

What Makes Men Mother and Mop?  
Constancy and Change in the Care Work Performed by American Men

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## ABSTRACT

BETH ANNE LATSHAW: What Makes Men Mother and Mop?  
Constancy and Change in the Care Work Performed by American Men  
(Under the Direction of Philip N. Cohen)

Despite widespread media attention to stay-at-home fathers, little empirical research has been done on the current predictors and implications of men's increased participation in the household. My dissertation overcomes this limitation by taking a mixed-methods approach to understanding what factors might reignite what Hochschild (1989) called the "stalled household revolution." I combine in-depth interviews with 40 fathers, household time diaries, and preexisting survey data to examine three research questions: (1) Does working with more women on the job prompt men to embrace or resist housework off the job?; (2) Is the Census accurately capturing how many US fathers provide primary care; and, (3) How much and what types of housework are stay-at-home fathers doing? My first paper analyzes data from the American Time Use Survey and finds that employed men complete fewer hours of housework per week the higher the proportion of women in their occupation, although this reduction is greatest when jobs have equal numbers of men and women. Using interview data, my second paper critically assesses whether men who self-identify as stay-at-home fathers fit the Census' definition and re-estimates how many care in the US today. Findings suggest that the Census undercounts the number of male primary caregivers by not including men who are employed, provide another reason for being home, or have been home less than one year. My third paper assesses how much and what types of housework full-time fathers complete. I find that stay-at-home fathers do more housework than working fathers,

but tend to specialize in “masculine chores” (avoiding some housework traditionally associated with “motherhood”). In particular, fathers who are home short-term, were dissatisfied in former careers, live in rural locations and have lower household incomes participated the least. These results contribute to the literature by revealing how men’s workplace context affects their housework time, ways we can use qualitative research to inform our measurement of fatherhood, and finally, what nuanced reasoning underlies fathers’ participation in households today.

To my parents, Robert and Pauline Latshaw

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While I am saddened to move away from Chapel Hill this summer, I know I received the best graduate school experience I could've possibly imagined with the Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina. Go Tar Heels!

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# CHAPTER 1

## FRAMEWORK, MOTIVATIONS, AND OBJECTIVES

### INTRODUCTION

Although Arlie Hochschild coined the term “the second shift” in 1989, feminist scholars have long marked childcare and domestic labor as obstacles to gender equality in the marketplace, as working women sacrifice time, energy, and resources that might be poured into their careers when completing daily, taxing domestic obligations for their families. The unintended result of this scholarly fixation on the seemingly persistent unequal division of household labor and care work by gender, or what Hochschild (1989) termed the “stalled revolution,” has been: (1) a relative absence of attention to, and examination of, households where men *are* taking primary responsibility for domestic labor; and, (2) a lack of consensus on whether this revolution is permanently stalled or whether individual or structural level shifts might propel change toward egalitarian conditions in the home.

With this premise in mind, my three paper dissertation reassesses to what extent 21<sup>st</sup> century American men are merely maintaining the stalled constancy Hochschild described, or alternatively, transforming the division of housework and care work. I conduct a systematic, empirical investigation of men’s household behaviors in two contexts where men do “women’s work.” By examining these two contexts, using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis, I contribute to the literature by better understanding what factors drive men, generally, and fathers, in particular, to take on more domestic responsibility and, in some cases, even become the “primary household care worker.” In addition, by empirically

assessing how much and what types of domestic labor employed men working in different occupational contexts do in their homes, I examine an unexplored link between workplace environments and household behaviors.

In essence, by studying the behaviors and circumstances surrounding (1) fathers who are taking a more active role in the household, and (2) men who do what is traditionally considered “women’s work” in the labor force, feminist and family scholars will gain a better understanding of what conditions are necessary for igniting change in the stalled household revolution. Furthermore, by conducting this systematic, mixed-methods study of male primary caregivers’ participation in housework, I investigate family and gender dynamics through a fresh lens, assessing whether gender inequality is still “evoked, created, and sustained day-by-day through interaction among family members” (Thompson and Walker 1989: p. 865) when traditional gender roles and responsibilities are radically swapped (Coltrane 1996, Risman 1998, Doucet 2006).

## BACKGROUND LITERATURE

### *Fatherhood in the United States*

When developing visions of gender equality, feminist scholars have generally underestimated the importance of examining how structural and cultural changes shape the lives of fathers as well as mothers (as opposed to mothers alone). While the role traditional “ideologies of motherhood” have played in reinforcing a conventional division of household labor and childrearing along gendered lines has been elaborately detailed ( Rich 1976, Chodorow 1978, Braverman 1989, Hays 1996, Crittenden 2002, Douglas and Michaels 2005, Warner 2005, Stone 2008), the same is not true of fatherhood (Blaisure and Allen 1995, Silverstein 1996). In the words of feminist scholar Louise B. Silverstein (1996: p. 3),

“feminist theory has not yet addressed the ways in which the ideology of fatherhood has contributed to interlocking inequalities in both paid employment and family life.” In this sense, because scholars have continually viewed fathers’ contributions to families through a breadwinner lens, less attention has been paid to how increased male involvement in care work might allow women to renegotiate responsibilities and power relations at home.

In addition, feminist scholars have implicitly disregarded how men, like women, are gendered beings and “active participants in creating gender” (Thompson and Walker 1989: p. 865). Moreover, by not acknowledging that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both men and women could embody and navigate dual-roles (provider and caregiver) or even reverse roles, sociologists of gender have inadvertently overlooked ways increased male participation in childrearing and domestic labor might benefit women (Silverstein 1996). As I argue here, a systematic examination of full-time fathers fills a gap in the literature on men’s family work – and gender inequality in the workplace and household.

While many feminists have avoided and sometimes even objected to the burgeoning interest in studying fathers (Silverstein 1996, Doherty et al. 1998), the amount of work generated on this subject matter has been growing rapidly in recent decades (Marsiglio et al. 2000, Hobson 2002). The rise in attention paid to fatherhood corresponded to an increasing interest in several monumental transitions that were shaping American family in the Post-WWII era. As female labor force participation increased and male wages stagnated, a growing ambiguity surrounding the division of household labor, and the balance of work and childcare in dual-earning families took center stage as the breadwinner-homemaker, the nuclear family form declined in number (Berk 1985, Gerson 1993). Simultaneously, mounting media attention paid to rising numbers of divorces, teenage pregnancies, and single



parent families led numerous scholars to explore the consequences of “father absence” for children (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994, Blankenhorn 1995, Popenoe 1996), attempting to both influence public policy (Griswold 1993, Daniels 1998) and to investigate the impact fathers have on child developmental outcomes (Parke 1996, Lamb 1997, 1998, 2002). This early focus on the dichotomous absence versus presence of fathers ultimately fostered studies aimed at expanding and more meaningfully exploring the significance of fatherhood to men (Daly 1995, Ihinger-Tallman et al. 1995, Messner 1997, Stacey 1998, Marsiglio and Cohan 2000, Townsend 2002).

Fatherhood itself is a historically contingent social construction. In other words, variation in what it means to be a “good father” shifts over time in response to cultural and institutional change (Stearns 1991, Griswold 1993, LaRossa 1997, Pleck and Pleck 1997, LaRossa et al. 1998). In viewing fatherhood as a social construction, scholars recognize the possibility for diverse father types and roles to exist and fatherhood ideals to change (Cherlin 1998, Lamb 1998). Most importantly, this perspective argues that caretaking itself was not an innate, biologically rooted phenomenon, but instead was historically and socially constructed as a “feminine” skill. In contrast, the evolutionary biological, physiological and ethological perspectives and the growing body of counter-evidence in sociobiology assert that genetic and physical influences predispose women to care, protect and bond with children (see, e.g., Bowlby 1952, Geary 1998). Still, in support of the social constructionist of gender perspective, Lamb’s (1997) review of the literature on parental caretaking studies in an array of western cultures concluded that neither sex possesses a “natural” ability to care for children and parenting skills are learned or acquired primarily through experience.

While definitions of fatherhood have varied over time, the most recent fatherhood “ideal” has been titled everything from “androgenous” to “involved” to “new” and “responsible” fathering. Sociologists Rotundo (1985) and Pleck (1987) were the first to outline this emerging fatherly image, characterized by men’s intimate, active, compassionate involvement in the lives of their offspring. Despite the popularity of this image in the media, LaRossa (1988) was quick to critique it, stating that while the “culture of fatherhood” had indeed changed, the “conduct of fatherhood” (i.e., men’s actual behavior) remained largely unaltered. Moreover, he feared that in mainly focusing on “involved” fathers, the large number of absent fathers who remain distant and neglect to pay child support could be overlooked. Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies published in the years following this work tend to support his assertions (Blakenhorn 1995, Parke 1996, Popenoe 1996, Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda 2004, Craig 2006). While the change in women’s and men’s work experiences and an increasing cultural emphasis on fathering could create an environment conducive to household gender equality (Waite and Goldscheider 1992, Bianchi 1995, Sanchez and Thomson 1997), this ideal has not been met to date.

Despite the persistently large number of absentee fathers, today’s fathers who are present are more involved in the lives of children than fathers in the past (Pleck and Pleck 1997, O’Brien and Shemilt 2003, Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004, Doucet 2006) and are spending more hours conducting fatherly activities (Furstenberg 1988, Bianchi 2000, Gershuny 2001, Yeung et al. 2001). Despite this positive change, research shows that men still tend to identify themselves as “helpers” in the home instead of primary caregivers or equal partners and often experience conflict arising from attempts to balance the breadwinner and parental roles (LaRossa and LaRossa 1981, Thompson 1991, Gerson 1993, Risman 1998,

Coltrane 2000). In sum, while men's hours of participation in fathering have risen (Bianchi 2000), suggesting movement toward egalitarianism, they have not increased enough to match the simultaneous rise in women's hours of paid employment (Beaujot 2000, Coltrane 2000, Silver 2000).

Despite proof that today's fathers, while doing more than in the past, continue to do fewer hours of housework and childcare than mothers (Brines 1994, Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Bianchi et al 2000, Sayer 2005), *any* evidence of father engagement and interest might be viewed as encouraging, and as I argue here, a potential avenue to gender equality in families. With aims of moving beyond research that primarily focused on absent, deadbeat fathers, Doherty et al. (1998) say a "responsible" father-child relationship involves acknowledgement of paternity, presence in the child's life, economic support, and active involvement with the child. This piece is perhaps most useful in reiterating reasons why feminists should not necessarily oppose scholarly interest in fathering, since involved fatherhood might benefit (more than harm) women and children (Phares 1996, Silverstein 1996) and should not contradict the feminist agenda, but instead, assist it.

Still, the majority of fatherhood researchers still conceptualize "responsible fathering" in relation to monetary support, reinforcing the social construction of a "father" as primarily an economic provider. In addition, there have been only a handful of other systematic, empirical studies conducted specifically on men who father full-time (O'Brien 1987, Wheelock 1990, Barker 1994, Smith 1998, Doucet 2006) and all were conducted outside of the United States, leaving a gap in the literature on how stay-at-home fathers could expose nuanced dynamics of gender and the division of labor in US households today. Besides monetary contributions fathers make to a child's life, they can also offer additional hours of

active, engaged parental time and increase the child's exposure to vocabulary and stimulation via their interactions with the child's mother (Marsiglio et al. 2000, Palkovitz 2002). In addition, fathers can indirectly aid children by serving as a support system to mothers, backing up their disciplinary decisions and authority, improving child achievement and reducing behavioral problems (Amato 1998) and provide children with a masculine role model.

Despite the realities of father absence, the cultural norm of men becoming more involved in their children's lives has accompanied a general shift toward fathers spending more hours with children, especially in the last several decades (Mosley and Thomson 1995, Lamb 2000, Gershuny 2001, Yeung et al. 2001). Although full-time male caregivers represent an extremely small proportion of U.S. population, the sociological import of this group should not be undermined. In other words, if fatherhood scholars continue to assert that fatherhood is socially constructed and care work is a gender-neutral skill, and if feminist theorists continue to view the unequal division of household labor and childcare as a barrier to reaching gender equality in the workplace, then the characteristics, behaviors, and belief systems of men who are actively participating in the home deserve a more thorough examination.

By investigating fathers who care full-time, sociologists might discover whether men who shed their breadwinning role perform significantly more household labor than other men, thereby relieving women of the burdensome "second shift" (Hochschild 1989). Alternatively, one must also explore whether the absence of a worker identity causes men to construct new forms of masculinity or, in contrast, demoralizes and stigmatizes stay-at-home fathers in the same way it has unemployed or unsuccessful men (Elder, Liker, and Cross

1984, McLoyd 1989), causing them to resist doing the “dirty work” traditionally assigned to women (Brines 1994). Through empirically examining whether stay-at-home father’s reasons for staying home, social support networks, or gender ideologies affect their participation in housework, we can better predict men’s involvement in the private sphere. In doing so, this research on full-time fathers will satisfy Marsiglio et al.’s (2000: p. 1186) suggestion that scholars develop a broader conceptualization of fathering, study wider ranges of fatherhood activity, and “understand how fathering roles are defined, negotiated, and expressed in diverse contexts.”

Finally, it is equally crucial that scholars empirically measure and define new variations of fatherhood correctly, as we attempt to delineate and reassess men’s increased participation in care work. While the Census defines a “stay-at-home dad” as a “currently married man with children under the age of 15 who is currently the primary caregiver for his family and has not earned any money through labor force participation for one year prior to the time he is surveyed,” because of the strong ties between breadwinning and the fatherhood identity, it is quite possible that most stay-at-home fathers continue to do some work while serving as the family’s primary caregiver. Thus, through qualitatively researching how full-time fathers define their own identity via their occupational and family expectations, roles, and responsibilities, I hope to expand upon the Census’ definition and better capture what “stay-at-home fatherhood” means to men who do it, thereby using qualitative research to inform quantitative measures.

### *Occupational Segregation and Housework*

While *changes* in men’s roles in the family is the primary focus of this dissertation, it has also been said that attitudes and behaviors towards normative gender roles have been

slower to change in the family than in the workplace (Coltrane 2000, Cohen 2004), making the link between and shifts in gendered workplace roles and family roles interesting to explore. Following this notion, in addition to focusing explicitly on stay-at-home fathers' housework and interpretation of their father identity, this dissertation will devote its final paper to empirically examining the link between men's occupational characteristics and their household behaviors generally, as well as for single versus married men, specifically. While prior research has examined how wages, work schedule, and hours worked affect housework time and its division, less has been done on how other job characteristics, such as the gender composition of one's job, relate to household labor, especially for men.

One study from the late 1980's found no association between occupation and housework time for women after classifying occupations as male or female dominated (Hardesty and Bokenmeier 1989) but did not focus on men. Another more recent study focused on the relationship between men's workplace subordination and their avoidance of "feminine" tasks at home (Arrighi and Maume 2000), finding that men's workplace subordination was negatively related to their participation in "feminine" household tasks, especially in couples where wives' earnings neared those of their husband. To my knowledge, no other studies on the relationship between the gender composition of men's jobs and their housework have been performed to date.

The rich literature on men in female dominated occupations and masculinities suggests that the experiences of such men in the workplace could be paralleled by, or at least affect, behaviors in the home. Nevertheless, this link has yet to be explored. In general, research on men who work in female dominated occupations tends to build its theoretical foundation on the concepts of "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987) and "hegemonic

masculinity” (Connell 1995). Because most jobs, even today, are considered to involve either “women’s work” or “men’s work,” dictating things like tasks, status, attire, responsibilities, and even pay accordingly, it is sociologically interesting to study the performance of gender for men and women working in non-traditional career paths. While it is often acknowledged that segregating men and women by occupation serves to reinforce stereotypes about appropriate gender roles and behaviors, it is less apparent how masculinities operate when men enter gender-atypical jobs. Thus, it is essential that we not only study the behaviors of men who are staying home and becoming more active in childcare and housework, but also what other contextual factors affect men’s participation in domestic labor. Through examining links between the workplace and the home, feminist scholars could discover factors that might reignite progress in the stalled household revolution. As occupations become more gender integrated over time (Cotter et al. 2004), it is vital to explore whether workplace behaviors affect household behaviors from this new, relatively unexamined perspective.

## OVERVIEW OF PAPERS

My first paper (Chapter 2) fills a gap in feminist and family literature on the “stalled household revolution” by examining the unexplored relationship between the gender composition of occupations and men’s participation in housework. Using data from the American Time Use Survey, I assess whether working in female dominated occupations (or working with more women on the job) prompts men to either embrace or resist housework off the job. As hypothesized by the compensatory gender display perspective, findings suggest that working men do fewer hours of housework the higher the proportion of women in their occupation, but this reduction (for every incremental increase of women in the

occupation) is greatest when occupations have equal numbers of men and women and smaller when jobs are either male or female dominated. In addition, it is single men's lessened participation in routine, "feminine" housework that drives this trend, suggesting that research more meaningfully explore how work environments alter household behavior for men of all marital statuses, instead of focusing on married men alone, as the relative resource perspective does.

In the second paper (Chapter 3), I critically assess whether the US Census Bureau undercounts the number of stay-at-home fathers currently serving as primary caregivers in American families. Using a combination of qualitative interview data with 30 stay-at-home fathers and 10 full-time employed fathers and Census microdata from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey, I examine how stay-at-home fathers define what it means to be a stay-at-home father, in their own words. According to the Census, a stay-at-home father is a "married father with children under 15 yrs old who has remained out of the labor force for more than 1 year primarily so he can care for his family while his wife works outside the home." This definition, however, potentially underestimates how many fathers serve as primary caregivers today by leaving out separated, divorced, or unmarried fathers (i.e., cohabiting), single fathers and gay fathers, fathers who have worked any hours or made any income in the past year, fathers who have looked for work at any point in the past year, fathers who were laid off at any point in the past year, fathers who began staying home less than one year ago, fathers with children over the age of 15, fathers who lie about their employment status, and fathers whose wives have been out of the labor force at any point in the past year.



With mixed-methods approach, I use the in-depth interviews to establish whether the 30 men who self-identify as stay-at-home fathers fit the Census' definition through asking them extensive questions about their family, educational, and work histories, as well as their transitions into stay-at-home fatherhood and activities they engage in while staying home full-time. In addition, I ask them to define what a stay-at-home father is and what boundaries they would place around this familial role if prompted by the Census. After doing so, I then use Census microdata from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey sample to estimate how many more men would be considered stay-at-home fathers if the definition was expanded to include married men with children under the age of 18 who were employed less than 20 hours a week (with wives working more than 30 hours a week) in the last year, men who are not employed but have brought income into the family in the past year, and men who were laid off or have been staying home less than one year.

It is my hope that this research will highlight the value of mixed-methods research techniques, particularly when studying emergent family forms like stay-at-home fatherhood. Without conducting qualitative interviews and using them in combination with quantitative data, we might erroneously assume that stay-at-home fatherhood operates and thus should be defined the same way stay-at-home motherhood is. Additionally, we might overlook ways family roles and responsibilities change and adapt over time with changes in economic climates and standards of living. For example, with a rising cost of living (as evidenced by increased housing, energy and healthcare fees), it seems increasingly likely that stay-at-home parents might attempt to work in some capacity while staying home, or seek options to work part-time outside of the home. Additionally, as women's educational attainment continues to increase and in many cases surpass that of men's (Goldin, Katz and Kuziemko 2006), we will

see more men staying home while still combating the societal expectations of men being providers, making the likelihood of male caregivers feeling compelled to work while staying home more probable.

My third dissertation paper (Chapter 4) uses a combination of in-depth interview, housework activity, and weeklong time diary data completed by my sample of 30 stay-at-home and 10 full-time employed fathers. To establish uniformity between this paper and my second dissertation paper (Chapters 3 and 4), I use ATUS housework codes to code the time diaries and create a quantitative dataset to analyze. In addition, as part of the in-depth interview, I had the fathers complete a “housework activity” in which I had three stacks of cards: chores you do more often, chores your wife does more often, and chores you do equally. I then went through a list of 30 housework chores (ranging from yard work to grocery shopping to mopping) and had the fathers tell me which pile to place them in. After doing this, I went through each pile and asked the fathers to tell me any theory or reasoning they had for why they did each chore more often, less often, or equally.

Using full-time employed fathers as a reference group, I hope to establish what childcare and housework stay-at-home fathers are doing when compared to fathers, generally. My main question is whether fathers who stay home see all domestic chores as part of their “job description” or whether such men resist completing chores traditionally associated with “women’s work” because they are already engaging in an occupation that is considered non-traditional. I also examine any evidence suggesting that women in stay-at-home father families, while working full-time, continue to engage in “gatekeeping,” or blocking their husbands from completing certain feminine housework chores. In addition, I establish whether stay-at-home father’s participation in housework varies according to (1)

whether they are staying home by choice or because they were laid off or unable to find a career they desired, and (2) the amount of social support (i.e., acceptance, appreciation, positive feedback, etc.) they perceive from their spouses.

I find that stay-at-home fathers complete more housework than full-time employed fathers, but tend to specialize in “masculine chores” and avoid some housework traditionally associated with “femininity” and “motherhood.” In addition, fathers who have been home for a shorter amount of time, were dissatisfied in their former careers, view stay-at-home parenthood as temporary, live in rural locations and have lower household incomes and social support complete less housework than wealthier fathers who “choose” to father long term and live in “progressive” communities. As a whole, these results contribute to the family, gender, work and fatherhood literatures by revealing how men’s workplace context affects their housework participation, ways we can use qualitative research to inform and improve our measurement of emergent family forms, and finally, what nuanced reasoning underlies fathers’ participation in domestic labor today.

### LIMITATIONS

My findings are limited because of a small sample size with little diversity in income, education and race/ethnicity. On one hand, this is likely representative of stay-at-home fathers generally, as they tend to, on average, have higher household income levels than other families in the US (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). Still, I cannot generalize to all stay-at-home fathers or say my results represent stay-at-home fathers definitively because of the limited number I interviewed. In addition, there is little racial/ethnic diversity, which again, may reflect that pattern in which white, educated, middle to upper class fathers married to high earning white, educated women are more likely to be stay-at-home fathers (or claim the

identity). Nevertheless, my research would be improved by increasing the size of my sample and sampling for groups that are less likely to be represented (in terms of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status).

In addition, conducting interviews in more diverse regions of the US would enable me to elaborate on my findings in regards to rural versus metropolitan areas and more traditional versus progressive community contexts. Likewise, while all of the men in my sample embraced the label “stay-at-home father,” I would have benefited from interviewing male primary caregivers who did not identify as such. I discuss specific limitations in each chapter and my attempts to address some of these concerns in future research projects in the remainder of this manuscript. Finally, while it was beyond the scope of my three-paper dissertation, my findings (particularly on housework) would be improved and reinforced if I had interviewed the wives/partners of full-time fathers in the sample. By interviewing wives separately and couples together to discuss housework, in particular, I could have better assessed dynamics of gender and the potential that gatekeeping operated in these households.

#### ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Because the interviews ranged in length from 1.5 to 3 hours and the interview guides were quite extensive, a number of additional findings emerged that could not be fit into the three-papers presented here. First, a wealth of valuable insights into the mental health dynamics of stay-at-home fatherhood became apparent in my interviews with full-time fathers. In particular, the isolation resulting from a lack of social support networks and coping strategies stay-at-home fathers employ to overcome these difficulties were quite telling. I found myself making numerous parallels between the statements made by these fathers and classic feminist works on stay-at-home motherhood, particularly in relation to the

loss of identity, lack of mental stimulation and issues associated with caring for children full-time and being economically dependent. In terms of affluent stay-at-home fathers, I also found parallels emerging between my discussions with them and the findings of Pamela Stone's, *Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Stay-Home* (2008).

In contrast to these parallels between stay-at-home fatherhood and stay-at-home motherhood, I also found numerous contrasts that are worthy of discussion and elaboration. In particular, I was struck by how many fathers willingly surrendered caregiving and housekeeping duties to wives after work and on the weekends. If given the opportunity to interview the wives of stay-at-home fathers, it would be quite interesting to publish findings on how female breadwinners maintain a sense of control and motherhood identity when they essentially swap traditionally gendered caregiving roles with their husband. In doing so, the implications of mothers taking over (or being coerced into completing) the demands of care work and domestic labor after work and on the weekends means gender inequality will persist in households even when fathers serve as primary caregivers.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

My future research will continue in the direction of studying men's participation in housework and childcare in several different capacities. I will use my dataset of 40 fathers to write a series of papers on the aforementioned topics. I also hope to follow my sample of fathers over time and re-interview them in 2 years, and then again in 5 years, to see whether they've reentered the labor force, changed their participation in housework or childcare, or have different perspectives on their familial role. In doing so, I would establish the only existing longitudinal dataset on men who serve as full-time caregivers. I am particularly interested in seeing how staying home or taking paternity leave affects men's work

trajectories and whether it affects them in a parallel or different way than women who stay home. Using this longitudinal data, I will write a book on the emerging dynamics of stay-at-home fatherhood.

In the future, I also hope to earn external funding to conduct two studies on additional aspects of fatherly involvement in the lives of children. First, I intend to study the race and class dynamics of fatherhood with more detail to understand how their intersection contributes to the encouragement or prevention of certain types of men from taking on this role. In particular, I hope to speak to young fathers living in urban areas to find out what fatherhood means to them (in their own words) and what structural, cultural and economic barriers prevent men from disadvantaged men becoming more active in the lives of their offspring. Finally, I hope to study the legal implications of fatherhood to assess how increased involvement in the lives of children could potential impact legal rights for groups of fathers such as single fathers, primary caregiving fathers and gay fathers.

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## CHAPTER 2

### WORKING MEN AND WOMEN'S WORK: THE GENDER COMPOSITION OF OCCUPATIONS AND MEN'S HOUSEWORK

#### ABSTRACT

This paper fills a gap in feminist and family literature on the “stalled household revolution” by examining the unexplored relationship between the gender composition of occupations and men’s participation in housework. Using data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), I assess whether working with more women on the job prompts men to embrace or resist housework off the job. As hypothesized by the compensatory gender display perspective, findings suggest that working men do fewer hours of housework the higher the proportion of women in their occupation, although the decrease (for every incremental increase of women in the occupation) is greatest when occupations have equal numbers of men and women and smaller when jobs are either male or female dominated. In addition, it is single men’s lessened participation in routine, “feminine” housework that drives this trend, suggesting that research more meaningfully explore how work environments alter household behavior for men of all marital statuses.

#### INTRODUCTION

Despite a significant rise in women’s labor force participation since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, men’s hours of housework have not increased at a corresponding rate, often resulting in a burdensome second shift for working women and mothers (Hochschild 1989, Shelton and John 1996, Coltrane 2000). Since the 1960’s (when women did seven times as much

housework as men), women's hours of domestic labor have declined substantially and men's have risen slightly, yet women are still doing nearly twice as many hours of housework as men, especially the more "feminine," routine tasks like cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer and Robinson 2000, Coltrane 2000, Sayer, 2005).

Furthermore, feminist scholars have isolated the second shift as an obstacle hampering attempts to obtain gender equality in the workplace, thereby perpetuating patriarchy and the benefits men accrue through controlling women's labor in a capitalist system (Hartmann 1979, Sokoloff 1980, Folbre and Hartmann 1989).

While this "stalled household revolution" has been confirmed using a number of different data sources and methods (Hochschild 1989, Shelton and John 1996, Coltrane 2000, Sayer 2005), less is known about what will *reignite* movement toward gender equity in the household. More specifically, while factors that are decreasing or changing women's housework are increasingly being explored and explained, the factors associated with men's participation in housework are not (Coltrane 2000). This paper seeks to fill this gap in the literature, connecting inequalities in the marketplace and the home, by examining whether men's occupational characteristics affect the time they spend on household labor.

Specifically, I ask if the gender composition (i.e., the number of women working in) of a man's occupation affects the amount or type of domestic labor he performs at home, and if so, why? While the rich literature on gender and work suggests that a man's occupational context could alter his behavior at home, this specific link has yet to be explored. In examining this potential tie, I also investigate whether the gender desegregation of occupations, were it to occur, might accelerate or continue to stall progress toward eliminating gender inequality in households.

## MEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE HOME

### *Masculinity and Fatherhood*

When developing visions of gender equality, feminist scholars have tended to underestimate the importance of examining how structural and cultural changes shape the household behaviors of men *and* women (as opposed to women alone). While the role traditional “ideologies of motherhood” have played in reinforcing a conventional division of household labor and childrearing along gendered lines has been elaborately detailed (Chodorow 1978), the same is not true of men (Blaisure and Allen 1995, Silverstein 1996, Doucet 2006). Instead, because scholars have primarily viewed men’s contributions to families through a breadwinner lens, less attention has been paid to the potential increased male involvement in housework has in allowing women to renegotiate power relations in the home. Along this vein, research has implicitly disregarded how men, like women, are gendered beings and “active participants in creating gender,” not only in the workplace but within households as well (Thompson and Walker 1989: p. 865). Moreover, by not acknowledging that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both men and women could embody and navigate dual-roles (provider and caregiver), or even reverse roles, sociologists of gender have inadvertently downplayed ways increased male participation in domestic labor benefits women (Silverstein 1996).

While gender scholars have tended to avoid or even object to the burgeoning interest in studying men and fathers (Silverstein 1996, Doherty, Kouneski and Erickson 1998), the amount of work generated on this subject matter has been growing rapidly in recent decades (Marsiglio, Amato, Day and Lamb 2000, Hobson 2002). The rise in attention paid to men and fathers corresponded to a growing interest in monumental transitions that were shaping

American families in the Post-WWII era. As female labor force participation rose and male wages stagnated (Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman 2004), a growing ambiguity surrounding the division of household labor and the balance of work and childcare in families took center stage (Berk 1985, Gerson, 1993). Simultaneously, mounting media attention paid to rising numbers of divorces, teenage pregnancies, and single parent families led numerous scholars to explore the consequences of “father absence” (Griswold 1993, Blankenhorn 1995, Popenoe 1996, Daniels 1998) on child development and outcomes (Lamb 1997, Parke, 1996). This focus on the dichotomous “absence versus presence” of men in families evolved into more nuanced studies aimed at meaningfully exploring the significance of masculinity and the father identity to men (Daly 1995, Messner 1997, Stacey 1998, Marsiglio and Cohan 2000, Doucet 2006).

While scholars noted that the change in women’s and men’s work experiences and an increasing cultural emphasis on fathering could create an environment conducive to household gender equality (Waite and Goldscheider 1992, Bianchi 1995, Sanchez and Thomson 1997), this ideal has not been met to date. On one hand, scholars find that today’s fathers are more involved in the lives of children than fathers in the past (Pleck and Pleck 1997, O’Brien and Shemilt 2003, Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004, Doucet, 2006) and are spending more hours conducting fatherly activities (Gershuny 2001, Yeung et al. 2001). Despite this progress, fathers/men continue to do fewer hours of housework and childcare than mothers/women (Brines 1994, Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Bianchi et al. 2000, Sayer 2005). Research shows that men still tend to identify themselves as “helpers” in the home instead of primary caregivers or equal partners and often experience conflict arising from attempts to balance the breadwinner and parental roles (Gerson 1993, Thompson 1993,



Risman 1998, Coltrane 2000). In sum, while men's hours of participation in domestic labor have risen, they have not increased enough to match the simultaneous rise in women's hours of paid employment and decline in housework (Beaujot 2000, Coltrane 2000, Silver 2000, Doucet 2006).

In addition, some men use their higher wage status in the labor force to resist contributing to tedious household tasks, and similarly, some women block (via "gatekeeping") male entrance into feminine roles of homemaker and caregiver (Coltrane 1989, 1996, Hochschild 1989, Thompson 1993, Milkie, Bianchi, Mattingly and Robinson 2002). In contrast, other women feel unable to negotiate equal participation from male partners (Major 1987, Hochschild 1989, DeVault 1990) and some men expect partners/wives to complete housework as a symbol of their commitment or dependence (Berk 1985). Finally, the lack of social support that might encourage or sustain egalitarianism leaves many couples attempting dual-parenting isolated and divided (Coltrane 1989, Hochschild, 1989). This has been attributed to the fact that attitudes and behaviors have been slower to change in the family than in the workplace (Coltrane 2000).

#### OCCUPATIONS AND THE DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK

While research has examined how earnings, work schedules, workplace subordination, and hours worked per week affect housework time and its division, little has been done on how other job characteristics, such as the gender composition of occupations, relate to household labor, especially for men. One study from the late 1980's found no association between occupations and housework time for women after classifying occupations as male or female dominated (Hardesty and Bokenmeier 1989), but did not focus on men. Another more recent study focused on the relationship between men's workplace

subordination and their avoidance of “feminine” tasks at home (Arrighi and Maume 2000), finding that men’s workplace subordination was negatively related to their participation in “feminine” household tasks, especially in couples where wives’ earnings neared those of their husbands’. Still, this study did not control for the gender composition of the occupation, examine other types of housework besides that classified as “feminine” work, or compare housework for married versus single men, all of which I do here. To my knowledge, no other studies on the relationship between the gender composition of jobs and housework have been performed to date.

### *Relative Resources and Prestige*

Melvin Kohn (1959) was the first to connect one’s structural experiences at work with behaviors at home, but never viewed family dynamics through a gendered lens. Since then, most studies that have examined the relationship between work outside of the home and work in the home follow the relative resources perspective (Blood and Wolfe 1960), assuming that because housework is an unpleasant activity neither partner would want to engage in, one’s earnings and occupational prestige can explain why some individuals do less than others (Brines 1993). Individuals with more resources are generally thought to opt out of more housework (vis-à-vis their partner), thus, the smaller the gap between the earnings of husbands and wives, the more equitably housework is divided (Ross 1987, Blair and Lichter 1991, Brayfield 1992, Shelton and John 1993, Kamo 1994, Presser 1994). However, the effect of earnings on household labor tends to be stronger for women than men, suggesting that increases in a woman’s absolute earnings decrease her housework, but have little affect on her husband’s (Gupta 2007).

Studies have also used occupational prestige as an indicator of relative resources, but results are less consistent than for earnings (Shelton and John 1996). Some studies document a negative relationship between men's occupational status and their amount of household labor (McAllister 1990), but others have found a positive relationship (Deutsch, Lussier and Servis 1993) or no relationship at all (Aytac 1990). Aytac (1990) also found that men whose wives have more authority on the job tend to share more housework than men whose wives have less decision making ability. Interestingly, the majority of studies have found no relationship between a woman's occupational status and her household labor time (Hardesty and Bokemeier 1989, McAllister 1990, Calasanti and Bailey 1991). New studies point to the importance of absolute (not relative) resources, particularly in predicting the amount of time women devote to housework (Gupta 2007), but again, rarely focus or find significant results for men.

#### *Occupational Gender Composition*

Despite this common focus on occupational resources and prestige, studies have overlooked the potential relationship between the gender composition of occupations and housework, particularly for men. The rich literature on the behaviors of men in female dominated occupations hints that men's experiences in the workplace could be associated with their behaviors in the home, but this link has yet to be explored. In general, research on men in female dominated occupations tends to build its theoretical foundation on the concepts of "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987) and "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 1995). Because most jobs, even today, are said to involve either "women's work" or "men's work," dictating factors like assigned tasks, status, attire, responsibilities and pay

accordingly, it is sociologically interesting to study the links between gender ratios at work and gender dynamics at home.

Scholars have suggested that people working in gender-atypical occupations construct, assert and perform their gender in a heightened way because the context is one in which their gender identity is challenged (Williams 1989, 1995, Evans 1997, Lupton 2000, Henson 2001, Cross and Bagilhole 2002, Simpson 2004). For men working in female dominated occupations like nursing and elementary school teaching, this is especially true. Because male nurses, for example, are often stereotyped as being effeminate, they are often propelled to maintain a “hypermasculine” or hegemonic male ideal (Connell 1995) to differentiate themselves from their female coworkers. According to Christine L. Williams (1989, 1995), men in such jobs use four major strategies to establish difference from and superiority over women sharing their occupation: specializing in male identified areas within the occupation, highlighting the masculine aspects of their specialties, defining their occupation as being merely the stepping-stone to another more prestigious job, or simply disassociating themselves from their work as a coping mechanism.

While Kanter’s (1977) famous study of women in male dominated corporations suggests that any group who is a numerical rarity adopts a “token” status that then makes them subject to stigmatization, increased scrutiny, and even discrimination, other studies have critiqued this theory. Work on the “glass escalator” (Williams 1992) illustrates how men who enter female jobs are often praised and privileged by their token status, instead of being penalized for it and are put on the fast track to pay, prestige, and promotions (Williams 1992, Budig 2002, Cognard-Black 2003, Hultin 2003). Instead of being a detriment, when working in a women’s field, a man’s gender is often viewed as an asset, eliminating internal

discrimination and barriers to mobility (Williams 1992, Budig 2002, Cognard-Black 2003, Hultin 2003). Still, most men are reluctant to participate in an occupation classified as “women’s work,” as this would signal a stigma or decline in status (Simpson 2005, Lupton 2006). Because of this, the overwhelming majority of studies done on men working in female-dominated fields (most of which rely on small, unrepresentative samples) conclude that men often end up overcompensating or displaying “hypermasculine” behaviors, while far fewer rework their own definition of masculinity to include feminine qualities and skills (Williams 1989, 1995, Evans 1997, Lupton 2000, Henson 2001, Cross and Bagilhole 2002, Simpson 2004).

### *Gender Display*

This occupational literature links with the “gender display” framework for housework, which argues that in doing particular types of tasks and spending more or less time on them, individuals recreate and perform gender within households. By cooking a meal, a woman displays and reconfirms her femininity and in taking out the trash, a man performs or demonstrates his masculinity. The “compensatory gender display” perspective suggests that men in subordinate positions at work might overcompensate and overemphasize their masculinity at home by completing fewer “feminine” housework chores (Arrighi and Maume 2000, Bittman et al. 2003). Alternatively, it’s equally possible that men working in female dominated occupations might display their gender in a more egalitarian way by becoming “more like their job.” In other words, if these jobs possess a set of common skills or characteristics that could carryover from the workplace into the home, two outcomes are possible. Men could become trained on the job with occupational skills they could use to specialize in housework, could feel empathy for their numerous female coworkers who

discuss the burdens of doing housework in their homes, or could work in jobs that allow them more flexible hours to meet home demands (because they are predominantly filled by female workers). Because studies have also found that having an egalitarian attitude has a positive effect on men's housework time (Ross 1987, Blair and Licher 1991, Kamo 1994), it's plausible that the man could "become more like his job" when at home. On the other hand, the stigma and wage penalty (England and Folbre 1999) attached to the caring labor these men perform at work could make them even more likely to overcompensate and assert a traditional, masculine identity in the household, resisting nurturing or "feminine" tasks when outside of work. For example, a male daycare worker could resist changing diapers at home even though this is a skill required of him at work because he feels resentment that his occupation is underpaid, whereas a male head chef might be comfortable cooking at home because his field is male dominated and prestigious.

In addition, it is theoretically interesting to examine whether working in a job with more women has the same or a different effect on single versus married men's housework. To date, most of the literature has examined married and/or cohabiting men's housework relative to that of their spouse/partner instead of looking at men's housework in general or absolute terms. This is likely due to the fact that variations in men's housework are more difficult to explain. Still, while married men's *relative* participation in housework (inference to their wives) is well documented, if unmarried men's housework participation is altered by their workplace environment also, this suggests that men's participation in household labor should not only be examined among couples, but for men as individual social actors as well. In other words, if single men reduce or increase their housework when working with more women on the job, it implies that they are, in a sense, performing gender

at home even without the presence of a female spouse or partner, adding additional support to the suggestion that work behaviors and environment affect how people “do gender” in the home, regardless of marital status.

In sum, it seems quite plausible that working with more women on the job could prompt men to either: a) become “more like their job” and relax traditional notions of masculinity by completing more housework, or alternatively, b) could overcompensate and carry a tendency to overemphasize their masculinity in their occupation into the home, rejecting housework (in particular, “feminine” tasks) as a strategy to differentiate themselves from their female partners or coworkers. In all, it is essential that we study whether this potential link between the workplace and the home will continue to suspend or will reignite the stalled household revolution.

### *Research Questions*

The overarching question this paper seeks to answer is whether working with higher numbers of women at work affects the amount or type of housework that men do at home. In other words, could the same tendencies towards hyper-masculinity and strategies towards distinguishing themselves as different or better than their female counterparts follow men from their workplace into their home, or alternatively, will men become more like the job and do more household labor after gaining a sense of empathy for their female coworkers, adopting a more egalitarian notion of family life, or working somewhere that allows more flexibility in balancing work and family demands? To be more specific, I test the following three questions:

- A) Is there a relationship between the gender composition of a man’s occupation and the hours of housework he completes per week?

- B) Is this relationship different for single men versus married men?
- C) Does this relationship vary according to the type of housework being completed?

## DATA AND MEASURES

### *The Sample*

I address these three questions using data from the 2006 American Time Use Survey, (ATUS) which is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and conducted by the US Census (U.S. Dept. of Labor 2007). This survey collects data on how people living in the US spend their time engaging in various activities (i.e., paid work, housework, leisure), as well as demographic characteristics like age, sex, race, and employment status. The survey provides a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults over the age of 15 who were part of households that completed their final month of interviews for the Current Population Survey. The survey administrators collected time diary data for a 24-hour period using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) techniques (Endnote 1).

### *Time Use Measures/Dependent Variable*

My main dependent variable is the absolute hours of housework men complete per week. I constructed this time use measure from an comprehensive list of primary housework activities that were converted from minutes per day to hours per day (by dividing each by 60) and then multiplied by seven to obtain housework hours per week, the standard way of measuring housework in the literature. These activities were then corrected for outlying, implausibly high values following a technique used by South and Spitze (1994) and Gupta (2007), where values higher than the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile are recoded to that percentile for each housework measure.



I created the “total housework per week” measure by summing four distinct types of housework together -- (1) routine, (2) non-routine, (3) non-household adult, and (4) outsourced housework. My theoretical motivation for doing so comes from literature (Bianchi et al. 2000) finding that women spend more time completing routine housework tasks (that tend to be monotonous in nature and must be completed on a regular basis), while the more recent increases in men’s hours of housework are primarily due to increased time spent doing “non-routine” or more infrequent housework, such as mowing the lawn or taking out the trash. I also included housework completed for non-household adults because of emerging literature on the burden and demands women, particularly in the middle-aged years, disproportionally experience in the care of elderly family members (Wolf 2004). Finally, literature on the increasing likelihood of employed women and single men to purchase or outsource their housework when the funds are available (de Ruijter, Treas and Cohen 2005) prompted me to include a measure on this trend.

The “routine housework” measure includes time spent on tasks like cleaning the interior of the house, doing laundry, preparing meals, and grocery shopping. The “non-routine housework” measure includes time spent on tasks like cleaning the exterior of the house, doing household and vehicle repair or maintenance, and lawn/outdoor care. The “non-household adult housework” measure includes any time devoted to completing routine or non-routine housework for other adults who reside outside the respondent’s home. Finally, the “outsourced” measure includes any time that is spent purchasing or arranging for others to do housework tasks like cooking, cleaning, or maintenance work for you (Endnote 2).

### *Independent Variables*

The main independent variable is the proportion of women in an occupation. This continuous variable (ranging from 0 to 1, with higher values representing a higher numbers of women) was constructed by dividing the number of year-round full-time female workers in an occupation by the total number of year-round full-time workers in the same occupation using occupational data from the 2000 Census (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). I also control for a number of demographic variables (including age, race/ethnicity, and education level), household variables (marital status, number of children in the household under age 18, presence of children in the household under age 5, the number of people in the household, and home ownership), and other work-related variables (logged annual labor market earnings, logged weekly employment hours, full or part-time student status, and occupying a managerial occupation). For a detailed description of my coding of these variables, see Table 2.1. The descriptive statistics for these variables are listed in Table 2.2. I limit my sample to currently employed men because my key variable of interest is the gender composition of men's current occupations.

### *Control Variables*

Turning to the demographic controls, I include age because it's thought that differential socialization experiences between generations (as well as having more/less time available to complete housework) could lead to variations in the housework completed by younger, middle-aged, and elderly respondents. I also control for race. Studies have found mixed results in regards to its effect on housework (Shelton and John 1996): some find that Black families distribute housework more equally than white families (Ross 1987); others find no effect (Wilson et al. 1990, Hossain and Roopnarine 1993). Finally, I control for education because it can be interpreted as an indicator of resources brought into a

relationship that potentially translates into opportunities to accrue more money or power, both of which can affect housework hours. Some studies find that men's absolute level of education increases their housework (Brayfield 1992, Brines 1993, Haddad 1994, South and Spitze 1994) and decreases their spouse's housework time (Shelton and John 1993), while other studies find no effect (McAllister 1990, Kamo 1991, 1994). For women, there is typically a negative association between education and housework (Brines 1993, Shelton and John 1993, South and Spitze 1994).

Household composition controls are also important in assessing the demand for housework. First, I control for marital status, although existing research that looks at this has focused more on women than men. Studies consistently show that married women tend to do more housework than cohabiting women (Denmark et al. 1985, Shelton and John 1993, Davis et al. 2007). For men, some studies show that cohabiting men do more housework than married men (Denmark et al. 1985, Davis et al. 2007), while others found that single men do more (Gupta 1999) or see little variation in men's housework regardless of marital status (Shelton and John 1993, South and Spitze 1994). Single men also tend to outsource tasks traditionally considered to be "women's work" (de Ruijter et al. 2005) more than married men. The presence of children in the household, especially children under the age of 5, is another important factor I control for. The number of children present tends to have a larger effect on women's housework than on men's (Shelton 1992), showing a positive relationship between the number of children and the amount of time devoted to housework (McAllister 1990, Bergen 1991, Brines 1993, Shelton and John 1993, South and Spitze 1994). The total number of household members and owning a house (as opposed to renting) are positively correlated with time spent on housework, particularly for women (South and Spitze 1994).

Finally, I control for a number of work-related variables to verify that it is not some other aspect of one's job or work environment that better explains the relationship between occupational gender composition and housework. First, I control for hours worked per week for all employed men, although this is typically said to affect women's housework time more than men's. In general, women's hours of paid work have a negative relationship with housework (Almeida, Maggs and Galambos 1993, Brines 1993, Acock and Demo, 1994), but women still complete more housework than men overall (Kamo 1991, Newell 1993, Shelton and John 1993). I also control for annual labor market earnings, which again, is thought to affect women's housework time more than men's. As Gupta (2007) found, increases in women's absolute earnings generally decrease their housework, but have little impact on their husbands' housework hours.

I further account for whether a respondent is a part-time or full-time student, as being in school while being employed could lead to a decrease in time spent on housework each week. My final control dictates whether or not an occupation involves a managerial title (as classified by the 2000 Census Occupational Codes). According to Arrighi and Maume (2000), men in managerial professions often enjoy higher levels of authority, power, and compensation at work, which could allow them to purchase the labor of others to get out of completing "women's work" at home. While their study found no effect of having a managerial occupation on domestic labor, I control for it here because a man in a managerial position could also carry workplace authority and power into the home, perhaps prompting him to resist or feel less compelled to complete housework.

## RESULTS

In the following section, I estimate a series of Ordinary Least Squares regression models to assess the effect that gender composition of occupations has on men's housework and examine whether this relationship varies by marital status or the type of housework being done.

A) *Is there a relationship between the gender composition of a man's occupation and the hours of housework he completes per week?* Model 1 (Table 2.3) suggests that there is a negative relationship between the proportion of women in an occupation and the total hours of housework completed per day for employed men, but this relationship is nonlinear (Endnote 3). As shown in Figure 2.1, we see that upon computing the predicted hours of housework per week for each percentage of women in a man's occupation (increasing by intervals of ten percent), the hours of housework men complete resembles a wide, U-shape. Once I control for demographic and household-composition variables (Model 2) the relationship remains significant, and upon controlling for other work-related variables (Model 3), it changes very little. Figure 2.2 (representing Model 3) displays the predicted hours of housework men complete per week at each increment of women work in an occupation when all continuous control variables are set to their mean and categorical control variables are set to their modal category. These predicted values, again, resemble a wide, U-shaped line of declining height that declines most rapidly up until the point of 55% women in an occupation, remains relatively steady, and then increases slightly when occupations exceed 80 percent female. In other words, as the percentage of women in an occupation increases, men do less housework, with their domestic labor declining rapidly up to the point where 55 percent of workers in an occupation are female. At this point, the reduction in men's housework reaches its lowest point and the size of the effect becomes smaller and

smaller, becoming slightly positive when the percentage of women in the occupation ranges from 85 to 100% female (Endnote 4).

When interpreting these results, it's important to note that in correspondence with the literature, the fewest number of male respondents work in female dominated jobs ( $N = 279$  or 8.6%), a fair amount work in middle-range jobs ( $N = 884$  or 27.1%), and the majority of men work in male dominated occupations ( $N = 2093$  or 64.3%). Male dominated occupations tend to be a combination of both high paying, prestigious white-collar jobs (CEO, physicians and lawyers) and lower paying, less prestigious, blue-collar jobs (construction workers, janitors, welders). Jobs dominated by women are also fairly predictable, including pink color jobs like nursing and secretarial work, as well as day care work and elementary school teaching. The middle-range occupational category where jobs are closer to being equally filled by men and women is more difficult to characterize. It includes jobs that are still significantly dominated by men (first-line managers, cooks, post-secondary teachers, retail salespersons) as well as formerly male-dominated jobs that now have slightly more women than men (accountants, secondary school teachers) and a few jobs that are more traditionally associated with women (counselors).

B) *Is this relationship different for single men and married men?* Table 2.4 breaks the sample of employed male respondents down by marital status to compare the effect of occupational gender composition on housework for married versus single men. After controlling for demographic, household, and work variables, we see that the effect occupational gender composition has on men's housework is quite different for the two groups, with the relationship being highly significant for single men and no longer significant for married men. In addition, the R-squared values suggest the model is able to explain

nearly twice as much of the variation in housework done by single men (10%) as it does for married men (5.3%). Figure 2.3 displays the predicted hours of housework at each percentage of women in an occupation for single men (after setting all continuous control variables to their mean and all categorical control variables to their modal category), revealing a similar relationship to Figures 2.1 and 2.2, but with slightly higher housework hours per week at the extremes (where occupations are either male or female dominated). In sum, Table 2.4 and Figure 2.3 suggest that as the percentage of women in an occupation increases (by intervals of ten), single men working in those jobs perform less housework per week. Their housework hours reduce rapidly up to the point where occupations have 50 percent women, or are gender integrated. From that point on, as the percentage of women in an occupation continues to increase toward 100 percent, the reduction in housework becomes smaller and smaller, turning slightly positive at the tail-end.

*C) Does this relationship vary according to the type of housework being done?*

Because the housework literature suggest that men's increased participation in housework over time is mainly due to investment in non-routine, infrequent chores (as opposed to specialization in more mandatory, mundane chores that are traditionally called "women's work"), I next break down the total housework measure into four components (routine, non-routine, non-household adult, and outsourced housework) to examine them individually. I run four models for single men to see if the negative effect of occupational gender composition on housework is predominately driven by one or more types of housework I measure. Turning to Table 2.5, we see that for single men, the negative effect working with more women has on the housework they complete is mainly the result of their decreased participation in routine or "feminine" housework as opposed to non-routine, non-household

adult, or outsourced housework. Again, we note that single men do significantly less routine housework the higher the percent female their occupation is, although the reduction in routine housework for every incremental increase of women working in an occupation is largest when occupations are integrated (50% women) and much smaller when they are either male or female dominated (0% or 100% women). There is no significant relationship between occupational gender composition and single men's participation in non-routine, non-household adult or outsourced housework.

## CONCLUSIONS

As hypothesized by the compensatory gender display perspective, my main finding is that employed men do less housework the higher the percent female their occupation is, although the amount of reduction per each increase in the number of women working with them is largest when occupations are half male/half female and quite small when occupations are male and female dominated. In other words, the "gender display" hypothesis predicts men's housework behaviors better than the "man becomes more like his job" perspective, and the relationship is primarily driven by a reduction in the hours of routine housework single men complete per week.

It is important to mention that while this finding is significant, it is quite small in size. For example, a single man working in an occupation with 10% women is predicted to complete approximately 12 hours of housework per week, while a man working in an occupation that has equal numbers of men and women completes about 8.5 hours. One could use this evidence to downplay the findings or say it's more interesting that the gender composition of occupations has such a minor effect on men's housework. In contrast, I argue that despite appearing somewhat trivial, it is quite meaningful given what has been



documented in the literature on men's housework to date. For example, we know that, in general, few studies has been able to find *any* significant predictors of men's housework, finding that overall, men's housework tends to vary very little regardless of external influences. In fact, the lack of research published on men's housework seems due, in part, to this notion that because a much higher variance of women's housework can be explained and independent variables tend to affect women's hours of housework far more than men's, research on men's housework is less significant.

In addition, while my model's R-square suggests I explain only 10% of the variation in housework completed by single men, this is quite comparable to other studies of men's housework in the literature. For example, Brines (1994) models found R-squared values of .08 and .10 when attempting to explain husbands' participation in housework, while Arrighi and Maume (2000) had R-squared values ranging from .11 to .18 using a smaller sample of men (N=385) than I use here. In addition, upon computing the standardize coefficients for the variables in my model, the main independent variable of interest (the proportion of women in an occupation) has the highest magnitude (.366) and is greater in value than other factors like age (.198), number of children (.050), hours worked per week (.086), and annual earnings (.051), all of which have been repeatedly used as predictors of housework in the literature. In sum, while the results may seem somewhat trivial in size and magnitude upon first glance, when considering the lack of research on men's housework, the difficulty in explaining any variation in it, and comparing the magnitude of the effect in reference to other variables that have been cited as affecting men's housework, the findings do contribute by filling a gap in literature on what, if anything, explains men's participation in housework.

Moving beyond the significance of the findings, the meaning behind them is more difficult to decipher. To begin, I find that the negative relationship between the gender composition of an occupation and men's housework is significant for single men but not married men, which suggests that men do not always decrease their housework as a strategy to distinguish themselves as different from and/or better than their female spouses or use their resources to do less housework than their partner. It does suggest, however, that regardless of marital status, employed men may try to overcompensate and emphasize their masculinity to distinguish themselves from their female coworkers even when they are at home and outside of their occupational context. In this sense, the connections between doing gender at work and at home are even more striking than previously thought.

The finding that single men significantly reduce their participation in routine work, in particular, which is often conceptualized as "feminine" housework like daily cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry, is especially telling. Because these chores are most often associated with "women's work," it makes sense that men, in attempts to distance themselves and overcompensate for working in an occupation that is associated with women, would reject participating in women's work in the household domain. Instead of becoming more like their job, perhaps by adopting skills or developing empathy for their female coworkers, men seem to reject participating in feminine behaviors at home, even when female partners are not present. This finding is in support of the literature that men are still resistant to specializing in "feminine" household chores (Bianchi et al. 2000, Sayer 2005), especially when they are in subordinated or stigmatized positions at work (Arrighi and Maume 2000). In future research, I plan to analyze whether there is no effect of occupational gender

composition on routine housework hours for single women, as this would make this finding for single men stronger.

Another interesting component of the findings is that men reduce their housework the most when they work in jobs that have close to an equal number of male and female workers. When considering why this would be associated with men's largest reduction in housework, one might posit that gender integration could theoretically create an environment in which men and women either see each other as equals, or alternatively, as competitors fighting for promotions and raises. If the latter is true, researchers might spend more time studying the behaviors of people working in gender integrated jobs to better understand how gender operates when occupations are not inherently gendered as "masculine" or "feminine" and/or when jobs that were formerly male dominated or considered to be "men's work" are increasingly or predominately being filled by women. For men working in jobs that are nearly integrated and no longer viewed as "male jobs," the threat of losing prestige and power to female coworkers could be a force driving them to decrease their household labor in their home, a place where patriarchy still tends to be more socially acceptable. Despite this, little research has been done on how workers do their gender when working in jobs that aren't "typed" as inherently masculine or feminine.

While this paper is limited because of my inability to control for gender ideologies (not asked about in the ATUS) or assess relative resources for couples (only one time diary is issued per household), the results point to an increased need to research the connections between men's occupational environment and their household behaviors. Future research could examine whether it is something about the group of jobs classified as gender integrated that causes men in them to reject housework in a magnified ways, perhaps because of

differing levels of power, status and prestige associated with these positions or the rate at which jobs are becoming filled by women over time. In all, it is pertinent that feminist scholars continue to explore factors that might *reignite* movement towards gender equity in the household and better understand the complex relationships between work on the job and work in the home. In doing so, we can continue to more meaningfully investigate whether and how occupational contexts accelerate or stall progress in households.

## ENDNOTES

1. The ATUS response rate in 2006 was 55.1 percent, providing a sample of 12,943 respondents. The survey oversampled on Saturdays and Sundays, so ATUS weights are used to correct estimates. While the ATUS time diary method is thought to be more accurate, it lacks measures on attitudes towards gender ideologies. It also collects time-use data on only one member per household, which limits exploration of the relative resource hypothesis. Because I am interested in the relationship between current workplace occupational gender composition and housework hours for men, the sample I use here includes male respondents age 18 or older who are currently “in the labor force” ( $N = 3249$ ). I exclude men (aged 15-17) who are still living with their parents, men who are retired, and men who are currently “out of the labor force” for any reason.
2. This conceptualization of “outsourcing” as time spent purchasing household services differs slightly from other papers (see, e.g. de Ruijter et al. 2005) that have conceptualized it in terms of one’s *expenditures* on household services. In both cases, outsourcing is interpreted as actions one takes to avoid doing one’s own housework, but the meaning of the findings will differ slightly.
3. In earlier analysis, I ran the original model without the squared term and, from the results, suspected that a non-linear relationship was present. To account for this, I added the quadratic term to better capture the nature of this relationship. I also conducted the analysis and experimented further numerous different versions of the gender composition of occupation variable. First, I ran OLS regression models with this gender composition of occupation variable divided into two, three, four, five, seven, and ten occupational compositions categories to assess whether the relationship varied for different types of occupational categories. Next, I ran a TOBIT regression to account for censored variables to account for potential heterogeneity in my dependent variable. Following this, I used a logged version of the main dependent variables (hours of housework per week) to account for the large number of respondents who reported “0” hours of housework, which might skew the results. Finally, I ran models for men in the sample who work in occupations that are 60% female or less and 70% female or less to account for heteroskedasticity due to the small number of men at the tail end of the occupational composition distribution. This has proven problematic in other research on men in female dominated occupations when scholars attempt to use large nationally representative survey data sets. Even in these large surveys, the number of men working in female dominated occupations is quite limited and can erroneously skew the results up or down unless accounted for. Reviews have also suggested using a SPLINE method to graph the residuals and better understand the relationship using STATA (which I plan to do prior to publication). In the end, despite running the model an extensive number of ways, the story was the same and the significance of variables and results changed very little across these various methods. The model with the highest predictability power and best fit is the one shown here.
4. While the slope suggests that there is a small positive effect of the gender composition of occupations on men’s housework at the tail end of the “U shape,” assessments of

heteroskedasticity suggest that the amount of error varies across it, with greater error being present at the tail-ends of the figure. In addition, the number of men in the sample filling jobs that are 85-100% women is very small, making this extremely small positive effect difficult (and risky) to interpret. To examine this potential for heteroskedasticity in greater detail, I did re-run the analysis where I restricted the dataset to men who work in occupations that are 60% female or less and 70% female or less (see Endnote 3), but the results remained consistent.

Table 2.1. Independent Variables: Description and Coding Information

NAME OF VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	CODING SCHEME
<b><i>Key Independent Variable</i></b>		
Prop. female	Proportion F of occupation	Continuous
Prop. female sq.	Proportion F of occupation sq.	Continuous
<b><i>Demographic Variables</i></b>		
Female*	Gender of respondent	1 = Female; 0 = Male
Age	Age of respondent	Continuous
Race	Race/ethnicity of respondent	Indicators: Black and Other; Suppressed Category: White
Education	Educational attainment of respondent	Indicators: Some College, BA, MA+; Suppressed Category: HS
<b><i>Household Variables</i></b>		
Marital status	Marital status of respondent	Indicators: Married Suppressed category: Unmarried
Number of Children	# kids < age 18 in the household	Continuous
Children under 5	Presence of children under age 5	1 = Yes, has child < 5; 0 = No, does not
Number in people in household	Number of people living in household	Continuous
Own house	Rental/ownership status	1 = Owns; 0 = Rents/doesn't pay
<b><i>Work Variables</i></b>		
Labor force status	Employment status of respondent	1 = Employed; 0 = Unemployed
Logged annual earnings	Natural log of annual earnings of employed respondents	Continuous, in thousands of dollars
Logged hours worked	Weekly employment hours	Continuous
Student status	Student status of respondent	Indicators: F-T; P-T; Suppressed category: Not in school
Managerial job	Job classified as managerial	1 = Managerial; 0 = Not

\*Note: Only the male sample is used in this analysis

Table 2.2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

	Mean (Male/Female)	Std. Dev. (Male/Female)	Min	Max
<b><i>Dependent Measures</i></b>				
Total hw hrs/wk	12.30 (9.75/14.52)	12.72 (11.48/13.31)	0	62.42
Routine hw hrs/day	9.48 (6.04/12.46)	11.08 (8.67/12.04)	0	40.25
Non-routine hw hrs/day	2.39 (3.26/1.64)	5.65 (6.56/4.58)	0	21
Other Adult hw hrs/day	.185 (.222/.153)	1.23 (1.46/1.14)	0	11.2
Outsourced hw hrs/day	.244 (.220/.264)	.710 (.675/.732)	0	4.62
<b><i>Key Independent Measure</i></b>				
Proportion F	.471 (.290/.633)	.295 (.229/.249)	0	.975
<b><i>Demographic Characteristics</i></b>				
Age	41.13 (41.01/41.23)	12.72 (12.50/12.91)	15	85
Race	.299 (.268/.326)	.674 (.638/.703)	0	2
Education	1.24 (1.23/1.24)	1.08 (1.09/1.07)	0	3
<b><i>Household Characteristics</i></b>				
Marital Status	.555 (.610/.507)	.497 (.488/.500)	0	1
# Kids under 18	1.05 (1.06/1.05)	1.14 (1.17/1.11)	0	7
Kid under age 5	.235 (.252/.221)	.424 (.434/.415)	0	1
Owns house	.747 (.756/.739)	.435 (.430/.439)	0	1
# in household	2.99 (3.05/2.94)	1.49 (1.52/1.46)	1	12
<b><i>Employment Characteristics</i></b>				
Annual Earnings	41617.05 (50089.7/34266.1)	32291.56 (35228/27470)	0	150,000
Hours Worked	40.36 (44.02/37.17)	12.91 (12.70/12.24)	0	160
Student status	.151 (.134/.166)	.497 (.471/.518)	0	2
Managerial Job	.018 (.026/.011)	.133 (.159/.105)	0	1



Table 2.3. OLS Regression of Gender Composition of Occupation on Total Housework Hours per day for Employed Men

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>
<b><i>Gender composition of occupation</i></b>			
Proportion female	-5.843 (2.799)**	-6.704 (2.978)**	-6.336 (2.981)**
Proportion female sq.	5.843 (3.517)*	7.553 (3.727)**	6.765 (3.758)*
<b><i>Demographic variables</i></b>			
Age		0.131 (0.020)***	0.100 (0.022)***
Race			
Other race		-0.219 (0.919)	-0.295 (.939)
Black		-1.820 (0.573)**	-1.929 (0.568)***
Education			
Some Col.		0.211 (0.626)	0.620 (0.596)
BA		0.829 (0.538)	0.967 (0.558)*
MA or more		-0.124 (0.675)	0.172 (0.695)
<b><i>Household variables</i></b>			
Married		-0.361 (0.532)	-0.244 (0.540)
# Kids < 18		0.522 (0.629)	0.481 (0.601)
Kid < 5		0.753 (0.555)	0.522 (0.557)
# in household		-0.316 (0.521)	-0.300 (0.505)
Owens house		1.431 (0.472)***	1.579 (0.500)***
<b><i>Work variables</i></b>			
Log Hours worked/wk			-3.693 (0.689)***
Log Annual earnings			0.360 (0.337)
Student status			
Part-time			-1.153 (1.341)
Full-time			-4.980 (1.015)***
Managerial job			-1.145 (1.174)
Constant	8.611 (.437)***	2.885 (1.106)***	14.194 (3.232)***
Observations	3249	3249	3249
R-squared	0.020	0.044	0.063

Standard errors in parentheses, \*p<0.1, \*\*p<.05, \*\*\*p<.01

Table 2.4. OLS Regression of Gender Composition of Occupation on Total Housework Hours per day for Employed Single versus Married Men

	<i>Single Men</i>	<i>Married Men</i>
<b><i>Gender composition of occupation</i></b>		
Proportion female	-14.305 (4.530)***	.077 (3.672)
Proportion female sq.	15.056 (5.821)**	-.757 (4.452)
<b><i>Demographic Variables</i></b>		
Age	0.148 (0.027)***	0.066 (0.029)**
Race		
Other race	-2.404 (1.355)*	1.349 (1.245)
Black	-2.157 (.762)***	-1.819 (0.861)**
Education		
Some Col.	-0.923 (0.881)	1.893 (0.830)**
BA	.288 (0.905)	1.459 (0.713)**
MA or more	2.287 (1.352)*	-.473 (0.817)
<b><i>Household variables</i></b>		
# Kids < 18	-.536 (1.087)	0.868 (0.479)*
Kid < 5	0.793 (1.471)	0.309 (0.640)
# in household	.139 (.733)**	-0.602 (0.429)
Owns house	1.578 (.635)**	1.255 (0.694)*
<b><i>Work variables</i></b>		
Log Hours worked/wk	-1.788 (.919)*	-5.389 (1.063)***
Log Annual earnings	-.551 (.673)	.713 (.350)**
Student status		
Part-time	1.074 (1.932)	-4.505 (0.951)***
Full-time	-3.529 (1.106)***	-5.269 (1.240)***
Managerial job	-.312 (2.562)	-1.401 (1.284)
Constant	15.607 (0.294)***	17.959 (4.824)***
Observations	1267	1982
R-squared	0.100	0.053

Standard errors in parentheses, \*p<0.1, \*\*p<.05, \*\*\*p<.01

Table 2.5. OLS Regression of Gender Composition of Occupation on Types of Housework per day for Single Men

	<i>Routine HW</i>	<i>Non-routine HW</i>	<i>Other Adult HW</i>	<i>Outsourced HW</i>
Prop female	-8.369 (3.491)**	-4.951 (2.60)*	-.669 (.506)	-.316 (.327)
Prop female sq.	8.702 (4.221)**	5.139 (3.610)	.871 (.641)	.343 (.003)
Constant	13.559 (4.148)***	1.568 (2.157)	.397 (.461)	.083 (.364)
Observations	1267	1267	1267	1267
R-squared	.0687	.077	.015	.021

Standard errors in parentheses, \*p<0.1, \*\*p<.05, \*\*\*p<.01

Note: I control for demographic, household, and employment variables, but do not show them above.

Figure 2.1. Predicted Hours of Housework per week for Men at Each Level of % Female in an Occupation (No Controls)

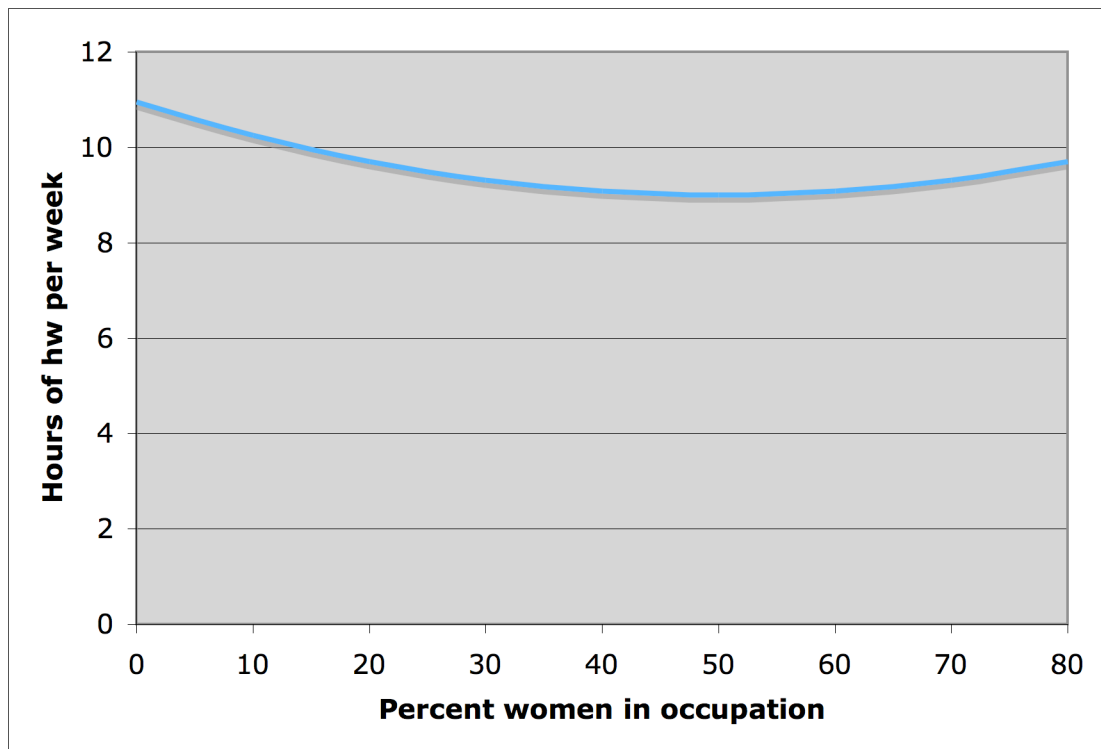


Figure 2.2. Predicted Hours of Housework per week for Men at Each Level of % Female in an Occupation (with Controls)

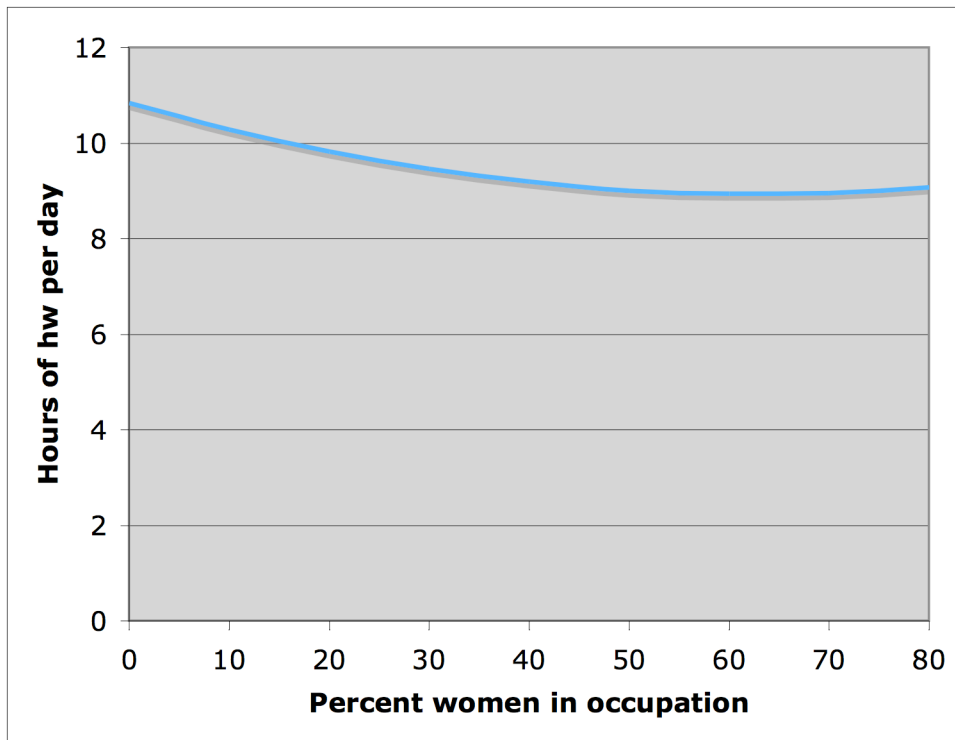
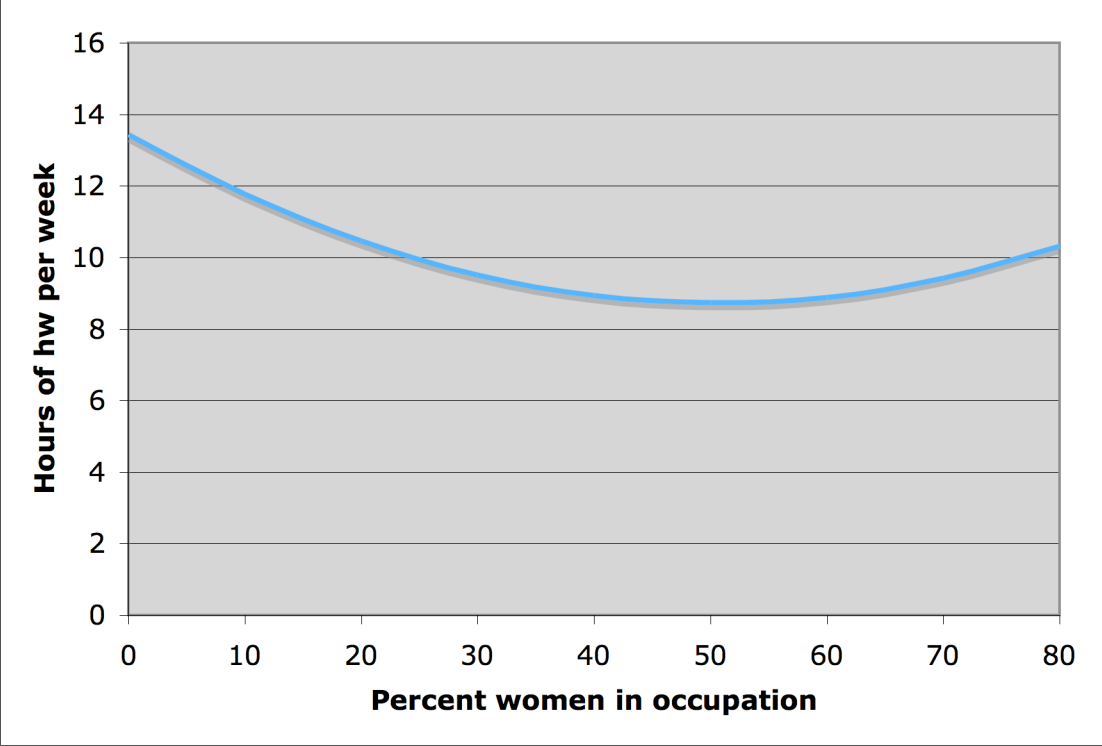


Figure 2.3. Predicted Hours of Housework per week for Single Men at Each Level of % Female in an Occupation (with Controls)



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## CHAPTER 3

### IS FATHERHOOD A FULL-TIME JOB? QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS INTO MEASURING STAY-AT-HOME FATHERHOOD

#### ABSTRACT

Little is known about men who serve as primary caregivers for their families due to a lack of detailed questions on fatherhood and the small numbers found in large-scale, nationally representative surveys. I move beyond this limitation by using a combination of in-depth interviews with 40 fathers and Census microdata from the American Community Survey (ACS) to critically assess whether the Census accurately count the number of male primary caregivers in the United States today. Findings suggest that the Census Bureau likely underestimates the number of men who father full-time (by as many as 1.4 million), as over 60 percent of men in my sample who self-identify as a “stay-at-home father” would be eliminated from the count because of part-time employment, their reason for not working, or their duration of time at home. These qualitative results have important implications for how researchers can more precisely model and measure fluid, emergent family forms.

#### INTRODUCTION

Despite a wealth of noteworthy studies on fathers’ increased involvement with children (see, e.g. Gershuny 2001, Yeung et al. 2001, O’Brien and Shemilt 2003, Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004) and full-time fathers outside of the United States (O’Brien 1987, Wheelock 1990, Smith 1998, Doucet 2006), scholars know very little about men who serve as the primary caregivers for US families for three interrelated reasons. First, a scholarly

fixation on the “stalled revolution” (Hochschild 1989) and emphasis on men’s lack of equal participation in housework and childcare has implicitly fostered an absence of attention to households where men are taking primary responsibility and fathering full-time. Second, the fatherhood literature has noted an overall lack of nuanced questions probing the meaning of fatherhood and/or behaviors fathers enact in the home in nationally representative, large-scale social surveys (Marsiglio et al. 2000). Third, surveys that do ask questions about fathers tend to have fewer numbers of male respondents, with most household surveys still allowing one household member (in many cases, the mother) to report on the actions of other members. This is especially true for stay-at-home fathers. Besides a numerical count of them published by the Census each spring, there is a large gap in the literature on what it means (in light of one’s past, present and future labor force participation and household behaviors) to identify as a stay-at-home father and on how many men claim this identity in families today.

I overcome these limitations by taking a mixed-methods approach to exposing the underlying meaning of calling oneself a “stay-at-home father” (for men who identify as such) and critically assessing whether the Census accurately counts the number of men who father full-time. First, I draw on in-depth interviews from a sample of 40 fathers (30 full-time caregivers and 10 full-time employed) to understand how men who identify as “stay-at-home fathers” define this social status, and evaluate whether these fathers meet the designated criteria used in the Census count. For example, because the Census requires men to be “not in the labor force” for one year to be counted as a stay-at-home father, I inquire whether men who identify as such reflect this measurement or, in contrast, are working while home, and if so, assess reasons why. Second, I use my qualitative findings to inform a second stage of analysis where I suggest revisions to the Census measurement. Drawing on the qualitative

results, I re-estimate (using the 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) sample) how many more stay-at-home fathers *would be counted* if the Census criteria were altered. The outcomes of this empirical investigation have important implications for how we model and measure emergent, fluid family forms that respond and adapt to shifts in larger social, cultural and economic forces (see, e.g. Coltrane 2000, Manning and Smock 2005, Brown and Manning 2009).

## FATHERHOOD

Scholarship on fatherhood emerged and grew rapidly in the mid-1980s to 1990s (Marsiglio et al. 2000, Hobson 2002). As a result of growth in female labor force participation and stagnation of male wages in the 1970s, breadwinner-homemaker family forms declined and alternative family forms took center stage (Berk 1985, Gerson 1993). Simultaneously, the rise in divorce, teenage pregnancies, and single parenthood led scholars to explore the consequences of “father absence” for children (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994, Blankenhorn 1995, Popenoe 1996), attempting to both influence public policy (Griswold 1993, Daniels 1998) and investigate the impact fathers have on child developmental outcomes (Parke 1996, Lamb 1997, 1998, 2002). An early focus on the dichotomous absence/presence of fathers gave way to studies aimed at more meaningfully exploring the significance of fatherhood to men (Daly 1995, Ihinger-Tallman et al. 1995, Messner 1997, Stacey 1998, Marsiglio and Cohan 2000).

Fatherhood is a historically contingent social construction. In other words, variations in what it means to be a “good father” shift over time and take on diverse forms in response to cultural and institutional change (Stearns 1991, Griswold 1993, LaRossa 1997, Pleck and Pleck 1997, Cherlin 1998, LaRossa et al. 1998, Lamb 1998). In addition, many argue that

caretaking is not an innate, biological phenomenon, but is constructed to be a “feminine” skill. In support of this claim, Lamb’s (1997) review of the literature on caretaking in an array of Western cultures concluded that neither sex possesses a “natural” ability to care for children, and thus, parenting skills are acquired primarily through experience. In contrast, research from the evolutionary biological, physiological and ethological perspectives disagree, asserting that genetic and physical influences predispose women to care, protect and bond with children in a heightened way (see, e.g., Bowlby 1952, Geary 1998). Nevertheless, building on Lamb’s notion, Rotundo (1985) and Pleck (1987) argued that the “new fatherhood” ideal is characterized by intimate, active, compassionate involvement in the lives of offspring. Despite the popularity of this image in the media, LaRossa (1988) critiques this ideal, stating that while the “culture of fatherhood” (i.e., shared norms and beliefs) has indeed changed, the “conduct of fatherhood” (i.e., men’s actual behavior) remains largely unaltered, as evidenced by the lack of egalitarianism and large number of absent, nonresident, and neglectful fathers (Coltrane 1996, Amato and Gilbreth 1999, King, Harris and Heart 2004, Carlson 2006).

Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies published in the years following LaRossa’s work tend to support his assertions (Blakenhorn 1995, Parke 1996, Popenoe 1996, Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda 2004, Craig 2006). While scholars note that the rise in women’s labor force participation and education, and a growing cultural emphasis on fathering, could foster an environment conducive to gender equality (Waite and Goldscheider 1992, Bianchi 1995; Sanchez and Thomson 1997), this ideal has not been met to date. On one hand, scholars find that today’s fathers are more involved in the lives of children than fathers in the past (Pleck and Pleck 1997, O’Brien and Shemilt 2003, Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004, Doucet 2006) and



are spending more hours conducting “fatherly activities” (Gershuny 2001, Yeung et al. 2001). Despite this change, research shows that men still tend to identify themselves as “helpers” in the home and often experience conflict in balancing the breadwinner and caretaker roles (LaRossa and LaRossa 1981, Gerson 1993, Risman 1998, Coltrane 2000). In sum, while men’s hours of participation in fathering have risen, they have not increased enough to match a simultaneous rise in women’s hours of paid employment (Beaujot 2000, Silver 2000, Doucet 2007). In addition, some fathers use their higher wage status to resist housework, and similarly, some women “gatekeep” or block male entrance into the traditionally feminine roles of homemaker, mother and caregiver (Coltrane 1989, 1996, Hochschild 1989, Thompson 1991, Milkie et al. 2002).

Despite proof that today’s fathers, while doing more than in the past, continue to do fewer hours of housework and childcare than mothers (Brines 1994, Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Bianchi et al 2000, Sayer 2005), researchers continue to investigate predictors of fatherly involvement and delineate what “responsible” or “generative” fathering looks like (Snarey 1993, Booth and Crouter 1998, Doherty et al. 1998, Dollahite and Hawkins 1998). Parke (1996) finds that personal influences, child characteristics, family influences, cultural influences, and institutional influences all determine father involvement. Studies have also examined how identity salience (the importance allotted to one’s fatherhood role) influences men’s behavior (Marsiglio 1995, McBride and Rane 1997, Peters et al. 2000, Sanderson and Thompson 2002). Doherty et al. first (1990, 1998) introduced the concept of “responsible fatherhood,” a father-child relationship characterized by acknowledged paternity, presence in a child’s life, economic support, and active involvement with the child. Doherty et al. (1998) argue that fostering an ideal where mothers and fathers are co-parents, and acknowledging

the possibility that fathers might benefit (more than harm) women and children (Phares 1996, Silverstein 1996), will not contradict the feminist agenda, but rather assist it. They also emphasize the influence mothers have as gatekeepers of the father-child relationship (De Luccie 1995) and suggest scholars more deeply examine the role insufficient social support outlets play in discouraging fatherly involvement (Belsky 1984, Pleck 1997).

While Doherty et al.'s model of fatherhood contributed to the literature, their implicit assumption that "responsible fathering" inevitably necessitates men filling a breadwinner or monetary role reinforced the social construction of a "father" as a financial provider more than a caregiver. In addition, there have been only a handful of other empirical studies conducted on men who father full-time (Barker 1994, O'Brien 1987, Wheelock 1990, Smith 1998, Doucet 2006) and most were conducted outside of the United States. While qualitative studies of dual-parenting couples (Coltrane 1996, Risman 1998, Doucet 2000), men who take paternity leave (Brandth and Kvande 1998), men who wish to stay home (Gerson 1993), and men's thoughts towards balancing work and fatherhood (Townsend 2002) have illuminated ways men accept, construct, and negotiate the caregiver identity, very little has been done on male primary caregivers.

Despite this lack of scholarly research, mounting media attention has been paid to these men in recent years. The media recently linked widespread layoffs and the recession with a rise in men staying home. Still, we know very little about stay-at-home fathers besides the yearly Census report. Even with Marsiglio et al.'s (2000: p. 1186) suggestion that scholars develop a broader conceptualization of fathering and "understand how fathering roles are defined, negotiated, and expressed in diverse contexts," little work has been done on men who, unlike absent fathers, take more active roles in the home.

## WHO COUNTS?

Some claim this lack of scholarship is due, in part, to the fact that so few men take on full-time care work in families. For example, in 2008, the Census reports that there were 140,000 stay-at-home fathers out of the 25.8 million married co-residential fathers in the US (U.S. Census Bureau 2008, see Table 3.1 for a count from 1998-2008), prompting many to discount the sociological import of this group. Certainly, full-time fathers represent a small proportion of the US population, but with little knowledge about them, can we be certain the Census accurately captures how many men *identify* with this emergent variation of fatherhood?

According to the Census Bureau, a stay-at-home father is defined as a “married father with children under 15 years old who has remained out of the labor force for more than one year primarily so he can care for his family while his wife works outside the home” (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). Each year, the March Current Population Survey (hereafter “CPS”) supplement is used to calculate this number using a question asked of respondents who are “not in the labor force” (i.e., have no job and have not looked for work or worked any weeks in the last year)(Endnote 1). Based on this definition, it is reasonable to hypothesize that a large number of stay-at-home fathers are left out of the count by virtue of not fitting the criteria (Endnote 2). For example, fathers who are primary caregivers but are in gay partnerships, single, divorced or living in a cohabiting union (all groups whose numbers have risen in recent decades) would not be in the count due to the stipulation that these men be currently married. In addition, the children’s age cutoff of 15 leaves out fathers who remain home until their children are independent and out of the house or care for a child with a long-term disability.

While these requirements certainly exclude some fathers, the definition's employment criteria likely remove significantly greater numbers from the count. As stated above, fathers who worked as little as one week in the last year or looked for work at any point in the same period are classified as "in the labor force," and thus, are not in the count. This stipulation also removes primary caregivers who were laid off or quit their job at any point during the last year. It also eliminates the possibility that a stay-at-home father could participate in any freelance, temporary, part-time, third shift, work from home or seasonal work. This is particularly noteworthy given the deeply entrenched social and cultural expectations that fathers provide monetarily for their families. Men may continue to have some labor force participation while simultaneously serving as a primary caregiver. Just as many stay-at-home mothers seek part-time or freelance opportunities to earn extra income, fathers might feel doubly compelled to do so because of the stigma associated with being an unemployed male and a caregiver, two roles that are not traditionally associated with the masculine or father ideal. In addition, if his wife was "not in the labor force" for one or more weeks in the previous year, a man would not be counted as a stay-at-home father, even though today's workers are far more likely to transition in and out of jobs frequently (see Table 3.2 for a detailed breakdown of the Census stay-at-home father count in 2008).

Finally, the Census count could leave out more stay-at-home fathers by imposing assumptions about the duration of stay-at-home fatherhood. Given the aforementioned social pressures, it's possible that full-time fatherhood is shorter in duration than stay-at-home motherhood and fathers could feel more compelled to reenter the labor force or eliminate gaps in their resumes, especially if they are not staying home by choice but due to a termination or unsuccessful job search. Similarly, fathers who only plan to stay home

temporarily might misrepresent their employment status (due to social desirability bias) or offer another reason for why they're not in the labor force. To be classified as a stay-at-home father by the Census, a father must be out of the labor force for the reason "taking care of home and family," despite the other options of "retired," "illness/disability," "going to school," "could not find work" or "other." In addition, research has not yet established whether full-time fathers see "taking care of the home" as an accurate reflection of their job description, making the language used by the CPS another potential deterrent for men who might otherwise be part of the count.

The data displayed in Table 3.2 reinforce the notion that the Census likely undercounts the number of stay-at-home fathers (even without taking into fathers who work full-time). As shown in Column B, their count only includes fathers who are "not in the labor force" for all 52 weeks of the last year, have a spouse who was in the labor force for all 52 weeks of the last year, and state the reason "taking care of home and family" to explain why they are "not in the labor force." If the Census included fathers who specify another of the aforementioned reasons for being out of the labor force and counted fathers having working spouses who were out of the labor force for short period of time (i.e., 10 or less weeks in the past year due to a change or transition in jobs), the 140,000 count would jump to just over one million stay-at-home fathers in the US. This number would likely grow considerable if the Census included gay fathers, cohabiting fathers and part-time working father in the count.

Given what we know about the transitory nature of stay-at-home fatherhood in Canada (Doucet 2006), coupled with the historically entrenched connections between work and masculinity and the stigma associated with unemployment and male care work, I anticipated that the majority of the men I interviewed would be participating in some form of

employment, whether it be part-time, freelance, or intermittent work from home, while serving as their family's primary caregiver. I examined this through in-depth interviews, also assessing whether fathers would interpret staying home as temporary, plan on reentering the labor force, and embrace or reject the stay-at-home father label, particularly if they were not staying home by choice.

## DATA AND METHODS

Because most nationally representative surveys (including the National Survey of Family and Households, the American Time Use Survey, and the National Longitudinal Study of Youth) tend to have small samples of full-time fathers, ask limited questions on the meaning of fatherhood, and tend to measure only two aspects of father involvement: the quantity (i.e., how often) and types (i.e., engaged, distant), I use a mixed-methods approach that combines in-depth interviews with secondary analysis of Census microdata. Qualitative methods are advantageous for gaining a more nuanced understanding of the fatherhood experience and studying smaller, statistically rare subpopulations (such as men who father full-time). In addition, qualitative techniques are especially useful when examining a social phenomenon that has not been studied in great detail (See, e.g., Strauss and Corbin, 1990), which is especially true of full-time fatherhood.

### *In-depth interviews*

I conducted in-depth interviews, ranging from one to three hours in length, and administered weeklong time diaries to a sample of 40 fathers living primarily in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Thirty of the fathers self-identified as the "primary caregiver" for their family and ten of the fathers were employed full-time and used as a reference group. I recruited 40 percent of these respondents using snowball sampling. I began by advertising the

study on university listservs (with personal contacts), parenting group/organization listservs, Facebook groups and message boards, Craigslist (under the “volunteer” section), and in businesses fathers would frequent (gyms, grocery stores). I recruited my sample carefully to avoid defining my target population of stay-at-home fathers in the same way the Census does. In other words, I advertised for men who are “primary caregivers” for children, but did not explicitly say I was looking for “stay-at-home fathers” (in anticipation that some men who stay home will not identify as such). In addition, I did not require that the men I interview be out of the labor force, as long as they were the primary caregiver of children under the age of 15, which allowed me to collect a diverse sample of men who invest in fatherhood but define it differently.

While I do not focus on the full-time employed father in my sample in this paper, I recruited them using similar methods. I relied on snowball sampling (starting with community contacts and full-time fathers in the sample) and advertised widely to “mothers” meeting/play groups, while also placing posters in local gyms, grocery stores, and religious institutions. My method of recruiting and the language I used in advertising the study inevitably shaped the pool of respondents I ended up with. While I purposely sought to capture a wide and diverse collection of men who define themselves or associate their familial role with stay-at-home fatherhood, I do not use my pool to define stay-at-home fathers *definitively* or to represent the population as a whole.

Fathers who expressed a desire to participate in the study were instructed to contact me (via email address, mailing address, or telephone number) to obtain more information. Upon doing so, they were then mailed a lengthier study description and time diary packet to fill out and were instructed to contact me via the same method upon its completion. At this

time, I arranged a time and date to meet the father at a public location that was convenient to their home or workplace to conduct the interview. In several instances, the interviews were conducted at the respondent's home if childcare was not available or the respondent expressed preference for this. Three of the interviews took place over the telephone. Upon completion of the interview, I discussed their completed time diary with them and inquired whether they knew any other fathers who might be interested in participating. From there, I continued to snowball sample until I achieved a sample size of 40. The fathers who were not recruited through snowball sampling contacted me directly after seeing ads online or in public locations.

As displayed in Table 3.3, the average age of full-time fathers in my sample is 37 and the average age of their children is 4. In terms of race/ethnic background, my sample can be characterized as heavily white and middle to upper middle class, but it includes representation from Black, Hispanic, and Asian fathers, as well as working class and lower middle-class families. While the average family income and educational attainment for my sample is well above the national average, this is likely reflective of the socioeconomic status households with men who select themselves into stay-at-home fatherhood possess. In some senses, stay-at-home fatherhood (like stay-at-home motherhood) is an option that is more readily available to privileged groups in society. All of the men in my sample were currently married, in a straight partnership, and had children under the age of 15.

The extensive interviews took an average of two hours to complete. Single-spaced transcriptions of the interviews ranged in length from 20 to 35 pages. I used a semi-structured interview guide, allowing me to cover a series of topics in a strategic order while also inserting follow-up questions and adding new areas of inquiry when needed. Conducting in-



depth interviews allowed me to capture the detail underlying men's decision making processes, beliefs and understandings about fatherhood, and behaviors in the home and workplace, all of which are difficult to decipher using close-ended survey questions. The interview covered a wide range of topics, from what factors prompted these men to stay home to how they felt about this decision to how much time they spent completing a series of household and childcare tasks. My interview sections targeted respondents' family histories, work histories, past, present and future employment plans, perspectives on fatherhood, understandings of their familial role and responsibilities, gender ideologies, beliefs about what being a "stay-at-home father" means, mental health, and social support systems. A copy of the primary caregiver interview guide is included in Appendix B.

After transcribing the interviews, I used qualitative data analysis (QDA) software (ATLAS.ti) to code and empirically evaluate the interview data (see Weitzman 1999, 2003, and Hwang 2008 for overviews of QDA software; see Manning and Smock 2005 for an example of its use in the family literature). This software allowed me to manage, assess, and extract meaning from my collection of interviews through coding techniques. The first step involved coding the interviews using a set of preconceived codes that emerged from my review of the fatherhood literature and guiding research questions. By manually coding sentences and paragraphs of each interview using these designated codes, I added a new level of meaning to the text and created interpretable units of analysis that I could analyze, with a goal of extracting patterns in fathers' experiences, beliefs, and behaviors.

In addition, by attaching more than one code to some sections and organizing the interviews into what Atlas.ti calls "families" (groups based on pre-determined categories like age, marital status, age of children, family background, education level, income level and

employment status, etc.), I generated networks of relationships between concepts and searched for variations in meaning between particular types of respondents in my sample. While I primarily rely on this preconceived set of codes, I did a second level of analysis in which I re-read through the coded interviews and allowed new and revised codes to emerge from the text. This extended, two-step coding process allowed me to improve and refine my understanding of the data.

#### *American Community Survey*

A second stage of analysis occurred after completing the transcribing, coding and analysis of the qualitative interviews. For this final step, I used my qualitative results to inform a re-estimation of how many more men might be primary caregivers but are not represented in the Census count. To do this, I downloaded Census microdata from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey (“ACS”) using the IPUMS database (U.S. Census Bureau 2007, Minnesota Population Center 2009). The American Community Survey, which began in 1996, is a survey administered annually (with data collected monthly on independent samples) in all US counties by the U.S. Census Bureau to gather economic, social, demographic and housing data (that was formerly only collected every 10 years by the population Census). Households are mailed a questionnaire and asked to return it upon completion. Each year, nearly 2 million housing units are surveyed and approximately 145,000 people living in group quarters are interviewed. In addition to the release of yearly ACS datasets, in 2008, the Census Bureau began providing “PUMS” of multi-year datasets, such as the 2005-2007 data I use here, allowing researchers to use weights to produce estimates for 3 year periods. From 2005-2007, the sample size was about 2.9 million households and the response rate for each year was 97.3, 97.5, and 97.7 percent, respectively.

I chose the multi-year file because it is said to be particularly advantageous for studying small populations such as full-time fathers (IPUMS 2010).

Using the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series website, I created and downloaded an extract of ACS 2005-2007 data that included variables for: household serial number, person number in sample unit, age of youngest child in household, relationship to household head, sex, marital status, employment status, weeks worked last year, usual hours worked per week and survey weights. Next, using STATA, I matched married men to their female spouses within survey households and created two new variables that indicate (1) wife's weeks worked last year and (2) wife's usual hours worked per week for each married man in the sample.

I then used this sample to generate estimates of how many men are staying home today after expanding and varying the criteria to include married men with young children who had low labor force participation, wives with high labor force participation, or who gave another reason for not currently being in the labor force (for a lengthy description of additional analysis and alternative models I ran using a variety of methods, see Endnote 3). I calculated this estimate a number of different ways because the ACS offers two units for men's labor force participation (usual hours worked last week and usual weeks worked last year) within the calendar year reference period and I vary the universe (the age of children and the wife's employment status) the number is based on.

First, I looked at how many currently married, co-residential fathers with children under the ages of 18 (and then 15, 12 and 5) "usually worked" less than 25 (and then 20) hours per week and have wives who "usually worked" more than 30 hours a week in the previous year. Next, I computed estimates of how many fathers with children in the same age

ranges as above worked less than 20 (and then 10) weeks and have wives who worked over 30 (and then 40 and 48) weeks in the previous year (Endnote 4). Finally, I estimated how many fathers with children in the same age ranges as above are not currently at work (i.e., either have a job but are not currently at work, are unemployed but still “in the labor force,” or are “not in the labor force” for any reason) and have a spouse who is currently employed (i.e., in the labor force, employed and at work). It is important to note that the first two methods above rely on a reference period and measure that indicates usual hours/weeks respondents and their spouses worked in the *previous year*, while the third method uses a reference period and measure of current labor force status.

Below, I report my findings in the form of summary statistics from my interviews (using quotations that support and illustrate these findings), followed by a presentation of ACS re-estimations of the count, and finally, a discussion of the implications these results have for future research on fatherhood and emergent family forms.

## RESULTS

### *In-depth Interviews*

*Identity Work.* After asking respondents an extensive series of questions on their work histories, past, present and future labor force participation/plans, and a detailed description of the activities they engage in while staying home, I found that all 30 men who responded as primary caregivers identified themselves as a “stay-at-home father” when speaking about their familial role before I introduced the term. Some fathers immediately took a defensive tone when identifying themselves as stay-at-home fathers, while others simply stated it in a matter-of-fact manner. For example, when I asked one father what his “current main occupation was,” he responded, “I would say I was a stay-at-home dad. No, I don’t have to

change my identity. I know I am quite competent at ... I know I have my skills. I don't have to call myself something else. I know I could get a job if we needed it ... a good job!" In contrast, another father matter-of-factly said, "I'd say I'm a stay-at-home parent. I stay home with the kids" (Endnote 5). For an older father who had recently remarried and had newborns, identity was more complicated. For this father, the main identity he embraced depended on his audience, stating:

"I'd say it depends on whom I'm talking to. I'm a photographer... I mean obviously my mainstay is stay-at-home dad. That's what I do "x" amount of hours a week. I don't have a lot of time for anything else. But, when I ... even before I retired I was working as a photographer some on the side and that was one of those things we kind of looked at economically like, okay, let me kind of try to develop this a little bit further to make up some of this income loss. So, if I'm talking to someone who needs a photographer, I'm going to tell them, 'I'm a photographer.' Or, if they seem like a family with young kids, I'll say I'm a photographer and I stay at home. I would say it that way. But, if I'm talking to somebody who's a friend or knows me, I'm going to tell them I'm a stay-at-home dad. The photography is almost 100% on the weekends. It's very flexible."

This illustrates the high level of "identity work" some stay-at-home fathers engaged in, shaping the labels they used to define themselves and information they gave out with respect to the level of familiarity they had with their audience, comfort accepting that identity fully, and conversational objectives.

*Labor Force Participation.* While all of the primary caregivers identified themselves as a "stay-at-home father" and most provided this response when asked to name their "current main occupation," when I asked to whether they'd brought in any income or worked any weeks since they began staying home, 18 of the 30 primary caregivers (60 percent) reported that they had (see Figure 3.1). For many fathers, employment was conducted on a freelance or intermittent basis whenever they could find the time to do it without sacrificing the needs of their family. Their work included: self employment (web design, statistical

consulting, contractor work), writing, editing and publishing (freelance, blogs, novels, children's books, local magazines), coaching and announcing for sports teams, pet sitting, photography, working for local universities, substitute teaching, adjunct instructor work at community colleges, graduate school teaching and research assistantships, acting and voiceover work, project management for non-profits, musical/band gigs, grocery store work, and catering.

The line between one's family identity and occupational identity was complicated for many of these men. For example, when I asked the simple question "What is your current main occupation?," one father said:

"I won't give you the corny answer that my first job is being a parent, because, in a way, it is, but I know that's not what you mean. Primarily, I do web design and writing."

While this father later identified himself as a "stay-at-home dad," he seemed reluctant to cite it as his main occupation. For example, when asked later whether he felt stay-at-home fatherhood was a full-time occupation, he said:

"I mean, really ... I didn't say that originally because I think it sometimes comes off as corny, but it is. He is my life ... I don't consider it work being [his] dad but he is the most important thing in our life."

In contrast, another father who had since returned to the labor force but worked 25 to 30 hours a week at a local grocery store while staying home seemed more eager to embrace the identity despite his extensive outside employment:

I. "When you stayed home, would you have reported that you were a full-time father or that you worked at the grocery store?"

R: "Oh, a stay-at-home dad, without a doubt."

I. "So you felt that was your primary occupation at the time?"

R. "Absolutely!"

These examples illustrate just how complicated the line is between stay-at-home fathers' familial identity and occupational identity. This leads to the question of when outside employment takes place. Stay-at-home fathers have a number of arrangements, ranging from working third shift and evening shifts several nights a week and/or on the weekends to working during the summers when their spouse was home to working from home during the day when their children were asleep or in school. A few fathers hired babysitters once or twice a week so they'd have a small block of time to do paid work, while others reported working on the computer and conducting business while their children played in a nearby location. For example, one stay-at-home father cared for his daughter while finishing up his doctoral dissertation from home. When asked how many hours he worked each week, he replied:

"The last 2 years since I've been staying home with [my daughter], it's been a lot less. I don't even know how I would measure it because, I mean, a lot of my work would be sitting at a computer and [her] being there and going and playing with her for 5 minutes and then coming up with a paragraph and going back to the computer to write it down. So, I don't know, 30 hours a week once I was a stay-at-home dad and I would work more on weekends and evenings."

Another father worked at night once his wife came home from work, saying:

"[I worked] about 20 to 25 [hours per week]... and that would be composed of three nights per week, and when I say nights, I'm going to say five to ten pm ... and then I worked a ten-hour shift on Saturday."

One additional father worked on editing his novel from home during daytime nap times and evenings once his children were asleep, stating:

"There's so much to be done over the Internet that it's remarkable how that can fit in. The sleep schedule that I've engineered is amazing. The kids sleep from 3:30 to 6:30 or 3 to 6:30pm everyday, both at the same time, and that's when [it's] laundry and work time. I had a good night last night and I'll have a good one tonight writing."

One father even created a dog walking business and brought his kids along so he could earn some extra money. In addition to the 18 employed fathers, two more had not earned income since being home but had submitted job applications in the past year, while three others volunteered while their children were in school or during evenings, two with hopes that volunteering would open opportunities for future employment.

The reasons 60 percent of the fathers in my sample provided for being employed while staying home varied and were often dependent on the financial stability and security of the wife's job and income. For most, their wives made more than enough money to provide a comfortable living for their family while also allowing them to save for things like college funds and retirement. For these fathers, outside work was framed not as being vital to the family's financial wellbeing, but instead, as what one called "fun money." For example, one stay-at-home father with two children continued to work, on a freelance basis, for his former boss when she needed help during busy season. His description of the employment follows:

I. "How much do you get paid?"

R: "Ten dollars an hour [laughs]. I don't do it for the money. I might make, you know, \$600 to \$1,000 bucks, give or take. I just look at it as, you know, it pays for the trip I might make with my son to a city to watch a baseball game this year or the cell phone bill for a year. It's nothing that ... my wife does very well as a [physician], so it's nothing that helps sustain us as a family by any stretch. More than anything, I like my boss a lot. When she calls and says she needs help with something, I say I can help. I don't actively seek out money making activities but I do little things on the side that do pay me a couple hundred bucks at a time here or there."

In other words, working allowed them to contribute monetarily, even if in a much smaller capacity, while reaping other benefits associated with being employed.

Most of the full-time fathers I interviewed who had also been employed and earned money in some capacity since they began staying home said they sought employment to overcome the isolation and lack of adult social interaction associated with stay-at-home



parenthood, and stay-at-home fatherhood in particular. Because full-time fathers, generally, often expressed difficulty with being accepted into mother's playgroups, organizations and social circles, or felt awkward asking mothers to hang out one-on-one, many reported spending long hours at home without other adults to engage in conversations with. Thus, working and volunteering gave some of them an outlet for socializing and gaining mental stimulation. In addition, the self-esteem benefits associated with working, earning money, and having an identity besides "full-time dad" was attractive to these fathers. One father joked about the effects stay-at-home parenting can have on mental sharpness, saying:

"I still have to entertain my mind... I got to know moms in play dates and stuff and you have these moms with Clinical Psychology degrees and they're watching Barney and are like, what am I doing? I invested all this time and money to keep my brain educated, and now I'm watching "Do, do, do, do, do!" I think a lot of people, guys and girls, when you are home parenting, feel like your brain is turning to mush so you have to do something to keep it in shape."

For another stay-at-home father who lived in a town with a large military base, socializing with mothers was particularly hard, prompting him to seek outside adult interaction through evening and weekend volunteer work, saying:

"There's a mom around our neighborhood and she'd say, oh yeah, all the moms do this and if I say, "Can I come?", she'd say, "Oh no, I don't think that'd be a good idea." And she was kind of standoffish about it. It's easier in a professional area where there are wives who are doctors, lawyers, researchers, whereas here the majority of families are marines and they tend to follow traditional gender roles."

For other fathers, particularly those whose wives made smaller incomes than might be expected for a stay-at-home father family, desired to swap roles and stay home themselves in the future, or expressed hope that both parents could ultimately split employment, housework and childcare equally, being employed while being a "stay-at-home father" was a necessity. Several of these fathers worked night shifts and weekend shifts, consistently working 30 to 35 hours-a-week while staying home during the day so their family could be on a more

comfortable footing financially. Despite their high level of labor force participation, these men still identified themselves as a stay-at-home father because the majority of their child's day (when they were awake) was spent under their care. About half of the men in my sample also reported concerns over having gaps in their resumes in the event that they wanted to work longer hours, reenter a full-time job, or enable their wife to stay home at some point in the future. In these cases, working (even on an intermittent basis) allowed them to tell future employers they were doing "something" besides "just raising kids" during the time they spent at home. One father summarized these feelings when talking about his current volunteer position:

"Well ... right now I am volunteering at [this business] about 6 hours a week and that's a place I'd love to work. I'm not saying there is a job there for me, but if there is, I'd be really happy about it. Taking care of kids for four years is a big resume hole and I guess I'm anxious about that. I mean, I know how biased I am about other stay-at-home dads. On some level, I see a stay-at-home dad and think, what's wrong with you? I know what's wrong with me, but what's wrong with you? I joke about it, but honestly, I have that reaction, so if I'm having that reaction, everyone's having that reaction. Maybe that's not fair to say, but so many people are. So, [I want to be] doing something other than taking care of [my daughter] on my resume ... but it's also something for me to get out of the house and interact with people and use my brain in a different way."

Despite the diverse and complex reasons this group of stay-at-home fathers sought employment, all stay-at-home fathers who simultaneously work or earn money in any capacity while caring for children full-time would be excluded from the Census' count.

*Duration of Full-Time Fatherhood.* Of the 12 stay-at-home fathers who had not been employed or earned any income since they began taking care of their children full-time, only four said they had no plans to reenter the labor force in the future. The other eight had specific plans to reenter the labor force within the next five years (see Figure 3.2). The majority of stay-at-home fathers in my sample expressed a belief that their time at home was

only *essential* to their children's wellbeing until they were in school most of the day (or the youngest child reached age 5). At this point, while a few fathers said their children would need them to drive them to practices, doctor's appointments, or be home when they got out of school, most admitted that they'd feel bored or even "lazy" continuing to stay home after this point. In other words, over two-thirds of self-identified "stay-at-home fathers" interpreted staying home as a short-term situation that would likely end within the next five years (see Figure 3.3). One father who had returned to the labor force once his daughters were both in school summarized his thoughts on this matter:

I: "Was there something that compelled you to transition from part-time to full-time work once your youngest daughter was in first grade?"

R: "Well, again, I mean ... I operate in a context just like anybody and it's the family context. I couldn't justify staying at home and playing guitar all day long so I definitely needed to contribute financially and it's helped tremendously. My wife and I were always ... we always made it financially and we had to cut back on certain things and didn't go out to dinner as much and things of that nature, but certainly the opportunity to pick up more hours, and in addition, I tended to get a promotion every so often to add more income, so the decision was pretty obvious at that point. The house was empty and the kids weren't in it, so I just transitioned into full-time again."

Several fathers in my sample had just begun staying home less than one year ago (and thus would not be included in the Census count). For these men, most talked about it as being an "experimental" or "trial period," saying they would like to "see how things go" and then reevaluate what is best for their families or whether their wife would like to stay home.

When I asked one father who had just recently begun staying home with twin infants about his future family and labor force plans, he said:

"We're just going to see how everything works itself out ... if I'm enjoying it, if the babies seem to be doing well... If there's opportunity and I have it knocking at my door, it might force me to make the decision, but at this point, I'm not looking to do anything and no one's looking for me to do much more. I'm not having calls every other day for work. My focus is really just kind of, okay, I've got to be the best I can be at taking care of these kids and truthfully, it's very new to me."

*Education.* In addition to seeing full-time fatherhood as relatively short in duration, 6 of the 30 stay-at-home fathers had either taken collegiate or graduate level courses in the past year or planned to apply to schools in the next two years to prepare for future employment opportunities (see Figure 3.4). Similar to the stay-at-home fathers who worked part-time, these men attended class and did reading and assignments mostly in the evenings and on the weekends. Because the Census gives “going to school” as another reason a man could be out of the labor force,” it’s possible that these stay-at-home fathers would report this instead of “taking care of house and family” when completing the CPS interview. This seems particularly likely given that most of these men were going to school to either change career paths or gain advancement because they were unhappy in their last occupation, thus prompting them to stay home while they worked on this objective.

When I asked one stay-at-home father who was about to finish graduate school and was currently applying for jobs whether his spouse would support him staying home after he finished his PhD, he said:

“I think for the past two years, staying home with [my daughter], I thought of my position as a stay-at-home dad as temporary, so there were certain adjustments I have not made that I think I would if it were long-term. Our plan is for me to get a job and for her to be a stay-at-home mom for as long as she wants to be a stay-at-home mom. She does have plans to go back eventually, but she’d be disappointed because we have the plan that she’ll work while I’m in school and after that she’ll have the time to do the things she wants to do, so I think she’d be disappointed that she didn’t get to do that.”

Another father, a former consultant who had been working long hours and traveling before he resigned used his years at home to plan out a new career path, saying:

“I’m going to completely switch gears. The one thing I learned as a consultant, cause I worked with a lot of dads that were leaving their families behind for weeks at a time, and I said to myself, no way can I do that as a dad once I start my family. So, I’m going to follow the legacy and get educated and focus on being an elementary school teacher. So, as soon as our youngest starts going back to school on a more

routine basis ... I'm studying for the GRE now and hopefully, just before she enters kindergarten, I hope to have my education finished to start teaching.”

*Marital Status and Age of Children.* In terms of the marital status and age of children constraints set forth by the Census definition, my sample matched the criteria in this aspect. All of the fathers in my sample were currently married and in a straight partnership. In fact, when asked whether they knew any stay-at-home fathers who were single or living in cohabiting arrangements, only one father reported knowledge of a full-time father who fit those criteria. Many asserted it was possible for an unmarried man to be a stay-at-home father but then referenced how difficult it would be to father full-time without the commitment and teamwork they associated with marriage. Some also highlighted the fact that divorced fathers rarely get custody of children and single fathers would likely not have the luxury of staying home. All 40 fathers had children under the age of 15 (besides one who had older children from a former marriage), with the oldest child from a current marriage being 9. This finding was in accordance with the general belief that children only need a parent at home full-time until they are old enough to attend school (although a few perceived stay-at-home fatherhood as lasting until their children were fully independent and “no longer needed them.”)

#### *Census Microdata*

Because 60 percent of the primary caregiving men in my sample had been employed in some capacity since they began identifying as a “stay-at-home father,” my next step was to use my qualitative findings to guide me in re-estimating a figure for how many men are staying home when the criteria are expanded to include men who worked some hours or weeks in the past year or offered another reason for not being in the labor force. When asking the fathers in my sample how many hours per week a stay-at-home father could theoretically

work and still fulfill his role as the primary caregiver, the average number given was 20 hours. According to the majority, it is impossible to father well if you are attempting to do work while taking care of children during the day, but if employment takes place during times when children are in school, at night when their wives are home, or on the weekends, a father is not shirking his responsibilities or stretching the boundaries of “stay-at-home fatherhood.”

Based on this and the aforementioned findings, I calculated new estimates for how many stay-at-home fathers there could be using three methods. The results are presented in Table 3.4. My first re-estimation uses the reference period of “usual hours worked per week in the previous year.” My count includes fathers who have spouses who worked at least 30 hours per week in the previous year with varying ages of children (under the age of 18, then 15, 12 and 5). When I restrict fathers’ hours worked to no more than 20 per week and set the age of children at 15 (as the Census does), the number of stay-at-home fathers is 700,000. Even if we set the maximum age of children at 5, a number far lower than the Census criteria, there are approximately 237,000 stay-at-home fathers in the US, nearly 100,000 more than the Census count of 140,000 stay-at-home fathers.

For a second estimation, I used the reference period of fathers’ “usual weeks worked in the past year.” I estimated a count of how many married fathers worked 20 weeks or less per year and have spouses who worked 30 or more weeks in the past year (Method 2A) and then varied the universe to measure how many fathers worked 10 weeks or less and have spouses who worked 48 or more weeks (Method 2B). In addition, I varied the age of children to see how it changed when the maximum age was reduced from 18 to 15, 12, and then 5 for both universes. I find there are 1.4 million married fathers with children under age 18 who

worked less than 20 weeks in the previous year and had spouses who worked at least 30 weeks in the previous year. When I cap the weeks fathers worked in the past year at 10, increase their spouses' to at least 48 weeks per year, and set the age of children at under 15, I find there are 577,000 stay-at-home fathers in the US. Again, when I lower the age of children to 5 (a criteria far more strict than the Census), I find there are 200,000 stay-at-home fathers, a number that is 60,000 higher than the current Census count of 140,000 (which sets the age of children at 15).

Finally, for the third method, I estimated how many fathers with children in the same age ranges as used above are classified as “not currently at work,” “unemployed,” or “not in the labor force” for any reason if they have a spouse who is employed, in the labor force, and currently “at work.” In the bottom portion of Table 3.4, we see that there are nearly 1.5 million married fathers with children under 18 who are not currently “with job and at work” but have wives who are. When I limit the count to men with children under the age of 15, the number drops to just over 1 million. Even when I cap the age of children at 5, I find that there are 400,000 married fathers who are not currently at work and have a spouse who is, a number that is nearly three times the Census' estimate.

It is important to note that these estimates are imperfect measures. First, the March 2008 CPS supplement and the 2005-2007 ACS sample are not drawn from an identical pool of respondents. However, I account for this by using ACS weights to assure that my sample is nationally representative. In addition, there are some difficulties in that my first two estimation methods use employment indicators from the past year, while the third uses a current indicator from the date of the interview. Things can change over the course of one year, making these estimates difficult to compare. Third, these men may not be caring for

their children even though they are not at work (as the ACS doesn't ask a question probing this subject) or, if they are working, during the hours/weeks they are not employed. Still, if these men are not working, it is safe to say that some (if not most) of them, especially those with young children, are serving as a caregiver to children in US families today.

## DISCUSSION

This paper uses a mixed-methods approach to study a relatively unexamined but emergent form of fatherhood that is rarely studied using large-scale survey data due to small sample sizes and a lack of nuanced questions delving into the behaviors of male caregivers. I use in-depth interviews with 40 fathers in combination with ACS data to examine whether the Census Bureau, one of the few sources of information on these men, is correctly defining and counting the number of men who father full-time in the US today, and then re-estimate how many men are potentially left out of this count. My findings provide several important insights into how we can better approach and measure full-time fatherhood.

First, findings suggest that we must rethink our definition of stay-at-home fatherhood and consider the possibility of counting fathers who participate in some employment, especially if it is not occurring during the hours when children are home, awake, and/or not supervised by another adult. With shifting economic conditions and high job loss brought about with the Recession, it seems increasingly likely that stay-at-home parents, regardless of gender, might attempt to bring in additional income without jeopardizing their ability to be the primary caregiver. In addition, because of the persistent gender wage gap, female breadwinner families (when compared to male breadwinner families) likely have a lower mean household income. From this wage gap perspective, it makes sense that stay-at-home fathers are more likely to need or feel compelled to supplement their wives' income and



work part-time than stay-at-home mothers, lessening the chance they could “opt out” of the labor force long-term. Alternatively, the trend toward increased educational and income homogamy in the marriage market might also increase the number of self-identified stay-at-home father families. Because two high earners are more likely to marry each other than in the past and the number of married households where the wife's income exceeds the man's is increasing (Fry and Cohn 2010), it might “make more sense” to live off of one income than both work full-time when their children are young. This is also supported by the notion that many stay-at-home fathers self-select themselves into the role because they have high-earning wives.

It is also important to note that many men in my sample were able to be employed or go to school because their wives took over childcare and household responsibilities during weekend and/or evening shifts and supported these endeavors. In some ways, this, coupled with the heightened pressure from social and cultural expectations linking masculinity and fatherhood with providing, could make full-time fathers even more likely to seek employment while identifying as a “stay-at-home parent” the rest of the time. In sum, the Census cutoff, specifying that stay-at-home fathers not work at all and not look for work for an entire year to be classified as such is too stringent given the widespread availability of temporary, freelance, and work-from-home employment opportunities.

Second, the findings have implications for how we conceptualize the duration of stay-at-home fatherhood and whether it can be measured the same way stay-at-home motherhood is. While it is not unusual or stigmatized for a woman to stay home until her children are independent or leave the house, the same is not true for male caregivers. My interviews clearly reveal a belief that stay-at-home fatherhood is a more temporary phenomenon that is

shorter in duration than stay-at-home motherhood, as the majority of men expected and planned to return to the labor force after their children were in school full-time. Some men reported that they were staying home until they found a higher paying job, at which point their wife would begin to stay home with their children. Because American men and women are increasingly transitioning between careers several times throughout their childbearing years (Casper and Bianchi 2002), it would not be unheard of for a father to stay home less than one year, when needed, or at several different points in his life. One graduate student father even called himself a “part-time stay-at-home dad” because he and his wife would swap roles each semester depending on who had more flexibility. For many men, being a stay-at-home father could be a temporary period of “opting out” of the labor force within an otherwise long-term career trajectory. In this sense, the Census criteria that men must be out of the labor force for at least one year and their wives cannot be out of the labor force any weeks in the prior year should be adjusted to account for individuals who take on this role for shorter periods of time.

The third major implication my findings have for how we measure and understand stay-at-home fatherhood relates to the reason why men are “not in the labor force.” Besides not counting any minimally employed stay-at-home fathers, fathers who do not report that they’re out of the labor force to “take care of home and family” are also eliminated from the count. My interviews suggest that some men might feel uncomfortable telling strangers that they are full-time caregivers, especially if they are only home for a short time. In addition, a number of fathers in my sample said they were staying home because they could not find work or were attending school to change career paths. Two referred to themselves as “retired.” Because the Census gives the alternatives of “illness/disability,” “going to school,”

“couldn’t find work,” “taking care of home and family,” “retired,” and “other,” it’s quite possible that social desirability bias and the stigma associated with male unemployment and care work could prompt some stay-at-home fathers to state an alternative reason. In addition, we don’t know for sure whether stay-at-home fathers see “taking care of the home” as part of their fatherly role, as the identity “homemaker” and “housewife” have traditionally been associated with mothers. If the Census altered the language of this option to “taking care of children full-time” or more than one reason, greater numbers of fathers might be reported.

Finally, the new estimates I calculated from the ACS data suggest that as many as 1.4 million fathers could be staying home and taking care of children full-time if the Census criteria were expanded to include other reasons for being out of the labor force and/or some hours or weeks worked in the previous year. By employing qualitative analysis to verify and improve our measurement of emergent forms of fatherhood, this paper aids scholars in understanding how identifying as a stay-at-home parent varies by gender and transitions over time as societal norms and expectations change.

## CONCLUSIONS

My data provides an in-depth insight and understanding of the beliefs and behaviors of full-time fathers but is also limited because the sample is small and not nationally representative. In addition, the size of my sample hinders my ability to generalize about variations between specific types of stay-at-home fathers. Nevertheless, the findings and implications the results have for how we measure and understand emergent family forms like full-time fatherhood contribute to the family, gender and fatherhood literature and add credence to the value of mixed-methods research. By allowing qualitative interviews to inform and improve quantitative models and measures, we can more accurately capture and

empirically examine family forms as they fluidly shift, adapt and evolve in response to social, cultural and economic change in the US today.

## ENDNOTES

1. The Bureau of Labor Statistics conceives of “the labor force” as being made up of employed and unemployed individuals. People are “still considered employed if they did any work at all for pay or profit during the survey week.” If someone has a job but did not work during the week they were surveyed (due to vacation, illness, child-care problems, taking care of family or personal obligation, on maternity/paternity leave, industrial dispute, or bad weather), he or she is still considered “employed” but is tabulated separately as “with a job but not at work.” People are still “in the labor force” but are classified as “unemployed” if they do not have a job but have actively looked for work in the prior 4 weeks or are currently available for work. Of the remaining individuals, people who have no job and are not actively looking for one are classified as “not in the labor force.” People who are “not in the labor force” are assumed to be going to school, unable to find work, retired, taking care of home/family, ill/disabled, or list some other reason for what keeps them from working or actively seeking work.
2. It is clear that the Census is erring on the side of caution when delineating criteria for who is/is not a stay-at-home father (even though they measure the number of stay-at-home mothers the same way). It is safe to say that their number is an extremely conservative one that they may know is an undercount. However, from a bureaucratic standpoint, they would rather undercount/not include as many stay-at-home fathers as there may be then potentially overcount and include men who do not consider themselves to be stay-at-home fathers. While they take a cautious approach, I take an inclusive approach, seeking to be all-encompassing in my definition stay-at-home fatherhood from a social scientific standpoint.
3. Studies on occupational segregation have mixed opinions on whether or not one’s labor market occupation overrides one’s “keeping house” status. Blau, Simpson, and Anderson (1998) allow part-time workers who spend more time on housework than they participate in the labor force to be included in data on paid occupations, whereas Cohen (2004) only allows people to have one occupation. In this sense, no one could “keep house” and be classified as having another occupation, so a stay-at-home father would only be considered one if he did no other paid work on the side. In contrast, a person who is a daycare worker 30 hours a week and an assistant 10 hours a week would be classified as a daycare worker even though she/he had a second occupation. This reveals a double standard in how we think about, delineate, and measure unpaid work versus paid work, allowing paid workers to have two occupations but not careworkers.
4. The Bureau of Labor Statistics official definition for full-time work is people who have usually worked 35 hours or more (at all jobs combined) per week or 50 or more weeks in the last year. According to the BLS, “this group includes some individuals who worked less than 35 hours in the reference week for either economic or non-economic reasons and those temporarily absent from work who usually work at least

35 hours per week” (BLS Handbook of Methods 2003; see also Cohen and Bianchi 1999).

5. For all interview conversations presented hereafter, an “I” represents questions I asked as the “Interviewer” and “R” represents the responses of the father “Respondents.”

Table 3.1. Census Count of Stay-at-Home Fathers (1998-2008)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Census Count</b>
2008	140,000*
2007	185,000
2006	159,000
2005	143,000
2004	147,000
2003	98,000
2002	106,000
2001	81,000
2000	93,000
1999	71,000
1998	90,000

\*Out of 25.8 million married fathers with children under the age of 15 in the US in 2008

Source: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>

Table 3.2. Breakdown of Census' Stay-at-Home Father Count (2008)

<b>A) Father in LF 1 or more weeks last year</b>	<b>B) Father NILF 52 weeks last year (reason = caring for home &amp; family; Spouse in LF 52 weeks last year)</b>	<b>C) Father NILF 52 weeks last year (reason = caring for home &amp; family; Spouse NILF 1 or more weeks last year)</b>	<b>D) Father NILF 52 weeks last year for other reason (ill or disabled, retired, going to school, could not find work or other)</b>
21,409,000	140,000 (SAHD)	57,000	838,000
Source: March 2008 CPS			



Table 3.3. Summary Statistics for Qualitative Sample

	<b>Primary Caregiver Fathers</b>	<b>Full-time Employed Fathers</b>
<b>Age</b>	Mean: 37	Mean: 35.3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White: 25 Black: 3 Hispanic: 2 Asian: 0	White: 7 Black: 1 Hispanic: 0 Asian: 2
<b>Age of children (in current marriage)</b>	Mean: 4.27	Mean: 4.74
<b>Number of children</b>	Mean: 1.88	Mean: 2
<b>Respondents' Parents' marital status</b>	Married: 22 Divorced: 8	Married: 7 Divorced: 3
<b>Educational attainment</b>	High School: 2 Some College: 4 College: 12 Graduate: 12	High School: 0 Some College: 1 College: 2 Graduate: 7
<b>Household income (before taxes)*</b>	Mean: \$96,000 Min: \$20,000 Max: \$150,000	Mean: \$105,000 Min: \$42,000 Max: \$150,000
<b>N=40 (30 primary caregiver fathers and 10 full-time employed fathers)</b> *I re-coded incomes > \$150,000 to \$150,000 to calculate the mean		

Table 3.4. New Stay-at-Home Father Estimates from the American Community Survey

<i>Criteria for Estimate</i>	<i>Number of Stay-at-Home Fathers</i>
<b>Method #1: Married fathers who worked 20 hours or less per week in the previous year &amp; have spouses who worked 30 hours per week or more in the previous year (varying age of children)</b>	
Children under age 18	966,000
Children under age 15	700,000
Children under age 12	531,000
Children under age 5	237,000
<b>Method #2A: Married fathers who worked 20 weeks or less in the previous year &amp; have spouses who worked 30 or more weeks in the previous year (varying age of children)</b>	
Children under age 18	1,400,000
Children under age 15	1,186,000
Children under age 12	x
Children under age 5	x
<b>Method #2B: Married fathers who worked 10 weeks or less in the previous year &amp; have spouses who worked 48 or more weeks in the previous year (varying age of children)</b>	
Children under age 18	577,000
Children under age 15	x
Children under age 12	455,000
Children under age 5	200,000
<b>Method #3: Married fathers who are not currently at work &amp; have spouses who are currently employed &amp; at work (varying age of children)</b>	
Children under age 18	1,446,000
Children under age 15	1,167,000
Children under age 12	929,000
Children under age 5	400,000

Source: 2005-2007 American Community Survey (Census Microdata)

Figure 3.1. Stay-at-Home Fathers' Labor Force Participation

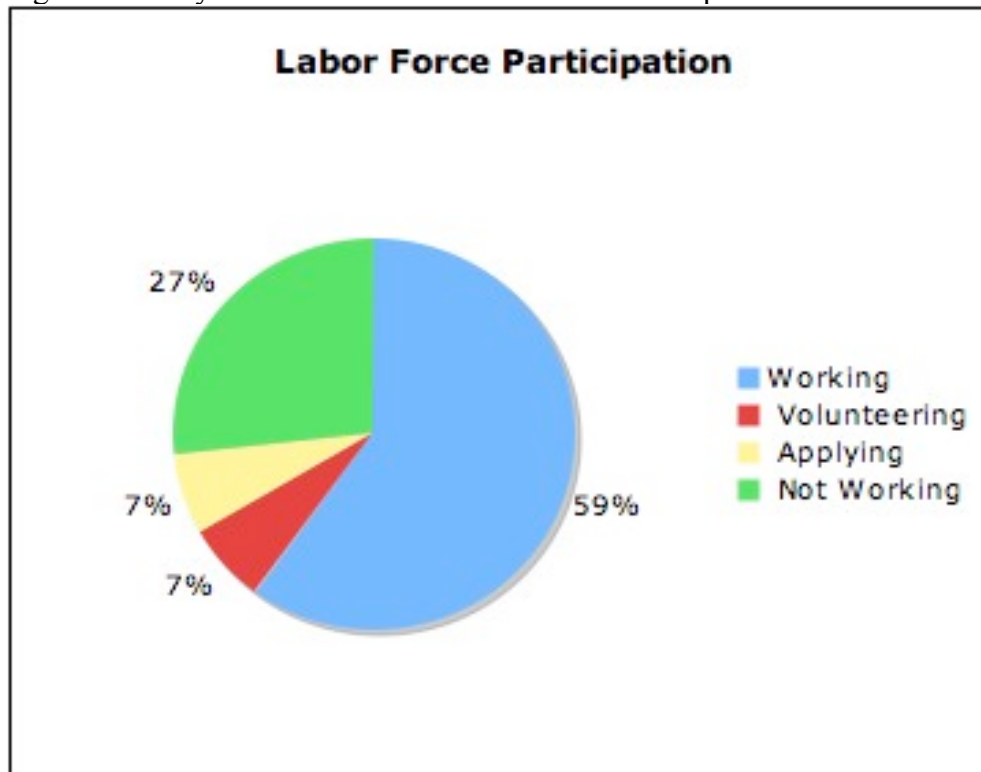


Figure 3.2. Non-Working Fathers' Plans to Re-enter the Labor Force

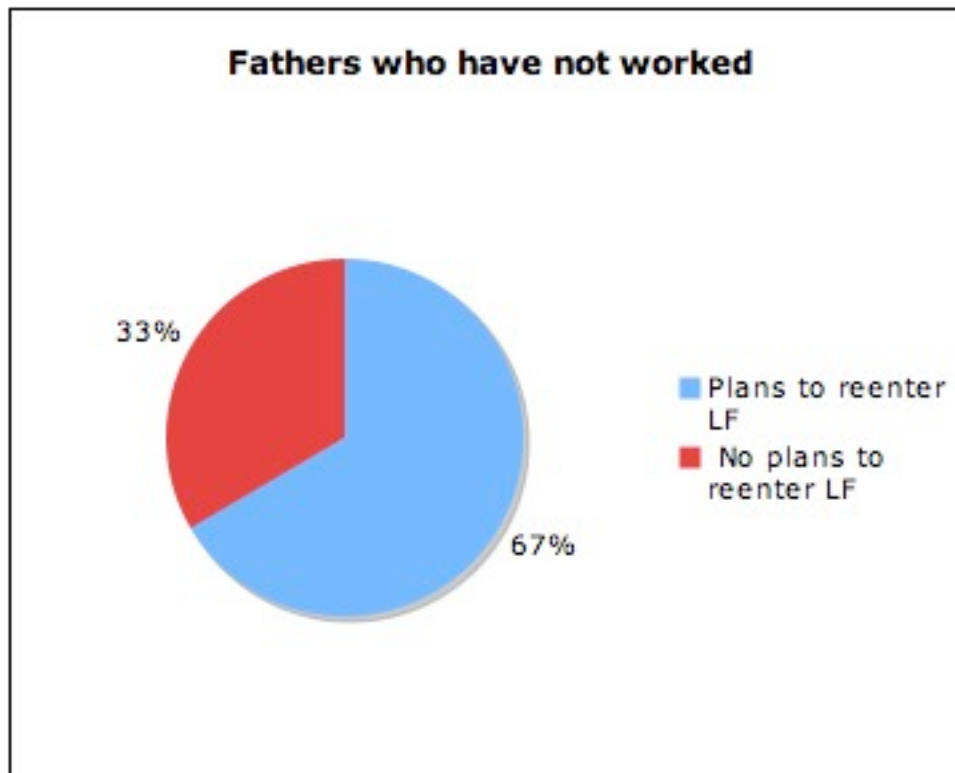


Figure 3.3. Stay-at-Home Fathers' Anticipation Duration of Time at Home

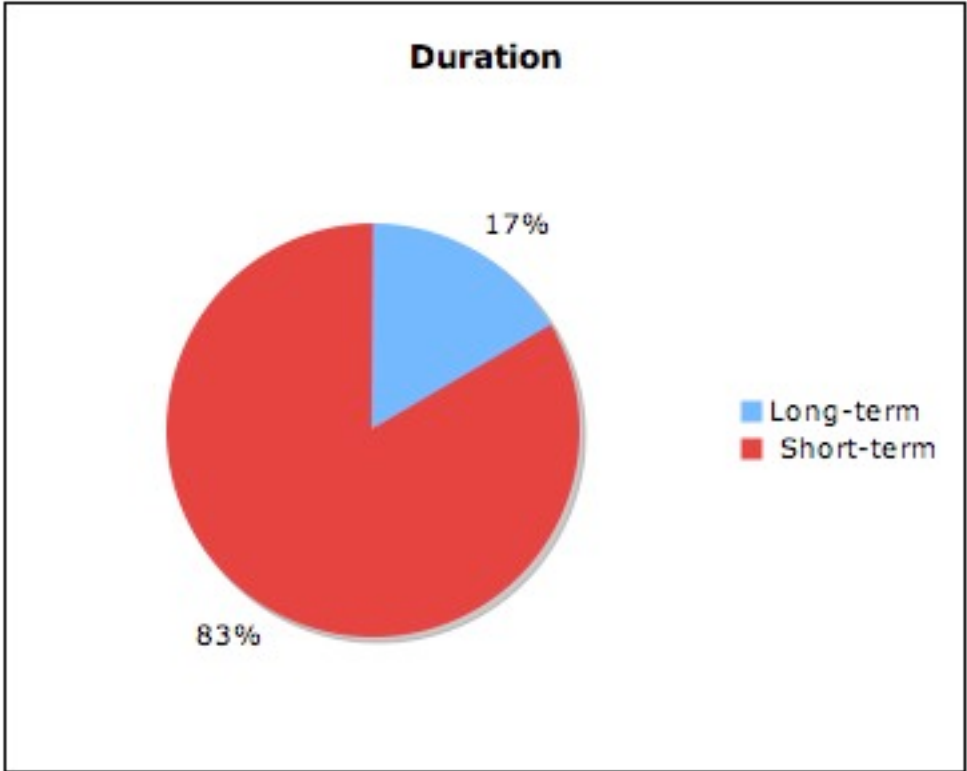
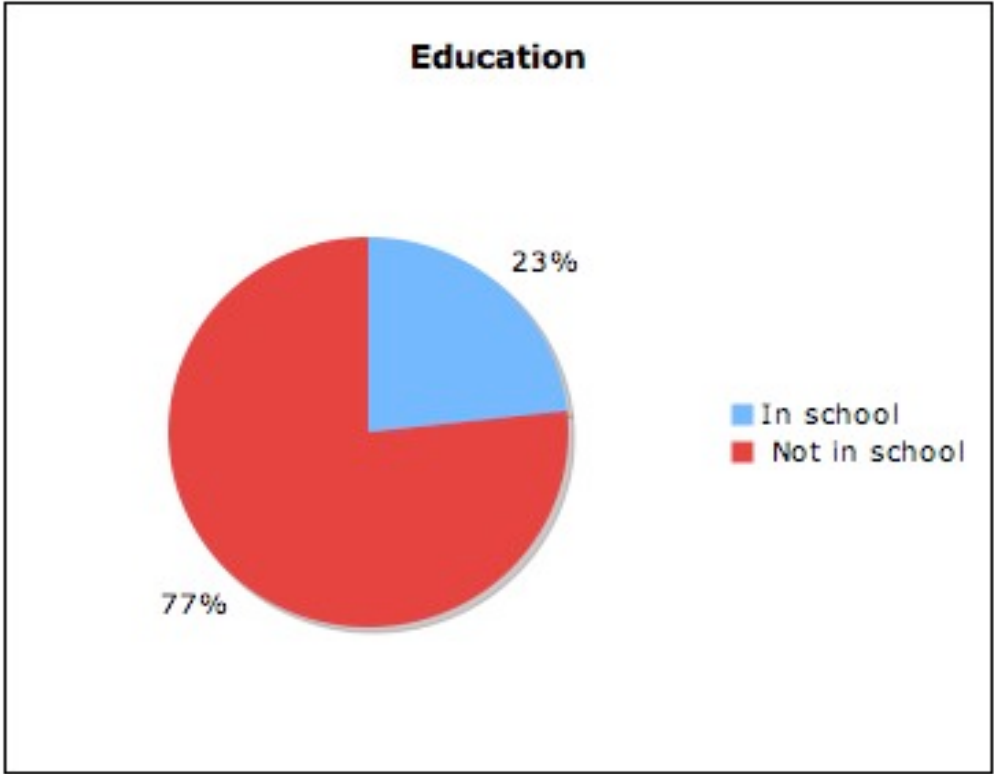


Figure 3.4. Stay-at-Home Fathers' Continuing Education



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## CHAPTER 4

### FATHERHOOD AND HOUSEWORK: HOW DO MALE PRIMARY CAREGIVERS SPEND THEIR TIME?

#### ABSTRACT

While the predictors and implications of men's participation in housework and childcare have been studied in great detail, little is known about the nuanced household behaviors of a particular subset of men: fathers who are primary caregivers. Using a combination of weeklong household time diaries, housework activities, and in-depth interview data with 40 married fathers, I overcome this limitation by empirically evaluating stay-at-home fathers' time use and how it differs from full-time employed fathers'. I further assess whether housework is considered part of the "stay-at-home father" role and if the quantity and/or type of domestic labor they perform varies according to their reason for staying home, length of time at home, age, outside employment, level of perceived social support, and gender ideology. In doing so, I contribute to the family and fatherhood literatures by uncovering whether a traditional gendered division of household labor transforms or endures when wives serve as the primary breadwinner.

#### INTRODUCTION

While the predictors and implications of men's participation in housework and childcare have been studied in great detail (see, e.g., Coltrane 1989, 1996, 2000, Hochschild 1989, Gerson 1993, Sayer 2005, Craig 2006), little is known about the nuanced household behaviors of a particular subset of men: fathers who are primary caregivers (Risman 1998,

Doucet 2006). From the 1960's to present, women's time spent completing housework has decreased and men's has increased (Bianchi et al. 2000), causing some to champion a convergence of time use by gender and others to suggest that any moderate or short-term rise in men's participation has now stalled (Sayer 2005). The most recent figures suggest that women still complete about 1.7 times more housework per week than men (Bianchi et al. 2000, Coltrane 2000, Sayer 2005).

This discrepancy is particularly marked in married, heterosexual couples following the initiation of parenthood (Shelton and John 1993, South and Spitze 1994, Coltrane 2000). The transition from being single to married tends to increase women's housework and decrease men's, suggesting there is a symbolic significance associated with marriage that prompts the majority of couples to divide household responsibilities in a conventionally gendered fashion (Gupta 1999). Similarly, women's hours of paid employment tend to decrease after they become mothers, while fathers' hours increase. Combined with the aforementioned household tendencies, married fathers with children report quite similar rates of household participation as childless married men (regardless of their wives' hours of paid work), while mothers shoulder the burden of household labor in homes across the US (Berk 1985, Ehrensaft 1987, Spitz 1988, Hochschild 1989, Shelton 1992, Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Bianchi et al. 2000).

Although shifting cultural norms increasingly validate what some call a "widespread shift" toward men becoming more active, intimate, involved fathers and family workers (Atkinson and Blackwelder 1993, Gerson 1993, Coltrane 1996), studies consistently show that parents still divide the household labor and experience parenthood in quite traditionally "gendered ways" (Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Coltrane 2000, Bittman et al. 2003). This

finding is attributed to persistent structural barriers and the lack of effective workplace policies (among other factors) needed to enable and sustain egalitarian households (Jacobs and Gerson 2004, Sayer 2005, Hook 2006, Fuwa and Cohen 2007). Still, an unintended consequence of the literature's focus on the persistent "stalled household revolution" (Hochschild 1989) is a relative lack of attention paid to families where fathers self-identify as the primary caregiver (Gerson 1993, Doucet 2006), and thus, plausibly contribute to housework at a heightened, transformative level. This hypothesis has not been tested until now.

As I argue here, an empirical examination of the behaviors of this small (but potentially much larger than previously thought (see Chapter 3) subset of fathers is crucial in our scholarly attempts to understand whether gendered divisions of household labor dramatically change under sets of previously unexplored conditions, or alternatively, persist even when traditional roles associated with mothers and fathers are essentially swapped. Accordingly, this paper seeks to assess whether married heterosexual households with male residential primary caregivers embody what I call a "transformative division of household labor." In other words, in these households, does a radical reversal of traditional caregiving roles produce a division of housework based not on gender, but on emerging external factors that trump gender (such as time availability, earning potential, years of education or job satisfaction), when women hold more economic power in families. Or, alternatively, do male primary caregivers embrace the care of their children but reject the performance of housework and homemaking expectations associated with "stay-at-home motherhood." In sum, by empirically assessing the amount, type, and nuanced beliefs about the division of household tasks that men who self-identify as a full-time caregivers complete, our scholarly

knowledge about *general* predictors and implications of men's involvement in family work and gender inequality in households will be strengthened and expanded (Silverstein 1996).

## MEN AND HOUSEWORK

While men's housework is said to vary less and have fewer significant predictors than women's housework (see, e.g., Blair and Hardesty 1994, South and Spitze 1994), scholars have delineated factors associated with variations in men's household contributions (see, e.g. Shelton and John 1993, Coltrane 2000, Gupta 2006). To begin, the transition from singlehood to marriage tends to increase women's housework and decrease men's, which suggests there is something symbolic about marriage that prompts couples to enact a traditional division of housework following this initiation (Gupta 1999). In support of this claim, Davis et al. (2007) find that despite living with a female partner, cohabiting men perform less housework than married men. They also found that cohabiting women also perform less housework than married women. Likewise, cross-national research found that couples who cohabit before marriage have a more equal division of housework, perhaps because they are less traditional individuals to begin with, than married couples who do not cohabit beforehand (Batalova and Cohen 2002), verifying the traditionalism and conventional gender roles associated with "being married."

In terms of predictors of male housework in married households, fathers tend to be quite similar to other fathers across income brackets in their weekday household labor. Fathers tend to do less housework during the week and more on weekends, regardless of income and family earner status (Clarke et. al 1986, Manke et al. 1994, Yeung et al. 2001). Other results have been inconclusive. Early research (Coverman 1985) found that husband's attitudes toward gender and their education level had no effect on their participation in



housework, but younger men with children, employed wives, and fewer hours of employment were the most likely to contribute. Clark et al. (1986) found that husbands tend to do more housework on the weekends regardless of their wives' employment hours. The minority of fathers in the study who completed more weekday housework also tended to do more on the weekend, but the overall trend supported the notion that most fathers interpret housework as voluntary and complete it when it is convenient, indicating men's ability to use familial power and authority to opt out of household labor and care work when they desire to (Manke et al. 1994, Nentwich 2008).

Thus, while fathers are becoming more involved in housework and childcare (Sayer 2005), any "new father" ideal (LaRossa 1988) tends to revolve around weekend family work, because both higher wages and work hours decrease men's time with children during weekdays. Interestingly, mothers work hours have no impact on how much time fathers spend with children (Yeung et al. 2001). Still, studies find that an increase in husbands' housework is linked to a move toward more diverse employment schedules for American workers (Presser 1994) and that both mothers and fathers spent more time conducting childcare-related activities throughout the 1990s and 2000s than in the preceding decades (Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004). In addition, there are some intergenerational effects of their own mother's employment throughout childhood on men's current housework participation (Sabatinni and Leaper 2004). Gupta (2006) found that both married and cohabiting men who grew up in households with working mothers completed more housework in their adult households than men with unemployed moms.

When comparing the housework and childcare performed by men and women in 1990s versus in the 1950s, Bianchi et al. (2000) found that Americans, as a whole, are

completing less housework than in the past due to factors like increased technology, less available time due to employment demands (especially for women), and lower standards of cleanliness. While married women still do nearly two times as much housework as married men, these results are driven by the finding that men are doing more housework than in the past, but women are also doing *markedly* less. Furthermore, mothers tend to spend more time completing routine housework such as cooking and doing laundry (Bianchi et al. 2000).

Alternatively, fathers tend to specialize in non-routine chores such as yard work and household maintenance (Gupta 1999, Coltrane 2000, Batalova and Cohen 2002, Sayer 2005). Noonan (2001) linked women's specialization in "female housework chores" to gender inequality in the workplace, indicating that not only decreasing the quantity, but adjusting the type of housework performed by women, could narrow the gender wage gap. In support, Hersch and Stratton (2002) found that controlling for housework time increased the explained gender wage gap by 14 percentage points.

Moving to interactions with their offspring, mothers tend to spend more time with daughters making meals and completing care-related family activities, while fathers tended to devote more time with sons completing yard work, household and car maintenance, pet care and retail purchases (Bryant and Zick 1996). In addition, fathers adopt and display varied "parenting styles" in traditional versus egalitarian households. In breadwinner-homemaker model families, fathers displayed "disengaged" parenting, whereas egalitarian households had "authoritative" fathers (Sabattini and Leaper 2004). Additionally, while fathers are completing more childcare today than in prior generations, mothers still complete significantly more routine work and fathers are increasingly likely to participate in "fun"

activities such as outdoor play and sport activities (McBride and Mills 1993, Sayer, Bianchi, and Robinson 2004).

Some research attributes men's lower amounts of family work to mothers' "gatekeeping" (see, e.g., De Luccie 1995). Allen and Hawkins (1999) suggest that some wives prevent husbands from taking more active household roles and set higher standards of cleanliness and caregiving to reinforce their power and identity as a mother. Other scholars suggest women might "gatekeep" as a consequence of women's inability to achieve status in the labor market. According to Blair and Hardesty (1994), women are reluctant to "relinquish control of childrearing" despite perceived and real unfairness in its division because of the "sense of identification and power" they accrue from it and are unable to achieve in their jobs. This is linked to what Coltrane (2004) calls the "career advancement double standard." While professional men who marry and start a family are often promoted and considered more valuable employees, married mothers are viewed as flight risks and less committed to their jobs. This prompts some women to seek identity and validation through a role that allows them some level of autonomy and control: homemaker. Blair and Hardesty (1994) summarize these dynamics well, saying, "the stagnant character of men's family participation within the context of a changing ideal may be related to resistance not only within the family but also within the larger social structure" (p. 49).

From a social psychological perspective, participation in family work and social comparisons made about the housework behaviors of oneself and one's spouse also affect both marital satisfaction and psychological wellbeing (Shelton and John 1996, Coltrane 2000). Women's wellbeing is more likely to be impacted by parenthood than men's (Blair and Hardesty 1994, Lennon and Rosenfield 1994, Nentwich 2008), such that women's

depression is linked to their partner's childcare activity and their perception of how fairly family work is divided. In terms of marital satisfaction, women report higher satisfaction when they perceive themselves as doing less housework than their female friends and their spouses as doing more than other males (Himself and Goldberg 2003). Alternatively, men report higher satisfaction when their wives do more housework than their mothers did in childhood.

Perceived fairness is also linked to the social exchange perspectives on housework, as women who are economically dependent and have few options besides marriage are more likely to interpret housework divisions as fair, while women with more options view similar divisions as unfair and have lower psychological well-being as a result (Lennon and Rosenfield 1994, Frisco and Williams 2003). Perception, in general, affects women more than men in regards to housework inequity, as women who perceive themselves as less dependent on marriage are more likely to see the division of household labor as imbalanced (Sanchez and Kane 1996). Additionally, perceived inequity in the division of household labor decreases marital happiness for both partners, decreases women's marital quality and increases the odds of divorce, role strain and marital dissatisfaction for wives (Frisco and Williams 2003).

## FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY WORK

While a cultural emphasis on the shift from passive, absent fatherhood to "active fatherhood" has become more normative in the past thirty years (Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Nentwich 2008), taking on a greater role in childcare has not prompted men to correspondingly increase their participation in particular kinds of care work and household chores (Coltrane 1997, Bianchi et al. 2000, Townsend 2002, Sayer 2005). For example, while

men are increasingly expected to be a present for their child by taking some time off of work, playing with their children after work and on the weekends and developing a fatherly bond, their participation is still largely interpreted as “optional” or a “choice,” whereas mothers’ caregiving and housework is routine, expected and mandatory (Ehrensaft 1987, Manke et al. 1994, Sanchez and Thomson 1997, Doucet 2006). According to one study, compared to mothers, men who “choose” to participate and emphasize the importance of family in their lives are still more likely to perform “provisional, discretionary, and secondary tasks” (Craig 2006: p. 258). In addition, compared to fathers, mothers still invest more time, complete more multitasking activities and physical labor, and conduct more management of care in married households (Craig 2006, Sayer 2007).

Thus, while mothers are more likely to take on a “second shift” to balance work and family (Hochschild 1989), risk their employment prospects, or drop out of the labor force after having children (Craig 1996), “new” or “active” fatherhood is not yet equated with disrupting or putting men’s career expectations and promotion in jeopardy (Doucet 2006, Sunderland 2006, Nentwich 2008). In households where women are economically dependent on their spouse, marriage tends to increase wives’ housework time and decrease their hours of employment. In contrast, however, in families where men contribute to housework and women provide a substantial proportion of the household income before becoming parents, it becomes more difficult for fathers to challenge expectations of his increased involvement in housework and childcare after parenthood is initiated, due to the reliance on the mother’s income (Sanchez and Thomson 1997). This indicates the possibility of pre-marital employment patterns having long-lasting effects on the division of household labor in families where wives have significant earning potential or contribute monetarily to support

their family's needs. Despite these findings on increases in men's family work and decreases in women's family work over the last several decades, mothers today still do significantly more childcare and housework than fathers (Coltrane 2000, Hook 2006).

### CULTURAL SHIFTS AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

A number of social, cultural and economic changes have occurred in the last four decades, providing the contextual groundwork ripe for producing widespread egalitarianism in American families (Coltrane 1996, Sayer 2005). Most notably, the increasing number of women (including mothers with young children) that entered the labor force in the 1960s, increases in women's educational attainment, and gradual improvements in the gender wage gap has complicated assumptions and expectations surrounding women's caretaking roles in families (Shelton and John 1996). Simultaneously, men's wages stagnated and then remained relatively stable from the 1970's on, making it substantially more challenging for men to serve as the household's sole earner. Along with shifting cultural notions of acceptable and normative employment expectations for men and women, individuals began to delay marriage and have fewer children, which in turn translated into fewer years when young children would need care and an increased likelihood that women might remain in or reenter the labor force after having children (Bianchi 1995, Sayer 2005).

Despite these cultural shifts, increases in women's education and employment opportunities, and an encouragement of men to take a more active, intimate role in their children's lives (Pleck 1987; Farley 1995; Coltrane 1996; LaRossa 1997, Pleck and Pleck 1997, Booth and Crouter 1998; Brewster and Padavic 2000, Marsiglio et al. 2000, Lamb 2004, Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004), studies still find a persistently traditionally gendered (as opposed to egalitarian or "transformative") division of labor in households, particularly

following the onset of parenthood for married, heterosexual couples (Thompson and Walker 1989, Fenstermaker, West and Zimmerman 1991, Risman 1998, Coltrane 2000, 2004). While men are doing more housework (particularly cooking) and spending more time completing fatherly activities, women still shoulder the lion's share of family work. For many women, this is done while trying to simultaneously balance the demands of their career (Bianchi et al. 2000, Coltrane 2000, Sayer 2005). Thus, while the cultural imagery and dialogue around parenting has changed to some extent, persistent structural barriers continue to shape the division of family work in households by gender.

As summarized by Nentwich (2008), while “new fathers” likely change diapers, “the mother is very often seen as the ‘main parent’ [and] parenthood is still constructed along the heterosexual gender binary that equates women with mothers and men with fathers” (p. 207). In fact, Singleton and Maher (2004) found that in contrast to the “new man” family ideal, Generation X men they surveyed were “largely disinterested in the identity and housework possibilities from discourses of equity” and content to be “domestic helpers” (p. 227). According to Sanchez and Thompson (1997), four major structural barriers still prevent most households from establishing egalitarian conditions marked by co-parenting and an equal division of caregiving and housework responsibilities. First, many men still tend to see themselves as “helpers” or “secondary” parents to women because the care of children. Second, male privilege and men's continued economic power continues to be pervasive and is sometimes used to avoid completing specific, unfavorable household tasks (while in other cases, mothers prevent men from participating because of the status they garner from being the primary caregiver). Third, despite gains women have made outside the home, many wives (especially the economically dependent) still feel unable to request equal participation from

husbands. Finally, effective social support networks from families, communities and workplaces that are needed to encourage and sustain egalitarianism are largely absent or (when present) inadequate and poorly executed.

From the latter perspective, the current state of motherhood and fatherhood operates within an institutional, economic and workplace context. While employers are most often blamed for their lack of effective family policies parents can utilize without fear of jeopardizing their chance for promotions or being seen as a less “serious” employee, other factors such as the wage gap shape how families divide care work. For example, women (compared to men) generally tend to be employed in jobs with lower wages, lower prestige and higher turnover that require fewer skills, less education, and offer few or no benefits (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2004). Because of this, many women center their identity around and accrue a great deal of pride and self worth from their role as a mother and homemaker (Ehrensaft 1984, Blair and Hardesty 1994).

Likewise, while some jobs are becoming increasingly flexible and subtly adapting to men’s desire to spend more time with children, few fathers take advantage of progressive workplace policies for fear that it will lower their earning and promotion potential (Sirrianni and Negrey 2000). Thus, most married men continue to shape their careers and household participation levels around the expectation that fathers will be primary earners for the family, shielding their involvement in family life for fear of being views as less committed employees (Coltrane 2004). As a result, families who would ideally choose to divide employment, childcare and housework equally find themselves unable to find jobs that provide benefits, flexibility, or part-time work, while also facing rising costs of daycare (Putnam 2000, Williams 2000, Jacobs and Gerson 2004).



The “male model” of employment (emphasizing long hours, efficiency, and a structured 9 to 5 workday regardless of family demands) and persistent gender inequality in wages and workplace environments prompts many mothers to stay home or work part-time while their husbands specialize in full-time employment (Becker and Moen 1999; Williams 2000). Despite this reality, earning higher wages has been shown to lower women’s housework time unequivocally (Gupta 2007). In a recent study, Bittman et al. (2003) found that married women decrease their housework hours as their earning level rises (up until the point when the husband and the wife have equal income contributions). However, women still had a higher “base level” of housework and those who made more than 50% of their household income did more housework, perhaps to overcompensate for breaking away from the “traditional” gendered division of employment. Similarly, examining husbands, Arrighi and Maume (2000) found that men with higher levels of workplace subordination performed less “feminine” housework at home, especially when their wives’ earnings approached their earning level.

Despite these findings, from a longitudinal, cross-national perspective, men’s unpaid work time does increase as national levels of women’s employment increase, suggesting an increased need to analyze the national context and social structures encouraging or prohibiting men’s involvement in care work (Hook 2006). Hook also found men’s housework time to be significantly affected by factors such as the length of parental leave and their ability to take it. Other countries, particularly Norway and Sweden, have adopted progressive social policies in attempts to promote and enable family-work balance. For instance, in Norway, families get thirteen months of paid family leave, although the mother is required to take three weeks before birth, nine after, and the father must take at least ten of

the 56 weeks for the family to receive aid. Similarly, Sweden offers paid leave and shared pay periods so mothers and fathers can split employment and childcare responsibilities. While these programs have been praised as championing a new standard for egalitarian family policies, the success of implementation has been a subject of debate (Sirianni and Negrey 2000).

Findings show fathers were reluctant to take leave despite widespread availability in countries like Norway. In addition, Scandinavian research found that the mother's full-time employment does not significantly increase the father's participation in family work. Instead, families tend to outsource childcare and housework to makeup for the mother's declining time investment at home (Kitterod and Pettersen 2006). Such findings prompt critics to suggest that it is not the availability of policies, but men's and employers' attitudes towards caretaking that need to shift for policies to be effective (Sayer 2005).

#### STAY-AT-HOME FATHERHOOD

Despite this rich literature on men's family work from a variety of theoretical perspectives, very little research has been conducted on the amount of housework (in particular) male primary caregivers complete. Zimmerman's recent study (2000) found that regardless of gender, when one parent stays home, couples have more positive feelings about their marriages (although stay-at-home mothers reported higher stress and exhaustion levels than stay-at-home fathers). Besides this piece, there have been only a handful of other empirical studies conducted on men who father full-time (Barker 1994, O'Brien 1987, Wheelock 1990, Smith 1998, Doucet 2006) and most were conducted outside of the United States. While qualitative studies of dual-parenting couples (Coltrane 1996, Risman 1998, Doucet 2000), men who take paternity leave (Brandth and Kvande 1998), men who wish to

stay home (Gerson 1993), and men's thoughts towards balancing work and fatherhood (Townsend 2002) have illuminated ways men accept, construct, and negotiate the caregiver identity, very little has been done on stay-at-home fathers. In addition, fathers' participation in childcare has been studied in more depth than their housework, with very few studying them in unison (Coltrane 2000, Doucet 2006).

Andrea Doucet's groundbreaking study of Canadian male primary caregivers (2006) is the most current and relevant piece of work in this subfield. Doucet conducted a qualitative study of 40 single fathers and 53 stay-at-home fathers living in Canada. In later stages of her research, she added in participants that fit neither category to increase the diversity of her sample (i.e., gay fathers, shared-caregiving fathers and 14 wives). Doucet's study design, research questions and findings aided me in framing my own theoretical contributions, but differ from my work in several key empirical and substantive areas. First, Doucet's research took place exclusively in Canada, and while she suggests the results could inform family research in all Western industrialized countries (2006), 10% of stay-at-home parents in Canada are men, while the most recent US Census figure shows less than 2% here (Census 2009). In addition, the social, cultural and political climate in Canada provides a context through which families make decisions about work and family balance, shaping respondents' understanding of their social world in different ways than studies done in the US.

In addition, when recruiting her sample, Doucet specified that respondents must have been staying home for at least one year to be classified as a "stay-at-home father," while I do not mandate that distinction here. This is an important delineation between my work and hers, which emphasizes my efforts to understand the fluidity and longevity of the stay-at-home father identity and role without placing constraints on it when recruiting participants.

Doucet also recruited her sample primarily through newspaper advertisements, while I used a combination of sampling techniques (as described in the methods section). In addition, she used a combination of in-person interviews, phone interviews and focus groups, while I rely heavily on in-personal interviews to maximize my in-depth understanding of the nuanced experiences primary caregivers have.

Finally, while Doucet primarily sought to understand whether men see “mothering” as their primary role and/or adopt feminine perspectives and behaviors in caring for their children, my main emphasis is on the boundaries of the “stay-at-home father” identity and (in this manuscript) fathers’ detailed participation in housework. Doucet conducted a brief housework exercise with fourteen of the stay-at-home fathers and their wives, but did not administer household time diaries. Thus, my study contributes by expanding our knowledge on stay-at-home fathers’ beliefs about and participation in housework (using a combination of 40 weeklong household time diaries, housework activity data, and in-depth interviews with US fathers).

Doucet’s relative inattention to stay-at-home fathers’ housework participation aided me in shaping my own research design and contribution. In nearly 300 pages of text, less than 10 were devoted to discussing housework. Based on her discussions with 14 couples, Doucet (2006) found that few men talked about housework, it was a sensitive issue to discuss, there was frequent discussion of differences in standards and perceived amounts of work completed between partners, and finally, wives had a tendency to take over domestic responsibilities when they came home from work. Doucet also noted that fathers generally expressed lower standards of cleanliness than their wives preferred, often leading to tension and difficulties in assessing how often and how much cleaning is being completed. Doucet

suggests this prompts many women to take over and clean up during evenings and non-working hours, leading them to take on a “second shift” that a male breadwinner would not be expected to burden.

Doucet also found that stay-at-home fathers tended to specialize in “masculine” chores and do mostly weekday cooking, while their wives completed more laundry, weekend cooking, homework help, and creative play. However, the generalizability of her results are limited by her focus on Canadian fathers, small housework sample size ( $N=14$ ), lack of detailed time diary data, and scant discussion of what factors and/or theories explain these results, all issues I hope to address and improve upon here. Thus, this paper seeks to understand how much and what type of housework stay-at-home fathers complete each week, and more importantly, what factors explain their participation (or lack thereof) in specific types of chores.

## DATA AND METHODS

Because nationally representative surveys (such as the NSFH and NLSY) tends to have small samples of primary caregiving fathers, ask limited questions on the significance of fatherhood to men, and tend to measure only two primary aspects of father involvement: the quantity (i.e., how often) and types (i.e., engaged, distant), I chose a mixed-methods approach that combines in-depth interviews with fathers and detailed weeklong household time diaries. In general, qualitative research is advantageous in gaining a nuanced understanding of beliefs and behaviors and in studying smaller, statistically rare subpopulations (such as full-time fathers). In addition, qualitative techniques are said to be especially useful when examining a social phenomena that has not been studied in great

detail (See, e.g., Strauss and Corbin 1990), which is especially true of male primary caregivers' household time-use.

### *In-depth interviews*

I conducted in-depth interviews, ranging from one to three hours in length, with a sample of 40 fathers living primarily in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Thirty of the fathers self-identified as the “primary caregiver” for their family and 10 additional fathers self-identified as being “employed full-time” in paid work and are used here as a reference group. I recruited 40 percent of the respondents using snowball-sampling techniques. I began by advertising the study on university listservs (some with personal contacts), parenting group/organization listservs, Facebook groups and message boards, Craigslist (under the “volunteer” section), and in businesses fathers would frequent (gyms, grocery stores) in several cities (having a varied race and class makeup) to increase the diversity of men in the sample. I recruited carefully to avoid defining my target population of stay-at-home fathers in the same way the Census does. In other words, I advertised for men who are “primary caregivers” for children, but did not explicitly say I was looking for “stay-at-home fathers” (in anticipation that some men who stay home will not identify as such). In addition, I did not specify or require that fathers be completely out of the labor force, as long as they were the “primary caregiver” of children under 18. This allowed me to collect a diverse sample of men who invest in fatherhood but define it differently. Still, my method of recruitment and the language I used in advertising the study inevitably shaped the pool of respondents I ended up with. While I purposely sought to capture as wide and diverse of a collection of men who define themselves or associate their familial role with stay-at-home fatherhood, I do not use my pool to define stay-at-home fathers *definitively*.

Fathers who expressed a desire to participate in the study were instructed to contact me (via email address, mailing address, or telephone) to obtain more information. Upon doing so, they were mailed a lengthier study description and time diary packet to fill out and were instructed to contact me via the same method upon its completion. At this point, I arranged a time and date to meet the father at a public location convenient to their home or workplace to conduct the interview. In several instances, the interviews were conducted at a respondent's home if childcare was unavailable or the respondent expressed preference for this. (Two of the interviews took place over the telephone and one was conducted using Skype). Upon completion of the interview, I discussed completed time diaries with respondents and inquired whether they knew any other fathers who might be interested in participating in the study. From there, I continued to snowball sample until I achieved a sample size of 40 men. The fathers not recruited through snowball sampling contacted me directly after seeing posted advertisements.

Before each interview began, I asked respondents to complete an IRB-approved consent form that explained the nature of the project, extent of their participation, and measures I would take to assure their anonymity. Next, I asked fathers to fill out a brief "Background Information Survey" to gather demographic information for my sample. As summarized in Table 4.1 (and further detailed in Table 4.2), the average age of full-time fathers in my sample is 37 and the average age of their children is 4. In terms of race/ethnic background, my sample can be characterized as heavily white and middle to upper middle class, but it includes representation from Black, Hispanic, and Asian fathers, as well as working class and lower middle-class families. While the average family income and educational attainment for my sample is significantly higher than the national average, this is

likely reflective of the socioeconomic status households that men who self-select themselves into stay-at-home fatherhood possess (Doucet 2006, US Census Bureau 2007). In some senses, stay-at-home fatherhood (like stay-at-home motherhood) is an option that is more readily available to privileged groups in society, a topic I will explore in more detail in future research. All of the men in my sample were currently married, in a heterosexual partnership, and had children under the age of 15 (although these categories were not specified as requirements in study advertisements).

Single-spaced transcriptions of the interviews ranged in length from 20 to 35 pages. I used a semi-structured interview guide, allowing me to cover a series of topics in a strategic order while also inserting follow-up questions and adding new areas of inquiry when needed. Conducting in-depth interviews allowed me to capture the detail underlying men's decision making processes, beliefs about fatherhood, and behaviors in the home, all of which are difficult to decipher using preexisting, close-ended survey questions. The interview covered a wide assortment of topics, ranging from what factors prompted these men to stay home to how they felt about this decision to how much time they spent completing a series of household and childcare tasks. The main interview sections targeted respondents' family histories, work histories, past, present and future employment plans, understandings of their familial role and responsibilities, gender ideologies, beliefs about what being a "stay-at-home father" means, housework participation, mental health issues, social support systems, and family change.

In general, full-time employed fathers were asked the same questions as stay-at-home fathers, especially with regards family histories, employment, gender ideologies, perspectives on gender and fatherhood and mental health. Several questions were altered slightly to probe



their attitudes toward stay-at-home fatherhood and whether it was ever a desirable or viable option for their family. If not, I asked a series of questions to understand why and delve deeper into their beliefs about male full-time caregivers. In addition, two of the fathers had recently transitioned from stay-at-home fatherhood to being employed full-time and a third defined himself as a “part-time stay-at-home dad.” Because all of their transitions occurred within a few months prior to the interview, I asked them questions from the perspective of their time staying home and added additional questions about why they transitioned back into the labor force and how their household behaviors have changed as a result of this shift. Complete copies of the interview guides, recruitment documents, consent form, time diary mailing materials, and Background Information Survey are included in Appendices A-F.

After transcribing all 40 interviews, I re-formatted and imported them into ATLAS.ti for analysis. I then used this qualitative data analysis software to code and empirically evaluate the transcribed interview data. This software allowed me to manage, assess, and extract meaning from my collection of interviews through employing a series of coding techniques (see Weitzman 1999, 2003, and Hwang 2008 for overviews of QDA software; see also, Manning and Smock (2005) for an example of its use in the family literature). The first step involved coding the interviews using a set of preconceived codes that emerged from my review of the fatherhood literature and guiding research questions. By manually coding sentences and paragraphs of each interview using these designated codes, I essentially added a new level of meaning to the text and created interpretable units of analysis that I could analyze, with a goal of extracting patterns in fathers’ experiences, beliefs, and behaviors.

In addition, by attaching more than one code to some sections and organizing the interviews into what Atlas.ti calls “families” (groups based on pre-determined categories like

age, marital status, age of children, family background, education level, income level and employment status, etc.), I generated networks of relationships between concepts and searched for variations in meaning between particular types of respondents in my sample. While I primarily rely on this preconceived set of codes, I did a second stage of analysis in which I re-read through the coded interviews and allowed both new and revised codes to emerge from the text. This extended, two-step coding process allowed me to improve and refine my understanding of the data and the themes emerging from them.

### *Housework Activity*

As part of the in-depth interview, I also asked fathers to participate in a “housework division” exercise. In this interactive portion of the interview, lasting approximately 15 to 20 minutes, I used a set of note cards that listed a series of chores on them. I instructed fathers that we were going to go through these cards, one by one, and place each of them into one of three piles: tasks you do more often, tasks your wife does more often, and tasks you divide equally. I explained that they should think about each tasks in terms of the total hours each person spends completing it each week. The chores I inquired about ranged from caring for pets to talking to babysitters. In total, the fathers sorted and discussed twenty-four chores (for a complete list, see the “Housework Activity” in Appendix G).

Once they divided the cards into three piles, I started with the first pile and asked participants to explain, in their own words, any theories or explanations they could give for why they did that task more often than, less often than, or equally as often as their spouse. In many cases, their answers prompted me to insert additional questions to delve deeper into the beliefs underlying the division of household chores. For example, I asked many fathers whether they tended to do certain chores on the weekend as opposed to during the week

and/or how often a less routine chore was completed. When respondents emoted their response (positively or negatively), I inserted follow-up questions about why that particular task prompted either enthusiasm or disdain.

I ended the activity by asking, “Are you generally satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you wish you did more or less of certain tasks?” and “Do you think your spouse is satisfied?” These questions wrapped up the activity but also allowed me to gauge the accuracy of their responses. For example, if a respondent claimed to do the majority of the tasks more often then his wife but then discussed her frustration that he wasn’t doing enough, I’d ask follow-up questions about how much time was spent on each task per day, why, and whether the couples had taken any steps to resolve the conflict and/or how he responds to her frustration.

While the “housework activity” results were transcribed and assessed in Atlas.ti with the rest of the in-depth interview data, I also revisited each interview and entered the activity results into Excel so I could analyze it independently. In doing so, I accomplished my goal of having two sources of data on housework to compare and assess for uniformity. For example, if the fathers claimed they did the laundry or emptied the dishwasher more often than their wives, but their time diaries did not list these activities at any point during the week, these results could reveal interesting findings in regards to perceptions versus realities of fathers’ housework and time use. Alternatively, other fathers could be spending a great deal of time on certain tasks and noting this in the diary, while still reporting that their wives do them more often. This could indicate insights into the mothers’ behaviors and perhaps her attempts to overcompensate by completing abnormally high amounts of housework because of her lack of time at home.

### *Weeklong household time diaries*

In addition to the in-depth interview data and housework activity data, I administered, collected and analyzed forty weeklong household time diaries to assess my participants' time-use in a more precise fashion. After agreeing to participate in the study, fathers were mailed a "time diary packet" containing information about the study, time diary requirements, and detailed instructions to follow when filling it out. I instructed participants to keep track of all housework, household maintenance/management-related, childcare, leisure, volunteer and employment-related activities completed in one week (seven day-long charts) using the packet provided. I attached a list of the range of activities that should be recorded and asked fathers to read it over before they began.

Fathers were then instructed to begin filling out the time diary by writing down the day of the week at the top of each page and then recording every primary activity they completed (in 15 minute intervals) for seven days under the "What were you doing?" column. The first diary day started at 4am (or whenever they woke up). In addition, if another person was present when they completed a task (i.e., spouse, child), fathers were asked to record that under the "Was someone else present?" table column. When fathers spent more than 15 minutes on any given task, they were asked to draw a line through the rows to indicate this. If fathers were doing more than one thing at once, they were asked to record their primary activity only. This allowed me to differentiate between times fathers were directly caring for children versus when they were completing other activities even though their children were present.

To alleviate confusion, I also included an example of a completed time diary page to examine before beginning and reiterated that when they were finished, there should be seven

full charts. Admittedly, as with most research on human subjects, it is difficult to assess whether social desirability bias affected the fathers' records of their time use or measure how accurate their diaries are. However, to discourage inaccuracy, mailings stated, "Please try to be as accurate, honest, and thorough as you can be. Your identity will remain completely anonymous and I will be the only person who sees the time diary." In assuring respondents that their identity would be protected and their time use only seen and analyzed by myself, I gained confidence in the results. I also reminded fathers that I would collect their time diary at the interview and would ask questions in regards to it. This statement served as a second check of authenticity by reminding fathers that anything they recorded could potentially be discussed in detail during the session. A complete time diary mailing/packet is included in Appendix F.

After collecting the completed time diaries from fathers, I entered the data into a spreadsheet to calculate summary statistics of time use and assess how they're related to fathers' demographic information, family history, employment hours, length of time at home, age, etc. I organized the spreadsheet to include the following columns: (A) Demographic Information (Respondent #, Father Status, State of Residence, Age, Race/Ethnicity, Marital Status, Parents' Marital Status, Religious Affiliation, Highest Educational Degree, Number of Children, Age of Youngest Child, Date Last Employed (Official), Date Last Employed (Unofficial), Current Occupation, Length of Current Employment, Yearly Household Income (before taxes), (B) Personal Activities (Sleeping, Personal Care/Grooming, Leisure Activities), (C) Housework (Food/Drink Preparation or Cleanup, Household Maintenance, Interior Cleaning, Laundry, Lawn and Garden Care, Pet Care, Vehicle Care, Consumer Purchases), (D) Care Work (Caring for Child (as Primary Activity), Caring for Other Adults)

and (E) Job-Related Activities (Working for pay, Job Search, Continued Education) and (F) Other.

I labeled these categories to establish a level of conformity between Chapters 2 and 4 (closely aligning them with the categorization schemes used by the American Time Use Survey). The spreadsheet rows listed the demographic information interviewees wrote on their “Background Information Survey,” and in the remainder of the rows, I calculated and recorded total number of minutes each respondent spent conducting each of the aforementioned activities each day of the week (Monday through Sunday). I then calculated the total minutes spent doing each chore for the week and a daily average for each chore. In subsequent analysis, I also compared the time diary results to the results from the respondents’ housework activity. For example, I checked to see whether Respondent X (who said he did more laundry than his wife) completed laundry throughout the time diary week. I also used the time diary results to establish whether there were demographic patterns among the group of fathers that recorded the lowest and highest housework minutes per week and expressed the lowest and highest participation during the housework activity. Finally, I used the time diary and housework activity spreadsheets to compare the time use and housework completion of stay-at-home fathers and full-time employed fathers in my sample (specifically in terms of minutes spent with children, on employment, and on chores they were more or less likely to do).

## RESULTS

### *Fatherhood and “Masculine” Housework*

After conducting, transcribing and analyzing the in-depth interviews, interactive housework activities, and time diary records, clear patterns of housework participation

among fathers emerged. The data revealed several important divisions between the behaviors of primary caregiving fathers and full-time employed fathers, as well between segments of the stay-at-home father group. To begin, regardless of their status as a primary caregiver or worker, nearly 80% of fathers in the sample reported that they completed the following activities more often than their spouse: taking out the trash, lawn/yard work, household repair and maintenance, auto repair and maintenance, paying bills, picking up take out food and taking care of pets. In addition, the majority of fathers who both worked full-time and stayed home reported that their spouse was more likely to decorate the house and iron. Thus, stay-at-home fathers and full-time employed fathers were quite similar in their embracement of traditionally “masculine” chores and rejection of two traditionally “feminine” tasks. These results are summarized in Table 4.3.

#### *Chores Stay-at-Home Fathers Take On*

When assessing a second collection of chores, marked differences emerged between stay-at-home and full-time employed fathers, as well as within the primary caregiving father group. To begin, as summarized in Tables 4.4 (stay-at-home father results) and 4.5 (full-time employed father results), stay-at-home fathers were more likely than working fathers to report completing the following chores “more often” than their spouse: (1) vacuuming and sweeping floors, (2) preparing all three daily meals, (3) washing dishes and emptying the dishwasher, (4) grocery shopping, (5) running errands, and (6) driving and picking up family members to/from activities, schools, practices, etc. (or one stay-at-home father described: “Dad’s taxi”). Stay-at-home fathers reported doing these six chores “more often” than their spouse, while, in contrast, working fathers reported the opposite: doing them “less often” or, for a few, “equally as often” as their spouses). Because specialization in these six chores, by

gender, is traditionally associated with stay-at-home motherhood (or motherhood generally), if stay-at-home fathers are “transforming” any aspect of the traditional division of household labor, these are noteworthy results. Stay-at-home fathers displayed the opposite tendencies of what full-time employed fathers reported, revealing a radical reversal of task specialization by gender in stay-at-home father families.

#### *Stay-at-home Fathers and “Feminine” Housework*

Despite what feminists might interpret as encouraging results, the tendencies to complete or reject an additional set of “feminine chores” revealed distinct differences in behaviors not only between working fathers and stay-at-home fathers, but within the stay-at-home father sample as well. Turning to Tables 4.6 and 4.7, we see that stay-at-home fathers, *as a whole*, are more likely than full-time working fathers to report contributing “equal participation” or “more participation” than their spouses in: (1) coordinating babysitters, (2) making beds, (3) doing laundry, (4) dusting the house, (5) picking up toys, (6) mopping floors, and (7) cleaning bathrooms. However, for this second collection of seven “feminine” or “motherly” tasks, only one-third of stay-at-home fathers said they were “more likely” than their spouse to complete these chores. The remaining two-thirds of stay-at-home fathers reported being “less likely” (or, in a few cases, “equally as likely”) as their spouse to complete these seven chores.

Thus, while stay-at-home fathers did not universally ignore or refuse to complete these additional “feminine” tasks, this collection of chores, in particular, were more likely to be divided equally or completed by wives in two-thirds of stay-at-home father families. In other words, while stay-at-home fathers have quite markedly taken on the tasks of sweeping floors, preparing and cleaning up meals, emptying dishwashers, grocery shopping and



transporting children to activities, and running errands, they approach other necessary chores with more caution. Thus, two-thirds of the stay-at-home father sample either reject or do not fully participate in the mundane, but less frequent, “feminine” chores of coordinating babysitters, cleaning bathrooms, mopping, picking up toys and dusting and the routine, mandatory jobs of making beds and doing laundry.

### *Explaining Housework Divisions - In Their Own Words*

Following the in-depth interview’s housework activity, I asked fathers to provide explanations for “why” they completed certain tasks more or less often than their wives. The results of these conversations were quite telling, revealing subtle, underlying beliefs and expectations about the current state of masculinity, femininity, motherhood, fatherhood, work and family. At times, stay-at-home fathers’ statements both reinforced and contradicted what they previously claimed to believe about gender roles and fathers’ abilities, skills and responsibilities in other sections of the interview.

*Revisiting Deutsch’s “Strategies Men Use to Resist.”* While coding the interviews in Atlas.ti, I also discovered numerous parallels between fathers’ statements and the findings of Francine Deutsch’s (1999) chapter, “Strategies Men Use to Resist” from her book *Halving It All*. In this work, Deutsch outlines five basic “strategies” married, employed fathers use to avoid completing housework in their homes. According to Deutsch, fathers often: say nothing or avoid discussing chores that needed to be done (“passive resistance”), pretend they don’t know how to do specific types of chores (“incompetence”), exaggeratingly praise their wives’ ability to do specific tasks better than they can (“praise”), claim their wives’ standards of cleanliness are unrealistically high (“different standards”), or insist they are doing more than their wife realizes or sees (“denial”). Throughout my own study, I was

surprised by how closely the reasons and explanations stay-at-home fathers with low participation in the seven “feminine” chores listed above mirrored Deutsch’s findings from her research on full-time employed fathers.

For example, the “passive resistance” strategy became evident when I asked one young stay-at-home father (who recently became a full-time student after staying home full-time for one year) how frequently he vacuumed floors and cleaned bathrooms, he stated:

“I’d do the bare minimum [laughs]. We had carpet everywhere in that apartment and [my child] didn’t like the vacuum at that time, so I’d put that off. I would clean bathrooms but I’d put it off until my wife made me do it.”

Similarly, a stay-at-home father from a rural county in North Carolina discussed his tactic for avoiding laundry duties, saying:

“Since we’ve been married, she’s always done the laundry. Every now and then, she says she’s not doing my laundry anymore and I’ll let it pile up ... because I have so many clothes, it’ll keep piling up until she ends up doing it anyway.”

Deutsch’s second strategy, “incompetence,” emerged when a father from rural Pennsylvania (who reported formerly working as a restaurant line cook when we discussed his occupational history) explained why his wife makes dinner after work, saying:

“She’s the cook even though I worked in a restaurant. She’ll pre-cook and tell me what to do and that I can do. Steak ... I’ll burn it. I burn popcorn. I actually enjoy the taste of burnt popcorn ... that’s how much I’ve done it.”

Similarly, another father cited “incompetence” (while also referencing what could be his wife’s “gatekeeping” behavior) when discussing why he doesn’t do laundry. He said:

“Generally, my job is to put the laundry away. She doesn’t trust me to touch her clothes. Actually, I fired myself from it after ruining too many of her clothes.”

Another Pennsylvanian father alluded to his inability to complete “feminine” or “motherly” chores by simply saying, “Housekeeping is not my forte.”

A third strategy, which Deutsch termed “praise,” arose several times throughout my interviews with male primary caregivers. One stay-at-home father (who was simultaneously a full-time graduate student) praised his wife’s grocery shopping and cooking abilities, stating:

“Coming into the marriage, [my wife] was a much better cook than I was ... She has a better sense of food. She’s a woman and I think she’s been taught more by her mom. In college she cooked a lot more than I did. She plans the menu because at the beginning of our marriage, she was much better.”

When I asked one full-time father why his wife mops the floors more often than he does, he said, “I suspect it makes her feel good to do it ... It’s never made me feel better to mop the floor,” while another stay-at-home dad said he didn’t make the bed as often as his wife because, “[My wife’s] always been better at that than I am.”

Finally, stay-at-home fathers made reference to the strategies Deutsch called “denial” and “different standards” to resist completing certain tasks. In terms of “denial,” a number of fathers asserted that they did far more housework than their wives thought they did. One father talked about his wife’s dissatisfaction with his amount of housework, saying:

“She thinks she does significantly more of the housework than I do but I don’t think that’s true. I think it’s pretty well split.”

In addition, a number of stay-at-home fathers in my sample referenced what Deutsch named the “different standards” strategy when explaining why they opted out of some chores. For example, one stay-at-home dad said, “I have a higher tolerance for dirt that she does,” while another claimed that, “having a tidy house is more important to her than it is to me.”

Likewise, a stay-at-home father from rural North Carolina said he didn’t do laundry because,

“[My wife’s] very picky about the clothes. She buys the girls all the pretty dresses and wants to get all the little stains out, so she’s more ‘particular’ about how the clothes look.”

Different standards (and “passive resistance”) also came up when I discussed emptying the trash with another stay-at-home dad. He reported, “I’m on the mindset that there’s always more room in the trash can, so I’ll cram it in there, but she gets annoyed and takes it out.”

This strategy was also evident when a stay-at-home father from a major city in North Carolina explained his wife’s tendency to clean the bathroom more often, saying:

“She’s just more particular about the bathroom than I am ... Well, I hate to say it, but she uses more stuff in the bathroom. She makes more of the mess, you know?”

*“I’ve Kind of Got It Down to a Science” - Proud Fathers.* On the opposite end of the spectrum from the two-thirds with equal or less participation in these “feminine chores,” one third of stay-at-home fathers in my sample *did* report doing the overwhelming majority of housework (including all “feminine” chores) and enthusiastically boasted about their high standards of cleanliness, the enjoyment they gathered from keeping the house in order, and their mastery of chores traditionally associated with “motherhood.” In statements made by this third of the full-time father sample, they expressed this pride and noted how appreciative they felt for their wives’ monetary contributions. For example, one father said, “I’m very proud of how I’ve kind of got it ‘down to a science,’” while another said, “I have this overriding feeling of gratitude to my wife, so, bring on the dishes! Give me another dirty diaper! Grateful. I’m very grateful.” When discussing why he tends to complete the overwhelming majority of housework for his family, another father summed it up by saying:

“All of these tasks have very direct and immediate tangible results. I get to feel like I’ve done something that’s contributing. That’s good, you know? There’s no question about whether or not I’ve contributed something. And, I’ll admit to the feeling of thinking I’m good at some of that stuff, but that almost sounds goofy. Like, ‘Oh, you are really good at doing laundry?’ But, I am! I really am. I take some pride in that, you know?”

In general, this third of the stay-at-home father sample with the highest levels of housework participation talked about daily “chores” as being part of their “job description.”

One stay-at-home father from a suburban area of NC said:

“It kind of, to me, goes along with the territory of being a stay-at-home parent. I mean, you’re not bringing in any income and despite what a lot of other stay-at-home parents will tell you, you do have time to do all this stuff. You just have to make the time to do it. So, I think that, you know, back to the mindset of it being a job ... this is what I signed up for and what I’ve taken upon myself to get done.”

Interestingly, the third of fathers within this high participation group made statements that paralleling Deutsch’s “different standards,” but this time, it was their wife who had lower expectations of cleanliness. For example, one full-time dad said that his wife was probably home “making a wreck” of the house as we conducted the interview. He also described the extensive housework routine he conducts each day, saying:

“Well, [my child and I] definitely have to clean the countertops three times a day ... Dishes, that’s a given, we have to do that. We sweep downstairs, shake out the rugs, make sure the beds are made. I don’t vacuum everyday but come pretty close to it ... I love to steam mop ... If people want to come over for lunch, I don’t have to think about it. I’m not embarrassed. Everything is spotless in the house just in case. I run a tight ship.”

When asked why he vacuums floors everyday, another father said, “If we waited until my wife vacuumed the floor, it’d be really disgusting!” Similarly, a self-proclaimed “part-time stay-at-home dad” said he dusted the house every week because it was “a tolerance thing ... I don’t want dust on the bookcases and [my wife] never notices it.” Two other stay-at-home fathers attributed their cleaning tendencies to “undiagnosed OCD” and being “anal retentive about the dishwasher.” In extreme contrast to the stay-at-home fathers who rejected or participated in “feminine” chores less often, one stay-at-home father even claimed that despite a near spotless household and constant upkeep, his wife promoted “a sex role stereotype reversal.” He compared her expectations to “old shows where the husband comes

home and says, ‘Why is the house dirty?’” and resented that his wife was “starting to embody a cultural stereotype about what the breadwinner has his entitlement to.”

*“Complicated Bills” and “Heavy Vacuums.”* While one-third of the stay-at-home father sample spoke proudly about their ability to master housekeeping tasks traditionally associated with femininity, nearly all (over 85%) of the stay-at-home fathers I interviewed (including fathers who performed both the highest and lowest amounts of “feminine” chores) use gender-stereotyped language and/or made biological references when asked why they specialized in “masculine” chores like auto repair and maintenance, household repair and maintenance, mowing the lawn and doing yard work, taking out the trash, and paying bills. While stay-at-home fathers in my study consistently asserted that they held flexible beliefs about gender and that caregiving was a learned, “gender-neutral skill,” they tended to use very gendered (and at times, biological essentialist) arguments to explain why their wives complete “masculine” chores less often in their households.

For example, in terms of monetary responsibilities, stay-at-home fathers who paid the bills in their families explained this tendency by saying things like, “I’m the finance guy, she doesn’t like dealing with numbers,” “I know how the accounts work and how the online banking works and am more comfortable with it,” and “There was a small bank error, so I fired her from paying the bills.” Three other stay-at-home fathers insisted their wives would pay the bills incorrectly if given that task, claiming: “When we first met she wasn’t balancing her checkbook,” “Strange things also happen when I trust her to pay bills,” and “She doesn’t have the foggiest idea of how to log in to any of our online accounts.”

Similar arguments were made in regards to wives’ lack of automobile repair and maintenance abilities and knowledge. While one might attribute a stay-at-home father taking

care of car service appointments because he has more flexible time during the day, one full-time dad said he specialized in the car work because:

“I mean, most of the times we’re just dropping off at the place ... but I really set it up. It’s a guy thing, you know?”

Another stay-at-home father based his tendency to take care of automobile issues on his wife’s biological makeup, stating, “She doesn’t even fill up gas and gets cold outside. I think it might be more genetically based.” Four other stay-at-home fathers I interviewed explained their specialization in auto-related chores by stating: “I have more experience,” “I’m more mechanically inclined,” “I have the knowledge base,” and, “I am familiar in terms of preventative maintenance.” An additional four stay-at-home fathers claimed their wives “didn’t know anything about that stuff,” “don’t pay attention to that stuff,” and explained that they take care of it “because I’m the man” and “because I know how to do an oil change, so when I feel like taking the time to do it, I’ll do it.”

Stay-at-home fathers made similar references to their wives’ lack of knowledge, abilities, interest and “inclination” when discussing household maintenance work, household repairs, and even taking out the trash. For example, one stay-at-home father said,

“I’m pretty handy. Sometimes she does try to take it on more. But, I painted houses for a living and can do things really fast. It sometimes makes me crazy to watch her painting slowly and really badly.

Another father said household maintenance “is just not my wife’s inclination,” while a stay-at-home father from rural Pennsylvania joked:

“I know more than she does. I know how to use a hammer [Laughs]. She will pick it up, but I know how to do things around the house and maintain things.”

Even taking out the trash more often was linked to gendered abilities and biologically based abilities. For example, a full-time father from suburban North Carolina generated a theory to explain why masculinity was linked to garbage, saying:

“How do guys always end up always taking out the trash? I have no clue, but I do think there’s this sense that a grubby guy who just finished making terriyaki chicken is better suited to take out a big stinking bag of fermenting garbage.”

Other fathers claimed their participation had more to do with their wives’ negligence or physical inability to haul trash, saying, “My wife wouldn’t know where a trashcan was” and “We had to cross a good sized parking lot, so I just did it.” Another stay-at-home dad pondered his specialization in garbage removal and then stated, “Yeah, it’s funny because she takes the trash bag to the trashcan but never to the curb. It’s big, so that might be why.”

Finally, mowing the lawn and doing yard work were two tasks that were unanimously completed “more often” by fathers in the sample. Both stay-at-home and full-time working dads talked about outdoor work with a great deal of pleasure, while also highlighting their superior skills in completing the job. Several stay-at-home fathers made reference to liking that yard work involved “working with their hands,” with one romanticizing, “There’s something about putting your hands on the dirt that you own.” Another primary made the assumed connection between lawn care and traditional notions of masculinity transparent when calling mowing his “manly duty.” Two other stay-at-home fathers noted that working outside in the yard was an escape from the drudgery of stay-at-home parenthood. One full-time father living on the East Coast of North Carolina stated:

“It’s something I enjoy. You put on your iPod and just chill. It’s enjoyable to walk around and listen to music. I’ve always liked mowing the lawn.”

Similarly, the stay-at-home father and husband of a physician noted spoke of yard work glowingly, saying:



“The best time of the week for a stay-at-home dad is when I get to put on my headphones and mow the lawn. You get so little alone time as a stay-at-home parent, until they go to school, and that’s one of the times in the summer time when I get alone time. Oh, I love it!”

Despite their affinity for mowing, raking and cleaning gutters, most of the full-time fathers noted that their wives still took care of the more feminine jobs of tending to the garden and watering and planting flowers.

An additional finding of interest emerged as I moved from analyzing fathers’ explanations for specialization in the set of stereotypically “masculine” chores to their reasoning for why they vacuumed floors more often than their spouses. For this task in particular, the respondents’ theories behind why completed it more or less often than their wives varied when I compared stay-at-home versus full-time employed fathers. This was one chore that nearly all stay-at-home fathers completed more often, while in contrast, nearly all full-time working fathers’ wives completed it more often. What made this finding particularly noteworthy was that a handful of stay-at-home fathers made reference to their wives’ physical restrictions when explaining why they vacuumed more often, whereas full-time employed fathers did not. For example, when asked why he vacuumed, one stay-at-home dad explained:

“We had a two story [house] and her wrists have always been bad so if she vacuumed she’d only vacuum one floor and I’d have to bring it up and down ... so [she has] physical limitations.”

Similarly, another full-time father said he vacuumed because his wife “can’t lift the vacuum cleaner up the stairs.” He noted that the weight of the tool made the job more appropriate for a man, saying, “It’s a big giant thing ... [it’s] very heavy.” Likewise, a stay-at-home father, who was formerly a teacher, equated called his vacuum a “male power tool” and joked that he swept more frequently because “it’s like mowing a lawn on the inside.”

### *Predictors of High and Low Participation Among Stay-at-Home Fathers*

When stepping back to examine the housework activity results as a whole, I find distinct housework patterns that split the sample approximately into thirds ( $N=10$ ): stay-at-home fathers with high participation (completing nearly all chores more often), moderate participation (completing most chores more often, while completely a few equally as often and/or rejecting a few “feminine” chores), and low participation (completing some chores more often but also rejecting a significant number of “feminine” chores).

*Low Levels of Participation.* When examining the third of stay-at-home fathers who participated in this group of seven “homemaking” chores traditionally associated with motherhood (i.e., laundry, mopping, making beds, cleaning bathrooms, dusting, ironing) the least, a number of commonalities emerged that might explain why these stay-at-home fathers resist chores that others men embrace. As summarized in Table 4.8, stay-at-home fathers who were least likely to participate in these specific “feminine” chores were significantly younger or older than the mean age of fathers in the study. For very young stay-at-home fathers, immaturity and a lack of experience as a stay-at-home parent (or a parent at all, for that matter) could explain their lower participation in housework. In contrast, one older stay-at-home father who had grown children from a first marriage was similarly struggling to adjust to being a full-time caregiver after many years of full-time employment.

The significance of age is closely tied to another noteworthy factor linked to variation in stay-at-home fathers’ household labor. Fathers reporting the least involvement had, on average, been staying home full-time for a shorter amount of time than those who completed equal or more housework. More specifically, several dads had been staying home for less than two years and, while acknowledging their stay-at-home father identity, discussed their

situation or “role” as being temporary, transitional, or comparable to a “test run.” For these fathers with less stay-at-home experience, the time it takes to adjust to full-time parenthood and learn to balance childcare and housework demands could explain their lower participation in chores. Alternatively, perhaps their wives were less likely to place housework demands or expectations on them during what was viewed as a transitional or experimental situation. Finally, perhaps these men didn’t perceive housework as part of their “job description” because they hadn’t spent a great deal of time around other stay-at-home parents or they felt participating in “feminine” chores might threaten their masculinity because they had not fully embraced the “stay-at-home father” identity.

The age and health of their children were two other significant factors linking this third of stay-at-home fathers to low participation. Most of these men were caring for infants or toddlers that required more focused, intensive parenting and monitoring, prompting them to express having less available time to complete the housework other fathers did when their children were attending activities, school, or playing independently. Another of these fathers was caring for a young child with a developmental disorder, leading him to spend the majority of his time researching, reaching out to other parents, and blogging about his experiences. In this case, his identity as the parent of a child with a developmental disorder trumped his stay-at-home dad identity and channeled his energy toward his son’s wellbeing.

Two other closely related factors linked to low housework participation include (1) the amount of time full-time fathers were devoting to educational or employment-related pursuits and (2) career satisfaction preceding their transition to staying home. The low participation third included many fathers who were part-time or full-time students, which created an additional set of demands and lessened time available to complete housework.

Additionally, these fathers were often pursuing degrees with the intent of transitioning back into the labor force, and thus, were staying home while finishing up school because it “made sense” as a short-term solution to achieving a higher earning potential or switching careers in the next several years. In addition, many of these fathers initiated full-time parenthood because they were unhappy with one or more aspects of their former job(s), were unable to decide on a fulfilling choice of career, or hoped to shift from one career to another. As a way to meet caregiving demands and reduce the amount of money spent on daycare, these men began to stay home full-time, but did not interpret it as long-term or permanent solution.

Finally, the third of full-time fathers with the lowest household participation also tended to have lower household incomes and live in rural areas that many of them discussed as having “more traditional” gender roles. In this sense, the male breadwinner mentality and social stigma attached to stay-at-home fatherhood could have prompted these fathers to resist “feminine” chores (or increased their wives’ desire to “gatekeep” and maintain a sense of control). In addition, expectations about “appropriate” roles and responsibilities for mothers and fathers, regardless of who stays home, could be quite different in rural locations and lower socioeconomic neighborhoods, increasing the likelihood that these fathers did not interpret certain chores as part of their job description or rejected “feminine” work to compensate for their dependence on their wives’ income.

In addition, 90% of the fathers in the lowest participation group reported that their wives were “not satisfied” with the way housework was divided. While maternal dissatisfaction was not associated with lower housework participation across the board (for example, two fathers with the highest levels of housework per week said their wives were extremely dissatisfied), the wife’s unhappiness did not compel this third of fathers to increase

their involvement. While many of them expressed feeling guilty for not doing enough or suggested that they “knew they should do more,” few reported increasing their activity as a result. Instead, two families outsourced, hiring housecleaners to make up the difference.

*High Levels of Participation.* In contrast, a third of stay-at-home fathers not only embraced, but spoke about the amount and quality of household work they completed with great pride. This third of the fathers in my sample reported completing the grand majority of housework in their homes, many saying they were happy and content to do so and conceptualizing it as their contribution. Some of these fathers made note of their abilities to make gourmet meals, fold laundry with precision, and keep the house tidy at all times. This group also tended to acknowledge how grateful they were for their wives and cite their desire to relieve their wife of housework so she could spend quality time with their children after work and on the weekend. They interpreted the entire range of housework chores to be part of the stay-at-home father role, expressed a general satisfaction and positive attitude toward housework, and at times even wished they could do more.

Like the third of stay-at-home fathers who resisted some “feminine” chores, this high participation group had demographic and situational commonalities. These ten fathers were, on average, in the middle of the sample age range and had been staying home for a longer period of time. In addition, their children tended to be older, freeing up time to accomplish tasks during school or activity hours. This group of fathers was also less likely to be pursuing additional education, more likely to be living in an area they described as “progressive” and “accepting,” and, in general, married to spouses with very lucrative careers. Accordingly, these fathers were less likely to be working or attending school to achieve future career goals and more likely to be employed or volunteering for pleasure and/or social interaction. In

addition, these ten fathers were more likely to view staying home as a long-term possibility and its initiation as a “choice” (as opposed to being due to job dissatisfaction or termination).

### *Time Diaries Findings*

*Summary Statistics.* Analysis of the household time diaries generally supported and confirmed the results of the in-depth interviews and housework activities. Nevertheless, several key findings of interest emerged from the time diary data, allowing me to inform and improve the aforementioned findings. In support of the housework activity results, the time diaries revealed that stay-at-home fathers complete 1.6 times as much “meal preparation and clean up” as full-time employed fathers do. In addition, while all fathers in the sample reported doing household maintenance and repair more often than their spouses, full-time working fathers completed 1.7 times as much maintenance work during their time diary week than stay-at-home fathers did. In addition, while stay-at-home fathers as a whole did not fully embrace the traditionally “feminine” chores of laundry and cleaning the house (and recording minutes per week for these two activities were low), stay-at-home fathers (as a whole) spent 12 times as much time doing laundry each week as working fathers did, and twice as much time per week doing interior household cleaning.

*Intensive Fathering.* In light of my findings on stay-at-home fathers’ participation in the labor force and drive to earn supplemental or necessary family income (see Paper #2), another valuable result emerged from time diary analysis. While full-time employed fathers reported working five times as many hours per week as stay-at-home fathers did, full-time dads spent an average of 71 minutes per day on non-childcare related employment or “work” (about 8.3 hours per week, compared to 42.3 hours per week for full-time working fathers). Finally, while stay-at-home fathers reported spending significantly more hours of time

around their children than full-time employed fathers did, one unexpected finding was that working fathers' time spent conducting one-on-one or "primary interactions" with their children (such as playing a board game or reading to kids while not engaging in other activities) was quite similar to the primary time recorded by stay-at-home fathers (approximately 2.5 hours per day versus 3 hours per day, respectively).

While at first this result seems surprising, I revisited the data to aid me interpreting these results. First, I found that the full-time employed fathers I interviewed tended to spend a great deal of one-on-one time with their children on weeknights and especially on the weekend, times when many stay-at-home fathers are making dinner, taking a break from care work (and allowing wives to 'take over'), cleaning, or spending time conducting personal, work, volunteer, school-related or leisure activities. Most stay-at-home fathers also discussed their full-time employed wives' desire to fill the "motherly role" and spend as much time as possible with their children after coming home from work and during the weekend. Like these mothers, many full-time working fathers reported playing with their child after work to relieve their wives and compensate for the quality time they missed during the workday.

Another reason working fathers and stay-at-home fathers might report similar amounts of primary interaction is linked to the age of children and other household responsibilities. A number of stay-at-home fathers had children who were in school, involved in activities, or spent blocks of time napping during the day. These factors freed up time for stay-at-home fathers to complete housework or pursue other activities at a time of the day when the full-time employed fathers were working outside of the home. Still, while working fathers emphasized their desire to spend quality time with their children after work to counterbalance time they missed during the day, stay-at-home fathers (despite having blocks

of free time) expressed feeling responsible for overseeing their children's schedules twenty-four hours a day. In addition, because the stay-at-home fathers were home and around their children for longer periods of time during the day, there could be less one-on-one focused playtime due to the father's need to accomplish other goals such as preparing meals, cleaning the house, completing home maintenance, interacting with other parents, and for many stay-at-home fathers, working or completing continued educational activities.

In sum, while stay-at-home fathers engaged in significantly higher amounts of what I call "secondary childcare" (or completing other activities while a child is present, under watch, or nearby under the watch of others) than full-time working fathers, the amount of time spent intensively or deliberately fathering one-on-one with children was quite similar.

## DISCUSSION

When considering the theoretical implications of these results within the context of preexisting literature on gender, work, masculinity, I turned back to scholarship on the behaviors of men who work in gender-atypical occupations (see also Chapter 2). Research suggests that individuals employed in gender-atypical occupations tend to construct, assert and perform their gender in an exaggerated way because they work in an environment that challenges their sense of gender identity (Williams 1989, 1995, Evans 1997, Lupton 2000, Henson 2001, Cross and Bagilhole 2002, Simpson 2004). This has proven true in studies on men who work in female dominated occupations like nursing and elementary school teaching, but to this date, no studies have applied the occupation and masculinities literature to stay-at-home fatherhood or interpreted full-time fatherhood as a "female-dominated occupation."



When assessing these findings on stay-at-home fathers' housework behaviors and the explanations they provided for chores they will and will not participate in, a number of parallels emerge between the tendencies of men who complete "women's work" in the home and the findings on men who do "women's work" in the labor market. For example, because male nurses are often stereotyped as being "effeminate," some feel compelled to maintain a "hypermasculine" persona and strive to align themselves with the "hegemonic male ideal" (Connell 1995). Christine L. Williams (1989, 1995) also found that men in female-typed careers use strategies to distinguish themselves as different from or better than their female coworkers. Williams found that such men would specialize in "male-identified" areas of the occupation, highlight masculine aspects of their specialties, define their occupation as a stepping-stone to a more prestigious job, or disassociated themselves from their work.

Stay-at-home fathers who were home for shorter periods of time, completing an advanced degree or job certification, or staying home by necessity (and not by choice) described enacting similar behavioral strategies, even though their occupational context was the household (and not the workplace) and their audience was their spouse, family and friends (not coworkers). For example, some of their most enthusiastic discussions revolved around doing yard work and household or auto maintenance and repair work, highlighting their abilities to complete and enjoy "masculine" skills despite their full-time caregiver status. When providing explanations for why their wives didn't specialize in these specific tasks, stay-at-home fathers continued to highlight their "masculine" skills and knowledge. Several fathers also used language to overtly distinguish themselves from stay-at-home mothers. For example, one father who felt uncomfortable attending "play dates" expressed not wanting to be around the "gossip" and "hen circle." Another said that unlike most stay-at-

home mothers, he would never approach another stay-at-home father simply because they were both male caregivers. Fathers who were in school or said they hoped to enter a different career expressed sentiments that also paralleled Williams' findings. They tended to talk about staying home as the short-term solution or stepping-stone to accomplishing career goals and reentering the labor force. Finally, while fathers did embrace the "stay-at-home father" label, most also disassociated themselves from "housekeepers" and resisted the completion of some chores that might be considered too "feminine" or to be "dirty work."

In another segment of this scholarship, Kanter (1977) found that any member of a group in numerical rarity adopts a "token" status that increases their likelihood of stigmatization, scrutiny, or discrimination in the workplace. Williams' (1999) work on the "glass escalator" disagreed, claiming that unlike women in male-dominated occupations, men who enter female jobs are not penalized, but praised and privileged with higher pay, prestige, and promotion rates (see also, Budig 2002, Cognard-Black 2003, Hultin 2003). Thus, instead of being a detriment, gender becomes an asset for men working in female occupations, although few men enter these occupations because of the general stigma and low status attached to them (Simpson 2005, Lupton 2006). Applying these findings to those found here, many stay-at-home fathers commented on the attention and exaggerated praise they received from strangers for simply being with their children during the day (or at all). While few admitted liking such attention, they did recognize how often they were congratulated for being the "token" stay-at-home father, even though stay-at-home mothers are rarely complemented for behaving like a mom.

Additionally, while I didn't speak directly with the wives of stay-at-home fathers, I wondered whether Williams' findings on the praise and privilege of being a male rarity in a

female occupation (combined with tendencies toward emphasizing masculinity) also apply in the home. If true, this might explain why a segment of stay-at-home fathers were able to opt out of less appealing housework chores. Underlying echoes of male privilege also seemed relevant when it became apparent that fathers who weren't completing certain housework chores and knew their wives weren't satisfied did little to alter their behavior or increase their participation in response. Instead, housework that wasn't completed simply didn't get done, was outsourced, or was accomplished by wives, indicating the persistence of power and privilege even when traditional breadwinning and caregiving roles are swapped.

My findings also parallel and inform results from the literature on "gender display" and housework in families. Rooted in West and Zimmerman's concept of "doing gender" (1987), this body of work emphasizes how individuals enact, construct and reinforce gender by specializing in specific tasks and spending more or less time on them. For example, through ironing a man's shirt, a woman displays her femininity and by mowing the lawn, a man performs his masculinity. Related to this notion, a "compensatory gender display" of housework occurs when men in subordinate positions at work overemphasize their masculinity at home by completing fewer "feminine" housework chores (Arrighi and Maume 2000, Bittman et al. 2003). Because stay-at-home fathers are subordinate to their wives due to her breadwinner status -- as well as the stigma, low status and wage penalty (England and Folbre 1999) attached to full-time "care work" -- the compensatory gender display also applies here. Those stay-at-home fathers who resisted some "feminine chores" and asserted their masculine identity, particularly if they weren't home by choice, were likely rejecting such work to overcompensate for their relative subordination to their wife (because most did

not have an employer). This might also explain why so many fathers sought to work and earn money while home, perhaps in attempts to counteract their feelings of subordination.

Finally, these results can also be interpreted from the perspective of Gary Becker's economic model of marriage and the division of household labor. Becker (1993) argues that the gains of marriage are derived from a "mutual dependence" of spouses who each specialize in a necessary family function -- household production (for women) and market work (for men). According to his model, marriage involves a trade and exchange of skills based on men's comparative advantage in earning higher wages and women's comparative advantage in being more "efficient," "biologically committed" caregivers. Thus, to Becker, marriage is most beneficial in society when male and female partners specialize in these two areas. Perhaps more important here, Becker also predicts that if the wage gap between men and women converged, fertility would drop and the gains women derive from marriage would decline, thereby prompting a decline in marriage in society.

While Becker also argued that women who were "biologically inclined" to favor market work and men who were inclined toward household work were "biological deviants" (1993: p. 40), his economic model of marriage failed to consider the possibility that a comparative wage advantage for women could compel a reversal of specialization roles by gender, as shown here. However, in contrast to Becker's hypothesis, I did not find evidence that having a comparative wage advantage prompted the wives of husbands in this study to find marriage or childbearing less attractive. On the other hand, as predicted by Becker's model, because one spouse (in this case, the woman) had a comparative wage advantage, stay-at-home fathers did reference it "making sense" or being "most efficient" for them to specialize in the home and their wives to specialize in market work. However, these results

also suggest that unlike the predictions of Becker's traditional model, wives who specialize in market work do not appear to reap the full "gains of marriage" that husbands who specialize in market work (and have wives who specialize in household production) might. In other words, because I find that men who specialize in childrearing have not fully embraced specialization in housework as well, married women with a comparative advantage in wages likely benefit less from the specialized division of labor than married men who have a comparative advantage in wages and a wife who stays home.

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper uses a mixed-methods approach to study a relatively unexamined aspect of stay-at-home fatherhood: participation in housework. This topic is one that is rarely studied using large-scale survey data due to small sample sizes of male primary caregivers and a lack of nuanced questions or time diary data delving into this segment of fathers' household behaviors. In addition, because in-depth qualitative work on stay-at-home fathers (Doucet 2006) explored this topic with brevity, my research contributes and informs the emerging literature on active and full-time fatherhood. I use in-depth interview and housework activity data with 40 fathers in combination with weeklong household time diaries to examine how much and what type of housework stay-at-home fathers do, as well as what factors might predict and explain their participation (or lack thereof). My findings provide several important insights into how we can better understand the household behaviors and beliefs of men who serve as primary caregivers in US families today.

First, findings suggest that stay-at-home fathers, while not transforming the gendered division of household labor, are completing significantly more housework than full-time employed fathers and embracing a portion of the chores traditionally associated with

“femininity” and “motherhood” (preparing and cleaning up meals, emptying the dishwasher, vacuuming, grocery shopping, transporting family members, and running errands). Stay-at-home fathers tended to interpret these chores as being part of their stay-at-home parent “job description” and were quite willing to complete them to remove the burden from their wives since they had the time and ability to do so while home.

Despite these positive findings, the second major implication of this study is that fathers, as a whole, still tend to specialize in “masculine” household chores and two-thirds of stay-at-home fathers are partially or fully hesitant to take on some of the mundane, routine and “dirty” feminine chores like doing laundry, dusting, making beds, and cleaning bathrooms. Additionally, the parallels between the strategies stay-at-home fathers used to avoid certain chores and the strategies Francine Deutsch (1999) delineated in her interviews with working fathers, suggest that stay-at-home fatherhood is not radically transforming male caregivers’ attitudes toward and acceptance of all household responsibilities. A number of full-time fathers used strategies like “passive resistance,” “denial,” and “incompetence” to opt out of tasks they didn’t enjoy or want to complete. In future research, interviewing the wives of stay-at-home fathers would improve my confidence in these findings by eliminating the possibility that wives are engaging in “gatekeeping” and preventing husbands from taking over some of these chores to reassert their motherly status and identity.

The third main significance of the findings is how pervasive biological essentialist arguments about gendered abilities are, even among groups of men taking on atypical gender roles in families. Despite many stay-at-home fathers’ insistence that men could care for children as well as women and the pride they expressed in mastering certain “motherly” chores like cooking meals, our conversations revealed a preference for performing a number

of “masculine chores” and a tendency to evoke biological reasoning to explain why their wives don’t complete these tasks. When discussing jobs like paying bills, mowing the lawn, taking out the trash, and doing auto or household repair and maintenance, fathers who worked *and* father who stayed home full-time tended to suggest that their wives’ lack of cognitive, mechanical, or physical inclinations and abilities explain their specialization in these chores. Stay-at-home fathers further extended this reasoning to justify their frequency of vacuuming. This points to stay-at-home fathers’ underlying desire or need to assert their “masculine” identity and skills, while also aligning themselves with more traditional notions of tasks fathers “should do” or are “better able” to specialize in. In doing so, perhaps unintentionally, they undermined their wives’ cognitive and physical abilities.

This leads to a fourth implication: some men who work in the female-dominated occupation “stay-at-home parenting” exhibit behaviors and “do gender” in a way that mirrors and parallels men who work in female-dominated occupations in the labor market. In rejecting less desirable “feminine” chores, asserting their biological advantage or inclination toward completing “masculine” chores and describing staying home as a stepping-stone to another career path, a segment of stay-at-home fathers appear to assert and reinforce their gender identity in response to their occupational context challenging it. In addition, stay-at-home fathers appear to benefit from male privilege in ways that mirror the praise and prestige offered to men who enter fields like nursing and teaching. Stay-at-home fathers reported receiving over-exaggerated praise from others and seem able to opt out or ignore less desirable housework chores (or view them as “optional”) because their power and privilege in the home, despite the full-time caregiver status. Similarly, in rejecting or ignoring sets of chores and seeking outside work, a segment of this population of fathers appears to be

overcompensating for their subordinate earning power, paralleling findings on men who are subordinated at work.

Finally, the results suggest that a “transformative division of household labor” may only be possible in a select number of stay-at-home father families that have the community context and socioeconomic status needed to fully embrace and “choose” male caregiving and homemaking long-term. In contrast, fathers who were staying home as a short-term, “logical” solution to enabling a career shift, dealing with job dissatisfaction or loss, or continuing their education, were less likely to remove the burden of the “second shift” from their employed wives, although they do complete more cleaning than full-time working fathers. In this sense, women who specialize in market work and have husbands who specialize in home production to do receive the maximum “gains of marriage” Becker predicts in his marriage model for a traditional division of household labor by gender. In addition, fathers’ social, economic and community context proved important in creating and sustaining the environment that is most conducive to a transformative division of household labor. In sum, having the adequate amount of social, economic and community support might be necessary to produce households where husbands took on full domestic responsibility was mostly limited to high earning households where men talked about staying home as a “choice” and felt accepted in their community.

My interview, housework activity, and time diary data provide an in-depth insight into the household behaviors and beliefs of full-time fathers but are limited because the sample is small and not nationally representative. In addition, the size of my sample hinders my ability to extend the results of my study to predict and describe tendencies of stay-at-home fathers definitively. Nevertheless, the findings and implications they have contribute to



the literature on full-time fathers by delineating (1) what factors are associated with lower and higher family work participation and (2) what explanations used to justify the embracement and/or avoidance of specific household chores. In doing so, I fill a gap in the family, gender and fatherhood literatures, while also adding credence to the value of mixed-methods research. By studying the beliefs and behaviors of this unexplored and potentially growing form of fatherhood, we can more accurately capture and assess the amount of constancy or change in household gender inequality as American families adapt and evolve in response to social, cultural and economic shifts.

Table 4.1. Summary Statistics for Qualitative Sample

	<b>Stay-at-Home Fathers</b>	<b>Working Fathers</b>
Age	Mean: 37	Mean: 35.3
Race/Ethnicity	White: 25 Black: 3 Hispanic: 2 Asian: 0	White: 7 Black: 1 Hispanic: 0 Asian: 2
Age of children (current marriage)	Mean: 4.27	Mean: 4.74
Number of children	Mean: 1.88	Mean: 2
Respondents' Parents' marital status	Married: 22 Divorced: 8	Married: 7 Divorced: 3
Educational attainment	High School: 2 Some College: 4 College: 12 Graduate: 12	High School: 0 Some College: 1 College: 2 Graduate: 7
Household income (before taxes)*	Mean: \$96,000 Min: \$20,000 Max: \$150,000	Mean: \$105,000 Min: \$42,000 Max: \$150,000
<b><i>N</i>=40 (30 stay-at-home fathers and 10 working fathers)</b> <b>*I re-coded incomes &gt; \$150,000 to \$150,000 to calculate the mean</b>		

Table 4.2. Detailed Description of Sample Characteristics

	Status	Location	Age	Race/Ethnic Background	Marital Status	Highest Degree	Number of Children	Youngest Child's Age	Years Home
1	SAHD	Rural	31	White	Married	MS	3	1	4
2	SAHD	Urban	35	White	Married	MA	2	<1	3
3	SAHD	Rural	40	White	Married	MA	2	6	6
4	SAHD	Urban	35	White	Married	JD	2	2	2
5	SAHD	Urban	44	White	Married	BA	2	2	3
6	SAHD	Urban	28	Hispanic	Married	GED	2	2	<1
7	SAHD	Rural	39	White	Married	PhD	1	5	1
8	SAHD	Rural	27	White	Married	PhD	1	2	2
9	SAHD	Rural	30	White	Married	Some Col	2	2	1
10	SAHD	Rural	49	White	Married	MA	2	5	5
11	SAHD	Rural	41	White	Married	Some Col	2	3	5
12	SAHD	Urban	34	White	Married	BA	1	<1	<1
13	SAHD	Urban	34	White	Married	BA	1	2	2
14	SAHD	Urban	44	Hispanic	Married	Some Col	4	<1	<1
15	SAHD	Rural	41	White	Married	BA	2	5	7
16	SAHD	Rural	33	White	Married	BA	4	4	3
17	SAHD	Rural	37	White	Married	MA	2	3	4
18	SAHD	Urban	33	Black	Married	Some Col	2	3	3
19	SAHD	Rural	42	White	Married	BA	2	2	5
20	SAHD	Rural	35	White	Married	BS	2	4	3
21	SAHD	Rural	30	White	Married	MBA	2	<1	2
22	SAHD	Rural	51	White	Married	MA Cert.	2	7	6
23	SAHD	Urban	40	White	Married	BA	2	4	7
24	SAHD	Rural	47	White	Married	BA	2	4	1
25	SAHD	Rural	36	White	Married	BA	2	8	6
26	SAHD	Rural	33	White	Married	MA	1	<1	<1
27	SAHD	Rural	41	White	Married	BA	3	7	7
28	SAHD	Rural	27	White	Married	PhD	1	2	2
29	SAHD	Rural	30	Black	Married	GED	1	2	2
30	SAHD	Urban	37	Black	Married	BA	3	5	5
31	WD	Urban	29	White	Married	MA	1	<1	-
32	WD	Rural	38	Black	Married	Some Col	6	3	-
33	WD	Rural	37	Asian	Married	PhD	2	<1	-
34	WD	Urban	28	White	Married	MA	1	3	-
35	WD	Rural	37	White	Married	JD	1	4	-
36	WD	Rural	38	White	Married	BA	1	1	-
37	WD	Urban	33	Asian	Married	BA	1	2	-
38	WD	Urban	38	White	Married	MBA	2	5	-
39	WD	Urban	32	White	Married	MS	2	<1	-
40	WD	Rural	43	White	Married	MA	3	<1	-

Table 4.3. Summary of Housework Findings for All Families (N=40)

<b>ALL FATHERS COMPLETE "MORE OFTEN"</b>	<b>ALL WIVES COMPLETE "MORE OFTEN"</b>	<b>STAY-AT-HOME FATHERS &amp; WIVES of WORKING FATHERS COMPLETE "MORE OFTEN"</b>	<b>STAY-AT-HOME FATHERS COMPLETE "EQUALLY" or "LESS OFTEN" &amp; WIVES OF WORKING FATHERS COMPLETE "MORE OFTEN"</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking out the trash</li> <li>- Mowing the lawn/yard work</li> <li>- Household repair &amp; maintenance</li> <li>- Automobile repair &amp; maintenance</li> <li>- Paying bills</li> <li>- Picking up take-out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decorating</li> <li>- Ironing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vacuuming &amp; sweeping</li> <li>- Preparing &amp; cleaning up meals</li> <li>- Doing dishes &amp; emptying the dishwasher</li> <li>- Grocery shopping</li> <li>- Driving family members places</li> <li>- Running errands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking to &amp; organizing babysitters</li> <li>- Making beds</li> <li>- Doing laundry</li> <li>- Dusting</li> <li>- Picking up toys</li> <li>- Mopping</li> <li>- Cleaning bathrooms</li> </ul>

Table 4.4. Division of Housework in Stay-at-Home Father Families (N=30)

	Dad Does More Often	Mom Does More Often	Divide Equally
<i>Talking to/organizing babysitters</i>	X	X	
<i>Feeding/walking pets</i>	X		X
<i>Decorating the house</i>		X	X
<i>Vacuum/Sweeping floors</i>	X		
<i>Making beds</i>	X	X	
<i>Doing laundry</i>	X	X	
<i>Taking out the trash</i>	X		
<i>Preparing/cleaning up meals</i>	X		
<i>Ironing</i>		X	
<i>Mowing lawn/doing yard work</i>	X		
<i>Household repair and maintenance</i>	X		
<i>Auto repair and maintenance</i>	X		
<i>Washing dishes/emptying dishwasher</i>	X		
<i>Dusting</i>	X	X	X
<i>Picking up toys</i>	X		X
<i>Paying bills</i>	X		
<i>Grocery Shopping</i>	X		
<i>Driving family members places</i>	X		
<i>Mopping floors</i>	X	X	
<i>Cleaning bathrooms</i>	X		X
<i>Running errands</i>	X		
<i>Picking up take-out meals</i>	X		

**Note:** If an “X” is in more than one column, this indicates that the equal numbers of stay-at-home fathers in my sample reported the response categories “more,” “less” or “equally” as often for that chore when asked during the activity

Table 4.5. Division of Housework in Working Father Families (N=10)

	<b>Dad Does More Often</b>	<b>Mom Does More Often</b>	<b>Divide Equally</b>
<i>Talking to/organizing babysitters</i>		X	
<i>Feeding/walking pets</i>	X		
<i>Decorating the house</i>		X	
<i>Vacuum/Sweeping floors</i>		X	
<i>Making beds</i>		X	
<i>Doing laundry</i>		X	
<i>Taking out the trash</i>	X		
<i>Preparing/cleaning up meals</i>		X	
<i>Ironing</i>		X	
<i>Mowing lawn/doing yard work</i>	X		
<i>Household repair and maintenance</i>	X		
<i>Auto repair and maintenance</i>	X		
<i>Washing dishes/emptying dishwasher</i>			X
<i>Dusting</i>		X	
<i>Picking up toys</i>			X
<i>Paying bills</i>	X		
<i>Grocery Shopping</i>		X	
<i>Driving family members places</i>		X	
<i>Mopping floors</i>		X	
<i>Cleaning bathrooms</i>		X	
<i>Running errands</i>		X	
<i>Picking up take-out meals</i>	X		

Table 4.6. Division of Housework by Chore Type among Stay-at-Home Father Families (N=30)

	<b>SAHDs Complete More Often</b>	<b>Wives Complete More Often</b>	<b>SAHDs Conflicted - Some Complete &amp; Some Do Not</b>	<b>SAHDs &amp; Wives Divide Equally</b>
<b>“Masculine” Chores</b>	<i>Paying bills</i> <i>Taking out trash</i> <i>Mowing &amp; yard work</i> <i>Household repair &amp; maintenance</i> <i>Automobile repair &amp; maintenance</i>			
<b>“Feminine” Chores</b>	<i>Grocery shopping</i> <i>Preparing &amp; cleaning up meals</i> <i>Washing dishes &amp; emptying dishwasher</i>	<i>Decorating</i> <i>Ironing</i>	<i>Making beds</i> <i>Doing laundry</i> <i>Dusting</i> <i>Mopping floors</i> <i>Cleaning bathrooms</i> <i>Talking to &amp; organizing babysitters</i>	
<b>“Gender-Neutral” Chores</b>	<i>Picking up toys</i> <i>Driving family places</i> <i>Running errands</i> <i>Picking up take-out</i>			<i>Feeding &amp; walking pets</i>
<b>Note: SAHDs = Stay-at-Home Dads</b>				

Table 4.7. Division of Housework by Chore Type among Working Father Families (N=10)

	<b>Dads Complete More Often</b>	<b>Wives Complete More Often</b>	<b>Families Divide Equally</b>
<b>“Masculine” Chores</b>	<i>Paying bills</i> <i>Taking out trash</i> <i>Mowing &amp; yard work</i> <i>Household repair &amp; maintenance</i> <i>Automobile repair &amp; maintenance</i>		
<b>“Feminine” Chores</b>		<i>Talking to &amp; organizing babysitters</i> <i>Decorating</i> <i>Ironing</i> <i>Vacuuming &amp; sweeping floors</i> <i>Making beds</i> <i>Doing laundry</i> <i>Preparing &amp; cleaning up meals</i> <i>Dusting</i> <i>Grocery shopping</i> <i>Mopping floors</i> <i>Cleaning bathrooms</i>	<i>Washing dishes &amp; emptying dishwasher</i>
<b>“Gender Neutral” Chores</b>	<i>Feeding &amp; walking pets</i> <i>Picking up take-out</i>	<i>Driving family members</i> <i>Running errands</i>	<i>Picking up toys</i>



Table 4.8. Characteristics Linking Stay-at-Home Fathers by Participation in “Feminine” Chores

	<b>SAHDs WHO COMPLETE “FEMININE” CHORES</b>	<b>SAHDs WHO REJECT “FEMININE” CHORES</b>
<b>Age</b>	Close to mean	Significantly older or younger gthan mean
<b>Prior Career Dissatisfaction</b>	None/Moderate	Moderate/Extreme
<b>Length of Time at Home</b>	>2 years	<2 years
<b>Reason for Staying Home</b>	Choice	Varies
<b>Community</b>	Progressive/More Accepting	Traditional/Less Accepting
<b>Plans to Stay-Home Long-term</b>	Possible/Likely	Not possible/Not Likely
Note: SAHDs = Stay-at-Home Dads		

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APPENDIX A:  
RECRUITMENT LETTER



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
AT  
CHAPEL HILL

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Dear Sir,

I am writing to let you know about a current research study I'm conducting on fathers that may be of interest to you. I obtained your name and contact information from [enter specific information here]. It is possible that you may be eligible to participate in this study and this letter provides you with some background information on the study and my contact information if you are interested in participating. You are eligible for this study if you are formerly or currently the primary caregiver of children under the age of 18 and your wife or partner was/is the primary earner in your family.

Please be aware that your participation in this or any research study is completely voluntary. There will be no consequences to you whatsoever if you choose not to participate, and you will not be affected in any way by that choice. If you do choose to participate, the study will involve taking part in a two-hour face-to-face interview with the Principal Investigator (myself) at the time and location of your choosing and filling out a time diary for one week where you will write down the time you spend in activities like childcare and housework each day. I am most interested in learning more about your decision to become a full-time father, the types of activities you do within the home, and how this experience has affected you and your family.

In order to determine your eligibility and your interest in participating, please contact me (Beth A. Latshaw) at the following phone number (919-360-5432) or email address ([blatshaw@email.unc.edu](mailto:blatshaw@email.unc.edu)). You may choose not to respond to this letter or speak with me, and I will not contact you again if I don't hear from you by phone or email. If you have any questions about the study that you would like answered before you agree to participate, please feel free to contact me at your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Beth A. Latshaw, M.A.  
PhD Candidate  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Department of Sociology

## APPENDIX B:

### INTERVIEW GUIDE: FULL-TIME FATHERS

#### I. Greetings

- Hi, (name of interviewee). How are you today? Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this research study.
- Re-explain topic of interview and assure interviewee of your interest in studying the full-time father experience (his feelings towards fatherhoods and his activities/behaviors in the home) and the confidentiality of his answers and identity.
- Before we begin, I would like to collect the time diary that you filled out. While I look it over, I'd like to give you a consent form to sign. I also have a very brief survey I'd like you to fill out to get some of your basic background information. This will be helpful in comparing you to other stay-at-home dads and understanding what factors make men more likely to stay home.

#### II. Personal Background & Career History

- First, let's talk a little about your childhood. Where did you grow up?
- Did you live with your mother, father or both growing up? Are you parents still married? If not, did they divorce? If so, when? Did they remarry?
- Did you have any siblings? If so, are they older or younger?
- What occupations did your parent(s) hold during your childhood/adolescence? Did they work full or part-time?
- How much time did you spend with your father and mother growing up? Would you say you spent more time with one of them? If so, which one and why?
- What sorts of extracurricular activities were you involved in when you were young? Did your parents ever help you with these activities? If so, which parent?
- Did your parents help you with your homework and educational pursuits growing up? Who would you say spent more time helping you?
- Can you tell me about your educational history? Where did you go to school? What about your spouse, where did she go to school? Is this your first marriage? If not, did you divorce? When? Are you remarried?
- If someone asked you what your current main occupation is, what would you say? (Answer will likely be stay-at-home father unless works part-time or on-the-side)

- How long have you been doing (current occupation)? Did you work somewhere else prior to this job? If so, where and for how long?
- Were you satisfied in your former occupation? If so, what did you like about it? If not, what did you dislike about it? What other places did you work before that? For how long? (Try to establish a career history)
- [If said an occupation besides stay-at-home father above] You considered yourself to be a (occupation besides stay-at-home dad) when I asked you for your current occupation above. Do you still work or are you currently employed in that occupation right now, even as you father full-time? About how many hours do you work each week? Each month? Each year?
- [If said stay-at-home father was occupation] You said your main occupation was a stay-at-home father, so do you consider yourself to be currently unemployed or do you consider yourself to still have another occupation? If so, what is it?
- Do you plan to reenter the labor force or increase your hours of work in the future? If so, when? What do you plan on doing? How many hours a week would you like to work?
- Are you currently looking for employment? If so, what are you currently doing to seek employment?
- What are you current and future occupational goals? What do you hope to accomplish?
- Would you be content if you remained out of the labor force permanently? Why or why not?
- Do you think your spouse, friends and family would you say that being a stay-at-home father is a full-time occupation? Why or why not?
- How would you define a person who fits the category “stay-at-home dad”? (Ex: Must he be married, must he be completely out of the labor force, must he have kids under a certain age, etc?) How about a person who fits the category “stay-at-home mom”? How are they the same or different?
- The US Census Bureau defines a “stay-at-home dad” as a “married father with children under 15 years old who have remained out of the labor force for more than one year primarily so they can care for the family while their wives work outside the home.” Do you fit this definition? Why or why not? Do you agree with this definition? Would you modify it? If so, how? Do you know any stay-at-home fathers who do not fit this category? If so, how do they differ from it?

### III. Transition to Full-time Fatherhood

- How long have you been staying home full-time?
- How did you decide to stay-home? Was it a gradual or sudden decision?
- Did your spouse/partner help you make this decision? If so, what role did she play in the decision making process?
- Was your spouse/partner supportive or questioning of this decision?
- What was the most crucial factor that led you to stay home (economic/job issues, day care fears, spouse got a promotion, etc.)?
- Did you ask advice from any other friends or family members before or when making the decision? If so, were they generally supportive? If not, did you wish you had other people to ask advice from? Is there a reason you didn't seek advice from certain people?
- How did people you know react when you told them you were going to be a stay-at-home father? Is there anyone you've avoiding telling? If so, why?

### IV. Typical Day as a Stay-at-home Dad

- Could you tell me what a typical day is like as a stay-at-home father? What sorts of things do you do? What are your major activities and responsibilities?
- Do you spend most of your time in the house or outside of the house? If you leave the house, where do you go?
- What other adults do you interact with during a typical day as a stay-at-home parent? Are they mostly men, women or both? How do you interact with them?
- How do people respond when they see you with your children in public? What is their reaction?
- Do you do any housework (such as cooking or cleaning) while you are home with your child during the day? If yes, what sorts of things do you do? If no, who does the housework in your household?
- **HOUSEWORK ACTIVITY:** Now I'm going to give you a list of cards and I want you to sort them into piles: tasks you do more often and tasks you wife does more often. If you do the tasks equally, you can tell me that too.
- Is there a reason you tend to do some tasks more than others? Is there a reason your spouse tends to do some tasks more than others?

- Are you generally satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you wish you did more or less of certain tasks?
- Do you think your spouse is satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you think she wishes you did more or less of certain tasks?

#### V. Perceptions of Fatherhood, Masculinity, and Social Support

- Parenthood can be very rewarding and challenging ... what has been the most rewarding aspect of stay-at-home fatherhood? What has been the most challenging?
- How do other mothers (perhaps of your children's friends) treat you? Are they generally friendly or is there any source of tension/awkwardness?
- Have your friends continued to be supportive of your decision to be a stay-at-home dad? Your parents? Your former coworkers? People from religious or community groups? If not, in what ways have they been unsupportive?
- Has your spouse continued to be supportive of your decision to be a stay-at-home dad? If not, in what ways has your spouse been unsupportive?
- Who is the most supportive person in your life? The least supportive? In what ways do you actually feel supported or receive support? In what ways do you need or wish you received more support?
- Do you know any other stay-at-home fathers? If so, do you talk to them frequently? Do you ever help each other with babysitting, etc? If not, do you wish you knew more full-time fathers?
- Do you think men are able to care for children as well as women? Why or why not? Did you believe this before you became a stay-at-home dad, or has this belief grown since you took on this job?
- Do you think your spouse wishes she spent more time with the children, or is she content with her role as breadwinner for the family?
- Has it been difficult to be home full-time and not having formal employment/labor force participation? If so, why?
- How would you define a good father? A good mother? How do you think making money for a family is related to parenthood?
- Do you feel masculine when you are caring for your children? ... When you tell people you are a stay-at-home father? ... When you talk to your wife about financial decisions/bills?

- Do you think men who stay home “mother their children” or do you think fathers care for children differently than mothers?
- How do you think society (generally) perceives stay-at-home fathers? Is their perception accurate? Why or why not?
- Do you think the media accurately portrays stay-at-home fathers? What about fathers generally? What would you change about the media portrayal of them?

Thank participant for their time.

## APPENDIX C:

### INTERVIEW GUIDE: WORKING FATHERS

#### I. Greetings

- Hi, (name of interviewee). How are you today? Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this research study.
- Re-explain topic of interview and assure interviewee of your interest in studying the father experience (his feelings towards fatherhood and his activities/behaviors in the home) and the confidentiality of his answers and identity.
- Before we begin, I would like to collect the time diary that you filled out. While I look it over, I'd like to give you a consent form to sign. I also have a very brief survey I'd like you to fill out to get some of your basic background information. This will be helpful in comparing you to other employed and stay-at-home dads and understanding what factors make men more likely to stay home vs. work.

#### II. Personal Background & Career History

- First, let's talk a little about your childhood. Where did you grow up?
- Did you live with your mother, father or both growing up? Are your parents still married? If not, did they divorce? If so, when? Did they remarry?
- Did you have any siblings? If so, are they older or younger?
- What occupations did your parent(s) hold during your childhood/adolescence? Did they work full or part-time?
- How much time did you spend with your father and mother growing up? Would you say you spent more time with one of them? If so, which one and why?
- What sorts of extracurricular activities were you involved in when you were young? Did your parents ever help you with these activities? If so, which parent?
- Did your parents help you with your homework and educational pursuits growing up? Who would you say spent more time helping you?
- Can you tell me about your educational history? Where did you go to school? What about your spouse, where did she go to school? Is this your first marriage? If not, did you divorce? When? Are you remarried?
- If someone asked you what your current main occupation is, what would you say?



- How long have you been doing (current occupation)? Did you work somewhere else prior to this job? If so, where and for how long?
- Were you satisfied in your former occupation? If so, what did you like about it? If not, what did you dislike about it? How does your current job compare to places you've worked before? (Try to establish a career history)
- So, about how many hours do you work each day? Each week? Do you ever have to work late at night? On the weekends? How much vacation do you get?
- What are your current and future occupational goals? What do you hope to accomplish?
- Do you anticipate working shorter or longer hours in the future? Do you think your occupational goals will cause you to work more (longer hours, work on weekends) than you might like to? If so, does this concern you? (Why/why not?)
- Do you ever feel like work keeps you from spending as much time with your child as you would like to?
- Was there ever a point in your life when you thought about or seriously considered being a stay-at-home dad? If so, when/why? If not, why not?
- If you did, hypothetically, chose to be or had to stay home with your children, do you think it would be difficult to be unemployed? If so, what would be difficult about it? How long do you think you could/would stay home?
- Do you think your spouse, friends and family would ever support you being a stay-at-home father if you chose to be or had to be?
- If someone asked you what a "stay-at-home dad" was, how would you define a person who fits that category? (Ex: Must he be married, must he be completely out of the labor force, must he have kids under a certain age, etc?) How about a person who fits the category "stay-at-home mom"? How are they the same or different?
- The US Census Bureau defines a "stay-at-home dad" as a "married father with children under 15 years old who have remained out of the labor force for more than one year primarily so they can care for the family while their wives work outside the home." Do you agree with this definition? Would you modify it? If so, how? Do you know any stay-at-home fathers who do not fit this category? If so, how do they differ from it?
- In what ways do you think employed dads are different from stay-at-home dads? In what ways are they the same? Do you think there are any stereotypes about stay-at-home dads? What are they? Do you think they are true? Partially true? Completely false?

### III. Transition to Fatherhood

- How long have you been working full-time?
- When you found out your wife was pregnant, what sorts of discussions did you have about who would work and who would care for your child?
- Did your spouse/partner help you make the decision that you would keep working full-time? If so, what role did she play in the decision making process?
- Was your spouse/partner supportive or questioning of this decision?
- What was the most crucial factor that led you to work full-time (economic/job issues, day care fears, spouse got a promotion, etc.)?
- Did you ask advice from any other friends or family members before or when making the decision? If so, were they generally supportive? What was the most important advice they gave? If not, did you wish you had other people to ask advice from? Is there a reason you didn't seek advice from certain people in your life?
- How do you think people would react if you told them you were going to be a stay-at-home father instead of working full-time? Is there anyone you would have avoided telling? If so, why?

### IV. Typical Day as a Working Dad

- Could you tell me what a typical day is like as a working father? What sorts of things do you do before work, during work, and after work? What are your major activities and responsibilities?
- Do you ever work from home or do you primarily work outside of the house?
- What other adults do you interact with during a typical day? Are they mostly men, women or both? How do you interact with them?
- How do you ever get to see or talk to your children during the workday? If not, when do you normally see them during the day? In the morning? After work? For how long do you normally see them?
- Do you do any housework (such as cooking or cleaning) before or after work? If yes, what sorts of things do you do? If not, who does the housework in your household?
- **HOUSEWORK ACTIVITY:** Now I'm going to give you a list of cards and I want you to sort them into piles: tasks you do more often and tasks you wife does more often. If you do the tasks equally, you can tell me that too.

- Is there a reason you tend to do some tasks more than others? Is there a reason your spouse tends to do some tasks more than others?
- Are you generally satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you wish you did more or less of certain tasks?
- Do you think your spouse is satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you think she wishes you did more or less of certain tasks?
- Do you do any childcare (such as bathing your child, putting him/her to bed, changing diapers, reading) before or after work? If yes, what sorts of things do you do? If not, who does the childcare in your household?
- Is there a reason you tend to do some childcare tasks more than others? Is there a reason your spouse tends to do some childcare tasks more than others?
- Are you generally satisfied with the way childcare is divided up in your household, or do you wish you did more or less of certain tasks?
- Do you think your spouse is satisfied with the way childcare is divided up in your household, or do you think she wishes you did more or less of certain tasks?
- Do you hire housecleaners or babysitters? If so, how often and why?
- How do you divide housework and childcare on the weekends?

#### V. Perceptions of Fatherhood, Masculinity, and Social Support

- Parenthood can be very rewarding and challenging ... what has been the most rewarding aspect of fatherhood? What has been the most challenging?
- When you are out in public with your children, how do other mothers (perhaps of your children's friends) treat you? Are they generally friendly or is there any source of tension/awkwardness?
- Have your friends continued to be supportive of your decision to be a working dad since your child was born? Your parents? Your coworkers? People from religious or community groups? If not, in what ways have they been unsupportive?
- Has your spouse been supportive of your decision to work full-time after the birth of your child? If not, in what ways has your spouse been unsupportive?
- Who is the most supportive person in your life? The least supportive? In what ways do you actually feel supported or receive support? In what ways do you need or wish you received more support?

- Do you know any other working fathers? Stay-at-home fathers? If so, do you talk to them frequently? Do you ever help each other with fatherhood issues? Do you ever wish you had more fathers to ask advice from?
- Do you think men are able to care for children as well as women or do you think your wife cares for them better? Why or why not? Where or when do you think these beliefs developed?
- Do you think your spouse wishes she spent more time away from the children (if staying home) or more time with the children (if working too)? Is she content with her current family role? If not, why?
- Has it been difficult for her to be home full-time and not having formal employment/labor force participation (if staying home) or to not be home with your child (if working)? If so, why?
- How would you define a good father? What responsibilities does he have? A good mother? How do you think making money for a family is related to parenthood?
- Do you feel more masculine when you are at work, when you are caring for your children, or both? ... When you tell people you are a father? ... Are there any activities you do with your child or do at home that make you feel a little out of your comfort zone or “less masculine”?
- Do you think men who stay home full-time or fathers in general “mother their children” or do you think fathers care for children differently than mothers?
- How do you think society (generally) perceives fathers? What about stay-at-home fathers? Is their perception accurate? Why or why not?
- Do you think the media accurately portrays fathers? What about stay-at-home fathers? What would you change about the media portrayal of them?
- Do you think it’s becoming more socially acceptable for men to be active fathers? What do you think is changing or different today than in the past?
- What role do you see yourself playing in your child’s life as they grow older?

APPENDIX D:  
BACKGROUND INFORMATION SURVEY  
UNC FATHERHOOD STUDY

Interviewee #: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Please write down answers to the following. You do not need to report any answer you feel uncomfortable giving.

What U.S. State do you live in?

What is your age?

What is your racial/ethnic background?

What is your current marital status?

What is your parents' current marital status?

What is your religious affiliation?

What is the highest educational degree you've obtained?

How many children do you have?

What are the ages of your children?

What is the last month and year you were employed?

What is your yearly household income (before taxes)?

APPENDIX E:  
IRB CONSENT FORM

**University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
Adult Participants  
Social Behavioral Form**

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**IRB Study # 08-0610**  
**Consent Form Version Date:** 3/17/09

**Title of Study:** “Stay-at-Home Fathers, Masculinity, and Housework”

**Principal Investigator:** Beth A. Latshaw, M.A.  
**UNC-Chapel Hill Department:** Sociology  
**UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number:** (919) 360-5432  
**Email Address:** [blatshaw@email.unc.edu](mailto:blatshaw@email.unc.edu)  
**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Philip N. Cohen: [pnc@unc.edu](mailto:pnc@unc.edu) or (919) 843-4791

**Study Contact telephone number:** (919) 360-5432  
**Study Contact email:** [blatshaw@email.unc.edu](mailto:blatshaw@email.unc.edu)

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**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this research study is to learn about stay-at-home fathers’ and working fathers’ participation in housework to find out more information about how gender dynamics operate in non-traditional households.

You are being asked to be in the study because you, a colleague, or a friend or yours indicated that you were a stay-at-home father or full-time working father who might be interested in participating in the study.

**How many people will take part in this study?**

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 35 people in this research study.

**How long will your part in this study last?**

As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed in-person for approximately 2 hours by the Principal Investigator. You will also fill out a time diary over a one-week period before the interview. You will return this time diary to the Principal Investigator at the time of your interview and that will be the extent of time you will have to spend on this study.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**

If you take part in this study, you will be interviewed in-person by the Principal Investigator using an interview guide that will be the same for all 25 stay-at-home fathers in the study. There is a separate interview guide that will be the same for all 10 full-time working fathers in the study. With your permission, this interview will be recorded using a tape recorder. Before the interview takes place, the Principal Investigator will give you a time diary that lists intervals (in 15 minutes) for a one-week period (starting at 4 am and going until 4 am the next week) along with a list of many different kinds of household, parenting, and working tasks. For one week, you will be asked to write down how much time you spend each hour conducting these various activities. After the week is completed, you will return your completed time diary to the Principal Investigator at the time of your interview. You will not be contacted again after your interview is complete and your time diary is returned.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may also expect to benefit by participating in this study by knowing you are contributing to society's knowledge about stay-at-home fathers and the work they are doing in households across the country.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**

There are no known risks you should experience by participating in this study. There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected at all times throughout this study. Your mailing address, phone number, email address and name will be only be given to the

Principal Investigator and will be kept on one list that will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office. The recording of your interview and your time diary will be identified using a confidential code number that will be assigned to you by the Principal Investigator. These tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's locked office. The interview recordings will be transcribed into Microsoft Word and the transcripts will be stored on a locked personal computer owned by the Principal Investigator. The tapes will be destroyed one year after the interview takes place. The links between the code numbers and your contact information will be secured on a personal computer owned by the Principal Investigator that is password protected. Any interview data will be analyzed on a secure campus network. Your name and contact information will not appear on any interview transcript, recording, or time diary. When reporting the results of this study, the Principal Investigator will use aliases to refer to the subjects, so your name and identity will remain anonymous. Only the Principal Investigator will have access to the project's data.

Participants *will not* be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

Check the line that best matches your choice:

☐ OK to record me during the study

☐ Not OK to record me during the study

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**

You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**

Your costs will potentially include transportation to a nearby public restaurant or coffee shop where the interview will take place if you are uncomfortable having it take place in your home. If you are unable to find childcare during the interview, the costs of such care will be covered by the Principal Investigator.

**What if you have questions about this study?**

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**



All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB\_subjects@unc.edu.

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**Title of Study:** “Stay-at-Home Fathers, Masculinity, and Housework”

**Principal Investigator:** Beth A. Latshaw

**Participant’s Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

APPENDIX F:

TIME DIARY MAILINGS

**UNC RESEARCH STUDY ON FATHERS**

[DATE]

Dear Sir,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the UNC research study on fatherhood. I've included the study's time diary materials in this envelope. The time diary instructions are listed below. Take some time to read over them carefully before you begin. I will be calling you soon to arrange a time for the study interview to take place.

Time Diary Instructions:

Every day for the next seven days (Ex: starting on Monday morning and ending Sunday night), keep track of all housework, household, childcare, leisure, and other work activities you complete using the time diary. I've included a list of some activities that are considered part of each of these categories and you should read it over before you begin.

When you are ready to begin your diary, you should use the attached chart to write down every task/activity you complete during each 15 minute interval of the week under the "What were you doing?" column. The diary starts on the first day of the week at 4am (or whenever you wake up). If another person is present while you complete a task (Ex: your spouse, your child), you should record their identity under the "Was someone else present?" column. If no one was present, you can leave it blank. If you spend more than 15 minutes on any given task, you can draw a line through the rows to indicate this (Ex: If you write emails or go grocery shopping from 5:00-6:30pm one day, you will draw a straight line from the top of the 5:00-5:15 row down to the bottom of the 6:15-6:30 row). I've included an example of a completed time diary page for you to look at. When you are finished, you should have seven days of completed charts.

Please try to be as accurate, honest, and thorough as you can be. Your identity will remain completely anonymous and I will be the only person who sees the time diary. I will collect your completed time diary on the day of our interview. It is important that it is completed at this time because I'll ask you questions in regards to it at the interview.

Please contact me at 919-360-5432 or [blatshaw@email.unc.edu](mailto:blatshaw@email.unc.edu) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time and participation in this important study!

Sincerely,

Beth Latshaw, M.A. (Principal Investigator)  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## **EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES TO WRITE DOWN**

Note: This is not a complete list of activities you should consider and record, but is meant to provide you with some examples of the different types of activities you will want to write down throughout the week. Also, you should write down the actual name of the activity you are doing on the time diary (and not the category it belongs to).

Sample “household activities”:

Paying bills, grocery shopping, putting away groceries, organizing closets, mowing the lawn or doing other yard work, taking care of pets (feeding, walking, cleaning up after), vehicle maintenance/repair, fixing things around the house, decorating, exterior cleaning (windows, front porch), arranging household services (arranging and/or purchasing cleaning services, food take-out, repair services, babysitters, etc.), running errands (going to the drycleaner), etc.

Sample “housework activities”:

Doing laundry (loading laundry machines, folding clothes), preparing meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks), setting the table, cleaning up after meals, dusting, vacuuming, sweeping, cleaning kitchen counters/sink, cleaning bathroom sinks/toilet/shower, cleaning living rooms or bedrooms, putting away toys, making beds, taking out trash and recycling, mopping, loading and emptying dishwasher, etc.

Sample “childcare activities”:

Playing with your child, giving child baths/showers, getting your child dressed in the morning and at night, taking children to/from school or activities, putting child to bed, reading to child, helping child with homework, attending play groups with child, playing sports with child, etc.

Sample “leisure activities”:

Reading the newspaper or books, watching television, browsing the internet, writing non-work related emails, talking to friends on the phone, playing sports/working out, going to movies, going out for dinner, sleeping, attending church or religious groups, having a “date night” with spouse, hanging out with friends, visiting family members, etc.

Sample “other work activities”:

Writing work related emails, networking, talking to potential clients, doing freelance work, working outside the home, working from home, searching for jobs, applying for jobs, updating resume, etc.

TIME DIARY -- \*\*SAMPLE DIARY DAY\*\*

TIME DIARY - DAY 1

DAY OF WEEK: Monday DATE: 2/9/09

	What were you doing?	Was someone else present?
4:00-4:15am		
4:15-4:30		
4:30-4:45		
4:45-5:00		
5:00-5:15am		
5:15-5:30		
5:30-5:45		
5:45-6:00	Woke up	
6:00-6:15am	Shower	
6:15-6:30	Get dressed	
6:30-6:45	Give kids bath	Son, daughter
6:45-7:00	Get kids dressed	Son, daughter
7:00-7:15am	Breakfast -	
7:15-7:30	Made breakfast,	Son, daughter,
7:30-7:45	Att, cleaned up	wife
7:45-8:00		
8:00-8:15am	Played with	son, daughter
8:15-8:30	kids	
8:30-8:45		
8:45-9:00		
9:00-9:15am	Drop kids off at school	son, daughter
9:15-9:30		
9:30-9:45	Did work from home	
9:45-10:00		
10:00-10:15am		
10:15-10:30	went to gym	
10:30-10:45		
10:45-11:00		
11:00-11:15am	Shower	
11:15-11:30	Checked email	
11:30-11:45		
11:45-12:00	Picked up kids from school	Son, daughter
12:00-12:15pm	Lunch -	
12:15-12:30	Made lunch	Son, daughter
12:30-12:45	Att, cleaned up	
12:45-1:00		
1:00-1:15pm		
1:15-1:30	Watched movie	son, daughter
1:30-1:45	w/ kids	
1:45-2:00		
2:00-2:15pm		
2:15-2:30		
2:30-2:45		
2:45-3:00		
3:00-3:15pm	Talked to babysitter	
3:15-3:30		
3:30-3:45	Took son to	son
3:45-4:00	doctor's appointment	
4:00-4:15pm		
4:15-4:30		
4:30-4:45	grocery shopping	son
4:45-5:00		

**TIME DIARY - DAY 1\*****DAY OF WEEK:** \_\_\_\_\_**DATE:** \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

	<b>What were you doing?</b>	<b>Was someone else present?</b>
4:00-4:15am		
4:15-4:30		
4:30-4:45		
4:45-5:00		
5:00-5:15am		
5:15-5:30		
5:30-5:45		
5:45-6:00		
6:00-6:15am		
6:15-6:30		
6:30-6:45		
6:45-7:00		
7:00-7:15am		
7:15-7:30		
7:30-7:45		
7:45-8:00		
8:00-8:15am		
8:15-8:30		
8:30-8:45		
8:45-9:00		
9:00-9:15am		
9:15-9:30		
9:30-9:45		
9:45-10:00		
10:00-10:15am		
10:15-10:30		
10:30-10:45		
10:45-11:00		
11:00-11:15am		
11:15-11:30		
11:30-11:45		
11:45-12:00		
12:00-12:15pm		
12:15-12:30		
12:30-12:45		
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3:45-4:00		
4:00-4:15pm		
4:15-4:30		
4:30-4:45		
4:45-5:00		
5:00-5:15pm		
5:15-5:30		

5:30-5:45		
5:45-6:00		
6:00-6:15pm		
6:15-6:30		
6:30-6:45		
6:45-7:00		
7:00-7:15pm		
7:15-7:30		
7:30-7:45		
7:45-8:00		
8:00-8:15pm		
8:15-8:30		
8:30-8:45		
8:45-9:00		
9:00-9:15pm		
9:15-9:30		
9:30-9:45		
9:45-10:00		
10:00-10:15pm		
10:15-10:30		
10:30-10:45		
10:45-11:00		
11:00-11:15pm		
11:15-11:30		
11:30-11:45		
11:45-12:00		
12:00-12:15am		
12:15-12:30		
12:30-12:45		
12:45-1:00		
1:00-1:15am		
1:15-1:30		
1:30-1:45		
1:45-2:00		
2:00-2:15am		
2:15-2:30		
2:30-2:45		
2:45-3:00		
3:00-3:15am		
3:15-3:30		
3:30-3:45		
3:45-4:00am		

**\*Six more copies of this twenty-four hour period were included in the mailings (for Days 2-7)**

## APPENDIX G:

### HOUSEWORK ACTIVITY

*Now I'm going to give you a list of cards and I want you to sort them into piles: tasks you do more often and tasks you wife does more often, and tasks you divide equally. Think of each task in terms of the number of minutes or hours you spend on it each week.*

*I. List the tasks (ask one by one and create three piles based on their response):*

*Talking to/organizing babysitters*

*Feeding/walking pets*

*Decorating the house for holidays*

*Vacuuming/sweeping*

*Making beds*

*Doing laundry*

*Taking out the trash*

*Preparing/cleaning up breakfast*

*Preparing/cleaning up lunch*

*Preparing/cleaning up dinner*

*Ironing*

*Mowing the lawn/doing yard work*

*Household repair/maintenance*

*Auto repair/maintenance*

*Washing dishes/emptying dishwasher*

*Dusting*

*Putting away toys*

*Paying bills*

*Grocery shopping*

*Driving family members to school, activities, etc.*

*Mopping*

*Cleaning bathrooms*

*Running errands, etc.*

*Picking up take-out meals*

*II. After putting all of these tasks into piles, start with one pile and go through each task in each pile, one by one, asking:*

*"Is there a reason you tend to do [task] more often/less often/equally than/as your wife? Do you have any reason or theory for why you divide them this way?"*

*III. Finish the activity by asking:*

*"Are you generally satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you wish you did more or less of certain tasks?"*

*"Do you think your spouse is satisfied with the way housework is divided up in your household, or do you think she wishes you did more or less of certain tasks?"*