

Justifications and Comparisons in the Division of Household Labor: The Relevance of Gender Ideology

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This study tests the direct relevance of justifications and social comparisons (predictors of perceptions of fairness) on different types of household labour distribution, and the importance of masculinity ideology and neosexism on these variables. The participants were heterosexual dual-earner couples. Our results showed that both men and women use more justifications when their housework distribution is not equal, but only women use social comparisons associated with the ways of distributing domestic work. In addition, we observe that, in both men and women, justifications are related to a traditional masculine ideology, but a different model appears in relation to comparisons which are associated with neosexism in men and with traditional masculine ideology in women. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: household labor, neosexism, masculinity ideology, social comparisons, justifications.

Este estudio muestra la relevancia directa de las justificaciones y comparaciones sociales (predictores de la percepción de justicia) sobre diferentes tipos de distribución de trabajo doméstico, así como la importancia de la ideología masculina y el neosexismo sobre las citadas variables. Los participantes fueron parejas heterosexuales de doble ingreso. Los resultados demuestran que hombres y mujeres usan más justificaciones cuando su distribución doméstica es desigual, y que solo las mujeres usan comparaciones sociales asociadas a las formas de distribución. Además se aprecia que las justificaciones se relacionan con una ideología tradicional masculina mientras que las comparaciones se asocian con el neosexismo, en el caso de los hombres y con la ideología masculina tradicional en el caso de las mujeres. Las implicaciones y sugerencias del estudio se comentan en relación a la distribución doméstica.

Palabras clave: trabajo doméstico, neosexismo, ideología masculina, comparaciones sociales.

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Many studies conducted in the last two decades have found a one-sided distribution of family labor between men and women (Ferree, 1991; Hochschild, 1989), with wives performing two to three times more family work than their husbands (Garner, Meda & Senik, 2005; Grote, Naylor & Clark, 2002). For both sexes, time spent on this sort of work, especially on childcare, has decreased over recent years, but the difference between women and men persists over time. In Spain, housework is fundamentally performed by women, five times more so than men (Women's Institute, 2007), and although younger men now participate more in household chores, the current situation is far from an equitable distribution (Women's Institute, 2006).

Explanations for the gendered division of housework are divided into three overarching frameworks: the time-availability perspective, the relative resource perspective, linked to the economic dependence model, and the gender ideology perspective. In general, each of these has been confirmed, outlining a differential model for women and men (Coltrane, 2000). For example, some studies have found that couples' division of household labour is affected by each spouse's time availability, so that whoever has more free time contributes more at home (Nordenmark & Nyman, 2003). However the relationship is more complex. For instance, men's share of housework has several predictors as women's employment, and men's employment, but different effects (Coltrane, 2000). When women are involvement in her job, men contribute more to housework, but in some cases women in professional jobs do more housework because they compensate for gender-atypical patterns (Hochschild, 1989). Even some research has proved that husbands' contribution to household labour depends on wives' occupational prestige (Deutsch, Lussier & Servis, 1993) and on workplace authority (Presser, 1994). Recently, Lewin-Epstein, Stier and Braun (2006) show spouses' labor market activity have an influence of housework contribution. Specifically, they found that when the wife has less educational level than her husband the household labour is female centred. In summary, the type of job, in terms of time, prestige and occupational status, is a predictor of household labour distribution.

Likewise, from gender perspective, research has indicated that the extent to which household labour is gendered is related, in general, for gender ideologies. In fact attitudes towards sexual roles are relevant predictors, in that the most traditional women do more and the most traditional men do less (Davis, Greenstein & Marks, 2007; Deutsch, et al. 1993; Forry Leslie & Letiecq, 2007; Nordenmark & Nyman, 2003).

Finally, some studies confirm that the partner who contributes more income does less housework (Lundberg & Pollak, 1996). The economic dependency model (Brines, 1994) suggested that women do household labour because wives are economically dependent on their husbands.

However, Brines (1994) argued that two separate gender processes link economic dependence and performance of housework; a linear relationship between economic dependency and housework has been found for women but a curvilinear one for men: men at the extremes of the dependence continuum do the less housework, whereas husbands whose earnings are approximately equal to their wives do the most. This behavior has been explained as a form of compensating for the non-traditional situation with respect to gender roles (Greenstein, 2000).

In short, the associations between such factors and models of the division of household labor is not simple (Shelton & John, 1996), and therefore this situation highlights the need to integrate different theoretical approaches.

On the other hand husbands and wives are accustomed to accepting an unequal division of family work as normal and this form of distribution is not perceived as unfair (Gager & Hohmann-Marriott, 2006; Nordenmark & Nyman, 2003). This lack of perceived injustice has generated a great academic curiosity to understand its conditions, given that inequality is not a sufficient reason for perceiving unfair treatment (Kluwer & Mikula, 2002).

In the context of distributive justice (Major, 1987, 1993; Thompson, 1991), two factors have been associated with the perception of unfairness: social comparisons (standards that people use to judge their outcomes) and justifications (attributions or rules that legitimize their outcomes). Women experience injustice if they have a high standard for comparison, and believe there is no acceptable justification for being deprived of desired outcomes (Major, 1987, 1993; Thompson, 1991). These comparisons may derive from social beliefs regarding gender roles (*normative comparison*) (De Maris & Longmore, 1996), direct comparison with the other member of the couple (*relational comparison*) or comparison with other persons of the same sex that constitute the reference group (*referential comparison*) (Buunk & Van Yperen, 1991). Justifications refer to the appropriateness of the procedures that create existing outcomes (Major, 1987). Some widespread justifications are that wives have more time available for family work, enjoy it more and that they are more efficacious and husbands less so (Major, 1993; Mikula, 1998; Thompson, 1991).

Some studies show that women, and sometimes men, with more egalitarian gender attitudes perceive more injustice (De Maris & Longmore, 1996) or that this perception is dependent on men's conventional gender attitudes (Sánchez, 1994). What the investigation has not demonstrated is if the justifications and social comparisons, that determine the fairness evaluations, are directly related with the gender ideology and specific forms of distribution of the domestic work.

Given that 'the negotiation of household tasks is a complex process that may best be explained using

multiple theoretical perspectives in tandem' (Davis et al., 2007, p. 1245), this investigation integrates the research on the perception of injustice in explaining the distribution of domestic work, meaning that justifications and comparisons can be linked, not only with the perception of injustice, but also directly with different types of distribution. Specifically this research is focused on proving (a) the association of justifications and social comparisons with different forms of distribution of domestic work and (b) the relationship between these cognitive aspects and gender ideology.

Gender ideology: masculinity and neosexism

Gender ideology, beliefs and attitudes regarding the roles of men and women, is relevant in explaining the unequal distribution of household labour. Findings indicate that traditional gender ideology is negatively associated with men's housework contribution (Greenstein, 1996; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2006). According to this approach, men contribute less to household labor than women because the male role is orientated towards paid work and professional success, while the female role is orientated towards family and care. As mentioned above, this conception of the role of men, used as an argument for justifying their level of participation, is probably associated with a model of traditional masculinity.

Traditionally, gender roles or questions about the mother's work when her children are under the age of 5, 7, or 12, have been the measure of gender ideology (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996). This operationalization is obviously focused on women, and on the social norms that regulate women's behavior. We think that these measures produce a symbolic and empirical confirmation of the women-family relationship. If the research question is why men do not participate in housework, other ways of evaluating gender ideology can inform us about several factors that support unequal household labor distribution. Nowadays, there are two very important constructs related to gender ideology: neosexism and masculinity ideology. Investigating the relationships among these constructs and justification and social comparisons implies moving the topic of interest towards men's position in the family.

Masculinity ideology has evolved from the theories of social construction (Kimmel, 1987). According to Pleck (1995), this term refers to sets of culturally defined standards of masculinity to which men are expected to adhere. Masculinity ideology is a particular constellation of dimensions upon which some individuals base their conception of masculinity. These dimensions are defined as the relative norm for toughness, physical as well as mental and emotional, the norm related to status and, finally, the antifemininity norm. While the dimension of toughness refers to expectations that the man is strong,

competent and capable of solving his emotional problems in an appropriate way, the status dimension is defined as economic and professional success, and is generally associated with a high income. Finally, the antifemininity norm is defined as the belief that men should avoid the behaviors and tasks typically attributed to women (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). In this point the question is if the norms of masculinity ideology can serve as a base to elaborate justifications, given that these are considered as rules and norms that legitimate an outcome or situation.

On the other hand, the concept of neosexism, modern sexist beliefs that refuse to recognize that women are discriminated against and therefore that sexism exists (Tougas, Brown, Beaton & Joly, 1995), reflects the complexity of current beliefs about the status of women. For example, neosexist people are not opposed to equality and may even maintain non-traditional gender roles, but they deny the existence of discrimination against women (Swim & Cohen 1997). Modern sexist beliefs provide some indication of people's orientation towards gender relations. Therefore neosexism is related to traditional gender roles (Konrad & Hartman, 2002) and with the resistance to modify gender relationships (Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & St-Pierre, 1999). A neosexist compares the social situations of men and women and concludes that there is not inequality. In this sense the neosexism can determine the social comparisons that are related to inequality and unfairness in household labor. Connecting neosexism with justifications and social comparisons helps us to show how one form of negation of the inequality in relation to labor is also connected to social comparisons and justifications that people make in relation to household labor distribution.

In synthesis, our intention is not to test the direct relation between perception of injustice and gender ideology but how gender ideology is in the base of comparisons and justifications. Both elements are precedents to the perception of injustice and determine it.

In summary, we hypothesized that (H1) justifications and comparisons are relevant in differentiating between the ways of distributing housework. An equal distribution, i.e. both members of the couple doing 50/50, would be different from the other forms of distribution in relation to the use of justifications and social comparisons. Other percentages, for example when the female does everything or almost everything, would use more justifications and more social comparisons in order to justify the situation. Second, we analyzed how justifications and social comparisons are related to gender ideology. Since justifications tend to exonerate the man from housework and associate it with the woman, we expected that (H2) a greater use of justifications would be associated with a traditional model of masculine ideology. Furthermore, given the relationship between gender ideology and perception of justice (H3) a greater use of comparisons,

both normative and referential, would be associated with masculinity ideology and neosexism, as both variables can be criteria for evaluating the contribution of women and men to household labor.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The study was carried out with 139 Spanish dual-earner couples. The sampling was incidental (not random) from amongst workers of the service sector in the Region of Murcia, taking into consideration the data from the census of active population by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics¹ of 2004. The participants were selected if both partners were in full time employment and without domestic service when the study was carried out in order to avoid bias result. Participants had similar monthly incomes ($M = 1.900$ €). The mean age was 38.9, and 75% of the couples had 2 children, the mean age of whom was 8. The rates of those with university studies were the same for men as women (54.7%); for secondary studies, the rates were 28% for men and 36% for women and for primary studies, the rates were 16.5% for men and 9.4% for women.

The respondents filled in questionnaires that were given at work and collected after a few days. 21% work in private companies, 60% in public sector companies and 10% were self-employed. Since this study is part of a wider one, the questionnaire used contained other measures which are not included in this study.

Measures

For some measures there were two different versions: one for women and one for men. The reason for this was to use the same construct for both genders. Given its relevance in the domestic distribution, two structural variables were included.

Occupational status: This labor variable was coded into three categories: (1) higher managerial position (50 men/17 women); (2) white collar worker or intermediate skilled (65 men/96 women); (3) blue collar worker or unskilled (22 men/24 women).

Economic dependency: This variable was measured following the proposal by Brines (1994), which has been widely used (Greenstein, 2000; Evertsson & Neramo (2004). The index of economic dependency is calculated by $E.D. = (\text{Own monthly earnings}) - (\text{Spouse's monthly earnings}) / (\text{Own monthly earnings}) + (\text{Spouse's monthly earnings})$

The degree of economic dependency is included in the analyses as a continuous variable ranging from -1 to 1, where -1 indicates that the respondent is fully economically dependent on the spouse; 1 indicates that the respondent is the economic provider for the spouse and 0 indicates that both spouses contribute equally to the household income.

Household Labor Distribution: Participants were asked to indicate the percentages of distribution of household labor. This includes tasks that must be performed frequently, such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, ironing and shopping. The response options were as follows: all my partner (0%/100%), almost all my partner (30%/70%); both equal, (50%/50%), almost all me (70%/30%), all me (100%/0%). We used a relational measure, following the instructions of Greenstein (2000), because the absolute number of hours is a measure that is affected by factors such as preferences, skill and necessity.

Justifications: Since there is no one standardized measure, four items were produced starting with the most frequently used justifications and those which exonerate men from family work, whilst making women responsible for it (Gager, 1998; Hawkins, Marshall & Meiners, 1995; Hochschild, 1989; Kluwer y Mikula, 2002; Mikula, 1998; Thompson, 1991). Response categories were yes (coded 1) and no (coded 0). The items represent different explanations concerning the division of household labor which people use in explaining the distribution of household chores. The items were:

1. "I see the home as my arena"; (1') "She sees the home as her arena".
2. "It is normal that I take care of the housework because I spend less time on my job"; (2') "It is normal that she takes care of the housework because she spends less time on her job".
3. "I take on household labor because my partner is untidy"; (3') "She takes on household labor because I am untidy".
4. I am responsible for the housework and my partner helps to do whatever he can" (4') "She is responsible for the housework and I help to do whatever I can".

A higher score on the outcome variable indicates a greater use of justifications. Three answer levels were calculated: high (affirmative answer to 3 or 4 items), medium (affirmative answer to 1 or 2 items) and low (negative answer to 4 items). The reliability of the scales by KR 20 was .60.

Social Comparisons: Four items were formulated based on the proposals by Gager & Hohmann-Marriott (2006). We differentiate between two types of comparison following the work by Freudenthaler and Mikula (1998):

¹ Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España.

Normative comparisons: Two items evaluate the perception of justice through normative comparisons:

- (1) "It is unfair that women continue to take care of household labor alone".
- (2) "I consider it unfair that men do less housework than women".

Response categories were yes (1) or no (0). A higher score on the outcome variable indicates more perceived normative unfairness. Three answer levels were calculated: high (affirmative answer to 2 items), medium (affirmative answer to 1 item) and low (negative answer to 2 items). The reliability of the scales by KR 20 was .73

Referential comparison: Two items compare the family work that each member does with what other people of the same sex do, so that comparisons serve the purpose of maintained a positive view of the situation.

1. "I can not complain, my partner at least helps to do housework more than the average man", "(1') She cannot complain, at least I do more than the average man"
2. "When I realize that other women are overloaded with housework, I think I am not so badly off"; "When I realize that other women are overloaded with housework, I don't think my partner is so badly off".

Response categories were yes (1) or no (0). Three answer levels were calculated: high (affirmative answer to 2 items), medium (affirmative answer to 1 item) and low (negative answer to 2 items). A higher score on the outcome variable indicates less positive view of situation and more perceived unfairness since the points were inverted. The reliability of the scales in this study by KR 20 was .64.

Traditional Masculinity Ideology: Two sub-scales of the Male Role Norms Scale (MRNS; Thompson & Pleck, 1986) were used to evaluate male traditional ideology: the status norms sub-scale (11 items), and the anti-femininity sub-scale (7 items), both scored on a 4 point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree* and 3 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores on the scale indicate traditional masculinity. The reliability of the scales in this study was $\alpha = .89$ for the status subscale ($M = 1.5$, $SD = .19$) and $\alpha = .81$ for the antifemininity subscale ($M = .51$, $SD = .02$).

Neosexism: The Spanish version of the Neosexism Scale (Moya & Expósito, 2001) by Tougas et al. (1995) was used to assess modern sexist beliefs. Neosexism is defined as the "manifestation of a conflict between egalitarian values and residual feeling toward women" (Tougas et al., 1995, p.842). Example items include, "It is difficult to work for a female boss" and "Women should not hold jobs ranking higher than men". The Neosexism Scale consists of 11 items scored on a Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree* and 3 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores on the scale indicate sexist attitudes towards women. The reliability of the scale in this study was acceptable ($\alpha = .72$; $M = .81$, $SD = .11$)

Results

Given the full relevance of sex in both, the explanation of household labor (Steil, 1997; Sullivan & Lewis, 2006) and the unfair perceptions (Kluwer & Mikula, 2002; Milkula, Hreudenthaler, Brennacher-kröll, & Schiller-Brandl, 1997; Mikula, 1998, Sanchez, 1994) we conducted all of the analysis separately. Preliminary analysis shows that there was a significant difference in occupational status by sex ($\chi^2 = 22.31$, $df = 2$, $p < .0001$), with more men in managerial positions (50) than women (17), but fewer men in intermediate level (65) than women (96). In addition, in comparison with the 13 men in a situation of economic dependence, there were 76 women in such a situation. Furthermore the contrast between the averages indicates a significant difference ($t = 12.61$, $p \leq .001$) between the average dependency for men ($M = .14$; $SD = .19$) and for women ($M = -.15$; $SD = .18$).

Household labor distribution was coded into five categories. The existence of differences by sex is confirmed ($\chi^2 = 17.94$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). Specifically, 37 men and 32 women report an equal distribution (50/50). For the other distributions we find that 13 men and 24 women say that the woman does everything; 4 men and 7 women say that the man does everything; 82 men and 65 women say that the woman does almost everything (70/30); 11 women and 3 men report a distribution in which the man does almost everything (30/70).

The gender variables were standardized. The analyses by sex indicate significant differences in neosexism $t = 3.9$ $p < .0001$, with men gaining higher scores ($M = .22$, $SD = 1.1$) than women ($M = -.22$, $SD = .78$); in antifemininity $t = 4.29$, $p < .0001$, with men gaining higher scores ($M = .25$, $SD = 1.1$), than women ($M = -.24$, $SD = .74$), and in status $t = 3.1$, $p < .002$, with men gaining higher scores ($M = .18$, $SD = 1$) than women ($M = -.18$, $SD = .93$).

Justifications, referential comparison and normative comparison were coded into three levels: high, medium and low. Whilst there are differences in the use of normative comparisons by sex ($\chi^2 = 19.07$, $df = 2$, $p < .0001$), with more women considering the situation to be unfair (134) than men (104), there are no differences in the use of referential comparisons among the 3 levels. With regard to justifications, there is a marginally significant difference ($\chi^2 = 4.9$, $df = 2$, $p < .08$): women use the lower category more (51) than men (43), and they use the higher category less (3) than men (10).

In order to test for the existence of an association between these variables and those of gender, contrasts of the frequencies were performed introducing the categorical variable in the rows (justifications, referential and normative comparison). The gender variables were dichotomized by median. For men, the results

Table 1
Means and standard deviations in gender variables for men

	Men																	
	Justifications ^a			Referential comparison ^b			Normative comparison ^b											
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High									
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>						
Neosexism	-.18	.80	-.05	1.02	1.39	1.53	.59	1.08	-.08	1.09	-.00	1.12	2.12	1.05	.82	1.22	-.12	.83
Antifemininity	-.10	.91	.09	.97	1.35	1.51	.45	1.00	.12	.90	-.12	1.04	1.23	.81	.47	1.19	.00	.92
Status	-.35	.94	.25	1.10	1.18	.98	.60	1.23	.27	1.30	-.11	.87	2.18	.84	.76	1.29	-.01	.94

High category means more use of justifications
High category means more perceived unfairness

Table 2.
Means and standard deviations in gender variables for women

	Women															
	Justifications ^a			Referential comparison ^b			Normative comparison ^b									
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High							
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Neosexism	-.40	.74	-.10	.71	.66	.38	-.07	.72	-.16	.91	-.46	.69	-.03	.99	-.23	.78
Antifemininity	-.57	.86	.09	1.02	.04	.62	-.16	.72	-.18	.89	-.39	.60	-.24	.72	-.24	.74
Status	-.31	.73	-.09	.86	.39	.51	-.20	.97	.13	.83	-.40	.88	-.20	1.40	-.18	.91

a) High category means more use of justifications
b) High category means more perceived unfairness

show significant association among justifications and neosexism, ($\chi^2 = 7.7$ $df = 2$, $p < .02$), status, ($\chi^2 = 6.83$ $df = 2$, $p < .03$) and antifemininity, ($\chi^2 = 6.1$ $df = 2$, $p < .04$). So the use of justifications covaried with the gender variables. It can be appreciated in table 1, the most use of justifications, the higher the scores in neosexism, antifemininity and status. In women, there were significant association only with neosexism, ($\chi^2 = 7.1$ $df = 2$, $p < .02$) and status, ($\chi^2 = 6.1$ $df = 2$, $p < .04$), but not with antifemininity. In general, the greater use of justifications, the higher the scores in neosexism and status.

The same pattern of results was found for referential comparisons. For men, there were association with neosexism, ($\chi^2 = 13.98$ $df = 2$, $p < .001$), status, ($\chi^2 = 7.17$ $df = 2$, $p < .02$), and antifemininity, ($\chi^2 = 7.3$ $df = 2$, $p < .02$). In general the greater use of referential comparisons, the higher the scores in neosexism, antifemininity and status. Again, in women (see table 2) there were significant association with neosexism, ($\chi^2 = 7.9$ $df = 2$, $p < .01$) and status, ($\chi^2 = 6.08$ $df = 2$, $p < .04$).

Finally, for men there were significant association among groups of normative comparisons and neosexism, ($\chi^2 = 16.29$ $df = 2$, $p < .000$) status, ($\chi^2 = 10.34$ $df = 2$, $p < .006$), and antifemininity, ($\chi^2 = 12.086.1$ $df = 2$, $p < .002$). In women there were only two groups (high and medium) in relation to normative comparison. This means that no women perceived fairness in relation to normative comparisons. The result shows no significant differences between the two groups.

Household labor distribution

To corroborate the first hypothesis, two logistic regression analyses were carried out. The procedure was that of main effects, the stepwise variable selection procedure, with forward selection. We introduced occupational status, justifications and social comparison into the logistic regression as categorical variables and economic dependency as the continuous variable. Control variables were not introduced (number of children or domestic help) because the sample was equalled for these variables. For men, the results indicate that the model which included five variables is significant in relation to the likelihood ratio ($\chi^2 = 26.89$, $df = 4$, $p < .0001$) and showed adequate goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 229.10$ $df = 216$, $p = .25$). The R^2 Nagelkerke coefficient shows that 34% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by justifications. So this model fits significantly better than the model that includes only the constant. Taking equal distribution (50/50) as a reference category, we observe that husbands use more justifications when their wives do all of the household chores ($B = 4.27$; $OR = 72.14$). Likewise, for women the model is significant with regards to the likelihood ratio ($\chi^2 = 29.76$, $df = 4$, $p < .0001$) and

goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 130.12$ $df = 156$, $p < .93$). The R^2 Nagelkerke coefficient shows that .33% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by justifications ($\chi^2 = 18.29$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$) and referential comparison ($\chi^2 = 13.8$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). In this case, women use more justifications in two situations: when they do all of the household chores and when husbands do all of the housework. The other relevant variable is referential comparison: in comparison with the egalitarian category more referential comparisons are made when wives do all of the household chores (see Table 3).

This result partially confirms hypothesis 1, showing a different use of comparisons and justifications by sex. For both men and women, justifications are a relevant element in differentiating among equal distribution and the other forms of distribution. Only in women however, are referential comparisons associated with the forms of distributing housework.

Justifications

In order to prove hypothesis 2 a logistic regression was carried out. The independent variables introduced into the analyses were the two subscales of masculine traditional ideology and neosexism. For men, the results indicated that the model is significant in relation to the likelihood ratio ($\chi^2 = 17.44$, $df = 2$, $p < .0001$) and showed adequate goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 146$, $df = 146$, $p < .47$). The R^2 Nagelkerke coefficient shows that 23% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by the status subscale of masculinity. Likewise, for women, model 1 is significant in relation to the likelihood ratio ($\chi^2 = 10.01$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$) and showed adequate goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 152.7$ $df = 156$, $p < .55$). The R^2 Nagelkerke coefficient shows that 14.7% of the variability in the dependent variable is also explained by the status subscale of masculinity. So, a dimension of masculinity ideology related to professional success is useful in differentiating among the different degrees of justifications. Table 4 shows the estimate coefficients.

Comparisons

To prove hypothesis 3 logistic regression analyses were carried out once more. Regarding referential comparison, the results for men showed that the model that includes the three variables is significant in relation to the likelihood ratio ($\chi^2 = 9.72$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$) and achieved adequate goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 1256.71$, $df = 242$, $p < .24$). The R^2 Nagelkerke shows that 8.2% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by neosexism. The difference is between the high and low categories. For women, the model is also significant in relation to the likelihood ratio ($\chi^2 = 7.69$, $df = 2$, $p < .02$)

Table 3
Logistic regression estimates: household labor distribution

Justifications ^a	Men					Women						
	B	E.T.	Wald	P	O.R.	IC 95%	B	E.T.	Wald	P	O.R.	IC 95%
All partner	4.27	1.1	14.94	.000	72.14	8.24-631.46	3.85	1.38	7.76	.005	47.28	3.1-712
Me 30/Partner 70	1.87	.66	7.9	.005	6.49	1.76-23.92	1.74	.80	4.68	.03	5.74	1.1-28
Me 70/Partner 30	1.49	1.02	2.09	.147	4.43	.59-33.32	.70	.59	1.4	.23	2.01	.63-6.45
All me	2.62	1.58	2.74	.09	13.78	61-307.58	2.97	1.05	7.99	.005	19.58	2.49-153.9
Referential Comparison ^a												
All partner							.78	.92	.72	.39	2.18	.36-13.26
Me 30/Partner 70							1.43	.53	7.32	.007	5.74	1.18-28
Me 70/Partner 30							.92	.366	6.38	.01	2.51	1.23-5.15
All me							1.93	.75	6.59	.01	6.91	1.58-30.22

a) The referent category is equality (50%50%).

Table 4
Logistic regression estimates: justifications and social comparisons

Justifications ^a	Men					Women						
	B	E.T.	Wald	P	O.R.	IC 95%	B	E.T.	Wald	P	O.R.	IC 95%
Status												
Low	-.61	.26	5.29	.02	.54	.32-.91	-.79	.27	8.18	.004	.45	.26-.78
High	.92	.43	4.52	.03	2.51	1.07-5.87	-.05	.62	.007	.99	.94	.27-3.23
Referential Comparison ^b												
Neosexism												
Low	.91	.38	5.88	.01	2.53	1.19-5.38						
Medium	-.16	.47	.110	.73	.85	.33-2.14						
Status												
Low							.47	.42	1.27	.25	1.6	.7-3.6
Medium							1.2	.45	7.04	.00	3.5	1.37-8.18
Normative Comparison ^b												
Neosexism												
Low	4.91	1.08	20.57	.000	136.41	16.3-1141						
Medium	2.08	.66	9.90	.002	8.03	2.19-29.41						

a) The referent category is medium.

b) The referent category is high.

and had adequate goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 270.72$, $df = 244$, $p < .11$). R^2 Nagelkerke shows that 6.1% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by the status subscale of masculinity ideology. In this case the difference is between the high and medium categories.

With regards to normative comparison we found for men that the model that includes the three variables is significant ($\chi^2 = 55.96$, $df = 2$, $p < .0001$) and has the right goodness of fit ($\chi^2 = 183.26$, $df = 240$, $p < .99$). R^2 Nagelkerke shows that 49% of the variability is associated with neosexism. The differences can be seen amongst all of the categories. In relation to women, the logistic regression found that the model is not significant. Table 4 shows the estimate coefficients.

Discussion

This paper is focused on two objectives. Firstly, to show that justifications and social comparisons predict different types of household labor distribution, not only perceived unfairness. Secondly, to prove that masculinity ideology and neosexism predict the use of the justifications and comparisons. In addition others results are commented.

As in others countries, husbands show higher occupational status than wives, and more economic dependence in women than men. Other studies with participants of different countries found similar tendency (Greenstein, 2000; Watt & Eccle, 2008). Besides ours results indicated significant differences by sex in gender variables. Men are more neosexist and more traditional in relation to masculinity ideology than women, a finding also similar in others research (Unger, 2001).

In relation to household labor distribution we have found significant differences by sex. In this sense, 82 men inform that women do almost everything household labor but only 65 women does this affirmation. On the other hand, 24 women affirm that they do everything opposite 13 men. This discrepancy is also found in others research that use hours per week for measuring household labor (Press & Townsley 1998). Kamo (2000) suggested that discrepancies in hours are found for the household tasks performed by husbands, but not those performed by wives. In this sense he consider that depending on the objective of research it will be necessary to use other forms of estimation. According to Greenstein (2000), analyses of a distributional measure of housework are more likely to capture equity aspects of the division. This question is addressed in the next section.

In relation to first hypothesis, we found that (a) cognitive variables have more relevance that economic dependence and occupational status on household distribution and (b) in comparison to equal distribution, men and women use more justifications when wives do all housework but there are no differences with regards to the distribution 70/30 when men do participate. This finding may be explained

by the fact that couples do not appear to use 50% as an 'equity point' (Lennon & Rosenfeld, 1994) and because men find the division of labor to be fair when husbands contribute about 36% of the time (Coltrane, 2000). Another interesting finding is that women use justifications when their partner does everything. One possible explanation is that, similar to the way economic dependence works, women use justifications as a way of negating a fact that deviates from the traditional gender norms. It would be necessary to investigate this relationship in further detail, for example, in less traditional couples as same sex couples, and in cohabiting heterosexuals' couples. Do women of these couples use justifications when their partners do all housework? Since, justifications spread to discharge the men and linking the women to the home, what happens in same sex couples? In fact, some studies have found a more egalitarian division in cohabiting than married respondents (Hamplova, 2002; Davis et al., 2007).

The second relevant element that differentiates between the forms of distribution is referential comparisons. Firstly, they are only used by women and specifically it has been observed that, in relation to equitable distribution, those comparisons are used more when the woman does everything and less when the man does 30%. This result is in accordance with the distributive justice theory because these comparisons enhance perceived fairness. In this sense wives feel better of than others women and maintain a positive view of the situation (Kluver, Heesik & van der Vliert, 2002). On the other hand this finding is also related with the idea that the domestic work of men is often constructed as 'help', whereas women assume a managerial role (Coltrane, 1996; Dempsey, 2000). In summary, women compare themselves with other women, and their partner with other men, when explaining an asymmetrical distribution of family work. Nonetheless, men do not use this type of comparison. According to Steil (1997), in dual earner couples women may compare themselves with other women, so they may do more of the child care and household chores than their male partner, and see this as normal since they view men's professional success as being more important than that of women. In accordance with these findings we consider necessary to analyse the comparisons and justifications, from a qualitative point of view, as explanations of household labour distribution

In relation to H2 and H3, our results show a partial confirmation. As predicted, justifications and social comparisons are associated with two important constructs: masculine ideology and neosexism. There is substantial evidence that gender ideology influence perceived fairness but the current study found significant relationships between antecedents of fairness and that ideology. The relationship among these variables was found both in men and women, but it is necessary to discuss some differences. In relation to justifications it was found that, the status

norms of masculinity are the only variable that is relevant. Husbands that use more justifications score higher on status norms than those that use them less. So we can say that men that use more justifications give greater relevance to their professional status. Women show the same tendency, but the difference is only between the medium and low categories. This fact is related to the high evaluation given to men's professional success and their traditional role as breadwinner. As a whole this result is consistent with the finding by Sánchez (1994) about the importance of the conventional attitudes of men in relation to the perception of injustice. In our study those conventional attitudes were evaluated through masculinity ideology, a construct that has been used yet as measure of gender ideology. But it is worth remembering that the subscale of antifemininity was not significant. The fact that justifications are associated with the male's professional relevance is consistent with the idea that sex role ideology has a moderating effect on perceived unfairness (Forry et al., 2007) and with the existence of a process of socialization by gender specific role expectations. For example, some studies show that African American husbands spend more time on household labour than white husbands, a fact that has been related to their socialization practices (Cunningham, 2001). African American families tend to socialize their children with fewer gendered expectations regarding household and child-rearing tasks compared to white families (Hill, 2002). So their model of man is not only related to breadwinner, provider role, and professional status.

In relation to social comparisons there is another model present. In men, neosexism is associated with both referential and normative comparisons. The tendency of the association indicates that the most neosexist husbands do less normative comparisons and less referential comparisons, which is related with perceive less injustice. This association is consistent with the idea that denying the existence of discrimination towards women's employment implies that they are free in their job choices. In this sense, what is freely chosen is not consider unfair. However, it is known that wives have jobs in which they spend less time than husbands and fit their jobs around their children's timetables (Sullivan & Lewis, 2006). In women, only referential comparisons are associated with the status norm. In this case the less referential comparisons the more traditional masculinity. These results agree with De Maris and Longmore (1996) and Sanchez (1994). The fact that women consider men's professional status to be a very important aspect when they make referential comparisons implies that they accept the importance of the professional role of their husband in relation to their own. Perhaps the traditional model of masculinity is operating as false consciousness. In short, neosexism and the professional status of men are associated with social comparisons; consider cognitive antecedents of perceived unfairness and both appear to be coherent in the current gender discourse.

Two implications seem evident from these results. In order to change unequal distribution it may be necessary to change the model of masculinity. First, an educational program, from a feminist perspective, may contribute to modify the distribution of household labor. If we conceptualize femininity and masculinity as existing in all individuals, and socialize more in terms of age and competency than according to sex, as has been proven to affect the housework distribution of African-American families (Hill & Thomas, 2000), the same would be expected in other countries. In our country the current implementation of models of coeducation could have similar results. But the more relevant question, according to our result, is not that men learn to cook or washing but the relevance of status in the model of masculinity. If the prestige of men is associated with a professional success, only marginally do household labour. In addition, it is necessary to show the subtle form of sexism and discrimination. Nowadays, the election of profession is biased by sex in our country, and the 'ideal worker' is yet a man without familiar responsibilities. A finding that is in line with the relevance of model of masculinity is that, according to the result by Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2005) on data of International Social Survey Programme, employment policies have no direct effect on couples' household labour. In comparison, country's gender ideologies do affect the level of gender equality in the family.

Secondly we consider it necessary to connect a policy of conciliation with household labor distribution and its impact on the justifications and discourse that couples use in relation to the distribution of family work. For example, in the Unites Sates, most men still use sick leave, vacation days or other discretionary leave as a means to justify their absence rather than using formalized leave (Pleck, 1993). Is this connected with a traditional masculinity ideology? Obviously one of the factors that affect men's use of parental leave is the societal view that men should provide for families (Hyde, Essex & Horton, 1993). If the conciliation measures do not cover the father's right to participate in caring for the family, the actions adopted by companies and chosen by couples will always tend to consider women as the only beneficiaries of these, and women will opt for more leave and a part-time work model, as occurs in the Netherlands (Den-Dulk, 2005).

In our country recent legal instruments are oriented in this direction. However the reality is far from to be equilibrated. Part-time work in Spain is basically done by women. This job is considered a precarious type of employment which women are forced to accept in a highly segregated labour market (Beltran, 2000). On the other hand, the report of Women, Job and Market labour of Spanish Council of Youth (2007) affirm that almost 43% of youth women have a temporal job and 80% of part-time work is done by women. This form of discrimination suppose more time to household labour and care. The care

of children or of adult sick, incapacitated or major persons is the second reason of the part-time day in the women. This reason affected to 18.3 % of women who have part-time day in 2008. Besides, this reality is probably related with the use of men of extended leaves of absence for care of children in Spain. In 2008, mothers were 98.45 % of the whole of persons who used maternity permission and 94.40 % of the whole of extended leaves of absence for care of children (Information published by Women's Institute in web in 2009). Extended leaves of absence for care of children are enjoyed almost in sole right by the mothers.

As with any study, it is important to consider the limitations. One limitation of our study is the participants. Although the profile of our respondents was relatively similar to a national sample with regards to a number of demographic characteristics, the respondents were not randomly selected and 53% of the couples did not respond to our invitation to participate. This is a frequent fact in this type of research. In addition our participants were from urban areas and heterosexuals. Thus, replication with a larger sample size and other types of couples is needed to confirm and extend these findings. Furthermore, we believe that the psychosocial processes that our investigation proposes should be studied in greater detail. From a qualitative approach it would be necessary to research in greater detail the meaning of "equality", "equity" or "50-50" in relation to housework, as well as the notion of masculinity maintained by men and women.

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