class households do nearly 10 percentage points more housework than their American counterparts (30.4% compared to 21.0%), whereas the differences between the United States and Sweden in the three other employee family-class locations are only a few percentage points.

Turning to the self-employed categories, we find that there are significant class differences in both countries, although again we find that in Sweden the class differences are larger than in the US. In the United States, husbands in families consisting of one self-employed member and one working-class member do less housework than in any other family-class location (only about 13% of total housework in Table 11.3, compared to around 21% in most other locations). In the results for the full sample, husbands in the pure self-employed household also do significantly less housework than in other class locations.[16] In Sweden, women in both of these family-class locations (households with both spouses self-employed and households with one self-employed and one worker) report that their husbands perform less housework than husbands in any other class location – less than two-thirds the contribution of husbands in the pure middle-class family. In both countries, therefore, it appears that in what might be thought of as traditional petty bourgeois households a more traditional form of patriarchy exists.

Multivariate equations

Table 11.5 presents the Tobit equations for class effects controlling for various other variables. In the first panel, only education is added to the equation; in the second panel, a number of other variables generally included in analyses of housework are included. Since many of these

[16] In the male only data, men in this kind of family report that they do an average of 14% of the housework which is actually less than reported by women in comparable families. The number of cases, however, is quite small.

Table 11.3. *Mean levels of husband's percentage contribution to total housework[a] by family-class composition (dual earner households only)*

All respondents

United States (N = 537)

Wife's job class	Husband's job-class: Self-employed	Middle class	Working class
Self-employed	[1][b] 17.1	[2] 22.8	[3] 16.1
Middle class	[2] 22.8	[4] 23.9	[5] 25.5
Working class	[3] 16.1	[6] 22.3	[7] 27.1

Sweden (N = 641)

Wife's job class	Husband's job-class: Self-employed	Middle class	Working class
Self-employed	[1] 16.0	[2] 25.1	[3] 19.6
Middle class	[2] 25.1	[4] 32.4	[5] 27.8
Working class	[3] 19.6	[6] 25.1	[7] 28.1

Women respondents

United States (N= 267)

Wife's job	Husband's job-class: Self-employed	Husband's job-class: Middle class	Husband's job-class: Working class
Self-employed	[1] 19.8	[2] 22.4	[3] 13.1
Middle class	[2] 22.5	[4] 21.0	[5] 20.0
Working class	[3] 13.1	[6] 21.3	[7] 22.1

Sweden (N= 297)

Wife's job class	Husband's job-class: Self-employed	Husband's job-class: Middle class	Husband's job-class: Working class
Self-employed	[1] 17.9	[2] 22.8	[3] 19.3
Middle class	[2] 22.8	[4] 30.4	[5] 22.9
Working class	[3] 19.3	[6] 24.3	[7] 25.4

a. "Total Housework" is a weighted average of the five housework tasks and childcare (for families with children under 16 living in the household) and simply of the five housework tasks for families without children at home. The weights are given in Table 11.2.

b. The numbers in square brackets refer to the categories listed in Table 11.1

Table 11.4. *Tobit regressions of family-class compositions on husband's housework*

	Men and Women (p)[a]	Women only (p)
United States		
Class categories[b]		
1 Self-employed household	-7.5 (.03)	-2.4 (.60)
2 Self-employed + middle	-1.4 (.69)	1.1 (.83)
3 Self-employed + worker	-8.7 (.02)	-9.9 (.04)
5 Wife middle + husband worker	1.0 (.75)	-1.8 (.68)
6 Wife worker + husband middle	-2.0 (.48)	-0.6 (.89)
7 Wife worker + husband worker	3.6[c] (.17)	1.8 (.62)
R^2 from corresponding OLS regression	.03	.02
N	537	267
Sweden		
Class categories		
1 Self-employed household	-17.9 (.00)	-13.8 (.01)
2 Self-employed + middle	-8.3 (.02)	-8.9 (.11)
3 Self-employed + worker	-13.3 (.00)	-11.0 (.02)
5 Wife middle + husband worker	-4.8 (.09)	-7.7 (.05)
6 Wife worker + husband middle	-7.4 (.00)	-6.2 (.04)
7 Wife worker + husband worker	-4.4 (.03)	-5.1 (.07)
R^2 from corresponding OLS regression	.06	.04
N	641	297

a. (p) is the statistical significance level using a t-test on the Tobit coefficient.

b. The pure middle-class household is the left-out category. All coefficients are therefore the difference between a given family class and the pure middle class.

c. There is a statistically significant difference ($p < .03$) between categories (7) and (6) – the pure working-class family and the wife worker/husband middle family – in this equation for all respondents taken together but not for the women only equation.

variables are measured only at the individual (rather than family unit) level of analysis, we have not included the regression for the male and female combined sample in these results.

The inclusion of education in the equation serves an important analytical purpose. In most concepts of class structure, education levels vary systematically across classes. In the conceptual approach we have adopted, education is intimately linked to one of the three assets which

Table 11.5. *Tobit regressions for family-class composition and selected other variables on husband's housework*

	United States		Sweden	
	Women respondents	(p)[a]	Women respondents	(p)
Class categories[b]				
1 Self-employed household	-1.4	(.77)	-9.5	(.10)
2 Self-employed + middle	0.9	(.86)	-7.7	(.17)
3 Self-employed + worker	-8.9	(.06)	-7.5	(.14)
5 Wife middle + husband worker	-0.6	(.89)	-5.0	(.22)
6 Wife worker + husband middle	-0.3	(.93)	-2.9	(.39)
7 Wife worker + husband worker	2.5	(.52)	-0.8	(.82)
Respondent's education	1.0	(.40)	1.8	(.03)
R^2 from corresponding OLS regression	.03		.06	
N	267		297	
Class categories				
1 Self-employed household	0.5	(.91)	-10.5	(.04)
2 Self-employed + middle	1.7	(.71)	- 8.8	(.08)
3 Self-employed + worker	-1.4	(.77)	- 5.0	(.29)
5 Wife middle + husband worker	-3.3	(.46)	- 5.9	(.11)
6 Wife worker + husband middle	- 0.8	(.83)	- 2.4	(.42)
7 Wife worker + husband worker	4.3	(.26)	- 2.6	(.41)
Respondent's education	-0.2	(.86)	0.5	(.55)
Respondent's hours of paid work	0.4	(.00)	0.4	(.00)
Wife's income contribution	0.5	(.78)	3.7	(.002)
Total family income ($ x 10^{-4})	0.5	(.51)	0.8	(.28)
Respondent's gender ideology	1.2	(.06)	0.9	(.09)
Age	-0.3	(.03)	-0.2	(.02)
Kids under 16 in household (0-1)	-1.4	(.57)	-4.5	(.02)
R^2 from corresponding OLS regression	.18		.28	
N	267		297	

a. (p) is the statistical significance level using a t-test on the Tobit coefficient.

b. The pure middle-class household is the left-out category. All coefficients are therefore the difference between a given family class and the pure middle class.

underlie class relations – ownership of skills. It could well be, therefore, that what might at first blush look like class differences in husbands' performance of housework might turn out to be strictly education differences as such, reflecting the cultural effects of educational attainment rather than the class effects linked to the control of educational assets. The problem here is that the category "education" embodies two quite distinct kinds of mechanisms – a class-exploitation mechanism linked to labor markets and work relations and a cultural-cognitive mechanism. An association of wife's education with husband's performance of housework could be generated by either of these causal processes. Such a possibility is not terribly relevant for the US results, since there were such meager class effects in the first place, but it is clearly relevant for the Swedish case since in Table 11.4 husbands in the pure middle-class households do perform significantly more housework than husbands in other class locations.

As Table 11.5 illustrates, the class differences between the pure middle-class household and other households in Sweden are considerably reduced when education is included in the equation. Only one contrast remains statistically significant (at the marginal .10 level of significance), that between the pure middle-class household and the pure self-employed household. None of the differences across employee households are now statistically significant. Indeed, for one of these contrasts – the pure middle-class compared to the pure working-class family – the absolute magnitude of the difference in husband's contribution declines from 5.1 to 0.8. Basically all of the initial difference between these two family-class locations is associated with the differences in education of the wives in the two classes.

How should this education effect be interpreted? Can it be interpreted as bound up with the class-exploitation nexus? Table 11.6 indicates what happens to the value of the education coefficient when other variables are added to the equation in the top panel of Table 11.5. This table indicates that what is probably lurking behind the education effect is age: when age is included in the equation, the education coefficient is cut in half and its level of statistical significance drops from .03 to .29. Regardless of how one might want to interpret this age effect in its own right, its effect on the education coefficient indicates that the education effect itself cannot plausibly be considered an indirect form of class effects.[17]

[17] The coefficient for age in Table 11.6 and in the more complex multivariate equation

Table 11.6. *Tobit regression coefficients for education on husband's housework controlling for various other variables (Swedish women only)*

	Education coefficient	(p)[a]	Coefficient for added control variable	(p)
Education + class dummies only	1.79	(.03)		
Education + class + age	0.89	(.29)	-0.30	(.001)
Education + class + ideology	1.35	(.10)	1.49	(.010)
Education + class + wife's income contribution	1.33	(.09)	6.24	(.000)
Education + class + wife hours in labor force	1.76	(.02)	0.58	(.000)
Education + class + kids under 16 in household	1.78	(.03)	-7.00	(.001)

a. (p) is the statistical significance level using a t-test on the Tobit coefficient.

The bottom panel of Table 11.5 presents the more complex multivariate equation. Since our interest is primarily on class effects as such, we will not explore the coefficients in these equations in any detail. A number of things are worth noting.

First of all, in Sweden, but not in the United States, the contrast between the first two categories of self-employed households and middle-class households is, if anything, slightly more pronounced in the more complex multivariate equation than it was in the equation containing only class and education. In the United States there are absolutely no significant class contrasts in the multivariate equation.

Second, overall family income has no effect in either country, but the wife's proportionate contribution to family income has a considerable effect in Sweden (but not in the United States).[18] This indicates that while direct class effects on male housework are not very strong in Sweden, the economic status of the wife within the household is a significant determinant.

Third, the biggest single contributor to the increased R^2 between the top and bottom panels of Table 11.5 in both countries is the number of

in Table 11.5 probably reflects more of a cohort-cultural process than simply a life-cycle process, since the age affect remains highly significant even when the presence of children in the household is included in the equation.

[18] Other research has reported quite inconsistent results on the effects of relative earnings on the household division of labor. In no research has relative earnings been shown to be a powerful determinant of husbands' contribution to housework, although in some research it has some effect (e.g. Farkas 1976; Huber and Spitze 1983). For a review of this literature, see Coverman (1985).

hours worked in the paid labor force per week by the wife. The R^2 for this variable alone is .14 in Sweden and .07 in the US. This is consistent with the finding of much other research which indicates that because of a simple scarcity of time, as women increase their labor force participation, less housework gets done and thus inequality in housework time is reduced. The result is also consistent with the argument that when women work longer hours in the paid labor force they have more leverage in internal family bargaining to get their husbands to do more housework.[19]

Finally, the gender ideology of the wife has a modest effect in both countries. As might be expected, in the parallel equations for male respondents (see Appendix Table 11.5 in the methodological appendix) the gender ideology coefficient is much larger. This is particularly striking in the United States.[20] Since it is likely that the age variable (understood as measuring cultural-historical cohorts) also partially taps cultural dimensions of gender relations, these data indicate that gender ideologies vary across households in ways that are consequential for household gender practices.

11.3 Implications

Overall, the basic implication of these results is that location within the class structure is not a very powerful or systematic determinant of variations in the gender division of labor across households. This is most consistent with Hypothesis 5, the gender-autonomy hypothesis. This is decidedly not what I had expected when I began the analysis. Indeed, as part of my general agenda of class analysis, I was initially quite bent on demonstrating that class was a significant part of the explanation of variations in gender practices. When I initially encountered such marginal class effects, I therefore tried many alternative ways of operationalizing the details of the class variable and aggregating the class distinctions. I examined the separate effects of husband's and wife's class rather than simply family-class composition. I

[19] For a recent study which systematically explores the interactions between hours of paid work by women and domestic work, see Kalleberg and Rosenfeld (1990).

[20] It must be remembered that in the husbands' equations, the number of hours worked by the wife is not included as an independent variable. To the extent that husbands' ideology has effects on time allocated to the paid labor force of the wife, then it is not possible to unequivocally compare the coefficients for ideology in the male and female equations.

changed the boundaries of the sample, restricting it to two-earner families with two full-time workers, or two-earner families with and without children. I even explored the possibility that class was linked to the tails of the distribution of housework – to the contrast between highly egalitarian and inegalitarian households – rather than to the distribution as a whole. None of these manipulations of the data changed the essential contours of the results: class location is simply not a powerful determinant of the amount of housework husbands perform.

This does not mean that class has no relevance whatsoever for the analysis. In Sweden, at least, husbands in property-owning households (especially the purely self-employed households) seem to do significantly less housework than husbands in employee households, even after controlling for the range of variables in Table 11.5. This difference was equally strong in the equations for our male respondents taken separately (see Appendix Table 11.5). These results therefore provide some modest support for part of Engels' classic argument about property ownership and male domination. Still, while this specific class effect does seem robust, it nevertheless is not at the center stage of the process by which variations in gender relations are produced and negotiated within families. And, in any case, there are no consistent, significant class effects on housework in the United States data. On balance, therefore, there is no support in the data at all for Hypotheses 1, 3 and 4 – the working-class egalitarianism hypothesis, the class culture hypothesis and the class bargaining power hypothesis – and at best very limited support in Sweden for Hypothesis 2, the petty bourgeois inegalitarianism hypothesis.

There are possible responses to these results that a staunch defender of class analysis might propose. First of all, we have restricted the analysis to two-earner families. It could certainly be the case that class plays an important role in determining the basic decisions within households concerning wives' labor force participation in the first place, and as all research on the topic indicates, this certainly affects the relative (but not necessarily absolute) amount of housework done by husbands. There is, however, little empirical support for this response. The labor force participation rates of wives do not vary dramatically across husbands' class location either in the United States or in Sweden (see Table 11.7). Also, while husbands in all classes do a higher proportion of housework when their wives are in the labor force, the pattern of variation across classes does not itself differ very

Table 11.7 *Wives' labor force participation rates and husband's contribution to housework by husband's class*

Husband's class location	Labor force participation rates of wives	Husband's percentage of contribution to total housework	
		Wife in paid labor force	Wife not in paid labor force
United States			
Capitalist class	54.3	20.1	17.0
Petty bourgeoisie	55.8	16.9	13.0
Middle class	51.6	25.2	19.8
Working class	50.4	30.8	21.7
N		266	247
Sweden			
Capitalist class	78.6	18.2	13.3
Petty bourgeoisie	86.0	19.0	10.6
Middle class	83.4	29.6	20.0
Working class	74.6	31.3	25.7
N		348	89

much between two-earner and single-earner households in either Sweden or the US.[21]

A more promising defense of class analysis shifts the focus from the problem of variations across households, to the more institutional issue of the relationship between the political mobilization of classes on the one hand and gender relations on the other. One might argue that the degree of housework egalitarianism in the society as a whole depends, in part, on processes of class politics which reduce or increase overall economic inequality. The greater egalitarianism of the gender division of labor within Swedish households is plausibly linked to the greater

[21] It also might be thought that class could be implicated in the husband's performance of housework via its effect on the number of hours of paid labor performed by wives. As we noted in the discussion of Table 11.5, the amount of hours worked in the labor force is a highly significant predictor of husbands' relative contribution to housework in two-earner households. However, this variable is itself only weakly linked to the class composition of households. Among two-earner employee households, in the United States the range across family-class locations in average hours of paid labor by wives is from 37 to 43 hours, and in Sweden from 29 to 32.

societal egalitarianism produced by the combined effects of Swedish social democracy and the labor movement.

While I would not want to minimize the importance of class politics in the formation of the Swedish welfare state, nevertheless it is problematic to attribute Swedish gender politics entirely to the logic of political class formation. Swedish social democracy has not merely produced an amorphous economic egalitarianism driven by working-class progressive politics; it has also supported a specific agenda of gender egalitarianism rooted in the political involvement of women. As Moen (1989) indicates, particularly in the 1970s, the Social Democratic government enacted a series of reforms specifically designed to transform the relationship between work, gender and family life: in 1971 separate income tax assessments were made mandatory for husbands and wives (which established the principle that each partner should be economically independent); in 1974 parental leave was established giving both mothers and fathers the right to share paid leave after the birth of a child; in 1978 paid leave was extended to 270 days and in 1980 to 360 days; in 1989 parents of infants became legally entitled to six-hour days, thus encouraging the expansion of opportunities for shorter work weeks. Furthermore, as reported by Haas (1981: 958), a specific objective of cultural policy in Swedish education is to encourage gender equality in childcare and, to a lesser extent, domestic chores. It seems likely that the greater egalitarianism within Swedish households has as much to do with these specific family-work policies and educational practices as it does with the more general class-based egalitarianism of Swedish society. To be sure, the class politics of social democracy helped to sustain a set of political and social values favorable to the enactment of such policies; but it seems unlikely that such policies can themselves be primarily explained in class terms.

One final line of response of class theorists to this research could be to shift the problem from the relationship between family-class location and gender to the relationship between class structure as such and gender. Instead of asking how the gender division of labor within families varies across locations within a class structure, the focus of analysis would be on how the gender division of labor varies across different kinds of class structures. Such an investigation could be posed either at the mode of production level of analysis, involving comparisons of capitalist class structures with different kinds of noncapitalist class structures, or at a more concrete level of analysis,

involving comparisons across capitalist class structures at different stages of development. It is certainly possible that the central dynamics of capitalism as a specific kind of class system of production provide the most important explanations for the changing forms and degrees of labor force participation of women over the past century in Western capitalist countries, and these changing forms of labor force participation in turn provide the central structural basis for transformations of gender relations within families, reflected in changes in husbands' participation in housework. The trajectory of development of the class structure of capitalism, therefore, might explain much of the trajectory of changes in gender relations even if gender relations do not vary systematically across different locations within a given class structure. For the moment, however, such arguments must remain speculative hypotheses. Much additional research is needed to validate or modify such claims.

Where does this leave us? Feminists have long argued for the autonomy of gender mechanisms in explaining the production and reproduction of male domination. While Marxist class analysis has generally come to acknowledge this autonomy, nevertheless there has remained a tendency for Marxists to see class as imposing systematic limits within which such autonomous gender mechanisms operate. The data analysis in this chapter indicate that, at least in terms of the micro-analysis of variations in gender relations within housework across households, there is basically no support for the view that class plays a pervasive role. The class effects are extremly weak – virtually nonexistent in the United States, and largely confined to the effects of self-employment in Sweden. While *economic* factors do seem quite relevant – the number of hours worked by wives in the labor force is a relatively strong determinant of variations in housework as is the wife's contribution to household income (at least in Sweden) – the relevance of these economic factors is not closely linked to class as such.

Methodological appendix

1 Variables

Gender division of labor in the household

The gender division of labor within households has both a qualitative and quantitative aspect. Qualitatively, the concept concerns the alloca-

tion of different sorts of tasks and responsibilities to husbands and wives; quantitatively it concerns the amount of time each spouse devotes to housework relative to other kinds of activities (including leisure). As all research on the topic has indicated, in most families men not only do different household tasks from their wives, but spend much less total time on housework as well.[22] While both of these dimensions are of general interest, we focus primarily on the quantitative aspects of the domestic division of labor in this chapter. That is, we are concerned with seeing if the degree of gender inequality in time contributions to housework varies across families in different locations in the class structure.

It is an arduous affair to measure fully the division of labor in the household. The most elaborate studies have involved complex time budget diaries in which household members carefully record the time at which they start and stop every activity during a particular period of time.[23] We rely on a much simpler kind of data. In the surveys we use, respondents were asked to estimate roughly what percentage of each task on a list of common household tasks they did themselves and what percentage was done by their spouses. Five tasks were included in the list: routine housecleaning, cooking, cleaning up after meals,

[22] Most research also indicates that, at least in dual-earner households, husbands in general spend less total time on all forms of "work" – paid work + domestic work. Walker (1970) finds for dual-earner households that women who do at least 15 hours of paid work per week do an average of 70 hours combined paid work and housework per week, compared to 63 hours for men. In a later study, Walker together with Woods (1976) found that in dual-earner families wives did a daily total of 10.1 hours of paid and unpaid labor, and husbands did 7.9. Robinson (1977) reports that husbands in dual-earner households do 6.9 hours of total work/day while wives do 9.3 hours. Similar findings are reported by Meissner et al. (1975) who calculates husbands working 7.7 hours total work per day and wives 9.0 hours. Pleck (1985) is one of the few analysts who has shown some skepticism toward the magnitudes of these differences in total hours of work of husbands and wives in dual-earner households. He analyzes data from two surveys, one which finds that employed wives work slightly longer in combined paid work and housework (0.2 hours/day more) and a second which finds that employed wives have substantially longer work days (paid and housework combined) than their husbands (2.2 hours/day more). The differences in the results of these two studies reflect, to a significant degree, different definitions of what constitutes "work" within the household, particularly whether *all* childcare time is counted as work, or whether some of this is considered "play."

[23] Studies which have employed time budget approaches are: Berk (1979, 1985), Berk and Berk (1979), Geerken and Gove (1983), Meissner et al. (1975), Morgan et al. (1971), Pleck (1985), Robinson (1977), Robinson, Andreyenkov and Patrushev (1988), Szalai et al. (1972).

grocery shopping and laundry. A similar question was also asked for childcare for those families with children under 16 in the household. The percentages for each of these tasks were then combined into two aggregate housework scales:

1 a simple additive scale (the unweighted mean of the components);
2 a weighted scale, in which the components were weighted by the relative amount of time these tasks typically take (based on published time-budget research).

Initially this scale was constructed only for the routine housework tasks. For people with children, this scale was then combined with the childcare tasks to produce an overall domestic labor contribution scale, to be referred to as "Total Housework Contribution." As it turned out, none of the results differ substantively for any of these scales, so throughout this chapter the analysis is restricted to the weighted total housework contribution scale. The weights used in constructing this scale are as follows:[24]

Routine Housework scale =
0.32 [cooking meals] + 0.12 [cleaning up after meals]
+ 0.15 [laundry] + 0.27 [general housecleaning] + 0.14 [groceries].
Total Housework scale =
0.84 [routine housework] + 0.16 [childcare].

The resulting variable, therefore, is a measure of the percentage, from 0 to 100, of the total housework performed by the respondent. For people with children under 16 years of age in the home this includes childcare; for people without children it does not. In order to facilitate the data analysis, I converted this scale into a *husband's* housework contribution variable.[25] A figure around 50, therefore, means that husbands and wives contribute more or less equally to housework.

It should be noted that relative equality in housework contributions

[24] The sources for the routine housework weights were the findings in Robinson (1977: 148–149) and Meissner et al. (1975: 432) and for the childcare weights, Meissner, et al. (1975: 432).

[25] Because not all the percentages reported for respondents and spouses added up to 100, I first proportionately balanced the reported shares. Then for male respondents, I took the respondents' reports for their own share of housework, and for the female respondents, I took the proportion they reported for their spouses. When there was missing data from some of these elements of the scale, I adjusted the weights accordingly and calculated the total housework contribution variable

can be achieved through two routes: either men can do more housework, or women can do less. Other research has indicated that when women enter the labor force there is, at best, a modest increase in the absolute amount of time husbands spend on housework, whereas wives reduce the amount of time considerably.[26] Less housework is done, and that which is done is done more intensively. The result is less inequality in housework contributions, but not primarily because of more housework on the part of husbands.[27] We cannot in the present study address this issue at all. Our analysis will be entirely focussed on the degree of inegalitarianism in the gender distribution of housework time, not on the amount of housework actually performed.

Problems of biases in the housework measures

It is important to stress that the measures of husbands' performance of housework we are using are all based on subjective estimates; we have no independent way of checking the reliability of our respondents' reports. It might therefore be reasonably expected that there are biases in these estimates. In particular, one might expect men to exaggerate their relative contribution to housework. This expectation is confirmed by the fact that the mean values of husbands' housework contribution for each of the components of the scale (and thus for the aggregate scale itself) are significantly lower when reported by the wives in the sample than by the husbands (see Table 11.2). This is particularly striking in the United States data where the reports by women of their

for the available data (as long as there were reports on at least two of the household tasks).

[26] No difference in the absolute amount of housework men do when their wives enter the labor force is reported by Meissner et al. (1975), Walker (1970); and Walker and Woods (1976), while an increase of between 4 and 6 minutes per day is reported by Robinson (1977), Berk (1985) and Pleck (1985). The decrease in the amount of housework women do when they enter the workforce is reported as follows: Robinson (1977): 3.5 hours per day decrease; Walker and Woods (1976): 3.3 hours/day; Walker (1970): 1 hour/day less when the wife works less than 15 hours weekly, 2 hrs/day less when she works between 15 and 19 hours per week, and 3 hours less when she works more than 30 hours in a week; Pleck (1985): 3 hours/day less; Vanek (1974): 4 hrs/day.

[27] If the changes in the *intensity* at which women do housework is sufficiently great because there are simply fewer hours available for such work, then the apparently greater egalitarianism in housework contributions could be entirely an illusion. The disparities in the actual *amount of work*, measured not in units of time but in units of time weighted by effort or intensity, could remain constant, or even increase. No research of which I am aware has even broached this problem, let alone attempted to empirically engage it.

husbands' contributions to housework are generally about 75% of the men's reports of their own contributions, whereas in Sweden the women's reports are closer to 90% of the men's.

Since we are mainly interested in the *variability* of husbands' housework contribution across class location and not with estimating the absolute levels of gender inequality within families, these kinds of biases would only undermine the usefulness of these data if they were significantly correlated with class. Unfortunately, there is some indication that this may be the case. If the gender bias in measures of housework were unrelated to class, then the patterns of *differences* in husbands' housework across the cells in the family-class matrix should be basically the same for data based on the reports of wives and of husbands. That is, all of the variables in such an analysis are derived from family-level data: the class composition of the family and the husbands' proportion of total family housework. Given that we have restricted the sample to two-earner families, there is no *substantive* reason why the patterns of differences across family-class categories of the table for data reported by men and by women should differ.

But they do. To give just one example, the average of husbands' housework contribution reported by Swedish women in the pure middle-class family is 30.4%, while the average of reports by men in the same kind of household is 33.9%. Those are reasonably close estimates. In households in which the husband is in a working-class job and the wife is in a middle-class job, on the other hand, the reports are quite divergent: 22.9% for female respondents compared to 32.6% for male respondents. The differences *across* these family-class locations, therefore, are 7.5% as reported by women but only 1.3% as reported by men. On the basis of the male responses we would conclude that there were no family-class composition effects, whereas on the basis of the female responses we might conclude the opposite. Whatever might be the root cause of the measurement problems, these discrepancies indicate that not merely is it the case that men may overestimate the amount of housework that they do, but that these overestimates vary from class to class and thus potentially undermine our attempt at a class analysis of housework.

What should be done in these circumstances?[28] There are two

[28] We have been unable to find any research on housework which systematically explored the degree of biases in reports of housework contributions. Berk and Shih (1980) do extensively explore the patterns of the discrepancies of reports by husbands and wives, but do not attempt to actually assess which estimates are less

plausible strategies. In the first strategy of analysis it is assumed that reports of both men and women are biased, but in different directions. Each spouse overestimates his or her *own* contribution, and since our data are proportions, this necessarily means that they underestimate their partners' contribution. Thus, the most accurate measure of housework is likely to come from combining the data from men and women into a single analysis. This calls for analyzing the relationship between class location and housework for the total sample of respondents in two-earner families, ignoring the respondent's gender. In the second strategy, it is assumed that women will have a more accurate view, both because they have so much more general *responsibility* for these tasks and because their contributions to housework are often less visible than their husbands' and thus are more likely to go unnoticed by their spouses. If one accepts this assumption, then it would make more sense to rely exclusively on the data for women. In neither strategy is there much value in analyzing the men's responses separately.

In the statistical analysis in section 11.2 we therefore focus almost entirely on the data from the women respondents, and secondarily on the results for the total sample. For readers skeptical of the justification for this strategy for contending with the biases in the data, the results based on the male data taken separately are presented at the end of this appendix.

There is one other relevant source of bias in the housework data. The list of tasks included in the analysis consists entirely of stereotypically female tasks within the traditional gender division of labor. I have not included characteristically male tasks such as home repairs, lawn mowing, etc. If there were households in which such male-stereotyped tasks took up great amounts of time, then conceivably in those households our scale would not be an accurate measure of the degree of gender inequality in the total time spent on domestic labor. But again, unless this measurement problem were strongly linked to class, it would not undermine the objectives of this chapter. And, in any case, all of the research on housework that raises the issue indicates that male household tasks are less routine and take up much less total time than female tasks.

biased. Berk (1985: 77) notes that for every household task in her study, "wives reported a smaller contribution for husbands than husbands reported for themselves." She, however, does not pass judgment as to whose reports are more accurate: "It seemed useless to spend time wondering whose version represented the 'true' report of who did what and how often" (Berk 1985: 55).

Other variables

A number of other variables are included in the analysis. Three of these describe attributes of the family: total annual family income, wife's percentage contribution to family income, and presence of children under 16 years of age in the household. The rest describe attributes of the respondent alone: hours worked by respondent, respondent's gender ideology, respondent's education and age. A few of these variables need brief explanation:

Wife's percentage contribution to family income. Respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of total household income brought in by their spouse. These responses were then converted into a "wife's percentage contribution" variable so that its meaning is homogeneous for our male and female respondents.

Gender ideology. I constructed a gender-ideology typology based on four Likert type (agree/disagree) questions on gender attitudes:

1 It is better for the family if the husband is the principal breadwinner outside of the home and the wife has primary responsibility for the home and children.
2 If both husband and wife work, they should share equally in the housework and childcare.
3 There are not enough women in responsible positions in government and private business.
4 Ideally, there should be as many women as men in important positions in government and business.

Items 1 and 2 were first combined into a variable tapping attitudes toward the sexual division of labor in the family (Family-Gender Attitude scale), and items 3 and 4 into a variable tapping attitudes toward gender and public authority (Gender-Authority Attitude scale). Each of these constructed variables has three values: 1 = sexist response pattern; 2 = mixed response; 3 = egalitarian response pattern. The coding scheme for each of these intermediate constructed variables is given in Appendix Table 11.1. These two intermediate variables were then combined into a seven-level ordinal gender-ideology variable, as illustrated in Appendix Table 11.2. Since a much smaller proportion of the sample took the extreme sexist position on the family-gender attitude variable than on the gender-authority variable, I treated the sexist pole of the gender-family variable as measuring a more extreme

Appendix Table 11.1. *Constructing family-gender attitude variable and authority-gender attitude variable*

1. *Gender-family attitudes*

		Item 2		
		Sexist response	Egalitarian response	Missing data
Item 1	Sexist response	1	2	2
	Egalitarian response	2	3	3
	Missing data	1	3	missing

2. *Gender-authority attitudes*

		Item 4		
		Sexist response	Egalitarian response	Missing data
Item 3	Sexist response	1	3	1
	Egalitarian response	2	3	3
	Missing data	1	3	missing

Definitions of items:

1. It is better for the family if the husband is the principal breadwinner outside of the home and the wife has primary responsibilities for the home and children.
2. If both husband and wife work, they should share equally in the housework and childcare.
3. There are not enough women in responsible positions in government and private business.
4. Ideally, there should be as many women as men in important positions in government and business.

form of sexism than the gender-authority variable. When the two variables were combined, therefore, the gender-family variable was treated as defining the sexist end of the gender-ideology scale and the gender-authority variable was used to differentiate levels within the

Appendix Table 11.2. *Constructing the gender ideology scale*

		Gender authority attitudes variable			
		Sexist	Mixed	Egalitarian	Missing
Gender family attitudes variable	Sexist	1	1	1	1
	Mixed	2	3	4	4
	Egalitarian	5	6	7	7
	Missing	5	6	7	missing

mixed and egalitarian regions of the scale. After constructing this variable, I examined a variety of other ways of aggregating the original four items. *None* of the results in this chapter were substantively affected by alternative forms of the gender ideology variable.

Education. Education is measured by the highest *level* of education attained by the respondent. Because the education systems differ in the United States and Sweden, the actual steps on this scale are not identical in the two countries. The American variable has the following levels: 1 = primary school or less; 2 = some secondary school; 3 = completed high school; 4 = some post-high-school education; 5 = college degree or more. The Swedish variable is coded as follows: 1 = primary school or less; 2 = vocational training without high school degree; 3 = terminal high school degree; 4 = *arbitur* high school exam or some education beyond high school; 5 = college degree or more.

Family income. Family income is measured as total family income from all sources, including unearned income. The Swedish data have been converted into dollars at the rate of exchange at the time of the surveys (1980).

2 *Data, methods and analytical strategy*

Sample

For the purposes of the present analysis, the sample is restricted to cases in which respondents are living with partners (married or unmarried) and in which both people are in the paid labor force. This

yields an effective sample of 271 men and 268 women in the United States and 349 men and 299 women in Sweden. Since in the population, there are exactly the same number of men as women living in two-earner households, there should be roughly the same number of men and women respondents who satisfy this criterion in the sample. This is the case in the United States, but not in Sweden, where there are fifty more men than women. I have not been able to discover the source of this difference in sample size. It could have been due to slightly different criteria being used to define being "in the labor force" for respondents and for spouses, but as far as I can tell, this is not the case.

This restriction is not meant to imply that the question of the relationship between class and gender relations is only relevant in cases where both partners are in the labor force. Clearly, the issue of the interaction of class and gender may bear on the decision of married women to enter the labor force, and, even in households with full-time housewives, class might still bear on the gender domestic division of labor. Nevertheless, for the present purposes the analysis is restricted to two-earner families for three reasons: first, the Swedish data excludes housewives from the sample of respondents, and thus there would only be data reported by men for such households; second, the problem of equality in the division of labor in housework is more acutely posed when both spouses are in the labor force; and third, if class location has effects on the division of labor in the household and not simply on the labor supply decisions of men and women, these effects are most likely to be apparent for two-earner households.

Limitations in the data

Two significant problems with these data need to be acknowledged. First of all, only one person in each family was interviewed, and thus there are no data on the ideological orientations of the respondent's spouse. Since it would be expected that the attitudes of both parties bear on the gender practices within the family, this is a significant limitation on the kinds of models we can explore. Second, the surveys inadvertently failed to ask respondents questions about the number of hours worked in the paid labor force by their spouses, or about spouses' education. Thus both of these variables are also available only for respondents. The absence of data on number of hours worked in the paid labor force by the wives of the male respondents is a particu-

larly serious liability, since this is clearly one of the important determinants of inequalities in housework.

These limitations in the data would matter more if the objective of this chapter were to provide empirical support for a general explanation of gender inequalities in housework. This is not, however, the goal. Rather, as already stated, the objective is narrower, focussing specifically on the relationship between class and housework rather than more broadly on housework as such.

Analytical strategy

The basic analytical strategy of this chapter is to examine the differences in the amount of housework husbands do across the cells of the family-class composition matrix in Table 11.1. The conventional way for exploring such differences would be to run ordinary least squares regression equations predicting housework with class entered as a series of categorical variables (0–1 dummies). The problem with such an approach is that the housework variable has a peculiar distribution that violates the assumptions of OLS regression, namely it has vastly more zero values (i.e. husbands doing no housework) than could occur in a normal distribution. In formal statistical terms, the distribution is "censored" at 0. Truncating a regression equation in this way on the dependent variable potentially introduces serious distortions in the slopes of the independent variables and in any statistical tests one might want to conduct on the coefficients in the equation.

We will deal with this technical problem by using Tobit regressions rather than OLS regressions. The statistical logic and rationale for this procedure is discussed in Maddala (1983) and Mare (1986). The coefficients in a Tobit regression can be treated in essentially the same way as ordinary regressions, so this should not cause any difficulties in interpreting the results. I also ran all of the equations in OLS regression, and none of the results were substantively different. The only disadvantage with Tobit regressions is that they do not generate a simple R^2 statistic, which many people find a particularly useful summary statistic for the analytical power of an equation. Given that in the present analysis the OLS and Tobit regressions do not differ substantively, I will therefore report the R^2 for OLS equations that correspond to the Tobit analyses to give readers a sense of the relative overall analytical power of the equations.

3 Results for male respondents taken separately

Appendix Table 11.3. *Mean levels of husbands' percentage contribution to total housework for dual-earner families with different family-class compositions: reports of male respondents only*

UNITED STATES

		Husband's job-class		
		Self-employed	Middle class	Working class
Wife's job-class	Self-employed	[1] 14.1	[2] 23.2	[3] 23.1
	Middle class	[2] 23.2	[4] 27.8	[5] 30.7
	Working class	[3] 23.1	[6] 23.4	[7] 30.9

SWEDEN

		Husband's job-class		
		Self-employed	Middle class	Working class
Wife's job-class	Self-employed	[1] 14.6	[2] 26.3	[3] 19.7
	Middle class	[2] 26.3	[4] 33.9	[5] 32.6
	Working class	[3] 19.7	[6] 25.8	[7] 30.8

Appendix Table 11.4. *Tobit regressions for family-class compositions on husband's housework: male respondents only*

	United States	Sweden
Class categories[a]		
1 Self-employed household	-13.8***	-21.0***
2 Self-employed + middle	-4.7	-8.4*
3 Self-employed + worker	-4.8	-15.1***
5 Wife middle + husband worker	2.4	-1.6
6 Wife worker + husband middle	-4.3	-8.2**
7 Wife worker + husband worker	3.2[b]	-3.2
R^2 from corresponding OLS regression	.07	.09
N	270	344

Significance levels: * p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

a. The pure middle-class household is the left-out category. All coefficients are therefore the difference between a given class and the pure middle class.

b. There is a statistically significant difference (p < .05) between categories 7 and 6 – the pure working-class family and the wife worker/husband middle family.

Appendix Table 11.5. *Tobit regressions for family-class composition and selected other variables on husband's housework: male respondents only*

	United States	Sweden
Class categories[a]		
1 Self-employed household	-2.8	-10.2*
2 Self-employed + middle	-1.9	-2.0
3 Self-employed + worker	-0.4	-6.2
5 Wife middle + husband worker	-0.6	-1.8
6 Wife worker + husband middle	-2.0	-4.1
7 Wife worker + husband worker	5.7	-0.5
Respondent's education	-0.71	0.95
Respondent's hours of paid work	-0.21**	-0.46***
Wife's income contribution	3.5**	2.48**
Total family income ($ x 10^{-4})	0.20	0.75
Respondent's gender ideology	3.0***	1.32**
Age	-0.15	-0.22**
Kids under 16 in household (0-1)	1.2	-2.0
R^2 from corresponding OLS regression	0.2	0.2
N	270	344

Significance levels: * $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

a. The pure middle-class household is the left-out category. All coefficients are therefore the difference between a given class and the pure middle class.