

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Timothy M. Ottusch for the degree of Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies presented on November 12, 2013.

Title: Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: The Relationship between Partner Acknowledgement of the Division of Labor and Couple Intimacy

Abstract approved:

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Using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD), this study assessed the implications of the division of labor on relationship intimacy for married and cohabiting dual-earner couples (N= 392 couples). The study focused on what mothers and fathers say they do in child care and household labor, what they are recognized for doing, and how these are associated with each partner's evaluation of relationship intimacy. It also examined how differences in the contributions of mothers and fathers in child care and household labor are associated with relationship intimacy. Structural equation models revealed that the recognition that mothers and fathers give each other for household labor offsets the negative effect of their household labor on relationship intimacy. For mothers, the recognition they receive from fathers for child care partially offsets the negative effects of child care on relationship intimacy. Fathers' evaluations of intimacy are highest when he contributes a certain amount of the child care, and his ratings of intimacy are lower when his child care load is anything more or less. Mothers' evaluations of intimacy lower as the discrepancy between what she says she does in reference to what the fathers' says he does in child care increases. These findings reveal it is important for partners to recognize the respective work they do in child care and household. For fathers

particularly, it may be important for them to do a better job of being aware of what their partner is contributing to child care.

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Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: The Relationship between Partner Acknowledgement  
of the Division of Labor and Couple Intimacy

by  
Timothy M. Ottusch

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Timothy M. Ottusch, Author

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Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: The Relationship between Partner Acknowledgement  
of the Division of Labor and Couple Intimacy

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

Several societal shifts in work and family have placed increased attention on the division of child care and household labor and its effects on couple relationships. The reality of dual-earner couples mean in addition to work obligations, child care and household chores must still be completed. This study sought to understand the importance of partners in dual-earner couples recognizing each other's contributions in child care and household labor and its associations with couple intimacy. It also sought to understand the possible importance of the difference between partner's contributions in both of those domains on couple intimacy.

Recent decades brought increased attention to the division of child care and household labor and its effects on cohabiting and marital couples. Since the mid-1960s men and women have both increased their time spent in child care (Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie, & Robinson, 2012). Men have also increased their time spent working on household labor while women have lowered their time in that domain (Bianchi et al., 2012). In addition, by the mid-1990s, dual-earner families became the majority (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). However, despite the increased employment rates of women and rates of involvement in child care and household labor of men, women still carry a large amount of the responsibilities at home, what Hochschild coined the "second shift" (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2012; Hochschild, 1989; Sayer, England, Bittman, & Bianchi, 2009). In families with children, women do about twice as much of all child care and housework (Bianchi et al., 2012). Dual-earner couples, especially women, handle several obligations; paid work, child care, and

household labor, among other commitments. The present study focused on the importance of men and women recognizing their partner's contributions to household labor and child care and its associations with couple intimacy.

Studies have reported evidence there is a direct association between the division of labor and the quality of relationships (Amato, Johnson, Booth & Rodgers, 2003; Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001; Suitor, 1991; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). More time spent in household labor by men and women has been associated with lower relationship happiness, more relationship conflict, and increased thoughts of divorce; though some evidence suggests increased time spent in child care activities has positive implications for the relationship (Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). In addition, the difference in amount of time spent between men and women in household work also has been shown to predict their feelings of the relationship (Klumb, Hoppman, & Staats, 2006). But, there have been inconsistencies in the results across studies. Some studies find direct associations for women but not men and vice versa. This study explores the direct relationships between the division of labor in the household and child care and couple intimacy for both partners.

Partners perceptions of the relationship are also improved when they feel supported and appreciated for their contributions. Pina and Bengston (1993) reported wives feel greater support from their husbands when the division of labor is more equal. This lack of support associated with lower marital quality. Other studies have reported the appreciation partners feel impacts the couple relationship. Klumb and colleagues found the lack of appreciation wives feel from others for their contributions in housework

lowers their relationship satisfaction (2006). The appreciation parents receive for their work also lowers the perceived unfairness in the division of labor (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Hawkins, Marshall, & Meiners, 1995). Thompson (1991) argued appreciation is very important to women in the division of child care and housework. However, little is known on how the recognition partners receive from their significant other also impacts their couple intimacy. To appropriately support and appreciate a partner's contributions one generally must be aware of that person's contributions. Thus, recognizing a partner's work may have important implications as it is a precursor to support and appreciation. The present study assesses how the recognition partners receive works in concert with their own perceptions of how much they do and how it associates with their perceived relationship intimacy.

As indicated above, women do significantly more child care and household work than men. Despite women shouldering such a large amount of the responsibility of child care and household labor, some studies have reported most women see the division as fair (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; Greenstein, 1996). Studies since the late 1980s reported the sense of fairness and satisfaction with the division of labor are key mechanisms in predicting whether or not the division of labor impacted the couple's relationship (Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Stevens et al., 2001; Sutor, 1991). These studies reported that the differences between partner's work in child care and household labor did not necessarily directly impact their relationship, but the degree partners saw this as unfair partially or fully mediated the association. Other studies, focusing only on the perceived fairness of the division, reported a direct relationship between fairness and

the well-being of the couple relationship (Frisco & Williams, 2003; Kluwer, Heesink, & Vliert, 1996; Yogev & Brett, 1985). Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) reported the relationship between the division of labor and psychological well-being as curvilinear, where women had the highest psychological well-being when completing two-thirds of the household work and men were happiest when completing a about third. While the current study does not directly address perceptions of fairness, satisfaction or psychological wellbeing, it does test whether the relationship between the division of labor and couple intimacy is curvilinear as evidence from these studies would suggest. It may be a couple's intimacy is highest when partners are doing a certain amount of household labor and child care and anything more or less than that may lower their relationship quality. A partner's intimacy with their significant other may decrease if they are doing too much or too little of the work.

The field also often does not distinguish household work from child care. Coltrane (2000) stated the flurry of studies done in the 1990s often neglected including child care. Bianchi and colleagues (2012) also argued including child care in studies is necessary when assessing inequalities between parents because unlike some housework, child care cannot be left undone. There has been a lack of consistency on how the division of household labor and child care has been constructed. Many studies have included childcare in their housework variables (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Klumb et al., 2006; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994) or have made it unclear via the questions asked whether child care was included in assessments of housework (Pina & Bengston, 1993; Stevens et al., 2001). Some have studied housework without asking about child care (Amato et al., 2003; Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Kluwer et

al., 1996; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Robinson, 1992; Sutor, 1991), while a few studies have separated the two constructs (Lavee & Katz, 2002; Strazdins, Galligan, & Scannell, 1997; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999; Yogev & Brett, 1985). Some of the inconsistency can be attributed to whether studies sample all adults, or just parents. Several studies have sampled parents and non-parents, making comparisons using child care variables harder to utilize. This study uses data from with children and includes separate variables for child care and household labor.

Finally, several theoretical perspectives have been utilized to explain this area of research, including social exchange theory, equity theory, and the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model. Social exchange theory posits people will look to maximize their rewards relative to their costs (White & Klien, 2008; Smith & Hamon, 2012). For couple relationships, this means partners will look to do the least amount of family work without accruing penalties either from their partner or neglected family work. Equity theory states exchanges do not necessarily have to be equal, and that there is a point where individuals see the exchange as most fair and anything substantially less or more than that is viewed as unfair (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1976; Walster, Walster, & Berschied, 1978; White & Klein, 2008; Yogev & Brett, 1985). Using these two theories, Yogev and Brett (1985) argued social exchange theory was more appropriate for dual-earner husbands while equity theory was better suited for dual-earner wives since wives were more concerned with each partner contributing a fair amount of work. Benin and Agostinelli (1988) reported some evidence a curvilinear relationship explains the views of both partners, indicating the importance of an equitable exchange. Finally, Robinson (1992) reported men have lower overall well-being when performing a larger amount of

housework while women's views of fairness of the division were most important for them. The current study applies both theories to distinguish any different statistical fits for husbands and wives, and child care and household labor.

The effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model states high efforts and low rewards will lead to strained outcomes (Siegrist, 1996; van Vegchel, de Jonge, Bosma, & Schaufeli, 2005; von dem Knesebeck & Siegrist, 2003). A partner doing a large amount of the child care and household work (effort) without being adequately recognized for their efforts (rewarded) may then be more strained (imbalanced) than partners being recognized for their work. For example, Klumb and colleagues (2006) reported wives who are not appropriately appreciated for their household work experience lower marital intimacy. The current study compares what parents perceive they do (effort) and how much their partners recognize they do (reward) and how that impacts their relationship intimacy (imbalance/balance).

Based on the literature and these theoretical perspectives, the study asks:

1. How is the perceived share of the child care and household labor of one partner, and the recognition they receive for that work, associated with relationship intimacy?
2. How is the discrepancy in the perceived contributions of men and women in child care and household labor associated with relationship intimacy?

In addition, a few other issues will be addressed. To assess the perceived equability of the division of child care and household labor, quadratic terms will be tested to better understand the relationship between the division of child care and household labor and how those two associate with relationship intimacy. One's intimacy may be highest when



they are doing a specific amount and may lower in either direction if they are doing too much or too little of the child care and household labor. In addition, a seldom addressed control will also be utilized. Each partner's perceived job stress will serve as additional controls as they may have important implications when assessing relationship intimacy.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Theoretical Perspectives

Several theoretical perspectives have been previously used to study the relationship between the division of child care and household labor and its associations with relationship outcomes, including; social exchange theory, equity theory, and the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model. Social exchange theory posits individuals try to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs in an exchange. When individuals reap more reward than cost in an exchange it is termed as a profit; the higher the profit the better the exchange (White & Klein, 2008; Smith & Hamon, 2012). According to this theory, individuals seek interactions that are beneficial to themselves, avoid ones that are not, and make choices in the constraints of the choices afforded to them. It also posits individuals are rationale enough to process the ratio of rewards to cost and this ratio of rewards to cost is different from person to person. Also, individuals must make their choices and actions in light of the reciprocal nature of a relationship (Smith & Hamon, 2012). Individuals then must balance rewards and costs in the structure of a relationship where fairness and norms are in play (Smith & Hamon, 2012). In assessing the relationship between the division of labor and couple intimacy, for men and women to reap the highest profit, they most likely would have to do a certain amount of work to avoid the costs of an unhappy partner or neglected household labor and child care. But partners would also do little housework if it accrued little or no penalty (i.e. cost) if they had the option, according to the theory.

Equity theory is an extension of social exchange theory, emphasizing equity as important in assessing the profitability of an exchange (Smith & Klein, 2008). Equity

theory posits a highly under-rewarded and a highly over-rewarded relationship would cause negative implications (Smith & Klein, 2008; Yogeve & Brett, 1985). Like social exchange theory, it states people will try to maximize the amount of rewards to costs. It also acknowledges there is a degree of interdependence between individuals in exchanges and individuals may have to increase the profits of others to increase the profits for themselves (White & Klein, 2008; Smith & Hamon, 2012; Walster et al., 1976). When individuals are viewed to be in inequitable relationships they become distressed and the more inequitable the relationship the higher the amount of distress (Walster, et al., 1978). A fair exchange does not necessarily mean it has to be equal and the perceptions of what is fair most likely differs between individuals taking part in the exchange (Walster et al., 1976; Walster et al., 1978). One of the key prepositions in the theory is groups can maximize their rewards by forming systems of perceived equability amongst its members, even when it is not equal for all, and then getting all members to buy into said system (Walster et al., 1978). Empirical evidence has previously supported this, as research has shown most women shoulder a large amount of the division of labor but see it as fair (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; Greenstein, 1996). Walster and colleagues (1978) found individuals are happiest in relationships when receiving a fair share of an exchange, and become less content when receiving significantly more or less than they feel they deserve. Other research indicates individuals prefer to be just slightly advantaged in exchanges, but become distressed when receiving too little or too much (Michaels et al., 1984).

The two theories have served as frameworks for many studies regarding the division of labor. Yogeve and Brett (1985) reported dual-earner husbands' marital

satisfaction is highest when they perceive themselves doing less than their share of the division of labor while dual-earner wives are most satisfied when they see both partners contributing their share of the load. Yogev and Brett (1985) argued the results indicate that social exchange theory was more appropriate for dual-earner husbands while equity theory was better suited for dual-earner wives. Robinson (1992) also reported husbands were more impacted by the amount that they contribute, while wives were more affected by their perceived equity of the exchange.

Additionally, evidence from studies reporting direct relationships between the division of labor and couple outcomes suggests that individuals see an over-rewarded relationship as bringing high personal profit, while studies using perceived fairness/satisfaction suggest that couples evaluate their relationship quality based on equity. However, many studies that have tested theories of perceived inequality have not used couple data (Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994) and/or have not paid specific attention to child care variables (Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Kluwer et al., 1996). The current study utilizes couple data with separate variables for household labor and child care. Separately exploring child care and household labor as distinct constructs allows for greater understanding of the relationship between the division of labor and couple intimacy.

Finally, the effort-reward imbalance model posits high efforts and lower rewards will lead to adverse outcomes (van Vegchel et al., 2005). Originally, the model was conceptualized to explain work related situations and their impact on health outcomes, including physical and psychological health markers (van Vegchel et al., 2005). However, some work has now extended the model outside of the work domain. von dem

Knesebeck and Siegrist (2003) reported that non-reciprocity amongst partners was associated with increased depressive symptoms. Partners who report putting in more effort than receiving in benefits show more depressive symptoms than individuals who feel equally rewarded for the effort they are contributing. This model has also started to be extended to studies on the division of labor and couple relationships. Klumb and colleagues (2006) explored whether the appreciation spouses perceive for their contributions balance out the efforts they contribute to the division of labor. Results indicated this to be true for wives; the more appreciation they received the higher their relationship satisfaction (Klumb et al., 2006). The present study seeks to understand whether recognition has a similar association with couple intimacy.

### **The Implications of the Division of Labor on Couple Relationships**

Several avenues of research have explored the relationship between the division of labor and couple relationships. Researchers have looked at the direct relationship, explored the importance of appreciation partners receive for their contributions, and the importance of the perceived fairness and support regarding the division of labor.

**Direct associations between the division of labor and relationship outcomes.** Several studies have found evidence of a direct relationship between the division of labor and couple relationships. Using the Marital Instability Over the Life Course study and the Survey of Marriage and Family Life, Amato and colleagues (2003) reported between 1980 and 2000 men's share of the household labor increased. This increase directly associated with lower marital happiness and higher divorce proneness among men. However, the increased efforts by men associated with increased marital happiness and lowered divorce proneness for women (Amato et al., 2003).

Some evidence supports time in child care activities has direct positive implications for parents. Voydanoff and Donnelly (1999) studied 970 married mothers and 895 married fathers with at least child between age 10-17 using the 1992-1994 wave of the National Survey of Families and Household (NSFH). Results reported increased time in parent-child activities positively associated with marital happiness for both husbands and wives. These results held even after the perceived fairness of the division of child care was added to the model. This study however focused on activities and not duties; the present study includes a child care variable that includes both activities and more demanding duties (such as getting up at night when the child is ill).

Kalmijn (1999) also found some evidence for the positive implications of involvement in child care for fathers. The study sampled 563 individuals currently in married or cohabiting couples from the Household in the Netherlands Survey. Couples had at least one child age six or older living in the home. They found fathers more involved in child care had higher marital stability than less involved dads. However, when mothers perceived marital satisfaction was added to the model the association disappeared, meaning father's participation in child care had an indirect association with marital stability through their spouse's perceived marital satisfaction (Kalmijn, 1999).

Results from direct associations often vary between men and women. Although finding positive implications for men and women with involvement in child care, Voydanoff and Donnelly (1999) reported even after controlling for the perceived fairness of the division of household chores, the time spent in household chores associated with more marital disagreements for husbands. Similarly, a study of 599 couples from Moscow reported increased time spent in household labor (not including child care

variables) predicted husbands, but not wives, perceived marital conflict and thoughts of divorce (Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004). This association held for husbands, but not wives, even after the satisfaction with the division of labor was included in the models (Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004). However, in a study of 156 couples, Stevens and colleagues (2001) reported a direct negative association between hours of housework and marital satisfaction reported for wives, but not husbands. Robinson (1992) found similar results. The study reported women's increased share of traditionally feminine household tasks (laundry, cooking, and cleaning) predicted greater personal unhappiness and increased personal distress.

Additionally, Perry-Jenkins and Folk (1994) studied 656 dual-earner couples using the 1988 wave of the NSFH. The researchers reported working class wives have lower marital conflict when they perform more of the traditional feminine tasks (cooking, dishwashing, cleaning, and laundry). Men in working class relationships experience more marital conflict when their wife performs a higher proportion of those tasks (Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994). Finally, a study of 52 dual-earner couples reported men's relationship satisfaction increases when their partner handles a larger share of the division of household labor (Klumb et al., 2006). The study also reported the absolute difference in time spent between partners in household work predicted lower relationship satisfaction for both partners. However, this association did disappear when the appreciation spouses feel towards their contributions was added to the model (Klumb et al., 2006). Overall, research on the direct associations between the division of labor and couple relationships is varied and more needs to be completed to better understand this

relationship. This study explores the association between a partner's perceived share of the child care and household labor and their relationship intimacy.

**The importance of partners feeling appreciated and supported for their**

**contributions.** Another avenue of research on the division of labor and its implications on couple relationships is through looking at the appreciation and support partners receive. Thompson (1991) argued the appreciation partners receive for their contributions are just as important as the division of labor itself. Klumb and colleagues (2006) studied the importance of appreciation with 52-German dual-earning couples with children. The results indicated the association of the absolute difference in hours contributed to the division of labor between spouses and its impact on relationship satisfaction disappeared once the appreciation parents felt towards their work was included. When gender differences were assessed, results indicated appreciation mattered for wives while the amount of household work husbands are expected to contribute lowered their relationship satisfaction (Klumb et al., 2006). The current study focuses on the vantage point of the partner's recognition for their significant other's contributions to see if there are similar implications.

Pina and Bengston (1993) studied 287 married women on the importance of supporting one's spouse in the division of labor. They found the quality of support wives receive from their spouses on various home and life issues mediated the relationship between the division of labor and marital outcomes. Spousal support associated with more positive marital interaction, more marital closeness, more marital affirmation, less conflict, thoughts of divorce, and less negative marital sentiment. Evidence then suggests partners accurately recognizing the contributions of their significant others in household



labor and child care may be important for the couple's intimacy. The current study investigated this question.

Similar evidence was found by Blair and Johnson (1992), as well as Hawkins and colleagues (1995). Blair and Johnson (1992) sampled 778 married white women from the 1988 wave of the NSFH. The study reported the appreciation wives feel is an important predictor of whether or not she feels the division of labor is unfair (Blair & Johnson, 1992). Hawkins and colleagues (1995) found similar support in a random sample of 234 dual-earning wives. Feeling appreciated was the strongest predictor of wives perceptions of the fairness of the division of labor (Hawkins et al., 1995). Given prior research on the relationship between the perceived fairness of the division of labor and relationship outcomes (Frisco & Williams, 2003; Kluwer et al., 1996; Yogeve & Brett, 1985), appreciation may also be a possible important factor for couple relationships. The present study assesses whether recognition has a similar impact.

**Fairness and satisfaction in the division of labor.** Several studies have also explored men and women's satisfaction with the division of labor and their perceptions of the fairness of it.

Several studies have found evidence the perception of fairness key in the relationship between division of labor and the couple relationship. Perry-Jenkins and Folk's (1994) assessed the relationship between the division of labor and marital conflict based on class. They reported the perceptions of inequality in the division of labor associated with marital conflict more than the actual division of labor for all middle-class wives and also working class wives married to middle-class husbands (1994). Wives perceived unfairness in the division also predicted increased marital conflict for all

husbands married to middle-class wives. Finally, perceived unfairness in the division of labor predicted all wives global assessment of the marriage, while husbands perceived equity of the division predicted wives assessment of the marriage for only middle-class women married to middle-class men (Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994). Another study of 121-employed married or cohabiting mothers reported the perceived fairness of the division of labor mediated the association between the division of labor and marital distress (Claffey & Mickelson, 2009). Wilkie and colleagues (1998) also reported similar results on a sample of 382-dual earning couples. Evidence from studies looking directly at the perceived fairness of the division of labor and its impact on romantic relationships have also reported evidence that fairness in the division of labor has implications for the overall relationship (Frisco & Williams, 2003; Kluwer et al., 1996; Yogeve & Brett, 1985).

Other evidence has also suggested the importance of perceived fairness on the well-being of partners. A study of individuals reported the division of household labor's association with marital quality was mediated by perceived unfairness in the division of labor for women only (Lavee & Katz, 2002). Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) found evidence that an unfair division of labor impacts married women's psychological well-being. Utilizing reports from the 1988 NSFH study, the researchers reported mother's perceived unfairness in the division of labor (whether in favor of her or her spouse) predicted lower psychological well-being (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994). This relationship was found to be curvilinear, where the women's psychological well-being was highest when they reported doing 65.9% of the household labor while men's was highest when they reported contributing 36%. Anything more or less than that for women and men

respectively lowered their well-being. Lennon and Rosenfield's findings suggest a partner's intimacy may be highest when they are contributing a certain amount to the household labor and child care.

Finally, the satisfaction individuals have towards the division of labor also has implications for romantic relationships. Cubbins and Vannoy (2004) reported the association between the division of labor and marital conflict disappeared for wives once the satisfaction with the division of labor was entered into the model. For husbands, satisfaction also associated with his perceived marital conflict, although the division of labor maintained its significance. Satisfaction with the division of labor for both spouses predicted lower marital conflict. The satisfaction in the division of labor also associated with lower thoughts of divorce for both husbands and wives. The perceived division of labor maintained its significance but the strength of the association lowered, indicating partial mediation (Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004). Similar evidence has also been reported has been reported by Sutor (1991) and Stevens and colleagues (2001).

While the current study does not address questions which directly tap fairness and satisfaction with the division of labor and its implications on the couple's intimacy, the evidence suggests couples intimacy may be highest when they are contributing a certain amount viewed as optimal. The present study includes linear and quadratic terms, allowing for investigation of whether or not there is a curvilinear relationship between the division of labor and couple intimacy. A curvilinear relationship would indicate there is a point where men and women see the division of labor as most beneficial for their intimacy.

**Measuring the division of labor.** One shortcoming, argued by some scholars, of studies on the division of labor and its impact on relationships is the various ways the division of labor has been conceptualized. Coltrane (2000) argued the wave of research during the 1990s on the division of household labor did not give child care the attention needed. Bianchi and colleagues (2012) argued more recently the importance of including child care variables in studies on the division of labor because unlike many components of the division of housework, child care work cannot be left undone and is a vital piece in of the division of labor between partners.

A specific deficit has been the lack of specificity regarding the inclusion or exclusion of child care variables in studies. Some studies use child care as its own distinct variable, while others tie it into the household labor variable or do not address the construct at all. For example, many studies included child care as part of their household labor variable (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Klumb et al., 2006; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994), did not clearly state whether child care was a part of the household labor variable (Pina & Bengston, 1993; Stevens et al., 2001) or studied housework without asking about child care (Amato et al., 2003; Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Kluwer et al., 1996; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Robinson, 1992; Sutor, 1991). A few studies have separated the two constructs (Lavee & Katz, 2002; Strazdins et al., 1997; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999; Yogeve & Brett, 1985). However, sample couples with children, making the associations of child care impossible to include. The present study includes separate variables for household labor and child care.

## **Aims**

The present study seeks to address two aims:

**Aim 1:** To test a model that uses reports from both partners on their contributions to child care and household labor, what the other partner gives them credit for, and how these reports are jointly associated with couple intimacy. Understanding these relationships will lead to greater clarity on the interplay between what a partner does and the importance of the recognition they receive for their perceived contributions.

Aim 2 deepens our understanding of the relationship between the division of labor and couple intimacy by addressing differences in the contributions of partners to child care and household labor.

**Aim 2:** To test the difference in the perceived contributions of mothers and fathers in child care and household labor and how these differences are associated with couple intimacy. This will shed light on the importance of the absolute difference between what mothers and fathers report contributing.

## **Chapter 3: Materials & Methods**

### **Data Set**

The data for the study comes from Phase III of the National Institute of Child & Human Development's (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD). Phase III data was collected between 2000-2004. The study utilizes data from the Grade 5 wave, which contained relevant variables on intimacy, the division of labor, and job stress. The original purpose of the study was to assess the influence of child care on the development of children. The study originally sampled 1,364 children and their families across 10 sites throughout the United States. Phase I studied the families from birth to age 3. Phase II retained 1,226 children and their families and studied the families through first grade. Phase III studied children through sixth grade and retained 1,061 children and their families (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, 2012).

The present study is focused only on married or cohabitating couples with children, the father present in the home, and data from both partners in the Grade 5 wave. Couples were included if they were married or cohabiting since the birth of the target child. Six-hundred and fifty six couples (48% of original sample) fit criteria of being in a relationship and living together since child was born. The study also focused on dual-earner couples, defined as both partners working at least 20 hours a week each, yielding information from 392 couples (29% of original sample and 37% of Phase III sample). Of the 392 couples, 387 were married at the Grade 5 wave and five were cohabitating.

### **Measures**

**Outcome variables.** To measure each partner's relationship intimacy, the SECCYD's "Love and Relationships" scale is being utilized. The scale is six-items and designed to tap the person's intimacy with their spouse or partner. Each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale with response options as 1= strongly agree, 3= neutral, and 5= strongly agree. Items were recoded from a 1-5 scale to a 0-4 scale for ease of interpretation. Example items include "My (spouse/partner) listens to me when I need someone to talk to" and "I can state my feelings without (him/her) getting defensive." Items three, five, and six were reverse coded to indicate a high score as being positive. One example of the reverse coded items is "I often feel distant from my (spouse/partner)." Item names and frequencies for men and women are located at Tables 3.1 and 3.2 respectively. Row means were taken for each partner to create the intimacy variables. Alpha levels are strong, with reports of .88 for men and .90 for women. Exploratory factor analysis revealed dropping any of the variables would not create a stronger measure for either partner.

**Predictor variables.** For the present study, several predictor variables were created. For Aim 1, variables that tap the division of child care and house hold labor, as well as ones that tap the recognition partners give each other in the division of child care and household labor were created. For Aim 2, difference variables for child care and household labor were created. Quadratic terms for all predictor variables were also utilized to assess a possible curvilinear relationship.

***Division of child care.*** To measure the division of child care, a 16-item survey assessing parent's perceived share of the child care is being utilized. Each parent in the SECCYD was given a 16-item scale focused on child care related activities entitled "My

time spent as a parent.” Response options ranged on a one to five scale, with 1= my partner’s job, 3= shared equally, and 5= my job. Items were recoded from a 1-5 scale to a 0-4 scale for ease of interpretation. Item examples included “Making sure he/she bathes,” “approving what he/she is wearing,” and “encouraging him/her to read.” All items and frequencies are located in the Appendices (Tables 3.3 and 3.4). The child care variable was constructed by averaging the scores across the 16-items for each parent. Alpha levels for men and women were .82 and .86 respectively, indicating adequate strength.

***Division of household labor.*** To measure the division of household labor, a nine-item survey assessing parent’s perceive share of the household labor was utilized. Each parent was given a nine-item scale focused on household labor tasks entitled “My time spent as a parent.” Responses ranged from a one to five scale, with 1= my partner’s job, 3= shared equally, and 5= my job. Items were recoded from a 1-5 scale to a 0-4 scale for ease of interpretation. Item examples included “preparing family meals,” “cleaning the bathroom,” and “doing the family grocery shopping.” All items and frequencies are located in the Appendix (Tables 3.5 and 3.6). The household labor variable was constructed by averaging the scores across the nine-items for each parent. Alpha levels for mothers and fathers are both .76, indicating adequate strength. Exploratory factor analysis reports dropping any of the items would not create a strong measure for either partner.

***Recognition variables.*** Four variables were created to tap the recognition men and women give their partners in the division of household labor and child care. To create these variables, the child care and household labor variables for both partners were reverse coded. Although the study does not directly ask partners for how much they



recognize their significant other contributing, asking a partner how much they do relative to their significant other also allows for assessment of how much the partner recognizes their significant other contributing in reference to themselves. By reverse coding those variables it portrays how much of the load they perceive their partners as doing.

***Difference variables.*** To address Aim 2, two difference variables were created. The two perceived difference variables were created to assess the perceived difference in how much women perceive they do minus what men perceive they contribute. To create the two variables, one for child care and one for household, the man's perceived share of what he says he does in child care was subtracted from what the woman perceives she does in the child care. The same was done to create the household labor variable. A high positive score would indicate mothers contribute more than fathers and a negative score would indicate fathers do more than mothers.

***Quadratic variables.*** To test for equity theory, quadratic terms for the child care and household labor variables for each partner are being utilized. These variables were created by squaring the perceived share of the child care and household labor variables for each partner, the recognition variables, and the difference variables (variables created to assess Aim 2). The squared difference variables will provide further evidence when a larger difference, in either direction, associates with lower or higher couple intimacy.

***Controls.*** Several controls are being utilized in all models in the present study. Aside from standard controls used in most studies on the division of labor, the perceived job stress of each partner is also included.

***Standard controls.*** The controls utilized for each model include: each partner's age, race, education level, hours worked, and income. Other controls include the length of

living together, whether or not the couple is married, the amount of children in the household, and whether or not a child under the age of six lives in the home. These variables have previously been used as controls on studies assessing the associations between the division of labor and couple relationships (Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Frisco & Williams, 2003; Kalmijn, 1999; Klumb et al., 2006; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994).

*Special controls.* In addition to the standard controls, each partner's perceived job stress was included in the models as controls. Parents' perceived job stress has not often been utilized as a control in studies on the division of labor and relationship outcomes. Past research has highlighted though the implications of work related stress on couple and family relationships (Hochschild 1989; 2001; Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992; Repetti, 1989; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). To create the job stress control variables for the models the "My Paid Employment" scale given in the SECCYD to any parent working at least eight hours a week was utilized. The survey asked parents 15 questions regarding concerns they have from work. Sample items include "have to juggle conflicting tasks/duties" and "you have too much to do." All items and frequencies are located for men and women in Tables 3.7 and 3.8. Constructing the job stress variables was a two-step process. First, all individuals who completed the survey were initially asked whether or not the topic asked in the survey question was a concern, 1= true and 0= false. All individuals that indicated true were then asked on a 1-4 scale how much of a concern it was, where 1= "not at all a concern" and 4= "of extreme concern." Items were recoded from a 1-4 scale to a 0-3 scale for ease of interpretation. Any individual who marked false were not asked the follow up question on how much of a concern the

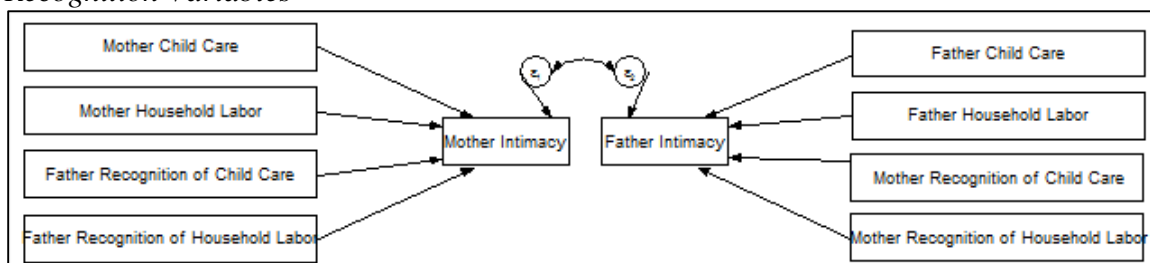
stressor from work was. For the purposes of the proposed study, all partners who marked 0 on the true/false question and not asked the follow-up question were recoded from missing to 0 (not at all a concern). This allows a range of job experiences to be tapped rather than a dichotomous item for each partner. To create the variables, row means were taken for men and women. Alpha levels for women is .83, indicating adequate strength. Exploratory factor analysis reports dropping the item “make less money than you feel you deserve” would increase the alpha level to .836. However, for theoretical purposes the item was retained, since financial issues overall are one of the leading reasons for couple dissolution (Lawrence, Thomasson, Wozniak, & Prawitz, 1993). For men, the alpha level is .825. Exploratory factor analysis reports dropping the item “make less money than you feel you deserve” would increase the alpha level to .83 and dropping “little chance for advancement” would increase the alpha to .827. However, like the women, the financial item will be retained for theoretical purposes (Lawrence et al., 1993) and to maintain consistent variables between men and women the “little chance for advancement” will be retained as well.

### **Analytic Plan**

To answer the first aim of the study, structural equation modeling using maximum likelihood with missing values was performed using STATA 13 (StataCorp, 2013). First, baseline models were run including only the controls. Second, the variables for each partner’s perceived contributions to child care and household labor were added. Third, the recognition variables were added and two models were run; both predicting each partner’s intimacy. One included all controls, mother’s perceived share of child care and household labor, and what the father recognizes the mother contributing. The other

included all the controls, father's perceived share of child care and household labor, and what the mother recognizes the father contributing (Figure 3.1). Two models were run due to collinearity issues. Since the recognition variables are the division of labor variables reverse coded, only one set of division of labor and one set of recognition variables could be run at time. Fourth, two additional models were ran which added quadratic terms for the child care, household labor, and quadratic variables. Again, two models were run due to collinearity issues with the division of labor variables and for ease of interpretation.

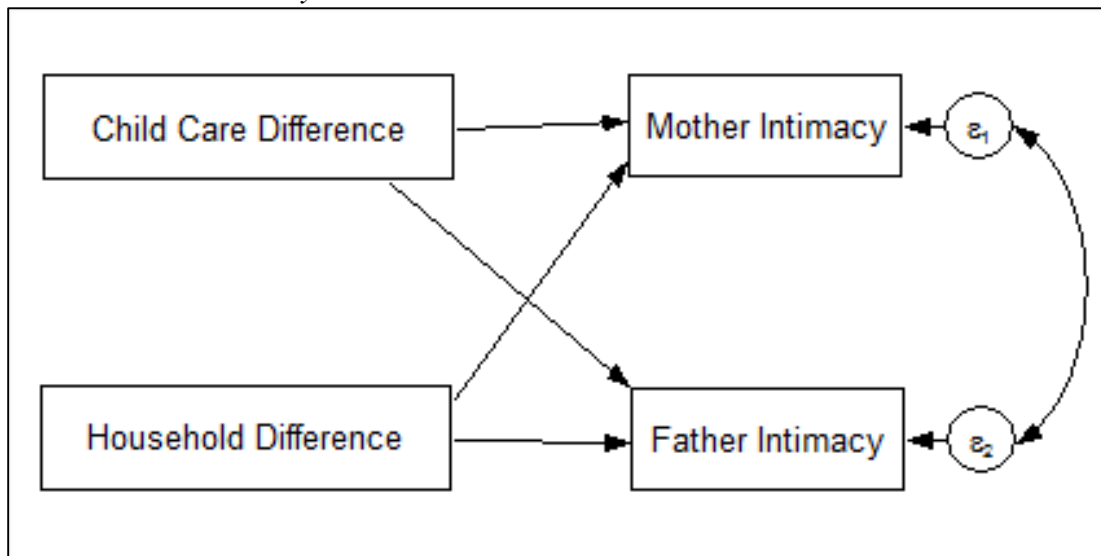
**Figure 3.1.** *Conceptual Model for Couple Intimacy with Division of Labor and Recognition Variables*



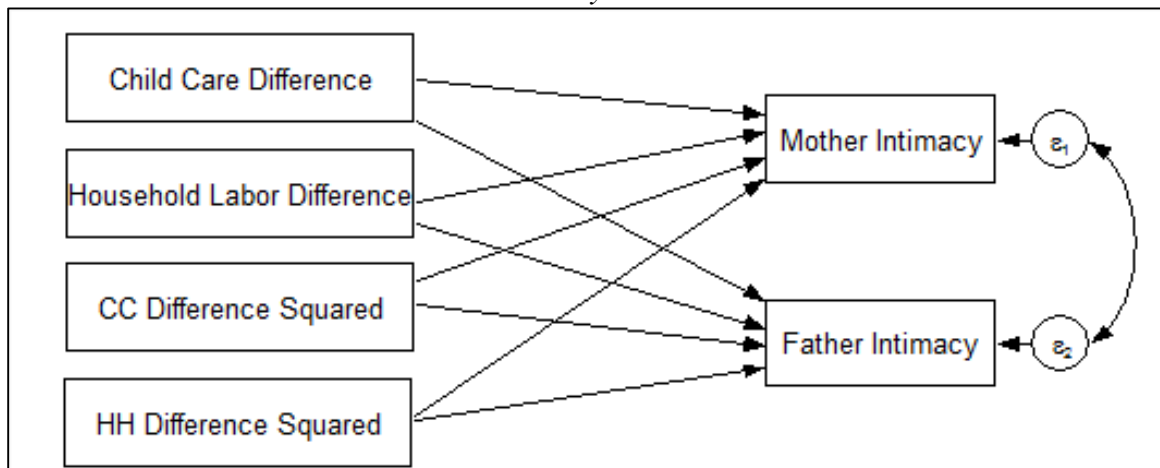
*Note.* Mom Child Care= Mother's reported share of child care; Mom Household Labor= Mother's reported share of household labor; Father Child Care= Father's reported share of child care; Father Household Labor= Father's reported share of household labor. Mother Recognition of Child Care= Mother's recognition of father's contributions to child care; Mother Recognition of Household Labor= Mother's recognition of father's contribution's to household labor; Father Recognition of Child Care= Father's recognition of mother's contribution to child care; Father Recognition of Household Labor= Father's recognition of mother's contribution to household labor.

For Aim 2, structural equation models using maximum likelihood with missing values were tested. The first model included controls and the two difference variables which tapped the difference in what mothers report contributing and what fathers report contributing were ran (Figure 3.2). A second model added the quadratic terms for the two difference variables to test whether there is a curvilinear relationship (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.2.** *Conceptual Model for the Association Between the Difference in Contributions Between Mothers and Fathers in Child Care and Household Labor and each Partner's Intimacy.*



**Figure 3.3.** *Conceptual Model, Including Quadratic Terms, for the Association Between the Difference in Contributions Between Mothers and Fathers in Child Care and Household Labor and each Partner's Intimacy.*



*Note.* CC Difference Squared= Child Care Difference variable squared; HH Difference Squared= Household Labor Difference variable squared.

## Chapter 4: Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for dependent, independent, and control variables are presented in Tables 4.1-4.3. The couples had been living together for an average of 17.52 years ( $SD= 5.51$ ), with an average of 2.32 children under the age of 18 living in the home ( $SD= 0.83$ ) and 14% of families with a child under six in the home. Average age of the men is 43.11 years ( $SD= 5.25$ ) and for women is 41.50 ( $SD= 4.93$ ). The sample is largely Caucasian and fairly educated. Men work more hours, earn more income, and report slightly higher job stress than women. Full descriptive statistics are located in Tables 4.1-4.3.

Descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables indicate men's relationship intimacy is higher than women's, averaging 2.98 ( $SD= 0.83$ ) and 2.90 ( $SD= 0.92$ ) respectively. Women ( $M= 2.76$  or 69% of the perceived share when the 0-4 scale is treated as a continuous variable) contribute more of the division of child care than men ( $M= 1.6$  or 40% of the share) perceive to contribute. In addition, they also report contributing more in household labor as well, with means of 2.72 (or 68% of the load) and 1.73 (43% of share) for women and men. The reverse coded variables report men recognize their partners as doing 60% of the child care (2.40 on scale) and 57% (2.27) of the household labor. Women recognize their partners as doing 31% (1.24) of the child care and 32% (1.28) of the household labor. Thus, there is a 9% discrepancy between partner's reports of their contributions to child care, and an 11% difference in household labor. This is similar to other findings that reported partners and spouses tend to inflate their contributions (Kamo, 2000; Lee & Waite, 2005). Women also report doing on average about 1.14 points more a week than their partners ( $SD= 0.77$ ) in child care and

0.97 points more in household labor (SD= 1.09). Put another way, women report doing 28.5% more of the child care and 24.3% more of the household labor than men report he contributes. Full descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables are located in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

### **Aim 1 Results**

Aim 1 results with unstandardized and standardized coefficients are shown in Tables 4.6 and 4.7, for fathers and mothers respectively. Model 1 reports mother's perceived share of the child care labor has a significant negative association with her relationship intimacy ( $\beta = -.25, p < .01$ ), while household labor was non-significant. Both child care and household labor were non-significant for fathers. In addition, mother's job stress had a significant negative association on her own couple intimacy ( $\beta = -.18, p < .01$ ) and a marginally significant association on father's perceived relationship intimacy ( $\beta = -.09, p < .10$ ). Father's perceived job stress had a significant negative association on both father's ( $\beta = -.26, p < .01$ ) and mother's intimacy ( $\beta = -.13, p < .05$ ). The models increased the explained variance by 7% for mothers and 0% for fathers above the baseline model (Tables 4.6 & 4.7).

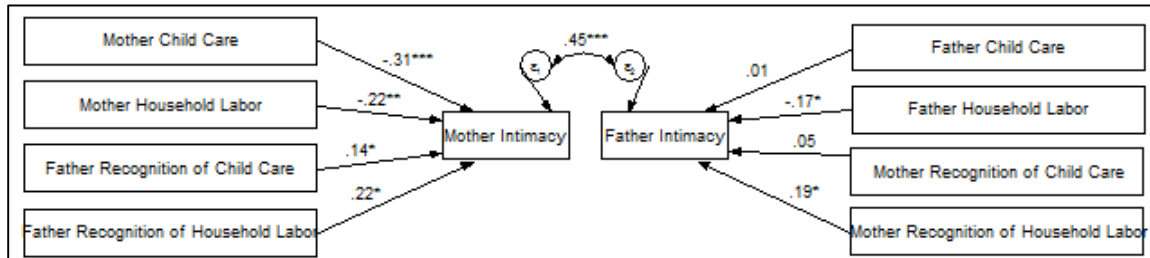
Model 2 reports including the recognition variables had a significant association for fathers and mothers (Figure 4.1 shows standardized coefficients). Although no significant findings were reported in Model 1 for fathers, when the recognition variables were included, his own share of the household labor ( $\beta = -.17, p < .05$ ) and mother's recognition of his contributions both became significant ( $\beta = .19, p < .05$ ). These reports suggest father's share of the household labor lowers his couple intimacy but the recognition for his work from his partner balances out the associations. Similarly for

wives, when the recognition variables were added to the model both her perceived share of child care ( $\beta = -.31, p < .05$ ) and household labor ( $\beta = -.22, p < .01$ ) produced negative associations on her relationship intimacy. However, men's recognition of her contributions were positively associated with her relationship intimacy, for child care ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ) and household labor ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ). The standardized betas suggest men's recognition of his partner's share of child care offsets some of the negative impact her perceived share of the child care has on her own relationship intimacy and offsets the association of her share of household labor. Also, father's and mother's perceived job stress had a significant negative association for mother's intimacy and father's own job stress maintained a negative association on his own intimacy.

Model 2 results suggests it is important to assess the recognition parents receive for their contributions when studying the impact of a parent's contributions to the division of labor and couple intimacy, as the association for mother's perceived share of the child care was lower when what the father recognizes she contributes was accounted included. It also explains that mother's and father's perceived share of the household labor does have significant negative implications for their relationship intimacy, but the recognition they receive from their partner's significantly offsets those implications.



**Figure 4.1.** Structural Equation Model Results for Research Question 1 with Recognition Variables.



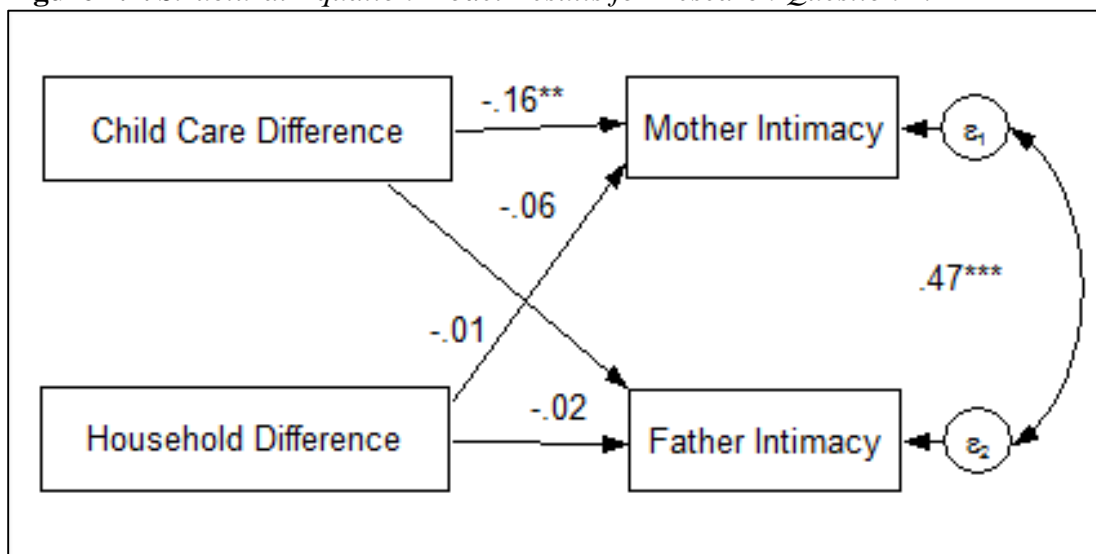
*Note.* Mom Child Care= Mother's reported share of child care; Mom Household Labor= Mother's reported share of household labor; Father Child Care= Father's reported share of child care; Father Household Labor= Father's reported share of household labor. Mother Recognition of Child Care= Mother's recognition of father's contributions to child care; Mother Recognition of Household Labor= Mother's recognition of father's contribution's to household labor; Father Recognition of Child Care= Father's recognition of mother's contribution to child care; Father Recognition of Household Labor= Father's recognition of mother's contribution to household labor.  $\chi^2(41) = 228.39$ ,  $p > .10$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000; SRMR not reported because of missing values. Standardized coefficients reported.  $R^2 = .23$  for mothers and  $.14$  for fathers. †  $p < .10$  \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Model 3 reports no quadratic terms were significant, indicating a linear relationship for child care and household labor variables. Only father's recognition of mother's share of the household labor ( $\beta = .63$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and mother's perceived share of the household labor ( $\beta = -.82$ ,  $p < .10$ ) maintained any form of significance between the division of labor variables.

## Aim 2 Results

The first model for Aim 2 (Table 4.8), which included only linear terms, reported the difference in contributions between mothers and fathers in child care has a significant negative association for women ( $\beta = -.16$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No significant results for fathers were reported (Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2.** Structural Equation Model Results for Research Question 2.

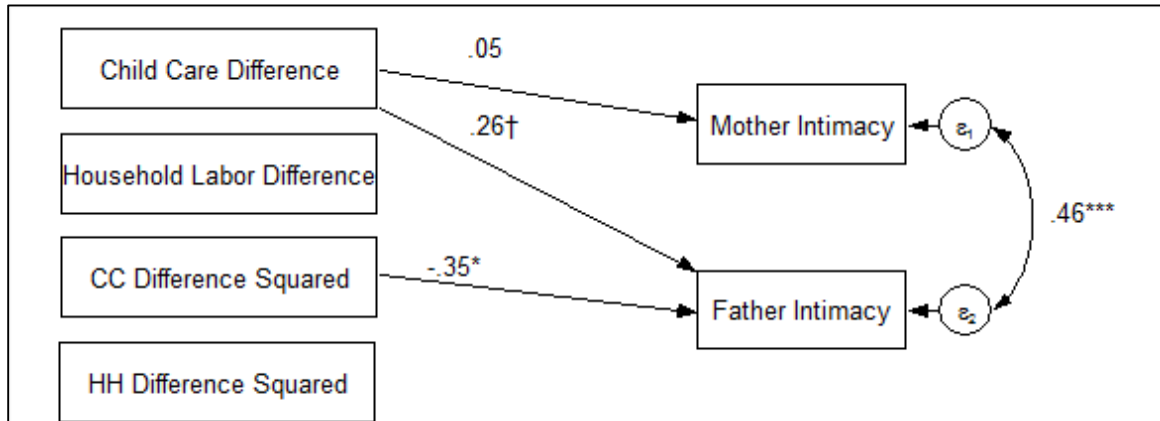


Note.  $\chi^2(37) = 178.92$ ,  $p > .10$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000; SRMR not reported because of missing values. Figure 4.1 shows Aim 1 Model 2 results with standardized coefficients.  $R^2 = .13$  for mothers and  $.12$  for fathers.

†  $p < .10$  \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

When quadratic terms were included for the child care and household labor difference variables, the difference in child care was marginally positive significant ( $\beta = .82$ ,  $p < .10$ ) and the quadratic term for the difference in child care was negatively significant ( $\beta = -.82$ ,  $p < .05$ ) for fathers (Table 4.9, Figure 4.3). This indicates a curvilinear relationship, with father's report of his intimacy being highest at about .96 (Figure 4.4). A difference of .96 implies dad's relationship intimacy is highest when he is contributing on average about 40% of the child care. This suggests the difference in child care for fathers is best explained by equity theory, as they are happiest when they are contributing less than half the amount. Anything lower or higher than that difference lowers the intimacy of the fathers. No significant results were reported for mothers. The addition of quadratic terms to the models increased the explained variance by 1% for both mothers and fathers.

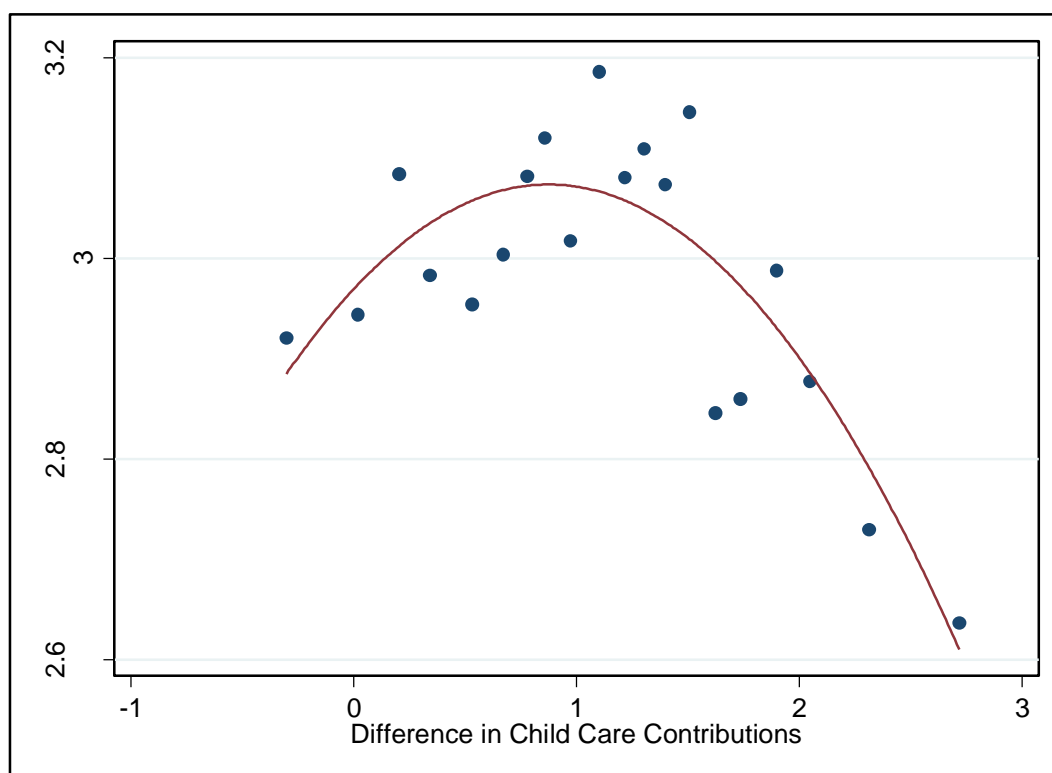
**Figure 4.3.** *Structural Equation Model Results for Research Question 2 with Quadratic Variables.*



*Note.* CC Difference Squared= Child Care Difference variable squared; HH Difference Squared= Household Labor Difference variable squared.  $\chi^2(41) = 185.63$ ,  $p > .10$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000; SRMR not reported because of missing values. Standardized coefficients reported.  $R^2 = .14$  for mothers and  $.13$  for fathers.

†  $p < .10$  \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Figure 4.4.** *Research Question 2 Predicted Values for Father's Intimacy on Difference in Child Care Contributions*



*Note:* A positive difference indicates women report contributing more to child care than the fathers report contributing.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The division of child care and household labor has important implications for the wellbeing of dual-earner couple relationships. The first research question sought to address the implications of the division of child care and household labor on couple intimacy, and the importance of partners recognizing what each one contributes to these domains. The results indicate the recognition partners give each other is important for both mothers and fathers. The work mothers and fathers do in household labor strains their relationship intimacy, but the recognition they give offsets these negative implications. Fathers' recognition of mothers' contributions to child care also partially offset some of the strains that mothers feel in this domain.

These findings suggest that it is important for dual-earner couples to adequately recognize each other's work. Past research has reported negative effects of the division of labor on relationship outcomes, that feeling appreciated for one's efforts is important in offsetting these negative effects, and that most married women feel appreciated for the domestic work they do (Amato et al., 2003; Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Klumb et al., 2006; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Lee & Waite, 2010; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Stevens et al., 2001; Sutor, 1991; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). In the case of this study, partner intimacy is not as affected by household labor as much as child care, perhaps because household labor is more flexible and less overwhelming, or perhaps because there is enough recognition of partner contributions that any negative feelings are offset. Given the stability of these relationships (an average of 17.5 years living together), these couples have probably worked out an agreeable system for dividing household labor.

For the child care domain, in contrast, the recognition that fathers give to mothers does not completely offset the toll of child care on her relationship intimacy. This may be due to a mismatch between what women say they do and how much recognition they receive from men. Fathers only recognize their partners doing 60% of the child care on average, while mothers claim to be contributing 69%. Past research has documented that partners tend to inflate their reports of the work they do (Lee & Waite, 2005). In this study, it is impossible to determine the accuracy of reported partner contributions and to judge misperceptions. These discrepancies are likely to affect couple relationships.

The second research question addressed how relationship intimacy was affected by the difference between mothers' and fathers' contributions to child care and household labor. Overall, results indicated that mothers' intimacy decreases linearly as the difference between what she contributes in child care, relative to her partner, grows. This linear result is partially supported by one previous study (Klumb et al., 2006), while another found the relationship to be curvilinear (Yogev & Brett, 1985). It may be that mothers in this study view their contributions to child care as being so significantly greater than fathers that they cannot see their current arrangement as equitable. For household labor, in contrast to child care, past research has reported that most men and women do not see their housework as particularly overwhelming (Spitze & Loscocco, 2000). In this study, it may be partners view their housework loads as manageable and nonthreatening to relationship intimacy.

Interestingly, fathers' intimacy is highest when they contribute an average of 40% of the child care load; anything more or less than this lowers their intimacy. One study conducted nearly twenty years ago (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994) found a similar

relationship, but with respect to household labor rather than child care; in that study, men's psychological well-being was highest when he contributed 36% of the household labor.

Finally, the models for both research questions explain greater variance for mother than fathers, which indicates that the division of labor and recognition received for one's work matters more for mothers than for fathers. This, too, is consistent with past findings (Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Frisco & Williams, 2003; Robinson & Spitze, 1992; Stevens et al., 2001).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The results of this study suggest that social exchange and equity theory explain different aspects of the division of labor and its relationship with partner intimacy. Social exchange theory reinforces the linear findings in the two research questions. Time spent in household labor lowers the relationship intimacy of both mothers and fathers, while time spent in child care only lowers the intimacy of mothers. The difference between what mothers and fathers do in child care also lowers the relationship intimacy of mothers. These findings coincide with linear findings in past research (Amato et al., 2003; Claffey & Mickelson, 2009; Cubbins & Vannoy, 2004; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Stevens et al., 2001; Sutor, 1991; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999).

According to social exchange theory, individuals seek to earn the highest profit by increasing rewards and decreasing costs (Smith & Hamon, 2012). For these partners, taking part in the share of the division of labor is a cost and the recognition they receive for their contributions may serve as a reward. This may explain why household labor

generally does not impact mothers and fathers, especially once recognition is taken into account. For mothers, the recognition they receive for their contributions to child care may not be enough. Mothers reported working an average of 37 hours per week, and the work in child care may be a larger burden than what recognition can alleviate.

Equity theory reinforces the curvilinear findings related to fathers in the second research questions—where fathers' intimacy is highest when they contribute an average of 40% of the child care. Some prior research has found that people prefer to be slightly advantaged in relationships (Michaels et al., 1984), while other research has reported that individuals like to feel that their contributions are equitable (Walster et al., 1976). According to equity theory, the division of tasks does not necessarily have to be equal to be deemed equitable, people will try to maximize their profits in an exchange, and that there is an acknowledged degree of interdependence between people (in this case, partners). For the fathers in this study, it may be that working anything more or less than 40% is viewed as both unequal and inequitable.

The study also further extended the use of the effort-reward imbalance onto the topic of the division of labor. According to the ERI model, increased effort and insignificant rewards lead to imbalance (van Vegchel et al., 2005). For these partners, their contributions to household labor (effort) appear to be adequately recognized by their partners (reward), and thus do not compromise their relationship intimacy. The findings are similar to the lone division of labor article to use the ERI model. Klumb and colleagues reported the difference between spouses' contributions to the household labor negatively associated with their perceptions of the marriage. But, when the appreciation

the spouses felt for their contributions was included into the study's model, the association became insignificant (Klumb et al., 2006).

The present study also dovetails with other previous findings using the ERI model. One study reported partners who perceive to be putting in more effort into the relationship than they are receiving in benefits experience increased depressive symptoms (von dem Knesebeck & Siegrist, 2003). This is similarly represented in the present study where although father's recognition did significantly offset some of the negative association from mother's perceived share of child care, it did not totally negate it. Since father's reports of mother's share of the child care is 9% lower than mother's reports of what she contributes, this may mean fathers are not adequately rewarding (recognize) mothers for the work she feels she contributes. Past findings indicate partners tend to underestimate the work of their significant others and overestimate their own (Kamo, 2000; Lee & Waite, 2005). For the present study, this suggests household labor is not a stress to the couple's intimacy because they are adequately recognizing the work they do, while for child care, mothers may feel they are being unrecognized for their contributions.

### **Limitations**

The study has some limitations. First, each partner was asked how much he or she contributed to child care and household labor. While the perceptions of what they do has its own implications, the method of data collection in the SECCYD did not allow for complete understanding of how much each partner is actually contributing and who is under- and over-estimating their contributions. The combined reports for child care between mothers and fathers come to 109% and household labor 111% of the share.



Problems related to the overestimation one's contributions have similarly been reported in other studies (Kamo, 2000; Lee & Waite, 2005). Question wording also did not allow for understanding of mothers and fathers multi-tasking between household labor, child care, and other activities (Bianchi et al., 2012).

Second, the study used the parent's perceive share of the division of child care and household labor and did not ask for absolute time spent in those two domains. Past research has suggested using time estimates, as opposed to scales, is a more optimal way of assessing the division of labor (Warner, 1986), although self-reported hours can also be subject to inflation issues, as noted above (Lee & Waite, 2005).

Third, this wave of the SECCYD did not assess the gender ideology of the parents. Previous research has reported gender ideology as important moderator of the division of labor, where wives with egalitarian ideology perceive greater unfairness than women with more traditional gender ideology (Kluwer, Heesink, & Vliert, 1997; Lavee & Katz, 2002).

Fourth, although the study did control for work hours, income, and job stress, it did not examine social class-related variation in the division of labor. Some prior research has indicated that perceptions of unfairness differ by social class (Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994); future research should investigate this relationship, particularly with respect to partner recognition.

Finally, these are dual-earner couples with long-lasting relationships. This makes it difficult to generalize these findings to a larger spectrum of couple and family types. In addition, while all these families have, by design, a child in fifth grade, families could have younger and/or older children and are in different phases of family formation.

## **Implications**

The findings document important implications for our understanding of couple relationships. The importance of recognizing each other's contributions may be important to the couple's intimacy because it shows they are aware of each other's lives. According to therapist John Gottman, it is important for partners to be in tune with their significant other's world, including what they do and how they feel (Gottman & Silver, 1999). What Gottman describes as love maps, these maps are a partners understanding of their significant other. A partner with a detailed love map is in tune with their partner (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Gottman's work may explain why father's recognition of mother's contributions to child care does not offset all of the negative implications. There is a 9% difference in what mother's report doing and what father's recognize her contributing. While it is impossible in the confines of this study's data to know who is over/under-flating their claims, it in any case documents some couples may not be seeing eye-to-eye on what each other are doing. Men may not be aware of how much their significant other is contributing while the women may be overinflating the work they do, and may be upset their partner does not recognize them for what they perceive to be doing. Given past research documenting partners tend to inflate their own contributions; this may be likely (Lee & Waite, 2005). The study's findings document an example of the importance of couples having a quality love map.

Gottman, as well as other researchers, have also noted the importance of partners admiring, appreciating, and supporting the work their partners do in the home and in child care (Gottman & Silver, 1999; Klumb et al., 2006; Pina & Bengtson, 1993). Although the current study did not directly ask if the mothers and fathers feel appreciated

or admired, it may be that being recognized for their work is a symbolic gesture indicating their partners are paying attention to the work they are doing. In addition, to appreciate and support ones partner, they must be aware of what they do and recognize what they contribute. Without being able to recognize each other's contributions means they likely cannot adequately appreciate and support their loved ones. Further future studies on this topic should continue to assess the importance of couples recognizing each other's contributions.

The results also document it is important for family workers to help couples find an agreeable system of dividing up child care duties. Mothers report lower relationship intimacy when the difference between her contributions and her partners in child care increases. Fathers are happiest when contributing on average 40% of the work in that domain. It may be partners look for different things in the division of labor and therapists must work with couples to find a happy median.

Findings also suggest including variables that tap the recognition partners give each other is provides key insight into the relationship between the division of labor and couple intimacy. Reverse coding the child care and household labor variables allowed for insight into how much partners perceive each other contributing. Few studies include measures that tap recognition, or similar concepts. Future studies should include these variables to gain a clearer, and more complete, picture of this phenomenon. Future studies, as indicated in the limitations section, should include questions which directly ask partners what they recognize their significant other contributing.

Studies also may benefit from including separate variables for child care and household labor, as well as linear and quadratic terms for these constructs. The inclusion

of these separate variables provided greater insight into the different relationships parents have with both domains.

Finally, the inclusion of job stress in the models documented the importance of including such variables in future studies. For women and men, their own job stress had negative implications for their own couple intimacy. In addition, men's job stress also spilled over onto the women's couple intimacy as well. These findings are not surprising; given prior research finding the negative implications work stress has on studies on couples (Hochschild 1989; 2001; Hughes et al., 1992; Repetti, 1989; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Coupled with past research findings, it is important for future studies on the division of labor to include more than just the hours worked for mothers and fathers, but also the stress they are under from their employers.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The study's results suggest the recognition partners receive for their contributions to household labor and child care has important positive implications for their couple intimacy. The findings indicate this recognition significantly offsets the negative implications of the work partners do in household labor. In addition, for mothers, being recognized for her contributions in child care significantly offset some of the negative implications on her relationship intimacy. These findings suggest recognition plays a key role in the intimacy of significant others. It also gives endorsement for other studies to be conducted which directly look at the recognition partners give each other, and whether or not this must be directly or symbolically done.

Second, the results indicate the larger the difference between what mother's report doing in child care and what father's report doing, the lower her intimacy. Meanwhile, father's intimacy is happiest when he is doing on average about 40% of the work, and lowers when it is higher and lower. These results suggest mothers and fathers are affected differently by child care work and more needs to be done on the difference between partner's reports on child care and household labor and its implications on partner's intimacy.

Finally, coupled with prior research, couple therapists and other family workers should work with couples to ensure they are aware of what each other is contributing and to recognize and appreciate the work they do for each other.

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## APPENDICES

**Table 3.1.** *Father's Perceived Couple Intimacy (N = 348)*

|  | Strongly disagree (0) | Somewhat disagree (1) | Neutral (2) | Somewhat agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| My (spouse/partner) listens to me when I need someone to talk to | 1.44%                 | 2.59%                 | 6.90%       | 34.20%             | 54.89%             |
| I can state my feelings without (him/her) getting defensive      | 2.87%                 | 16.09%                | 14.66%      | 42.82%             | 23.56%             |
| I often feel distant from my (spouse/partner) <sup>a</sup>       | 0.00%                 | 16.67%                | 14.94%      | 27.30%             | 41.09%             |
| My (spouse/partner) can really understand my hurts and joys      | 2.30%                 | 10.34%                | 11.49%      | 37.36%             | 38.51%             |
| I feel neglected at times by my (spouse/partner) <sup>a</sup>    | 0.00%                 | 22.41%                | 15.23%      | 29.31%             | 33.05%             |
| I sometimes feel lonely when we're together <sup>a</sup>         | 0.00%                 | 13.22%                | 11.21%      | 20.69%             | 54.89%             |

<sup>a</sup>Items were reverse coded to indicate a higher score reporting more intimacy.

**Table 3.2.** *Mother's Perceived Couple Intimacy (N = 381)*

|  | Strongly disagree (0) | Somewhat disagree (1) | Neutral (2) | Somewhat agree (3) | Strongly agree (4) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| My (spouse/partner) listens to me when I need someone to talk to | 1.58%                 | 7.63%                 | 5.53%       | 36.32%             | 48.95%             |
| I can state my feelings without (him/her) getting defensive      | 4.20%                 | 13.12%                | 10.50%      | 47.24%             | 24.93%             |
| I often feel distant from my (spouse/partner) <sup>a</sup>       | 0.00%                 | 24.41%                | 8.40%       | 24.67%             | 42.52%             |
| My (spouse/partner) can really understand my hurts and joys      | 3.67%                 | 11.29%                | 9.71%       | 41.99%             | 33.33%             |
| I feel neglected at times by my (spouse/partner) <sup>a</sup>    | 0.00%                 | 30.18%                | 10.50%      | 23.10%             | 36.22%             |
| I sometimes feel lonely when we're together <sup>a</sup>         | 0.00%                 | 18.90%                | 12.34%      | 19.42%             | 49.34%             |

<sup>a</sup>Items were reverse coded to indicate a higher score reporting more intimacy.

**Table 3.3.** *Father's Perceived Share of Child Care* (N = 347)

| Variable                              | My partner's job (0) | Mostly my partner's job (1) | Shared Equally (2) | Mostly my job (3) | My job (4) | N   | Missing      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----|--------------|
| Making sure he/she bathes             | 5.93%                | 35.61%                      | 52.82%             | 4.75%             | 0.89%      | 337 | 55 (14.03%)  |
| Taking him/her to school              | 20.57%               | 26.90%                      | 30.38%             | 13.92%            | 8.23%      | 316 | 76 (19.39%)  |
| Taking him/her to doctor visits       | 15.85%               | 45.24%                      | 31.70%             | 6.34%             | 0.86%      | 347 | 45 (11.48%)  |
| Buying things such as books and games | 7.23%                | 44.22%                      | 45.66%             | 2.89%             | 0.00%      | 346 | 46 (11.73%)  |
| Packing a lunch                       | 33.98%               | 34.63%                      | 17.80%             | 9.39%             | 4.21%      | 309 | 83 (21.17%)  |
| Approving what he/she is wearing      | 13.70%               | 42.27%                      | 41.98%             | 1.17%             | 0.87%      | 343 | 49 (12.50%)  |
| Getting up at night if he/she is ill  | 4.35%                | 25.51%                      | 60.58%             | 7.83%             | 1.74%      | 345 | 47 (11.99%)  |
| Spending leisure time with him/her    | 0.58%                | 8.65%                       | 81.56%             | 8.65%             | 0.58%      | 347 | 45 (11.48%)  |
| Making sure he/she goes to bed        | 0.58%                | 11.27%                      | 73.99%             | 12.72%            | 1.45%      | 346 | 46 (11.73%)  |
| Scheduling after-school care          | 20.07%               | 39.78%                      | 34.77%             | 2.87%             | 2.51%      | 279 | 113 (28.83%) |
| Encouraging him/her to read           | 1.17%                | 19.24%                      | 75.51%             | 3.21%             | 0.87%      | 343 | 49 (12.50%)  |
| Buying clothes for him/her            | 30.35%               | 50.00%                      | 17.92%             | 1.73%             | 0.00%      | 346 | 46 (11.73%)  |
| Preparing breakfast for him/her       | 11.15%               | 33.75%                      | 29.41%             | 15.79%            | 9.91%      | 323 | 69 (17.60%)  |
| Taking him/her to outings             | 0.58%                | 10.40%                      | 75.72%             | 11.85%            | 1.45%      | 346 | 46 (11.73%)  |
| Supervising him/her friends are over  | 0.87%                | 15.41%                      | 76.74%             | 6.40%             | 0.58%      | 344 | 48 (12.24%)  |
| Arranging out-of-school activities    | 7.31%                | 40.06%                      | 47.37%             | 3.80%             | 1.46%      | 342 | 50 (12.76%)  |

**Table 3.4. Mother's Perceived Share of Child Care (N = 382)**

|                                       | My partner's job (0) | Mostly my partner's job (1) | Shared Equally (2) | Mostly my job (3) | My job (4) | N   | Missing     |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----|-------------|
| Making sure he/she bathes             | 0.55%                | 4.10%                       | 36.34%             | 38.52%            | 20.49%     | 366 | 26 (6.63%)  |
| Taking him/her to school              | 8.56%                | 11.01%                      | 25.38%             | 24.46%            | 30.58%     | 327 | 65 (16.58%) |
| Taking him/her to doctor visits       | 0.79%                | 1.32%                       | 20.90%             | 39.15%            | 37.83%     | 378 | 14 (3.57%)  |
| Buying things such as books and games | 0.00%                | 2.10%                       | 39.90%             | 32.55%            | 25.46%     | 381 | 11 (2.81%)  |
| Packing a lunch                       | 5.36%                | 5.99%                       | 11.67%             | 24.61%            | 52.37%     | 317 | 75 (19.13%) |
| Approving what he/she is wearing      | 0.55%                | 0.82%                       | 26.37%             | 38.37%            | 33.52%     | 364 | 28 (7.14%)  |
| Getting up at night if he/she is ill  | 0.79%                | 3.15%                       | 37.27%             | 31.23%            | 27.56%     | 381 | 11 (2.81%)  |
| Spending leisure time with him/her    | 0.00%                | 2.88%                       | 79.06%             | 15.71%            | 2.36%      | 382 | 10 (2.55%)  |
| Making sure he/she goes to bed        | 1.05%                | 4.71%                       | 57.59%             | 26.44%            | 10.21%     | 382 | 10 (2.55%)  |
| Scheduling after-school care          | 0.62%                | 3.12%                       | 2.81%              | 32.40%            | 42.06%     | 321 | 71 (18.11%) |
| Encouraging him/her to read           | 0.54%                | 0.81%                       | 51.75%             | 28.03%            | 18.87%     | 371 | 21 (5.36%)  |
| Buying clothes for him/her            | 0.00%                | 0.79%                       | 10.50%             | 31.50%            | 57.22%     | 381 | 11 (2.81%)  |
| Preparing breakfast for him/her       | 5.43%                | 11.71%                      | 30.00%             | 25.71%            | 27.14%     | 350 | 42 (10.71%) |
| Taking him/her to outings             | 0.00%                | 3.93%                       | 67.28%             | 22.51%            | 6.28%      | 382 | 10 (2.55%)  |
| Supervising him/her friends are over  | 0.00%                | 2.89%                       | 56.17%             | 30.18%            | 10.76%     | 381 | 11 (2.81%)  |
| Arranging out-of-school activities    | 0.00%                | 2.91%                       | 29.10%             | 41.01%            | 26.98%     | 378 | 14 (3.57%)  |

**Table 3.5.** *Father's Perceived Share of Household Labor (N = 347)*

|                                   | My partner's job (0) | Mostly my partner's job (1) | Shared Equally (2) | Mostly my job (3) | My job (4) | N   | Missing         |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----|-----------------|
| Cleaning the bathroom             | 16.25%               | 30.00%                      | 36.56%             | 11.88%            | 5.31%      | 320 | 72<br>(18.37%)  |
| Dusting                           | 17.78%               | 36.51%                      | 35.24%             | 8.57%             | 1.90%      | 315 | 77<br>(19.64%)  |
| Vacuuming                         | 9.57%                | 29.01%                      | 40.43%             | 16.98%            | 4.01%      | 324 | 68<br>(17.35%)  |
| Doing laundry                     | 19.88%               | 38.89%                      | 28.36%             | 9.65%             | 3.22%      | 342 | 50<br>(12.76%)  |
| Preparing family meals            | 11.40%               | 37.13%                      | 35.09%             | 13.16%            | 3.22%      | 342 | 50<br>(12.76%)  |
| Doing the family grocery shopping | 18.16%               | 35.73%                      | 27.67%             | 12.68%            | 5.76%      | 347 | 45<br>(11.48%)  |
| Taking out the garbage            | 1.52%                | 5.45%                       | 19.70%             | 35.45%            | 37.88%     | 330 | 62<br>(15.82%)  |
| Doing the dishes                  | 4.79%                | 20.66%                      | 52.99%             | 15.57%            | 5.99%      | 334 | 58<br>(14.80%)  |
| Doing the ironing                 | 32.10%               | 31.37%                      | 26.20%             | 5.17%             | 5.17%      | 271 | 121<br>(30.87%) |



**Table 3.6. Mother's Perceived Share of Household Labor (N = 382)**

|                                   | My partner's job (0) | Mostly my partner's job (1) | Shared equally (2) | Mostly my job (3) | My job (4) | N   | Missing     |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----|-------------|
| Cleaning the bathroom             | 2.56%                | 3.70%                       | 22.22%             | 31.62%            | 39.89%     | 351 | 41 (10.46%) |
| Dusting                           | 1.45%                | 1.16%                       | 17.92%             | 33.24%            | 46.24%     | 346 | 46 (11.73%) |
| Vacuuming                         | 2.29%                | 8.86%                       | 27.71%             | 29.71%            | 31.43%     | 350 | 42 (10.71%) |
| Doing laundry                     | 1.32%                | 4.21%                       | 27.11%             | 29.74%            | 37.63%     | 380 | 12 (3.06%)  |
| Preparing family meals            | 2.36%                | 7.33%                       | 25.39%             | 36.39%            | 28.53%     | 382 | 10 (2.55%)  |
| Doing the family grocery shopping | 4.46%                | 9.97%                       | 21.26%             | 27.56%            | 36.75%     | 381 | 10 (2.55%)  |
| Taking out the garbage            | 28.09%               | 32.87%                      | 22.19%             | 10.11%            | 6.74%      | 356 | 36 (9.18%)  |
| Doing the dishes                  | 1.63%                | 6.81%                       | 44.69%             | 29.43%            | 17.44%     | 367 | 25 (6.38%)  |
| Doing the ironing                 | 3.65%                | 4.32%                       | 26.91%             | 17.61%            | 47.51%     | 301 | 91 (23.21%) |

**Table 3.7. Father's Perceived Job Stress (N = 343)**

|   | Not at all a concern (0) | Somewhat of a concern (1) | Of considerable concern (2) | Of extreme concern (3) | N   | Missing      |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Little chance for advancement           | 80.76%                   | 10.20%                    | 4.37%                       | 4.66%                  | 343 | 49 (12.50%)  |
| Lack respect from people at work        | 84.75%                   | 6.74%                     | 4.69%                       | 3.81%                  | 341 | 51 (13.01%)  |
| Have to juggle conflicting tasks        | 44.71%                   | 29.71%                    | 19.12%                      | 6.47%                  | 340 | 52 (13.27%)  |
| You have too much to do                 | 56.14%                   | 21.35%                    | 14.62%                      | 7.89%                  | 342 | 50 (12.76%)  |
| Job takes too much out of you           | 75.73%                   | 10.82%                    | 8.48%                       | 4.97%                  | 342 | 50 (12.76%)  |
| Have to do things against judgment      | 86.84%                   | 7.89%                     | 3.51%                       | 1.75%                  | 342 | 50 (12.76%)  |
| Not able to get job done/red tape       | 73.76%                   | 11.37%                    | 10.20%                      | 4.66%                  | 343 | 49 (12.50%)  |
| Make less money than deserve            | 54.68%                   | 20.18%                    | 13.74%                      | 11.40%                 | 342 | 50 (12.76%)  |
| You have deadlines to meet              | 34.12%                   | 31.47%                    | 21.47%                      | 12.94%                 | 340 | 52 (13.27%)  |
| Can't complete tasks in time available  | 78.43%                   | 9.91%                     | 7.29%                       | 4.27%                  | 343 | 49 (12.50%)  |
| You work under time pressure            | 44.44%                   | 28.36%                    | 17.84%                      | 9.36%                  | 342 | 50 (12.76%)  |
| Supervisor doesn't appreciate your work | 91.93%                   | 3.51%                     | 2.81%                       | 1.75%                  | 285 | 107 (27.30%) |
| Not enough support from supervisor      | 79.79%                   | 10.45%                    | 6.62%                       | 3.14%                  | 287 | 105 (26.79%) |
| Supervisor has unrealistic expectations | 88.11%                   | 7.34%                     | 2.80%                       | 1.75%                  | 286 | 106 (27.04%) |
| Supervisor not competent                | 89.55%                   | 3.83%                     | 4.18%                       | 2.44%                  | 287 | 105 (26.79%) |

**Table 3.8. Mother's Perceived Job Stress (N = 377)**

|   | Not at all a concern (0) | Somewhat of a concern (1) | Of considerable concern (2) | Of extreme concern (3) | N   | Missing     |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----|-------------|
| Little chance for advancement           | 78.19%                   | 12.77%                    | 5.85%                       | 3.19%                  | 376 | 16 (4.08%)  |
| Lack respect from people at work        | 84.31%                   | 6.38%                     | 4.52%                       | 4.79%                  | 376 | 16 (4.08%)  |
| Have to juggle conflicting tasks        | 52.27%                   | 28.53%                    | 15.20%                      | 4.00%                  | 375 | 17 (4.34%)  |
| You have too much to do                 | 53.60%                   | 23.20%                    | 16.53%                      | 6.67%                  | 375 | 17 (4.34%)  |
| Job takes too much out of you           | 72.61%                   | 14.63%                    | 7.98%                       | 4.79%                  | 376 | 16 (4.08%)  |
| Have to do things against judgment      | 89.92%                   | 7.16%                     | 2.12%                       | 0.80%                  | 377 | 15 (3.83%)  |
| Not able to get job done/red tape       | 78.13%                   | 11.47%                    | 6.93%                       | 3.47%                  | 375 | 17 (4.34%)  |
| Make less money than deserve            | 51.06%                   | 23.67%                    | 15.96%                      | 9.31%                  | 376 | 16 (4.08%)  |
| You have deadlines to meet              | 52.00%                   | 27.47%                    | 14.67%                      | 5.87%                  | 375 | 17 (4.34%)  |
| Can't complete tasks in time available  | 79.52%                   | 10.11%                    | 7.18%                       | 3.19%                  | 376 | 16 (4.08%)  |
| You work under time pressure            | 55.88%                   | 26.47%                    | 11.50%                      | 6.15%                  | 374 | 18 (4.59%)  |
| Supervisor doesn't appreciate your work | 91.10%                   | 3.86%                     | 2.97%                       | 2.08%                  | 337 | 55 (14.03%) |
| Not enough support from supervisor      | 75.96%                   | 10.68%                    | 8.31%                       | 5.04%                  | 337 | 55 (14.03%) |
| Supervisor has unrealistic expectations | 89.32%                   | 4.15%                     | 4.75%                       | 1.78%                  | 337 | 55 (14.03%) |
| Supervisor not competent                | 89.32%                   | 2.08%                     | 4.45%                       | 4.15%                  | 337 | 55 (14.03%) |

**Table 4.1.** *Descriptive Individual Demographic Statistics (N= 392 Couples)*

| Variables                     | Fathers       |           | Mothers       |           |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
|                               | <i>M</i> or % | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> or % | <i>SD</i> |
| Age                           | 43.11         | 5.25      | 41.50         | 4.93      |
| Work Hours                    | 46.63         | 10.09     | 37.35         | 10.07     |
| Income <sup>a</sup>           | \$49,100      |           | \$33,093      |           |
| Race                          |               |           |               |           |
| White                         | 91.33%        |           | 90.56%        |           |
| Black                         | 5.61%         |           | 6.12%         |           |
| Asian                         | 1.53%         |           | 2.55%         |           |
| Other                         | 1.53%         |           | 0.77%         |           |
| Education                     |               |           |               |           |
| H.S. or less                  | 22.19%        |           | 18.37%        |           |
| Associates or<br>Some College | 29.59%        |           | 30.56%        |           |
| Bachelors                     | 28.57%        |           | 28.57%        |           |
| Advanced<br>Degree            | 19.65%        |           | 22.71%        |           |

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Income listed as median.

**Table 4.2.** *Descriptive Couple Statistics (N= 392 Couples)*

| Variables                              | <i>M</i> or % | <i>SD</i> |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| Percent Married                        | 98.72%        | -         |
| Length of living together              | 17.52         | 5.51      |
| Number of Children <sup>a</sup>        | 2.32          | 0.83      |
| Presence of Child Under 6 <sup>b</sup> | 13.71%        | -         |

<sup>a</sup>Number of Children= Number of children living in the household. <sup>b</sup>Presence of Child Under 6= Number of children under the age of six living in the home.

**Table 4.3.** *Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables (N= 392 Couples)*

| Variable                         | 1                 | 2                 | 3       | 4       | 5       | 6       | 7       | 8       | 9      | 10     | 11     | 12 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| 1. Mom Intimacy                  | -                 |                   |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |    |
| 2. Dad Intimacy                  | .50***            | -                 |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |    |
| 3. Mom CC                        | -.28***           | -.11*             | -       |         |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |    |
| 4. Mom HH                        | -.19***           | -.10 <sup>†</sup> | .53***  | -       |         |         |         |         |        |        |        |    |
| 5. Dad CC                        | -.03              | .01               | -.56*** | -.32*** | -       |         |         |         |        |        |        |    |
| 6. Dad HH                        | -.10 <sup>†</sup> | -.05              | -.28*** | -.64*** | .47***  | -       |         |         |        |        |        |    |
| 7. Mom CCR                       | .28***            | .11*              | -       | -.53*** | .56***  | .28***  | -       |         |        |        |        |    |
| 8. Mom HHR                       | .19***            | .10 <sup>†</sup>  | -.53*** | -       | .32***  | .64***  | .53***  | -       |        |        |        |    |
| 9. Dad CCR                       | .03               | -.01              | .56***  | .32***  | -       | -.47*** | -.56*** | -.32*** | -      |        |        |    |
| 10. Dad HHR                      | .10 <sup>†</sup>  | .05               | .28***  | .64***  | -.47*** | -       | -.28*** | -.64*** | .47*** | -      |        |    |
| 11. Child Care Diff <sup>a</sup> | -.14*             | -.07              | .90***  | .48***  | -.86*** | -.42*** | -.90*** | -.48*** | .86*** | .42*** | -      |    |
| 12. Household Diff <sup>a</sup>  | -.03              | -.03              | .44***  | .91***  | -.44*** | -.91*** | -.44*** | -.91*** | .44*** | .91*** | .50*** | -  |

*Note.* 1= Mother's reported couple intimacy; 2= Father's reported couple intimacy; 3= Mother's reported share of child care; 4= Mother's reported share of household labor; 5= Father's reported share of child care; 6= Father's reported share of household labor; 7= Mother's recognition of father's contributions to child care; 8= Mother's recognition of father's contribution's to household labor; 9= Father's recognition of mother's contributions to child care; 10= Father's recognition of mother's contributions to household labor; 11= The difference between what mother's perceive contributing to child care and what father's perceive contributing to child care; 12= The difference between what mother's perceive contributing to household labor and what father's perceive contributing to household labor.

<sup>a</sup>Variables 11-12 are in separate models from variables 3-10.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.4.** *Summary Statistics (N= 392 Couples)*

| Variables                                   | Fathers  |           |           | Mothers  |           |           |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
|   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Range     | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Range     |
| Couple Intimacy <sup>a</sup>                | 2.98     | 0.83      | 0.50-4.00 | 2.90     | 0.92      | 0.50-4.00 |
| Share of Child Care <sup>b</sup>            | 1.60     | 0.40      | 0.40-3.13 | 2.76     | 0.48      | 1.67-4.00 |
| Share of Household Labor <sup>b</sup>       | 1.73     | 0.60      | 0.00-3.57 | 2.72     | 0.60      | 1.33-4.00 |
| Recognition of child care <sup>c</sup>      | 2.40     | 0.40      | 0.87-3.60 | 1.24     | 0.48      | 0.00-2.33 |
| Recognition of household labor <sup>c</sup> | 2.27     | 0.60      | 0.43-4.00 | 1.28     | 0.60      | 0.00-2.67 |
| Job Stress <sup>d</sup>                     | 0.51     | 0.45      | 0.00-2.33 | 0.45     | 0.43      | 0.00-3.00 |

*Note:* <sup>a</sup>Scale 1-4. Higher score indicates higher couple intimacy. <sup>b</sup>Scale 1-4. 1= *My partner's job*, 4= *My job*. <sup>c</sup>Recognition variables are the child care and household labor variables reverse coded. <sup>d</sup>Scale 1-4. Higher score indicates increased job stress.

**Table 4.5.** *Summary Statistics for the Difference in Contributions to Child Care and Household Labor.*

| Variable                      | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Difference in Child Care      | 1.14     | 0.77      |
| Difference in Household Labor | 0.97     | 1.09      |

*Note:* Original Scale 1-4. 1= *My partner's job*, 4= *My job*. Positive mean indicates mothers report doing more than fathers. Difference in Child Care= The difference in mother's and father's contributions in child care; Difference in Household Labor= The difference in mother's and father's contributions in household labor.



**Table 4.6.** *Research Question 1 Structural Equation Model Results for Father's Couple Intimacy (N = 392 Couple)*

| Variables                 | Baseline Model     |                    | Model 1            |                    | Model 2  |          | Model 3           |                   |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                           | B                  | $\beta$            | B                  | $\beta$            | B        | $\beta$  | B                 | $\beta$           |
| DadCC                     |                    |                    | 0.06               | 0.03               | 0.02     | 0.01     | 0.82              | 0.40              |
| DadHH                     |                    |                    | -0.07              | -0.05              | -0.24*   | -0.17*   | -0.01             | -0.01             |
| MomCCR                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | 0.08     | 0.05     | 0.16              | 0.33              |
| MomHHR                    |                    |                    |                    |                    | 0.27*    | 0.19*    | -0.12             | -0.08             |
| DadCC-Squared             |                    |                    |                    |                    |          |          | -0.25             | -0.40             |
| DadHH- Squared            |                    |                    |                    |                    |          |          | -0.07             | -0.17             |
| MomCCR- Squared           |                    |                    |                    |                    |          |          | -0.20             | -0.29             |
| MomHHR- Squared           |                    |                    |                    |                    |          |          | 0.16              | -0.40             |
| Mom Job Stress            | -0.18 <sup>†</sup> | -0.09 <sup>†</sup> | -0.18 <sup>†</sup> | -0.09 <sup>†</sup> | -0.14    | -0.07    | -0.14             | -0.07             |
| Dad Job Stress            | -0.50***           | -0.27***           | -0.49***           | -0.26***           | -0.49*** | -0.26*** | -0.47***          | -0.26***          |
| Mom Education             | -0.02              | -0.06              | -0.02              | -0.06              | -0.02    | -0.06    | -0.02             | -0.05             |
| Dad Education             | 0.03               | 0.10               | 0.03               | 0.10               | 0.03     | 0.08     | 0.02              | 0.07              |
| Mom Race                  | -0.01              | -0.01              | -0.01              | -0.01              | 0.07     | 0.04     | 0.08              | 0.04              |
| Dad Race                  | 0.13               | 0.05               | 0.12               | 0.05               | 0.11     | 0.05     | 0.11              | 0.05              |
| Children in Home          | 0.01               | 0.01               | 0.01               | 0.01               | 0.03     | 0.03     | 0.05              | 0.05              |
| Children Under 6          | -0.06              | -0.02              | -0.05              | -0.02              | -0.04    | -0.02    | -0.07             | -0.03             |
| Mom Income                | 0.01 <sup>†</sup>  | 0.01 <sup>†</sup>  | 0.01 <sup>†</sup>  | 0.10 <sup>†</sup>  | 0.01     | 0.10     | 0.01 <sup>†</sup> | 0.10 <sup>†</sup> |
| Dad Income                | -0.01              | -0.05              | -0.01              | -0.03              | -0.01    | -0.03    | -0.01             | -0.04             |
| Mom Work Hours            | 0.01               | 0.05               | 0.01               | 0.05               | 0.01     | 0.03     | 0.01              | 0.04              |
| Dad Work Hours            | 0.01               | 0.02               | 0.01               | 0.01               | 0.01     | 0.03     | 0.01              | 0.03              |
| Mom Age                   | -0.01              | -0.04              | -0.01              | -0.05              | -0.01    | -0.05    | -0.01             | -0.04             |
| Dad Age                   | -0.01              | -0.08              | -0.01              | -0.07              | -0.01    | -0.07    | -0.01             | -0.06             |
| Married                   | 0.62               | 0.08               | 0.64               | 0.09               | 0.56     | 0.08     | 0.64              | 0.09              |
| Length of Living Together | 0.01               | 0.04               | 0.01               | 0.04               | 0.01     | 0.03     | 0.01              | 0.03              |
| R <sup>2</sup>            |                    | .11                |                    | .11                |          | .14      |                   | .16               |

*Note.* DadCC= Father's reported share of child care; DadHH= Father's reported share of household labor; MomCCR= Mother's recognition of father's contributions to child care; MomHHR= Mother's recognition of father's contribution's to household labor; DadCC-Squared= DadCC squared; DadHH- Squared= DadHH squared; MomCCR-Squared= MomCCR squared; MomHHR-Squared= MomHHR squared.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.7.** *Research Question 1 Structural Equation Model Results for Mother's Couple Intimacy (N = 392 Couples)*

| Variables                 | Baseline Model    |                   | Model 1           |                   | Model 2            |                    | Model 3            |                    |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                           | B                 | $\beta$           | B                 | $\beta$           | B                  | $\beta$            | B                  | $\beta$            |
| MomCC                     |                   |                   | -0.47***          | -0.25***          | -0.58***           | -0.31***           | 0.89               | 0.47               |
| MomHH                     |                   |                   | -0.11             | -0.08             | -0.33**            | -0.22**            | -1.25 <sup>†</sup> | -0.82 <sup>†</sup> |
| DadCCR                    |                   |                   |                   |                   | 0.33*              | 0.14*              | 0.62               | 0.27               |
| DadHHR                    |                   |                   |                   |                   | 0.34**             | 0.22*              | 0.98**             | 0.63**             |
| MomCC-Squared             |                   |                   |                   |                   |                    |                    | -0.26              | -0.78              |
| MomHH- Squared            |                   |                   |                   |                   |                    |                    | 0.17               | 0.61               |
| DadCCR- Squared           |                   |                   |                   |                   |                    |                    | -0.06              | -0.14              |
| DadHHR- Squared           |                   |                   |                   |                   |                    |                    | -0.14              | -0.42              |
| Mom Job Stress            | -0.44***          | -0.21***          | -0.39***          | -0.18***          | -0.35**            | -0.16**            | -0.35**            | -0.16***           |
| Dad Job Stress            | -0.24*            | -.12*             | -0.27*            | -0.13*            | -0.21*             | -0.10*             | -0.20 <sup>†</sup> | -0.10 <sup>†</sup> |
| Mom Education             | -0.03             | -0.06             | -0.02             | -0.05             | -0.01              | -0.03              | -0.01              | -0.03              |
| Dad Education             | 0.04 <sup>†</sup> | 0.12 <sup>†</sup> | 0.04 <sup>†</sup> | 0.11 <sup>†</sup> | 0.03               | 0.09               | 0.03               | 0.08               |
| Mom Race                  | -0.06             | -0.02             | 0.10              | 0.04              | 0.10               | 0.04               | 0.11               | 0.05               |
| Dad Race                  | 0.34              | 0.13              | 0.27 <sup>†</sup> | 0.10 <sup>†</sup> | 0.31               | 0.12               | 0.31 <sup>†</sup>  | 0.12 <sup>†</sup>  |
| Children in Home          | -0.02             | -0.02             | 0.01              | 0.01              | 0.02               | 0.02               | 0.04               | 0.04               |
| Children Under 6          | -0.01             | -0.01             | -0.02             | -0.01             | 0.03               | 0.01               | 0.02               | 0.01               |
| Mom Income                | 0.01              | 0.03              | -0.01             | -0.01             | 0.01               | 0.01               | 0.01               | 0.02               |
| Dad Income                | 0.01              | 0.07              | 0.01              | 0.07              | 0.01               | 0.06               | 0.01               | 0.05               |
| Mom Work Hours            | 0.01              | 0.06              | 0.01              | 0.01              | 0.01               | 0.05               | 0.01               | 0.05               |
| Dad Work Hours            | -0.01             | -0.03             | 0.01              | 0.03              | -0.01              | -0.01              | -0.01              | -0.01              |
| Mom Age                   | 0.01              | 0.02              | 0.01              | 0.02              | -0.01              | -0.01              | 0.01               | 0.01               |
| Dad Age                   | -0.03*            | -0.17*            | -0.03*            | -0.15*            | -0.01 <sup>†</sup> | -0.14 <sup>†</sup> | -0.02*             | -0.14*             |
| Married                   | 0.09              | 0.01              | 0.01              | 0.01              | -0.04              | -0.01              | 0.04               | 0.05               |
| Length of Living Together | 0.02*             | 0.12*             | 0.02*             | 0.12*             | 0.02*              | 0.01*              | 0.02*              | 0.12*              |
| R <sup>2</sup>            | .11               |                   | .18               |                   | .23                |                    | .25                |                    |

*Note.* MomCC= Mother's reported share of child care; MomHH= Mother's reported share of household labor; DadCCR= Father's recognition of mother's contributions to child care; DadHHR= Father's recognition of mother's contribution's to household labor; MomCC-Squared= MomCC squared; MomHH- Squared= MomHH squared; DadCCR-Squared= DadCCR variable squared; DadHHR-Squared= DadHHR squared.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 4.8.** *Structural Equation Model Results Research Question 2. (N = 392 Couple)*

| Variables                          | Mother's Intimacy |          | Father's Intimacy |          |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|                                    | B                 | $\beta$  | B                 | $\beta$  |
| Child Care Difference <sup>a</sup> | -0.19*            | -0.16**  | -0.07             | -0.06    |
| Household Difference <sup>b</sup>  | -0.01             | -0.01    | -0.01             | -0.02    |
| Mom Job Stress                     | -0.44***          | -0.21*** | -0.18†            | -0.09†   |
| Dad Job Stress                     | -0.26*            | -0.13**  | -0.51***          | -0.27*** |
| Mom Education                      | -0.03             | -0.07    | -0.02             | -0.06    |
| Dad Education                      | 0.05*             | 0.12*    | 0.03              | 0.10     |
| Mom Race                           | 0.01              | 0.01     | 0.02              | 0.01     |
| Dad Race                           | 0.29†             | 0.11†    | 0.11              | 0.05     |
| Children in Home                   | -0.02             | -0.01    | 0.01              | 0.01     |
| Child Under 6                      | -0.01             | -0.01    | -0.05             | -0.02    |
| Mom Income                         | 0.01              | 0.01     | 0.01              | 0.09     |
| Dad Income                         | 0.01              | 0.07     | -0.01             | -0.03    |
| Mom Work Hours                     | 0.01              | 0.02     | 0.01              | 0.03     |
| Dad Work Hours                     | -0.01             | -0.01    | 0.01              | 0.04     |
| Mom Age                            | 0.01              | 0.02     | -0.01             | -0.05    |
| Dad Age                            | -0.03*            | -0.16*   | -0.01             | -0.07    |
| Married                            | 0.07              | 0.01     | 0.61              | 0.08     |
| Length of living together          | 0.02*             | 0.01*    | 0.01              | 0.04     |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | .13               |          | .12               |          |

*Note.* Child Care Difference= Mother's perceived contributions to child care minus father's perceived contributions to child care. Household Difference= Mother's perceived contributions to household labor minus father's perceived contributions to household labor.

†  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.9.** *Structural Equation Model Results for Research Question 2 with Quadratic Variables. (N = 392 Couple)*

| Variables                 | Mother's Intimacy |          | Father's Intimacy |          |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|                           | B                 | $\beta$  | B                 | $\beta$  |
| Child Care Difference     | 0.06              | 0.05     | 0.28†             | 0.26†    |
| Household Difference      | 0.01              | 0.02     | -0.03             | -0.04    |
| CC Diff- Squared          | -0.11             | -0.23    | -0.15*            | -0.35*   |
| HH Diff- Squared          | -0.04             | -0.01    | 0.01              | 0.04     |
| Mom Job Stress            | -0.44***          | -0.21*** | -0.18†            | -0.09†   |
| Dad Job Stress            | -0.25*            | -0.12*   | -0.50***          | -0.27*** |
| Mom Education             | -0.03             | -0.06    | -0.02             | -0.06    |
| Dad Education             | 0.04†             | 0.12†    | 0.03              | 0.09     |
| Mom Race                  | 0.01              | 0.01     | 0.01              | 0.01     |
| Dad Race                  | 0.31†             | 0.12†    | 0.14              | 0.06     |
| Children in Home          | -0.01             | -0.01    | 0.02              | 0.02     |
| Child Under 6             | -0.04             | -0.02    | -0.10             | -0.05    |
| Mom Income                | 0.01              | 0.02     | 0.01†             | 0.11†    |
| Dad Income                | 0.01              | 0.07     | -0.01             | -0.04    |
| Mom Work Hours            | 0.01              | 0.03     | 0.01              | 0.04     |
| Dad Work Hours            | -0.01             | -0.01    | 0.01              | 0.03     |
| Mom Age                   | 0.01              | 0.03     | -0.01             | -0.05    |
| Dad Age                   | -0.03*            | -0.16*   | -0.01             | -0.07    |
| Married                   | 0.10              | 0.01     | 0.66†             | 0.09†    |
| Length of living together | 0.02*             | 0.12*    | 0.01              | 0.03     |
| R <sup>2</sup>            | .14               |          | .13               |          |

*Note.* Child Care Difference= Mother's perceived contributions to child care minus father's perceived contributions to child care. Household Difference= Mother's perceived contributions to household labor minus father's perceived contributions to household labor. CC Diff- Squared= Child Care Difference variable squared; HH Diff-Squared= Household Difference variable squared.

†  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .