

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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Title: Children's Housework in Single-Mother and Single-Father Families.

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Using data from the 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households, this study compared time children of single mothers ($n = 717$) and fathers ($n = 78$) spent on housework. Housework takes time and many parents combine it with employment and child rearing. Characteristics of families headed by single mothers and fathers differ: mothers have more and younger children, fathers have more.

The purpose of this study was to use a nationally representative data set to examine participation in housework by children in single-parent families. It examined whether the pattern of labor differed by gender of parent or child, or by an interaction between the two. Central to the theoretical perspective is the notion that the gendered division of labor in unpaid family work is part of socially constructed gender. Because parent characteristics and child characteristics influence children's housework, these and other variables were explored. Variables which were significant in preliminary analyses were entered into the final analyses.

The dependent variables were time children spent in housework, both absolute (hours) and relative (percentage of time spent by children of the time spent by children and parents), measured for overall, "feminine," and "masculine" housework. General Linear Models were used in the first set of analyses, testing for differences by gender of parent as if mother households and father households were equal on all covariates. Multiple regression models were used in the second set of analyses exploring the impact of child gender. Multiple regression models with an interaction factor (gender of child and gender of parent) were used in the final analyses.

Families headed by single fathers overall did less housework than families headed by single mothers. Children of fathers spent a higher percentage of time in housework than children of mothers. There was no interaction between parent gender and child gender that would show only fathers or only mothers burden their daughters. As in two-parent households, daughters in single-mother and in single-father families do more housework than sons.

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Children's Housework in Single-Mother and Single-Father Families

by Leslie Duke Hall

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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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Leslie Duke Hall, Author

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CHILDREN'S HOUSEWORK IN SINGLE-MOTHER AND SINGLE-FATHER FAMILIES

1. Introduction

Housework is a time-consuming and non-trivial part of family life. Performing housework, managing a household, parenting, working for pay, and attending to other family and social needs can be difficult. While smaller households can result in less housework to be done, they also result in fewer workers. Due to the increasing number of single-parent families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994), the increasing employment of mothers, and the smaller number of children in households, there are fewer people available to do housework. Housework may be a particular strain when there is only one parent in the household. Children do a significant portion of the housework in many families (Blair, 1992b; Peters & Haldeman, 1987); some studies have found that this is particularly true in single-parent families (Amato, 1987; Goldscheider & Waite, 1991; Peters & Haldeman, 1987). The purpose of this study is to use a nationally representative data set to examine participation in housework by children in single parent families to see if the pattern of labor differs by gender of parent and gender of child. The division of labor in housework provides insights into family life and gender functions within families. This study also adds to our knowledge of single parent families, a group often ignored in research.

Doing housework, bearing responsibility for housework, and having little free time can all affect physical and emotional well-being (Robinson, 1977), employment (Berheide, 1984), and family relationships (Berheide, 1984). Because of these

important consequences, this study explores the question of whether the gender of the single parent affects how much housework the children perform.

Single-Parent Families

Single-parent families have increased from 13% of families with children in 1970 to 26% of families with children in 1993 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). It is expected that of children born in the 1980's, 50% will spend at least part of their childhood in a single-parent home (Bumpass & Sweet, 1989). Before the Industrial Revolution, fathers obtained custody because they legally owned the children or because of fathers' ability to support dependents. Later, the rights of children were considered and mothers were seen as vital for young children due to the "tender years" doctrine; therefore, mothers usually obtained custody (Greif, 1985c). Today, single mothers with custody greatly outnumber single fathers with custody, but the percentage of single fathers with custody is growing at a faster rate (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994), particularly in cases of divorce and separation (Greif, 1985c).

Single parent families vary in many ways depending on whether the family is headed by a woman or a man. It is well-established that single mothers have lower incomes than do single fathers (Acock & Demo, 1994; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993), however not all single-parent fathers are financially well-off (Meyer & Garasky, 1993). Single mothers have, on average, more children than do single fathers. A higher proportion of African American and Hispanic American women are single mothers in the U.S. population than are non-Hispanic White women. A slightly

higher proportion of Hispanic American men are single fathers than non-Hispanic White or African American men (4% vs. 3% vs. 3%) (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1994).

Research Questions

What is the contribution that children make to housework in single-parent families? Does it differ in single-mother and single-father families? Does it differ for daughters and for sons? If the children of single fathers do more housework than the children of single mothers, and if daughters of single parents do more housework than sons, then fathers and sons will presumably have more free time or down time (LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981) and less work and responsibility in the home than single mothers and daughters. Single mothers and daughters of single parents, on the other hand, would both presumably carry more responsibility for household management, do more housework, and have less free time for doing other things (Coverman, 1983; Hochschild, 1989; Pleck, 1979; Yogevev, 1981). Such responsibility, or lack thereof, has important implications for the well-being of single parents and their daughters.

Married Two-parent Families

Although many people think housework is a trivial matter, the battle over who does it may cause conflict and resentment, and spill over into other areas of family, social, and work life. Lack of free time can be a problem in terms of a parent's relationship with children (Berheide, 1984), physical health and emotional well-being

(Hill & Stafford, 1980; Hochschild, 1989; Huber & Spitze, 1983; Pleck, 1979; Robinson, 1977), sense of time pressure (Robinson, 1977), relationship to employment (Berheide, 1984), and opportunities for further education and job training (Schmiege & Richards, 1995).

Recent studies have found family life and work life speeding up for many families. In two-parent, married families, employed mothers often work two shifts, performing both paid work and family work. The majority of men in two-parent families do not spend much time on family work (Demo & Acock, 1993; Hochschild, 1989). Men often do not do housework because it is "women's work," thus fathers are allowed more leisure time than mothers (Fassinger, 1993; LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981; Pleck, 1979) and women feel more strained and more often do more than one task simultaneously than do men (Berheide, 1984; Hochschild, 1989). Mothers get less sleep than they may need (Pleck, 1979); in fact, Hochschild (1989, p. 9) reports that working mothers she interviewed "talk about sleep the way a hungry person talks about food." Women are sick more often, are more likely to feel anxious, are emotionally drained, feel more tired (Hochschild, 1989) and have a lower sense of well-being and an elevated sense of time pressure, relative to men (Robinson, 1977). A number of studies find a "leisure" gap between men and women, resulting in men having from 15 to 30 hours more a week of leisure than women (Coverman, 1983; Hochschild, 1989; Yogev, 1981). As Hochschild (1989) noted, this can add up each year to a month of twenty-four-hour days.

Such unequal distribution of housework may lead to strains in the marital relationship. Hochschild (1989, p. 260) has noted that, "the most important injury to

women who work the double day is not the fact that they work too long or get too tired. That is only the obvious and tangible cost. The deeper problem such women face is that they can not afford the luxury of unambivalent love for their husbands. . . . Many women carry into their marriage the distasteful and unwieldy burden of resenting their husbands." In the same way that society lessens the value of work in the home, some women pay an emotional price by devaluing themselves or their daughters; they see females as inferior, as society does, for doing less valued work (Hochschild, 1989).

Research on Children's Housework

Previous research on children's participation in housework in non-random samples has consistently found that daughters do more housework than sons, and older children do more housework than younger children (Benin & Edwards, 1990; Blair, 1992b; Greif, 1985b; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b). Most of these studies did not, however, address the special circumstances of single-parent families. Those that did either looked only at children of single fathers (Greif, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1990) or of single mothers (Hilton & Haldeman, 1991; Peters & Haldeman, 1987), but not both. Two exceptions, Risman and Park's 1988 study and Fassinger's 1993 study, addressed both single mothers and single fathers, but both looked primarily at parent's housework; children's housework in these studies was only a peripheral concern. Two studies of families using nationally representative data (Blair, 1992a, 1992b) have explored children's housework, but not in single-parent families. In addition, most studies on children's housework were carried out in the 1970's and early 1980's;

employment patterns, family composition, and economics have changed since then (Benokraitis, 1993; Zill & Peterson, 1982).

The household tasks normally done by women and girls differ from the household tasks normally done by men and boys. Household tasks are sometimes referred to as "feminine," "masculine," and "gender-neutral" (Berheide, 1984; Berk, 1985; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Some studies have reported continuity in housework across generations. The type and amount of housework children do and their feelings about it are impacted by the values of their parents (Goodnow, 1988; Manke, Seery, Crouter, & McHale, 1994). Men's household behavior has not kept pace with women's changing employment behavior. Furthermore, men's household behavior has not kept pace with their own changing attitudes (Hochschild, 1989; Schwartz, 1994). Similarly, women's expectations for their own household behavior has not changed at the pace their employment behavior has changed. In other words, women, as well as men, still expect women to be responsible for family work (Hochschild, 1989; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Perry-Jenkins, Seery, & Crouter, 1992). In the same way, children's household behaviors and their expectations for those behaviors have not kept pace with the changes of their parents, particularly their mothers' employment behavior. Gender differentiation of tasks is one thing that has stayed constant through changing times. In both children and adults, tasks are segregated by gender, although the amount and type of housework that children do may be becoming less gendered than they used to be (Goodnow, 1988; Hilton & Haldeman, 1991).

Theoretical Perspective

When people think of "gender," they often think of sex. Yet gender is not the same as biological sex and gender is not only a set of expectations learned according to sex. Gender is something we actively create and maintain in a dance with other persons, according to "socially appropriate" "masculine" and "feminine" behaviors (Berk, 1985). More recently, some feminist theorists have revisited the "sex is biology, but gender is socially constructed" debate, concerned that in an effort to avoid "biological determinism," "cultural determinism" was created. One of these theorists, Judith Butler (1990, 1993), suggests we can not define female or male by sex as if the state of sex was natural and preordained before the use of language: The body itself is a cultural entity. In addition, scientific notions of men's and women's bodies are seen systematically and in practice as part of a sexuality that is compulsory, that is heterosexuality. Butler (1990) notes that "Gender must . . . designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (p. 7). In a later work, Butler (1993) reiterates that "sex" and bodies are material and that "sex" is a "cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies" (p. 3). For the purposes of this study, the theoretical perspective of gender theory will focus on how gender is socially constructed, not ignoring, but not focusing on the fact that sex is also culturally constructed.

Gender theory provides the main theoretical framework for this research. Central to the gender perspective or gender theory is the gendered division of labor in both paid work and unpaid family work that makes symbolic gender differences explicit (Ferree, 1990).

Although women and men (and girls and boys) are very similar, the social construction of gender usually defines how female and male persons are perceived as different and ignores their many similarities (Ferree, 1990). This theory locates gender within the environment of people and structures rather than as a notion of personality (Coltrane, 1989; Connell, 1985). It suggests that gender is a significant way of showing power relationships (Scott, 1986) and a major predictor of behavior in families. Given that "gendered meanings" are assigned to roles and behaviors (Ferree, 1990, p. 105), the assignment of housework to children may differ depending on the gender of the child and the gender of the parents assigning those roles and behaviors.

Gender is difficult to define because it is constructed differently by each person. Therefore, it is important to ascertain how people construct gender, define gender differences socially, and understand the meanings these gender differences have (Scott, 1987). Socially constructed gender is affected by political and economic systems, is dynamic, and is created constantly (Scott, 1987). We "do gender," "creating differences between girls and boys and women and men" daily (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 137). This legitimizes the created gender categories, based on sex categories, and limits choices for women and men.

According to Thompson (1993, p. 558), gender is created through "four levels of analysis." The first level, the broader socio-historical context, encompasses structural aspects as well as meanings, symbolic aspects, or ideologies about male and female. An example of this level is the expectation that a daughter is more responsible for household chores than a son because, as a female, she exists primarily within the private sphere of family.

The second level of analysis, the immediate context, includes daily communication and family situations, and how these aspects shape gender within intimate relationships. Both married and single fathers have more resources (i.e., income, job prestige) than mothers and live in a society where men are dominant. The power men hold may affect a father's ability to set household standards, avoid doing housework himself, and demand household work from other family members. At the same time, this power is enacted within the theoretically loving, non-political domain of family (Thompson, 1993).

Thompson's (1993) third level of analysis, interactional processes, affects how gender is created through day-to-day confirmations of what is masculine and what is feminine. For instance, it is possible that fathers may use the strategies of not seeing the housework as their responsibility and get other family members to help (Fassinger, 1993). Therefore, both daughters and sons learn that women perform housework, and men do not. Children are likely to model themselves after their parents, particularly the same sex parent, and follow that pattern as adults (Blair, 1992b; Goodnow, 1989; Thrall, 1978).

Finally, in the fourth level of analysis, individual outcomes, gender differences are seen in roles enacted, identity, consciousness, and well-being. Limiting one's identity as either a primary financial provider or a primary parent can be confining and limiting for both genders (Thompson, 1993). Fathers may define themselves as masculine and not do "women's work" or housework. Those parents who limit their housework may have more leisure time than other parents (Fassinger, 1993; LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981). An example of this might include getting up with a child at night,

foregoing an afternoon of golf to take a child to a birthday party, or passing up a promotion because of a child's schooling.

The social construction of gender and of family is extended in Coltrane's (1989) construction of parenting. He explored the social interactions of spouses and the relational conditions that encourage or discourage them from dividing work more equally. The couples in his study who shared parenting were likely to see the similarities of behaviors between mothers and fathers. However, the couples who parented with a father-as-mother's-helper model more often saw essential differences (e.g., maternal instincts) between women and men, and were more likely to see housework as women's work.

One's gender is structurally associated with one's position within the family and the household, and women's and men's positions are clear. Women have often been denied access to the public sphere because they have been restricted to the private sphere of household and family (e.g., White, middle-class women) or restricted to the lowest, least-powerful areas in the public sphere such as serving and cleaning (e.g., working-class women and women of color).

Family work--doing the tasks of, and being responsible for, child rearing, housework, and managing the family's emotions, relationships, and schedules--is often seen inside and outside of the family as a way for women, but not men, to express love to family (Ferree, 1990). Much of the social, economic, and political power lies within the public sphere. As long as women remain responsible for domestic labor they will be less able to have equal access to a living wage and power in the public realm (Benokraitis, 1993; Farnham, 1987).

The power that men have over women in society is mirrored in the home. Women do repetitive, menial, "feminine" tasks, and men do more interesting, "masculine" tasks. Women do more family work than men. In a two-parent family the greater power of men may be mirrored in how much housework men do compared to their wives and children; in a one-parent family this power might be mirrored in how much housework men do in comparison to their children, particularly daughters. On the other hand, it may be that being the only adult in a one-parent household alters their social construction of gender (Fassinger, 1989; Schmeige & Richards, 1995).

Berk (1985) notes that the way housework is allocated among family members is affected by both the production of household "goods and services" and the production of gender; this allocation is one way to account for normative behavior according to gender. Performing a household task, particularly one that is "feminine" or "masculine," is an event in which one's gender can be reaffirmed at the same time a household commodity is produced (Berk, 1985). In many households the division of labor in the house is gendered, sometimes implicitly, but often clearly. It is the process by which the household work and gender--"the material and the symbolic"--are jointly produced, "that effectively guarantees the asymmetric patterns found so often in studies of the division of household labor" (Berk, 1985, p. 207). Hochschild (1989) found that some husbands and wives reconstructed the gendered division of labor in their household to coincide with the way they were living. For instance, in one family the wife wanted an egalitarian marriage and her husband was unwilling to do much housework or parenting. To live with her ideal, the wife divided their home into upstairs and downstairs work. The upstairs work, done by the wife, included

caring for the child, preparing meals, cleaning house, and doing laundry. The downstairs work, done by the husband, included tinkering in the workroom and walking the dog.

Recent work on provider-role attitudes and their effects on family work is helpful in looking at theoretical perspectives related to single-parent family work (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Perry-Jenkins, Seery, & Crouter, 1992). Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) hypothesized that if men felt ultimately responsible for the provider-role, they did not feel the need to increase the amount of family work they did, even if their wives became employed. The authors found differences between three groups of men. Men who saw themselves as main providers and their wives as secondary providers, spent the least time in "feminine" household tasks. Husbands who saw themselves and their wives as coproviders spent the most time and the highest percentage of time in "feminine" household tasks. Men who were ambivalent about seeing themselves as coproviders, preferring to be main providers, spent an intermediate amount of time in "feminine" household tasks. In a second study, Perry-Jenkins, Seery, and Crouter (1992) looked at women's attitudes about the provider-role and the meanings they attached to it. They found evidence about how people construct gender and the role specializations that may be included for wives and for husbands. For some couples the meaning of the provider-role, rather than the fact that the wife is employed, makes the difference in how much housework the husbands do and why they feel they should/can do the amount they do.

Conclusions

Because of what we know about two-parent families, we can make some predictions about roles in one-parent families. Due to the construction of gender in this country, it is expected that there will be differences in the amount of housework done by children of single fathers compared to children of single mothers. It is also expected that there will be differences in how much housework is done by daughters and how much is done by sons. These will be explored both in the number of hours children perform and in the percentage of hours they perform relative to the total performed by all children and the parent in the family. In addition, whether children overall and particularly by gender of child do more housework for single fathers or single mothers will be explored. Specifically, this study attempts to determine how the characteristics of parents, children, and families affect the children's housework in single-parent families.

Data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH)¹, a national probability survey, are used to examine this question. These data are only cross-sectional, but the survey permits exploratory analysis of parental and child participation in housework in single-parent families.

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Contribution of This Study

Studies of children's housework are generally limited to children in two-parent families. Studies consistently find that mothers do more housework than fathers and that this inequity can have important consequences for all family members. Those studies that explore children's housework in single-parent families typically look only at single-father or single-mother families. In addition, the majority of studies of children's housework do not use representative data.

The present study, using nationally representative data to explore children's housework, will contribute important new information to the study of the household division of labor in single-parent families.

2. Review of the Literature

The amount of housework that children do is dependent partly on how much housework needs to be done and how much housework others (family members, friends, paid help) are already doing. In most households parents do more housework than children (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Therefore, in order to explore children's housework, we first need to explore parent's housework. In addition, there has been more research done on housework in married families than in single-parent families, thus the literature on household division of labor in two-parent families will be explored.

This chapter explores the household division of labor, including attitudes of women and men and definitions of housework. There will be a look at the characteristics of one-parent families. One section will explore parents' housework in two-parent families, one-parent families, and a comparison between the two types of families. A number of influences on children's performance in housework will also be explored, including parent characteristics and child characteristics which are potential covariates. Another section will look at children's housework in two-parent families and in one-parent families. The chapter will conclude with the hypotheses for this study.

Characteristics of Single-Parent Families

Single-parent families vary in many ways, depending on the gender of the parent. Single fathers are the household heads of approximately 15% of single-parent families

(U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). Race, income, and other demographic variables vary by gender for single parents. For children under age 18 by presence of parents, a higher percentage of African American children (57%) live in single-parent families (57% of African American children) than do Hispanic children (32%), or non-Hispanic White children (20%). Single parents are proportionately more likely to be African American or of Hispanic origin than non-Hispanic White (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). Single fathers have approximately double the income of single mothers and are more likely to have sons than daughters (Hall, Walker, & Acock, 1995; Meyer & Garasky, 1993). Single fathers tend to be older and have more education, whereas mothers tend to have larger families and younger children (Hall et al., 1995; Norton & Glick, 1986).

Considering reasons for single parenthood, both mothers and fathers are most likely to be divorced, fathers are more likely than mothers to be widowed, and mothers are more likely than fathers to have never married (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). Previously married parents obtain custody of children in a variety of ways: those who get custody when the other parent dies, abandons, neglects, or does not want the children, and those who choose custody because they want the children, already care for the children, think they are a better parent, they can care for the children, and so on (Guttmann, 1989). In one small scale study of single custodial mothers and fathers, most mothers, but few fathers, obtained custody because they had been the primary caregiver of the children (Risman & Park, 1988).

Who Does What? Attitudes and Housework by Parents

Types of Housework

As the household tasks normally done by women differ from the households tasks normally done by men, so do the tasks of girls differ from those of boys. Household tasks are measured in a number of ways and grouped into types of tasks, such as "feminine," "masculine," and "neutral." Women usually do repetitive, unrelenting, menial, routine, never-ending, boring tasks that rarely have a leisure component (Berheide, 1984; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Thompson & Walker, 1989). These tasks often follow a daily schedule that allows little discretion in timing. So-called feminine tasks include preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning house, washing and ironing clothing, making beds, cleaning bathrooms, kitchen work, picking up, vacuuming, and setting tables (Berk, 1985; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Szinovacz, 1984; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Child care tasks are often also termed "feminine," but are not explored in this study due to the lack of data.

Men usually do more infrequent, less routinized, and more interesting tasks that more often have a leisure component. So-called masculine tasks can more often be done when convenient: Normally there is discretion about when the tasks may be done (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Thompson & Walker, 1989). These "masculine" tasks include outdoor work (yard work, shoveling snow, mowing grass, farm labor), taking out the garbage, auto maintenance, and household repairs (Berheide, 1984; Berk, 1985; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Szinovacz, 1984; Thompson & Walker, 1989).

Neutral or undifferentiated tasks are gender-neutral or seem to be assigned to men as frequently as to women. These tasks include doing errands, caring for pets, shopping, driving or chauffeuring family members, and paying bills (Berk, 1985; Blair & Lichter, 1991; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b).

Housework by Married Parents

Much of what is known about parent's housework has been discovered using samples of married, two-parent families. This literature on the division of housework between wives and husbands may suggest potential differences between the housework of single mothers and single fathers. In other words, how women and men behave in two-parent families may have bearing on how they behave in one-parent families.

No matter the variables that affect the division of family labor (e.g., parents' employment, income), wives consistently do more hours of housework than husbands (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston, & McHale, 1987; Kamo, 1988). In the recent National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), it was found that in married and cohabiting heterosexual households women averaged 33 hours a week in household work to men's 14 hours (Blair & Lichter, 1991). As in that study, Coverman and Sheley (1986) found that a larger number of children and the presence of preschool children increase a man's time in housework but do not raise it to the time a woman spends.

Studies have documented the fact that the type of housework done is also highly segregated by gender: Wives more often do "feminine" tasks, husbands more often do "masculine" tasks, and both do neutral tasks (Berk, 1985; Blair & Johnson, 1992;

Burns & Homel, 1989; Hall et al., 1995; Hilton & Haldeman, 1991; McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994).

The differences may be extreme. For example, in Hilton and Haldeman's 1991 time diary study of children in one-parent mother and two-parent families, matched for age and sex of children, they discovered that mothers did up to 240 times more than fathers on some housework activities including "feminine," neutral, and "masculine" tasks. In Burns and Homel's study of 9 to 11 year-old children in over 200 Australian families (1989), the authors found that mothers were more active than fathers in "feminine" household tasks as well as parenting tasks. A study of housework that explored the temporal rhythms of weekdays and weekends found that, consistent with other studies, the most hours daily are spent on "feminine" tasks, then on neutral tasks, and the least hours on "masculine" tasks (2.5 vs. 1.5 hours vs. less than 1 hour) with neutral tasks falling somewhere in the middle (Manke et al., 1994).

Because studying single-parents often means studying families that were once two-parent families, it is important to recognize the differing experiences of housework and relationships with children mothers and fathers may bring to single parenthood. Studies of parental time with children find that mothers in married families spend more time with children than fathers, fathers spend a larger percentage of their time with children playing, and mothers spend a larger percentage of their time with children tending to practical tasks (i.e., bathing, feeding, chauffeuring) (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Lamb, 1986; Peterson & Gerson, 1992; Robinson, 1977). Therefore, in studying one-parent families it is reasonable to expect single mothers to have more experience with children than single fathers.

Housework by Single Parents

What is known about parent's housework in single-parent families comes primarily from studies with small, voluntary samples. Some studies have found that single mothers and fathers do not differ on housework or on how they divide the housework within the household (DeFrain & Eirick, 1981; Risman & Park, 1988). In Risman's studies (Risman, 1986; Risman & Park, 1988), although mothers felt more responsible for household labor, when variables such as income and number of children were added, parental gender was insignificant; personal responsibility for housework was not dependent on gender but rather on being the primary parent.

However, other studies have found differences in the household behavior of single mothers and single fathers. In one recent study that used nationally representative data, single mothers spent more hours on housework overall than single fathers, and mothers spent more hours on "feminine" tasks, whereas fathers spent more hours on "masculine" tasks (Hall et al., 1995). Even when a variety of sociodemographic variables were controlled, this weekly difference (40 vs. 34 hours), remained. Because so few fathers have been the primary or sharing givers of care to their children during marriages (Peterson & Gerson, 1992), it might seem that these fathers would be ill-prepared to care for children and a home. However, this is not always the case.

Parents' experiences in homemaking during marriage may make it easier or more difficult to do homemaking when they become single parents. In a one study, Fassinger (1993) interviewed 34 White, divorced parents and found that mothers and fathers reacted differently to the responsibility of housework and had different

expectations for their children. Fathers who had done any housework during marriage found single parenting easier. Fathers who had shared in housework during a marriage continued to take responsibility. Previously uninvolved fathers or fathers who had "helped" (i.e., helped their wives) during marriage, did not see housework as their obligation as a parent, but rather saw it as a family chore. Mothers who had total responsibility for housework during marriage expected little help from their children. Mothers used to some help in the marriage expected some help from their children, yet, they were sensitive to the changes the children had experienced due to the divorce and did not take their children's help for granted or overburden them. Mothers were more likely than fathers, except for previously sharing fathers, to say that housework was the responsibility of the parent rather than the entire family. Some studies have found that fathers who had shared housekeeping and parenting during a marriage needed less adjustment to homemaking as single parents (Bartz & Witcher, 1978; DeFrain & Eirick, 1981; Fassinger, 1993; Gasser & Taylor, 1976; Greif, 1985c, 1990; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1977). In Greif's (1985c) study the more fathers wanted custody, the better prepared they were for it.

On the other hand, differing from Fassinger's 1993 findings, over 75% of single fathers in a number of older studies see housework as their personal responsibility (Orthner, Brown, & Ferguson, 1976; Risman, 1986) and over 80% of single fathers do the housework themselves (Guttman, 1989; Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978; Mendes, 1976). For those fathers who have household help, it is usually their children who are the main resource (Greif, 1985a; Guttman, 1989; Orthner et al., 1976; Risman, 1986). Those fathers with the financial means are more likely to have outside help

(Greif, 1985a, 1985b; Risman, 1986; Risman & Park, 1988). Early studies of single-parent fathers reported 3 to 30% of fathers had outside, paid help for shopping, cleaning, cooking, laundry, or ironing (Gasser & Taylor, 1976; Greif, 1985a; Risman, 1986); and 20% of those with any housework help had a full-time housekeeper (Orthner, et al., 1976). Many of these studies were done in the 1970's and 1980's, however, and economic conditions today are less likely to allow for paid help (Benokraitis, 1993).

Some studies report that fathers mention it is not the housework itself that is problematic; what is problematic is the coordinating of housework with child rearing, employment, and a social life, and the time, drudgery, and lack of familiarity with housework (Bartz & Witcher, 1978; Katz, 1979; Mendes, 1976; Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981). Most research shows that the majority of fathers do not have inordinate trouble with homemaking skills (Chang and Deinard, 1982; Greif, 1985b; Hanson, 1988; Risman, 1986). Mendes (1976) found that shopping in a thrifty manner and budgeting income were difficult. Bartz and Witcher (1978) noted that fathers coped by taking pride in their housework, reducing tasks, lowering housework standards, or hiring help.

Housework in Two-Parent versus Single-Parent Families

Using data from the NSFH, Acock and Demo (1994) found that mothers in a variety of family structures continue to do most of the housework. On average, mothers in first marriages and subsequent marriages did about 70% of the family's housework compared to never married and divorced mothers who did about 85% of

the housework. The total number of hours did not differ by family structure.

Compared to the percentages above, full-time homemaker mothers increased their proportion in housework while mothers employed 30 or more hours a week decreased their proportion of housework, both by 5%.

Children's Housework Performance

Gender Role Attitudes of Adults in Assigning Tasks

Like the research on expectations of how adults should divide household labor, research on how adults hypothetically assign household task to girls and boys might shed light on our understanding of children's housework. In Lackey's 1989 national probability study, the author found that the majority of adults assigned tasks to children in a non-traditional manner. Yet, men assigned household chores to children in a more traditional or gender stereotypical manner than did women, regardless of whether the adults were married or not, and were parents or not. In addition to men, older adults and those with a lower socioeconomic status assigned chores more traditionally than women, younger adults, or those with a higher socioeconomic status.

Like studies of the division of housework between adult women and men, nearly all studies of children's housework find gender differences in the amount of tasks performed, the types of tasks performed, and the time spent performing tasks. In Blair's (1992b) nationally representative study (NSFH) of over 600 married and cohabiting couples with a school-aged child, parents influenced children's housework, often with the result of sex-typed tasks performed by girls and by boys. Both girls and

boys learn housework roles through modeling, usually from a same-sex parent, and this may be important for the socialization of children's housework patterns (Blair, 1992b; McHale et al., 1990).

In their time diary, longitudinal study of children ages 7 to 17, Benin and Edwards (1990) found that no children are being trained to do all of the household tasks necessary to manage their own households when they are adults. Although people do manage households as adults, most people are not prepared to do all of the tasks--feminine, masculine, and neutral--that are necessary. Blair (1992b), Goodnow (1988), and White and Brinkerhoff (1981b) found that daughters and sons are also rewarded differently for doing housework. Girls and boys are socialized differently as to whether self-sacrifice in doing housework is appropriate, and what the differences are between "women's work" and "men's work." Daughters may be taught that work at home expresses love; they may learn not to expect allowance or other payment for family work because they do not see their mothers rewarded for doing it (Goodnow, 1988). This training of girls in traditional household chores seems to be a concern not only because the girls learn "women's work", but also they learn that "the optimal working relationship between men and women is one of women's doing for others what others could do for themselves--making a gift out of the relief from adult tasks and the opportunity to do something of greater market value" (Goodnow, 1988, p. 20).

Parent's rationales for children's housework. The amount of housework children do varies due to a number of characteristics including parental demands. Parents expect children to do housework for reasons such as obligation to family, parental

need for help, developing prosocial behavior, developing responsibility and character, and learning skills (Goodnow, 1988; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981a). In White and Brinkerhoff's (1981a) study of nearly 800 randomly selected parents in Nebraska, single mothers and two-parent families with employed mothers, more often than single-(husband)-earner two-parent families, cited need (i.e., extrinsic or pragmatic) reasons for children's help. Other studies have shown children learn expectations from parents directly via parent's gender role orientations, employment status, and education, and indirectly by modeling themselves after the parent (Blair, 1992b; Goodnow, 1988; Manke et al., 1994; Thrall, 1989).

Parent Characteristics as Influences on Children's Housework

The amount and type of household work children do in both single-parent and two-parent families depends on a number of child and parental characteristics. This section explores parent characteristics, beginning with two-parent families.

Two-parent Families

Parental gender. Gender of parents has been discussed earlier in the study.

Parents, particularly fathers, often assign housework to their children based on gendered tasks (Lackey, 1989; Thrall, 1978).

Parental employment. Parent's employment status and number of work hours are significant parental characteristics in the amount of housework done by children.

Children spend more hours on housework and more hours in "feminine" tasks when

both parents are wage earners and when their parents spend more hours employed (Blair, 1992a, 1992b; Lawrence & Wozniak, 1987; McHale et al., 1990; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b); this is especially true with mothers' employment hours (Blair, 1992a).

Children are used more than fathers to replace mothers' hours in housework if mothers become employed (Blair, 1992a). Blair (1992b, p. 189) found that children, daughters particularly, "fill in the labor shortage caused by their mother's work in the labor force." Father's employment hours also affected their children's time in housework: A daughter's housework hours were highest when fathers were employed between 20 and 39 hours. A father's employment affected his son's hours in housework erratically, with sons doing the most housework when fathers were employed more than 40 hours per week and the least when fathers were employed 20 to 39 hours per week.

Peters and Haldeman (1987), who studied two-parent (both one-earner and two-earner) and single-mother households, found that the increase in adult employment meant children did a larger percentage of the housework (i.e., spent more relative time) because adults were reducing their contribution. Other studies report both daughters and sons are more skilled in performing "feminine" tasks when the mother is employed (Burns & Homel, 1989; Cogle & Tasker, 1982; Peters & Haldeman, 1987).

In general, children of mothers employed part-time do less housework than children of mothers employed full-time or children of mothers home full-time (Benin & Edwards, 1990; Blair, 1992b; Cogle & Tasker, 1982; Lawrence & Wozniak,

1987), although Manke et al. (1994) found otherwise. Blair (1992b), found compared to daughters of mothers employed part-time (1 to 19 hours), daughters of mothers employed full-time (40 or more) and daughters of non-employed homemaker mothers spent more hours in housework. Likewise, compared to sons of mothers employed part-time (1 to 19 hours), sons of mothers employed full-time (40 or more) and sons of non-employed homemaker mothers spent more time. Peters and Haldeman (1987) found children of employed mothers spent relatively more time on feminine tasks than did children of homemakers.

Benin and Edwards (1990) found an interaction between parental employment and child gender. When mothers were employed part-time, children did less than 3 hours a week of housework. In dual-earner families daughters averaged two-and-one-half times the hours of sons (10.2 vs. 2.8 hours). In single-earner families there was more equality in the amount of time spent in family work by daughters and sons, but the tasks done were more gender stereotypical. In another study by Cogle and Tasker (1982), children whose mothers were full-time homemakers participated the most in household tasks (91%), followed by children whose mothers worked full-time (88%), and then by children whose mothers worked part-time (76%) (Cogle & Tasker, 1982). This may be because the employed mothers are less available to supervise and encourage the children's work, expect less help (Cogle & Tasker, 1982), or are expected by the family to do it all (Benin & Edwards, 1990). Cogle and Tasker (1982, p. 397) noted that "It is possible that employed mothers, especially those employed part-time, have guilt feelings about seeing their children doing tasks that previously were done by them."

On the other hand, Manke et al. (1994) found daughters of mothers who worked part-time did an intermediate percentage of the total household labor done by households members, lower than daughters of mothers employed full-time and higher than daughters of mothers who were homemakers. This difference may be due to the Manke et al. study (1994) being done most recently; perhaps the expectations of families of employed mothers have eased a bit or mothers employed part-time feel more at peace in the labor force and less guilty expecting or asking families for help. In terms of the absolute time, daughters did the most when mothers were employed part-time and the least when mothers were home full-time (Manke et al., 1994). Sons of mothers who worked part-time did the highest percentage of time of sons doing the family housework and sons of homemaker mothers did the least. In terms of absolute time, sons did the most housework hours when their mothers were employed part-time and the least when mothers were employed full-time.

In Nebraska, White and Brinkerhoff (1981b) explored the childhood antecedents of the sex-typed division of labor and found that both sons and daughters in families with employed mothers did more "feminine" or girls' tasks than those in families with non-employed mothers, but the discrepancy between the work of daughters and sons was not reduced. White and Brinkerhoff (1981b, p. 177) concluded that, "While women's employment may broaden the experiences of their sons, it sinks their daughters even deeper into the domestic role."

Parental education. In Burns and Homel's (1989) Australian study participants had been selected to represent the population in terms of socioeconomic and cultural divisions. They found sons had mastered more feminine tasks when parents were more

educated, and daughters did more "masculine" tasks when mothers were more educated. Both sons and daughters did more "feminine" tasks, especially sons, as parents' education rose (White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b). On the other hand, in Blair's study (1992b), greater parental education, particularly of mothers, was associated with lower housework demands on daughters.

Parental income. Children who had lower family income did more housework in Blair's (1992a) study. Zill and Peterson (1982) found that children from higher-income families were more likely than those from lower-income families to have done neutral, maturity-related tasks, but less likely to have done "feminine" tasks. These authors (Zill & Peterson, 1982, p. 361), noted a "positive main effect of parent education on the skill development of boys and girls . . . but only limited evidence of an education-sex interaction effect whereby the accomplishments of boys and girls became more similar in families with higher education and income levels."

Parental race or ethnicity. In Zill and Peterson's (1982) study, African American and White children differed on the type, but not the amount, of housework performed. Burns and Homel (1989) found cultural background, defined as country of origin, was a predictor of behavior, with non-Anglo families having a more traditional division of labor between mothers and fathers and between daughters and sons than Anglo families.

Parental role modeling. Children often do what their parents do. Thrall (1978) concluded children usually did what their parents did, although sometimes sons did housework because their fathers did not. Blair (1992b) found parents affected children's housework, particularly children of the same gender as the parent, through

role modeling: Children's housework was gender-typed in a way similar to that of adult women and men. The more household labor the parents did, the more the daughters did; the more the fathers did, the more their sons did.

Single-parent Families

Parental gender. As in two-parent families, the gender of the parent makes a difference in children's housework in single-parent families. Fassinger (1993) found that most single fathers expected more help from children than did single mothers. Single fathers are more likely to relinquish responsibility for household work to their children, whereas single mothers are likely to keep the responsibility themselves. Risman and Park (1988) found that single mothers are significantly less likely than single fathers to have others be responsible for the housework. Those mothers and fathers who can delegate the responsibility for housework, generally because of their income, do so.

Parental role modeling. Less evidence suggests that parental modeling has the same effect in single-parent families as in two-parent families. Fassinger's (1993) work does not support a role modeling perspective. Therefore, this variable will not be pursued.

Parental income. In single-parent families income is positively related to having outside household help and being less responsible for housework. Half of fathers with the highest incomes in the studies hired housekeepers compared to one-fifth of lowest income fathers in the studies (Risman, 1986; Risman & Park, 1988). In terms of income, the higher the income of Greif's (1985a, 1985b) single fathers, the more

likely they had outside help, whereas those with intermediate incomes more often shared housework with their children, and those with lower incomes did most of the housework themselves. Several studies with convenience samples found single fathers were more likely than single mothers, and parents with higher income more likely than parents with lower income, to hire household help; however, most single parents do not (Risman, 1986; Risman & Park, 1988).

Child Characteristics as Influences on Children's Housework

In addition to parent characteristics, characteristics relating to children make a difference in how much housework children do. The most salient child characteristic is the gender of the child. The quantity and type of housework children perform leads to the learning of practical skills according to Zill and Peterson (1982), who used a national U.S. sample of over 1,700 households with one or more children 7 to 11 years of age. Thus, there is a persistence of gender role stereotyping. Other characteristics include the age, number, and gender of children in the family.

Two-parent Families

Child gender. Studies consistently show that just as mothers spend more hours and a higher percentage of time in housework than fathers, so daughters spend more hours and a higher percentage of time (9.1% vs. 7.6%) than sons (Blair, 1992a). Blair (1992b) found daughters did more household work. This was, at least in part, because

of their higher likelihood of doing "feminine tasks" which comprise most household work (Berk, 1985; Thompson & Walker, 1989).

Many parents still assign or expect children to do household work based on their gender. White and Brinkerhoff (1981a) found chores appeared to be very gender-linked by the time children were in their teens. Goodnow (1988, p. 15) has noted that "Changes with age suggest that parents assign tasks on the principle 'from each according to ability.' The impact of gender qualifies this story considerably."

Manke et al. (1994) found most children, daughters in all family types and sons in most family types, did more housework on weekends than during the week. Mothers were the primary housekeepers, with children and fathers being secondary. Daughters did more housework than sons on both weekdays and weekends, whereas sons of women employed full-time did little housework at all. Manke et al. (p. 667) noted that this difference may be "due in part to the emotional work--the monitoring, coaxing, and praise--necessary to push boys to do housework. Busy mothers who are employed full-time may find it easier simply to do the work themselves." Parents may expect boys to do little housework and expect girls to do more housework when they are not in school.

Zill and Peterson (1982) and Burns and Homel (1989) found significant gender differences in almost every task measured. Girls had performed tasks on their own more often, were more skilled, and achieved skills at a younger age than boys in "feminine" tasks. Both sets of authors describe neutral or undifferentiated tasks, including cleaning one's own room, as sometimes related to maturity for children. These tasks include writing and mailing a letter, shopping alone, or setting the time on

a clock. Daughters had acquired skills in neutral, maturity-related tasks at a younger age, whereas sons had acquired skills at a younger age and were more skilled in "masculine" tasks. Burns and Homel (1989) found the "masculine" tasks were the strongest gender difference predictor of children's housework behavior.

Several other studies found gender differences between girls and boys ages 6 to 17 (Cogle & Tasker, 1982; Lawrence & Wozniak, 1987; McHale et al., 1990; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b). For example, in Cogle and Tasker's (1982) study, girls participated more than boys in household work (94% vs. 82% respectively). Girl's participation rates were higher than boy's in five "feminine" tasks, whereas boys participated more only on maintenance, a "masculine" task. White and Brinkerhoff (1981a), however, found boys were slightly more likely than girls (82% vs. 78%, respectively) to be assigned chores.

White and Brinkerhoff (1981a, 1981b) studied (1981a) the meaning of children's work in the family and (1981b) the childhood antecedents of the sex-typed division of labor. In both studies girls averaged one hour more per week than boys between ages 2 and 17. By the late teen years, girls averaged two hours more per week and the authors found that the gender-linked differences in household tasks increased: Boys took out garbage and maintained the yard several times as often as girls; girls cleaned house and did kitchen tasks several times as often as boys. The authors also found that older girls spent more time in household labor than older boys, in part, because girls spent more time on "feminine" tasks. This pattern was also found in other studies (Berk, 1985; Blair, 1992b). McHale et al. (1990) reported that girls did more than

boys on five "feminine" tasks, whereas boys did more than girls on three "masculine" tasks.

In most studies, compared to boys, girls spend more time in "feminine" housework and more time in housework overall. Hilton and Haldeman (1991) found that in two-parent families, girls more than doubled boys' time weekly. In another study, rural girls spent nearly half again as many hours a week as rural boys (Lawrence & Wozniak, 1987). Manke et al. (1994, p. 665) noted that daughters (44%) were more likely than sons (19%) to do more housework than their fathers: "Substantial father-daughter substitution may have occurred for a subsample of families." In one-third of families children did more housework than their fathers; three times as many of those families had daughters than sons.

Child age. A second characteristic influential in how much housework a child does is the child's age. In general, children do more household labor, more chores, and more hours of work, as they get older (Blair, 1992b; Burns & Homel, 1989; Lawrence & Wozniak, 1987). In Thrall's (1978) study parents assigned older children chores more often than younger children. In Cogle and Tasker's (1982) study, 88% of school-aged children participated in at least one household task and, as they aged, children did more housework, especially in meal preparation and house cleaning. White and Brinkerhoff (1981b) found that the percentage of boys involved was a little higher than girls. Boys who had chores rose from 66% (age 2 to 5) to 95% (age 14 to 17). For the same age groups the percentage of girls who had chores rose from 55% to 92%.

In Blair's (1992a) study children averaged 7 hours a week (12% of the household work total) and in his (1992b) study children did more housework as they aged, ranging from 2 hours for elementary age children to 8 hours for daughters and 6 hours for sons in their late teens. Lawrence and Wozniak (1987) found children averaged 7 1/2 hours a week; older children (12 to 17 years) did more than younger children (6 to 11 years) on feminine tasks and one masculine task (home/yard maintenance). Girls and boys got better at doing "feminine" tasks and neutral, maturity-related tasks as they aged (Burns & Homel, 1989).

Increasing participation due to age impacts daughters more strongly than sons (Blair, 1992b). White and Brinkerhoff (1981b) also found that chores became more gender-linked when children became teens: Boys moved toward tasks understood as masculine and girls toward tasks understood as feminine. For instance, at younger ages (age 2 to 9) more girls than boys did kitchen work: For teens this participation rate decreased for boys and increased for girls. This highlights an interaction between gender and age of child. In addition, older daughters do more overall than older sons. Zill and Peterson (1982) found that the percentage of children doing a household task alone rose with age, and although this was true of both sons and daughters, the rate of the rise was steeper for daughters.

Other characteristics: number, gender, and age of siblings. Other characteristics that affect children's housework are the number, gender, and age children in the family. Blair (1992a) reported that children with siblings do more housework because their parents demand more and because there is more to do. Burns and Homel (1989) and Zill and Peterson (1982) found that children with siblings are often more skilled at

and take responsibility for "feminine" work, possibly with older children in the family teaching the tasks to the younger children. Girls did more "masculine" tasks if they were an only child, whereas boys did neutral, maturity-related tasks earlier if they had siblings. Similarly, White and Brinkerhoff (1981b, p. 177) found: "Overall, the structural impact of having more housework to distribute is greater than any ideological impact on breaking traditional roles." Both daughters and sons did more repetitive, "feminine tasks" when there were a larger number of children in the family. Benin and Edwards (1990) found that the number of siblings made more of a difference than whether or not there were "opposite-sex" siblings in the amount of housework children do.

Gender of siblings affected both the type and amount of housework children did. In their 1981(b) study, White and Brinkerhoff found parents with children of both sexes were more likely to assign sex-typed work. Blair (1992a) found that in households with just sons, children did fewer hours and a smaller percentage of the labor than in households with just daughters. Children in two-parent families, especially girls, who have preschool siblings, do fewer hours of housework than children without siblings (Blair, 1992a, 1992b). These children may have substituted child care for younger siblings for some hours of housework.

Single-Parent Families

Child gender. As in studies of two-parent families, girls in single-parent families consistently spend more time than boys on housework. Single fathers raising girls age 12 to 18 got more household help than fathers raising boys of that age; 87% of

children in daughter-only and 74% in son-only families did housework in Greif's 1985a study. Hilton and Haldeman (1991) found in single-mother families, girls spent three times more time overall than boys, girls spent more time than boys in two "feminine" tasks.

Other child characteristics: age of children and number of siblings As in two-parent families, children in single-parent families do more household labor, both more chores and more hours of work, as they get older. Greif (1985a) found that children participated more in housework as they aged, while their single-parent fathers took less responsibility. While 80% of single fathers with children ages 1 to 4 cooked, that percentage decreased to 53% of single fathers with children 12 to 18. In addition, outside help was used less as children aged. In Amato's representative 1987 Australian study of over 300 school-age and teen-age children, adolescents from all three family types (first married, step, and single mother) did more of the combined 20 household tasks than did primary school aged children. Risman and Park (1988) found that single parents with more children were less likely to be responsible for housework. It is possible the children are more responsible.

Summary of Parent Characteristics

If children living in a two-parent family, become part of a single-parent family that may change the way they grow up. There has been speculation and some research on whether children of single parents grow up "a little faster" and are forced to assume too many household responsibilities (Wallerstein, 1985; Weiss, 1979). Some children of single parents may come home to an empty house. A negative aspect of

that may be children feeling no one is in charge or a lack of parental supervision. Children may also be overwhelmed by expectations of carrying adult burdens. On the other hand, there are positive aspects of being a child of a single parent. Children of single parents may become more independent, responsible, and aware of adult concerns and values than other children (Weiss, 1979).

Greif (1985a) and Fassinger (1993) found some fathers saw their children as substitute housekeepers, spouses, or mothers; this is true especially for daughters. In Greif's studies and in Fassinger's study (1993), the majority of single fathers had been less involved than their wives in "feminine" tasks when married. These fathers subsequently received more help from children than did single mothers. These fathers also did less housework themselves as their children aged and were more likely to receive help from older daughters than older sons (Grief, 1985a). Fassinger (1993) found some single mothers differed from single fathers in their use of and expectations of children to help with housework. Parents who maintained housework as a parental responsibility not only did more, but they never relinquished their involvement or sense of responsibility. This relinquishing or retaining responsibility leads to differences in the amount of leisure time available to single mothers and single fathers.

In Peters and Haldeman's 1987 study, the household responsibility level of school-age children depended on their parents: For housework overall, children in single-parent families spent more time than children in two-parent families (83 vs. 65 minutes respectively). In addition, the children in single-parent families spent a larger percentage of the time spent by all family members in housework (17%) compared to

children in two-parent families (8%). In Hilton and Haldeman's 1991 study, in single-parent families girls spent at least three times more time than boys on two "feminine" tasks. Daughters in single-parent families did more on two "feminine" tasks than daughters in two-parent families, but sons in two-parent families did more than sons in single-parent families. Daughters did more than sons in both family structures.

There are fewer studies of single-parent families than of two-parent families and most do not cover all of the parent characteristics listed. In single-parent families, the gender of the parent plays a role in children's housework, but perhaps a less significant role than in two-parent families. National data show that children of single or mother-custody step-families (probably previously single) do more housework than children of first marriages. Parent's employment status and hours strongly affected children's housework in two-parent families: Children do more housework if their mothers are employed.

Summary of Child Characteristics

Although not every study obtained the same results, there are some general findings supported by most studies. Children do more housework if they are female than if they are male; this is particularly true for "feminine" tasks. Children do more housework if they are older than if they are younger, and do more if they have siblings than if they do not have siblings. Some studies have found that the gender and number of children made less difference to the children's housework hours in single-parent families than in two-parent families, partly because single-parent families were smaller (Hall et al., 1995; Norton & Glick, 1986). In Amato's 1987 study, children in

single mother and mother-custody stepparent families had more regular responsibility for household tasks, three "feminine," one "masculine," and one "neutral," than children in two-parent families.

Hypotheses

Gender theory posits that gender is a major predictor of family behavior and of showing power in relationships (Scott, 1986). Consistent with gender theory, and consistent with existing research, 16 hypotheses, presented in three sets, will be tested in this study.

We know that single fathers, on average, have more resources (i.e., income and job prestige) than single mothers (Norton & Glick, 1986) and single fathers live in a society where men are dominant. Thus, single fathers are more likely to be able to set household standards and demand housework work from their children. Fathers may be more likely than mothers to use the strategies of not seeing the housework as their responsibility and getting their children to help (Fassinger, 1993). In using gender theory to hypothesize about children's housework, it is important to remember that this is research evidence to suggest that the gender of the parent affects the way they assign household tasks. Therefore the first set of six hypotheses focuses on parent gender.

Hypothesis 1A: Children of single fathers will do more hours of total housework than children of single mothers. 1B: Children of single fathers will do more hours of feminine housework than children of single mothers. 1C: Children of single mothers will do more hours of masculine housework than children of single fathers. 1D:

Children of single fathers will do a higher percentage of total housework than children of single mothers. 1E: Children of single fathers will do a higher percentage of feminine housework than children of single mothers. 1F: Children of single mothers will do a higher percentage of masculine housework than children of single fathers.

We know that gender is created daily in families and in other places (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Women and men do different kinds and different amounts of housework, so that both daughters and sons learn that primarily women perform housework and men do not. Therefore, the second set of six hypotheses focuses on child gender.

Hypothesis 2A: Daughters of single parents will do more hours of total housework than sons of single parents. 2B: Daughters of single parents will do more hours of feminine housework than sons of single parents. 2C: Sons of single parents will do more hours of masculine housework than daughters of single parents. 2D: Daughters of single parents will do a higher percentage of total housework than sons of single parents. 2E: Daughters of single parents will do a higher percentage of feminine housework than sons of single parents. 2F: Sons of single parents will do a higher percentage of masculine housework than daughters of single parents.

Because mothers receive more housework from daughters than from sons and mothers do more housework than fathers, the third set of four hypotheses focuses on the interaction between the gender of the child and the gender of the child, specifically between mothers and daughter. I explore whether mothers report more housework done by daughters than by sons, and if that amount hours or a higher percentage than

fathers report done by daughters or sons. The amount reported could relate to differing expectations of parents by gender and of children by gender.

Hypothesis 3A: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on hours of total housework such that daughters of mothers will do more than other children of single parents. 3B: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on hours of feminine housework such that daughters of mothers will do more than other children of single parents. 3C: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on percentage of total housework such that daughters of mothers will do more than other children of single parents. 3D: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on percentage of feminine housework such that daughters of mothers will do more than other children of single parents.

Overall Summary

A number of studies have explored the housework of children in two-parent families. Regardless of other characteristics, in virtually every study, daughter's and son's behaviors mimic those of mothers and fathers: Gender role segregation persists, with mothers spending more time than fathers, and daughters spending more time in household labor than sons. Children do chores regularly and many start at a young age. A number of studies comparing two-parent and single-parent (usually mother-only) families have found that children in single-parent families have more household responsibility, spend more actual time in housework, and spend more relative time in housework than children in two-parent families. However, one study found that children in mother-custody stepparent families (most of which had previously been

single-mother families) joined single-mother families in having more regular responsibility for household work than children in two-parent first marriage families. Some studies find or interpret that children do little housework overall, no matter their family type, whereas, other studies find or interpret a larger amount or percentage.

Children are less gender segregated than their parent in tasks, but it may be difficult for them to overcome the socialization that they experience in most families and that is important to many parents. The low status of family work and its identification with females suggests that fathers will do less housework than mothers and that single fathers will be more likely than single mothers to obtain help if they can. In addition, because fathers, including single fathers, have higher incomes than mothers, including single mothers, fathers are more able to hire help. Single fathers, on average, also have higher expectations of their children to do housework. On the other hand, single mothers may have little household help from children or others, and therefore may have less leisure time.

Covariates for Single-Parent Families

Previous studies have found some effects of variables in addition to gender. Therefore, depending on the findings of significance in the two-step process of analysis (see Chapter 3), the following variables may potentially be controlled for in the analyses.

Gender of parent is an important covariate. Being in a single-parent family rather than a two-parent family is another important variable. Previous research shows parents with higher income hire household help more often, which could lessen the

children's workload, or could only lessen the parent's workload. Parental education makes a difference in two-parent families. Employment of parents also makes a difference, particularly maternal employment and number of hours employed. Race and ethnicity have not been included in single-parent studies. Scant evidence shows that gender role orientation and role modeling has less of an effect in single-parent families than in two-parent families. The gender of the child is the most important variable. Age of children and number of siblings also makes a difference. The effect of preschool siblings on older siblings' housework is little documented, particularly in single-parent families.

The next chapter outlines the methods that will be used to test the 16 hypotheses presented here.

3. Methods

Sample

The data for this study came from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH). This national probability survey interviewed 13,017 adults in the United States. When interviewed in 1987-1988, adults were aged 19 and over. Several categories of people were double sampled, including single-parent families, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans. There was an overall 74% response rate for the primary respondents (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988). Because of the small number of single-father families, unweighted data were used in the analyses to take advantage of the oversampling. Analyses included the variables used in the oversample design as potential covariates.

The sample includes 795 single-parent respondents who completed the interview, 717 single mothers and 78 single fathers. Respondents were (a) never-married, divorced, widowed, or separated; (b) not living with a heterosexual unmarried partner or spouse; and (c) living with one or more children over 4 years old and under 19 years old for at least 13 weeks of the year. Because children under five do not usually do a lot of housework, children in families where all children are under the age of five were excluded from the study. The majority of the parents were mothers and most of the mothers and fathers were single due to divorce.

As can be seen in Table 3.1, single mothers and single fathers in the sample vary in many ways. Differences were measured at the .05 level. For those single parents who were employed, fathers, on average, work more paid hours each week (45.4 vs.

39.5). Single mothers were younger than single fathers (37.5 vs. 41.6 years) and fathers have more education than mothers (12.9 vs. 12.2 years). Adding together the incomes of all employed and non-employed single mothers and fathers, single fathers report, on average, double the income (\$32,000 vs. \$16,600) of single mothers. Single-mother households were larger than those of single fathers (3.4 vs. 2.8).

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Single Mothers and Single Fathers: Means

Variable	Mothers			Fathers			t ratio for mean	z ratio for median
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Med- ian	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Med- ian		
Hours ^{ab}	39.5	10.5	40	45.4	13.5	40	4.78***	2.97**
Age	37.5	7.0	37	41.6	7.6	40	4.92***	3.26***
Educ ation ^c	12.2	2.6	12	12.9	3.0	12	2.25*	1.88
House- hold income ^b	19.6	13.3	17	33.7	24.0	31	6.69***	7.28***
\$1000s by race								
All non- White ^d	16.2	10.8	14	23.7	11.0	26	3.58***	2.21
Non- Hispa nic White	21.7	14.2	20	35.8	25.5	32	5.48***	5.66***
Num ber in house hold	3.4	1.3	3	2.8	1.0	3	- 3.32***	-2.60***

Table 3.1, Continued

Note. Analyses use unweighted data.

n = 717 mothers, n = 78 fathers.

^a Employment hours. ^b The mean and median hours and incomes were calculated only for those who are employed part-time or full-time. ^c Years of higher education. ^d African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

As shown in Table 3.2, single fathers were more likely than single mothers to be employed (91% vs. 68.9%). Mothers were more likely than fathers to have never married and fathers were more likely than mothers to be widowed. In this sample the majority of both mothers and fathers were non-Hispanic White, but they do differ by race and ethnicity. Single fathers were more likely than single mothers to be non-Hispanic Whites (78.2% vs. 55.5%) and single mothers were more likely than single fathers to be non-White (44.4% vs. 21.8%). These data were consistent with other research findings.

Table 3.2. Characteristics of Single Mothers and Single Fathers: Percentages

Variable	Mothers		Fathers		χ^2
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Employment					21.82**
Not employed	31.1	(223)	9.0	(7)	
Employed part-time	8.6	(62)	5.1	(4)	
Employed full-time	60.3	(432)	85.9	(67)	
Race/ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic White	55.5	(397)	78.2	(61)	14.82**
All others ^b	44.4	(318)	21.8	(17)	
Marital Status					23.86***
Separated	20.5	(147)	14.1	(11)	
Divorced	54.1	(388)	59.0	(46)	
Widowed	8.6	(62)	23.0	(18)	
Never married	16.7	(120)	3.8	(3)	

Note. Analyses use unweighted data. $n = 717$ mothers, $n = 78$ fathers.

^a The mean and median hours and incomes were calculated only for those who are employed part-time or full-time.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

As shown in Table 3.3, the average age of mothers' youngest children (9.8 years) was younger than the average age of fathers' youngest children (11.4 years). Single mothers have more children (2.2) than single fathers (1.6). These data were consistent with other research findings.

Table 3.3 Characteristics of Children: Means

Variable	Mothers			Fathers			t ratio for mean	z ratio for median
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Med- -ian	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Med- -ian		
Age of youngest child	9.8	4.7	10	11.4	3.9	12	2.73**	2.62**
Number of residential children	2.2	1.2	2	1.6	0.8	2	-3.76***	-3.36***

$n = 717$ mothers, $n = 78$ fathers.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

As can be seen in Table 3.4, single mothers were more likely than single fathers to have young children (age 0 to 4 years) residing with them (16.4% vs. 5.1%). Single mothers were more likely to have three or more children than single fathers (31.4% vs. 13%). Single fathers were more likely to have only boys (46.8% vs. 28.5%) than were mothers and single mothers were more likely to have children of both genders (44.4% vs. 29.8%) than fathers. These data reflect previous research findings.

Table 3.4 Characteristics of Children: Percentages

Variable	Mothers		Fathers		χ^2
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Age of Children					
Any child 0-4	16.4	(118)	5.1	(4)	6.95**
Any child 5-11	55.0	(394)	38.4	(30)	7.68**
Any child 12-18	74.0	(531)	76.9	(60)	ns
Gender composition					
Both boy(s) and girl(s)	44.4	(318)	29.8	(23)	11.40**
Boys	28.5	(204)	46.8	(36)	
Girls	27.0	(193)	23.4	(18)	
Number of children					
One child	30.2	(216)	48.0	(37)	14.94***
Two children	38.3	(274)	39.0	(30)	
Three+ children	31.4	(225)	13.0	(10)	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < 001$.

Measures

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables were the absolute time and the relative time children spent in designated household tasks. These two time variables were measured in terms of both overall, "feminine," and "masculine" household tasks.

Measures of tasks. Children's performance in housework was assessed by the self-administered questionnaire respondents (i.e., the single parents) used to estimate the number of hours each week "children under 18 normally spend in housework". Hours in housework was also measured for parents using the same self-administered

questionnaire. The total housework or nine tasks ("preparing meals; washing dishes and cleaning up after meals; cleaning house; outdoor and other household maintenance tasks; shopping for groceries and other household goods; washing, ironing, and mending; auto maintenance and repair; paying bills and keeping financial records; and driving other household members to work, school, and other activities") were summed to yield children's and parent's total number of hours in household tasks each week. You will note however, in Chapter 4, that three tasks mentioned here were not included in the final analyses. Paying bills, auto maintenance and repair, and driving were all too tied to age of child (i.e., children under 16 do not drive), and/or three was too much missing data. These three questions were left unanswered by parents more often than the other questions. (Hereafter these tasks will be referred to as meals, dishes, cleaning house, outdoor/maintenance, shopping, and laundry). In addition, hours in "feminine" tasks (meals, dishes, cleaning house, and laundry) and hours in "masculine" tasks (outdoor/maintenance work) were summed both for children and for parents.

Measures of performance. Two different measures have been used in measuring the amount of children's and parent's housework. The first is actual or absolute time, the average number of minutes or hours per day or per week children spent on a specific task. The second is relative or a percentage of the housework, the number of minutes or hours in a day or a week children spent in a specific task divided by the summed minutes or hours done on that task by the parent and children in the household (Blair, 1992a, 1992b; Peters & Haldeman, 1987). Housework contributions by children and other family or non-family members in the household over the age of

18 were not included. In addition, volunteer help and paid help from outside of the household was not included in this study because that information was not available in the data.

Independent Variables

Characteristics of both parents and children may influence children's performance in housework, therefore, a number of control variables were entered into the model. The age of the youngest child was included. Gender composition, reflecting the gender of all children under age 19 in the family, was measured with two dummy variables (all boys coded as 1, otherwise as 0; boys and girls coded as 1, otherwise as 0); all girls was the reference group. A number of demographic variables of the parent were also included in the model, gender being the primary variable. Race or ethnicity was measured with a dummy variable: Non-White (African American, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian) was coded as 1. Non-Hispanic White served as the reference group. Employment status was measured with two dummy variables: Not employed was coded as 1, otherwise it was coded as 0; and employed part-time was coded as 1 (all who work 1 to 29 hours per week), otherwise it was coded as 0. Thus those employed full-time (30 or more hours per week), was the reference group. Education in years and age in years was included. Household income, including investments and dividends, was a continuous variable. Parents with missing data on income were assigned the mean income for their gender and employment status. Employment hours were measured continuously. Marital status was measured with three dummy variables: separated coded as 1, otherwise as 0; widowed coded as 1, otherwise as 0;

and never married coded as 1, otherwise as 0. Thus, divorced parents served as the reference group.

Analyses

It was important to use any covariates that might significantly affect the outcome variables, but because of the small number of single-parent fathers in the sample, and the small number who answered all of the questions about their children's housework, it was important to use as few covariates as possible. Therefore, I used a two-step process to select which covariates should be included.

Selection of covariates. The first step was to perform bivariate tests to test the relationship between each outcome variable (children's absolute time and relative amount in total, feminine, and masculine housework tasks) and each potential covariate to see if the outcome variables were affected by the potential covariates. A t-test was used to test the relationship between the outcome variables and the predictor variables that were dichotomous: race/ethnicity of the parent, marital status, and gender composition of children in the family. All outcome variables were individually correlated with the other predictor variables: parent's age, number of employment hours, education, age of the youngest child, household income, and the number of children in the family. If the bivariate relationship was significant at the .05 level, that variable was included in the second step. The second step was a multiple regression analysis using all of the significant potential covariates. Many of these variables could have been highly correlated with each other (i.e., education and income). However, having performed two tests for multicollinearity, the variance inflation factors and an

analysis of the structure looking at relationships in the set of variables, no multicollinearity between the variables left at that point was found. Potential covariates still significant after the second step were used in the multivariate analyses, general linear models, regressions, and regressions with an interaction factor. This allowed for the use of fewer covariates while still using all that were significant, and also decreased the likelihood of problems with multicollinearity.

Hypotheses

Set 1. The first set of hypotheses looked at whether the gender of the parent affected the hours and percentage of housework children did. Hypothesis 1A stated that children of single fathers will do more hours of total housework than children of single mothers. Hypothesis 1B stated that children of single fathers will do more hours of feminine housework than children of single mothers, while Hypothesis 1C stated that children of single mothers will do more hours of masculine housework than children of single fathers. Hypothesis 1D stated that children of single fathers will do a higher percentage of total housework than children of single mothers. Hypothesis 1E stated that children of single fathers will do a higher percentage of feminine housework than children of single mothers, while Hypothesis 1F stated that children of single mothers will do a higher percentage of masculine housework than children of single fathers.

These models include the parent's gender as the classification variable along with the covariates that proved significant in the two-step process. These covariates could include parent age, employment hours, race, marital status, education, household

income, number of children, age of youngest child, and gender composition of children in family. Parent gender was coded "1" for single parent mother and "0" for single parent father. Using general linear models, least-square means were computed for the effect of parent gender. The least-squares means option is used when designs are not balanced in cell number as this sample is not. Estimating the class and subclass marginal means with least-square means is like estimating the arithmetic means in a balanced design. In this way, I could test for differences between the means by gender of parent, while controlling for other important variables. The general linear model procedure provided estimates of the means as if father households and mother households were equal on all control variables. In this way, the expected value for children's housework of parents of each gender was the estimated mean where the mother or father was statistically average on all control variables (Demo & Acock, 1993).

Set 2. The second set of hypotheses looked at whether the gender of the child affected the hours and the percentage of housework children of single parents did. Because the data set does not allow me to look at each child in a family separately, I can only separate family types into those with children of both genders, those of all boys, and those of all girls. A dummy variable was computed and coded "1" if the children were girls and "0" if the children were boys. This meant that the sample was smaller for the second set of hypotheses ($n = 54$ fathers, $n = 397$ mothers) than it was for the first set of hypotheses ($n = 78$ fathers, $n = 717$ mothers). This set of hypotheses controlled for the covariates found significant in the two-step process, as in the first set.

Hypothesis 2A stated that daughters of single parents will do more hours of total housework than sons of single parents. Hypothesis 2B stated that daughters of single parents will do more hours of feminine housework than sons in single-parent families, while Hypothesis 2C stated that sons in single-parent families will do more hours of masculine housework than daughters of single parents. Looking at percentage of work rather than number of hours, Hypothesis 2D stated that daughters of single parents will do a higher percentage of total housework than sons of single parents. Hypothesis 2E stated that daughters of single parents will do a higher percentage of feminine housework than sons in single-parent families, while Hypothesis 2F stated that sons in single-parent families will do a higher percentage of masculine housework than daughters of single parents.

Set 3. The third set of hypotheses looked at parent gender, child gender, and an interaction between parent gender and child gender on number of hours and percentage of housework children do. Hypotheses 3A and 3B stated that there are interactions between parent gender and child gender such that daughters of mothers will do more hours of housework than other children of single parents. In other words, daughters of mothers would spend more hours in total and in feminine housework than would daughters of fathers, sons of fathers, or sons of mothers. Hypotheses 3C and 3D stated that there are interactions between parent gender and child gender such that daughters of mothers will do a higher percentage of the housework than other children of single parents. Thus, daughters of mothers would do a higher percentage of the total and feminine housework than daughters of fathers or sons of fathers, or sons of mothers. Only those families that have either daughters (but

no sons) or sons (but no daughters) were included. The dummy variable was coded "1" if the children were girls and "0" if the children were boys. A second variable was computed for the interaction between parent gender and child gender. This was "1" if the parent was a mother and the children were girls. It was "0" otherwise. This meant that the sample was the same size for the third set of hypotheses ($n = 54$ fathers, $n = 397$ mothers) as for the second and was smaller than it was for the first set of hypotheses ($n = 78$ fathers, $n = 717$ mothers). This set contained the two main effects of parent gender and child gender and a two-way interaction between parent gender and child gender while controlling for the covariates found to be significant in the two-step process.

The models regressed time or the relative amount spent in housework by the children on child gender, parent gender, and the two-way interaction, while controlling for the potential covariates that proved significant in the two-step process. The main effect of parent gender would have been significant and positive whenever children of mothers did more housework than children of fathers. The main effect of child gender would have been significant whenever daughters did more housework than sons. The hypotheses implied that the slopes for the interactions would be positive and statistically significant. These slopes would identify the additional housework mothers might receive or expect from their daughters.

Summary

The general linear models series for the first set of hypotheses assessed the amount of hours children in single-mother and single-father families did in designated

household tasks, both in absolute hours and in the percentage of total housework, dependent on parent gender. Multiple regression models were used to assess the second set of hypotheses, assessing the amount of hours and percentage of designated household tasks children in single-parent families did, dependent on child gender. Multiple regression models with interaction factors were used to assess the third set of hypotheses, looking for the impact of parental gender, child gender, and the interaction between parental gender and child gender.

4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the analyses exploring variables that affect children's performance in housework in single-parent families. Of special interest is whether the gender of parent and the gender of the children make a difference. Three major questions have guided this research.

Research Questions

1. Do children of single mothers do differing amounts and differing types of housework than children of single fathers? 2. Do daughters of single parents do differing amounts and different types of housework than sons of single parents? 3. Do daughters of single mothers do more housework than other children of single parents?

Tasks and Measurements

There are three types of housework considered: total, feminine, and masculine. There are also two ways of measuring children's housework contributions: absolute hours and percentage of housework done by children. As described in the literature, feminine tasks include kitchen work, cleaning house, and laundry; masculine tasks include yard work and home and auto maintenance; and neutral tasks include shopping, paying bills, and driving (Berheide, 1984; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Thompson & Walker, 1989; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b). Each task is described more completely in Chapter 3. Total housework hours include all six tasks: preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning house, doing laundry, outdoor/maintenance work, and

shopping. Feminine housework includes the first four of these; masculine housework includes outdoor/maintenance work. Half of the hypotheses refer to the absolute number of hours done by children in a normal week; the other half of the hypotheses refer to the percentage of housework done by the children. For this study, 100% of the housework measured was done by the parent and the children. Because there are so many hypotheses, they are presented at the end of the chapter in tabular form (Table 4.10) where it is noted whether or not they were supported by the data.

Covariates. Here I will present the three sets of research hypotheses controlling for covariates that were selected by the two-step process described in Chapter 3. As you will recall, all variables that could theoretically or empirically affect children's performance in housework were considered as potential covariates. Covariates selected were examined in a two-step process with bivariate and multivariate analyses. Potential covariates significant after both analyses were entered in the general linear models and regressions. That is why there are different sets of covariates for various individual and summed household tasks.

In controlling for the selected significant covariates, any differences between the amount and the percentage of children's housework by gender of parent can be tested, while controlling for other variables. Using the general linear models and regressions, estimates of the means were provided as if mother households and father households were equal on all selected covariates. In other words, controlling for variables allows me to discover if it is parental gender, other variables, or a combination of parental gender and other variables, that make a difference in children's housework in single-mother and single-father families. There is some evidence that single fathers get more

help from their children than single mothers (see Greif, 1985c; Peterson & Haldeman, 1987 as noted earlier). This study takes a conservative approach to looking at possible gender differences by controlling for critical sociodemographic variables. Using covariates is the only way to equalize single mothers and single fathers on all other variables to see if the gender of the parent makes a difference. This kind of analysis, with covariates, has not been done often in children's housework literature (for exceptions see Blair, 1992a, 1992b; Risman, 1986; Risman & Park, 1988).

Single Parents' Housework

To explore children's housework, it is important to know about parent's housework. Although this was not one of the hypotheses of the present study, Table 4.1 shows that single mothers (in self-report questionnaires) spent 9 hours more a week on total housework than did single fathers (36.9 vs. 27.8); mothers reportedly spent 10 hours more a week on feminine housework than did single fathers (31.1 vs. 21.2); and fathers reportedly spent 1 hour more a week on masculine housework than did single mothers (3.7 vs. 2.6). The summed totals for total housework and for feminine housework were significantly different for single mothers and for single fathers. There was no significant difference in masculine housework.

Table 4.1. Weekly Housework Hours by Single Mothers and Fathers, with Covariates

Variable	Mothers Adjusted Means ^a (n = 717)	Fathers Adjusted Means ^a (n = 78)	Significance Level
Feminine Housework	31.1	21.2	***
Meal preparation	11.0	8.4	**
Dishes	6.6	5.2	ns
Clean house	9.4	5.5	***
Laundry	5.3	2.6	***
Masculine Housework	2.6	3.7	ns
Outdoor/maintenance	2.6	3.5	ns
Neutral Housework			
Shop	3.8	3.3	ns
Total Housework	36.9	27.8	**

Note. Covariates. For **individual** tasks: Number of parental employment hours (meal, dish, clean); race (meal, shop); number of children (meal); education (clean); marital status (outdoor/maintenance). For **total**: education and parental employment hours; for **feminine**: education, employment hours, and age of youngest child; and for **masculine**: parental age and marital status.

^a Total housework includes all six tasks; feminine housework includes meals, dishes, cleaning house, and laundry; and masculine housework includes outdoor/maintenance.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Analyses

The constraints of the data set do not allow the measurement of housework of particular children in a household because parents answered for housework hours for all children under age 19 together. To test for particular children would mean using only one-child families, which would greatly reduce the number of subjects.

Therefore, because of an interest in looking at gender of both parent and child, I needed to contrast families where children are all sons or all daughters. This drops the

number from 795 (717 mothers and 78 fathers) for analyses in the first set of hypotheses to 451 (397 mothers and 54 fathers) for households with all daughters or all sons used for the second and third sets of hypotheses.

Sets of Hypotheses

Set 1: Parent gender. This first set includes three hypotheses that focus on whether the gender of the single parent makes a difference in how many hours children reportedly spend in housework, and three hypotheses that focus on whether parental gender makes a difference in the percentage of housework children do. In this first set of hypotheses, expectations are that children of fathers will do more hours in total housework than children of mothers (1A), children of fathers will do more hours in feminine housework than children of mothers (1B), and children of mothers will do more hours in masculine housework than children of fathers (1C). One foundation for these expectations is a recent study that found that single fathers do less total and less feminine housework than single mothers, while single fathers do more masculine housework than single mothers (Hall et al., 1995). Therefore, for this present study, the six tasks, the summed total housework (six), the summed feminine housework (four), and the masculine housework (one) were each regressed using general linear models including the covariates selected by the two-step process described earlier.

As shown in Table 4.2, children of mothers and children of fathers did not differ in hours spent on housework and Hypotheses 1A, 1B, and 1C were not supported. Given the differences in hours between single mothers and single fathers, it is interesting to note that children of mothers and fathers do not differ in the absolute

number of hours they reportedly spent in any of the six individual tasks, on total housework, on feminine housework, or on masculine housework.

Table 4.2. Weekly Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates

Hypotheses 1A, 1B, 1C	<u>Children of</u> <u>Mothers</u> <u>Adjusted</u> <u>Mean^{a,b}</u> (n = 717)	<u>Children of</u> <u>Fathers</u> <u>Adjusted</u> <u>Mean^{a,b}</u> (n = 78)	<u>Significance</u> <u>Level</u> p < .05
1B Feminine Housework	8.7	8.4	ns
Meal preparation	2.5	2.4	ns
Dishes	3.3	3.4	ns
Clean house	3.4	3.2	ns
Laundry	1.2	1.1	ns
1C Masculine Housework	1.8	1.2	ns
Outdoor/maint.	1.8	1.5	ns
Neutral Housework			
Shop	0.7	0.5	ns
1A Total Housework	10.1	9.5	ns

Note. Covariates for **individual** tasks: age of youngest child (meal); number of children (meal, dish, clean, outdoor/maintenance); child gender--all sons=1, others=0 (dish, clean, laundry); parent age (shop); for **1A total** and **1B feminine**: number of children, age of youngest child, and child gender (all sons=1, others=0); and for **1C masculine**: age of parent, number of children, and child gender (all daughters=1, others=0). Process for selecting covariates described in Chapter 3.

^a Adjusted hours, controlling for covariates. ^b Total housework includes all six tasks; feminine housework includes meals, dishes, cleaning, and laundry; and masculine housework includes outdoor/maintenance.

Covariates for individual tasks included: age of youngest child (meals); number of children (meals, dishes, cleaning, and laundry); gender of children, all sons or all daughters (dishes, cleaning, and laundry); and parental age (outdoor/maintenance tasks and shopping). These were all significant. Covariates for total (1A), feminine (1B),

and masculine (1C) housework included: number of children (1A, 1B, and 1C); gender of children (1A and 1B); age of youngest child (1A and 1B); age of parent (1C); and parental marital status--whether separated, divorced, widowed, or never married--(1C). All but the last covariate (marital status for masculine tasks) were significant in the three analyses.

In this first set of hypotheses, it was expected that children of fathers would do a higher percentage of the total housework than children of mothers (1D), that children of fathers would do a higher percentage of the feminine housework than children of mothers (1E), and that children of mothers would do a higher percentage of masculine housework than children of fathers (1F). In these analyses the covariates found to be significant in the selection process were entered. Covariates for individual tasks included: parental employment hours (meals, dishes, and cleaning); child gender (meals, dishes, cleaning, laundry, and outdoor/maintenance tasks); age of youngest child (meals, dishes, cleaning, and laundry); and number of children (dishes). These covariates were all significant. As shown in Table 4.3, the gender of the parent did make a difference in some individual tasks. Children did a larger percentage of housework for fathers than mothers in the feminine tasks of house cleaning (40.9% vs. 30.9%) and laundry (31.4% vs. 19.0%). On the other hand, children of mothers did a larger percentage of housework than children of fathers in the masculine task of outdoor/maintenance work (48.6% vs 32.5%). In addition, children of fathers did a higher percentage of the total housework than children of mothers (28.1% vs. 22.1%) and a higher percentage of the feminine housework (30.7% vs. 23.1%). On the other hand, children of mothers did a higher percentage of masculine housework than

children of fathers (48.7% vs. 31.2%). Therefore, these three hypotheses, 1D, 1E, and 1F, were supported.

Table 4.3. Percentage of Housework by Children, with Covariates

Hypotheses 1D, 1E, 1F Variable	<u>Children of Mothers Adjusted Mean^a Percent (n = 717)</u>	<u>Children of Fathers Adjusted Mean^a Percent (n = 78)</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
1E Feminine Housework	23.1	30.7	**
Meal preparation	21.1	26.1	ns
Dishes	39.4	45.7	ns
Clean house	30.9	40.9	**
Laundry	19.0	31.4	**
1F Masculine Housework	48.7	31.2	***
Outdoor/maintenance	48.6	32.5	**
Neutral Housework			
Shop	13.4	13.7	ns
1D Total Housework	22.1	28.1	**

Note. Covariates for **individual** tasks: employment hours (meal, dish, clean); child gender--all sons = 1, others = 0 or all daughters = 1, others = 0--(meal, dish, clean, outdoor/maintenance, laundry); age of youngest child (meal, dish, clean, laundry); number of children (dish); for **1D (total)**: age of youngest child, parental employment hours, and child gender (all sons = 1, others = 0); for **1E (feminine)**: number of children, age of youngest child, parental employment hours, and child gender (all sons = 1, others = 0, and all daughters = 1, others = 0); and for **1F (masculine)**: age of parent and child gender (all daughters = 1, others = 0). All are significant except gender-all daughters for feminine, and age of parent for masculine.

^a. Total housework includes all six tasks; feminine housework includes meals, dishes, cleaning, and laundry; and masculine housework includes outdoor/maintenance.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

This part of the first set of hypotheses include the following covariates: total (1D), feminine (1E), and masculine (1F) housework included: number of children (1E);

gender of children (1D, 1E, and 1F); age of youngest child (1D and 1E); parental employment hours (1D and 1E); and age of parent (1F). All but the last covariate (age of parent for masculine housework) were significant.

Set 2: Child gender. The second set includes three hypotheses that focus on whether the gender of the children makes a difference in how many hours children reportedly spend in housework and three hypotheses that focus on whether child gender makes a difference in the percentage of housework children do. The expectations are that daughters of single parents will do more hours (2A) and a higher percentage (2D) of total housework than sons, that daughters will do more hours (2B) and a higher percentage (2E) of feminine housework than sons, and that sons will do more hours (2C) and a higher percentage (2F) of masculine housework than daughters. This set of hypotheses was tested by regressions with covariates performed for the sub-sample of 451 parents with children of only one sex (397 mothers and 54 fathers).

There were substantial differences to be observed in the present sample. As shown in Table 4.4, the gender of the child had a significant effect on the amount of work the child reportedly does ($B = 2.74$, $\beta = .13$; $p < .01$), controlling for the covariates that were found to be significant in the selection process. Hypothesis 2A was supported and both of the covariates--age of youngest child and number of children--were significant.

Table 4.4. Weekly Total Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates:
Main Effect of Child Gender

Hypotheses 2A, 3A			
Variable	B	β	t ratio
Total housework ^a			
Intercept	-3.22	---	-1.19 ns
Children's gender	2.74	.13	2.74**
Parent's gender	.30	.009	.18 ns
Number of children	2.59	.19	3.53***
Age of youngest child	.62	.26	4.90***
R ²			.08***

n = 451: 397 mothers and 54 fathers.

Note. Child gender, 1=daughters, 0=sons; parent gender, 1=mothers, 0=fathers. Covariates include age of youngest child and number of children; both are significant.

^a Total housework includes meals, dishes, cleaning house, laundry, outdoor/maintenance work, and shopping.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

These results are graphed in Figure 4.1. There it can be seen that daughters do nearly three more hours of total housework weekly than do sons (10.8 vs. 8.1 hours).

Figure 4.1. Weekly Total Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates:
Main Effect of Child Gender)



The prediction that daughters would do more feminine hours of housework than sons, Hypothesis 2B, was also supported. As seen in Table 4.5, child gender had a significant effect on the amount of work reported in feminine housework ($B = 2.91$, $\beta = .16$; $p < .001$), controlling for the covariates that were found to be significant in the selection process. Both of the covariates, age of the youngest child and number of children, were significant as well.

Table 4.5. Feminine Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates:
Main Effect of Child Gender

Hypotheses 2B, 3B			
Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>t</u> ratio
Feminine housework ^a			
Intercept	-1.70	---	-.72 ns
Children's gender	2.91	.16	3.32***
Parent's gender	-.16	-.006	-.11 ns
Number of children	2.16	.18	3.27**
Age of youngest child	.45	.22	4.04***
R ²			.07***

n = 451: 397 mothers and 54 fathers.

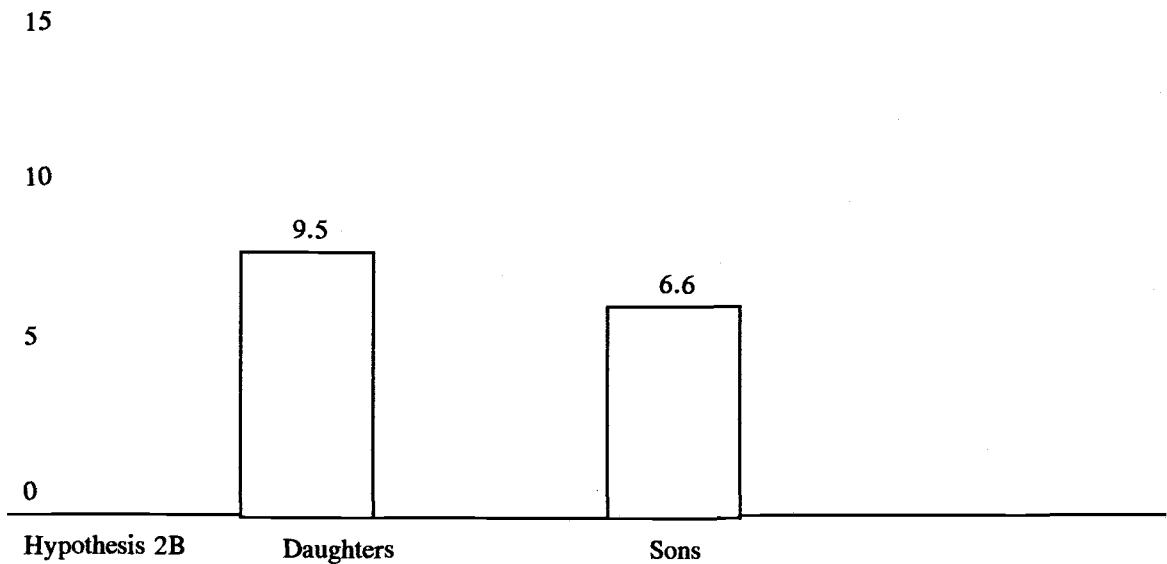
Note. Child gender, 1=daughters, 0=sons; parent gender, 1=mothers, 0=fathers. Covariates: age of youngest child and number of children.

^a Feminine housework includes preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning house, and doing laundry.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The results of this hypothesis are graphed in Figure 4.2. This figure shows that daughters do nearly three more hours of feminine housework each week compared to sons (9.5 vs. 6.6 hours).

Figure 4.2. Weekly Feminine Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates:
Main Effect of Child Gender



Differing from the two previous hypotheses, the next hypothesis predicted that sons would do more hours of masculine housework than daughters. As shown in Table 4.6, Hypothesis 2C was supported as well. The gender of the child has a significant effect on the amount of work the child reportedly does ($B = -.67$, $\beta = -.13$; $p < .01$), controlling for the covariates that were found to be significant in the selection process. These covariates were age of the parent, number of children, and marital status (whether separated, divorced, widowed, or never married); the first two covariates were significant.

Table 4.6. Masculine Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates:
Main Effect of Child Gender

Hypothesis 2C			
Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>t</u> ratio
Masculine housework^a			
Intercept	-2.48	---	-2.78*
Children's gender	-.67	-.13	-2.58*
Parent's gender	.74	.09	1.81 ns
Parental age	.08	.26	4.69***
Number of children	.34	.11	2.04*
Marital status	.11	.01	.27 ns
R ²			.09***

n = 451: 397 mothers and 54 fathers.

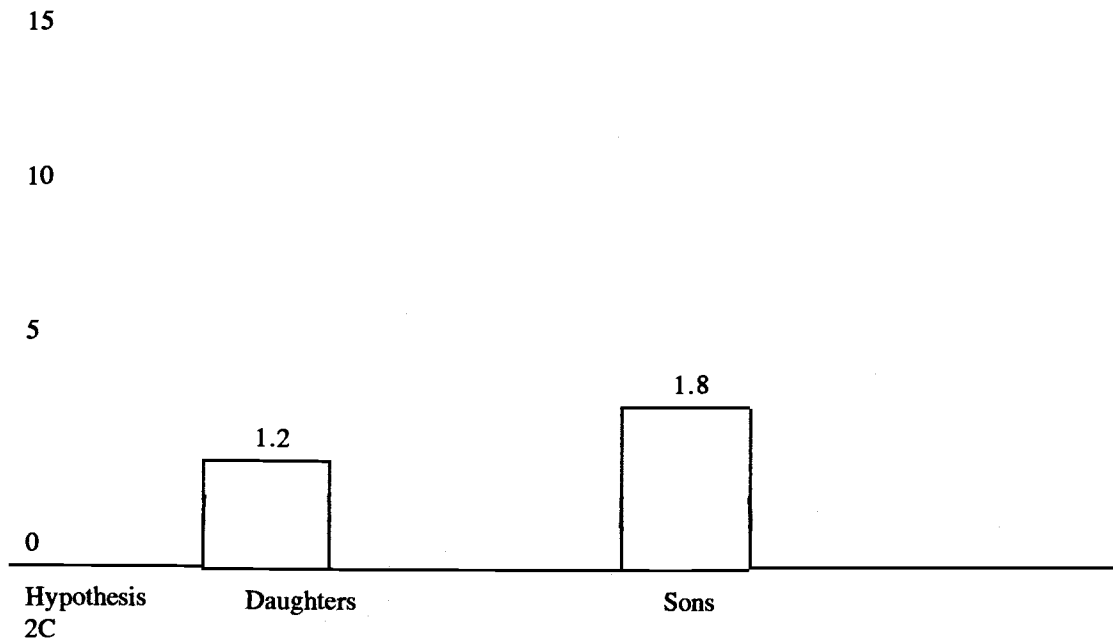
Note. Child gender, 1=daughters, 0=sons; parent gender, 1=mothers, 0=fathers. Covariates: age of parent, number of children, and marital status (separated, divorced, widowed, or never married.) All significant except marital status.

^a Masculine housework includes outdoor/maintenance.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The results for masculine housework hours are graphed in Figure 4.3. Sons do significantly more hours of masculine housework than do daughters. Although this difference is significant, it is less than an hour of work per week (1.8 vs. 1.2 hours).

Figure 4.3. Weekly Masculine Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates: Main Effect of Child Gender



The next two hypotheses predicted that daughters of single parents would do a higher percentage of total (2D) and feminine (2E) housework, than would sons of single parents. In a different direction, Hypothesis 2F predicted that sons of single parents would do a higher percentage of masculine housework than would daughters of single parents. All three of these hypotheses were supported. Regressions were performed, controlling for the selected covariates which included: age of youngest child (2D and 2E); the number of children (2E and 2F); parental employment hours (2D and 2E); and parental age (2F). All covariates were significant except for parental employment hours for total housework. There were substantial differences to be observed in the present sample. As shown in Table 4.7, the gender of the child has a

significant effect on the percentage of work the child reportedly does ($B = .06$, $\beta = .18$; $p < .001$).

**Table 4.7. Percentage of Total Housework by Children, with Covariates:
Main Effect of Child Gender**

Hypotheses 2D, 3C			
Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>t</u> ratio
Total housework ^a			
Intercept	.11	---	3.05**
Children's gender	.06	.18	4.03***
Parent's gender	-.08	-.14	-2.98**
Age of youngest child	.01	.28	6.02***
Employment hours of parent	.0008	.09	1.85 ns
R^2			.15***

$n = 451$: 397 mothers and 54 fathers.

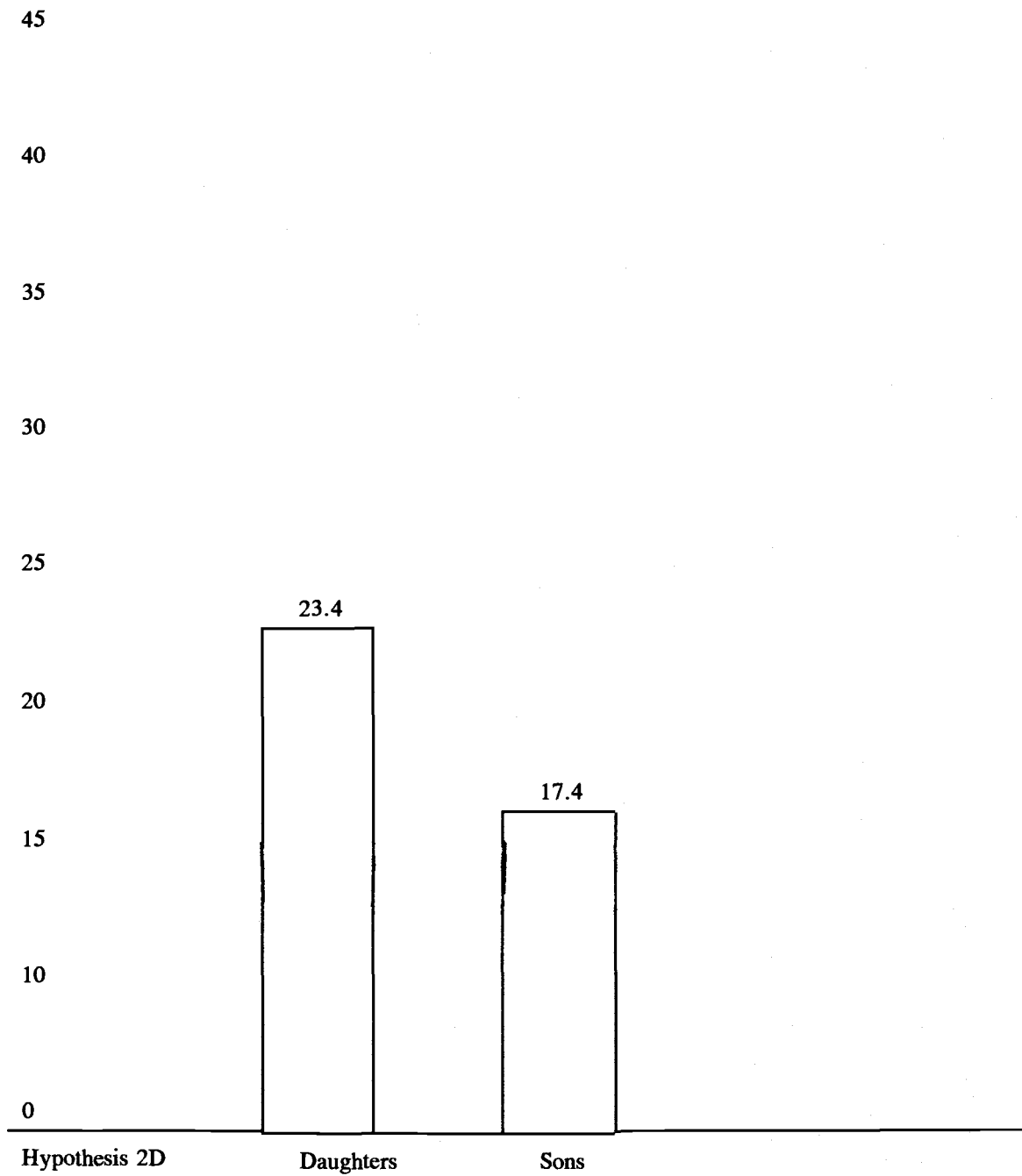
Note. Child gender, 1=daughters, 0=sons; parent gender, 1=mothers, 0=fathers. Covariates: age of youngest child and parental employment hours. Only the first covariate is significant.

^a. Total housework includes: meals, dishes, cleaning house, laundry, outdoor/maintenance, and shopping.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

These results are graphed in Figure 4.4. It can be seen there that daughters do a higher percentage of total housework than do sons (23.4% vs. 17.4%), supporting Hypothesis 2D.

Figure 4.4. Percentage of Weekly Total Housework by Children,
with Covariates: Main Effect of Child Gender



Likewise Hypothesis 2E predicted that daughters would do a higher percentage of feminine housework than sons. As shown in Table 4.8, the gender of the child has a significant effect on the percentage of work the child reportedly does ($B = .08$, $\beta = .21$; $p < .001$) and Hypothesis 2E is supported.

Table 4.8. Percentage of Feminine Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates: Main Effect of Child Gender

Hypotheses 2E, 3D			
Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>t ratio</u>
Feminine housework ^a			
Intercept	.0002	---	.004 ns
Children's gender	.08	.21	4.55***
Parent's gender	-.09	-.14	-3.02**
Parent's age	-.0004	-.017	-.29 ns
Number of children	.05	.195	3.68***
Age of youngest child	.02	.36	5.48***
Employment of hours of parent	.001	.12	2.50*
R ²			.18***

$n = 451$: 397 mothers and 54 fathers.

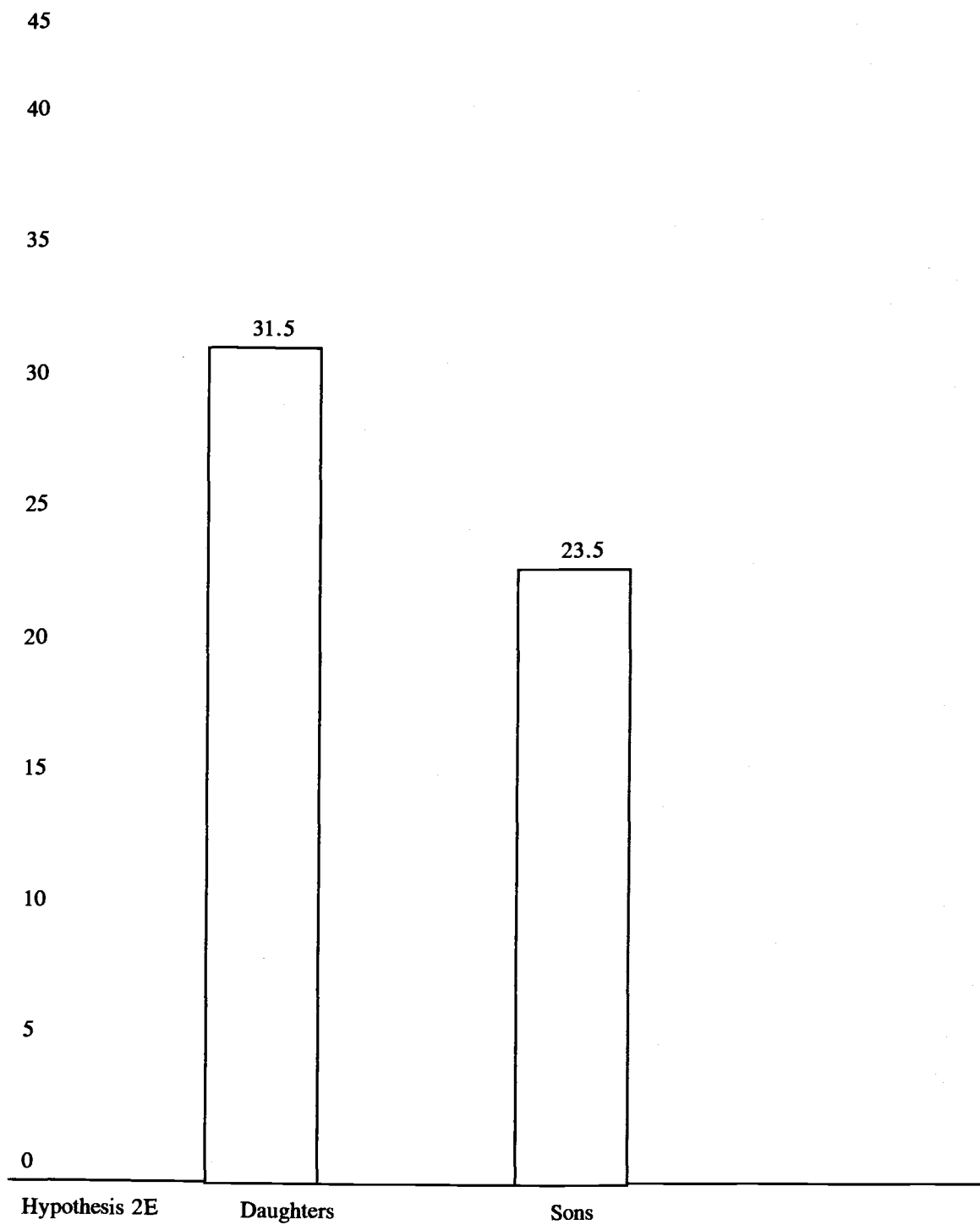
Note. Child gender, 1=daughters, 0=sons; parent gender, 1=mothers, 0=sons. Covariates: parental age, number of children, age of youngest child, and parental employment hours. All are significant except parental age.

^a Feminine housework includes meals, dishes, cleaning house, and laundry.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 4.5 shows the results for this hypothesis. As can be seen, daughters do a higher percentage of feminine housework than do sons (31.5% vs. 23.5%).

Figure 4.5. Percentage of Weekly Feminine Housework Hours by Children,
with Covariates: Main Effect of Child Gender



Hypothesis 2F predicted that sons would do a higher percentage of masculine housework than daughters. This hypothesis was supported; Table 4.9 shows that the gender of the child has a significant effect on the percentage of masculine work the child reportedly does ($B = -.16$, $\beta = -.24$; $p < .001$).

Table 4.9. Percentage of Masculine Housework Hours by Children, with Covariates: Main Effect of Child Gender

Hypotheses 2F			
Variable	B	β	t ratio
Masculine housework ^a			
Intercept	-.05	---	-.38 ns
Children's gender	-.16	-.24	-3.96***
Parent's gender	.14	.15	2.44*
Number of children	.04	.09	1.50 ns
Age of parent	.008	.20	3.15**
R ²			.11***

$n = 451$: 397 mothers and 54 fathers.

Note. Child gender, 1=daughters, 0=sons; parent gender, 1=mothers, 0=sons. Covariates: age of parent and number of children; only the former is significant.

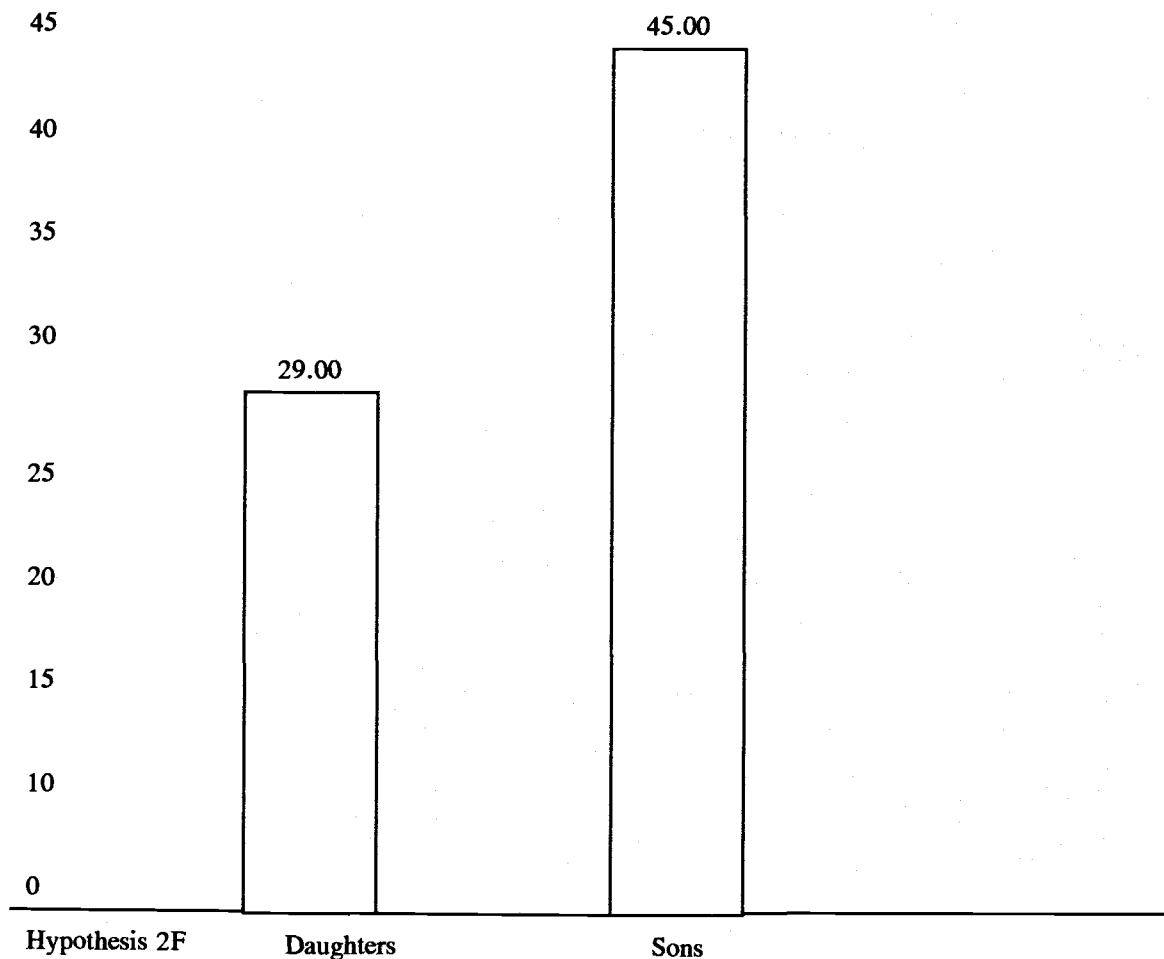
^a Masculine housework includes outdoor work/maintenance.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The results for masculine housework are graphed in Figure 4.6. It can be seen there that sons do nearly half and daughters do nearly one-third of the household's

masculine housework. Sons do a higher percentage of masculine housework than do daughters (45% vs. 39%).

Figure 4.6. Percentage of Weekly Masculine Housework Hours by Children,
with Covariates: Main Effect of Child Gender



Set 3: Parent gender main effect, child gender main effect, and interaction
between the two. The third set includes four hypotheses that focus on parent gender,
child gender, and extends the first two sets by looking at the interaction between the

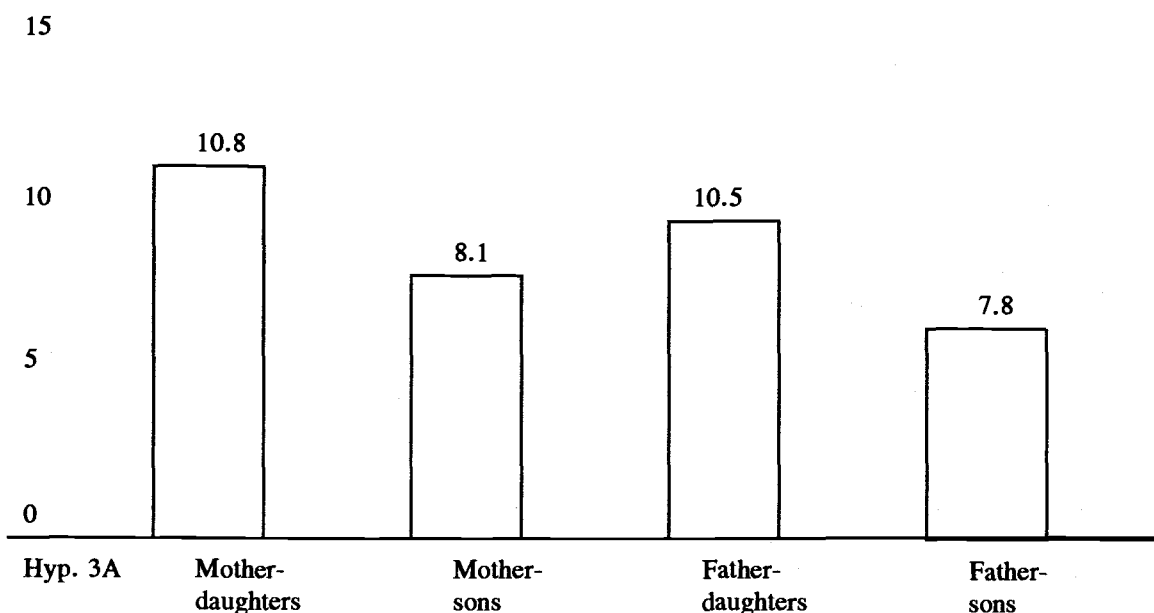
gender of the parent and the gender of the children. The questions is whether the interaction between parent gender and child gender makes a difference in the number of hours and the percentage of housework children reportedly do. Hypotheses 3A and 3B predicted that daughters of single mothers would spend more hours on total and on feminine housework than daughters of fathers or sons of either mothers or fathers. Likewise, Hypotheses 3C and 3D predicted that daughters of single mothers would spend a higher percentage of total and feminine housework than daughters of fathers or sons of either mothers or fathers. In other words, the interaction between parent gender and child gender would be such that daughters of mothers would do more hours and a higher percentage of total and feminine housework than children in other single-parent household dyads. This set was tested by regressions with covariates and interactions performed for the sub-sample of 451 parents with children of only one sex. None of these interactions proved to be significant.

Because none of these four hypotheses (3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D) were supported, I can produce estimated means for each of the four types of household dyads (mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, and father-son) by using the coefficients found earlier in the second set of hypotheses. For the hypotheses in this third set, refer to Tables 4.4 (total hours), 4.5 (feminine hours), 4.7 (percentage of total housework), and 4.8 (percentage of feminine housework). To find the number of hours (or percentage) children performed in each of the four household dyad configurations, the unstandardized betas (regression coefficients) for the intercept, for child gender, and for parent gender were added together in four equations (one for each household configuration). In addition, the mean of each covariate used in that regression was

added to the equation. The covariates were those found to be significant in the selection process which included: age of youngest child (3A total hours, 3B feminine hours, 3C percentage of total housework, and 3D percentage of feminine housework); number of children (3A, 3B, and 3D); and parental employment hours (3C and 3D). All of these covariates were significant in all analyses except for one--parental employment hours--in 3C.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show the numbers I put into the equations to find the amount of total (3A) and of feminine (3B) housework hours for each of the four household types. I then estimated the hours spent on total and on feminine housework by daughters living with mothers, daughters living with fathers, sons living with mothers, and sons living with fathers. Figure 4.7 graphs the results for the first hypothesis (3A), total housework hours. In mother-daughter households the daughters work an average of 10.8 hours, in father-daughter households the daughters work 10.5 hours; there was little difference there. In mother-son households the sons work an average of 8.1 hours, while in father-son households the sons work 7.8 hours; also little difference there. While the interaction of parent gender and child gender was not significant, child gender was significant, and the contrast in households was between daughter-households and son-households.

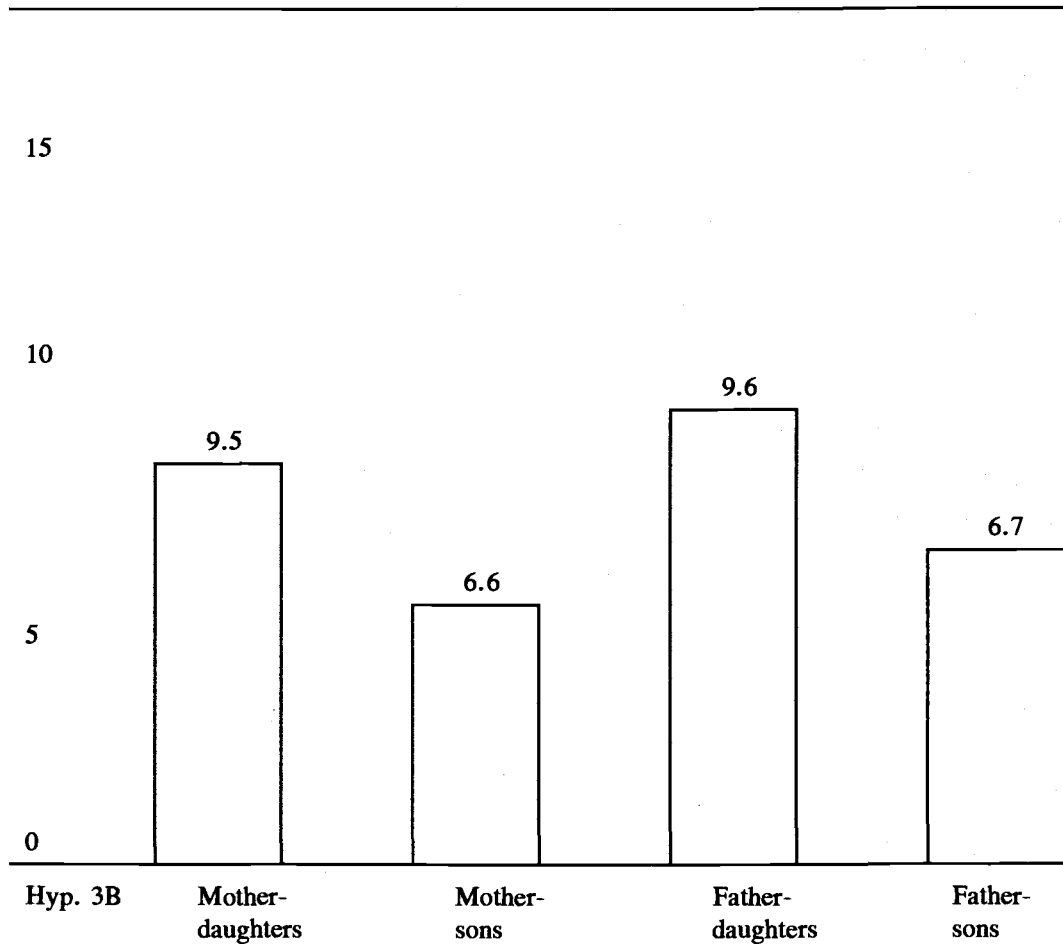
Figure 4.7. Estimated Weekly Total Housework Hours by Children by Household Configuration, with Covariates: Gender of Parent and Gender of Child



Similarly for feminine hours, Figure 4.8 graphs the results, showing that in mother-daughter households the daughters work an average of 9.5 hours, while in father-daughter households the daughters work 9.6 hours. As in total housework hours, these differences were small. In mother-son households the sons work an average of 6.6 hours, while in father-son households the sons work 6.7 hours. Again, as in total housework hours, there was little difference there. While the interaction of parent gender and child gender was not significant, child gender was significant, and the contrast in households is between daughter-households and son-households; sons work fewer hours than daughters. Thus, for both total housework and for feminine housework, we see that the gender of the child, but not the gender of the parent, nor

the interaction, was significant. Daughters do more hours of total and feminine housework in both single-mother and single-father households.

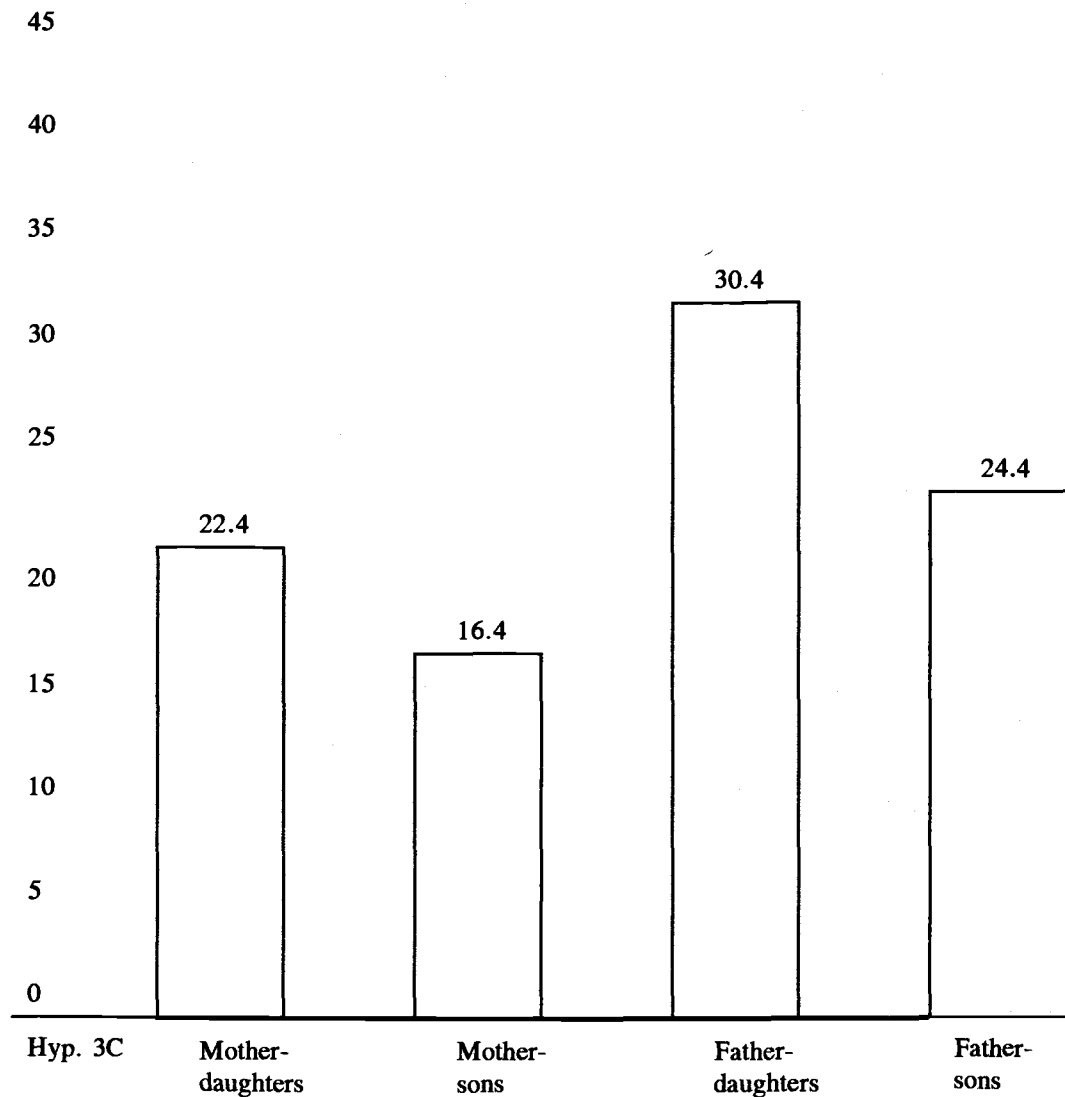
Figure 4.8. Estimated Weekly Feminine Housework Hours by Children by Household Configuration, with Covariates: Gender of Parent and Gender of Child



Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the numbers I used in the equations to find the percentage of housework children do, both total housework (3C) and feminine housework (3D). The percentage of housework done by children for each of the four household types was estimated in the same way as for the previous two hypotheses (3A and 3B). Both child gender and parent gender are significant in these analyses.

For the percentage of total housework (3C) child gender was measured at ($B = .06$, $\beta = .18$; $p < .001$) and parent gender was measured at ($B = -.08$; $\beta = -.14$; $p < .01$). For the percentage of feminine housework (3D) child gender was measured at ($B = .08$, $\beta = .21$; $p < .001$) and parent gender was measured at ($B = -.09$; $\beta = -.14$; $p < .01$). Figure 4.9 graphs the results for total housework, showing that in father-daughter households the daughters average 30.4% of the work (nearly one-third), while in mother-daughter households the daughters average 22.4% (between one-fifth and one-quarter) of the work. By contrast, in father-son households the sons do an average of 24.4% (one-quarter) of the work, while in mother-son households the sons average 17.4%.

Figure 4.9. Estimated Weekly Total Housework Percentage by Children by Household Configuration, with Covariates: Gender of Parent and Gender of Child

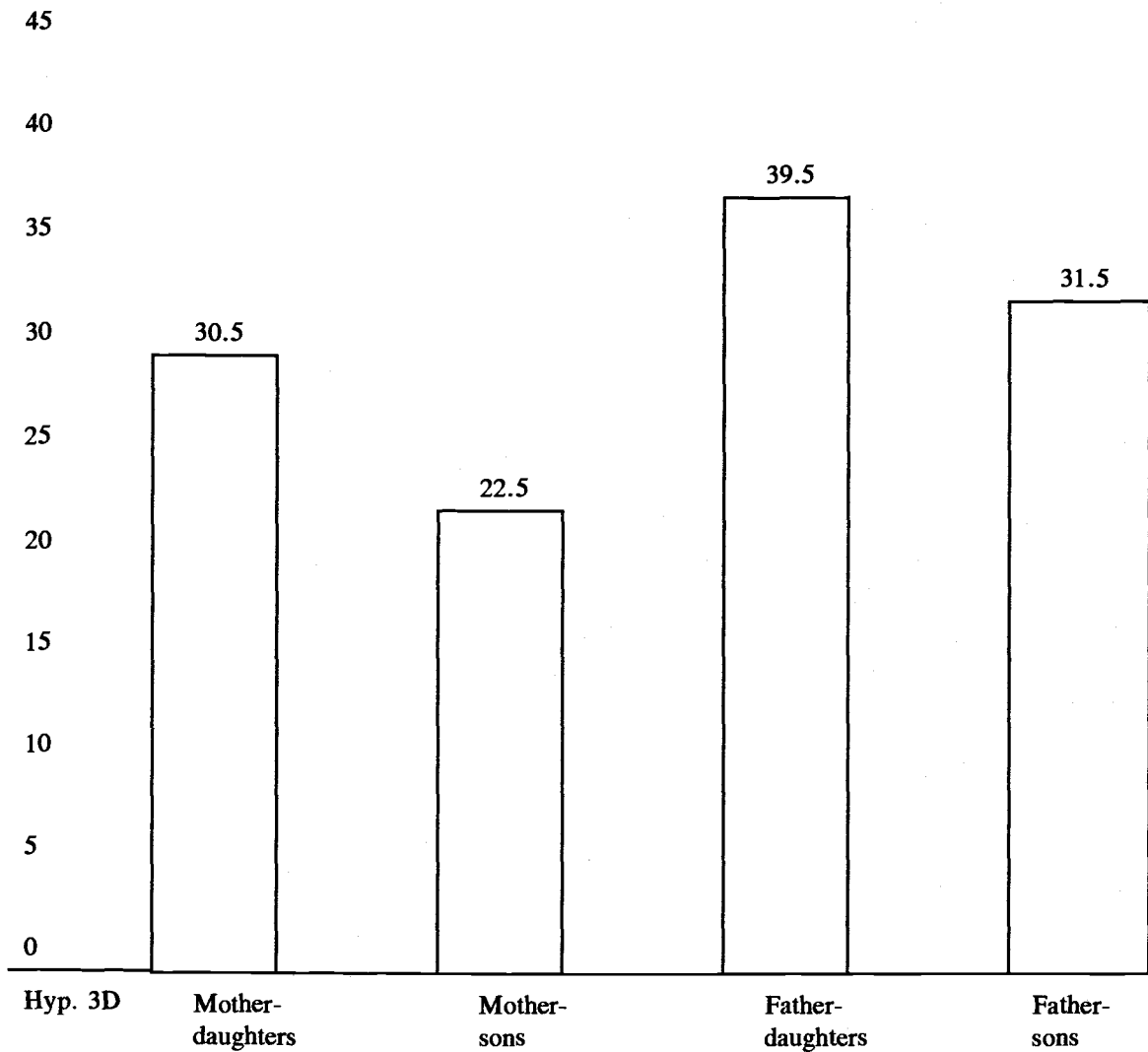


This figure shows that in father-daughter households the daughters average 39.5% (nearly two-fifths) of the feminine housework, while in mother-daughter households daughters average 30.5% (less than one-third). In father-son households the sons do an average of 31.5% (nearly two-thirds) of the work, while in mother-son households the

sons average 22.5% (between one-fifth and one-quarter). Thus, mothers do not seem to receive a different amount of housework from their daughters than fathers do.

Daughters do a higher percentage of total and feminine housework than sons in both single-mother and single-father households. The results for feminine housework are similar to these results and are graphed in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10. Estimated Weekly Feminine Housework Percentage by Children by Household Configuration, with Covariates: Gender of Parent and Gender of Child



For percentage of feminine housework, Figure 4.10 shows the differences between the percentage of housework reportedly done by households with daughters and households with sons: These differences were significant. For the percentages of housework reportedly done by children in households with mothers and households with fathers, the differences were significant. Our small sample size may have made it

more difficult to attain statistical difference, but there was no interaction pattern shown anyway.

Table 4.10. Hypotheses and Whether Supported or Not

Set 1 of hypotheses: Parent gender

HOURS

Hypothesis 1A: Children of single fathers will do more hours of total housework than children of single mothers. **Not supported.**

Hypothesis 1B: Children of single fathers will do more hours of feminine housework than children of single mothers. **Not supported.**

Hypothesis 1C: Children of single mothers will do more hours of masculine housework than children of single fathers. **Not supported.**

PERCENTAGE

Hypothesis 1D: Children of single fathers will do a higher percentage of total housework than children of single mothers. **Supported.**

Hypothesis 1E: Children of single fathers will do a higher percentage of feminine housework than children of single mothers. **Supported.**

Hypothesis 1F: Children of single mothers will do a higher percentage of masculine housework than children of single fathers. **Supported.**

Set 2 of hypotheses: Child gender

HOURS

Hypothesis 2A: Daughters of single parents will do more hours of total housework than sons of single parents. **Supported.**

Hypothesis 2B: Daughters of single parents will do more hours of feminine housework than sons of single parents. **Supported.**

Hypothesis 2C: Sons of single parents will do more hours doing masculine housework than daughters of single parents. **Supported.**

Table 4.10, Continued

PERCENTAGE

Hypothesis 2D: Daughters of single parents will do a higher percentage of total housework than sons of single parents. **Supported.**

Hypothesis 2E: Daughters of single parents will do a higher percentage of feminine housework than sons of single parents. **Supported.**

Hypothesis 2F: Sons of single parents will do a higher percentage of masculine housework than daughters of single parents. **Supported.**

Set 3 of hypotheses: Interaction of parent gender and child gender

HOURS

Hypothesis 3A: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on hours of total housework such that daughters of mothers do more than other children in single-parent families. **Not supported.**

Hypothesis 3B: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on hours of feminine housework such that daughters of mothers do more than other children in single-parent families. **Not supported.**

PERCENTAGE

Hypothesis 3C: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on percentage of time spent in total housework such that daughters of mothers do a higher percentage than other children in single-parent families. **Not supported.**

Hypothesis 3D: There is an interaction between parent gender and child gender on percentage of time spent in feminine housework such that daughters of mothers do a higher percentage than other children in single-parent families. **Not supported.**

Summary

A number of the hypotheses were supported. Although the gender of the parent does not make a difference in the hours children spend in housework (Hypotheses 1A, 1B, and 1C), it does make a difference in the percentage of work children do (Hypotheses 1D, 1E, and 1F). Hypotheses 1A, 1B, and 1C were not supported, while Hypotheses 1D, 1E, and 1F were supported. The gender of the child makes a difference in both hours of housework (Hypotheses 2A, 2B, and 2C) and in the percentage of the housework children do (Hypotheses 2D, 2E, and 2F). All of the hypotheses of the second set were supported. None of the hypotheses of the third set (3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D) were supported. There were no significant interactions between the gender of child and gender of parent, such that daughters of mothers did more total or feminine housework or a higher percentage of the housework than other children of single parents.

The last chapter will explore and explain these findings, their implications, and directions for further research.

5. Discussion

This chapter analyzes the results in light of gender theory and prior research. Limitations are noted and implications for individuals and families are explained.

Hypotheses Analyses

Parental Gender

There were no differences between the number of hours children of mothers and children of fathers spent in housework. It is interesting that none of the hypotheses in the first set which predicted the amount of children's housework dependent on parent gender were supported. In two-parent families Thrall (1978) and Blair (1992b) found that children modeled their housework after their parents' housework, particularly the parent of the same gender: the more housework parents did, the more daughters did; the more fathers did, the more sons did. In contrast, Fassinger (1993) did not find the role model perspective usual among single-parent families: there fathers expected more help and mothers were less likely to relinquish responsibility for housework. The findings of the present study are more similar to those of Fassinger than those of Thrall or Blair: Although the mothers did more hours of housework than the fathers, the daughters and sons did not differ significantly on the number of hours in individual or summed tasks.

This lack of differences may be due to the facts that in single-father households less housework is done, less housework is performed by fathers and children, and/or some housework is done by others living outside of the home. It may be that fathers are more likely to hire help, reducing their hours, but not necessarily their children's

hours in housework; or mothers and fathers may have different standards about what needs to be done. It may also be because of the small sample of single fathers that there were no statistically significant differences. On the other hand in Fassinger's (1993) qualitative work with single parents, a number of mothers stated their standards of housework had been dictated by their husbands when they were married and those standards were now relaxed. Some fathers in her study had children do a higher percentage of the housework than mothers did because the fathers saw the work as a family obligation while the mothers saw the work as a parental obligation. Other research has found that some fathers want to prove they can take care of the children and house by themselves, so they do not have the children do a lot and they do not hire help (Greif, 1990). Blair (1992a) found that in households with sons but no daughters, children did fewer hours and a smaller percentage of the labor than in households with daughters and no sons.

In contrast, the hypotheses in the first set that predicted children's percentage of housework dependent on parent gender, were supported. For the present study, children of fathers did more total housework and feminine housework compared to children of mothers. Children of fathers did a higher percentage of feminine and total housework than did children of mothers, and children of mothers did a higher percentage of masculine housework than did children of fathers, although the amount of time spent on masculine tasks was quite small. Children of fathers also did significantly more on the individual tasks of cleaning house and doing laundry. However, for masculine housework, mothers received a higher percentage of help than did fathers. We may be learning more about the amount of housework done in the

different households (single-mother or single-father), the larger percentage of chores that are described as feminine rather than masculine, and the amount done by mothers and by fathers than we are about childrens' housework.

Child Gender

In the second set of, the hypotheses that predicted children's housework hours dependent on child gender, were all supported. Daughters spent more hours in feminine and total housework, while sons spent more hours in masculine housework. Daughters in the present study did three more hours of housework weekly compared to sons. This tells us that daughters do more work than sons all together in terms of number of hours spent by children compared to parents. In addition, sons spent significantly (though not substantially) more hours on masculine housework, compared to daughters. We know that more hours of housework is described as feminine than as masculine. For instance, more time is spent on preparing meals and cleaning house than on maintaining the yard. Many studies show that daughters spend more hours in housework than sons, particularly feminine housework, and sons spend more hours in masculine work than daughters (Blair, 1992a, 1992b; Benin & Edwards, 1990; Hilton & Haldeman, 1991; Lawrence & Wozniak, 1987; Manke et al., 1994; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981b).

Continuing to look at the gender of the child, the differences in the percentage of total, feminine, and masculine housework daughters and sons did was significant, with all three hypotheses supported. In the present study, daughters did a significantly higher percentage of feminine and total housework than did sons; sons did a higher

percentage of masculine housework than did daughters. This tells us that daughters do more than sons all together in terms of the percentage of housework children do compared to parents. We know that a higher percentage of housework is described as feminine than as masculine. Previous studies have shown that daughters do a higher percentage of housework than sons, particularly feminine housework, that sons do a higher percentage of masculine housework than daughters (Blair, 1992a, 1992b), and that daughters and sons are more likely to participate in "traditional" gendered housework (Burns & Homel, 1989; Cogle & Tasker, 1982; Greif, 1990; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981a, 1981b; Zill & Peterson, 1982). Therefore, it appears parents are maintaining the gender stereotypes of daughters doing feminine work and sons doing masculine work, perpetuating the fact that daughters do more than sons in most, if not all, households, regardless of family composition.

In the third set of hypotheses, I predicted that there would be an interaction between the parent's gender and the children's gender such that daughters of single mothers would do more hours in total and feminine housework than other children of single parents (sons of mothers, daughters of fathers, and sons of fathers). None of these hypotheses were supported and the gender of the parent was not significant in either case. On the other hand, in terms of number of hours, the gender of children was significant on both total and feminine housework. Daughters of mothers did not do more hours of total and feminine housework than other children: sons of mothers, daughters of fathers, or sons of fathers. Instead, daughters did more housework than sons for both mothers and fathers. Daughters did over two-and-one-half hours more of total housework per week and nearly three hours more of feminine housework per

week than did sons. In addition, daughters of mothers did three hours more than sons of fathers.

I also predicted that there would be an interaction between the parent's gender and the children's gender such that daughters of single mothers would do a higher percentage of total and feminine housework than other children in single-parent families. The interactions were not significant, but the pattern of child gender being significant continued for percentage of housework done by children. In addition, terms of the percentage of feminine and total housework done, the gender of parent was also significant. Daughters did six percentage points more than sons in both single-mother and single-father families, and children of fathers did eight percentage points more than children of mothers on total housework. Thus, of housework done by parents and children, daughters of fathers did a higher percentage in their households than daughters of mothers (6%), sons of fathers (8%), and sons of mothers (14%). In feminine housework, daughters did eight percentage points more compared to sons in both mother and father families, and children of fathers did nine percentage points more than children of mothers. Therefore, of feminine housework done by parents and children, daughters of fathers did a higher percentage in their households than sons of fathers (8%), daughters of mothers (9%), and mothers of sons (17%).

Contrary to some studies (Lackey, 1989; Thrall, 1978), fathers in this study did not solely assign housework due to the child's gender; daughters did more in both single-mother and single-father families. In terms of the percentage of housework, daughters did higher percentages than did sons (in total and feminine housework), but both daughters and sons of fathers did a higher percentage than daughters and sons of

mothers. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that fathers do less housework than mothers.

Comparison of Analyses

Covariates Not Included

In operationalizing the hypotheses statistically, by controlling for a number of demographic variables, I made single mothers and single fathers equal in many areas. The reality is that mothers and fathers are not alike on the variables and I cannot ignore that controlling for these variables in this sample masks the differences based on the gender of the parents. I recognize that factors other than gender--such as mothers having more children, younger children, and lower incomes--can influence time children spend in housework. It could be hypothesized that the findings without controlling for variables would be closer to reality than the original findings that controlled for variables. In order to see if those factors did make a difference, I re-ran all of the analyses without covariates, essentially removing the variables that artificially equalized single mothers and single fathers. There were no significant differences in the analyses of the 16 hypotheses when covariates were not included. The findings essentially remained the same as when the covariates were included. There were slight differences in number and in strength of significance, but no changes in direction.

Parental Gender With Two Samples

In addition, the first set of hypotheses used the larger sample of 795 parents. That set of hypotheses can be compared to the smaller sub-sample of 451 parents by looking at the parent gender statistics in the second set of hypotheses. The results were the same in significance and direction. For the first set of hypotheses parental gender, was supported for percentage but not for absolute hours.

Reflecting on Gender Theory

Women and men, girls and boys, are very similar emotional, social, intellectual, and physical creatures. But the social construction of gender defines females and males by, and confines them to, feminine and masculine attributes that are very different (Ferree, 1990). Gender is constructed constantly, creating differences between female persons and male persons of all ages (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The division of labor in unpaid family work and the fact that this division makes gender differences clear, is one of the central tenets of gender theory or the gender perspective. This theory locates gender within the environment of people and structures (Connell, 1985) and one's gender is structurally associated with one's position within the family. Single fathers are in many ways structurally like single mothers (Fassinger, 1989). Therefore, being a single parent can alter a parent's construction of gender and lessen the differences between mothers and fathers (Fassinger, 1993; Schmiede & Richards, 1995). On the other hand, even in the non-traditional role of single father, some fathers fall into "traditional" patterns (Greif, 1985a). Some fathers view a daughter as a substitute mother, spouse, or housekeeper (Fassinger, 1993; Grief, 1985c). While

sons may do more housework in single-parent households than they did in two-parent households, daughters--who do more housework than sons in two-parent households--continue to do more in single-parent households.

I hypothesized that children of fathers would do more work than children of mothers because there is some evidence that single fathers see housework as a family rather than a parental obligation (Fassinger, 1993). I also hypothesized that daughters would do more work than sons, which is consistent with gender theory and previous research. Even though adult males assign tasks more stereotypically than adult females (Lackey, 1989; Thrall, 1978), I hypothesized that the assignment of housework to children would differ more by gender of children for mothers than for fathers. This is because fathers would take whatever help they could from either daughters or sons (Fassinger, 1993), while mothers depend on daughters more (Benin & Edwards, 1990; Blair, 1992a; Manke et al., 1994). It was expected that mothers and daughters would spend more time in "socially appropriate feminine" household tasks, while fathers and sons would spend more time in "socially appropriate masculine" household tasks (Berk, 1985).

The findings of the present study are, in the main, consistent with gender theory. Daughters did more hours in and a higher percentage of feminine and total housework, while sons did more hours in and a higher percentage of masculine housework. Children of mothers and fathers did not differ significantly in the total number of hours they spent in housework, fathers' children did spend a significantly higher percentage of time in housework than mothers' children, in part because fathers

spend less time in housework overall than do mothers. In other words, housework in single-parent households, like in two-parent households, is gendered.

Implications

One explanation for these findings would be that fathers are spending more time with children compared to mothers, and mothers are spending more time in housework compared to fathers. Yet, this notion does not bear up to the recent research using the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) data set that showed mothers and fathers spending similar amounts of time with children (although differing on activities) and mothers spending more time on housework (Hall et al., 1995). It may be that single-mother households spend too much time on housework and/or that single-father households spend too little time on housework. From the amount of time parents report preparing meals or report their children prepare meals, it is not clear how much these families bring in food from a deli, eat out in restaurants, or hire a cook. It is likely to be parents with higher incomes--who are more likely to be fathers--who eat food cooked by others. In the same way, there is no way to know who has a dishwasher and who does not; who takes clothing to the cleaners, who hauls clothes to the laundromat, or who washes clothing in the sink; or who has a yard maintenance service or even a yard. All of these can affect the parent's and children's time in those tasks.

In the present study, in terms of the types and amount of chores done, girls and boys followed "traditional" gender roles. Role stereotypes based on sex and gender persist today. In the 1970's girls were expected to learn household responsibilities at a

younger age than boys, and were, as Zill and Peterson noted: "less likely to be allowed to get away with not mastering domestic skills at all" (1982, p. 361). For all of the changes--real and imagined--in family life, in household technology, and in maternal employment, adults and children are still stereotyped by gender. Parents in two-parent families see their own roles defined by gender and they teach their children housework and roles in the family that are gender-appropriate (Thrall, 1978). In my data on single-parent families, as in Blair's (1992b) on married and cohabiting households (both NSFH from the late 1980's), children's housework is still commonly gender-typed. Just as mothers do more than fathers, daughters do more housework than sons. The intergenerational continuity is striking and threatens to continue into future generations. Behaviors based on gender within families may affect the way children understand behaviors and inequities in society (e.g. wage gaps, sex discrimination, sexual harassment) (Blair, 1992b). In addition, even if this stereotyping is, as Lawrence and Wozniak note: "illogical or even detrimental to positive family and human relations, it still persists in a great many American families" (1987, p. 935).

Along these lines, political philosopher, Susan Moller Okin asks how children can develop a sense of justice in families if there are hierarchical relationships between two parents, between siblings, or between parents and children. The traditional division of labor "within the family by sex has deep ramifications for its respective members' material, psychological, physical, and intellectual well-being. . . . It is also at the very root of other significant concerns of justice, including equality of opportunity for children . . . especially . . . girls" (Okin, 1989, p. 149).

The implications for housework in single-parent families is clear, as it is in two-parent families: Mothers do more housework than fathers and daughters do more housework than sons. Daughters also perform tasks that are more routine and restricted by time constraints than those tasks performed by sons.

Limitations

This study has limitations. The NSFH data set only asks about nine household tasks. In addition, it does not cover other tasks related to family work such as child care, management of the household, emotion management, and so on. For this study I did not take into account the measures of housework done by others in the household, including children and others (i.e., roommates, parents, relatives) over the age of 18. No information is given about the amount of time paid workers or volunteers (relatives, friends) living outside of the home spend doing housework. For instance, do grandmothers do more housework for single fathers? Do grandfathers do more household repair or outdoor/maintenance work for single mothers? The R^2 s are very modest, ranging from 7% to 15%, so obviously there are other factors influencing the performance of household tasks in these analyses.

In addition, the six household tasks I used were answered by the single parent respondent on a self-administered questionnaire and there was a lot of missing data. A respondent could answer zero or choose to leave the space blank (causing an answer of missing data). Although I surmise that no answer translates into zero, especially since all respondents included answered at least one of the children's household task questions, there is no way for me to establish that with certainty. The studies that

report low numbers of single parents hiring household help (Grief, 1990; Risman, 1986, 1987; Risman & Park, 1988) do not include eating out, only if someone cooked for them in their homes.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should investigate these areas with expanded questions. A sample that has a higher number of single fathers and more equality in numbers between mothers and fathers would be helpful. Future research should include more household tasks, errands, child care tasks, and emotion work.

More data household tasks could expand some categories used as well as suggesting others. "Preparing meals" could be divided to include planning menus, writing shopping lists, taking inventory, thawing or marinating, and cooking. "Dishes" could be expanded to include wiping down counters and cleaning out the refrigerator. "Cleaning house" could include straightening up, vacuuming, mopping, cleaning bathrooms, and throwing out dead flower arrangements. "Laundry" could be categorized separately for washing, folding, ironing, and putting away. "Outdoor/maintenance work," which includes household repairs, could be divided into taking out garbage, mowing the lawn, sweeping walks, cleaning gutters, filling bird feeders, cleaning up after pets, and gardening, in addition to painting, decorating, waxing, and repairs. "Auto maintenance" could include buying gas, taking the car to the shop, washing, checking the oil, and other mechanical matters. "Shopping" could be separated into groceries, children's clothing, and household items. "Paying bills" could include writing checks, balancing the checkbook, and going to the bank.

In addition, other tasks could be added to those used in the NSFH data set. Errands is another category which includes many items. Child rearing tasks are included in the NSFH data set for parents, including time with child in leisure activities, private talks, projects and play at home, and reading to and helping with homework. These tasks could be expanded to cover sibling care. In addition they could be expanded to include practical tasks such as bathing, feeding, and getting a child to the doctor; attending school conferences; entertaining the child's friends; and finding lost socks and homework. Another important area is that of emotion work. This could also include communicating with kin, giving a birthday party, bandaging hurts and hurt feelings, listening, and--for some--maintaining a relationship with a partner including time together without others around for the couple. Emotion work and organizational work might be different in single-parent households, which might mean higher maturity expectations for children. This could include very young boys being told they are the "man of the house" at a developmentally inappropriate age.

It would be helpful to have the answers of the children as well as answers from their parent(s). Future surveys may also want to directly ask the questions of the respondents, rather than using a self-administered questionnaire, in order to lessen the amount of missing data. The NSFH data set has been used to look at the amount of housework done by children of married and cohabiting couples. It would be interesting to directly compare those results with those obtained in this study of single-parent families. In addition, it would be helpful to be able to find out how many hours and how much of the percentage of time was spent by each individual child, rather than by all of the children in the household.

Summary

In this study, parents seem to be maintaining gendered stereotypes with daughters doing more "feminine" work, sons doing more "masculine" work, and daughters doing more housework overall. Fathers do less housework than mothers so that children do a higher percentage of housework in single-father families than in single-mother families. This is not that different from two-parent families in which mothers do more work than fathers. Living in a two-parent or in a single-parent family does not mean highly different expectations for housework for daughters or for sons. Living with a single mother or a single father does not make a difference in the number of hours children are expected to spend in housework. In any of these family types--two-parent, single-father, or single-mother--daughters do more housework.

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