

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Parents shape their adolescents' gender role attitudes through the process of gender role socialization. How parents socialize their adolescent's gender role attitudes has long-lasting impacts on how youth navigate social relationships, envision work and family roles, and enforce or reject gender stereotypes. Adolescence is a period in which romantic interests, peer involvement, and identity formation are rapidly developing, making it important to understand how parents contribute to their adolescents' gender role attitude development (i.e., expectations for women's and men's behavior and social roles; Galambos et al., 2009; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Evidence suggests that parents may socialize their children differently depending on their own and their adolescent's gender (i.e., parent-child gender constellation; McHale et al., 2003; Ruble et al., 2006). The aim of this study is to examine parents' accounts of how they socialize gender in their adolescent daughters and sons using open-ended responses from mothers and fathers ( $N = 60$  parents) in 30 White, working and middle-class families with both an adolescent daughter and son. Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization served as a guide to

analyze parents' socialization practices within three pathways: parent-child interaction, parents as instructors, and parents as providers of opportunities. Symbolic interactionism provided a lens through which to understand how gender roles are socially constructed. Parents revealed gender socialization practices that were inconsistent with their own attitudes, fit within the tripartite model socialization, and were unique to each parent-child gender constellation. Understanding parents' gender socialization practices can be useful to help practitioners who work with families, so they can better support parents in becoming more aware and intentional about how they may be socializing gender differently depending on their own and their child's gender.

*Keywords:* gender socialization, adolescence, gender roles, parenting, stereotypes

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Parents' Reflections on their Gender Socialization Practices  
with their Adolescent Daughters and Sons

by  
Jennifer A. H. Blodgett

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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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Jennifer A. H. Blodgett, Author

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## CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Dr. Kelly D. Chandler assisted in securing data, coding transcripts, and was involved in the design and editing of the entire manuscript. Dr. Shauna Tominey, Dr. Kate MacTavish, and Dr. Susan Shaw assisted in developing the analytic strategy and editing the manuscript.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

Gender roles shape nearly every aspect of American adolescent and adult social lives. The pressure of assigned gender roles (i.e., social scripts) influence how individuals navigate daily choices and major life decisions. Throughout history, the dominant Western narrative has placed women and men in polarized positions in society, the workplace, and in family roles. This narrative refers to a culture of heteronormativity and binary assumptions, such that women were expected to occupy supportive, less prestigious roles, and men traditionally held more power (Ellemers, 2018). This dichotomy has persisted today because how individuals conceptualize and reinforce gender roles is founded in and perpetuated by norms and stereotypes of gender-typical behavior, attitudes, and traits (Ellemers, 2018). On the one hand, traditionally feminine gender roles are depicted as passive, warm, and relationship-oriented, wherein childrearing and emotional connection are high priorities. Traditionally masculine gender roles, on the other hand, are defined by assertiveness, agency, sexually-charged pursuits, toughness, and emotionally reserved attitudes and behavior (Ellemers, 2018; Epstein & Ward, 2011). Within the last few decades, America's dominant culture has embraced slightly less traditional gender roles, but this stark dichotomy between women's and men's gender roles and lived experiences still exists. Although most parents today are reluctant to admit they endorse traditional gender stereotypes, research has demonstrated that both implicit and explicit stereotypes about gender are still pervasive today, especially in the domains of work and family (Ellemers, 2018; Endendijk, Groenveld, van Berkel, Hallers-Haalboom, Mesman, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2013). These pervasive, stereotypical views of women's and men's gender roles have far-reaching implications throughout the lifespan that warrant further attention. Specifically, how these gender norms and stereotypes are deconstructed or reinforced through parental gender role

socialization in adolescence can inform how individuals navigate romantic relationships, select career paths, and eventually how they socialize these stereotypes and gender norms with their own children.

Gender roles are the social scripts that individuals adhere to in relationships that include expectations for childrearing, power, interpersonal communication style, and emotional and physical labor. The specific makeup of one's social script (or gender role) with regards to each of these and other domains is determined by one's own set of beliefs, values, and expectations ranging on a continuum from traditional (e.g., breadwinner-homemaker dichotomy) to egalitarian (e.g., equal division of labor; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). More specifically, gender role *attitudes* refer not only to one's own gender role, but also their expectations for women's and men's roles more broadly in the workforce, relationships, and families (i.e., subscribing to an egalitarian, traditional, or a blended system of ideals and beliefs; Lendon & Silverstein, 2012). This paper refers almost exclusively to women's and men's gender roles, because dominant Western culture does not have clearly defined gender roles that are unique to individuals who identify as transgender, agender, or nonbinary. Gender itself, or the socially constructed experience including (but not limited to) one's identity and expression, is far more than a two-dimensional construct and can emerge in experientially unique ways for everyone (see Galambos et al. 2009). Therefore, because of the overrepresentation of binary genders and gender roles, individuals in the trans\*<sup>1</sup> community have fought for more visibility and resorted to writing their own social scripts. Nearly 20 years ago (when data for this study were collected) gender and gender roles were overly represented as binary, both in academic literature and in the minds of the average American. Unfortunately, the experiences of individuals in the trans\*

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<sup>1</sup> Trans\* is commonly used as an umbrella term to refer to the broad community of individuals who do not identify as cisgender (i.e., someone whose sex assigned at birth matches their gender identity).

community are beyond the scope of this paper, and I resort to focusing primarily on gender roles for cisgender women and men throughout this paper.

In previous research, studies commonly analyze gender or sex differences (e.g., women's and men's interpersonal communication styles in romantic relationships), but it is possible that these studies may actually be documenting the differences in individual's socialized gender roles rather than inherent gender or sex differences per se. Parsing out differences between gender and gender roles is critical to move the field forward. To do this, research must document how gender role attitudes develop through the process of gender socialization.

Gender socialization is the process of instilling values, beliefs, and expectations associated with feminine and masculine gender roles (Epstein & Ward, 2011). Parents are largely responsible for socializing their children's gender roles both intentionally (e.g., through modeling gender roles) and unintentionally (e.g., implicit biases that inform their behaviors). According to Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization, parents transmit messages about gender to their children through three major pathways: direct parent-child interaction, providing instruction, and providing opportunities. Gender socialization through each of these pathways varies depending on a variety of circumstances, such as the family composition, parent-child gender constellation (i.e., parent by child gender combination), birth order, and age of children (Hess, Ittel, & Sisler, 2014; Marks, Lam, & McHale, 2009; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Adolescents are particularly impacted by gender socialization as the onset of puberty and romantic interests force adolescents to address their gender roles in new and nuanced ways (Galambos et al., 2009). Parents' gender socialization practices contribute to how their adolescents navigate social relationships and life decisions.

Traditional and egalitarian gender role attitudes encompass a set of ideals that can differentially shape one's lived experiences. Consider traditional gender roles. Inequality is inherent in traditional gender roles because they mirror gender stereotypes, specifically the unequal balance of power, resources, and responsibilities between women and men (Ellemers, 2018). For example, because traditional feminine gender roles are tied so heavily to childrearing, a woman may be more reluctant than a man to pursue a career while trying to start a family, which would result in her reduced cumulative earnings over time and potential social mobility (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007).

Even so, abiding by traditional gender roles can aid in successful navigation through a society that reinforces these attitudes. Policies on maternity leave provide an example of how Western society is currently organized to support a traditional division of labor. Maternity leave policies that offer limited time and favor women whom birth biological children simultaneously discourage men from participating in childrearing activities and make it challenging for working women to have children. Therefore, abiding by traditional gender roles would allow couples to comfortably navigate the transition to parenthood, because their beliefs about a family's division of labor are being enforced by policy (Moen, 2001).

By contrast, egalitarian gender role attitudes reject traditional gender stereotypes and instead reinforce the notion that women and men possess equal capabilities and should therefore enact equal roles in romantic partnerships, parenting responsibilities, and the workforce. Abiding by egalitarian gender roles can be beneficial in the sense that they attempt to counterbalance the inequality associated with traditional gender roles. For example, a couple that assumes equal responsibility for childcare would give a mother more time and freedom for upward mobility in her career and her partner the opportunity to play an equally valued role in raising children and

supporting their family life. Nonetheless, current social policies, such as the absence of paid paternity leave in America, make maintaining egalitarian gender roles throughout a couple's transition to parenthood more challenging. Regardless of one's own gender role attitudes, the policies and institutions in Western society were designed by, and continue to reinforce, traditional notions of gender, especially with regards to division of labor. By first understanding the impacts gender role socialization can have on children and adolescents, parents can learn to become more intentional about how they are parenting and shaping their children's lives.

Over time, parental gender socialization can funnel adolescents into gendered life trajectories, meaning that one's gender role attitudes may serve as a guiding principle by which to make decisions. These gendered life trajectories can become especially impactful during late adolescence as adolescents prepare for the transition into young adulthood and begin to contemplate educational, occupational, and relational decisions (Côté, 2009; Lawson, Crouter, & McHale, 2015; Moen, 2001). For example, the implicit bias that can stem from the stereotype that boys are better at math and science than girls may deter young women from choosing STEM majors or careers (Lawson et al., 2015). In addition, the implicit bias that can stem from the stereotype that boys and men should inhibit their emotions may steer men away from majors or careers that require emotional awareness, such as teaching or counseling. Contextual and individual characteristics tailor this trajectory, leaving no one distinct developmental path (Crouter, Whiteman, McHale, & Osgood, 2007). To begin to understand how these gendered life trajectories are created, research must take a deeper look into the specific parental gender socialization practices occurring in adolescence.

In previous research, parental gender socialization in adolescence has been overlooked as the bulk of this research has focused on early childhood (Galambos et al., 2009). In adolescence,

the onset of puberty tends to be accompanied by increased conversations about sex, dating, and changing bodies that are oftentimes gendered conversations (e.g., the sexual double-standard; Martin & Luke, 2010). Opportunities and challenges arise for parents as their children enter adolescence. Although peers become increasingly influential socialization agents in adolescence, parents are still significant influences in their adolescent's lives but their influence vis-à-vis gender socialization has not been extensively documented (Galambos et al., 2009).

The present study takes a qualitative approach to examine interviews with mothers and fathers about their parenting practices of their adolescents and uses the tripartite model couched within a symbolic interactionism framework to understand how parental gender role socialization practices may vary depending on the parent-child gender constellation. Investigating how parents intentionally and unintentionally socialize their daughters' and sons' gender role attitudes has the power to uncover the ways parents are fostering (in)equality and shaping the next generation's gender role ideologies. Findings from the present study can be used to help develop parenting education programs or bolster sex education curricula.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Symbolic interactionism and the tripartite model of socialization guide the present study's examination of parents' gender socialization practices with their adolescent daughters and sons. These theoretical frameworks lay the foundation for the literature review on parents' gender socialization practices by the tripartite model pathways that follows.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

**Symbolic interactionism.** Symbolic interactionism provides an overarching framework to understand parents' gender role socialization practices. According to this framework, people attribute meaning(s) to various symbols (e.g., physical strength and nurturance), and those agreed upon meanings shape the way individuals interpret their social interactions (White, Klein, & Martin 2015). Social norms and roles govern these social interactions. *Social norms* refer to the behavioral expectations in any given situation, such as parents' expectations for how their children should behave based on their gender. The more salient social norms include those associated with gender roles. Additionally, everyone has a role in the social group(s) of which they are a part. *Roles* are a set of normative expectations about the rules for behavior. For example, an individual can play the role of a mother, a wife, a professor, and a daughter. Each of these roles has some shared underlying meaning (e.g., what it means to be a woman in all these roles), but the ways in which one differentiates between the role of a mother and a wife, for example, depends on the context-specific socialization one has received. *Socialization* is a process of social interaction in which we acquire norms, beliefs, representations (or symbols), and attitudes about culture (White et al., 2002). Parents shape their adolescent's gender role attitudes through *gender role socialization*, or the process of transmitting messages, both implicitly and explicitly, about gender appropriate norms, values, and behaviors (Epstein &

Ward, 2011). Even parents who believe they raise their daughters and sons similarly still can be influenced by implicit assumptions grounded in gender stereotypes about how to raise their children (Ellemers, 2018). For the purposes of this study, symbolic interactionism will be the lens in which those socialization practices are identified, analyzed, and interpreted.

**Tripartite model of socialization.** The major constructs of symbolic interactionism (social norms, roles, and socialization) operate in every pathway of Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization, which identifies three major pathways through which gender role socialization occurs: parent-child interactions, parent as direct instructor, and parent as provider of opportunities. As parents socialize their adolescents' gender role attitudes through each pathway, parents teach their children about symbols, behaviors, and responsibilities that make up the social meaning of masculinity and femininity. Through this process, parents enforce or reject social norms that serve to channel their children into specific gender roles. The present study aims to address between-family parental gender role socialization practices of both mothers and fathers of adolescent children. Similar to McHale et al. (2003), I draw on Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model to examine White, working and middle-class parents' own accounts of how they socialize gender roles in both their adolescent daughters and sons.

Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization was originally designed to reflect the different pathways through which parents socialize their children's social competence. For the purposes of this project, I have adapted the tripartite model of socialization to reflect how parents socialize their adolescents' gender role attitudes. Because the goal of gender socialization is to socialize children to adhere to culturally appropriate gender norms, gender role attitudes can be considered to be a specific variation of social competence, such that gender role attitudes inform social interactions and provide one blueprint from which to evaluate social competence.

Therefore, this adaptation is an appropriate extension of Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization.

Similar to the majority of extant research on gender socialization, this study's sample is comprised entirely of heterosexual, White, and working- and middle-class families. As such, the literature reviewed below focuses primarily on families who reflect the dominant culture of this study. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that each piece of one's social identity combined creates a unique lived experience. Most importantly, the intersection of race and gender create a lived experience that is unique for Latino fathers, White mothers, Black mothers, and Arab fathers, for example. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of this study's sample, gender role socialization practices unique to LGBTQ+ families or families of color are outside the scope of this paper.

Parents' gender socialization practices affect the six different domains of gender development: biological or categorical sex, activities and interests, person-social attributes, social relationships, styles and symbols, and values regarding gender (Berenbaum, Martin, & Ruble, 2008). For the purposes of this study, I focus on the socialization of gender role attitudes specifically, which are comprised of each of these six domains, but draw most heavily from values regarding gender (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Because the dominant understanding of sex and gender are often conflated, parents' gender role socialization practices tend to be informed by their child's assigned sex at birth, which can lead to a process of essentializing gender (i.e., attributing gender differences to natural, inherent sex differences; Eagly & Wood, 2013). Some parents are intentional about socializing gender roles regardless of the child's assigned sex, however, this is not as common. For individuals in the trans\*community, this lack of separation between assigned sex and gender socialization practices

can cause confusion and psychological harm (Stieglitz, 2010), however, this level of nuance is also beyond the scope of this paper.

Furthermore, contextual factors, such as family composition, socioeconomic status, maternal workforce participation, and the parent-child gender constellation shape the nature of parents' gender role socialization practices (Galambos et al., 2009; McHale et al., 2003). In this study, I focus on the role of parent-child gender constellation (i.e., how mothers and fathers socialize gender depending on their adolescent's gender). Previous research has highlighted some overall trends in mothers' and fathers' gender socialization practices, such as modeling different gender roles and engaging in different activities with adolescents (Galambos et al., 2009; McHale et al., 2003). For example, in their meta-analysis, Biblarz and Stacey (2010) found that mothers typically invested more time in relationships, childrearing, and housework than fathers. Previous literature has focused primarily on mothers but has demonstrated that fathers may play a unique role in parenting (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). Hess, Ittel, and Sisler (2014) found that the effects of gender socialization are strongest for same-gender parent-child dyads. Specifically, boys are more influenced by gender-specific parenting from fathers than mothers, and daughters are more influenced by mothers than fathers. Furthermore, parents' differential treatment of sons and daughters tends to be exacerbated in families with mixed-gender sibling dyads (McHale et al., 2003). Therefore, as I review the gender socialization literature within these three pathways below, I note patterns by parent-child gender constellation as well as reference the different domains of gender development as they are relevant.

**Parent-child interaction.** The first socialization pathway involves daily parent-child interactions that occur within family rituals and routines. Parents reinforce gender-typed behavior through shared activities, general conversation, non-verbal communication, and

modeled behavior (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Parents are children's primary models for gender roles as they enact gender-typed behavior within their couple dynamics and division of labor (Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). The implications of these interactions vary in terms of the level of warmth, encouragement, and control parents exhibit (McHale et al., 2003). For example, the parent-child relationship is a platform for children to rehearse and hone social skills, and parents' differential responsiveness can reinforce gender-typical behavior and skills.

The research on parents' gender role socialization practices through direct parent-child interaction is extensive and has been measured in terms of parents' time spent with children, amount of communication, modeled behavior, and their differential treatment of their daughters and sons. Parents may interact with, and in turn socialize, their daughters' and sons' gender role attitudes differently (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Galambos et al., 2009; Mchale et al., 2003). For example, parents can encourage gendered behavior by engaging in more rough-and-tumble play with boys and more conversation with girls (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Mchale et al., 2003). As children age into adolescence, perceptions of stereotypically gendered activities become less rigid and are therefore not as segregated, but several gendered trends still emerge (Galambos et al., 2009; Mehta & Strough, 2010). For example, previous research demonstrates that adolescent girls are more likely to be interested in activities defined by cooperation and relationships, whereas boys are interested in activities defined by competition and physical exertion (Mehta & Strough, 2010; Perry & Pauletti, 2011; Galambos et al., 2009). These differences likely both encourage and are a result of differential socialization. In addition, these differences appear to be relatively consistent across socioeconomic status and race, although the research predominately reflects White, working and middle-class families.

Previous research has demonstrated that parents tend to communicate differently with girls and boys, which shapes adolescents' gender role attitude development. Specifically, parents (especially mothers) tend to provide more emotional support and communicate more often and about a wider variety of topics with daughters than sons. Greater communication for girls may contribute to girls' tendency to score higher than boys on traits such as agreeableness, warmth, and openness to feelings (Galambos et al., 2009; Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007; Moon & Hoffman, 2008; Perry & Pauletti, 2011). These personality traits align closely with the social script for feminine gender roles (e.g., expectations to be the emotional laborer). Conversely, a study about emotion socialization in children found that fathers were more reluctant than mothers to have family conversations about emotions, consequently modeling stoic behavior consistent with masculine gender roles (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2010).

In addition to how parents spend time with their children, parents model gender roles through their division of labor at home (Galambos et al., 2009). Mothers tend to be more involved in childrearing and report spending more time than fathers engaged in physical care and emotional support of their young children, which can lead to more opportunities for socializing feminine gender roles (Moon & Hoffman, 2008). When mothers perform more of these stereotypically feminine tasks, such as housework and childcare, Halpern and Perry-Jenkins (2016) found girls learned feminine gender stereotypes as early as age six. Alternatively, in a review of gender differences in adolescence, Perry and Pauletti (2011) found that when parents endorsed egalitarian values and an equal division of labor, adolescent girls performed better in school. Because women today are spending more time working outside the home and less time engaging in direct child care, an emerging body of literature has documented connections between mothers' engagement in the paid labor and adolescents' egalitarian gender role attitudes

(e.g., views of women roles in the workforce and at home; Galambos et al., 2009; McHale et al., 2003; Ruble et al., 2006).

Fathers' relationships with children are not as well-documented as mothers' relationships, however (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). Research has shown that fathers' time with children tends to center around leisure activities, which allows fathers to model masculine gender roles (McHale et al., 2003). For example, a father who spends much of his time watching or playing sports, hunting, or taking on home improvement projects would model toughness and strength as an important aspect of masculine gender roles. In addition, because fathers tend to spend more time with their sons than daughters and the effects of gender socialization are strongest for same-gender parent-child dyads, fathers may be more responsible than mothers for socializing their son's gender roles through daily interactions (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010; McHale et al., 2003). Conversely, fathers who have more egalitarian gender role attitudes tend to spend more time involved in childcare and consequently socialize more egalitarian gender role attitudes in their children (Hess et al., 2014). It is important for future research to better document fathers' role in socializing gender role attitudes in their children because of the implications this can have for boys' development specifically.

**Direct instructors.** Parents also socialize gender roles by providing instructions, the second pathway in the tripartite model. Parents educate and instruct their children to adhere to culturally appropriate behaviors to become "successful" women and men (Parke & Buriel, 1998). Parents also act as mentors and teachers as they coach their children through new social experiences by giving advice, offering support, and rewarding or punishing behavior (Parke & Buriel, 1998). The most common way parents use instructions to socialize their adolescent's gender role attitudes is by setting different gendered expectations for romantic relationships,

educating their children about gender role symbols, and encouraging girls and boys to express emotions differently (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Galambos et al., 2009; Hess et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2002; Ruble et al., 2006). The degree to which parents provide similar or different instructions about dating, symbols associated with gender roles, and adolescents' expression of emotions generally depends on the parents' own gender role attitudes (e.g., the more traditional attitudes the parents hold, the more they will likely provide gendered instructions).

There is a growing body of literature assessing parents' management of and involvement in their adolescent's romantic relationships as a means of socializing gender role attitudes. Madsen (2008) found that both mothers and fathers set more rules regarding dating for their adolescent daughters than sons in a sample of predominately White families. Specifically, parents exerted more control over their daughter's romantic relationships by requiring their dates to be more supervised (e.g., enforcing an "open-door" policy). Mirroring these findings, Kan, McHale, and Crouter (2008) found that parents were stricter with their daughters and encouraged them to conform to gender roles in romantic relationships, whereas parents granted sons more independence to explore their romantic relationships. Parents' gendered instructions about how to navigate romantic relationships reflect the dominant narrative about gender roles in romantic relationships, wherein women require protection from men and men's sexually charged pursuits are encouraged or excused (Ellemers, 2018).

Previous research has also shown that many parents teach their adolescents about the symbols that signify feminine or masculine gender roles. Such symbols include the gendered aspects of one's appearance (i.e., gender expression), specifically related to body image (Galambos et al., 2009). Girls receive both overt and covert messages from parents, peers, and the media that associate thinness with attractiveness, happiness, and success (Tiggemann,

Gardiner, & Slater, 2000). Conversely, boys tend to receive messages about body image that associate toughness and strength with what it means to “be a man” (Smith, Schacter, Enders, & Juvonen, 2018). Although girls’ and boys’ body images are socialized differently, Epstein and Ward (2011) found that the more exposed girls and boys are to these messages, the more both girls and boys reported traditional gender role attitudes. These messages have been linked to adolescents’ self-esteem and levels of depression, so better understanding the role parents have in socializing this domain of gender development could further the field’s understanding of some of the connections from gender role socialization to mental health in adolescence (Smith et al., 2018; Ruble et al., 2006).

Previous research also shows that starting in early childhood and continuing throughout adolescence, parents instruct their girls and boys to manage and express their emotions differently, whether that instruction is explicit or implicit, intentional or unintentional (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2010; Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007). Phrases like “boys will be boys” and “girls can be so emotional” send powerful messages to adolescents about how girls and boys are supposed to behave and experience emotions. Although there is much overlap between the messages girls and boys receive, previous research shows mothers and fathers do not socialize emotions in the same way. Klimes-Dougan and colleagues (2007) found that mothers were more invested than fathers in the emotional lives of their children. In two studies of predominately White families, fathers were found to ignore adolescents’ expression of sadness and anger, regardless of adolescent gender (Denham et al., 2010; Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007). Learning to express and understand emotions is a crucial part of development, so it is critical to document parents’ contributions to their daughters’ and sons’ socioemotional development (e.g., emotional intelligence skills).

**Providers of opportunity.** Third, socialization occurs when parents provide or restrict opportunities for their children (Parke & Buriel, 1998). Parents are responsible for managing their children's time and resources both indirectly (e.g., designing their child's social context) and directly (e.g., organizing child's time), and the more financial flexibility families have, the more intentional and selective parents can be when providing opportunities (McHale et al., 2003). Opportunities during adolescence could range from joining clubs, attending events, or building friendships. Indirectly, parents choose the neighborhood, school district, and type of education their children experience, and these choices contribute to the kinds of clubs, events, and people their children access (Parke & Buriel, 1998). For example, an adolescent who lives in a neighborhood that is located close to a religious institution or is surrounded by a community comprised mostly of people of faith may receive messages about gender that will likely be different than if his or her neighborhood was comprised of predominately LGBT+ couples and families.

Parents shape family life by providing or restricting opportunities based on the intersection of their family's resources, their own values and beliefs about gender, and the sibling gender constellation of their family (Crouter, Head, Bumpus, & Mchale, 2001; Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016; Mchale, et al., 2003). Additionally, increased autonomy in adolescence allows adolescents to have more agency and control over how their gender role attitudes are socialized, especially through the opportunities and activities they participate in (Galambos et al., 2009). The most common ways that parents socialize gender roles through opportunities are assigning household chores and encouraging sports-related activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005).

The assignment of household chores, whether egalitarian or traditional, send strong messages about what gender roles look like in a family (Galambos et al., 2009; Mchale et al.,

2003). In a review of gender socialization, Leaper and Friedman (2007) found that children's experiences with household chores shapes their gender role attitudes, prosocial behavior, and future sense of obligation and entitlement regarding housework. Crouter and colleagues (2001) found that when mothers in middle-class White families held demanding jobs, adolescent girls were assigned significantly more housework than their brothers. This division of labor was especially evident in families with mixed-gender sibling dyads. Additionally, Crouter, Manke, and McHale (1995) found that both the sibling gender constellation and parents' gender role attitudes influenced parents' assignment of household chores, finding that parents with traditional attitudes assigned more housework to older daughters than younger sons and adolescent boys engaged in more masculine-typed chores (e.g., outdoor work) than girls. These studies help demonstrate that household chores may be one of the most salient examples of gender role enactment. Understanding the circumstances under which parents assign stereotypically gendered (or gender neutral) chores to their children will help to document one of the many mechanisms through which gender role attitudes are socialized by means of parents' provision of opportunities. The research on parental gender role socialization via opportunities is scant, so I have extrapolated relevant gender-specific and gender-neutral parenting practices from previous studies.

Another way parents socialize their children's gender role attitudes is by encouraging or restricting their children's participation in various school activities. Previous research has demonstrated that both mothers and fathers provide less encouragement and fewer opportunities for sports-related activities to girls than boys from childhood through adolescence (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Greendorfer, Lewko, & Rosengren, 1996). Similarly, Fredricks and Eccles (2005) found that parents' beliefs about girls' and boys' sports-related competence and values predicted

parents' gender-typed encouragement of sport-related opportunities. In their review, McHale and colleagues (2003) also found that parents more frequently arrange opportunities for their sons to be involved in computer and advanced placement classes than their daughters. Adolescent involvement in gender-typed school activities is a common example of how gender roles and their associated social scripts begin to emerge in young adolescence (Galambos et al., 2009).

Because adolescents grow increasingly autonomous throughout adolescence, there is a dynamic interplay between adolescent's exploring their individual agency and parents providing opportunities that foster autonomy. Previous researchers have discovered that parents tend to differentially grant autonomy to their adolescent children based on the sibling gender constellation of the family (McHale et al., 2003). Heterosexual parents in White, middle- and working-class families tend to provide firstborn girls with more autonomous decision-making opportunities than second born boys (Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 2001). When mothers in these families held more traditional gender role attitudes, adolescent boys were given more autonomous decision-making opportunities than adolescent girls. Although Bumpus, Crouter, and McHale (2001) did not review providing these opportunities through a gender socialization lens, providing autonomous decision-making opportunities could be an unexplored means through which parents are inadvertently socializing gender role attitudes.

### **Adolescence as a Critical Period for Gender Development**

Adolescence is a critical period for development marked by changing social lives as adolescents become more autonomous and spend more time with peers. As adolescents become more autonomous, their gender role attitudes play an increasingly critical role in how they navigate new and changing relationships, responsibilities, and decisions. Eagly and Wood (2013) found that gender roles have the power to influence psychosocial aspects of development,

including social and self-regulation over and above gender identity (i.e., one's sense of self as a woman or a man; Ruble et al., 2006). Eagly and Wood's (2013) study demonstrates that the power of gender roles goes far beyond relationships and can have long-lasting effects on the skills and opportunities one may acquire throughout adolescence and beyond. Untangling how gender role attitudes are shaped during this developmental period could deepen the field's understanding of the underlying mechanisms (e.g., gendered values and beliefs) that contribute to adolescents' lived experiences.

### **The Current Study**

In the height of gender socialization research from the late 90s to the early 2000s, the primary focus was on direct parent-child interaction; parents as providers of instruction and opportunities are two pathways of the tripartite model that have been relatively neglected and warrant further investigation (McHale et al., 2003; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Additionally, it is important to note that parents oftentimes send conflicting and incongruent messages about gender appropriate behavior, both between mothers and fathers and across different pathways of the tripartite model (Martin et al., 2002). To better understand how and under what circumstances parents socialize their adolescents gender role attitudes, it is critical to document the role of parent-child gender constellation in each branch of the tripartite model.

There are several major gaps in the literature that this study aims to address. First, the field still needs to understand the mechanisms through which parents convey their attitudes about gender (e.g., McHale et al., 2003; Galambos et al., 2009). To do this, previous studies have called for a multidimensional approach to study gender socialization in families in order to ascertain a more nuanced understanding of the different contributors to gender development (e.g., Epstein & Ward, 2011; Hess, Ittel, & Sisler, 2014). Park and Buriel's (1998) tripartite

model of socialization applied in this study serves as the multidimensional approach necessary to understand how parents allocate family resources and organize family life that socialize gender. Second, the majority of previous studies have relied on quantitative methods to study parental gender socialization. Although these methods have produced important insights, this study utilizes a qualitative approach that can provide rich detail about the context and mechanisms behind the process of gender socialization that quantitative methods may not adequately assess. Specifically, qualitative interviews with both mothers and fathers will produce meaningful insights into the role that the parent-child gender constellation has for parents' gender socialization practices. Finally, this study builds on previous literature by studying families with adolescent children rather than focusing on early childhood. Much of the previous literature has focused on early childhood, so the patterns in the gender socialization literature may not necessarily apply to adolescence. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to utilize a qualitative approach to yield a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of parents' gender role socialization practices. Specifically, I apply Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization to investigate how the various documented pathways of parental gender role socialization unfold depending on the parent-child gender constellation.

This study aims to answer the following research question: How do mothers and fathers describe socializing their adolescents' gender roles – overall and by adolescent gender – in the following domains: (a) Direct parent-child interaction? (b) Providing instruction? (c) Providing opportunities? Based on existing literature, I expect to find variation in how parents describe socializing their daughters and sons. In terms of direct parent-child interaction, I expect that mothers and fathers will initially state that they socialize their son's and daughter's gender roles similarly but then will describe modeling traditional gender roles. In terms of providing

instruction, I expect that mothers and fathers will provide explicit instruction to their adolescents (especially daughters) about gender roles in romantic relationships. Lastly, in terms of providing opportunities, I imagine that mothers and fathers will describe providing the same opportunities for daughters and sons, but fathers will be more concerned than mothers with their children (especially sons) abiding by gender-typical activities and interests.

### Chapter 3 – Materials and Method

Data for this study were collected as part of the Family Relationships Project (FRP), a fifteen-year longitudinal study focusing on the family context of gender socialization from middle childhood through young adulthood. The aim of this study fits within that of the larger project. Data for this study was collected as part of the Phase 7 (2001-2002) data collection. Data from Phase 7 is most appropriate for this study because it includes open-ended questions about possible gender-specific parenting practices. In addition, the target children for this study had reached adolescence, which is the target age range for the scope of this study.

#### **Participants**

FRP-participating families were recruited in Phase 1 (1995) through letters sent out to families in 16 school districts in a northeastern state. FRP targeted two-parent working and middle-class White families with at least two children. Of the families that were targeted, those eligible were families with married, heterosexual parents with a firstborn child in fourth or fifth grade and a sibling 1 to 3 years younger. This resulted in a sample of families with target children that included two daughters, two sons, an older daughter and younger son, or an older son and younger daughter. In Phase 1, 203 eligible families participated in the study. By Phase 7, 191 families were still enrolled in the study. Of those, 91 families included both a daughter and a son and 57 of those families had interview data from both mothers and fathers.

To address the aforementioned research question, I used stratified random sampling to select a subsample of families, including 15 families in which the eldest target child was a boy (i.e., BG families) and 15 families in which the eldest target child was a girl (i.e., GB families;  $N = 30$  families, 60 parents). I randomly selected BG and GB subsamples in order to balance the number of families with different gender and birth order constellations. Additionally, limiting the

sample to only families with both a daughter and a son allowed for gender-specific parenting practices to become more salient in each parent-child gender constellation and allowed these parents to reflect on their similar and differential treatment of their adolescents. For the purposes of this study, I limited my analyses to between-family comparisons and did not compare mothers and fathers gender socialization practices within the same family. Lastly, documenting the nuances of gender socialization practices by the sibling birth order by gender constellation is beyond the focus of this study but remains a ripe area for future research.

Reflecting the demographic characteristics of the northeastern region of the U.S. that this data were collected from, the total sample consists of White working and middle-class families. On average, the adolescents were high school-aged, and siblings were approximately three years apart (see Table 1 for more details). I conducted three independent samples *t*-tests. After first comparing the analytic sample to the remaining Phase 7 sample ( $N = 161$ ), the only variable of interest that was significantly different was family income (See Tables 1 for more details). As shown in Table 1, the analytic sample has a mean family income that is approximately \$18k higher than the remaining Phase 7 FRP sample. Although family income is significantly different, this difference in income level does not indicate a meaningful difference between the two samples, because both average family incomes would be considered middle to upper-middle class and all other family characteristics are similar. An independent samples *t*-test comparing the analytic sample ( $n = 30$ ) to the remaining subsample of families with both a daughter and son ( $N = 61$ ) revealed no significant differences (See Table 2 for more details). Lastly, when the analytic sample was divided by the sibling gender constellation (i.e., 15 girl-boy families and 15 boy-girl families), a final independent samples *t*-test revealed that the two subsamples do not statistically differ from one another on any variable of interest (see Table 3 for more details).

## **Procedure**

For the current study, I analyzed 60 transcribed semi-structured interviews from mothers and fathers in 30 families who participated in Phase 7 of the longitudinal Family Relationships Project. Data were collected during at-home interviews separately with mothers and fathers within the same families about the same children. Informed consent was obtained from each family member, and the family was compensated \$100 for their time and participation.

## **Measures**

**Demographic information.** Family background information was obtained from mothers who reported information about themselves and each child in a family demographics survey at the beginning of the interview in Phase 1 and reconfirmed in the phases that followed. Mothers reported each child's gender, age, years of education, academic achievement, and biological relatedness. In addition, both mothers and fathers reported current employment status, number of hours worked per week, type of work shift (e.g., day shift, rotating shift), parental education level, and individual and combined annual gross income.

**Home interviews.** After survey data and background information were obtained, researchers from the original FRP team conducted face-to-face, semi-structured interviews individually with mothers and fathers of adolescent children. The semi-structured part of the interview lasted approximately 20 minutes out of the total two to three hours of data collection and contained two sets of questions. The first nine questions were related to how parents have learned to be more effective parents and included questions about communication and developing attitudes and values. Sample questions included "What have you learned from raising [your oldest child] that has been useful?" and "Do you think this has helped you in getting along with [your youngest child] a little, somewhat, or a lot?" The last six questions addressed how

each parent has approached raising their son versus their daughter (see Appendix A for the complete list of questions). These questions related to parenting, marriage, and future role in the workplace. Sample questions included “What, if anything, have you tried to teach your daughter about her future role in the workplace that may or may not be different from what you have tried to teach [your son]?” Although the first set of questions may not directly assess gendered parenting practices, it was possible that they would yield meaningful insights that the second set of questions may not. For example, in response to the question “What have you learned from raising [your oldest child] that has been useful?” it is possible that a parent will describe parenting strategies that are specific to gender and/or the tripartite model (e.g., providing instruction). Additionally, because each family will contain both a girl and a boy, these first questions were identified as implicitly addressing gender differences. These interviews were originally recorded on cassette tapes and transcribed by the interviewers prior to the release of the Phase 7 data. Only the transcripts were available for this data analysis.

### **Data Analytic Strategy**

Each semi-structured interview was transcribed to yield 60 transcripts, which were an average of five single-spaced pages long. To analyze the transcripts, I used an abductive approach coupled with a directed content analysis. An abductive approach is the systematic combination of both inductive and deductive methodologies (Dubios & Gadde, 2002). Both an abductive approach and a directed content analysis aim to serve the same purpose: to refine or extend theoretical frameworks by using theoretical models to guide analyses while simultaneously allowing new themes and concepts to emerge from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dubios & Gadde, 2002). An abductive approach was deemed the most appropriate approach for this study, because it allowed me to develop an informed analytic plan while also

providing the flexibility for new codes, concepts, and themes to emerge from the data. The major tenets of symbolic interactionism – roles, norms, and socialization – provided the overarching framework for this study that informed emerging codes and definitions as well as helped to organize themes that served to extend Parke and Buriel's (1998) tripartite model of socialization.

**First impressions.** For my first pass through the data, I read through each transcript to glean any first impressions. I wrote a first impressions memo for each transcript, making note of any potential codes and emerging concepts and themes. I also wrote a summative memo in which I wrote about my overall reactions and any recurring codes, highlights, and emerging concepts that cut across the first impression memos. Following Hsieh and Shannon's (2005) recommendations, I developed an initial coding scheme and definitions based on previous literature and theoretical frameworks informing this study (see Table 4 for example codes and definitions).

**Content analysis.** To analyze the transcripts, I used Atlas.ti (student version 8.1.30.0) as a tool to organize and visualize associations that emerge from the data. For my second pass through the data, I highlighted any relevant text and code with the initial coding scheme. For passages that did not fit within the initial coding scheme, I created a new code and code definition. I wrote a memo for each transcript as well as a summative memo after every ten transcripts. After my second pass through the data, I considered all original and new codes created during the content analysis process and finalized the codebook. Then, I re-coded each transcript using the finalized codebook. To add context to each person's story, I made note of important attributes, such as a participant's socioeconomic status and age.

A second coder coded twenty percent of the interviews (i.e., 12 interviews). This second coder had over 10 years of research experience since receiving her Ph.D. in Human Development

and Family Studies, including qualitative research, and had direct experience with the FRP. Following MacPhail, Khoza, Abler, and Ranganathan's (2016) recommendations for establishing intercoder reliability, the second coder and I coded each transcript independently, and reconciled until we reached agreement before moving to the next transcript. Together, we revised codes and definitions and solidified emerging concepts and themes.

**Thematic analysis.** To interpret the data and address the research question, I organized memos, codes, and associated quotes around different themes that emerged from the thematic analyses. I visually represented each theme by creating a hierarchical representation. In addition, I also wrote a memo for each theme that aimed to flesh out and explain each theme and its different aspects, such as the codes and concepts. Concepts can also refer to conceptual categories, or clusters of interrelated codes that are at the core of higher-level themes (Brown 2008). Two themes emerged that captured gender socialization practices by the parent-child gender constellations as well as reflect the different domains of the tripartite model (i.e., direct parent-child interaction, providing instruction, and providing opportunities).

**Establishing rigor.** I took several measures to ensure reliable and valid analyses. To yield trustworthy findings, it is essential to be responsive throughout each phase of analysis. Memoing with each pass through the data served as an opportunity for me to acknowledge my positionality and any biases I had that could have influenced my interpretation of the data. Additionally, memos provided a detailed record of my decision-making process. Another major strength of this study's analyses is the use of a second coder. A second coder ensured that analysis was consistent and meaningful by helping to develop the codebook, check for bias by reviewing memos and themes, and establishing rigor. Specifically, a second coder helped me to check for alternative explanations and minimize confirmation bias.

## Chapter 4 – Results

The aim of this study was to understand how parents describe socializing their daughters and sons by parent-child interaction, providing opportunities, and providing instruction and to identify any patterns by parent-child gender constellation. Because the purpose of qualitative research is to identify broader themes, an additional aim of this study was to identify broader, salient themes about parents' socialization beliefs and practices. Qualitative analyses indicated that parents socialize their adolescents in diverse ways that align well with the tripartite model of socialization pathways. A group of codes and concepts (i.e., clusters of interrelated codes that are at the core of higher-level themes; Brown 2008) also emerged from the data that do not fit neatly within Parke and Buriel's definitions of socialization as depicted in their tripartite model of socialization. The interview questions for this study were designed to capture special concerns parents had about raising a daughter versus a son as well as the different lessons parents tried to teach their daughters versus their sons. These questions solicited responses about expectations and concerns, interactions, communication patterns, and instructions about gender roles unique to each parent-child gender constellation (see Appendix B for complete list of codes and definitions). Some parenting practices and adolescent differences emerged that are more reflective of birth order or personality and are outside the scope of this study. Therefore, they are included in the full list of codes and definitions (Appendix B) but will not be discussed in the results or discussion section.

As Parke and Buriel (1998) indicate, there is some overlap between the three pathways of the tripartite model of socialization, which became evident in my analyses. Therefore, I begin by introducing and quantifying the descriptive results and mapping parents' gender socialization practices onto the tripartite model of socialization. I include quotes from parents and highlight

salient socialization patterns by parent-child gender constellation within each tripartite pathway. I dissect the similarities, differences, and overall patterns by parent-child gender constellation later in the discussion section. Then, I discuss parents' beliefs, concerns, and attitudes that shape their socialization practices, but do not fit within any of the three pathways. Lastly, I introduce the two salient themes that emerged and describe how the codes discussed in the descriptive results connect to form overarching concepts that make up the themes. Because all fathers and most mothers were employed full-time, I include parents' age and family size and only indicate parents' employment status if they are a stay-at-home parent.

### **Parents' Strategies According to The Tripartite Model of Socialization**

Each of the three pathways of the tripartite model of socialization were salient across nearly all interviews. Although there is some overlap among the three pathways, the most salient gender socializing practices that fit well within each pathway are described below. The number of mothers and fathers that described each gender socialization practice and exemplary quotes are also included.

**Pathway 1: Parent-child interactions.** Every parent described interacting with their adolescents in a way that socialized gender.

**Communication.** The most salient form of gender socialization via parent-child interaction was communication. Whether parents were talking to their daughter, son, or both adolescents, more mothers than fathers described spending time openly communicating with their children ( $n = 18$  mothers and 13 fathers). Of those 31 parents, both mothers and fathers noticed that their adolescents typically gravitated toward communicating most often with their same-gender parent. For example, a mother, age 45, observed this pattern of same-gender communication and noted:

...It's different because I never had any brothers. Um I never had a lot of male influence more or less. And I usually- some of that stuff I just I let [his father] talk to 'em about that stuff, because I'm not sure.

A 43-year-old father echoed this sentiment by stating, "I think sometimes she talks to [her mom] more or about different than she talks to me because I'm the father and she's the daughter."

Nonetheless, mothers reported communicating with both their daughters and sons more frequently and about a wider array of topics than fathers. Unsurprisingly, mothers emphasized having open communication with their adolescents and often initiating conversations about friendships and romantic relationships, parenthood, and daily hassles and activities. A 42-year-old mother of four, stated, "They probably don't tell me everything, but at least we talk. But, I have always tried to keep those lines open and encourage them to do that." There were 16 parents that stated they hadn't talked to their daughter or son about a particular topic, however, there were not any patterns in these parents' responses.

Sixteen parents took notice of their daughter's communication habits. Most often, daughters were described as either easy or difficult to talk to. For example, parents described their daughter as: "articulate," "easy to talk to," able to "tell you when she has a problem," "doesn't argue a lot," "has to get the last word in," "reserved," and "outspoken." Five fathers noticed that their daughters communicate more often and more openly than their sons. One 48-year-old father, said, "I'm not trying to sound gender biased here, but I think girls talk more about that kind of stuff [relationships] than guys do."

To encourage their adolescents to communicate, nine mothers (but zero fathers) described coming up with strategies to communicate more effectively or more frequently with their sons and daughters. For example, a 43-year-old mother of three learned that both of her adolescents just wanted validation when trying on new clothes. She stated:

[My son] would say how do I look and I might say, I've come to the conclusion unless it's downright deplorable, I say, 'You look nice.' (laughter) It's the best thing to say because they're not really asking; they just want some assurance.

A 41-year-old stay-at-home mother of two described how she adapted her communication style with her daughter in order for her daughter to feel more comfortable sharing things with her:

Um, yeah, I think I've learned that if I overreact to things she tells me that she's either done or her friends have done that then she doesn't tell me anymore things that happen. So, I learn to just sort of bite my tongue a little bit, hear the whole story, and don't really react like my insides want to react.

Parents described communicating less frequently with their sons than daughters. Again, Mothers communicated with their sons more frequently than fathers, such that 12 mothers and seven fathers described communicating with their sons. Fathers most frequently discussed potential future career paths and how to best prepare for them with their sons. Eight parents described how they navigated arguing with their sons. Similarly, another eight parents revealed that they provided their sons with more autonomy in conversations than they did their daughters, such that they described asking for, taking into consideration, and respecting their son's point of view. For example, "...with [my son], he's really outspoken too, I just let him. I let him say what he wants to say and then let him get another perspective..." (Father of two, age 43). Another mother revealed:

I think again just ah hearing him on his point of view. He's pretty level-headed and respecting that, I think I have a lot of respect for his opinion. Ummm and he's- I don't know he has a lot of character. I think he has a lot of character and so I put a lot of worth in what he has to say. (Mother of three, age 46).

Parents never mentioned their daughter's perspective in the same way.

Mothers' most common topics of conversations with their daughters included friendships, romantic relationships, how to navigate interpersonal conflict, and parenthood. Fifteen mothers and eight fathers described communicating with their daughters. Five of those fathers noticed that their daughter communicates more than their son. One 48-year-old father of two, stated,

“She’s, you know, she’s very easy to talk to and uh, [her brother] is not, but that has to do with I think from what I’ve been finding at least is quite common with that age and that sex.”

Parental knowledge was a salient method of gender socialization that emerged from the data, aligns with previous literature, but it is not neatly captured in Parke and Buriel’s tripartite model of socialization. Parental knowledge refers to the accurate knowledge parents have about their child’s mood, whereabouts, social lives, etc., is obtained primarily through monitoring and self-disclosure from the child, and overlaps with parents’ attitudes, beliefs, and concerns that are discussed later in this chapter (Crouter & Head, 2002). Parental knowledge emerged primarily in these data as parents’ knowledge of daughter’s conflict with peers and daughter’s whereabouts. Seven mothers and one father noted that their daughters experience more conflict with friends than their sons do.

Girls, sometimes they get mad at each other for no reason and it takes longer for them to set, resolve it, and I know it’s more upsetting to a girl than it is whenever you have a couple guys who are friends and they get upset with each other and then they, you know, guys just mad today and forgive tomorrow. And girls don’t. (Mother of two, age 40).

**Modeling.** Modeling gender roles is another method of socialization that parents described intentionally using to socialize their adolescents but does not fit within Parke and Buriel’s definition of modeling. Parke and Buriel (1998) define modeling warm and responsive interactions as a means of socialization. Although warm and responsive interactions can be inferred from some parents’ responses, these parents describe modeling a division of household and paid labor as a means of socializing their adolescents. Seven mothers described leaving the workforce or staying home full-time when their children were young. Mothers’ participation in the paid workforce specifically was of interest to many parents and an important aspect of modeling gender roles that many parents discussed.

Well I- I think that in a family that we have, I don't think that it's necessary that I've been one of the main providers... When they were younger [my wife] stayed at home. Which to us that was very uh that was an important part of that maybe she wasn't bringing money in, but it was important for us as a family to uh to provide them with someone at home. (Father of three, age 38).

Some parents described intentionally modeling behavior, such as this 50-year-old mother of two, stated, "modeling behavior for children is probably the most important thing that you can do." A 46-year-old father of two, stated, "I- I think we try to lead by example. Um I really don't discuss it too much." Two parents summed up their intentions behind modeling gender roles:

Uh I don't think we've taught them, I think we just tried to be good role models that's all. You know, we don't say 'this is the way you should be a mother' or 'this is the way you should be a spouse.' We- we live it, I think. We try to. You know we're not perfect, but we try to. (Father of three, age 48).

Cause he gets home from work before I do, so they're used to seeing him cook, they're used to seeing him do the dishes, and work around the house, so I've tried to be the same, you know, treat them that way too. That you don't have women's chores and men's chores or, err, it's not the wife's job to do certain things. And I think with we working too that has helped, or maybe molded the [way] we've done what we've done. (Mother of four, age 41).

The extent to which intentionally and unintentionally modeling gender roles is a salient method of gender socialization will be analyzed further in the discussion section.

**Pathway 2: Direct instruction.** All parents responded that they conveyed similar messages to their adolescents about education, the workplace, marriage, and/or parenthood. Many parents responded with concise answers regarding whether they instruct their son and daughter differently, such as "Not really, no," "I don't see any differences there," or "There's nothing different there." Some patterns emerged, included encouraging higher education and wanting their adolescents "to do the best they can."

**Education.** When asked about education, 19 fathers and 17 mothers stated that they conveyed the same messages about education to their daughters and sons. Parents emphasized the importance of encouraging their adolescents' educational pursuits. A 43-year-old father of

two, stated, “I will encourage my, both of them to do what they want to do, you know, as long as they’re happy and doing what they enjoy.” A 45-year-old father of two echoed a similar sentiment, “I mean we both want them to do as well as they can and encourage them to aspire to as much as they can accomplish. As much as they can do.” A 43-year-old mother of two described the importance of timing major life decisions around education and stated, “I encourage them all to finish their education before they make other life decisions.”

***Marriage and parenthood.*** When asked if there was anything parents taught their daughter about parenthood and marriage that is different from what they have taught their son, 12 fathers and nine mothers stated that they conveyed similar messages both their adolescents. “I think that we tried to be equal in what we think is important for one to know is also important for the other one. So, I don’t believe there are any big differences” (Father of three, age 48). A mother, age 44, referenced conveying that marriage is a commitment not to be taken lightly:

Umm, I really can’t think of anything different, umm, you know, I believe that marriage is a commitment and hopefully they only do it one time and so they better be sure who they pick for their partner, but I can’t think of anything that I’ve told one that is different from the other.

Some parents spoke specifically about teaching their adolescents similar things about parenting.

A mother described teaching her adolescents about how to divide childcare:

Um, I, to both of them I say and would say that someone does need to take responsibility during the day. To me, it’s whoever best equipped to do it, who’s better suited to do, and individual choices they make with their spouse. Pretty much the same... (Mother of two, age 50)

***Careers.*** Nineteen fathers and 14 mothers described conveying similar messages to their adolescents about their future roles in the workplace. Several mothers emphasized that they wanted their adolescents to choose a career that made them happy. The same mother that described teaching her adolescents how to divide childcare during parenthood, stated:

I, I have told her, both of the children, that I want them to pick something that is, that gets them gratification for a career that's respectable, honorable, and self-supporting. Both of them, I want my children to be independent. So that they don't have to depend on someone else for anything, unless they want to. (Mother of two, age 50)

Several parents emphasized wanting their adolescents to work hard. "Nothing. Um I want them to you know do whatever they want to do and do the best they can do at it." (Father of three, age 45). Another mother similarly stated, "I don't think anything. I tell them both they can be anything they want to be work hard and they can be anything." (Mother of two, age 44).

*Preparing daughters for marriage.* Parents were asked three interview questions about what (if anything) they have tried to teach their daughter about their future roles in marriage, parenthood, and in the workplace. These questions led parents (primarily mothers) to describe ways in which they were uniquely preparing their daughters for each of these roles. Six mothers described ways in which they were preparing their daughters for marriage, such that they were coaching their daughters and giving them advice on how to pick the "right person." For example, a 41-year-old stay-at-home mother described coaching her daughter to choose her friends wisely now in preparation for when she marries in the future:

I mean, I've talked to Angela, you know, about issues like, you know, she has to pick wisely in her friends now because, you know, when she marries someone that is who she will be with the rest of her life. And, you know, superficial things fade and, you know, try to stress that you need a good person and how, how important the family, the background of the people mean. That they have to be people with high morals.

A 39-year-old father described preparing his daughter for marriage in a similar way by teaching his daughter to avoid choosing a partner based on looks. He stated:

Um, I guess I taught her about trying to find the right person, someone who is going to treat her the way she wants to be treated. Not trying to find a person for looks, trying to find a person that is going to respect her as a person.

*Preparing daughters for motherhood.* Similar to how parents prepared their daughters for marriage, mothers (but not fathers) also described ways that they prepared their daughters for motherhood. Because this interview question was often asked as things parents tried to teach their daughters about marriage *and* parenthood, the instruction mothers gave to their adolescents were sometimes similar for both roles. Mothers from seven families instructed their daughters about when and how to make major life decisions, such as, choosing a job field that allowed part-time work or waiting to have kids. The same stay-at-home mother that described preparing her daughter for marriage, described coaching her daughter: “Well, I have mentioned to her that if she, you know, it would be nice to have a kind of job that she, if she would decide to have a family and wanna work part-time or take some time off. There are certain professions that are easier to do that with.” Another 45-year-old mother stated:

My thing with her is... the thing with some daughters is that they think that they have to get married and have children. I told her she didn't have to do that right away. I told her to take her time. So I mean that's one thing that's a little different.

*Preparing daughters for future role in the workplace.* Both mothers and fathers described preparing their daughters for their future role in the workplace. While describing how they were coaching their daughters on what to expect for her future role in the workplace, much of parents' advice stemmed from their awareness of stereotypes and society's expectations for women in the workplace. Many of these instructions revolved around this idea that women have to work “twice as hard” as men to receive the same recognition. Fathers spearheaded socializing their daughters in this way, such that six fathers and three mothers taught their daughters about how to prepare for and what to expect in the workplace. A 41-year-old father of two, stated:

Um, but as far as when she does get into the workplace, she probably does have to be better than a man because she'll be judged as a woman and not known. And people with the perception that she doesn't know what she is talking about. So she really needs to go above and beyond what a man might do to prove him or herself.

Another 40-year-old father, stated:

The only thing with Heather, employment wise, the only thing I've said to her is nobody has the right to be abusive to you, because you're a female doesn't allow anyone more rights to be verbally abusive or make sexual advances to you, I probably wouldn't say the same to my son, but as a dad you're always thinking about those things.

Alternatively, another 43-year-old father stated, "I've tried to teach her that there wasn't any difference. That she's going to have the same opportunities and responsibilities that [her brother] does." One 46-year-old mother set the expectation for her daughter that "[marriage] shouldn't be a career goal".

*Fostering daughter's sense of independence and self-respect.* Parents were most intentional about socializing through direct instruction, especially with regards to socializing aspects of their daughters' sense of self. Nine mothers and three fathers described fostering their daughters' sense of independence. One stay-at-home 39-year-old mother of two, stated, "Um, I think the big thing was to make Tori a little bit more independent. Kind of pushed her out there a little bit more than I did him." Seven of those mothers discussed how important they felt it was for their daughter to become financially independent and not rely on others:

I think with raising a daughter, I think it's important to help them develop their independence, umm, that, you know, in our society, I agree that a woman does or should have a good job or be able to support herself if she needs to and I think it's really important to be independent and the umm, encourage what positive skills they have for their future, for working... (44 years old, mother of 2).

Well I know they both need to work. I um I'm a little bit more independent on the on the job type thing cause when I got out of school I had a job. I got a job. And I would expect Rachael to do the same thing. I wouldn't expect her just to get married and have someone take care of her, you know? So she wouldn't have to work (45 years old, mother of 2).

A 50-year-old father of two similarly stated, "We have not told her that she can, we tried to prepare her to be a self-reliant. Um, be able to support herself and not depend upon a rich husband, etc." Some parents referenced how they would want the same financial independence

for their sons but prioritized discussing how they were intentionally fostering this in their daughters. Therefore, parents' encouragement of their son's financial independence was not a salient concept as it was generally mentioned as an afterthought.

I would stress that with him too, but I guess what I'm saying is that with the female, umm, you might need to encourage that more now, than in prior years, but no, I've certainly done that with both of them, umm, encouragement to be able to be independent thinkers and to be able to develop their positive skills that they have in the future to be successful. (44 years old, mother of 2).

Teaching adolescents about respect emerged from parents' interviews, such that three fathers and six mothers reported teaching their sons to respect women and/or teaching their daughters to respect themselves. Five parents referenced the explicit instructions they gave their sons to teach them to respect women and girls.

In raising [my son] it's been really important to me to impress upon him a respect for girls and women and ummm have a mutual respect, you know between genders. I think that he would clearly get that message from me. (Mother of three, age 46)

A mother quoted previously described how she taught her daughter about self-respect at work:

Well for example, she just started working part-time. I told her the way you look, um, the way you present yourself I think is very important on how people respect you. You- you wanna make sure you're dressed neat, your hair's neat, you know, you- you don't have too much make-up on, too much jewelry... (Mother of two, age 45).

**Pathway 3: Providers of opportunity.** Parents described both restricting and providing opportunities to their adolescents. Although fewer codes and concepts emerged for this pathway than the others, this was still a salient pathway. Examples of this pathway that emerged from the data, include attending religious services, assigning similar or gender-typical chores, encouraging involvement in various activities, and restricting daughter's opportunities.

*Neighborhood and religious services.* Eight parents described providing various opportunities that, according to previous literature, could indirectly socialize their adolescent's

gender role attitudes. Examples of these opportunities include neighborhood context and religious services. Four parents described their family regularly attending religious services. “I-we’ve seen that we feel that the institution of a religion really helps the child with life’s values and things like that. So, I just think that what you do matters so much.” (Mother of two, age 50). One 51-year-old father of two described how it was helpful for his son to live in a neighborhood with other little boys: “he grew up next to, as a little boy, there were a couple of little boys right next to him and as he was growing up, which helped.”

*Sports.* In addition to these indirect ways parents socialized their adolescents, parents also described providing similar or typically gendered opportunities (i.e., assigning chores and encouraging involvement in sports) to their adolescents as a means of socialization. Only three parents supported their adolescents to get involved in whatever they desired, whereas six parents mentioned encouraging their adolescents (especially sons) to get involved in gender-typical sports. Of those six parents, four of those fathers encouraged their sons to get involved in competitive sports and steered their daughters toward academic pursuits. For example,

And probably, another difference would be from a schoolwork standpoint and a sports standpoint. Cause I always wanted [my daughter] to do some sort of sport cause, you know, I am very into that. When she became older, I think [school] became much more important for her to, from a study standpoint and grades. Whereas [my son], guess at looking at it now, with the potential money that’s out there, you know, you hate to say it, but you probably push them more towards a sports or athletics career as opposed to something in academics. Whereas hopefully you can do both of them, which would really be an advantage. But I think that that is another big difference. (Father of two, age 40).

Similarly, another five mothers and three fathers mentioned how their sons were involved in more competitive activities or social interactions but did not describe specifically encouraging their sons to get involved in these competitive situations. For example, a 50-year-old mother of two, stated, “But he loves the contact with other boys in groups of, um competitive sports. So we, we adjust according to what they need.” Another 50-year-old father of two, stated, “she

doesn't like the competitiveness. [My son] does like the competitiveness. Um, more than he likes to be in it than worrying about well, he's worried about he's better than most."

**Household chores.** A salient method of socialization that emerged from the data was parents' (mostly mothers') assignment of similar or gender-typical chores ( $n = 11$  parents). Eight mothers and one father described assigning similar chores regardless of gender, and two fathers described assigning gender-typical chores. Many parents were tuned in to how assigning similar or gender-typical chores taught their adolescents about gender roles. For example, a mother who assigned the same chores to either adolescent, stated:

Oh, well there again we I minded in the philosophy in this day in age that a boy may need to do girl things and girls need to do boy things so um I've taught Josh all the typical domestic type chores that girls would be taught and vice a versa. (Mother of two, age 38).

Alternatively, a father who assigned gender-typical chores, stated:

Definitely encouraged him to do more mechanical type things than what I had done with [my daughter]. You know, repairs around the house and with the car. And, you know conversely, encouraged [my daughter] to do more household type tasks. Washing clothes, spending more time with the kitchen maybe. (Father of three, age 47).

### **Parents' Concerns, Expectations, and Attitudes that Shaped their Socialization Practices**

There were several codes and concepts that did not fit within the tripartite model of socialization but align well with symbolic interactionism that this section aims to capture. These concepts reflect parents' attitudes, beliefs, and/or concerns that influence how they socialize gender in their adolescents. Parents often made comments that reflected their own gender role attitudes, whether traditional, egalitarian, or a mix of both. Parents' gender role attitudes were typically double coded along with other socialization practices. Traditional comments referred to believing in a homemaker-breadwinner division of labor, devaluing women's financial contributions, feeling more protective of their daughter, and believing in innate gender differences. Parents' egalitarian comments referred to equally valuing women's and men's

financial contributions, believing in an equal division of household labor, and combatting stereotypes. Mixed or conflicting comments refer to parents that made both traditional and egalitarian comments or made comments that reflect attitudes that are in the middle of the traditional and egalitarian continuum. Other concepts discussed previously, such as having greater parental knowledge of daughters versus sons, teaching sons to respect women, fostering daughter's independence, teaching daughter's self-respect, assigning chores, and modeling gender roles, also reflect parents' gender role attitudes but will not be discussed here.

*Concerns about daughters.* Parents expressed explicit concern about their daughters more than their sons. Twelve parents ( $n = 3$  fathers and 9 mothers) expressed explicitly feeling more protective of their daughters. Parents described restricting where their daughters could go and with whom. For example, a mother, stated:

It comes up all the time with [my daughter], and we're very um, I think we're very careful with Laura about where she can go and what she can do in this college town and um, because she's female and I'm not sure that um, I, I have this feeling that I mean, even if we end up having the same, um curfews and limits on [my son] it won't be exactly for the same reasons. (Mother of two, age 45)

A 41-year-old mother of three, stated, "I'm defiantly more protective of [my daughter], even if it's not fair I just think that it's the way the world is. Um, I just think a girl is more vulnerable to problems, you know?" Several fathers echoed similar feelings of protectiveness.

Umm, we've been a little more freer with [our son] than we are with [our daughter], uhh, just because she's a girl or a little more umm, selective on what she does, umm, and I think that's a gender thing. (Father of two, age 52).

Similar to parents feeling protective of their daughters, 21 parents (11 fathers and 10 mothers) expressed concern about their daughter's dating and the risk of pregnancy that was not expressed for sons. For example, three parents, stated:

We were very concerned about the- the dances that she went to and the ages of students that went. The constant phone calling, the interest, the romantic interests and we were absolutely amazed when [our son] went through the same thing in

sixth grade. I think that we reacted more strongly with [our daughter] in letting her know that we did not want her to- to actually formally date. And she was expected to go out in groups and things like that. (Mother of two, age 50).

Um, with girls I do feel that there is concern about more careful steps that we need to take with the dating. And, um, with protection so that they're wise in terms of activities and who they're choosing as boyfriends. Um, so the perimeters are probably tighter there. (Stay at home mother of two, age 54).

I think that the whole dating thing is different from what you need to tell a child. Um, I think that, um, girls are more vulnerable in society. Just 'cause they are physically weaker than they can, you know, they're always being taken advantage of by the boy. (Father of two, age 50).

Although parents were very concerned about their daughter's dating, they normalized this feeling by expressing that this kind of concern was normal or expected. For example, a 43-year-old father of two, stated, "Umm, probably the obvious one, dating." Three other parents, stated:

Well I think one thing with a girl is always the boyfriend issue and stuff like that. Where, like I said earlier, I would be happy if she didn't have a boyfriend until she's thirty. (Laughter) We know that is not going to happen. Where, on the other hand, that would not upset me as much with [my son]. So, I think the relationships with boys and girls would be one of the biggest differences. (Father of two, age 41).

Special concerns that come up with [our daughter] are obviously I guess, when she gets to the age where, well she has, gone on a couple of so-called dates I guess to dances and things like that. And of course, those are concerns... Concerns we've never really had to deal with Zack because he just stays home. But I think a parent is at least the father anyway is naturally more concerned about having a daughter that age than a son. Because I guess a little distrusting of all the boys out there. (Father of two, age 41).

***Gendered expectations about adolescents.*** None of the interview questions were intended to elicit responses about cultural norms. Nonetheless, 21 parents ( $n = 14$  mothers and 7 fathers) expressed an awareness of society's gendered scripts for girls and boys. Some of the stereotypes or societal messages parents referred to, included: societies different expectations for girls and boys, girls being more vulnerable, traditional divisions of labor, men's pressure to secure well-paying jobs, women having more opportunities nowadays, and gender-typical careers. A mother of two, age 50, stated:

Society expects different things of boys and girls. We have had to adjust the way we look at things, the way we respond to behaviors, you know? ...You don't want them to stand out or have ideas that are so far out that they're going to be made fun of by their peers or not fit in with their peers at their age group.

A mother of three, age 47, told a story of how she noticed her children picking up stereotypes:

But, we've, [my husband] and I have both laughed about times when, like when [our son] was younger, like first or second grade. He was like, "Dad what are you doin' doin' the laundry?" (Laughter) You know they pick up certain stereotypes about men and women.

A mother of two, age 39, eloquently captured society's gendered workforce expectations:

I think there's more pressure put on a boy to have a good paying job and still be the head of the household, I mean his wife can certainly contribute, but I still think that pressure is there. I think a lot of times, women- girls have to do things maybe twice as well as a man in today's society, but I also think a women can do anything a man can do.

Lastly, five parents described raising their children to "fit in" to cultural norms:

Yes, the child has to fit in to, to society. Um, they, you, yes. You don't want them to stand out or have ideas that are so far out that they're going to be (inaudible) made fun of by their peers or not fit in with their, um, peers at their age group. (Father of two, age 50).

Sometimes, parents' awareness of society's messages or stereotypes solidified into a belief in natural or innate gender differences. This emerged when 27 parents (17 fathers and 10 mothers) expressed gender differences as "just the way it is" or as "natural" instead of attributing them to cultural messages or social structures. Oftentimes, these beliefs were coupled with other sentiments, such as feeling more protective of daughter, preparing daughter for the workplace or marriage and parenthood, assigning chores, and more. Some parents expressed a rigid, overt belief in natural differences, such as one 43-year-old mother of three, expressed, "You know, so even if you tried to raise them the same you wouldn't be able to." Another mother, revealed, "But, there- there is just differences because they are a boy and a girl, and you have to- you just realize that." (Mother of two, age 40). A 41-year-old mother of three, stated, "I'm defiantly more protective of Angela, even if it's not fair I just think that it's the way the world is. Um, I just

think a girl is more vulnerable to problems, you know?” Sometimes, parents implicitly expressed a belief in natural gender differences. For example, when describing designating chores, a mother of two, age 38, revealed an inherent belief in “boy things” and “girl things:”

Oh, well there again we I minded in the philosophy in this day in age that a boy may need to do girl things and girls need to do boy things so um I've taught Josh all the typical domestic type chores that girls would be taught and vice a versa.

Another way the implicit belief in natural gender differences emerged was this observation or belief that boys are easier to raise. Fourteen parents ( $n = 7$  fathers and 7 mothers) expressed that raising boys was easier. One 43-year-old father of three, stated, “in fact, it's much easier raising boys than it is a girl.” A mother of a similar age shared this belief: “We usually didn't have many disagreements with [our son], he was pretty cooperative whereas [our daughter] is more outspoken and trying. I don't know if it's being a girl... I don't know. I think it's easier to raise boys” (Mother of 2, age 42).

***Parents' gender role attitudes.*** Fifteen fathers and 13 mothers made comments that reflected traditional gender role attitudes. These comments primarily included gendered expectations for adolescents, believing it is best if women stay home with children, and devaluing women's financial contributions. For example, one father described how he had higher expectations for his son than his daughter:

I had pretty high expectations of him, uhh, kind of the, you're the man of the house if I'm not here type stuff and really expected some leadership prior to his maturation level and sometimes I found myself frustrated, my work ethic is not necessarily, or was not necessarily his, up into his teen years, and interestingly, he's a good worker outside here, but not really in here and I find that really frustrating, but yet I have a little less expectations of the girls in those same areas, which isn't fair. (Father of three, age 40).

Another father who described gendered expectations for his daughter, stated, “She is going to have to use her brain more than her physical ability” (Father of two, age 44). Beliefs about what division of household and paid labor is best for the family came up frequently. A stay-at-home

mother of two, age 40, stated, “I think that they can fill a need with children, that father, dad, men can’t just because they are not designed to think and be that way.” Another stay-at-home mother described feeling similarly:

If it’s an actually necessary that a woman needs to work for the family to make ends meet that there’s no reason that she shouldn’t contribute rather than a husband take two jobs, or something like that. I think that’s crazy. Um, I think you need to really be sure that that’s would you need versus what you want. Um, because it definitely takes away from the family when a mother is working cause I’ve done it. And it’s very difficult to be the parent you want to be when you’re exhausted and don’t have the time and energy to put into it. (Mother of three, age 41)

A father of two, age 39, similarly stated:

I think that the husband should be the main provider. And after the kids are taken care of then the wife can go out and work. Um, I feel it’s, in this day and age, it’s the wife’s responsibility to help make ends meet, but not be the sole provider.

Nine fathers and 14 mothers made comments that reflected egalitarian gender role attitudes. These comments primarily referred to supporting both girls and boys regardless of gender, combating societal expectations, and expecting both parents to equally provide financially. Parents described trying to raise their children equally. For example, “I don’t discourage, you know, either one of them from doing anything that they want to do.” (Father of three, age 46). Another father described how he had the same expectations for his daughter and son when it came to household chores: “No, not really, no. We pretty much do everything equally around here, I mean, I’m teaching him to do the laundry and he cooks and she helps outside with grass.” (Mother of two, age 38,). Lastly, 13 mothers and five fathers described attempting to combat society’s expectations and stereotypes. For example:

I think we’re all very aware that there are different societal expectations for males and females and um, so for Laura we, um have spent a lot of time, um, trying to I don’t know, combat or make her aware of those societal expectations and that she doesn’t have to meet them and focusing on um, giving her the not skills really, focusing on academics and school work instead of um, as my parents did for me

learning how to type. Uh, take cooking, take care of the house. (Mother of two, age 45).

There's so much studies about girls not having confidence especially, you know, in the early teenage years of lacking confidence and lacking a sense of themselves. ...Even if they're a good student, thinking they are dumb, or even if they are slim, thinking they are fat. You know, all of those kinds of confidence things, that I don't think, and so I think I was especially concerned about trying to do what I could to not allow that to happen (Mother of two, age 51).

Nearly all parents expressed a mix of gender role attitudes. This emerged in two ways.

The first, was parents expressing conflicting comments reflecting egalitarian and traditional gender role attitudes. Eighteen parents expressed contradictory traditional and egalitarian gender role attitudes. For example, a 45-year-old mother of two expressed comments reflecting both egalitarian and traditional gender role attitudes. She stated: "I do realize it's going to be more important for him to learn how to be able to fix everything." and later in the interview stated "That she needs to have higher education, and she needs not to be quaint and play dumb for any boy. Because she won't she can never expect to rely on somebody else for her livelihood." A 47-year-old father of three expressed a contradicting mix of sentiments about whether gender should determine what the rules are:

There may be times as a parent when you give permission to do something that you might be more willing to give it to a male child because you feel he'll be with other males and they might be able to protect him, you know, he wouldn't be in a vulnerable position that you feel a female child might be in. Like if she was going four-wheeling with a bunch of guys, you know, if you understand what I'm saying... I don't think that their gender should necessarily determine, you know, what their rules are. Other than specific situations when their gender might get them in more trouble.

Twenty-seven parents ( $n = 14$  fathers and 13 mothers) made comments expressing traditional gender role attitudes but described socializing their daughters and sons similarly. The most common way this emerged, however, was parents expressing egalitarian gender role attitudes but traditional attitudes about finances, romantic relationships, and innate gender differences. Nine

fathers and 14 mothers expressed egalitarian gender role attitudes. Of those, six parents believed that a man should be the main breadwinner in a family or that women's financial contributions were not as important as a man's contributions. Twelve fathers and 10 mothers expressed concerns about their daughter's dating. Five fathers and four mothers believed gender differences were natural. And five fathers and three mothers believed that boys were easier to raise.

The other way mixed gender role attitudes emerged was parents expressing gender role attitudes that conflicted with their gender socialization practices. Twenty-eight parents ( $n = 15$  fathers and 13 mothers) made comments expressing traditional gender role attitudes. Of those, one father and six mothers described assigning the same chores regardless of gender. Five mothers described teaching their son to respect women and two fathers and four mothers described fostering their daughter's sense of independence. Lastly, one father and three mothers expressed that women and men should equally financially contribute in a family. Of the 23 parents ( $n = 9$  fathers and 14 mothers) that expressed egalitarian gender role attitudes, two fathers four mothers expressed wanting to raise their child to "fit in" to society and three fathers and four mothers expressed feeling more protective of their daughters.

### **Themes about Parents' Gender Socialization Practices**

Two salient themes emerged during the thematic analysis that cut across different pathways of the tripartite model of socialization as well as demonstrate parents' meaning making process that takes place translating cultural and societal messages, gender stereotypes, and symbols to their adolescents. There is some overlap between these two themes, such that some quotes and associated codes exemplify more than one theme.

**Theme 1: Inconsistent gender socialization.** This theme captures how parents described inconsistent and oftentimes conflicting gender role attitudes and gender socialization practices

(See Figure 2 for hierarchical visual representation). This theme represents 41 parents ( $n = 21$  fathers and 20 mothers). The concepts represented under this theme, include parents' gender role attitudes, similar socialization practices, and essentializing gender.

***Conflicting gender role attitudes and beliefs.*** As delineated above, 17 parents expressed contradictory traditional and egalitarian gender role attitudes. Of the nine fathers and 14 mothers that expressed egalitarian gender role attitudes, seven parents expressed beliefs or concerns that contradicted their egalitarian gender role attitudes, including traditional financial beliefs and concern about daughter dating.

***Essentializing gender.*** Essentializing gender is a concept that emerged from the data that reflects the process of ascribing qualities, personality traits, or tendencies to girls and boys as inherent qualities and is reflective of 52 parents ( $n = 24$  fathers and 28 mothers; Eagly & Wood, 2012). The codes and concepts that reflect essentializing gender, include: an awareness of society's gendered scripts, believing girls are more vulnerable (captured by parents' concern for daughters dating and feeling more protective), and endorsing natural gender differences by stating boys are easier to raise and girls are naturally nurturing. Of the 23 parents that described having egalitarian gender role attitudes, 21 of those parents described essentializing gender.

***Conflicting gender role attitudes and gender socialization practices.*** All of the 28 parents that made comments reflecting traditional gender role attitudes also revealed contradictory gender socialization practices, including, teaching sons to respect women, endorsing equal financial contributions, and engaging in similar socialization practices. Similar socialization practices include encouraging similar activities, taking a similar approach to raising girls and boys, assigning similar chores, and conveying similar messages about education, the workplace, marriage, and parenting. The most common way this emerged was when parents

made comments reflecting traditional gender role attitudes conveyed similar messages about education, the workplace, and adolescents' future roles as parents and partners. Of the 23 parents that made comments reflecting egalitarian gender role attitudes, nine parents described wanting to raise their adolescents to "fit in" with society or feeling protective of their daughter.

**Theme 2: Intensive socialization of daughter's gender role attitudes.** The second theme that emerged from the data is titled intensive socialization of daughter's gender role attitudes and reflects 49 parents ( $n = 22$  fathers and 27 mothers; see Figure 2 for hierarchical visual representation). This theme captures the unique and nuanced relationship parents have with their daughters, which is hallmarked by a preoccupation or concern for their daughter's safety and success in life. The major concepts that make up this theme include, parents' entrenched belief that girls are more vulnerable, explicit communication about feminine gender roles, and greater parental knowledge about daughters. Thirty-six parents ( $n = 17$  fathers and 19 mothers) made comments that reflected the entrenched belief that girls are more vulnerable than boys. This concept emerged from the worry, concern, and feelings of protectiveness parents expressed uniquely for their daughters. The belief that girls are more vulnerable than boys partially informs parents' explicit communication about feminine gender roles, such that parents sometimes prepare their daughters for their roles as future partners and employees in a way that attempts to combat societal expectations. This is reflected in a father's description of how he coaches his daughter on how to choose a partner:

Yeah, I think we try to encourage her to step out there, to take a chance, to not let her intelligence be a uh a dimming factor if it means that a guy thinks that her intelligence is intimidating well that's not the right person then. (Father of three, age 48).

This intensive socialization parents demonstrated with their daughters is reflective of parents' awareness of society's gendered scripts for women.

## Chapter 5 – Discussion

The inspiration for this work came from knowing that parents have the power to perpetuate or deconstruct gender norms and stereotypes through their gender socialization practices. To gain a deeper understanding of parents' gender socialization practices and document how they may align with gender norms and stereotypes, I applied the tripartite model of socialization and symbolic interactionism to answer the following research question: How do mothers and fathers describe socializing their adolescents' gender roles – overall and by adolescent gender – in the following domains: (a) Direct parent-child interaction? (b) Providing instruction? (c) Providing opportunities? Upon answering this research question, two salient, overarching themes emerged from the data. In this chapter, I discuss whether or not these results matched my expectations and the extant literature. Using both previous literature and theory, I explore alternative interpretations for the most salient descriptive and substantive results. I first discuss whether these results matched the expectations for this study. Then, I unpack the most salient gender socialization practices by parent-child gender constellation that fit within the tripartite model of socialization. Lastly, I discuss how the two themes that emerged overlap, compliment, and are distinct from one another as well as evaluate the extent to which these themes extend, contradict, or replicate previous literature and theoretical propositions.

### **Expected Findings**

Based on existing literature, I proposed three expected findings organized by domain of gender socialization, the tripartite model, and parent-child gender constellation. First, I expected to find that mothers and fathers would initially state that they socialize their daughter's and son's gender role attitudes similarly but would then describe modeling traditional gender roles. Many parents described socializing their adolescents similarly but also described socialization practices and beliefs about gender differences that reflected traditional (and conflicting) gender role

attitudes. This expectation was confirmed as inconsistent gender socialization emerged as a salient finding and is reflected in Theme One. A deeper discussion of inconsistent gender socialization will follow in the global discussion of Themes One and Two.

Second, because gender roles are typically very salient in romantic relationships, I expected that parents would provide explicit instruction to their adolescents (especially daughters) about gender roles in romantic relationships (Ellemers, 2018). This expectation was confirmed for the mother-daughter gender constellation only, such that mothers described preparing their daughters for marriage by instructing them on what qualities to look for when choosing a boyfriend or future husband. Additionally, parents (mostly mothers) expressed explicit concern about their daughters dating but described being generally less concerned with their son's romantic pursuits, which could explain why parents provided less explicit instruction to their sons about romantic relationships. These differences mirror Kan, McHale, and Crouter's (2008) findings that parents were more restrictive with their daughters and provided more freedom to their sons. Nonetheless, providing more freedom to sons still socializes and teaches sons about their expectations regarding dating; this type of socialization is simply more subtle than, for example, providing explicit instruction on how to pursue a romantic interest.

Lastly, based on existing literature, I expected that mothers and fathers would describe providing the same opportunities for daughters and sons, but fathers would be more concerned than mothers with their adolescents (especially sons) abiding by gender-typical activities and interests. This expectation was partially confirmed. The majority of parents described assigning chores and encouraging opportunities (such as involvement in sports) regardless of gender, however, neither mothers nor fathers described feeling particularly concerned about their sons abiding by these gender norms. A subset of families did describe providing stereotypically

gendered opportunities to their daughters and sons, but even then, many parents still described that they were not trying to hold their adolescents back from anything. For example, A 51-year-old father of two, stated, “We raised [our daughter] as a girl because she was a girl, but if she was interested in sports that would have been fine too. We didn’t trap each other from anything.” Given the ample evidence demonstrated in previous research that activities and interests is a salient area for gender-typical socialization, this was a surprising finding (e.g., Galambos et al., 2009; McHale et al., 2003). Given there was no direct question about activities or interests, parents may have been reciting parenting practices that were socially desirable and not revealing the complete nature of their gender socialization via providing opportunities.

### **Salient Gender Socialization Practices by The Tripartite Model of Socialization and Parent-Child Gender Constellation**

Overall, much of how parents described socializing their adolescents was consistent with previous literature and fit within the tripartite model of socialization. The most salient gender socialization practices that both fit within these three pathways and emerged differently by parent-child gender constellation, include codes and concepts related to communication and instructing gender role attitudes.

**Communication.** How much parents communicated with their adolescents and what topics were discussed often differed by each parent-child gender constellation. Both parents described communicating openly with their adolescents, although they recognized that both themselves and their adolescents actively gravitated toward communicating with the same-gender parent. Both parents’ communication with their sons was unique compared to their communication with their daughters.

Specifically, mothers reported communicating more frequently and about a wider array of topics than fathers did with both daughters and sons, but the mother-daughter parent-child gender

constellation was still the most fruitful dyad for communication. Mothers reported frequently talking with their daughters (but not sons) about how to navigate conflict, friendships, and romantic relationships. Again, this is consistent with previous research indicating that mothers are socially or relationally oriented when communicating and fathers commonly engage in conversations about instrumental tasks or details (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; McHale et al., 2003). Previous research has shown that this tendency for the greatest amount of communication to occur within the mother-daughter parent-child dyad begins in early childhood and persists into adolescence (Galambos et al., 2009). Upon entering this new developmental phase, their adolescent daughters spend more time with peers and may experience budding romantic interests, which may explain why these relationships are naturally now the topic of conversation. Adolescent girls that frequently communicate with their mothers about relationships may become better prepared than boys to navigate or communicate about relationships as adults which would perpetuate gendered communication styles and topics of conversations as depicted in previous literature (e.g., Hass, 1979; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). This is just one example of how gender-specific parenting practices such as this can negatively affect boys' development and result in individuals building different skills based on their gender.

Fathers revealed that they communicated with their sons more frequently than their daughters. Whereas mothers had social-relational conversations, the most common topics of conversations for fathers were future careers and education. Interestingly, several fathers described having trouble relating to, and therefore communicating with, their daughters. Fathers pointed out how they gave their sons more autonomy during conversations and were interested in their son's perspective or point of view when communicating. Neither mothers nor fathers described valuing their daughter's perspective in the same way. Previous research has shown

that, on average, women's and men's communication styles can be different, such that men tend to be more direct, assertive, and make instrumental observations whereas women tend to communicate more expressively and empathetically while striving for emotional connection (Ellemers, 2018; Epstein & Ward, 2011; Hass, 1979). Additionally, previous research has indicated that less is known about the role fathers have in socializing gender (Berenbaum et al., 2008; Galambos et al., 2009). In the case of this research, fathers valuing their sons' perspective and asking for their sons' (but not their daughters') points of view during conversations, may be one way fathers are uniquely socializing their sons to feel comfortable being assertive or direct while communicating. This practice may also teach their adolescents that a man's perspective is more valuable than a woman's perspective.

**Instructing gender roles.** Instructing gender roles was the most salient pathway into which parents' socialization practices fit. All parents initially described similarly instructing their daughters and sons about education, the workplace, marriage, and/or parenthood. When probed further, however, many parents revealed specific lessons they taught their daughters (but not their sons) to prepare them for their future roles as partners, parents, and employees. Specifically, mothers were more concerned than fathers with preparing their daughters for parenthood and marriage. Mothers instructed their daughters about how to choose the "right person" to marry and how to tailor major life decisions (e.g., education and starting a career) to fit with when they wanted to become mothers. Alternatively, fathers spearheaded preparing their daughters for their future role in the workplace. Much of parents' advice stemmed from their awareness of stereotypes and society's expectations for women in the workplace. For example, parents described teaching their daughters that they will have to work "twice as hard" as men, strive to

become financially independent, and “respect themselves” by not conforming to the stereotypes at work.

Providing instruction as a means of gender socialization – especially the specific content of those instructional messages – is an area of research that has been largely neglected (McHale et al., 2003). Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the inextricable connection between culturally shared meanings (i.e., symbols) and the ways in which those symbols invariably shape our interactions and thus socialization practices in a continuous, multidirectional cycle (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). This research reveals that a pragmatic approach to understand how parents socialize their adolescents to acquire the symbols of various gendered roles would be to investigate how parents provide instruction to socialize gender. Specifically, this research adds to the gender socialization literature by detailing the gender of the instructor and recipient, which behaviors parents are socializing, and the content of those instructional messages. For example, these parents socialize their daughters to acquire a sense of independence as a symbol of success in their future roles in the workplace. Because these findings are captured within Themes One and Two, later in this chapter I discuss the nuances of how parents socialize their daughters’ gender role attitudes and draw inferences and conclusions about how these findings fit within the larger gender socialization literature.

### **Global Discussion of Theme 1 and Theme 2**

Interviews with these White, working- and middle-class American parents in the early 2000s reveal that they use a complicated mix of (un)intentional, (in)consistent, and (in)direct practices to socialize their adolescents’ gender role attitudes. The defining aspect of parents’ gender socialization practices is how their own attitudes and beliefs about gender roles interacted with their awareness (or internalization of) gender norms and stereotypes. This interaction is

captured in two themes: inconsistent gender socialization and intensive gender socialization for daughters.

**Race, class, and gender socialization.** It became evident across interviews that these parents held privileged, dominant positions in society. Specifically, parents' description of how they support and coach their adolescents to pursue their future careers embodied that of the American Dream, common of White, working-and middle-class families (i.e., dominate U.S. culture). The American Dream is an ideology (or system of values and beliefs) that emphasizes upward mobility, independence, the pursuit of happiness, and a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mentality (Porter, 2010). Some of parents' messages that reflected these pillars of the American Dream included the importance of helping their adolescents succeed in "whatever makes them happy," teaching them to find "happiness first and money will follow," finding a career that is "honorable, respectful, self-supporting," and to "work hard and [you] can be anything." These messages showcase the intersection of these parents' class and gender socialization practices, which were mirrored in Hill and Sprague's (1999) study of the intersection of gender, class, and race on parents' gender socialization practices. Hill and Sprague found that lower middle-class White parents prioritized being a teacher to their children and emphasized their child's happiness.

Additionally, these findings relate to Lareau's work on invisible inequality in diverse families. Lareau found that a quality of middle-class parenting practices (both Black and White) was fostering an "emerging sense of entitlement" (Lareau, 2002, pp. 749). White, working- and middle-class parents in this sample may be fostering an emerging sense of entitlement by sending the message to their adolescents that they should be happy and (will) find fulfilling, successful careers. Because these parents failed to describe neither emphasizing the work it will

take to achieve that success nor the obstacles they may have to overcome, it is reasonable to deduce that this is one way parents may be transmitting a form of invisible privilege similar to an emerging sense of entitlement (Lareau, 2002).

**Interconnectedness of theme 1 and theme 2.** Intensive gender socialization for daughters (Theme 2) reflects a gendered type of intensive parenting, or a parent's overuse of time and resources to be over- or inappropriately involved in different aspects of a child's life, usually in the realm of education, employment, or social/romantic relationships (Faircloth, 2014). Although this type of parenting does look similar to the well-known "helicopter parenting" style, its gender-specific nature indicates that it is a unique method of gender socialization.

Nevertheless, inconsistent gender socialization (Theme 1) and intensive gender socialization for daughters (Theme 2) are largely intertwined with overlapping codes and concepts. Because all parents describe socializing their adolescents similarly in some way, intensive gender socialization for daughters can be considered a gross, unrecognized form of inconsistent gender socialization that is specific to daughters. These two themes are rooted in the same foundation: an awareness of and internalization or rejection of gender expectations, norms, stereotypes. The concepts that are intertwined the most that I will focus on are an awareness of gender stereotypes, essentializing gender, and the entrenched belief that girls are more vulnerable. I will fold in overarching points about inconsistent gender socialization practices and intensive gender socialization for daughters when applicable.

**Awareness of society's gendered scripts for women and men.** Parents describe being aware of society's gendered scripts for women and men that include well-known gender norms, gender stereotypes, and society's overall gendered expectations for women and men. The

majority of these messages were about women and girls. Overall, the most salient messages about society's gendered scripts parents described being aware of, included: a breadwinner-homemaker division of labor, the expectation that women need to work "twice as hard" to receive the same recognition as men, and the belief that in today's society, women need to contribute financially. Mothers most frequently referenced a stereotypically gendered division of household labor and the expectation that women today need to be self-sufficient, whereas fathers' observations were commonly about women and the workforce. Fathers most frequently mentioned that there are more opportunities for women in the workforce and that women need to contribute financially but will also have to work "twice as hard."

*Parents' response to society's gendered scripts.* How parents respond to society's gendered scripts shapes how they socialize gender for their adolescents. Some parents may reject these gendered scripts by teaching their adolescents skills to succeed and navigate the inequitable privileges and challenges inherent in society's gendered scripts. More often than not, however, parents respond by either consciously or unconsciously accepting these gendered scripts and socializing their adolescents accordingly. Some parents in this study rejected these scripts by teaching their sons to respect women and fostering a sense of independence in their daughters. Additionally, one way that parents can consciously accept these scripts is demonstrated in this study when these parents described raising their adolescents to "fit in" to society or assigning stereotypically gendered chores. This is reflected in previous research that depicts one of the most common ways parents socialize and reinforce gender differences is when they assign stereotypically gendered chores (i.e., a gender-specific opportunity; Berenbaum et al., 2008; Crouter et al., 2001; McHale et al., 2003).

Consequently, when parents unconsciously accept society's gendered scripts and (without realizing it) socialize their adolescents accordingly, inconsistent gender socialization can emerge. As shown in Figure 2, parents' awareness of society's gendered scripts and their comments reflecting their own gender role attitudes were often conflicting and inconsistent with their gender socialization beliefs and practices. One of the beliefs about gender that typically conflicted with parents' egalitarian comments described earlier was parents' awareness of the emerging script for women's need to contribute financially but work "twice as hard." The notion that women's financial contributions are typically expected today, but regularly devalued was a common thread among parents' descriptions of society's expectation for women in the workforce:

Well, I think that in today's society, I think that the woman has to work just to make ends meet. Um, I don't necessarily think that they have to have as good of a job or better, but I think that they need to contribute. (A 41-year-old father of two).

This awareness could stem from the trend that there was a steady increase in women's workforce participation since the 1980s (when these participants would have been an average age of about 24 years old) to when this data was collected in 2001 (Hipple, 2016). Nevertheless, there were (and still are) stark gender differences in the types of jobs and positions women and men typically occupied (e.g., leadership versus administrative positions). This representation may be one of the reasons why parents imply valuing men's work and financial contributions more than women's work. Another explanation could be that parents are wrestling with letting go of the long history of the breadwinner-homemaker dichotomy common among White, working- and middle-class families. In the early 2000s when this data were collected, parents may have still been coming to terms with the fact that new cohorts of women were entering the workforce, so transmitting these messages and beliefs about women's financial contributions to their

adolescents teaches them that women's work is less important or valuable and (implicitly) that it is more important for her to take care of the house and kids.

*Interpreting why parents demonstrated inconsistent gender socialization.* The most obvious explanation for this inconsistency is the likelihood that social desirability influenced parents' responses. Because these were face-to-face interviews, the risk of social desirability may be higher than it would be with anonymous surveys, so parents may have felt more pressure to respond in socially desirable (i.e., egalitarian-like) ways. Another possible explanation as to why there is so much inconsistency among parents' gender socialization practices and their beliefs about gender is that parents' beliefs, attitudes, and socialization practices are domain-specific. For example, parents may consistently provide similar educational opportunities to their daughters and sons but will instruct their daughters to navigate dating and social relationships differently than they will their son. A 39-year-old father of two who described socializing his daughters and sons similarly alluded to the possibility that his gender socialization practices were domain-specific: "Yeah just with the uh the dating stuff you know... Things I would say to him I would probably say the exact opposite to [my daughter]."

Alternatively, another possibility for inconsistent gender socialization is the bidirectional nature of the parent-child relationship that is not adequately captured in these interviews with parents. Previous gender socialization literature has nodded to the agency or influence of adolescents but has not fully documented their role in the gender socialization process. Kerr and Stattin (2003) argue that parents may be acting or reacting when parenting their adolescents, but most previous research has attributed their findings to parenting effects.

**Essentializing gender and entrenched beliefs.** When parents internalize society's gendered scripts for women and men, this can lead to essentializing gender, or the process of

ascribing the gender differences perpetrated in consumer products, media, and their own interpersonal interactions as innate qualities of women and men (Eagly & Wood, 2013).

Essentializing gender is the root of parents' traditional gender beliefs and socialization which reinforce gender stereotypes. This concept emerged in these data primarily regarding women and the essentialized belief that women have unique caretaking abilities that men do not have.

Interestingly, mothers described this essentialized belief more frequently than fathers did. A 40-year-old stay-at-home mother of two, stated, "Uh, I still think women, just because of they are different... I think that they can fill a need with children, that fathers, dads, men can't just because they are not designed to think and be that way." Another mother used coded language to suggest that even when fathers were parenting their adolescents, they were fulfilling a maternal role: "We worked opposite shifts. So, he was 'Mr. Mom' in the morning and then I was 'mommy dearest' all night." (Mother of three, age 43).

A specific form of essentializing gender emerged as a salient concept in Theme 2 which was the entrenched belief that girls are more vulnerable than boys. This is an entrenched belief for two reasons: the rampant inconstant gender socialization reflected in Theme One coupled with parents' clarifying statements, such as "I know you shouldn't think of them [girls] as being helpless, and it's not that, they just seem more vulnerable." (Mother of two, age 40). This mother demonstrates that oftentimes parents are aware that this belief stems from a stereotype more so than their own observations.

The belief that girls are naturally more vulnerable than boys is a common gender stereotype that is portrayed in consumer products, media, and television. For example, a content analysis of Disney princess movies revealed that physical weakness was a typical characteristic of female princesses (England, Descartes, & Collier-Meek, 2011). Previous research has shown

that influences like this contribute to gender acquisition and the essentialization of gender (Ellmers, 2018; Eagly & Wood, 2013; Martin et al., 2002). Although parents in this study did not mention media or television as a source of influence, it is reasonable to assume that the far-reaching consequences of consumer products, media, and television have had an effect on these (and arguably most) families.

One of symbolic interactionism's primary assumptions is that society precedes the individual (White et al., 2015). This means that society's gendered scripts for women and men that parents learn about (which include gender norms and stereotypes) informs their perception and socialization of their adolescents. As depicted in Figure 2, in this sample, parents' perception of their daughters becomes a deeply entrenched view that girls are more vulnerable, which results in parents intensely socializing their daughters by being more protective, concerned, and restrictive of what their daughter can do and with whom. These findings confer previous research that highlights that parents manage, direct, and restrict their daughters' social and romantic relationships. For example, Madsen (2008) found that mothers set more rules for their daughters than sons regarding dating. In this sample, parents described restricting their daughter's opportunities, especially when it came to dating. This research also mirrors Kan et al.'s (2008) research in parents' involvement in their adolescents' romantic relationships, such that both Kan et al. (2008) and this study found that parents restricted their daughter's romantic relationships but offered more autonomy and independence to their sons. Across all three of these studies, mothers were more protective or restrictive of their daughters than fathers (Kan et al., 2008; Madsen 2008).

*Interpreting why parents engage in intensive socialization of their daughters' gender role attitudes.* Intensive socialization, commonly referred to as helicopter parenting, has been

shown to be most common among middle-class White women (Faircloth, 2014). Additionally, the role of a parent contains the social symbol of being a protector, such that mothers can be depicted as “mother bears” and fathers are depicted as saviors or physical protectors. Because of parents’ awareness of stereotypes and entrenched view that girls are more vulnerable, mothers in this study may feel that protecting their daughters by expressing their concern and restricting their opportunities is a way to enact that role. Alternatively, because parents describe believing girls are often seen as unequal to boys and need to work harder than boys, they believe girls are more vulnerable and invest extra attention and time in socializing them. Mothers specifically may want to invest more energy and time in socializing their daughters to help them achieve more equality than they experienced themselves.

### **Strengths**

A major strength of this study is the focus on families with adolescent children. Much of the gender socialization literature has focused on early and middle childhood, but this and other studies highlight how parents’ gender socialization practices can evolve and become more gendered when their children enter adolescence (e.g., Galambos et al., 2009). Another major strength of this study is the application of tripartite model of socialization: a multidimensional model that made it possible to map on parents’ gender socialization practices to each pathway. Much of previous research has isolated its focus to parent-child interactions (the first pathway; McHale et al., 2003). This study had an expanded scope that also assessed how parents socialize gender through the provision of opportunities and instructions. Lastly, fathers’ perspectives are not as well-documented as mothers’ perspectives in previous literature (Berenbaum et al., 2008; Galambos et al., 2009). This study captures both mother’s and father’s perspectives, which allowed me to document different gender socialization practices by various parent-child gender

constellations. Additionally, having a daughter and son within the same family allowed these parents to reflect on their similar and differential treatment of their adolescents.

Many previous studies have aimed to document how parents socialize gender. For example, previous studies have investigated the effects of parental knowledge on parent-child relationship quality or the extent to which parents have explicit conversations about gender. Fewer studies, however, have explicitly demonstrated how parents' gender socialization efforts can counteract gendered scripts and halt the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. This study moves beyond the overly emphasized descriptive "what messages" and "how are they being transmitted" to incorporate a critical lens of "what does this mean" specifically in the context of symbolic interactionism's notion of meaning-making and the deconstruction or perpetuation of gender norms and stereotypes. Additionally, this current study extends the gender socialization literature by demonstrating both the pathways through which parents (either consciously or unconsciously) are promoting gender (in)equity (i.e., by providing instruction) and the content of those messages (i.e., teaching boys to respect women).

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

A major limitation for this study is the limited detail in some responses. Although the interviews were semi-structured, some interviewers gravitated toward using a more structured approach. Another limitation of this study is that the tripartite model does not take into consideration the adolescent's influence or autonomy, rendering it challenging to capture whether parents are interacting or reacting with their adolescents (Kerr & Stattin, 2003). Lastly, the timing of this data collection was also a limitation. Collected in 2001, these data are 18 years old and there has been a cultural shift since then which could have influence what I found. Specifically, understandings of gender have shifted from a traditionally binary (i.e., woman *or*

man) understanding based on assigned sex to a much more accurate and inclusive representation of gender captured with continuums (e.g., femininity/femaleness and masculinity/maleness). The essence of these parents' responses is reflective of the sociopolitical context of the early 2000s. Specifically, in the early 2000s, comments that would have been considered egalitarian or progressive then may today be considered somewhat traditional. This cultural shift means that if this study were replicated today, parents may describe socializing gender differently by, for example, taking intentionally taking into account their adolescents understanding of their own gender identity and expression. Therefore, this study yields novel and nuanced findings about parents' gender socialization practices in the early 2000s, but the age of this data must be taken into account so as to not overly generalize this study's findings to parents of adolescents today.

Future research should consider collecting new qualitative data with both parents and adolescents within the same family to better examine the gender socialization practices occurring within each parent-child gender constellations and the implications this can have for adolescents' gender role attitudes. Applying a family systems approach to compare mothers' and fathers' gender socialization practices with their daughters versus their sons within the same family would allow you to see if daughters or sons are receiving similar or conflicting messages from parents. Additionally, future research should measure intentional and unintentional socialization practices to yield a more detailed, nuanced understanding of this phenomenon. For example, a study that utilized both semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observational methods would capture parents' own gender role attitudes and intentions as well as the unintentional or conflicting socialization practices and their impact on adolescents.

Lastly, although sample homogeneity in general is a strength, in this instance, only studying White working-and middle-class families is not. The overrepresentation of White and

working- and middle-class families in the literature can unintentionally lead to normalizing the White experience of gender socialization. A crucial next step for future research is to study parents' gender socialization practices in diverse families, specifically with families of color and parents and/or adolescents in the LGBTQ+ community. The intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, and family formation create unique experiences that have yet to be represented extensively in this literature. Given ever-increasingly intolerant nature of the current sociopolitical climate, prioritizing intersectionality as a focal point of future research is essential, especially for families with members who identify as nonbinary or transgender.

### **Practical Implications**

Findings from this study can be used to help develop parenting education programs that emphasize inclusivity as a core aspect of their curriculum. Parenting education programs that directly address gender socialization in families could help parents and caregivers become more intentional about how they are socializing gender in children of all ages. It could also help parents understand and partially control the various developmental outcomes that are shaped by different gender socialization messages (e.g., social and self-regulation; Eagly & Wood, 2013). Because gender roles impact children's development and learning outcomes over and above gender identity, integrating key findings from this study into parenting education curriculum could help parents, caregivers, and practitioners promote gender equity in their families and work environment in addition to helping to shape future generations of gender role scripts. A particularly lucrative aspect of these study's findings to integrate into the parenting education curriculum would be to target specific parent-child gender constellations. This approach could have the added benefit of targeting and engaging more fathers to participate in parent education courses.

Another practical implication could be gleaned from this study by applying a sexual health or sex education lens to these and findings from similar studies to bolster sex education curriculum. Doing so could shed light on the gendered expectations surrounding sexual health, birth control, and consent and could be another way to promote gender equity both in these classrooms and consequently in romantic relationships. Additionally, because most sex education programs contain information about gender roles as they relate to sex and sexual health in their curriculum, adding content about gender roles and parents' explicit communication about dating could be a useful way to begin making sex education more practical and inclusive.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to understand how parents' gender socialization practices are shaped by factors, such as race, class, and the parent-child gender constellation. This study demonstrates that investigating how parents intentionally and unintentionally socialize their daughter's and son's gender role attitudes has the power to uncover the ways parents may be fostering or dismantling gender stereotypes. The tripartite model of socialization was useful to understand how different methods of gender socialization fit within its three pathways. The three pathways of the tripartite model capture the direct forms of parental gender socialization, but I conclude, however, that it is necessary to couple this model with a type of social role theory (such as symbolic interactionism) to capture and interpret the unintentional, inconsistent, and indirect socialization practices parents use to socialize their adolescents.

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Table 1

*Results of an Independent Samples t-test comparing the Analytic Sample Characteristics (n = 30 families) to the Remaining Original Sample Characteristics (N = 161 families)*

| Characteristics                      | Original Sample<br>(N = 161 families) |          |          | Analytic Sample<br>(n = 30 families) |          |          | Degrees<br>of<br>Freedom | Test of<br>significance |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                      | N                                     | M        | SD       | n                                    | M        | SD       | df                       | t                       |
| Age (in years)                       |                                       |          |          |                                      |          |          |                          |                         |
| Mothers                              | 161                                   | 43.13    | 3.94     | 30                                   | 43.72    | 4.17     | 189                      | 0.46                    |
| Fathers                              | 161                                   | 45.54    | 5.25     | 30                                   | 45.47    | 4.16     | 189                      | 0.95                    |
| Firstborns                           | 161                                   | 17.37    | 0.80     | 30                                   | 17.20    | 0.77     | 189                      | 0.27                    |
| Second borns                         | 161                                   | 14.83    | 1.15     | 30                                   | 14.42    | 1.16     | 189                      | 0.07                    |
| Education (in<br>years) <sup>a</sup> |                                       |          |          |                                      |          |          |                          |                         |
| Mothers                              | 159                                   | 14.50    | 2.19     | 30                                   | 15.13    | 2.30     | 187                      | 0.15                    |
| Fathers                              | 148                                   | 14.69    | 2.48     | 30                                   | 15.30    | 2.61     | 176                      | 0.22                    |
| Firstborns                           | 160                                   | 11.29    | 0.77     | 30                                   | 11.17    | 0.75     | 188                      | 0.40                    |
| Second borns                         | 161                                   | 8.65     | 1.16     | 30                                   | 8.27     | 1.11     | 189                      | 0.10                    |
| Work hours <sup>b</sup>              |                                       |          |          |                                      |          |          |                          |                         |
| Mothers                              | 160                                   | 35.21    | 15.03    | 30                                   | 39.00    | 20.10    | 188                      | 0.23                    |
| Fathers                              | 149                                   | 47.92    | 15.58    | 30                                   | 48.03    | 11.26    | 177                      | 0.97                    |
| Job Prestige <sup>c</sup>            |                                       |          |          |                                      |          |          |                          |                         |
| Mothers                              | 144                                   | 49.62    | 13.26    | 25                                   | 53.82    | 11.32    | 167                      | 0.14                    |
| Fathers                              | 140                                   | 49.88    | 12.41    | 29                                   | 53.17    | 13.38    | 167                      | 0.20                    |
| Income                               |                                       |          |          |                                      |          |          |                          |                         |
| Family                               | 157                                   | \$80,162 | \$46,796 | 29                                   | \$98,956 | \$37,762 | 184                      | 0.04*                   |
| Mothers                              | 153                                   | \$27,136 | \$20,428 | 29                                   | \$28,778 | \$18,175 | 180                      | 0.68                    |
| Fathers                              | 144                                   | \$54,400 | \$35,016 | 29                                   | \$65,345 | \$39,016 | 171                      | 0.14                    |
| Family size                          | 161                                   | 4.55     | 0.98     | 30                                   | 4.37     | 0.61     | 189                      | 0.32                    |
| Marriage<br>duration (in<br>years)   | 161                                   | 20.00    | 2.41     | 30                                   | 20.31    | 2.94     | 189                      | 0.54                    |

*Note.* Except for variables for fathers, all data come from mothers. Casewise deletion was used to account for missing family demographic information.

<sup>a</sup>Parents and children indicated their highest level of education in years or number of grades completed (12 = *high school graduate*, 13 = *high school plus some additional training*, 14 = *some college*, 15 = *associate's degree*, 16 = *college degree*, 17 = *some post college*, 18 = *master's degree*, 19 = *professional degree*, 20 = *PhD*). <sup>b</sup>Work hours represents total number of hours spent on paid work at the workplace and at home. <sup>c</sup>Job prestige scores range from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating greater prestige.

\* $p < .05$

Table 2

*Results of an Independent Samples t-test Comparing the Analytic Sample Characteristics (n = 30 families) to the Remaining Gender Composition Sample Characteristics (n = 67)*

| Characteristics                   | Gender Composition Sample (N = 67) |          |          | Analytic Sample (n = 30 families) |          |          | Degrees of freedom | Test of significance |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------|----------------------|
|                                   | N                                  | M        | SD       | n                                 | M        | SD       | df                 | t                    |
| Age (in years)                    |                                    |          |          |                                   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 67                                 | 43.28    | 4.24     | 30                                | 43.72    | 4.17     | 95                 | 0.64                 |
| Fathers                           | 67                                 | 45.81    | 5.31     | 30                                | 45.47    | 4.16     | 95                 | 0.76                 |
| Firstborns                        | 67                                 | 17.37    | 0.86     | 30                                | 17.20    | 0.77     | 95                 | 0.35                 |
| Second borns                      | 67                                 | 14.77    | 1.07     | 30                                | 14.42    | 1.16     | 95                 | 0.14                 |
| Education (in years) <sup>a</sup> |                                    |          |          |                                   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 66                                 | 14.62    | 2.23     | 30                                | 15.13    | 2.30     | 94                 | 0.30                 |
| Fathers                           | 61                                 | 14.31    | 2.58     | 30                                | 15.30    | 2.61     | 89                 | 0.09                 |
| Firstborns                        | 67                                 | 11.28    | 0.79     | 30                                | 11.17    | 0.75     | 95                 | 0.59                 |
| Second borns                      | 67                                 | 8.57     | 1.08     | 30                                | 8.27     | 1.11     | 95                 | 0.21                 |
| Work hours <sup>b</sup>           |                                    |          |          |                                   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 67                                 | 37.10    | 14.04    | 30                                | 39.00    | 20.10    | 95                 | 0.59                 |
| Fathers                           | 62                                 | 47.74    | 18.47    | 30                                | 48.03    | 11.26    | 90                 | 0.94                 |
| Job Prestige <sup>c</sup>         |                                    |          |          |                                   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 63                                 | 51.69    | 12.25    | 25                                | 53.82    | 11.32    | 86                 | 0.45                 |
| Fathers                           | 56                                 | 49.28    | 12.12    | 29                                | 53.17    | 13.38    | 83                 | 0.18                 |
| Income                            |                                    |          |          |                                   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Family                            | 65                                 | \$82,230 | \$45,465 | 29                                | \$98,956 | \$37,762 | 92                 | 0.09                 |
| Mothers                           | 64                                 | \$29,544 | \$22,749 | 29                                | \$28,778 | \$18,175 | 91                 | 0.87                 |
| Fathers                           | 60                                 | \$52,511 | \$31,777 | 29                                | \$65,345 | \$39,016 | 87                 | 0.10                 |
| Family size                       | 67                                 | 4.54     | 0.89     | 30                                | 4.37     | 0.61     | 95                 | 0.34                 |
| Marriage duration (in years)      | 67                                 | 20.24    | 2.81     | 30                                | 20.31    | 2.94     | 95                 | 0.90                 |

*Note.* Except for variables for fathers, all data come from mothers. Casewise deletion was used to account for missing family demographic information.

<sup>a</sup>Parents and children indicated their highest level of education in years or number of grades completed (12 = *high school graduate*, 13 = *high school plus some additional training*, 14 = *some college*, 15 = *associate's degree*, 16 = *college degree*, 17 = *some post college*, 18 = *master's degree*, 19 = *professional degree*, 20 = *PhD*). <sup>b</sup>Work hours represents total number of hours spent on paid work at the workplace and at home. <sup>c</sup>Job prestige scores range from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating greater prestige.

\* $p < .05$

Table 3

*Results of an Independent Samples t-test Contrasting the Analytic Sample Characteristics by Family Gender Composition (N = 30 families)*

| Characteristics                   | Girl-boy sibling constellation<br>(n = 15 families) |           |          | Boy-girl sibling constellation<br>(n = 15 families) |          |          | Degrees of Freedom | Test of significance |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|----------|---|----------|----------|--------------------|----------------------|
|                                   | n   | M         | SD       | n   | M        | SD       | DF                 | t                    |
| Age (in years)                    |   |           |          |   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 15  | 44.52     | 2.94     | 15  | 42.91    | 5.09     | 28                 | 0.30                 |
| Fathers                           | 15  | 46.37     | 3.62     | 15  | 44.57    | 4.58     | 28                 | 0.24                 |
| Firstborns                        | 15  | 17.14     | 0.65     | 15  | 17.25    | 0.88     | 28                 | 0.72                 |
| Second borns                      | 15  | 14.29     | 0.96     | 15  | 14.55    | 1.36     | 28                 | 0.55                 |
| Education (in years) <sup>a</sup> |   |           |          |   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 15  | 15.47     | 2.26     | 15  | 14.80    | 2.37     | 28                 | 0.44                 |
| Fathers                           | 15  | 15.87     | 2.72     | 15  | 14.73    | 2.46     | 28                 | 0.24                 |
| Firstborns                        | 15  | 11.13     | 0.74     | 15  | 11.20    | 0.77     | 28                 | 0.81                 |
| Second borns                      | 15  | 8.13      | 0.99     | 15  | 8.40     | 1.24     | 28                 | 0.52                 |
| Work hours <sup>b</sup>           |   |           |          |   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 15  | 41.87     | 15.54    | 15  | 36.13    | 24.65    | 28                 | 0.44                 |
| Fathers                           | 15  | 46.40     | 12.61    | 15  | 49.67    | 9.90     | 28                 | 0.44                 |
| Job Prestige <sup>c</sup>         |   |           |          |   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Mothers                           | 14  | 55.28     | 11.89    | 11  | 51.96    | 10.81    | 23                 | 0.48                 |
| Fathers                           | 15  | 53.44     | 14.39    | 14  | 52.89    | 12.75    | 27                 | 0.91                 |
| Income                            |   |           |          |   |          |          |                    |                      |
| Family                            | 14  | \$106,239 | \$41,908 | 15  | \$92,160 | \$33,445 | 27                 | 0.32                 |
| Mothers                           | 14  | \$31,857  | \$13,637 | 15  | \$25,905 | \$21,672 | 27                 | 0.39                 |
| Fathers                           | 14  | \$69,071  | \$42,307 | 15  | \$61,868 | \$36,818 | 27                 | 0.63                 |
| Family size                       | 15  | 4.53      | 0.74     | 15  | 4.20     | 0.41     | 28                 | 0.14                 |
| Marriage duration (in years)      | 15  | 20.24     | 3.56     | 15  | 20.38    | 2.27     | 28                 | 0.90                 |

*Note.* Except for variables for fathers, all data come from mothers. Casewise deletion was used to account for missing family demographic information.

<sup>a</sup>Parents and children indicated their highest level of education in years or number of grades completed (12 = *high school graduate*, 13 = *high school plus some additional training*, 14 = *some college*, 15 = *associate's degree*, 16 = *college degree*, 17 = *some post college*, 18 = *master's degree*, 19 = *professional degree*, 20 = *PhD*). <sup>b</sup>Work hours represents total number of hours spent on paid work at the workplace and at home. <sup>c</sup>Job prestige scores range from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating greater prestige.

\* $p < .0$

Figure 1

*Parke and Buriel's (1998) Tripartite Model of Socialization Adapted to Include Adolescent Gender Role Attitudes.*

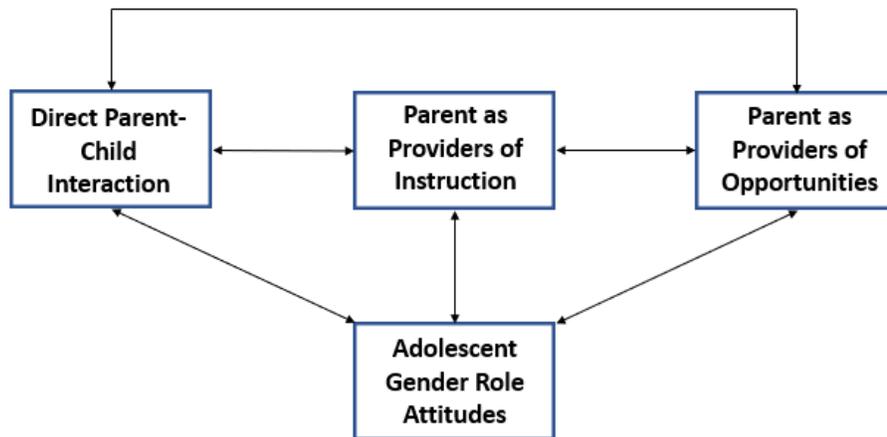
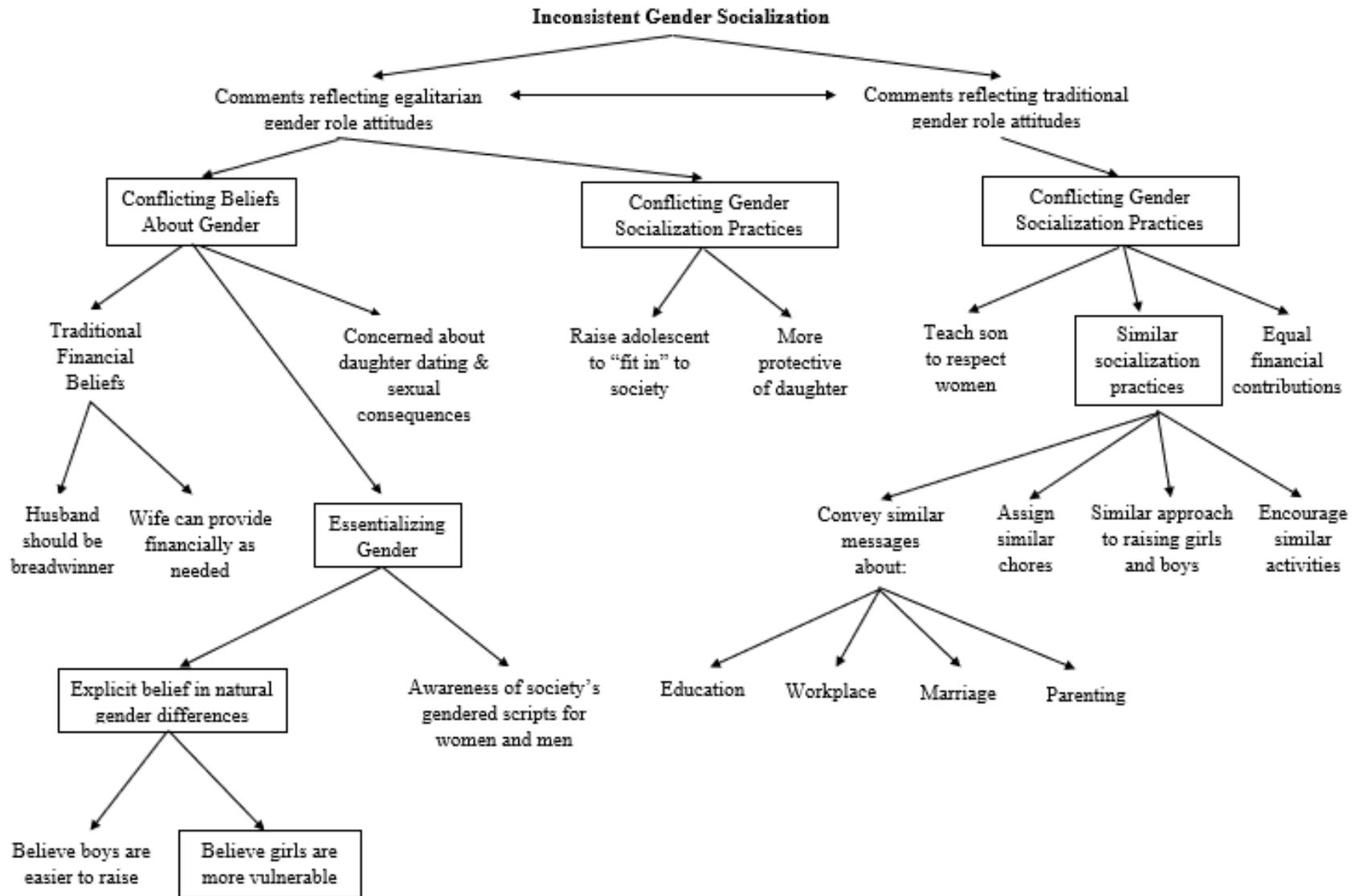
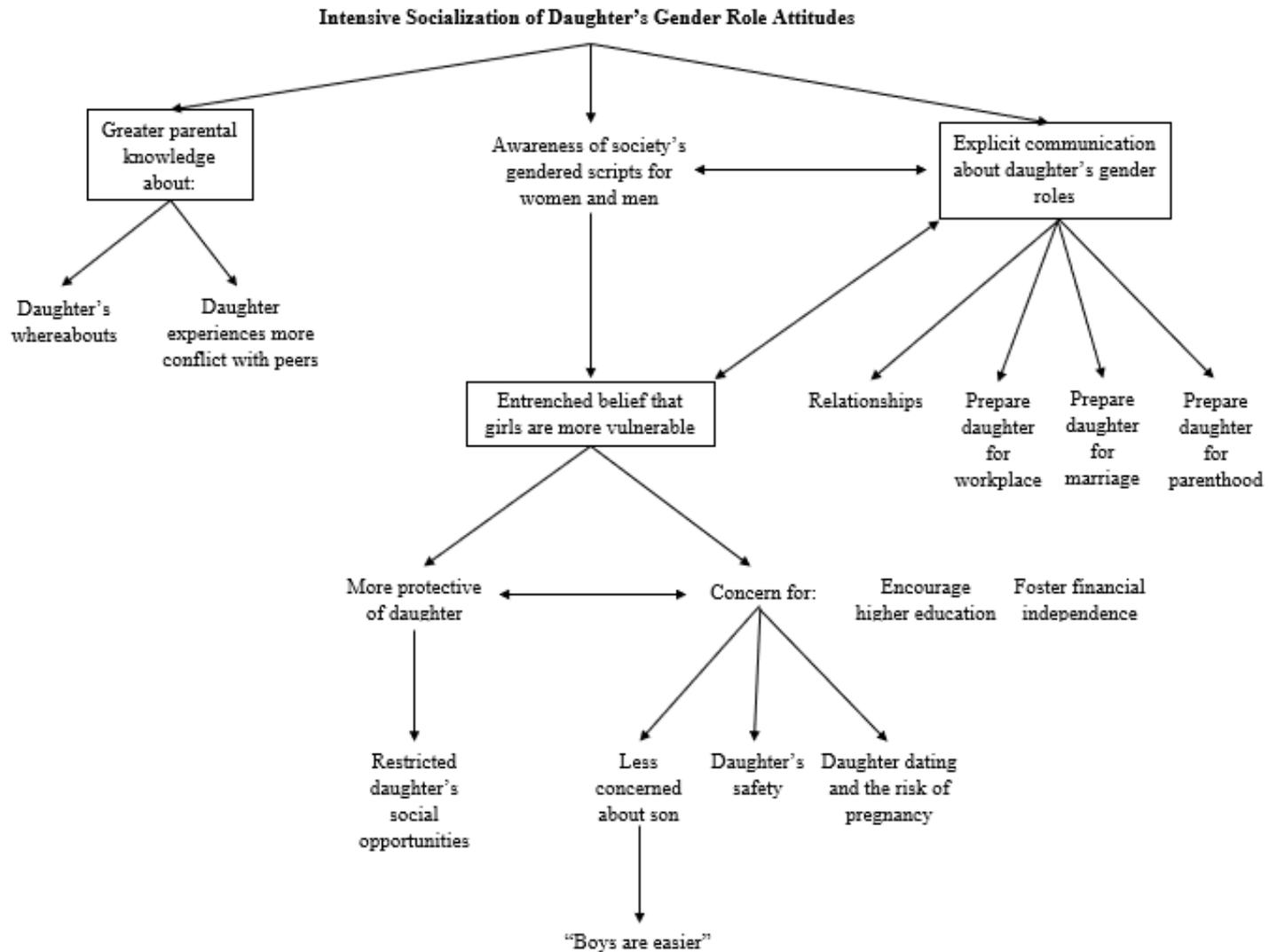


Figure 2. Hierarchical Visualization of Theme 1: Inconsistent Gender Socialization



Note. Boxes indicate concepts. All lines drawn from concepts indicate a conflicting relationship.

Figure 3: Hierarchical Visualization of Theme 2: Intensive Socialization of Daughters' Gender Role Attitudes



Note. Boxes indicate concepts.

APPENDICES

## Appendix A

## Face-to-Face Interview Questions

## Set 1: Raising the Older Sibling (SibO) versus the Younger Sibling (SibY)

1. My next set of questions have to do with in what way parents can learn to be more effective as parents. In particular, I'm curious about what you have found, if anything, raising [SibO] that has helped you in rearing [SibY]. What you have learned from raising [SibO] that has been useful?
2. And think about how you have handled arguments and disagreements. Have you learned anything from your experiences with [SibO] that has helped you in getting along better with [SibY]?
3. And do you think this has helped you in getting along with [SibY] a little, somewhat, or a lot?
4. Alright, think about the area of communication. Have you learned anything from your experiences with [SibO] that has helped you in better conveying your point of view to [SibY] or to help you better understand where she is coming from?
5. And do you think this has helped a little, somewhat, or a lot?
6. Think about how you have helped your children develop important attitudes and values. Did you learn anything from your experiences with [SibO] that has helped you to develop important attitudes and values with [SibY]?
7. And do you think this has helped a little, somewhat, or a lot?
8. And think about the time in which your children were making the transition from being a kid to being a teenager. Did you learn anything from your experiences with [SibO] that has helped you make a smoother transition with [SibY]?

9. And do you think this has helped a little, somewhat, or a lot?

Set 2: Raising boys versus girls

10. OK, now I'd like to move on to a related topic. My next set of questions have to do with raising boys and girls today. In the past few years, there has been a trend for more equal roles between men and women in the workplace and maybe in the home. Some parents feel that it is necessary to acknowledge the difference between boys and girls when raising children. So, you have both a daughter and a son, you have experience at this issue.
11. How have you approached raising a boy compared to raising a girl?
12. Are there special concerns that come up when raising a boy that are different from issues that come up with raising a girl?
13. Are there special concerns that come up when raising a girl that that don't come up when raising a boy?
14. What sorts of things have you tried to teach your son about his education in both high school and afterwards that may or may not be different than what you have tried to teach your daughter?
15. What, if anything, have you tried to teach your daughter about her future role in the workplace that may or may not be different from what you have tried to teach [SibO]?
16. And, finally, what, if anything, have you tried to teach your daughter about parenting and marriage that may or may not be different from what you have tried to teach [SibO]?

## Appendix B

## Finalized Codes, Code Definitions, and Examples

| <i>Code Group</i>                         | <i>Codes</i>                                   | <i>Code Definition</i>   | <i>Example</i>  |
|---|--|--|---|
| OBSERVED (GENDER) DIFFERENCES IN CHILDREN | Gendered interests                             | This category is meant to capture parents observed, oftentimes gendered, differences between their children. This category does not include specific socialization behaviors, only observations about the children     | E.g., "She wants to go to the dances and you know all the girls go to the dances" |
|   | Different personality                          | Describes approaching raising children differently because of their personality differences  | E.g., "their personalities are just so different"                                 |
|   | Daughter more effected by social relationships | Describes daughter as having more problems with her friends;   | E.g., "daughter is more conflict-oriented with her friends"                       |
|   | Boys are easier                                | Describing boys as being easier to raise than girls, in general. Can also refer to boys having an "easier transition" than girls or parents feeling "less worried" about their sons than their daughters               | E.g., "boys are easier to deal with"  |
|   | Girls are more emotionally expressive          | Describes daughter as being more emotional or expressing her emotions more than son  | E.g., "She's just more emotional"   |
|   | Boys are less emotionally expressive           | Describes son as not being very emotional, holding it in, or bottling it up  | E.g., "he just kinda bottles it up"   |
| PARENTS' GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES            |  | This category is meant to capture parents' gender role attitudes in general. This may include both general comments reflecting gender role attitudes as well as behaviors that reflect parents' gender role attitudes. |   |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| PARENTS' GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES (continued) | Mixed/conflicting gender role attitudes | Captures the mixed or conflicting statements parents make about their beliefs, values, intentions, and behaviors that are reflective of their gender role attitudes  | E.g., "women see things differently than men" at the beginning of an interview and "Yea, we raised our daughter as a girl because she was a girl" later in the interview |
|  | Traditional(ish) GRA comment            | Comments reflecting gender role attitudes that are closer to the traditional side of the continuum; Traditional is here defined as the belief that there are inherent differences between women and men and specific roles in society, wherein men are meant to be stoic, tough, and financial providers and women are meant to be emotional, sensitive, and in charge of raising children | E.g., "women see things differently than men"  |
|  | Belief in "natural" gender differences  | Describes the belief that girls are boys are "completely different"; explains the way something is (e.g., his belief, concern about a child, p-c relationships) is because parent is a man/dad or woman/mother   | E.g., "I mean, boys and girls are so different" & "as a dad I would worry about those kinds of things"   |
|  | Egalitarian(ish) GRA comment            | Comments reflecting gender role attitudes that are closer to the egalitarian side of the continuum; Egalitarian is here defined as the belief that women and men are equal and can (and should) have equal roles in the home and workforce   | E.g., "I don't think there's any difference in functioning in a job or household chores or anything"   |
|  | Wife provides financially as needed     | Belief that wife should only be expected to provide financially for a family if "the family needs it"; describes wife's income as unnecessary, optional, or required on an as needed basis   | E.g., "I think the wife should be a provider if the husband's income warrants that she needs to be a provider."  |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| PARENTS' GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES (continued) | Husband should be main breadwinner                           | Belief that husband should be the main or sole financial provider   | E.g., "I might be old fashioned but the husband probably a little bit more than the wife."   |
|  | Equal financial contributions                                | Belief that both a wife and husband should provide financially for the family   | E.g., "I think both should provide for the family"   |
| EXPECTATIONS/CONCERNS FOR CHILDREN         |  | This category is also meant to capture parents' beliefs, expectations, concerns, etc. rather than specific behaviors  |  |
|  | Concerned about daughter dating and the sexual consequences: | Describes parents concern, hesitation, or worried feelings about their daughter dating and/or sex life or consequences  | E.g., Yea, I'm definitely concerned with my daughter as far as dating and sexual activity and stuff of that nature"  |
|  | More protective of daughter                                  | Describes parents concerns for their daughter's safety in general; wanting to be protective of their daughters; supervising her more closely than their son   | E.g., "I'm not as free with her I guess with her freedom as I was with him"  |
|  | Son's risky or rebellious behavior                           | Describes parents' awareness and/or concerns about son getting in trouble, risk taking, or rebellious or adventurous behavior   | E.g., "boys have the tendency to drive fast, or live a little more on the edge, and I think that will be a little more of a concern for me"  |
|  | Boys can take care of himself                                | Describes not being worried about son because he can "take care of himself"   | E.g., "you just think boys can handle themselves"  |
|  | Raise adolescent to "fit in" with society                    | Describes having the expectation that their child will "fit in" with society; wanting to raise their children the same but also want them to "fit in" with society; wanting their children to conform | E.g., "obviously there is some differences that society, um, places on the behavior of boys and girls and different things are expected, um, from boys and girls. And so you have to raise a child in society" |
|  | Approached raising kids                                      | Describes approaching raising kids differently, in general; this code is meant to   | E.g., "I think we've approached raising them differently"  |

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| EXPECTATIONS/CONCERNS FOR CHILDREN (continued) | differently (general)                     | capture parents' general statements that they raise their children differently   |   |
|  | Approach raising kids similarly (general) | Describes raising children the same or approaching raising their children similarly; meant to capture general similar socialization messages not captured in the following codes   | E.g., "I try to treat them the same"  |
|  | Awareness of society's gendered scripts   | Describes parents' awareness of the social pressures, messages, stereotypes, norms or expectations for girls and boys. These social expectations can come from anywhere, including the child's friends, the community, or society "in general" | E.g., "society expects different things from girls and boys"  |
| 1. INSTRUCTION                                 |   | This category captures how parents instruct their children's gender role attitudes.  |   |
|  | Fostering daughter's independence         | Describes the importance of teaching their daughter to be independent in any capacity (e.g., in general, in romantic relationships, in the work place, etc.)   | E.g., "big thing was to make Tori a little bit more independent. Kind of pushed her out there a little bit more than I did him"   |
|  | Teaching daughter self-respect            | Describes teaching their daughter to respect themselves, what self-respect looks like, and how to get respect from others; often refers to dressing modestly   | E.g., "I told her the way you look um the way you present yourself I think is very important on how people respect you. "   |
|  | Prepare daughter for motherhood           | Describes parents preparing their daughter for motherhood by having conversations about what it is like, what to expect, how long to wait, how to pick a job that supports a family, etc.  | E.g., "it would be nice to have a kind of job that she, if she would decide to have a family and wanna work part-time or take some time off. There are certain professions that are easier to do that with" |

|                            |                                      |   |   |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. INSTRUCTION (continued) | Prepare daughter for marriage        | Describes parents preparing daughter for marriage by giving advice about dating, finding a husband, and marriage.   | E.g., "when she marries someone that is who she will be with the rest of her life. And, you know, superficial things fade"                |
|                            | Girls have to work "twice as hard"   | Parents' belief that their daughters will likely have to work twice as hard as a men to achieve the same outcomes. This is typically in reference to the workplace, but this code is meant to capture this idea that women have to work "twice as hard" under any circumstance. | E.g., "Well I think women have to work harder"  |
|                            | Preparing daughter for the workplace | This code reflects parent's comments to daughters about what to expect in the workplace or workforce that is different than what they tell their sons.  | E.g., "because you're a female doesn't allow anyone more rights to be verbally abusive or make sexual advances to you"                    |
|                            | Teaching son to respect women        | Describes teaching son to have respect for women in any capacity (e.g., in general, in romantic relationships, in the work place, etc.)   | E.g., "[son needs to have] the respect for a woman as a human being and an independent person, that they should be treated with respect." |
|                            | Similar workplace messages           | Describes giving their children the same messages about their future place in the workplace   | E.g., "we've pretty much told them the same things"   |
|                            | Similar education messages           | Describes giving their children the same messages about education   | E.g., "we have both treated them pretty equally"  |
|                            | Similar marriage messages            | Describes giving their children the same messages about marriage  | E.g., "no difference there"   |
|                            | Similar parenthood messages          | Describes giving their children the same messages about parenthood  | E.g., " I don't think anything different here"  |

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| 1. INSTRUCTION (continued) | Similar messages about marriage & parenthood | This code can be used to describe parents' responses to the question "is there anything you've tried to teach your daughter about marriage and parenthood that has been different than what you've tried to teach your son?" | E.g., "I don't think so"  |
|                            | Share the work in marriage & parenting       | This code reflects parents describing preparing their children (usually their sons) for marriage and parenthood by warning them that they will have to share the work (e.g., household chores, childrearing, etc.)           | E.g., "don't expect that your wife is going to be the only one to do things around the house" |
|                            | Haven't talked to daughter about it          | Reflects topics that parents haven't talked to their daughter about. This could refer to any topic (e.g., dating, workplace, education, etc.).   | E.g., "We haven't approached that subject with her"   |
|                            | Haven't talked to son about it               | Reflects topics that parents haven't talked to their daughter about. This could refer to any topic (e.g., dating, workplace, education, etc.).   | E.g., "I haven't talked to him about it yet"  |
| 2. P-C INTERACTIONS        |  | This category captures gender parent-child interactions, including the amount of communication parents have with their children, modeling gender roles, etc.   |   |
|                            | Modeling gender roles                        | Describes modeling gender roles (e.g., division of household labor)  | E.g., "If we ask them to do it we need to be able to do ourselves."                           |
|                            | P-C interactions (General)                   | Captures general parent-child interactions that can be considered gendered and do not fit in any of the following categories   | E.g., "that's always kinda been a father-daughter activity."                                  |
|                            | Stronger same gender p-c relationship        | Describes having a stronger or easier same gender parent-child bond or relationship  | E.g., "I'm more familiar with some of the issues my son is facing compared with what my       |

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| <p>2. P-C INTERACTIONS<br/>(continued)</p> |  |  | <p>daughter is facing since I've faced some of them myself "</p>   |
|  | <p>Son needs more academic attention</p> | <p>This code captures parents describing that their son needs more attention when it comes to school. This could include more help with homework, needing to apply himself more, or needing more help getting going in the morning</p> | <p>E.g., "He needs to apply himself a little more"</p>   |
|  | <p>Parental knowledge</p>                | <p>Captures parents' knowledge and awareness of their child's social lives (i.e., peer and/or romantic relationships)</p>  | <p>E.g., "So, I sort of knew about where she was whereas Joe was more out and about"</p>   |
|  | <p>Communication with daughter</p>       | <p>Describes communicating with daughter, either more than son or about a specific topic; intended to capture how much mothers vs fathers are communicating more/less with daughters vs sons</p>                                       | <p>E.g., "I think sometimes she talks to Beck more or about different than she talks to me because I'm the father and she's the daughter"</p>  |
|  | <p>Communication with son</p>            | <p>Describes communicating with son, either more than daughter or about a specific topic; intended to capture how much mothers vs fathers are communicating more/less with daughters vs sons</p>                                       | <p>E.g., "Like [with my son], is at nighttime cause he's a night owl and he'll come over when I'm, umm, just getting into bed. And you know, watching some tv, and he'll come over and talk about what happened during the day."</p> |
|  | <p>Communication with both children</p>  | <p>This code is used to describe parents communicating with both of their children about something</p>   | <p>E.g., "I try to talk to them both about that"</p>   |
| <p>3. OPPORTUNITIES</p>                    |  | <p>This category captures how parents provide or restrict opportunities to their children. This category includes opportunities that construct their child's environment</p>   |  |

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| 3. OPPORTUNITIES<br>(continued) |   | (perhaps before the parents had children) as well as encouraging children to pursue specific opportunities  |   |
|                                 | Providing opportunities (general)           | Providing opportunities in general; serves as a catch-all for opportunities parents describe providing that are not captured in the other codes. Includes religious opportunities and neighborhood context. | E.g., "we typically go to church every week"  |
|                                 | Son's involvement in competitive situations | Describe sons being pushed into or involved in more competitive situations, opportunities, or sports.   | E.g., "he's pushed into competitive situations a lot"   |
|                                 | Encouragement in gendered activities        | Describes encouraging daughter or son to pursue or engage in gender-typical activities;   | E.g., "I always pushed him towards sports"  |
|                                 | Encourage similar activities                | Describes encouraging children to pursue similar activities, regardless of their child's gender   | E.g., "I guess in playing sports, we've always been pretty much enthusiastic about both sexes getting involved in whatever it is they like to be involved in. "                     |
|                                 | Assign gendered chores                      | Describes assigning gender-typical chores to their children   | E.g., "§ "I mean uh he does a lot more of the physical stuff as far as mowing the yard and stuff like that and now Lauren helps in the yard but she normally does the inside stuff" |
|                                 | Assign same chores                          | Assign the same chores to both children, regardless of gender   | E.g., "they're expected to do the same things around the house"   |