SOCIOL H188A
Professor Carian

Reverse Outlining Allison Daminger's Literature Review for "The Cognitive Dimension of Household Labor"

Instructions: In groups, complete this worksheet. For each paragraph of Daminger's literature review, determine the main idea/thesis of each paragraph. Then, determine why the paragraph is necessary (e.g., Does it provide important background information? About what? Does it outline a theory relevant to the research? Does it motivate the research question or argument?). Write your answers in the space to the right of each paragraph.

Paragraph	***Notes***
UNCOVERING COGNITIVE LABOR Unpaid housework is as much a form of labor as is paid work for an employer. This insight catalyzed a robust sociological literature on household activity. Scholars in this subfield ask how much unpaid labor household members complete, who completes it, how these figures vary temporally and geographically, and what meanings individuals ascribe to such work (e.g., Bianchi et al. 2012; Fuwa 2004; Hochschild 1989; Sayer 2005). Despite innovation over time in the methods used and questions asked, the object of study has remained largely consistent. Both qualitative and quantitative scholars use a definition of housework heavily weighted toward physical activities such as cooking, shopping, cleaning and laundry, home maintenance, and paying bills (Bianchi et al. 2012; Coltrane 2000; Twiggs, McQuillan, and Ferree 1999).2 Quantitative scholars typically measure the amount of time individuals spend on housework or the proportion of tasks completed by each spouse (e.g., Berk 1985; Bianchi et al. 2012; Lam, McHale, and Crouter 2012). Qualitative researchers often examine respondents' feel- ings about performing housework in addition to describing the particular labor patterns they have adopted (e.g., Deutsch 1999; Hochs- child 1989; Miller and Carlson 2016).	
Critics of this dominant stream of research contend that most studies of household labor ignore the non-physical dimensions of the activities documented. An exclusive focus on concrete, observable tasks—work I refer to as "physical work" or "physical labor"—is, they argue, incomplete, because it overlooks "hidden" or "invisible" forms of labor (Daniels 1987; DeVault 1991; Papanek 1979) that do not match dominant understandings of domestic work.	

One hidden dimension is the affective or emotional: literature on "emotion work" asserts that managing feelings and affect is a form of labor distinct from the physical work of completing a task (Hochschild 1979). For instance, whereas traditional studies of household labor would tally the minutes a woman spends chopping and stir-frying vegetables for dinner, a study of emotion work would note her efforts to remain cheerful despite her children's misbehavior or to hide her disappointment when a family member refuses to eat what she has prepared. Emotional labor often occurs alongside physical labor, but it need not: the spouse cooking could easily entrust the work of boosting children's spirits or defusing a tense dinner-table exchange to their partner. In summary, emotional labor constitutes a distinct dimension of work inadequately represented by predominant frameworks for studying domestic labor.	
Yet even this two-dimensional conception of labor as both emotional and physical falls short by omitting a class of activities that are primarily cognitive in nature. Building on the dinner preparation example, the work of anticipating the family's need for a meal and generating a plan for fulfilling that need is primarily neither physical nor emotional. Cognitive labor may occur in the same time or space as its physical and emotional counterparts, but it differs in form (chiefly mental rather than physical) and purpose (anticipating a need or making a decision rather than regulating affect and mood). In the following section, I draw on insights from sociology and psychology to make the case for adding the cognitive dimension to our understanding of household labor.	
The Case for a Cognitive Dimension The bulk of household research centers on physical and, to a lesser extent, emotional work, but several qualitative studies reference household activities with a strong mental component. Hochschild (1989:276), for example, defines "management of domestic life" as a discrete category of work that entails "remembering, planning, and scheduling domestic chores and events." Similarly, Coltrane (1996) and Allen and Hawkins (1999) identify a distinction between the cognitive work of managing household chores and the physical work of helping with those chores. Still other scholars foreground planning work, defined as activity related to ensuring the household runs smoothly and every family member gets where they need to be, when they need to be there (Arendell 2001; Daly 2001; Mederer 1993).	

Such references point to the existence of cognitive labor, but they do not theorize it as a distinct dimension of household life with qualities that require unique measurement strategies. Instead, cognitive phenomena are typically referenced as an aside in studies otherwise devoted to physical labor (e.g., Coltrane 1996; Deutsch 1999; Tichenor 2005); treated as a category of work equivalent to physical tasks (e.g., appearing as "household management" alongside "cooking" and "shopping") (Hochschild 1989); or conceptualized narrowly as a phenomenon of time and schedule management (Arendell 2001; Daly 2001; Hessing 1994).	
Despite its marginal position, cognitive labor emerges from these fragments in the qualitative literature as a phenomenon that is both prevalent and gendered. Some scholars report the largest gap between male and female participation lies not in cooking or childcare time but in "management" activity (Deutsch 1999). Even among couples who share housework and childcare equally, women are more likely to feel responsible for task outcomes (Daly 2001; LaRossa 1988), remind their partners to complete certain chores (Ahn, Haines, and Mason 2017), set standards for what constitutes an acceptable meal or a clean-enough house (Mederer 1993), and coordinate and supervise hired help (Gregson and Lowe 1994; Hertz 1986). In the context of long-term planning and decision-making, women devote more mental energy to anticipating the demands of parenthood and reconciling partners' competing career needs (Bass 2015; Wong 2017).	
Another cognitive task—making decisions for the family—may be more male-typed. Prior research on different-sex couples suggests men often wield decision-making power: they are more likely than their female partner to overtly exercise their preferences and, implicitly, to determine which issues may be discussed at all (Komter 1989; Miller and Carlson 2016; Tichenor 2005).	

Innovative time-use studies that attempt to quantify "invisible" forms of labor or document differences in the nature of men's and women's domestic labor have produced mixed results. One line of research tests the hypotheses that women spend more time multitasking, have more fragmented leisure time, or experience more "time pressure" regardless of actual labor hours (Craig and Brown 2016; Mattingly and Sayer 2006; Sullivan and Gershuny 2013). Although not direct manifestations of cognitive labor, multitasking, time fragmentation, and time pressure may be symptoms of a heavy cognitive labor load. For instance, individuals with the greatest knowledge of household activities may be called on to respond to family members' requests for assistance, even while engaged in a leisure activity. Likewise, they may multitask in an attempt to accomplish a long list of both physical and cognitive tasks (Sullivan and Gershuny 2013).	
By some measures, time-use data support the expectation that one hour of a woman's housework time is not precisely equivalent to one hour of a man's time. British women's leisure time is more frequently interrupted by domestic tasks than men's (Sullivan 1997), and U.S. women spend more hours per week multitasking (Offer and Schneider 2011) and are more likely to feel rushed, even compared to men with equivalent leisure time (Mattingly and Sayer 2006).	
Yet two studies that explicitly operationalize a "mental" component of housework complicate this narrative. Lee and Waite (2005:332) define mental labor as "thinking about household labor when . . . not performing household tasks" and report that U.S. women spend more time than men on such labor. However, both the gender gap and the absolute workload reported in their study appear negligible: men reported 2.3 hours per week of mental labor, compared to women's 3.1 hours. Adding mental labor time to the overall housework tally decreased men's share of domestic work by only three percentage points.	
Offer and Schneider (2011:816) also include a measure of mental labor, defined as "various thoughts related to work and family members," in their study of multitasking among U.S. parents. Although mothers spend more hours multitasking each week, Offer and Schneider (2011:823) find no gender differences in the proportion of all multitasking that involves mental labor (about 8 percent of all multitasking episodes) or in how frequently participants' mental labor is focused on "family matters." They do, however, find that multitasking at home is a more negative experience for mothers than for fathers: women in the study experience more stress and psychological distress in conjunction with multitasking.	

It is puzzling that women are found to bear substantially more of a household's managerial load when studied qualitatively, yet both the overall cognitive burden and the gender gap look insignificant when studied quantitatively. One possible explanation is that qualitative researchers have identified activities that respondents perceive as pervasive but are in fact minimal. Another is that the primarily time-based metrics utilized by quantitative researchers are poorly suited for estimating either relative or absolute cognitive labor loads.	
Mediating among these conflicting findings is important for our understanding of gender inequality at the household and societal levels. Recent research links a high cognitive burden to significant psychological and behavioral consequences, including reduced capacity to exercise willpower and make long-term decisions (Mullainathan and Shafir 2013; Vohs et al. 2008; Wang et al. 2010). Whereas physical chores are unlikely to intrude on time outside the home, household-related cognitive labor may easily occur in contexts where distractions are unwelcome (Darrah, Freeman, and English-Lueck 2007). Efforts to multitask have been associated with anxiety, stress, and other obstacles to well-being (Wetherell and Carter 2013). Although direct examination of the consequences of a gendered distribution of cognitive labor is beyond the scope of this study, there is reason to believe that health, relationship satisfaction, and career decisions could all be affected.	
In summary, activities classifiable as cognitive labor are not wholly absent from the housework literature. However, they have largely been referenced in passing, commingled with or treated as equivalent to physical tasks, or studied in a relatively narrow context (e.g., regarding infant care [Walzer 1998]). In the present study, I combine the relevant ideas scattered throughout the literature under one conceptual umbrella, offering a unified definition of cognitive labor as a unique dimension of domestic work alongside the physical and the emotional. I ask not only whether cognitive labor is gendered, but how, and I seek an explanation for apparent discrepancies between relevant qualitative and quantitative findings. This research is essential because the limited evidence available suggests cognitive labor is ubiquitous, unequally distributed by gender, and likely to generate negative consequences for the laborer.	

Literature review from: Daminger, Allison. 2019. "The Cognitive Dimension of Household Labor." *American Sociological Review* 84(4):609–33.