

Gender and Housework in a Changing Demographic Context

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Sociology)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2021

Date of final oral examination: 06/10/2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It takes a village to survive grad school and complete a dissertation, and I am thankful to so many people.

First, I would like to thank Marcy Carlson for her cheerful advising, constant encouragement, and for providing opportunities that I would not have had otherwise. I am fortunate to have had an advisor that encouraged my independence and gave me the freedom to explore the topics and questions that interested me while being patient with my tendency to change research questions. Ironically, it all came full circle in the end.

I am also thankful for Christine Schwartz for always having a thoughtful comment and advice that polished my techniques. I am in great debt to Myra Marx Ferree for her intellectual support not just as a committee member but as the faculty that has shaped me as a scholar in one research methods course. I am also thankful to Daniel Meyer and Eunsil Oh for their critical comments and wise advice at different stages of my journey.

I would also like to thank Jim Raymo for his patience in teaching and guiding me through the little details. Michal Engelman, thank you for having the door open for anything and everything and “speaking my language,” both literally and figuratively. I am also grateful to Jenna Nobles and Monica Grant for their teachings and for maintaining DemSem and FemSem – the two most important intellectual communities to me during my time at UW.

I am thankful to the staffs in the Department of Sociology, CDE, and the Social Science Computing Cooperative for solving so many problems over the years. Special thank you to Charlotte Frascona, Susan Vial, Mary Lynn Dombrowski, Sherry Huhn, and Rebekah Turner, and Caitlin Tefft for always assisting and offering a smile. I am also grateful for Russell Dimond, who provided frequent statistical and computing guidance that was crucial for this dissertation.

I was also fortunate to be surrounded by many brilliant graduate students who were also incredible human beings. Mike King held me accountable, provided statistical and coding assistance, offered critical input on papers, and most importantly, validated my feelings and allowed me to vent even after he graduated during a pandemic. Grad school would have been a very different experience without him. I am grateful for Sarah E. Frank, for entering my life at the very last minute of grad school as a collaborator and a caring, generous friend and to Isabel Pike, Nathan Seltzer, Jessica Polos and many others for being colleagues and friends.

I was extremely lucky to have access to mental health resources at UW-Madison that have helped me through challenging and dark times. I am thankful for UHS for providing students with free counseling during our time in grad school. I am specifically grateful beyond words to Todd Avellar for saving me from drowning and Jeff Hird for bringing me safely to shore. I am also thankful for Raquel Sancho Solis from the Recreation and Wellbeing at UW for her Zumba classes that have added pure joy and happiness to my life.

I was also fortunate to have Israeli friends who pushed me through Israeli-style. Ety Konor-Attias provided emotional support, constant encouragement, and validation. Efrat Herzberg-Druker always had a pragmatic and wise solution to professional challenges. Rebeca Rajjman and Alisa Lewin at the University of Haifa got me into grad school and believed in me all along.

Last but not least, I am dedicating this dissertation to my mother and brother, who sacrificed a lot so I can go and stay on this journey. Even though they did not always understand what I am doing or why, they always supported me in any way they knew how. My mom and brother were a constant force in my life that reminded me where I came from, who I am, and that I am, in fact, good, smart, and enough. I could not have made it without their love. Toda.

ABSTRACT

Gender inequality in housework has been the center of sociological research for decades and continues to be a topic of public interest. Despite extensive sociological attention, many questions about gendered housework over the life course and across diverse family and household forms have received limited attention in the mainstream literature. This dissertation focuses on housework and gender in three specific family-household contexts to offer insight into questions about the stability and ambiguity of gender relations: repartnering, family complexity, and shared households.

Amidst increasing cohabitation rates and union instability, heterosexual women and men are likely to form and dissolve multiple marital and non-marital unions with different partners over the life course. However, sociologists know very little how past relationships affect current ones, particularly whether people change their housework arrangements upon repartnering and whether women and men experience similar patterns of change. Drawing on life course and gender theories and prospective longitudinal data, the first paper tests competing hypotheses about the effect of repartnering on individuals' levels and shares of housework. I find that women and men perform the same amount and share of housework in their second union as they did in their first union. However, there is also evidence that women's share of housework slightly declines in their second union. The results suggest that although the life course is dynamic, gender roles are stable amid union instability.

The second paper focuses on family complexity. Past research highlighted the Incomplete Institution hypothesis to explain the more egalitarian division of housework in remarriages and stepfamilies. The explanation suggests that family complexity introduces ambiguity to family life, resulting in a more egalitarian division of labor. In this paper, I investigate the gender

dynamics in complex families by examining men's relative housework shares across different family structures from 1985 to 2017. I find that although in the earlier period (1985-1989), men in stepfamilies had greater shares of housework than men in two-biological parent families and blended families, stepfathers' housework behavior has converged over time. In contrast, men in stepmother families have consistently shared housework more equally than other men. Additional decomposition analysis suggests that between half and 61% of the gap between men in stepmother families and men in other family structures are attributed to selection. The findings challenge the Incomplete Institution hypothesis and highlight how parental roles cement the gendered division of housework in heterosexual unions.

As most housework research, the first two papers exclusively focus on families and couples. However, demographic and economic trends have changed people's living arrangements and delayed family formation. In the third paper, I offer an alternative setting for studying "doing gender" through housework - shared living households where young adults live together but do not share romantic or kinship relationships (i.e., roommates). I find that women and men "do gender" via housework in shared households and that young men are particularly resistant to cleaning, regardless of their roommates' gender. Moreover, the results show that women living with men spent more time cleaning than men living with women. In contrast, women and men, regardless of their household's gender composition, spent a similar amount of time on other "female-typed" tasks, "male-typed," and gender-neutral tasks. The findings underscore that housework carries a gendered meaning beyond the context of families and how cleaning is a core site for men's masculinity.

Taken together, the dissertation demonstrate the overall stability and similarity of men's low housework participation across contexts.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

Gender inequality in housework has been the center of sociological research for decades and continues to be a topic of public interest, especially amidst the ongoing pandemic. Although men have increased their housework investment over time, the gender gap in housework has plateaued. Women continue to do the lion's share of household labor and devote twice to three times more hours of housework than men (Bianchi et al. 2000; Bianchi et al. 2012).

The sociological study of housework often focuses on testing three “competing” theories: relative resources, time availability, and gender construction (Coltrane 2000; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel 2020). Moreover, the debate on the merits of “doing gender” as an explanation for the persistent gender inequality in housework is ongoing (Bittman et al. 2003; Brines 1994; Greenstein 2000; Gupta 2007; Killewald and Gough 2010; Schneider 2012; Sullivan 2011). Ultimately, scholars find evidence for all perspectives. However, one cannot understand housework without paying particular attention to gender as a construct shaping power dynamics within and across families and households (Berk 1985; Davis and Greenstein 2013; Ferree 2010).

Despite extensive sociological attention, many questions about housework remain open. Questions about gendered housework over the life course and across diverse family and household forms have received limited attention in the mainstream literature. Moreover, other theoretical concepts have been neglected, and implicit assumptions have gone untested. This dissertation shifts the focus to these questions in the context of the United States.

Although often mentioned in the context of declining fertility, the Second Demographic Transition introduced many changes to people's familial and living arrangements experiences (Lesthaeghe 2010). This dissertation focuses on housework and gender in three specific family-

household contexts: repartnering, family complexity, and shared households. Each of these contexts received tremendous attention as demographic processes, but less attention as sites of gender dynamics (Brown et al. 2019; Cross 2018; Eickmeyer and Manning 2018; Pilkauskas and Cross 2018; Raley and Sweeney 2020; Schimmele and Wu 2016; Smock and Schwartz 2020; Wu and Schimmele 2005). Investigating housework in these contexts offers insight into questions about the stability and ambiguity of gender relations.

I rely on two data sources for my analyses. For Chapters 2 and 3, I use the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and its supplement the Family Relationship Matrix. Although the PSID has limitations which I discuss in more detail in each of the chapters, it is the only nationally representative household survey that follows people over time as they transition between relationships and households while also collecting information about housework investment. Moreover, the Family Relationship Matrix supplement details the relationship between all household members, which is beneficial for measuring family complexity consistently over time. Therefore, the PSID is the only data source to my knowledge that has housework time investment for the same people over time and across diverse family structures in the United States. For Chapter 4, I use the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) combined with the Current Population Survey (CPS). Time-use surveys are considered the “golden standard” of time use estimation (Cornwell, Gershuny and Sullivan 2019). The ATUS offers the most recent available time use for the adult American population. Both the PSID and ATUS are the most commonly used data sources in housework research in the United States. Together, these data sources allow me to explore housework in changing and complex settings that so far have received less attention from mainstream research.

Studying these settings also allows us to revisit theoretical concepts that have been underutilized in gender and housework research. First, focusing on repartnering (Chapter 2) introduces a new dimension of the life course to the study of gender and housework – changing partners. With the increasing availability of longitudinal data and methods, scholars have gradually paid more attention to the dynamic nature of the division of household labor (Allen and Webster 2001; Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Gough and Killewald 2011; Leopold and Skopek 2016; Nitsche and Grunow 2016). Existing literature has focused on the changing dynamics of housework as couples experience life events *together* as a couple throughout the duration of their relationship. However, people are expected to experience union instability and repartnering, i.e., have multiple unions (marriage or cohabitation) with different partners over their life course. Although demographers have documented the trends and patterns of repartnering (Raley and Sweeney 2020), sociologists have yet to incorporate repartnering into the study of gender and family dynamics from a life course perspective. Studying people’s gendered division of housework across partnerships illuminates both the dynamic nature of the life course but the stable nature of gendered roles in heterosexual relationships.

Second, focusing on family complexity (Chapter 3) allows for the inclusion of diverse family forms in the study of gender and housework while also challenging the Incomplete Institution hypothesis (Cherlin 1978). Although coined to explain the higher divorce rates of higher-order marriages, sociologists have expanded the terminology to describe family and gender dynamics in stepfamilies more broadly (Eickmeyer, Manning and Brown 2019; Ivanova 2017; Stewart 2006). According to the incomplete institution explanation, because these family forms have not been “institutionalized,” there is ambiguity about familial norms, roles, and expectations. The ambiguity encourages family members to renegotiate their familial and gender

roles. There are several challenges and limitations to this perspective when applied to housework. Primarily, this application is gender-neutral, ahistorical, and overlooks diversity in family life that aligns with demographic selection into these families. Comparing the division of housework across different forms of family complexity sheds light on the gender dynamics within and between complex families over time. It also contributes to our understanding of how gendered expectations are embedded in familial roles and challenges the extent to which “ambiguity” is a relevant explanation to complex families’ gender dynamics.

Third, studying shared households (Chapter 4) offers an opportunity to explore the relationship between gender and housework in the absence of familial and romantic expectations. Recent research has gradually paid more attention to household labor among same-sex couples (Goldberg 2013). Scholars have demonstrated how studying same-sex couples offers insight into the familial power dynamics when *gender* is “taken out” (Davis and Greenstein 2013; Moore 2008). Investigating housework in shared households, namely, roommate households, offers insight into the gender power dynamics when *family* is “taken out.” Taking familial expectations out of the study of housework is an opportunity to empirically test an implicit assumption in the housework literature, which assumes that “doing gender” only takes place in families because there is an added meaning to housework in families, e.g., care and love (Berk 1985; Kroska 2003). Since housework in roommate households does not carry any additional meaning beyond “the work itself” (Berk 1985), there should not be any evidence of “doing gender” in these households. However, there is qualitative evidence to suggest that housework is gendered in all-men households (Natalier 2003). Therefore, studying housework participation in shared households with various gender configurations will shed light on the centrality of gender relations as an organizing mechanism of daily life beyond the context of the family.

Dissertation overview

This dissertation presents three empirical papers that connect gender and housework in three different familial and living arrangement contexts. Chapter 2 uses 40 years of longitudinal data from the PSID to examine whether Americans in heterosexual unions change their housework arrangements when they repartner. I find that women and men invest similar amounts and shares of housework in their second unions as they did in their first unions. The results suggest that forming a new heterosexual union evokes gender scripts that encourage women and men to adopt the same gendered roles in their previous union. Thus, although the life course is dynamic, gender roles are stable amid union instability.

Chapter 3 focuses on the gender dynamics in complex families by examining men's relative housework shares across different family structures from 1985 to 2017 using the PSID. I find that although in the earlier period (1985-1989), men in stepfamilies contributed higher shares of housework than men in two-biological parent families and blended families, stepfathers' housework behavior has diverged from the housework of men in stepmother families over time. Moreover, I find that men in stepmother families have consistently contributed the most to housework. Additional decomposition analysis suggests that much of the gaps between groups over time are attributed to the differences in their demographic composition. The findings challenge the Incomplete Institution hypothesis.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus to single young adults who live with roommates. Using the American Time Use Survey, I find that women and men "do gender" via housework in roommate living arrangements. The results show that men are particularly resistant to cleaning, which is a shared chore, regardless of their roommates' gender. Moreover, the results show that women with men roommates spend more time cleaning than men living with women. In contrast, women

and men, regardless of their household's gender composition, spent a similar amount of time on personal chores, male-typed chores, and gender-neutral chores. The findings underscore that housework carries a gendered meaning beyond the context of families.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I offer general conclusions and propose directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2. “Thank U, Next”? Repartnering and the Household Division of Labor

Introduction

A growing body of literature over the past two decades has studied the division of household labor from a life course perspective. This rich body of work often follows heterosexual couples as they experience life events together throughout their relationship. These events include, for example, parenthood (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Grunow, Schulz and Blossfeld 2012; Kühhirt 2011), unemployment and economic changes (Gough and Killewald 2011; Nitsche and Grunow 2016; Voßemer and Heyne 2019), health deterioration (Allen and Webster 2001) and retirement (Leopold and Skopek 2016; Szinovacz 2000). Other life course studies follow people before and after union formation and dissolution (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Gupta 1999) or generally follow individuals over their life course (Leopold, Skopek and Schulz 2018). Overall, this body of work demonstrates that housework is not static throughout the life course. The time people dedicate to household labor changes in response to various life transitions, but women and men experience different patterns of change over the life course.

However, we know very little about how people change their division of household labor arrangements or the amount of time they dedicate to housework when they change romantic partners. Understanding housework participation upon repartnering is essential in the current demographic context in the United States. With high rates of cohabitation, remarriages, and union instability, women and men are increasingly likely to form and dissolve multiple and sequential marital and non-marital unions with different partners (Brown et al. 2019; Dush, Jang and Snyder 2018; Eickmeyer 2018; Eickmeyer and Manning 2018; Lichter and Qian 2008; Lichter, Turner and Sassler 2010; Wu and Schimmele 2005). Existing literature on repartnering focuses on demographic trends and the implications of repartnering for adults and children

(Raley and Sweeney 2020). Yet, we know very little about how past relationships shape current ones, even though we might presume that people learn from their past romantic experiences (Sassler 2010). Moreover, studying individuals' division of housework vis-à-vis different partners contributes to our understanding of gendered roles over the life course and the circumstances under which women and men may, or may not, reconstruct these roles (Deutsch 2007).

This study seeks to understand whether people in heterosexual unions change their levels and shares of housework participation when they change partners and whether women and men experience similar patterns of change. By answering these questions, this study makes three contributions. First, it contributes to a growing body of literature about housework over the life course by focusing on the role of repartnering. Second, it draws on key theoretical approaches - life course and gender theories - to formulate competing hypotheses about the existence and direction of change in housework behavior for women and men as they repartner. Third, this study draws on 40 years of panel data from the PSID and fixed-effects models to systematically compare the change in both housework levels and shares of the housework, separately for women and men. Thus, this study contributes to our understanding of the gendered experience of housework, life course, and romantic relationships.

Past research

Most of our current knowledge about the role of relationship history in couples' division of household labor comes from studies using relatively dated cross-sectional surveys. These studies compared the household division of labor of couples who were in their first marriage to the housework of remarried couples or stepfamilies. Overall, this body of work suggests that the division of household labor is more egalitarian in higher-order marriages and partnerships than in

first marriages (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992; Snoeckx, Dehertogh and Mortelmans 2008; Sullivan 1997).

Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992) compared men's absolute and relative housework contribution across various types of stepfamilies using the first wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (1987-1988). They found that men who were remarried contributed slightly but significantly more to household labor than men who were in their first marriages, namely an hour, or two percent more to the total housework. Using the British Household Panel Survey data from 1992, Sullivan (1997) compared the share of the housework of women in their first-marriage to women who were in a higher-order union (marriage or cohabitation). Sullivan found that although British women did most of the housework regardless of union order, women who were in higher-order partnerships contributed less to the total housework than women who were in their first marriage, 76% compared to 80%, respectively. Moreover, Sullivan found that women's union history but not their partners' union history mattered for their housework, which suggests that women are the ones to adjust their housework but not men. Finally, using the European Social Survey (2004-2005), Snoeckx, Dehertogh, and Mortelmans (2008) compared the division of household labor between first-marriage families and stepfamilies across 17 European countries. They found that although both types of families were likely to report that the woman in the union did more housework than the man, first-marriage families were more likely to report this type of division of housework compared with stepfamilies across all countries.

To explain these findings, scholars have theorized that couples in higher-order unions experience more ambiguity with role expectations and norms (Cherlin 1978). This ambiguity encouraged these couples to renegotiate the housework. However, this explanation poses two crucial challenges. First, the differences between couples in first marriages and couples in

higher-order unions were very small. Thus, the idea that the division of labor is “more egalitarian” in higher-order unions, as these results are often cited in the literature, is overstated.

Second, these studies offer evidence about *being* in a higher-order union instead of the experience of *transitioning* into a higher-order union. Although the authors have acknowledged this methodological limitation, the common explanation implies that there was a change in women’s and men’s housework behaviors upon repartnering. However, one requires longitudinal data that follow the same individuals over time as they transition from one union to the next to support that explanation, i.e., testing the difference between the housework in the first union to the housework of the same individual in the second union. Meaning, prior studies have found between-group differences at a particular time and place, but these differences do not inform us of an actual individual change.

Fortunately, family scholars have witnessed a surge in longitudinal surveys over the last two decades, which led to a flourishing body of work that investigates housework from a life course perspective. However, only one study, to my knowledge, used longitudinal data to study people’s housework across different unions. Beblo and Solaz (2018) used the German Socio-Economic Panel data from 1991 to 2012 to investigate whether German women and men changed the way they divided their time between market labor and domestic labor (housework and childcare) upon repartnering. In other words, they compared the individual specialization between market and domestic work of the same people when they were in their first union and when they were in their second union.

Beblo and Solaz (2018) found mixed support for prior cross-sectional studies. On the one hand, they found no evidence for changes in specialization upon repartnering, i.e., women and men spent similar amounts of time doing market and domestic labor in their second union as they

did in their first union. On the other hand, the results suggest that women dedicated more time to childcare at the expense of housework in their second union, i.e., German women dedicated less time to housework in their second union compared with their first union.

Nonetheless, there are several questions that remain open. First, Beblo and Solaz (2018), as well as Sullivan (1997), focused on the level of housework, e.g., number of hours, which considers only one form of housework behavior. A change in the number of hours upon repartnering does not inform us of the contribution of the new partner compared with the first partner. To understand whether the division of housework became equal upon repartnering, we need to test the change in the relative share of the housework across unions.

Second, social context is a critical factor in shaping men's and women's housework participation (Fuwa 2004; Hook 2006; Thébaud 2010). Germany is a distinct social setting characterized by traditional gender ideology that exhibits different outcomes related to housework and gender compared to the United States (Cooke 2006). Thus, it is unclear to what extent the stability documented by Beblo and Solaz is generalizable to the United States. Finally, prior research did not systematically compare the change in levels and shares of the housework for both women and men. Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992) focused on men, and Sullivan (1997) limited her analysis to women. Thus, it is unclear if women and men experience a similar pattern of change upon repartnering.

This study builds upon and expands previous studies by using longitudinal panel data that follows people's housework, prospectively, when they are in their first union and when they are in their second union. This study also advances our understanding of the role of repartnering in housework behavior by accounting for both potential change in people's levels and their shares

of housework vis-à-vis different partners and by comparing women to men to understand whether patterns of housework change upon repartnering are gendered in the United States.

Theory and hypotheses

Why there could be a change in housework upon repartnering? The life course is dynamic

To understand why people would or would not change their housework upon repartnering, we need to consider competing theoretical explanations to the relationship between repartnering and housework participation. Why would women and men change their housework arrangements upon repartnering? Prior studies have utilized the incomplete institution explanation (Cherlin 1978) to theorize why higher-order unions share housework relatively more equally than first unions. According to the incomplete institution explanation, there are no clear rules and norms for remarriages and stepfamilies. The ambiguity, in turn, encourages family members to renegotiate their familial and gender roles; consequently, stepmothers do less childcare than biological mothers (Ivanova 2017; Thomson, McLanahan and Curtin 1992) and stepfamilies are less likely to pool their income together (Burgoyne and Morison 1997; Eickmeyer, Manning and Brown 2019). Similarly, the ambiguity also encourages renegotiation for a more egalitarian division of household labor in higher-order unions (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992; Snoeckx, Dehertogh and Mortelmans 2008; Sullivan 1997). However, as mentioned earlier, this explains differences about *being* in a higher-order union rather than *transitioning* into a higher-order union.

A life-course approach, however, allows us to take an individual change perspective that focuses on the individual as they transition from one union to the next. A plethora of studies show that housework participation is dynamic, and that people adjust their housework in response to various life-course transitions (Artis and Pavalko 2003; Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes

2008; Gupta 1999; Leopold, Skopek and Schulz 2018; Sanchez and Thomson 1997). Under this framework, entering a new relationship with a new partner potentially offers an opportunity to change past routines from past relationships.

Repartnering may facilitate change in housework behavior in several ways. First, people learn from their past romantic experiences. Qualitative studies find that women and men reflect on their previous romantic relationships and describe them as experiences from which they learn and grow (Dalessandro and Wilkins 2017). Housework is a source of discord and conflict in relationships that matters for women's satisfaction (Hu and Yucel 2017) and the couple's frequency and satisfaction from sexual intimacy (Carlson et al. 2016). Women are more likely to dissolve a marriage when marital satisfaction is low in general (Sayer et al. 2011) and when they perceive the division of household labor to be unfair in particular (Frisco and Williams 2003).

If housework has a crucial role in shaping the relationship between romantic partners, there is reason to believe that people will compare their current division of housework to the way they divided housework in their former relationship. Interviewing White remarried heterosexual couples, Pyke and Coltrane (1996) found that women and men used their experiences in their first marriage to justify their housework behaviors and their expectations from their partners in their second marriage. Although not all participants reported an equal division of labor, it was evident that the first marriage was a baseline for comparison. Thus, we can expect that women and men will want to avoid a second dissolution and change one significant source of conflict by doing more housework (men) or negotiating for less (women).

People can also learn from their post-dissolution experiences. Longitudinal research shows that women and men adjust their housework behaviors upon union dissolution and the transition to singlehood differently. Upon union dissolution, newly single men increase their

housework hours, but newly single women decrease their housework hours (Gupta 1999; Hewitt, Haynes and Baxter 2013). These studies suggest that in the absence of a woman-partner, men do more housework, but in the absence of a man-partner, women do less housework. Therefore, it is plausible that this experience will “carry over” to the next union (Sullivan 1997). Women will maintain an “adjusted-down” housework behavior and choose not to return to the same gendered roles upon repartnering, and men will maintain an “adjusted-up” housework behavior. Carrying the adjusted housework behavior will result in a decrease in women’s housework across unions, and an increase in men’s housework across unions.

Thus, following the life course approach, I expect that women will *decrease* their housework investment, i.e., levels and shares, in their second union compared with their housework investment in their first union, but men will *increase* their housework investment, i.e., levels and shares, in their second union compared with their first union.

Why there might not be a change in housework upon repartnering? Gender roles are persistent.

There is also a theoretical possibility that people will not change their housework behavior across unions. Although the life course is dynamic, it also involves some form of consistency and stability for the individual. One form of stability across partnerships is in relationship dynamics. Psychologists, for example, show that although people change partners, their interpersonal relationship dynamics and some personality traits remain stable across relationships (Johnson and Neyer 2019; Robins, Caspi and Moffitt 2002).

Thinking sociologically about how couples share housework, one key source of potential stability upon repartnering is the role of gender in organizing family life and household labor. The gender perspective of household labor has a significant role in understanding the relationship between repartnering and housework. From a gender perspective, although people

change partners, they are still within the context of a heterosexual union where housework is a form of gender display.

The gender perspective for the study of household labor underscores the idea that gender is performed in our interactions with others (West and Zimmerman 1987). Household labor is a key site where women and men assert their gender identity (Berk 1985; Ferree 1990). The gendered division of household labor allows women and men to display their femininity or masculinity by “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987). From a gender perspective, individuals may keep the same housework behavior across unions because the heterosexual union is a context where gendered expectations and roles shape family relationships (Berk 1985; Ferree 1990). Thus, although under some circumstances, people actively reconstruct their gender roles (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009; Shows and Gerstel 2009), gender inequality in the household is persistent (Ridgeway 2011), so the context of sequential heterosexual unions may not offer such an opportunity.

Entering a familial role has a gendering effect on housework participation. Longitudinal research finds that union formation encourages men and women in heterosexual unions to adopt the traditional gender script. Entering a marital or non-marital union increases women’s housework but does not change men’s housework (Baxter, Haynes and Hewitt 2010a; Gupta 1999). Thus, forming a heterosexual union, even if a second union, will activate the same gender roles, which will result in women and men exhibiting the same housework behavior across unions. In this case, even if women and men change their housework behavior upon dissolution, they will not “carry-over” this behavior into the next union but rather go back to the housework arrangement they had in their previous union. The findings from Beblo and Solaz’s longitudinal

study, support the gender perspective. Specifically, they find that German women and men had a stable specialization between market and domestic work upon repartnering.

Thus, following the gender approach, I expect that women and men will not change their housework behavior upon repartnering, i.e., women and men will do similar amounts and shares of the housework in their second union as they did in their first union.

Method

Data

I draw on data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), which is a nationally representative longitudinal household survey. PSID began in 1968 and has followed the original sample members and their families annually until 1997 and bi-annually after that. Currently, the PSID has 50 waves of data collected through 2017 (<https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/>). The periodic sample refreshers in 1997 and 2017, and high response rates have maintained the sample's population-representativeness over time (McGonagle et al. 2012).

The panel and household design of the survey make PSID an ideal data source to answer my research questions. First, it is the longest running survey in the U.S. that has repeated observations of housework hours for the same individuals over time. Moreover, its long-running character provides prospective data on a large sample of individuals who have experienced multiple unions. Finally, the household design of the survey is valuable for the current analysis because it collects socioeconomic information on new partners as they join the sample.

From 1968 to 2017, there were 3,511 core members (49% women) observed in multiple, heterosexual marital, or non-marital unions. However, PSID started asking the housework question in 1976. Hence, I retain only individuals who were observed in a first union in 1976 or later (493 cases dropped) and had at least one valid observation with information about their

housework in their first and second union (712 cases dropped). Using the marriage history file, I also excluded people who remarried the same partner at some point and those whose marriage history indicated that they were married to a different person before the first union observation (221 cases dropped). Unfortunately, PSID does not collect cohabitation history. Therefore, I cannot rule out that the people in my sample had other non-marital unions before the first or second union in which they are observed in the data. This limitation means that the first and second unions I refer to in the analysis are individuals' first and second *observed* unions. Lastly, I excluded cases with missing information about control variables (188 cases dropped).

The final analytic sample (n=1,897) includes 935 women and 962 men who were observed in 1,862 and 1,912 unions, respectively. Most of the sample was observed in two unions (over 80%), and over half has been observed in a marital union and a non-marital union. Another 40% of the sample has been observed in multiple marriages. About half (47%) of the women and men in the sample were born between 1946 and 1964 ("Baby Boomers"), and about a third were born between 1965 and 1980 ("Generation X"). The sample is also predominantly White (over 80%) with about 8% and 12% Black women and men, respectively. Over 80% of the sample has completed 12 grades or more (45% completed 13 grades or more).

The sample's characteristics are consistent with evidence from other nationally representative surveys suggesting that cohabitation is a preferred pathway into repartnering (Brown et al. 2019; McNamee and Raley 2011; Wu and Schimmele 2005), and that White women repartner (and remarry) faster than Black and Latina women (McNamee and Raley 2011). However, there is also evidence that recent younger cohorts are more likely to dissolve a union and repartner faster than Baby Boomers (Eickmeyer and Manning 2018), which might suggest an under-representation of birth cohorts born after 1980 ("Millennials") in the study's

sample. This under-representation does not bias the results, but rather limits the generalization of the findings to the represented group in the sample. I present robustness checks by birth cohort, race, and time to repartnering in the Results section.

Measures

Dependent variables. In 1976, the PSID began collecting information on the average number of weekly hours the head of the household and their spouse spend separately on housework.

Respondents were asked, “About how much time do you spend on housework in an average week--I mean time spent cooking, cleaning, and other work around the house?” The respondent is then asked to answer the same question about their spouse or partner. In this study, I explore changes in the absolute number of hours and the share of the housework when women and men repartner. I top coded the top 1% values of housework to take the value of the 99th percentile to avoid outliers that might bias the results (Gough and Killewald 2011; Killewald and Gough 2010). The share of the housework is the share of the individual’s housework of the couple’s total housework hours. The housework measure in PSID is a stylized survey question that generates higher estimates of housework compared with time diaries (Juster, Ono and Stafford 2003). However, this should not bias my results because I am interested in individual *change* for a particular group of people rather than population point estimates.

Independent variable. The main independent variable is repartnering, i.e., being in a second union. This is a dummy variable where a score of 0 means that the respondent is in their first union and a score of 1 indicates that a respondent is in their second union. Thus, the dummy variable represents the difference in housework between the first and the second union.

Time-varying controls. Repartnering may coincide with other life-course changes, at the individual-, partner-, and household-level that could explain a change in housework across

unions. The focus of this study is whether women and men change their housework participation upon repartnering, net of other life-course changes that may impact housework behavior according to prior research.

Time-varying individual controls include the individual's age (years) and the quadric term of age to account for changes in housework that are due to aging (Anxo et al. 2011; Leopold, Skopek and Schulz 2018). The first and second observation takes place at different ages across respondents. Meaning, the change in age is not constant between observations. Therefore, to rule out that the change in housework is a result of aging, I include age and its quadric form as controls because evidence suggests the relationship between age and housework is non-linear. I also include the individual's share of the total income from labor (Brines 1994; Killewald and Gough 2010; Mannino and Deutsch 2007), weekly working hours, and employment status (employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force) (Artis and Pavalko 2003; Gershuny, Bittman and Brice 2005; Gough and Killewald 2011).

The time-varying covariates that represent a change in partner's characteristics are age and age squared, the partner's weekly working hours, and employment status. I also control for partner's education (Bianchi et al. 2000; Davis and Greenstein 2004; Mannino and Deutsch 2007). Finally, I control for household-level characteristics such as marital status (married versus cohabiting) (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Davis, Greenstein and Gerteisen Marks 2007; Domínguez-Folgueras 2013; South and Spitze 1994), presence of a child under 3 in the household, number of children under 18 in the household (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Dush, Yavorsky and Schoppe-Sullivan 2018; Grunow, Schulz and Blossfeld 2012; Sanchez and Thomson 1997), homeownership status, number of rooms, family's total income quintile (Gupta 2006; Gupta 2007; Heisig 2011). Finally, PSID asks one of the partners about their housework

and their partner's housework. Therefore, I control for the identity of the respondent who reported the housework, i.e., whether housework was self-reported to account for discrepancies between women's and men's reports about their partners (Achen and Stafford 2005; Lee and Waite 2005).

Analytical approach

I estimate fixed-effects models to characterize the relationship between union transition and change in the number of hours and share of housework. Individual fixed-effect controls for unobserved constant heterogeneity that is associated with housework that might bias the results, e.g., fixed personal traits (Johnson and Neyer 2019; Robins, Caspi and Moffitt 2002) and preferences that might affect housework behavior (Allison 2009). Although some scholars have used random effects to investigate change in housework over the life course (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008) others have utilized fixed-effects (Beblo and Solaz 2018; Gershuny, Bittman and Brice 2005; Gough and Killewald 2011; Killewald and Gough 2010). Random-effect models assume that there are no omitted variables that might affect both housework and repartnering. However, gender ideology is not included in the PSID survey and could be associated both with housework (Carlson and Lynch 2013; Nitsche and Grunow 2016) and union formation and dissolution (Kaufman 2000). Therefore, fixed-effects models are better in this instance because it reduces the risk of biasing the estimates if gender ideology does not change over time (Johnson 1995). However, if gender ideology changes over the life course as some studies show (Vespa 2009), my models do not account for its contribution to the change in housework across unions.

In this study, I focus on the change in hours and shares of housework between the first and second unions. I use the first observed housework report for each union, i.e., for each individual, there is a total of two observations from the beginning of each union. The first

available observation of each union represents the early stages of the union. Thus, when thinking about the transition into the second union, the early stage of the relationship is likely to capture changes in housework that are related to repartnering and not to other changes that occur over the course of a relationship (Baxter, Haynes and Hewitt 2010a; Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Gershuny, Bittman and Brice 2005; Gough and Killewald 2011). Moreover, although marital satisfaction changes over the duration of the relationship, couples are happiest at the beginning of the relationship (VanLaningham, Johnson and Amato 2001). Hence, comparing housework at the beginning of each sequential union captures the “best of times” of each relationship. Nonetheless, in the Results, I present a robustness check using multiple observations of each of the sequential unions and show that the results are robust.

Similar to (Beblo and Solaz 2018), I begin with a base model (Model 1) that includes a dummy for the union’s order (second versus first) to examine change in housework across union. Then, to control for other life course changes, I add the time-varying characteristics of the individual in Model 2. In the third model, I add time-varying partner characteristics, and finally, I add household-level characteristics (Model 4).

Results

Descriptive results

Table 1 presents the time-varying characteristics of the individual, their partner, and the household in the first and second unions. Overall, the descriptive results show that second unions are significantly different from first unions. Women’s economic conditions are better in their second union, but they still work and earn less than their new partners. In their second union, women worked about five hours more, which is almost a full day’s work, compared with their first union. Women’s share of the couple’s total income from labor also increased in their second

union from 30% to 36%. In contrast, men worked about two hours less in their second union, and their share of the couple's total income from work decreased from 71% in the first union to 62% in the second union. Notably, men in second unions were more likely to be out of the labor force, which could indicate retirement.

With whom do the women and men in the sample repartner? Both women and men were more likely to repartner with someone who has more formal education than their first partner. Although little over a third of women's and men's first partner had completed 13 years or more, almost half of women's and men's second partner had completed higher education (46% and 48%, respectively). Men's new partners were also more likely to be employed and worked more hours than their previous partner. Women's new partners, on the other hand, worked similar hours and were as likely to be employed as their first partner. Women's new partners were slightly more likely to be out of the labor force which could indicate older couples' repartnering.

At the couple-level, second unions were significantly more likely to be non-marital, which reinforces past research suggesting that cohabitation is a pathway to repartnering (Brown and Lin 2012; McNamee and Raley 2011; Wu and Schimmele 2005). Though both unions had, on average, at least one child under age 18 in the household, the second union was significantly less likely to have a child under the age of 3. In their first union, women and men were more likely to live in a rented home but were more likely to own their home in their second union. The family's total income quintile shows some improvement across unions. Women and men were significantly less likely to be at the bottom quintile in their second union and about twice as likely to be in the top quintile. This trend is consistent with both partners having better economic prospects in the second union.

It is also evident that there was change in housework upon repartnering. Women reportedly spent about 20 weekly hours doing the housework in their first union. In their second union, women reportedly spent about three hours less, and this difference is significant. Interestingly, women's *share* of the couple's total housework also declined as they repartnered, but they still did the majority of the housework. In their first union, women reportedly did 76% of the housework, and that share decreases to 70% at the beginning of the second union. In contrast, men's housework increased when they repartnered from 7.3 weekly hours of housework at the beginning of their first union to 8.6 weekly hours in their second union. This increase is significant, albeit small. Though men increased their participation, they still did less than a third of the housework in both their unions. Men's share of the total housework increased from 27% of the total housework to 33%. To sum, descriptive results suggest that there is a considerable change in the individual-, partner-, and couple-characteristics and levels and share of housework participation. Next, fixed-effects models test whether the change in housework across unions is significant once accounting for concurring life course changes.

Fixed-effects models

Figure 1 shows the results for the fixed-effects models estimating the change in women's and men's housework hours (see Appendix I for full regression results). Figure 1 shows the coefficient for the repartnering dummy variable, representing the change in hours from the first union to the second, wherein estimates below the horizontal line indicate decrease in housework and above the horizontal line indicates an increase in housework. Starting with the left-side, Model 1 shows that women significantly reduced their housework by three hours in their second union. However, Models 2, 3, and 4 show that this change is no longer significant after controlling for other changes that occur upon repartnering. In other words, the fixed-effects

results suggest that after adjusting for concurrent life-course changes, women invested a similar number of housework hours in their second union as they did in their first union.

Shifting our focus to the right-side panel, Figure 1 shows a similar pattern of change for men but in the opposite direction. Model 1 shows that men slightly increased their housework hours by an hour and a half when they repartnered and that this small change is statistically significant. However, Models 2, 3, and 4 show that this change is no longer significant once controlling for other changes that occur upon repartnering. After controlling for other life-course changes, men did not significantly change their housework hours across unions. The results for levels of housework support the gender explanation, that women and men invest similar number of housework hours in their second union as they did in their first union.

Although the results suggest a lack of individual change in the *level* of housework participation across unions, it does not consider the share of work that partners do. To understand whether the division of housework vis-à-vis one's partner became equal upon repartnering, I tested the individual change in the *share* of the housework across unions. Figure 2 turns our attention to the individual change in the share of the housework across unions vis-à-vis one's partner. The coefficients represent a percentage point change in the share of the housework of the couple's total housework time (see Appendix I for full regression results).

Starting with the left-side panel, Model 1 shows that women significantly reduced their share of the housework by six percentage points in their second union. Unlike the change in housework hours, this change drops to five percentage points but remains significant after controlling for individual, partner, and union characteristics in Models 2, 3, and 4, respectively. However, this is a modest change that represents a shift from doing 75% of housework in the first union to doing 70% of the housework in the second union. Although it is important not to

overstate the meaning of this decline, it does imply that the housework behavior of women's new partners drive this change. Given that women continued to contribute a similar number of hours but, at the same time, slightly reduced their share of the housework suggests that the new partners, on average, contributed a little more than the first partner. The results for women support both the life course and gender hypotheses.

Men's fixed-effects models reveal a different story. Model 1 shows that men significantly increased their share of the housework by six percentage points. However, this small change is mostly attributed to other life-course changes, as evident by Models 2, 3, and 4. Hence, the results suggest that men's share of the housework remained stable across unions and that men who repartnered maintained a similar division of housework with their second partner as they did with their first partner. This finding implies that men's housework behavior is strikingly persistent upon repartnering, both in the levels and share of housework they contribute to the household. Thus, the results for men support the gender hypothesis.

To sum, the fixed-effects models suggest that the levels and shares of housework remained largely stable upon repartnering for women and men, which supports the gender hypothesis. One small exception is that women's share of the housework was lower in their second union compared to their first union. This decrease was modest but significant, which suggests that the women partnered with men who contributed slightly more than their first partners. Thus, the results partially support the life course hypothesis for women's share of the housework. Men who repartnered, in contrast, maintained a similar housework behavior and division of labor with their new partner across unions. Nonetheless, the results also suggest that the division of homework remained gendered upon repartnering – women continued to do most of the housework in their second union, just as they had in their first union.

Robustness analyses

It is essential to check that these results are robust with a different model specification and across time-constant characteristics that are differently associated with repartnering. Due to space limitations, the results are presented in Appendix II but briefly summarized here. First, I checked that the results hold with different model specifications, namely, including all available housework observations in the fixed-effects models and not just with the first available observation per each union. The results are robust in their direction, significance, and effect size both for women and men (shown in Tables A3 and A4 in Appendix II). Thus, the patterns observed in the main analysis are not a result of the focus on the early stages of the relationships and first available observation. I also tested the specification of the models to include a different combination of controls, namely the economic controls and results were robust (Tables A5-A8 in Appendix II).

Second, the selection into repartnering and the effect it might have on housework behavior across unions might vary across subgroups based on race, education, birth cohort, time it took people to form a second union, and period. However, fixed-effects models exclude time-invariant covariates. One way to address this is to stratify the sample by these key characteristics and to examine whether the results are robust across the different subgroups. In the current study, I focus on the key individual characteristics that are associated with different repartnering patterns – race (McNamee and Raley 2011), education (Shafer 2013), birth cohort (Eickmeyer 2018), time between unions (Schimmele and Wu 2016), and historical period when unions were formed. Tables A9 and A10 in Appendix II show the coefficient for the dummy variable that represents the change in the number of housework hours and shares upon repartnering by subgroup. In these analyses, I used the first available observation for each union, similar to the main analysis.

The results are overall robust. However, several patterns are important to note. The results for change in housework hours and shares are robust across race. Black and White women invest a similar number of hours in their second union as they did in their first. However, in contrast to the results in Figures 1 and 2, the difference in the number of hours and shares of housework among Black women and men is not significant in the base model.

Interestingly, the robustness tests show that there are differences by education in women's change in housework shares. Table A10 suggests that repartnered women with 12 years of education or less significantly reduced their shares of the housework, but this pattern was not evident among women with 13 years of education or more.

The results are also overall robust across birth cohorts, but the sensitivity checks suggest that Silent and Baby Boomer men significantly increased their housework hours and shares. This result is driven by merging the Silent generation birth cohort with Baby Boomers due to small sample size of the former.

Time is a crucial factor in this analysis. First, the data span 40 years, during which women's and men's housework investment has changed. Specifically, women's housework declined, and men's housework increased until the mid-late 1990s, followed by a plateau in the housework gender gap (Bianchi et al. 2000; Bianchi et al. 2012). The decrease in women's share could reflect a historical change in women's housework. Therefore, I tested the fixed-effects models separately among those who formed their first union by 1999 and those who formed their first union since 2001. Table A10 shows that the decline in women's shares was driven by women who repartnered during the earlier period when the gender gap was declining. Women who formed their unions during the plateau in the housework gender gap did not significantly change their housework shares even in the base model. This result suggests that the significant

five percentage-point decrease in women's shares could be attributed to a historical change that concurred with their repartnering.

Another time-related factor is the time that elapsed between the first and second union. Though the current study focuses on the housework within sequential unions, there is a period between the end of the first union and the beginning of the second union that might be consequential for a potential change in housework across unions. Thus, I also checked whether the results are robust by the duration of time it took people to form a second union. The results are overall robust in their direction and significance for women's and men's hours and shares of housework. This finding supports findings of previous research (Beblo and Solaz 2018; Johnson and Neyer 2019).

Finally, another way selection could shape the interpretation of the results is if people who repartnered are different from people who were also at risk to dissolve or repartner but did not. For example, if men who repartnered are more traditional, this could explain the stable housework behavior even though their partner's characteristics have changed. To address this question, I compared the housework behavior of the women and men who repartnered with the housework behavior of people who did not dissolve their first union and with people who dissolved their first union but did not repartner. See a detailed description of the analysis in Appendix III. The results show no significant differences in housework between people who repartnered, people who dissolved a union and did not repartner, and people who's first observed union remained intact. This analysis suggests that the housework arrangements of women and men who repartnered in the PSID sample were not different from their counterparts' arrangements in the time of the first union.

Conclusion

This study has sought to deepen our understanding of the role of repartnering in changing women's and men's levels and shares of housework vis-à-vis sequential partners. Drawing on 40 years of longitudinal data, the results show that overall, women and men in heterosexual unions did not change their housework behavior upon repartnering. Women, and particularly men, performed similar levels and shares of housework in their second union as they did in their first union, i.e., women continued doing the lion's share of the housework in their second union. It seems that forming a new heterosexual union with a new partner evoked the same gender scripts that encourage women and men to adopt similar gendered roles as they did in their previous union. Thus, the results suggest that gender roles, when observed through participation in housework, are stable amid union instability.

The results, however, also suggest that women and men do not have a symmetrical experience with housework change upon repartnering. Women maintained a similar number of housework hours across unions, but at the same time, reduced their share of the total housework by five percentage points. This reduction suggests that women's new partners reportedly contribute more than women's previous partners. Meaning, if women maintained their levels of housework but reduced their share of the housework, this can signal a change in the new partner's contribution compared to the previous partner's contribution. Therefore, the results for women support both the life course and the gender hypotheses.

But is this decrease meaningful? It depends on the point of reference. A decrease of five percentage points in women's shares of the housework can be perceived as profound compared to the striking plateau in the gender gap on housework over the past several decades. However, the robustness test suggested that the women who experienced this change are the women who repartnered during a period of change in housework more broadly. Moreover, women continued

doing more than two-thirds of the total housework. Therefore, although it is important to note this decrease it is also important not to overstate it.

In contrast, men's levels and shares of the housework were strikingly stable across unions, which supports the gender hypothesis for men. Men repartnered with women who contributed similar shares to the housework as the previous partner did even though the new partner worked more hours and contributed more to the household income than the first partner (Table 1). Although the sensitivity analysis showed that men who repartnered were not more traditional in their division of labor than men who were at risk to repartner but did not, there is qualitative evidence that older men, for example, seek emotional and instrumental support in new relationships (McWilliams and Barrett 2014). Therefore, these results signal a potential preference among men who repartner to keep a gendered division of labor in their new union and thus a preference for women who will sustain that arrangement. Future studies should investigate further the gendered motivations and preferences underlying repartnering over the life course.

The results are mostly consistent with Beblo and Solaz (2018), the only study to my knowledge to investigate housework and repartnering. Like them, I found that men's housework is robust across unions. However, I did not find that American women have significantly decreased their housework hours. This underscores the importance of a life-course approach to the study of the division of household labor and the systematic comparison of women and men across different measures of housework and social contexts.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the current analysis is limited to housework behavior and cannot speak to how people's perceptions of fairness has changed upon repartnering. In their interviews with White remarried couples, Pyke and Coltrane found that women who continued to do most of the household labor in their second marriage justified the

inequity differently. The women explained that the new partner contributed other resources to the household or treated them better than their first husband. Therefore, it possible that what has changed was the perception of inequity and fairness and the expectations from one's former partner, instead of the actual arrangement (Pyke and Coltrane 1996). Future research should investigate further how perceptions of fairness and satisfaction from the division of household labor change upon repartnering.

Second, the current study cannot rule out that other aspects of the division of household labor, such as participation in childcare, have changed upon repartnering. Beblo and Solaz (2018), for example, found that German women decreased their housework time but increased the time they invested in childcare. Therefore, the decrease in women's share of the housework does not rule out that the women increased their share of childcare, especially because women are more likely to live with their biological children. Childcare could also play a role in explaining men's lack of change in housework upon repartnering. This study cannot rule out that the reason men's housework remained stable is that the new partner helps facilitating men's involvement with their non-resident children. Future research should incorporate childcare and investigate the role of non-resident children in couples' decisions around housework.

Nonetheless, this study makes several contributions. First, this study uses prospective panel data that follows individuals as they experience sequential romantic partnerships to systematically compare women's and men's housework behaviors as they repartner. Moreover, the analysis includes both absolute and share of the housework vis-à-vis each of the partners. Thus, this current study improves upon past studies by unmasking the nuanced and gendered experiences with housework upon repartnering.

The results underscore the gendered experience of re-forming romantic relationships. Prior research has demonstrated that women and men transition into second unions at different rates (Brown and Lin 2012; Schimmele and Wu 2016). Others have also found that women and men have different preferences for their second partner when they remarry (Choi and Tienda 2017; Gelissen 2004; Shafer 2013). Moreover, recent qualitative work showed how women and men use different narratives to reflect on their past romantic experiences and how those affected them differently (Dalessandro and Wilkins 2017). The current study contributes to this growing body of work by taking an individual life-course approach to compare the gendered experiences of individuals with doing and sharing the housework with different partners.

This study also contributes to our understanding of the nature of romantic relationships and the diverse ways in which people simultaneously experience change and stability as they transition through these relationships over the life course (Beblo and Solaz 2018; Johnson and Neyer 2019). This study focused on housework behavior upon repartnering and found that gender roles as they are observed through housework were stable amid union instability. However, the results do not suggest that gender roles are deterministic because we know from other studies that there are instances when people reconstruct their gender roles when it comes to doing and dividing housework (Shows and Gerstel 2009). Instead, this study suggests that heterosexual repartnering may not be such an instance. Sociologists know very little about people's experiences with different partnerships. This study underscores the importance of incorporating a dynamic approach to the study of gender roles that goes beyond the transitions that couples experience together.

Tables and figures

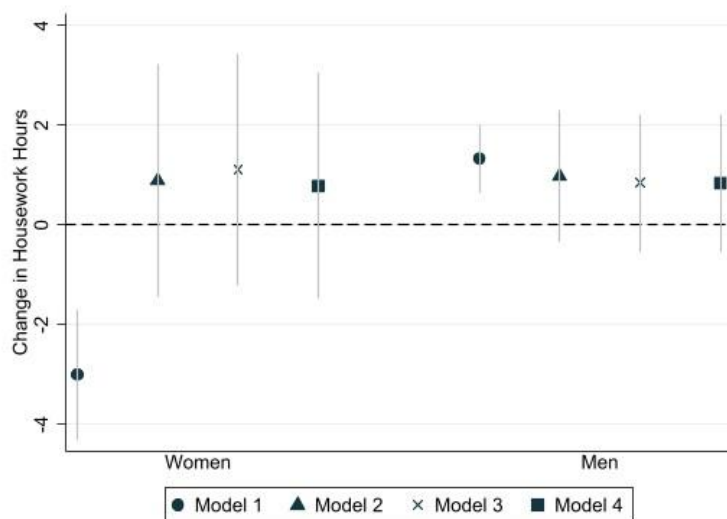
Table 1. Weighted Percentages and Means (SD) for Individual-, Partner- And Household- Characteristic in the First and Second Union by Gender

		Women			Men				
		First union	Second union	Difference between 1st and 2nd union	First union	Second union	Difference between 1st and 2nd union	Gender difference 1st union	Gender difference 2nd union
Individual	Age	24.61 (6.55)	36.05 (10.52)	**	27.23 (8.15)	39.06 (11.81)	**	**	**
	Weekly working hours	22.96 (18.00)	27.93 (18.25)	**	41.20 (15.73)	38.83 (17.26)	**	**	**
	Share of couple's income from labor	0.30 (0.26)	0.36 (0.28)	**	0.71 (0.25)	0.62 (0.31)	**	**	**
	Employed (%)	57.72	69.22	**	89.11	83.72	**	**	**
	Unemployed (%)	6.60	6.59		6.59	7.88			
	Not in LF (%)	35.67	24.19	**	4.30	8.40	**	**	**
Partner	Age	27.64 (7.70)	38.46 (11.63)	**	26.18 (8.35)	35.59 (11.45)	**	**	**
	Completed 13 grades or more (%)	36.77	46.01	**	38.61	48.32	**		
	Weekly working hours	38.78 (16.16)	37.48 (17.89)		21.70 (17.16)	25.89 (17.66)	**	**	**
	Employed (%)	86.23	83.99		55.00	66.77	**	**	**
	Unemployed (%)	7.58	6.86		8.26	6.16			
	Not in LF (%)	6.19	9.15	*	36.74	27.07	**	**	**
Household	Marriage (%)	83.14	66.06	**	81.24	66.68	**		
	Child under 3 (%)	31.51	19.56	**	30.06	19.49	**		
	Number of children under 18	0.77 (1.07)	1.04 (1.19)	**	0.85 (1.10)	0.99 (1.22)	*		
	Own home (%)	35.37	55.62	**	36.69	55.52	**		
	Number of rooms	4.81 (1.61)	5.64 (1.86)	**	4.90 (1.66)	5.78 (1.90)	**		
	Family income bottom 20% (%)	29.58	15.79	**	26.81	15.68	**		
	Family income top 20% (%)	10.57	23.31	**	12.01	25.03	**		
	Self-reported (%)	58.97	90.64	**	91.89	92.31		**	
Housework	Hours	19.99 (14.86)	16.99 (11.80)	**	7.27 (7.38)	8.61 (7.28)	**	**	
	Share	0.76 (0.19)	0.70 (0.20)	**	0.27 (0.20)	0.33 (0.20)	**	**	
	N		935		962				

* Difference is significant at $p < 0.01$; **difference is significant at $p < 0.05$

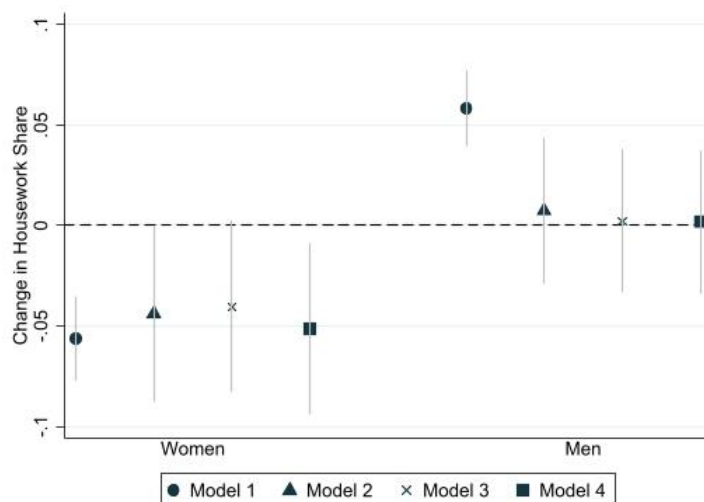
Source: PSID 1976-2017; weighted.

Figure 1. Fixed-effects coefficients estimating the change in housework hours from the first union to the second union by gender



Model 1: base model, unadjusted change. **Model 2:** adding individual characteristics = age (years), age square, share of the total income from labor, weekly working hours, and employment status. **Model 3:** adding partner characteristics = age (years), age square, education, weekly working hours, and employment status. **Model 4:** adding household characteristics = marital status, presence of a child under 3 in the household, number of children under 18 in the household, home ownership status, number of rooms, family's total income quintile, and whether housework was self-reported or reported by partner. Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted).

Figure 2. Fixed-effects coefficients estimating the change in housework shares from the first union to the second union by gender



Note: Model 1: base model, unadjusted change. **Model 2:** adding individual characteristics = age (years), age square, share of the total income from labor, weekly working hours, and employment status. **Model 3:** adding partner characteristics = age (years), age square, education, weekly working hours, and employment status. **Model 4:** adding household characteristics = marital status, presence of a child under 3 in the household, number of children under 18 in the household, home ownership status, number of rooms, family's total income quintile, and whether housework was self-reported or reported by partner. Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted).

Appendix

Appendix I - Fixed-Effects Main Analysis, full tables

Table A1. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Hours from the First Union to the Second Union, by Gender

	Women				Men			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Second union (ref. first union)	-3.00** (0.66)	0.89 (1.19)	1.12 (1.18)	0.78 (1.15)	1.34** (0.35)	0.98 (0.68)	0.85 (0.70)	0.84 (0.71)
Age		0.45^ (0.23)	0.04 (0.36)	-0.38 (0.36)		-0.18 (0.14)	-0.24 (0.21)	-0.25 (0.20)
Age square		-0.01** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)		0.00^ (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)
Share of total income from labor (5%)		-0.05* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)		0.01 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Weekly working hours		-0.06 (0.04)	-0.08* (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)		-0.04^ (0.02)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.04^ (0.02)
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		4.24* (1.70)	4.55** (1.63)	5.01** (1.61)		1.18 (1.48)	1.19 (1.51)	1.03 (1.48)
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		9.07** (1.24)	9.70** (1.27)	8.66** (1.22)		2.76^ (1.52)	3.30* (1.62)	3.58* (1.56)
P's age			0.36 (0.33)	0.16 (0.32)			0.08 (0.18)	0.16 (0.19)
P's age square			-0.01 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			-2.56** (0.95)	-2.12* (0.93)			0.40 (0.59)	0.64 (0.59)
P's weekly working hours			0.04 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)			0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-2.78 (2.31)	-2.29 (2.11)			-0.26 (1.13)	-0.19 (1.08)
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-2.52 (1.80)	-2.96 (1.80)			-1.30^ (0.70)	-1.39* (0.69)
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				1.22 (1.01)				-0.68 (0.55)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				3.32** (1.18)				1.23^ (0.65)
Number of children under 18				2.18** (0.55)				-0.19 (0.26)
Family's income percentile				-0.64 (0.40)				-0.30 (0.26)
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-2.29* (0.97)				-1.03^ (0.57)
Number of rooms				0.53^ (0.30)				0.12 (0.16)
Housework self-reported				-1.94^ (1.16)				3.50** (0.77)
Constant	19.99** (0.33)	14.88** (4.35)	13.87** (4.96)	21.02** (5.16)	7.27** (0.17)	10.28** (2.98)	9.77** (3.22)	5.86 (3.61)
Person-years	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912
R-squared	0.03	0.22	0.24	0.32	0.02	0.06	0.08	0.11
N	931	931	931	931	956	956	956	956

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A2. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Shares from the First Union to the Second Union, by Gender

	Women				Men			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Second union (ref. first union)	-0.06** (0.01)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.04^ (0.02)	-0.05* (0.02)	0.06** (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Age		0.01* (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)		0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age square		-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Share of total income from labor (5%)		-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)		-0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Weekly working hours		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00^ (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00* (0.00)	-0.00* (0.00)
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		0.07* (0.03)	0.07** (0.03)	0.07* (0.03)		0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		0.11** (0.02)	0.12** (0.02)	0.12** (0.02)		0.06^ (0.03)	0.09** (0.04)	0.10** (0.03)
P's age			-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
P's age square			0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)			0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)			0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)
P's weekly working hours			0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)			0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-0.02 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)			-0.07** (0.03)	-0.07** (0.02)
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-0.12** (0.04)	-0.12** (0.04)			-0.11** (0.02)	-0.10** (0.02)
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				0.04* (0.02)				-0.03^ (0.02)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				0.03^ (0.02)				0.01 (0.02)
Number of children under 18				0.01 (0.01)				-0.02** (0.01)
Family's income percentile				-0.00 (0.01)				-0.00 (0.01)
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-0.02 (0.02)				-0.02 (0.02)
Number of rooms				-0.01* (0.01)				0.01 (0.00)
Housework self-reported				0.03 (0.02)				0.10** (0.02)
Constant	0.76** (0.01)	0.58** (0.08)	0.63** (0.09)	0.64** (0.09)	0.27** (0.00)	0.25** (0.07)	0.27** (0.08)	0.11 (0.09)
Person-years	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912
R-squared	0.04	0.13	0.16	0.18	0.05	0.12	0.19	0.23
N	931	931	931	931	956	956	956	956

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Appendix II - Fixed-Effects Robustness Checks, model specification

Table A3. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Hours from the First Union to the Second Union Using Multiple Observations for Each Union, by Gender

	Women				Men			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Second union (ref. first union)	-4.39** (0.53)	0.04 (0.63)	0.08 (0.65)	0.37 (0.67)	1.11** (0.24)	0.79* (0.35)	0.57 (0.36)	0.17 (0.35)
Age		0.16 (0.12)	0.01 (0.21)	-0.24 (0.21)		0.02 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.11)	-0.08 (0.11)
Age square		-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Share of total income from labor		-3.05** (0.83)	-1.88* (0.90)	-1.25 (0.83)		-0.27 (0.40)	0.61 (0.41)	0.53 (0.40)
Weekly working hours		-0.12** (0.02)	-0.13** (0.02)	-0.10** (0.01)		-0.03** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		5.00** (0.84)	5.04** (0.84)	5.13** (0.81)		2.21** (0.47)	2.33** (0.47)	2.42** (0.46)
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		6.52** (0.51)	6.64** (0.51)	5.95** (0.47)		2.71** (0.50)	3.10** (0.51)	3.20** (0.51)
P's age			0.11 (0.21)	0.01 (0.20)			0.04 (0.11)	0.08 (0.11)
P's age square			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			-0.80 (0.75)	-0.68 (0.68)			1.20** (0.42)	1.19** (0.40)
P's weekly working hours			0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)			0.01 (0.01)	0.01^ (0.01)
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-0.88 (0.70)	-0.81 (0.69)			-0.98* (0.44)	-0.74^ (0.43)
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-1.31^ (0.72)	-1.97** (0.70)			-0.97** (0.22)	-1.06** (0.23)
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				-0.67 (0.64)				-0.15 (0.39)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				3.27** (0.47)				0.72** (0.24)
Number of children under 18				2.37** (0.20)				0.20* (0.10)
Family's income percentile				-0.43* (0.18)				-0.11 (0.10)
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-1.63** (0.49)				-0.63* (0.27)
Number of rooms				0.13 (0.12)				0.26** (0.07)
Housework self-reported				0.99^ (0.56)				2.85** (0.33)
Constant	22.12** (0.28)	22.61** (2.40)	22.77** (2.65)	23.99** (2.62)	7.33** (0.12)	8.49** (1.30)	8.31** (1.34)	3.91** (1.44)
Person-years	10,177	10,177	10,177	10,177	11,047	11,047	11,047	11,047
R-squared	0.03	0.17	0.17	0.23	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.06
N	931	931	931	931	956	956	956	956

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A4. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Shares from the First Union to the Second Union Using Multiple Observations for Each Union, by Gender

	Women				Men			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Second union (ref. first union)	-0.04** (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.05** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age		0.01** (0.00)	0.01^ (0.00)	0.01^ (0.00)		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Age square		-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Share of total income from labor		-0.10** (0.02)	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.05** (0.01)		-0.08** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Weekly working hours		-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)		-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		0.05** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.05** (0.01)		0.06** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		0.06** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)		0.03* (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)
P's age			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
P's age square			0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)			0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)			0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
P's weekly working hours			0.00** (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)			0.00** (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-0.05** (0.01)	-0.06** (0.01)			-0.06** (0.01)	-0.05** (0.01)
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-0.07** (0.01)	-0.07** (0.01)			-0.06** (0.01)	-0.06** (0.01)
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				0.01 (0.01)				-0.01 (0.01)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				0.01 (0.01)				-0.01 (0.01)
Number of children under 18				0.01** (0.00)				-0.01** (0.00)
Family's income percentile				0.00 (0.00)				0.00 (0.00)
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-0.00 (0.01)				-0.01 (0.01)
Number of rooms				-0.01** (0.00)				0.00* (0.00)
Housework self-reported				-0.07** (0.01)				0.08** (0.01)
Constant	0.76** (0.00)	0.69** (0.04)	0.73** (0.04)	0.79** (0.04)	0.24** (0.00)	0.27** (0.03)	0.30** (0.03)	0.17** (0.04)
Person-years	10,177	10,177	10,177	10,177	11,047	11,047	11,047	11,047
R-squared	0.01	0.10	0.12	0.14	0.03	0.08	0.13	0.16
N	931	931	931	931	956	956	956	956

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A5. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Hours from the First Union to the Second Union Using Different Model Specification, Women

	Base	Individual	Partner	Union	Full 1	Full 2	Full 3
Second union (ref. first union)	-3.00** (0.66)	0.89 (1.19)	-0.72 (1.04)	-1.62* (0.82)	0.77 (1.15)	0.56 (1.11)	0.18 (1.12)
Age		0.45^ (0.23)			-0.20* (0.09)	-0.19* (0.08)	-0.16^ (0.09)
Age square		-0.01** (0.00)					
Share of total income from labor (5%)		-0.05* (0.02)					-0.11** (0.02)
Weekly working hours		-0.06 (0.04)			-0.17** (0.03)		
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		4.24* (1.70)				5.26** (1.58)	
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		9.07** (1.24)				9.72** (1.07)	
P's age			0.01 (0.25)				
P's age square			-0.00 (0.00)				
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			-2.61* (1.06)				
P's weekly working hours			0.05 (0.03)				
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-2.92 (2.32)				
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-2.86 (2.05)				
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				0.11 (1.06)	1.04 (1.01)	1.12 (1.00)	1.34 (1.03)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				6.44** (1.28)	5.15** (1.28)	4.08** (1.22)	5.55** (1.21)
Number of children under 18				2.15** (0.56)	2.26** (0.50)	2.52** (0.48)	2.27** (0.50)
Family's income percentile				-0.79^ (0.42)			
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-1.54 (1.09)			
Number of rooms				0.56^			

Housework self-reported				(0.32)			
				-4.47**	-2.52*	-2.23^	-2.78*
				(1.22)	(1.23)	(1.19)	(1.22)
Constant	19.99**	14.88**	21.08**	19.18**	26.79**	18.64**	25.67**
	(0.33)	(4.35)	(4.78)	(2.08)	(2.40)	(2.09)	(2.24)
Person-years	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862
R-squared	0.03	0.22	0.07	0.19	0.23	0.28	0.23
N	931	931	931	931	931	931	931

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1
Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A6. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Hours from the First Union to the Second Union Using Different Model Specification, Men

	Base	Individual	Partner	Union	Full 1	Full 2	Full 3
Second union (ref. first union)	1.34** (0.35)	0.98 (0.68)	1.50** (0.55)	1.56** (0.39)	0.40 (0.60)	0.45 (0.61)	0.27 (0.61)
Age		-0.18 (0.14)			0.09* (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)	0.11** (0.04)
Age square		0.00^ (0.00)					
Share of total income from labor (5%)		0.01 (0.01)					-0.01 (0.01)
Weekly working hours		-0.04^ (0.02)			-0.06** (0.02)		
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		1.18 (1.48)				1.69 (1.40)	
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		2.76^ (1.52)				4.02** (1.22)	
P's age			-0.32** (0.12)				
P's age square			0.00** (0.00)				
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			0.49 (0.60)				
P's weekly working hours			-0.01 (0.02)				
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-0.11 (1.14)				
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-1.03 (0.73)				
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				-0.54 (0.56)	-0.82 (0.56)	-0.94^ (0.56)	-0.85 (0.57)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				1.18^ (0.64)	1.26* (0.61)	1.29* (0.63)	1.58* (0.62)
Number of children under 18				-0.49* (0.24)	-0.31 (0.24)	-0.30 (0.23)	-0.39^ (0.24)
Family's income percentile				-0.42 (0.26)			
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-1.07^ (0.56)			
Number of rooms				0.11 (0.17)			
Housework self-reported				3.34**	3.34**	3.47**	3.43**

Constant	7.27** (0.17)	10.28** (2.98)	12.84** (2.13)	5.62** (1.45)	(0.75) 4.17* (1.68)	(0.74) 1.53 (1.33)	(0.75) 1.81 (1.65)	(0.73)
Person-years	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912
R-squared	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.06
N	956	956	956	956	956	956	956	956

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A7. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Shares from the First Union to the Second Union Using Different Model Specification, Women

	Base	Individual	Partner	Union	Full 1	Full 2	Full 3
Second union (ref. first union)	-0.06** (0.01)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03^ (0.02)
Age		0.01* (0.00)			-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Age square		-0.00** (0.00)					
Share of total income from labor (5%)		-0.00 (0.00)					-0.00** (0.00)
Weekly working hours		-0.00 (0.00)			-0.00** (0.00)		
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		0.07* (0.03)				0.08** (0.03)	
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		0.11** (0.02)				0.12** (0.02)	
P's age			-0.00 (0.00)				
P's age square			0.00 (0.00)				
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			-0.02 (0.02)				
P's weekly working hours			0.00 (0.00)				
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-0.01 (0.04)				
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-0.12** (0.04)				
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.04^ (0.02)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				0.06** (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
Number of children under 18				0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Family's income percentile				0.00 (0.01)			
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-0.01 (0.02)			
Number of rooms				-0.01* (0.01)			

Housework self-reported				-0.00	0.02	0.02	0.01
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.76**	0.58**	0.78**	0.78**	0.83**	0.73**	0.81**
	(0.01)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Person-years	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,862
R-squared	0.04	0.13	0.07	0.07	0.10	0.13	0.10
N	931	931	931	931	931	931	931

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A8. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Shares from the First Union to the Second Union Using Different Model Specification, Men

	Base	Individual	Partner	Union	Full 1	Full 2	Full 3
Second union (ref. first union)	0.06** (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.05** (0.01)	0.05** (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Age		0.00 (0.00)			0.00** (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)
Age square		-0.00 (0.00)					
Share of total income from labor (5%)		-0.00** (0.00)					-0.00** (0.00)
Weekly working hours		-0.00 (0.00)			-0.00** (0.00)		
Employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)		0.04 (0.03)				0.06* (0.03)	
Employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)		0.06^ (0.03)				0.10** (0.03)	
P's age			-0.01** (0.00)				
P's age square			0.00** (0.00)				
P's education: completed more than 13 grades (ref. 12 or less)			0.01 (0.02)				
P's weekly working hours			0.00 (0.00)				
P's employment status: Unemployed (ref. employed)			-0.07* (0.03)				
P's employment status: Not in labor force (ref. employed)			-0.10** (0.02)				
Marital status: Cohabitation (ref. marriage)				-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03^ (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Has child age 3 or younger in household				-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Number of children under 18				-0.03** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)
Family's income percentile				0.01 (0.01)			
Home is rented (ref. owned)				-0.02 (0.02)			
Number of rooms				0.01			

Housework self-reported				(0.01)			
				0.10**	0.10**	0.11**	0.11**
				(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.27**	0.25**	0.44**	0.18**	0.19**	0.11**	0.19**
	(0.00)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Person-years	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912	1,912
R-squared	0.05	0.12	0.14	0.13	0.15	0.15	0.15
N	956	956	956	956	956	956	956

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A9. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Hours from the First Union to the Second Union by Race, Birth Cohort, and Time to Repartner

		Women				Men					
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	N	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	N
Race	Black	-2.91 [^] (1.60)	1.48 (3.18)	2.22 (3.38)	0.44 (3.00)	213	0.04 (1.04)	0.52 (1.91)	0.86 (1.87)	1.23 (1.83)	296
	White	-3.23** (0.74)	0.01 (1.34)	0.26 (1.35)	0.42 (1.30)	634	1.52** (0.38)	1.20 (0.75)	1.00 (0.80)	0.96 (0.80)	608
Education	12 years or less	-4.62** (1.00)	1.28 (1.76)	1.44 (1.72)	1.25 (1.69)	542	1.07* (0.51)	1.39 (0.95)	1.17 (1.00)	1.21 (0.98)	586
	13 years or more	-1.09 (0.82)	0.54 (1.66)	0.75 (1.69)	0.66 (1.60)	389	1.66** (0.46)	0.29 (0.89)	0.05 (0.91)	0.03 (0.93)	370
Birth cohort	Silent and Baby Boomers	-6.56** (0.89)	-0.99 (1.61)	-0.86 (1.58)	-0.25 (1.53)	545	2.43** (0.40)	2.44** (0.79)	2.02* (0.81)	2.29** (0.83)	605
	Gen X and Millennials	1.37 (0.94)	1.89 (1.76)	1.92 (1.76)	1.78 (1.75)	386	-0.44 (0.63)	-1.38 (1.59)	-1.17 (1.61)	-1.24 (1.51)	351
Time to repartner	Less than 4 years	-1.67 (1.10)	1.30 (1.82)	1.54 (1.79)	1.11 (1.67)	301	1.71** (0.53)	1.57 (0.96)	1.51 (0.98)	1.51 (1.00)	376
	Four years of more	-3.71** (0.83)	0.33 (1.65)	0.55 (1.64)	-0.31 (1.65)	630	1.09* (0.46)	0.06 (0.95)	-0.11 (1.00)	0.23 (1.00)	580
Period of repartnering	First union before 1999	-5.07** (0.75)	-1.60 (1.41)	-1.36 (1.38)	-1.60 (1.35)	760	1.58** (0.38)	1.43 [^] (0.75)	1.22 (0.77)	1.25 (0.78)	794
	First union after 2001	4.41** (1.14)	7.38** (2.34)	7.49** (2.31)	6.68** (2.48)	171	0.05 (0.80)	-1.63 (2.15)	-1.71 (2.14)	-0.98 (2.02)	162
Controlling for individual characteristics			Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	
Controlling for partner characteristics					Y				Y	Y	
Controlling for couple characteristics										Y	

Individual characteristics = age (years), age square, share of the total income from labor, weekly working hours, and employment status; Partner characteristics = age (years), age square, education, weekly working hours, and employment status ; Couple characteristics = marital status, presence of a child under 3 in the household, number of children under 18 in the household, home ownership status, number of rooms, family's total income quintile, and whether housework was self-reported or reported by partner.

Birth cohorts: Silent = before 1944, Baby Boomer = 1945-1964, Gen X = 1965-1980, Millennials = after 1980.

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Table A10. Fixed-Effects Models Estimating the Change in Housework Shares from the First Union to the Second Union by Race, Birth Cohort, and Time to Repartner

		Women				Men					
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	N	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	N
Race	Black	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.12 [^] (0.07)	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)	213	0.05 [^] (0.03)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	296
	White	-0.06 ^{**} (0.01)	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.04 [^] (0.02)	634	0.06 ^{**} (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	608
Education	12 years or less	-0.08 ^{**} (0.01)	-0.05 [^] (0.03)	-0.05 [^] (0.03)	-0.07 [*] (0.03)	542	0.05 ^{**} (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	586
	13 years or more	-0.03 [*] (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	389	0.07 ^{**} (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	370
Birth cohort	Silent and Baby Boomers	-0.07 ^{**} (0.01)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	545	0.09 ^{**} (0.01)	0.06 ^{**} (0.02)	0.05 [*] (0.02)	0.05 [*] (0.02)	605
	Gen X and Millennials	-0.04 [*] (0.02)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.04)	386	0.01 (0.02)	-0.08 [*] (0.04)	-0.08 [^] (0.04)	-0.07 [^] (0.04)	351
Time to repartner	Less than 4 years	-0.06 ^{**} (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	301	0.06 ^{**} (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	376
	Four years of more	-0.06 ^{**} (0.01)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.05 [^] (0.03)	630	0.06 ^{**} (0.01)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	580
Period of repartnering	First union before 1999	-0.07 ^{**} (0.01)	-0.05 [^] (0.03)	-0.04 [^] (0.02)	-0.05 [*] (0.02)	760	0.08 ^{**} (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	794
	First union after 2001	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)	171	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)	162
Controlling for individual characteristics			Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	
Controlling for partner characteristics					Y				Y	Y	
Controlling for couple characteristics										Y	

Individual characteristics = age (years), age square, share of the total income from labor, weekly working hours, and employment status; Partner characteristics = age (years), age square, education, weekly working hours, and employment status ; Couple characteristics = marital status, presence of a child under 3 in the household, number of children under 18 in the household, home ownership status, number of rooms, family's total income quintile, and whether housework was self-reported or reported by partner.

Birth cohorts: Silent = before 1944, Baby Boomer = 1945-1964, Gen X = 1965-1980, Millennials = after 1980.

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

Appendix III – Selection

The goal of the current study is to understand individual change across partnerships. However, one crucial issue to address is selection into union dissolution and repartnering (Raley and Sweeney 2020; Sassler 2010; Sweeney 2010). Although selection is a mechanism that explains between-individual differences and not within-individual processes (Johnson and Neyer 2019), it is useful to explore to what extent people who repartnered are different in their housework arrangements from people who were also at risk to dissolve and repartner but did not. Suppose there are fundamental differences at the beginning of the risk, for example. In that case, if people who repartner are more traditional than people who did not repartner, it could explain why housework is stable across unions in the repartnering sample.

To address this question, I compared women's and men's housework behavior by their union and repartnering status. I distinguish between three groups: 1) People who repartnered – these are the same people from the main analysis (n=1,887). 2) People observed in one union and PSID data indicate that the union dissolved by separation, divorce, or widowhood (n=2,825), i.e., these people did not repartner. 3) People observed in the PSID data only in one union, and the marriage history file suggests that marriage remained intact (n=6,737). I examine these groups' housework levels and shares at the earliest available observation during their first union, i.e., when they were all at risk to dissolve their union.

It is important to note one data limitation. I cannot rule out that those who I classify as “dissolved” did not repartner after they left the PSID survey or that the people I identify here as “intact” dissolved the union after leaving the PSID survey. Also, because PSID does not collect cohabitation history, people who were observed in one union which was cohabitation are excluded from this analysis. The classification for this analysis is based solely on the union formation and dissolution experiences documented by PSID. These data limitations also highlight the necessity to limit the main analysis to within-individual and not between-individual analysis. Nonetheless, this analysis allows us to explore housework behavior across groups who were at risk for dissolution and repartnering.

I use the same measuring housework strategy as the main analysis given its robustness. I use the first available observation in the first or only observed union. I use OLS models to compare the difference in hours and shares of housework using two models. The first is a base model to estimate the difference between the groups—the second model controls for factors associated with housework and the risk to dissolve and repartner. I run the analysis separately for women and men.

Starting with the left side of Table A11, the results show that when controlling for other factors that shape housework behavior (e.g., birth cohort, age, presence of children in the household, etc.), there are no significant differences between women. In their first union (before dissolving and repartnering), women who repartnered had similar levels and shares of housework as women who dissolved their first union and did not repartner and women whose union remained intact. Shifting to the right side of Table A11, the results show that there are no significant differences between men when they are in their first union. In their first union, men who repartnered had similar housework levels and shares as men who dissolved their first union and did not repartner and men whose union remained intact

Table A11. OLS Regression Analysis Estimating Differences in Housework Levels and Shares in First Union by Repartnering and Union Status, by Gender

	Women				Men			
	Hours		Shares		Hours		Shares	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Dissolved - not repartner (ref. repartnered)	3.60** (0.72)	-0.50 (0.64)	0.03** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.20 (0.39)	0.06 (0.37)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Intact (ref. repartnered)	-0.10 (0.64)	-0.35 (0.53)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.25 (0.32)	0.02 (0.31)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Controls		Y		Y		Y		Y
N	6,062	6,062	6,062	6,062	5,387	5,387	5,387	5,387

Notes: Housework is measured at the first available observation during the first or only observed union. Controls include respondent's birth cohort, race, age (years), age square, education, share of income, employment status, income percentile, children under 3 in household, number of children under 18 in the household, and whether housework was self-reported or reported by partner.

Source: PSID 1976-2017 (weighted)

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^ p<0.1

CHAPTER 3. “Ain’t Your Mama”: Family Complexity and the Division of Household Labor

Introduction

The scholarship on gender and housework is burgeoning. Decades of research show a persistent gender gap wherein women do the lion’s share of the housework (Coltrane 2000; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel 2020). The literature on household labor gradually incorporates diverse family forms, such as same-sex couples (Goldberg 2013) and single-parent households (Pepin, Sayer and Casper 2018). However, stepfamilies and family complexity received less scholarly attention (Ganong and Coleman 2012; Stewart 2006). This lacuna is surprising considering how encompassing the family complexity¹ literature and how complex families have become more prevalent. This paper investigates the division of housework by family structure over time in the United States.

Family complexity research often focuses on children’s outcomes and parental involvement (Brown, Manning and Stykes 2015; Carlson and Berger 2013; Kalil, Ryan and Chor 2014). Few studies that have focused on childcare and parenting found that stepparents are less involved with children than biological parents (Demo and Acock 1993; Ivanova 2017; Thomson, McLanahan and Curtin 1992). Furthermore, Ivanova (2017) found that European stepmothers share childcare more equally with their partners than biological mothers and stepfathers.

Although childcare is a primary component of household labor, focusing on childcare or child-related investment in complex families limits our understanding of gender and family daily life because childcare and housework are distinct (Sullivan 2013). Childcare is considered more

¹ I use the term “family complexity” broadly and focus in this paper on the complexity of daily life across various family structures. I make the distinction between family structures based on the nature of the relationships between parents and children in the same household, namely whether the relationships are biological or non-biological.

enjoyable than housework and directly related to kinship maintenance (Kroska 2003) and parents' subjective wellbeing (Musick, Meier and Flood 2016). The gender gap in childcare has decreased over time as men have increased their participation in childcare more than in housework because it has become an integral part of fatherhood (Bianchi et al. 2012; Sullivan 2013). There is also some legal obligation and social expectation from adults living with children to perform minimal childcare, but there is no parallel obligation or expectation about housework. Moreover, childcare is shared with non-resident parents and may bring up gatekeeping issues (Tach, Mincy and Edin 2010), but this is not an issue for housework. Therefore, studying housework in complex families shifts the focus from children to adults and introduces a gender perspective to family complexity that has been mostly overlooked.

The division of housework signals the power dynamics between partners (Davis and Greenstein 2013; Ferree 2010). The context and nature of the household's familial relationships are integral to how families organize their daily life (Davis and Greenstein 2013; Moore 2008). Therefore, incorporating family complexity into the study of gender dynamics surrounding the division of housework sheds light on a unique aspect of daily family life among complex families and enhances our understanding of gendered familial roles.

Literature review

A handful of studies compared the gendered division of housework across different family structures. Earlier work has focused on remarriages and found evidence that remarriage was associated with men's higher share of the housework, but with some variation across family structures. Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992) compared men's absolute and relative housework contribution across various types of *remarried* families using the National Survey of Families and Households (1987-1988). They found that remarried men with biological children

contributed slightly but significantly more to household labor than men who were in their first marriages. However, they did not find a difference between the housework contribution of remarried men in stepfamilies or blended families and first marriages. Using the British Household Panel Survey data from 1992, Sullivan (1997) compared the share of women's housework in their first-marriage to women who were in a higher-order union (marriage or cohabitation). Sullivan found that although British women did most of the housework regardless of union order, women in higher-order partnerships contributed less to the total housework than women in their first marriage. More recent work from Europe has investigated the division of housework in stepfamilies. Using the European Social Survey from 2005, Snoeckx et al. (2008) compared the household division of labor between stepfamilies and first marriage families across 17 European countries. Their findings suggest that stepfamilies are more egalitarian than first-marriage families.

Although the above studies set the stage for the study of housework and family structure, they have several limitations. Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992) focus on remarriages using data from the late 1980s. Family complexity in the US has gone through significant changes since then, and it is unclear to what extent the findings are relevant to complex families today. Moreover, past studies are limited to a single year, thus limiting our understanding of how the division of labor in complex families has evolved over time. Also, although Snoeckx et al. offers a more recent analysis, they could not identify the gender of the stepparent or blended families. I build upon these studies and expand them further by investigating the division of housework across various complex family structures over time in the US.

The Incomplete Institution Hypothesis

How do scholars explain the findings that men in stepfamilies contribute more to housework? The Incomplete Institution explanation (Cherlin 1978) is a prominent theoretical framework for explaining family dynamics in stepfamilies (Stewart 2006). According to the incomplete institution explanation, there is ambiguity about familial norms in remarriages and stepfamilies because these families have yet to be socially “institutionalized.” This introduces ambiguity about familial roles and expectations which encourages family members to renegotiate their familial and gender roles. Consequently, stepmothers do less childcare than biological mothers (Ivanova 2017; Thomson, McLanahan and Curtin 1992); stepfamilies are less likely to pool their income together (Burgoyne and Morison 1997; Eickmeyer, Manning and Brown 2019). Similarly, this ambiguity also encourages renegotiation for a more egalitarian division of household labor in remarriages and stepfamilies (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992; Snoeckx, Dehertogh and Mortelmans 2008; Sullivan 1997).

The application of the incomplete institution argument to gender and the division of labor has some limitations. First, if we accept the incomplete institution argument, family complexity has changed significantly over the past several decades. Rising non-marital fertility, multi-partner fertility, cohabitation, and union instability contribute to increasing family complexity (Raley and Sweeney 2020; Smock and Schwartz 2020). A growing share of Americans is likely to have step relationships (Wiemers et al. 2017; Yahirun, Park and Seltzer 2018). Although some boundary ambiguity continues to prevail in complex families (Brown and Manning 2009; Carroll, Olson and Buckmiller 2007), these families may not be as “incomplete” as they were. Therefore, investigating men’s shares of the housework in complex families over time will

contribute to our understanding of how power dynamics have evolved over time and across families.

Second, applying the incomplete institution argument to the study of household labor overlooks how gender organizes family life, thus making the argument gender neutral. In other words, the ambiguity argument implies that family complexity introduces the same ambiguity for all family members across all forms of family complexities. Although parental responsibilities might be ambiguous in complex families, given that there is a non-resident parent with whom child-related responsibility is shared to some extent, housework might be less ambiguous. Moreover, women and men experience their roles as stepparents differently, and there is evidence that stepmothers suffer from stress and continue to be stigmatized, unlike stepfathers (Ganong and Coleman 2012; Sanner and Coleman 2017).

Incorporating a gender perspective is crucial for the study of housework in general. However, in complex families it is necessary because the stepparent role does not challenge the gendered expectations that men navigate in heterosexual families (Levin 1997). Men are not expected to be responsible for housework regardless of circumstances, but receive higher positive and moral evaluations from others when they do (Thébaud, Kornrich and Ruppner 2019). This conflict shapes the social-relational context (Ridgeway and Correll 2004) within the family and impacts the biological parent as well. In stepmother families, the biological fathers have already established themselves as the primary caretakers, thus challenging gender roles (Doucet 2006). In this context, where gendered roles about childcare are already “challenged,” sharing housework more equally is not surprising nor is it a reaction to ambiguity. This may not be the case in stepfather families and blended families.

Therefore, comparing the division of housework across different forms of complex families will shed light on the nuanced ways that ambiguity interacts with gender. This paper compares men's share of the housework by comparing four family structures with various forms of complexity: two biological parents, stepmother, stepfather, and blended. This holistic analysis expands prior work by Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992) that included similar categories but limited the sample to remarried couples in the late 1980s. This paper also extends the European studies about childcare and housework in stepfamilies. Although Ivanova (2017) distinguished between stepfathers and stepmothers, the analysis excluded blended families, and Snoeckx et al. (2008) could not identify the gender of the stepparent in stepfamilies or blended families due to data limitations.

Third, the ambiguity argument assumes there is only one script for familial and gender expectations, but different family forms may subscribe to different expectations (Geist and Ruppner 2018). The division of household labor carries different meanings across different groups and families (Hossain and Roopnarine 1993; John and Shelton 1997; Moore 2008; Sayer and Fine 2011). For example, Moore (2008) finds that for biological mothers in Black lesbian stepfamilies, doing *more* housework and childcare was a form of power in the relationship. Meaning, families organize their life in a way that makes sense to them, and not necessarily reacting to ambiguity.

Selection

Demographic compositional differences exist between family structures (Goldscheider and Bures 2003; Guzzo and Furstenberg 2007; Smock and Schwartz 2020). Therefore, if housework carries distinct meanings among groups who are differently selected into family complexity, the gap in the division of labor may be a result of compositional differences

(Kolpashnikova and Kan 2020). Past studies addressed selection by controlling for various demographic characteristics and showing that the gap between stepfamilies and first-marriage families remained significant. However, the questions of how much of the gap is attributed to differences in demographic composition and how this changed over time remain open.

There are numerous selection pathways into different family structures. Although these processes are intertwined, I focus on the main three associated with variations in housework that have received the most scholarly attention: cohabitation, race/ethnicity, and SES.

Cohabitation has increased significantly over the past several decades (Smock and Schwartz 2020). Statistics about stepfamilies often focus on marriages, but about 45% of children living in stepfamilies were cohabiting stepfamilies (Eickmeyer 2017). Moreover, cohabitation is becoming a primary pathway to repartnering, which is at the core of stepfamilies (Brown et al. 2019; Guzzo 2016; McNamee and Raley 2011; Wu and Schimmele 2005). Though increasingly common, cohabitation is less stable than marriage (Eickmeyer and Manning 2018) and the primary source of non-marital fertility (Manning, Brown and Stykes 2014). In other words, cohabitation is a key feature of step and complex families in the US.

Cohabitation is associated with a more equal division of housework among couples (Batalova and Cohen 2002; Domínguez-Folgueras 2013). However, earlier studies using the NSFH found that although cohabiting women spent less time on housework than married women, cohabiting and married men invested similarly in housework (Shelton and John 1993; South and Spitze 1994). Therefore, if cohabitation is more prevalent in complex stepfamilies, it could explain a gap in the division of housework, but this association might have changed over time.

Family complexity also varies by race and ethnicity (Raley and Sweeney 2020; Smock and Schwartz 2020). Non-marital and multi-partner fertility, which drive family complexity, are higher among Black and Hispanic women than among White women, although there has been an increase among White women over time (Goldscheider and Bures 2003; Guzzo and Furstenberg 2007; Smock and Schwartz 2020). Black women are more likely to form a stepfamily than White and Hispanic women, especially in their first union (Guzzo 2016).

Studies find mixed evidence about the levels of egalitarian division of labor by race/ethnicity. In the earlier studies, scholars found that Black heterosexual partnered men contributed more to household labor than White heterosexual partnered men (Hossain and Roopnarine 1993; Orbuch and Eyster 1997). However, more recent studies with nationally representative time-use diaries did not replicate these findings (Sayer and Fine 2011; Wight, Bianchi and Hunt 2013). The inconsistency in results could be due to very different samples and measurements of housework. Alternatively, it is possible that the race/ethnicity gap in the division of labor has changed over time. Regardless, it is clear that current theoretical explanations in the mainstream literature explain the gender inequality among White couples but are less relevant for understanding housework among Black, Hispanic, and Asian couples (Kolpashnikova and Kan 2020; Parrott 2014).

Finally, family complexity is closely linked to education level and socioeconomic status (McLanahan and Percheski 2008; McNamee and Raley 2011; Raley and Sweeney 2020). Women and men with a high-school education or less were almost twice more likely to form a stepfamily in their first marriage than those with some college or a college degree (Carlson 2020). Complex families are more likely to be economically disadvantaged (Cancian and Haskins 2014; McLanahan and Percheski 2008).

Results are mixed and limited about the division of labor by SES. Most of the housework literature has focused on SES as a prime force that explains “gender display,” however, most of the discussion centered on women who earn more or the same as their partners and the appropriate measurement of “resources” (Brines 1994; Gupta 2006; Gupta 2007; Killewald and Gough 2010). Scholars gave less attention to the sharing of housework across class and the studies that did, found mixed results. Some scholars find that lower-SES men contribute more household labor (Shows and Gerstel 2009). However, others find that middle- and higher-SES couples have a more egalitarian division of housework (Gupta 2007).

In this study, I focus on the gender dynamics in complex families by examining the gendered division of labor across different family structures. I ask the following questions: 1) How does the gendered division of housework vary across different family structures and over time, and 2) Are these differences attributed to the different demographic compositions of the groups. I answer these questions using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics from 1985 through 2017. Answering these questions will shed light on gender dynamics within and between complex families over time and contribute to our understanding of how gendered expectations are embedded in familial roles.

Methodology

Data

I use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), which is a nationally representative longitudinal household survey. PSID began in 1968 and has followed the original sample members and their families annually until 1997 and bi-annually after that. Currently, the PSID has 50 waves of data collected through 2017 (<https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/>). The periodic sample refreshers in 1997 and 2017, and high response rates have maintained the sample’s

population-representativeness over time (McGonagle et al. 2012). I will use PSID as a repeated cross-sectional survey.

Drawing on PSID offers unique and rare access to the largest sample of non-biological residential mothers (i.e., residential stepmothers) in the US. Stepmothers are often absent from the family complexity debate because of small sample sizes. Given the gendered nature of domestic labor, having a large sample of non-biological residential mothers is crucial to our understanding of how these families operate. PSID started collecting housework information in 1976 but only started collecting full socio-economic information on the partner or spouse in 1985. Therefore, this study uses data from 1985 through 2017.

The unit of analysis is heterosexual (cohabiting or married) couples who were the main couple heading a household with children under age 18 each year between 1985 and 2017 ($n=59,746$). I limited the sample to include couples where both partners were between ages 18 and 65 with valid information for housework and socio-demographic controls. The total sample includes 51,638 couple-years between 1985 and 2017. To answer the first research question, I first present the trend in the division of household labor for the period between 1985 and 2017. For the second research question, the decomposition analysis, I compare the earliest (1985-1989) and latest periods (2011-2017)². All analyses are weighted by the family weight.

A significant limitation is that PSID does not collect information on housework for cohabiting partners during the first year of cohabitation. This restriction could lead to underestimating the prevalence of cohabitation after 1997 when PSID started collecting data bi-annually³. This data restriction could also bias the housework estimates downward because

² I merge years to increase the sample size. The later period includes 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 because PSID collected data bi-annually since 1997.

³ From personal communication with the PSID team, it seems that PSID has reason to believe that the survey does not underestimate the prevalence of cohabitation.

cohabiting couples share housework more equally. However, there is no evidence to my knowledge that couples in complex families transition to marriage quickly. Moreover, studies show that the transition to marriage among cohabiting couples does not significantly change their housework behavior, i.e., it remains relatively more equal (Baxter, Haynes and Hewitt 2010b). Therefore, the exclusion of first-year cohabiting couples does not pose a major concern.

Measures

The dependent variable is *men's relative share of the housework*. PSID asks respondents, "About how much time do you spend on housework in an average week--I mean time spent cooking, cleaning, and other work around the house?" The respondent is then asked to answer the same question about their spouse or partner. The share of the housework is the share of the man's housework of the couple's total housework hours. I top coded the top 1% values of housework to take the value of the 99th percentile to avoid outliers.

The housework measure in PSID is a stylized survey question that generates higher estimates of housework time compared with time diaries (Juster, Ono and Stafford 2003; Kan and Pudney 2008). However, this should not bias my results because I am interested in between-group differences in relative shares of men and not population estimates. There is evidence to discrepancy between women's and men's reports (Achen and Stafford 2005). However, there is also evidence that the discrepancy is smaller in partners' reports of men's *share* of the housework (Lee and Waite 2005). Nonetheless, I control for a dummy variable that identifies whether men answered the housework question or their partner.

The main independent variable is *family structure*. In this paper, I focus on the nature of the relationships between parents and children under age 18 in the household. PSID provides matrix household files (the Family Relationship Matrix supplement) which identify the

relationship between *all* household members. Taking men's perspective, I distinguish between four families: 1) Two biological parent family. These fathers reside only with their biological children, and their partner is the biological mother of these children. 2) Stepmother family. These fathers reside only with their biological children and their partner, who is not the biological mother. 3) Stepfather family. These fathers live only with non-biological children who are the biological children of their partners. 4) Blended. These fathers reside with biological and non-biological children. Biological children may or may not be shared with the current partner.

Table 1 shows the sample size and distribution of families over time. Two-biological parent families are most of the sample over time (85%), and the share of stepmother families is consistently very small (over 1%). Although there is evidence of an increase in single-fathers or custodial fathers due to changes in shared-custody arrangements (Cancian et al. 2014) and that men are more likely to repartner than women (Wu and Schimmele 2005), there is less consistent evidence that residential stepmother families have increased. This could be because single-fathers are more likely to partner with women who also have children, i.e., more likely to form a blended family than a stepmother family (Di Nallo 2019).

There seems to be a decrease in the share of stepfather families over time from 7% to about 5% while there was an increase in the share of blended families. These estimates suggest that about 15% of couple-headed households with children are stepfamilies. This estimate is close to a Census estimate from 2000 wherein 9% of married-couple households and 12% of cohabiting-couple households included stepchildren (Teachman and Tedrow 2008)⁴.

⁴ Formal statistics about the prevalence of stepfamilies are lacking due to variations in definitions. Most available official statistics focus on children's living arrangements or remarriages and are not available consistently over time. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, these are the best available official statistics for comparison.

Demographic trends over time and across family structure

The analysis controls for men's and households' characteristics that are associated with housework. I control for men's age and age square, race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic), years of completed education (12 or less and 13 or more), men's share of the total income from labor, men's weekly working hours (and their partner's), marital status (married or cohabiting), presence of a child under 6 in the household, and the number of children under 18 in the household.

It is essential to understand the demographic changes that complex families have experienced. Table 2 shows the sample characteristics by family structure and period. Several patterns and trends stand out. Men in blended families are consistently younger compared with the other fathers. Men in two-biological parent families have the highest increase in age over time. Non-Hispanic White men are the majority in each family structure, but their share has significantly declined among step and blended families. Most notably, between 1985-1989, over 90% of the men in stepmother families were non-Hispanic White. This declined to 72% by the 2010s. By 2010, Non-Hispanic Black men and Hispanic men account for about a quarter of men in two-biological parent families and stepmother families and about a third of stepfather and blended families.

Men in two-biological parent families had the largest gains to education between 1985 and 2017, while men in stepfather and blended families experienced a small increase. In contrast, men in stepmother families experienced a decrease in percent that completed 13 years of education or more (from 45% to 39%). Men in two-biological parent families have had consistently higher levels of education compared to the fathers in all complex families. Men's working hours and shares of the income have decreased over time, but for fathers in complex

families more than fathers in two-biological parent families. Men in stepmother families had the largest decrease in working hours (six hours less in the 2010s than in 1985-1989). Men's share of the income has decreased across all family structures but most for men in two-biological parent and blended families. Men in stepmother families had the lowest share of the income over time, but they experienced the smallest decrease.

Cohabitation increased dramatically across all family structures but remained higher in complex families than two-biological parent families⁵ and especially among stepfather families. Over a third of men in stepfather families were cohabiting by the 2010s compared with about a quarter of men in stepmother and blended families. Finally, the age and number of children varies across family structures remained stable across family structures but with clear differentials. Blended families have on average more children in the households (over 2.8) and most have at least one child under the age of six. Two-biological parent families also had a higher number of children in the household than stepfamilies and over half had young children. Stepmother families have the lowest number of children and are the least likely to have young children under age six in the household.

Analytical strategy

First, I present the descriptive trends in men's housework shares over time and by family structure. Then, I present a decomposition analysis to investigate to what extent the gaps between men are attributed to compositional differences. I use a Kitagawa-Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition analysis (Blinder 1973; Kitagawa 1955; Oaxaca 1973) by apportioning a gap between groups into an explained and unexplained components. Decomposition analysis is rare in housework

⁵ The percent of two-biological parent families in the 2010s period is consistent with Census estimates. According to CPS(ASES), 5% of parents with coresident children under 18 who had joint children were cohabiting. (Table A3. Parents With Coresident Children Under 18, by Living Arrangement, Sex, and Selected Characteristics: 2020)

research (Kolpashnikova and Kan 2020; Pepin, Sayer and Casper 2018). When used, scholars often decompose a housework gap between groups. As Table 2 showed, the groups are demographically different at the earliest and latest time periods. All groups have changed over time but mostly in the same direction. Therefore, I decompose the differences across groups in 1985-1989 and 2011-2017, i.e., the earliest and most recent observations. The main limitation of this approach is that it will not consider how the changes in characteristics of each group have affected the change in the gap over time.

Results

Trends in housework over time

Figure 1 shows men's shares of the total housework by family structure from 1985 to 2017. Starting with the earliest period (1985-1989), the results show that men in stepmother families had the largest housework shares - about a third and not significantly different from stepfathers' housework shares. Figure 1 also shows that in the late 1980s, men in blended families and men in two biological parent families had significantly lower shares than men in stepfamilies— about a quarter or less of the couple's total time dedicated to housework. These patterns are similar to the results by Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992).

Shifting our focus to the most recent period, several findings stand out. First, all groups of fathers have increased their share of the housework since 1985. Second, we see that men in stepmother families continuously had the highest shares of the housework. In the most recent decade, the housework share of men in stepmother families was almost 40%. However, the gap between men's share in stepmother families and stepfathers has diverged over time. The housework gap between stepfathers and men in two-biological parent families and blended

families has converged. By the most recent decade, men's shares of the housework in stepfather, blended, and two-biological parent families was about a third and significantly less than the share of men in stepmother families.

These trends challenge the relevance of the incomplete institution explanation, especially in the most recent decade. If there is ambiguity regarding gender or familial roles, it is not applied similarly across all complex family forms over time.

Decomposition analysis

Does differential demographic composition explain the gaps in men's share of the housework over time? Figure 2 shows the results for the Kitagawa-Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition analysis for the earliest and most recent years. The bars represent the gaps in men's shares of the housework between two groups in each period. The dark bars represent the part of the gap explained by differences in the groups' composition. Table 3 shows the OLS regression analyses for each group over time.

Two-biological parent families versus stepmother families

The left-hand panel in Figure 2 shows the decomposition analysis for the gap between men in two biological parent families and stepmother families. In the 1985-1989 period, most of the gap was unexplained by the different composition of the groups. In the 2010s, the gap between the men slightly increased but remained stable. However, a larger share of the gap in men's housework shares was explained by compositional differences between the groups in the 2010s period (43%).

The decomposition analysis suggests that the two main driving forces that accounted for the explained portion of the gap in housework were related to the differences in the number and age of children and the observed differences in men's partners' working hours and men's share

of the income (not shown). Table 3 further shows the differences in the OLS coefficients between the men in the 1985-1989 period (columns 1 and 2). Men in two biological parent families with at least one child under age 6 in the household had higher shares of housework than men in two biological parent families who did not have young children in the household. However, the association between the number of children and men's share of the housework was negative in two biological parent families, meaning the more children, the lower men's shares of the housework. This association was no longer evident in the 2010s (columns 5 and 6). In contrast, the number and age of the children were not significantly associated with men's housework in either of the periods.

Men's working hours mattered for their housework contribution across all groups in 1985-1989, but a different pattern emerges for men's reaction to their partners' working hours and their share of the income. In 1985-1989, men in two biological parent families contributed a little more to the housework with every additional working hour by their partners than men in stepmother families who did not show a significant association between partner's working hours and housework. Moreover, with every additional increase in men's share of the income, they significantly reduced their housework contributions consistently over time. However, this pattern was not evident among men in stepmother families in either period.

Two-biological parent families versus stepfather families

The middle panel of Figure 2 shows results from the decomposition analysis for the gap between men in two biological parent families and stepfathers, where the gap between the groups has converged over time. The decomposition results suggest that in both periods, the gap is generally unexplained. Interestingly, Table 3 shows that the OLS coefficients for stepfathers exhibit a

similar pattern to men in stepmother families. However, the gap in housework between men in two biological parent families and stepfathers is not significant in the 2010s and unexplained.

Stepmother and stepfather families

The right-hand panel shows the decomposition analysis results for the gap between men in stepmother families and stepfathers. As Figure 1 showed, this gap between these groups has increased over time. In the earliest period, there was a small insignificant gap between the groups. Half of this gap was attributed to differences in the demographic composition of the groups. However, by the 2010s, the gap increased. Over 60% of the gap was explained by the different characteristics of the two groups in the 2010s. Table 3 shows few differences in the OLS coefficients over time between these groups, meaning the “returns” to their characteristics are similar. However, the differences are driven by the differences in observed characteristics.

Finally, the decomposition analysis also suggests that cohabitation and race and ethnicity are not the major driving forces of the gaps in men’s housework across family structures. Cohabitation is not significantly associated with men’s housework in any model in both periods. This finding contradicts prior research and could be a result of different housework measurements.

Table 3 suggests that the racial and ethnic differences in men’s housework were inconsistent over time. In 1985-1989 Hispanic men in stepfamilies had lower housework shares than non-Hispanic White men in the same family structures. In the 2010s, this association was insignificant. Also, in the 2010s, non-Hispanic Black men in two-biological parent families contributed more to housework than non-Hispanic White men. In contrast, non-Hispanic Black men in stepmother families had lower housework shares than their non-Hispanic White counterparts. The inconsistent racial and ethnic differential in men’s housework is consistent

with the mixed evidence of existing literature and should be explored in more depth in future research.

Taken together, between half and 60% of the gap between men in stepmother families and men in two-biological parent families and stepfathers is explained by their different demographic composition. The main explanatory variables that vary across groups and over time are related to men's share of the income, their partners' working hours, and the number and age of the children in the household.

Discussion

This paper investigated the gendered division of labor across family structures over time. The results showed that in the late 1980s, men in stepfamilies had significantly greater housework shares than fathers in two biological parent families and blended families. However, group differences have changed over time. Although men in stepmother families continued to contribute greater shares to the housework than other men, stepfathers' housework shares converged with fathers in blended and two-biological parent families. A decomposition analysis suggested that most of the gap between men in stepfamilies is attributed to different demographic composition, i.e., most of the difference is explained by selection. Moreover, the differences in partners' working hours and men's share of the income were the most consistent characteristics that explained housework contribution.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the analysis does not include non-residential stepmother families, which are more common than residential stepmother families (Stykes and Guzzo 2015). Although the PSID collects direct information on the relationship between all household members, information on non-resident family members is limited. Future

research should investigate the role of non-resident children in the couples' household organization to expand our understanding of family complexity and gender.

Second, the current study focuses on housework because housework and childcare are distinct forms of household labor (Sullivan 2013). Over time, childcare became less gendered as fathers have increased their involvement, but housework remains a highly gendered household task (Bianchi et al. 2012). Moreover, childcare investment is intertwined in the biological parental relationship, making it a less clear venue to test the role of ambiguity in organizing family life. However, childcare is a significant component of household labor that is relevant to understanding gender. The PSID started collecting childcare time in 2017, so there are only two waves currently available. Although replicating the trend analysis offered in this paper will not be possible, future studies should replicate the current research to investigate the differences between family structures. Comparing childcare to housework will illuminate whether “ambiguity” is more relevant to organizing childcare responsibilities than housework.

Nonetheless, this study makes several contributions. The findings challenge the incomplete institution hypothesis and the idea that ambiguity is the mechanism that drives an egalitarian division of housework in complex families. The results showed a striking and consistent resemblance in the division of housework between blended and two biological parent families. Men in these families contributed the lowest shares, which is consistent with prior research (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992). Blended families introduce the most complexity and ambiguity to familial relationships (Brown and Manning 2009; Carroll, Olson and Buckmiller 2007). Nonetheless, their division of housework followed closely with the two biological parent families, which theoretically are “not complex” nor ambiguous. The results suggest that blended

and two-biological families organize their housework similarly, and the ambiguity of family complexity does not translate to an egalitarian division of labor.

The results also challenge the extent to which ambiguity promotes an egalitarian division of housework in stepfamilies over time and across different forms of stepfamilies. Although the results from the earlier years (1985-1989) showed that stepfamilies were *relatively* more egalitarian than two-biological parent families, thus reinforcing the ambiguity argument, stepfathers' shares of the housework converged with men in blended and two-biological parent families. By the 2010s, only men in stepmother families reported an almost egalitarian division of labor. Moreover, most of this gap, albeit not all, was explained by the different compositions of the groups. Meaning, if family complexity introduces ambiguity to familial roles in stepfamilies, it does not seem to apply to families where women are not the biological mothers. Since much of the gap is related to compositional differences, the division of labor is likely associated with the different scripts these families choose and not reacting to ambiguity.

The convergence of stepfathers with two-biological parent families over time also challenges the notion wherein the ambiguity that family complexity introduces to family daily life is stable over time. The results cannot rule out the ambiguity hypothesis in the earlier years. Stepfathers had higher shares of housework than two-biological parent families, and most of the gap was not explained by selection, which implies a behavioral difference between the groups. However, stepfathers' housework shares became more similar with time even though they continued to have significantly lower education and higher cohabitation. Stepfather families are more common than residential stepmother families, which continue to be a small portion of stepfamilies (Stykes and Guzzo 2015). Therefore, an incomplete institution explanation for the convergence of stepfather families with two-biological and blended families is that stepfather

families have been “institutionalized,” which promoted gender relations similar to two-biological parent families. The current study cannot rule out this explanation. However, an alternative explanation will focus on the role of gender of the biological parent, an explanation to which I return below.

The results suggest that men’s economic characteristics are an important driving force of men’s housework contribution in complex families. In stepmother families, women have contributed more to the total income, and the men had lower education and working hours than men in other families. Nevertheless, these men shared housework more equally. Although the scholarly debate about the relevance of “doing gender” and “gender-deviance neutralization” is ongoing (Gupta 2007; Schneider 2012; Sullivan 2011) and the evidence for an egalitarian division of household labor among low SES couples is mixed (Gupta 2007; Shows and Gerstel 2009), the results here imply that for stepmother families lower SES is associated with a more egalitarian division of housework.

Lastly, the results cannot be discussed without addressing the role of children and biological parenthood in these families. Stepfathers and men in blended families were also economically disadvantaged compared to men in two-biological parent families, yet their gendered division of labor was similar, i.e., highly gendered. Men in stepmother families were also economically disadvantaged, yet their division of housework was almost equal and not related to their relative income contribution. This pattern underscores the role of biological parenting in dividing familial roles. As Moore (2008) shows in her study of Black lesbian stepfamilies, the biological mothers in these families invested more time in childcare and housework to establish power in their relationship. In Moore’s study, gender was not salient (Ridgeway and Correll 2004), which according to Moore, explained why doing more household

labor is associated with more power. However, the findings for this study cannot rule out that men in stepmother families contributed much more to housework for the same reason.

Men in stepmother families are the biological parents and have established themselves as their children's primary caretakers (Doucet 2006). Being the primary caretaker with custodial responsibilities is a powerful position in stepfamilies. The results demonstrate that biological parental roles shape the gender relational context which organizes housework—the gender of the biological parent matters for doing housework (Moore 2008). The resemblance between men in two-biological parent, blended, and stepfather families, on the one hand, and the unique position of men in stepmother families underscore how parenthood and children cement the division of housework (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Dush, Yavorsky and Schoppe-Sullivan 2018; Grunow, Schulz and Blossfeld 2012; Kühhirt 2011).

The findings challenge the hypothesis set forth by previous studies that family complexity promotes an egalitarian division of labor because of ambiguity about familial roles. Instead, it seems that biological parenthood and economic characteristics are the forces that bolster the gendered division of labor persistently over time. While family complexity research often highlights how complex families are at a disadvantage compared with two-biological parent families, this study finds that when it comes to the gendered division of housework, blended and stepfather families share quite the resemblance.

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Sample Sizes by Family Structure and Period

Family structure	1985-2017		1985-1989		2010s	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Two biological parents	40889	85.11	9538	85.70	6342	85.35
Stepmother	709	1.15	129	1.22	139	1.19
Stepfather	4331	6.24	964	7.13	632	4.79
Blended	5709	7.50	1045	6.16	1200	8.67
Total	51638	100	11676	100	8313	100

PSID 1985-2017. Percentages weighted. Ns are not weighted.

Table 2. Men's and Families Demographic Characteristics by Year and Family Structure

	Two biological parents		Stepmother		Stepfather		Blended	
	1985-1989	2010s	1985-1989	2010s	1985-1989	2010s	1985-1989	2010s
Age	37.90	41.01	38.54	41.23	37.84	39.62	35.01	35.71
Non-Hispanic White	0.89	0.72	0.93	0.72	0.86	0.68	0.74	0.63
Black	0.07	0.08	0.03	0.11	0.10	0.20	0.18	0.20
Hispanic	0.04	0.17	0.04	0.11	0.04	0.11	0.08	0.13
Education: 13+	0.51	0.66	0.45	0.39	0.45	0.48	0.39	0.45
Weekly working hours	43.00	41.44	44.75	38.48	42.62	39.99	41.86	39.76
Partner's weekly working hours	20.67	24.99	32.24	31.88	28.62	29.26	21.13	25.55
Share of income	0.77	0.68	0.66	0.63	0.70	0.65	0.75	0.67
Cohab	0.01	0.06	0.06	0.22	0.15	0.37	0.09	0.26
Number of children under 18 in household	1.80	1.85	1.47	1.24	1.46	1.37	2.71	2.95
Child under age 6 in household	0.52	0.51	0.13	0.12	0.22	0.17	0.71	0.71

PSID 1985-2017. Weighted.

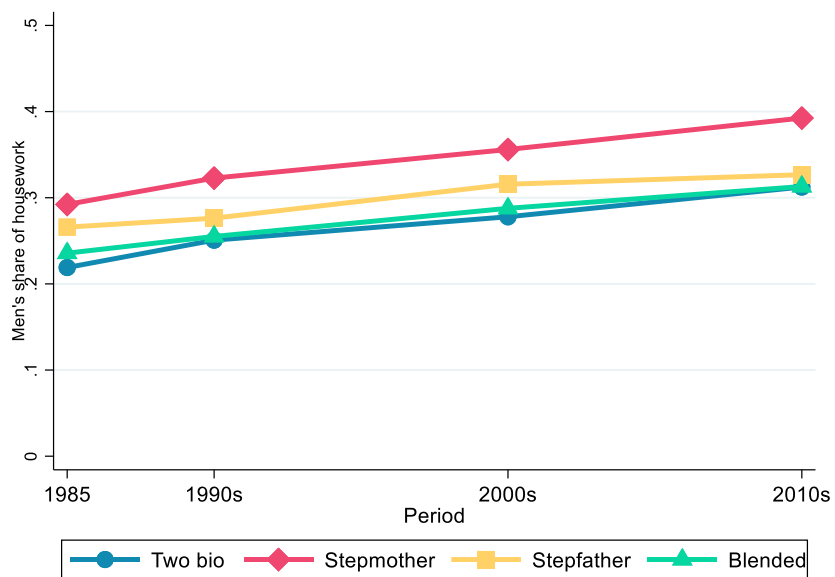
Table 3. OLS Regression Analysis for Men's Relative Shares of the Housework by Family Structure, 1985-1989, and 2011-2017

Variables	1985-1989				2011-2017			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Two- biological parents	Stepmother	Stepfather	Blend	Two- biological parents	Stepmother	Stepfather	Blend
Age	0.004*	-0.013	0.016**	-0.019*	0.006*	-0.034	0.010	0.013
	(0.002)	(0.024)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.003)	(0.018)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Age square	-0.000*	0.000	-0.000**	0.000*	-0.000**	0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
NH-Black (ref. non-Hispanic White)	0.014	-0.034	-0.016	0.003	0.035**	-0.089**	-0.037	0.013
	(0.008)	(0.054)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.010)	(0.033)	(0.024)	(0.019)
Hispanic (ref. non-Hispanic White)	0.021	-0.213**	-0.101**	-0.015	-0.011	-0.079	-0.044	0.002
	(0.012)	(0.063)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.007)	(0.050)	(0.029)	(0.020)
Children under 6 in household (ref. no)	0.043**	-0.016	0.031	0.042*	0.006	0.030	0.016	0.019
	(0.005)	(0.061)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.007)	(0.054)	(0.025)	(0.020)
Number of children under 18 in household	-0.007**	0.013	0.000	-0.006	-0.005	0.028	0.041**	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.022)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.008)
Cohabitation (ref. married)	-0.004	0.123	-0.023	0.007	-0.013	-0.021	-0.011	-0.005
	(0.017)	(0.084)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.011)	(0.036)	(0.021)	(0.017)
Weekly working hours	-0.002**	-0.007**	-0.002**	-0.002*	-0.002**	0.000	-0.001	-0.002**
	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Partner's weekly working hours	0.003**	0.002	0.002**	0.002**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.002**
	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Share of income	-0.114**	-0.197	-0.155**	-0.110*	-0.077**	-0.002	-0.063	-0.082**
	(0.015)	(0.126)	(0.039)	(0.045)	(0.013)	(0.063)	(0.039)	(0.032)
Self-reported	0.080**	0.188**	0.049**	0.112**	0.102**	0.142**	0.115**	0.111**
	(0.005)	(0.043)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.005)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.015)
Constant	0.191**	0.719	0.058	0.568**	0.231**	0.831*	0.044	0.109
	(0.041)	(0.488)	(0.122)	(0.171)	(0.052)	(0.353)	(0.186)	(0.174)
Observations	9,538	129	964	1,045	6,342	139	632	1,200
R-squared	0.182	0.345	0.169	0.174	0.236	0.320	0.189	0.155

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

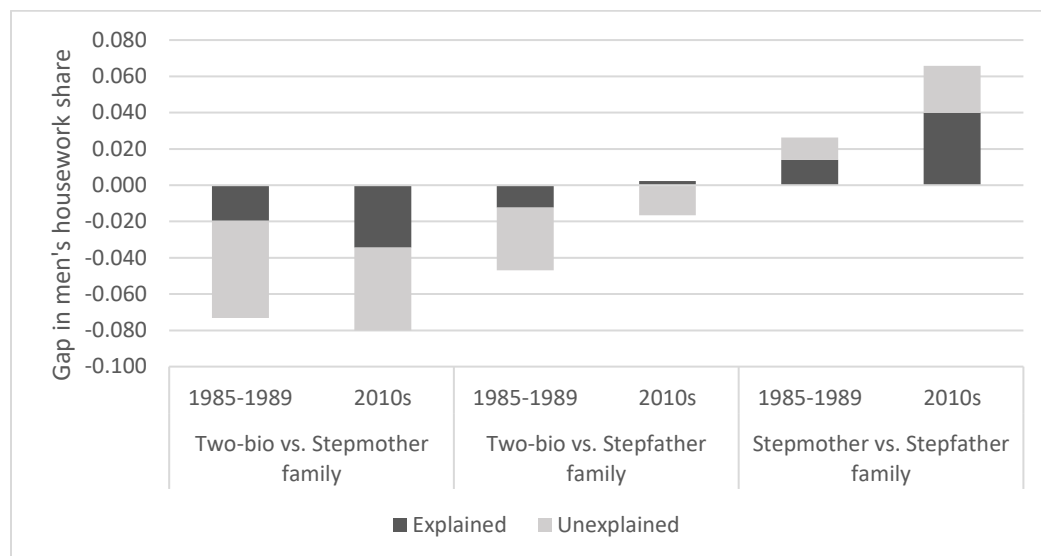
Source: PSID 1985-1989, 2011-2017. Weighted.

Figure 1. Men's Shares of Total Housework by Family Structure and Period



PSID 1985-2017. Weighted.

Figure 2. Main Decomposition Results of the Gap in Men's Share of the Housework between Family Structures in 1985-1989 and 2011-2017



Source: PSID 1985-1989, 2011-2017. Weighted. Observed characteristics: Men's age, Age square, Man's race/ethnicity, Cohabitation, Num. of resident children under 18, Presence of child under age 6, Man's education, Men's working hours, Partner's working hours, men's share of couple's income from labor, Identity of family respondent.

CHAPTER 4. “A House is Not a Home?” Gender, Housework, and Roommates

Introduction

The sociological literature on gender and housework is flourishing. Decades of research consistently demonstrate that women do the lion’s share of the housework (Coltrane 2000; Ferree 1990; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel 2020). Over time, men have increased their investment in housework while women have increased their participation in the labor market, yet women still spend about three times more doing household labor (Bianchi et al. 2000; Bianchi et al. 2012; Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel 2020; Sayer 2016; Van Bavel, Schwartz and Esteve 2018). Furthermore, research consistently finds that women do more “female-typed”⁶ chores, e.g., cleaning, cooking, doing the dishes, and laundry. Men, in contrast, usually do tasks that scholars classify as “male-typed” chores, e.g., maintenance and outdoor chores (Bianchi et al. 2000; Bianchi et al. 2012; Coltrane 2000; Hook 2017; Kolpashnikova 2018; Kroska 2003; Quadlin and Doan 2018; Sayer and Fine 2011; Schneider 2012; Twiggs, McQuillan and Ferree 1999).

This massive body of work is dedicated to uncovering the gendered power dynamics at the core of this persistent inequality. Though there are several theoretical explanations for the gendered division of household labor (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Perry-Jenkins and Gerstel 2020), “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987) is one of the most prominent sociological explanations. This approach suggests that gender is enacted and performed in our interactions with the people around us (West and Zimmerman 1987) and that housework is a key

⁶ Coltrane (2000) rightfully criticizes the concepts “female-typed” and “male-typed” for reinforcing the notion that housework chores are inherently “feminine” or “masculine” and suggest using other terms. However, alternative classifications such as “core/non-core” or “routine/non-routine” are more fitting for couples or families who share housework as a unit, not as a group of individuals. Therefore, although there is nothing inherently “feminine” or “masculine” in any chore, I use “female-typed” and “male-typed” throughout the text to emphasize the notion that these tasks are *perceived* as gendered.

site where women and men perform and maintain their gender identity (Berk 1985; Ferree 1990). However, scholars almost exclusively apply “doing gender” to couples and families even though people do housework when they are unpartnered and childless (Eichler and Albanese 2007; Sayer 2016). Furthermore, people “do gender” regularly in their everyday lives, not just in the context of their families (Goffman 1978; West and Zimmerman 1987). Therefore, overlooking the role of gender in shaping housework behaviors in non-familial non-couple settings underestimate the extent to which gender performance shapes men’s and women’s behavior.

An alternative setting to revisit the relationship between power, gender, and housework are shared living arrangements where adults live together but are not romantically involved and are not connected through kinship, i.e., housemates or roommates⁷ (Natalier 2003). Although shared living arrangements are not new, they are becoming increasingly important in young adults' current demographic and economic context. Age of marriage and childbearing is delayed, and union instability is consistently prevalent (Smock and Schwartz 2020). At the same time, amid increasing economic precarity, living with other adults has become a solution to financial hardship, particularly after the Great Recession (Bitler and Hoynes 2015; Glick and Van Hook 2011; Heath et al. 2017; Hughes 2003; Vespa 2017; Wiemers 2014). Living with housemates also requires navigating interpersonal relationships that are not free of power dynamics while at the same time expecting an equal contribution of economic and non-economic resources (Glick and Van Hook 2011; Heath et al. 2017). Therefore, shared living households offer a new setting to investigate whether and how gender matters for housework behavior when there are no

⁷ I use the terms “housemates” and “roommates” interchangeably throughout the text for stylistic reasons. However, it is important to note that the term “roommates” does not refer to college roommates sharing a dorm room. I also use interchangeably the concepts “shared living arrangements,” “shared living households,” “roommate households,” and “roommate living arrangements.” Although “shared living household/arrangements” often include in the literature other family members (also called “doubling up” (Glick and Van Hook 2011; Pilkauskas and Cross 2018; Wiemers 2014), in this paper, I refer only to households where adults are living together but do not share kinship or romantic ties.

familial or romantic expectations before people form families and when they need to share the responsibilities with other people of the same or different gender (Natalier 2003).

In this paper, I investigate how the gender composition of shared households shape young adults' housework time in the United States. I use the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) from 2003 to 2019, a nationally representative sample. This is the first study, to my knowledge, to describe gendered housework participation in roommate households using a nationally representative sample of young adults in the United States. The ATUS offers detailed information on detailed tasks and relationships between household members, thus providing a unique opportunity to study whether “doing gender” matters for housework time in non-familial and non-couple households.

Shared living arrangements, gender, and housework

We know very little about roommate living arrangements in the United States. This empirical lacuna is intriguing given the central role of roommate relationships in American popular culture (e.g., *Three's Company*, *The Golden Girls*, *Friends*, *Living Single*, *New Girl*, and *Grace and Frankie*, to name a few). Although it is unclear how many Americans are living with roommates or their socio-demographic profile, there is evidence to suggest that changing demographic and economic circumstances render it increasingly more difficult to establish an independent household in adulthood (Bitler and Hoynes 2015; Glick and Van Hook 2011; Heath et al. 2017; Hughes 2003; Vespa 2017; Wiemers 2014). In 1975, 6.1 million (11%) young adults ages 18 to 34 were lived with other adults who were not their partners or parents. By 2016, this number increased to 15.6 million (21%) (Vespa 2017).

Past studies have focused on the circumstances of forming shared households, namely with other family members, and these households' strategies for pooling economic resources in

the United States (Glick and Van Hook 2011; Pilkauskas and Cross 2018; Wiemers 2014). Numerous social psychology studies investigate the dynamics between American college roommates (Eisenberg, Downs and Golberstein 2012; Trail, Shelton and West 2009). However, most of the empirical work about the dynamics of young adults' roommate arrangements is based on qualitative work from the United Kingdom (Heath et al. 2017; Heath and Kenyon 2001), Australia (Natalier 2003), New Zealand (Clark et al. 2018), and Singapore (Liang 2018). These studies shed light on the benefits and challenges that living with housemates introduces to people's lives and how they navigate power dynamics in their households. Though this living arrangement offers economic and social benefits, i.e., affordable housing and alleviating loneliness) it also requires constant negotiation of expectations and boundaries (Clark et al. 2018; Heath et al. 2017; Heath and Kenyon 2001; Liang 2018). Moreover, a primary source of tension and conflict in these households revolves around housework (Heath et al. 2017; Heath and Kenyon 2001; McNamara and Connell 2007), making these living arrangements important sites to study gender.

Very few studies investigated housework within shared living households from a gender perspective. Natalier (2003) interviewed 35 young men ages 18 to 33 living in eleven all-male households in Australia. Natalier found that the men adopted an "opting-in" approach to doing the housework, which resulted in very little housework being done overall. The men justified their behavior by referring to their masculinity (e.g., "I'm not his wife") and by asserting their power in the household. Natalier's study sheds light on the role of gender in organizing housework participation in shared households and demonstrates that performing masculinity by disengaging from housework is not a strategy that is unique to men in families.

Another study compared housework time of Australian young adults across living

arrangements (Craig, Powell and Brown 2016). Using the Australian Time Use Survey from 2006, Craig et al. (2016) found that although gender differences in routine and non-routine housework were most pronounced among couples, gender differences in housework existed between men and women living in shared households, alone, or with their parents. The authors also found that although young adults in shared households spent most of their housework time doing chores that benefited only themselves, women spent more time on personal chores and chores that benefited the household.

These studies suggest that gender matters for housework in shared households, but several questions remain open. First, Natalier's study is limited to men who live with men, and Craig et al. compared living arrangements but did not focus on the role of the gender composition of the household. It is unclear whether these patterns apply to women and men who live in shared households with different gender compositions and how these patterns might vary by different housework tasks. In this paper, I build upon and extend these studies by answering these questions and focusing on the housework time of young adults, women and men, in the United States.

Doing Gender in Shared Living Households

“Doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987) is a prominent sociological explanation of the persistent gender inequality in housework. Usually referred to as the “gender-based explanation” to housework in mainstream research, its underlying argument suggests that women do more housework and men do less (or avoid) housework because this is a way to display a gender identity that conforms to cultural gender expectations of “femininity” and “masculinity” (Berk 1985; Brines 1994; Ferree 1990).

The debate on the merits of “doing gender” to explain the persistent gender inequality in housework is ongoing (Bittman et al. 2003; Brines 1994; Greenstein 2000; Gupta 2007; Killewald and Gough 2010; Schneider 2012; Sullivan 2011). The debate almost exclusively focuses on couples and centers on partners’ relative resources as the driving mechanism that explains why women who earn the same or more than men do more housework. This approach often entails testing three “competing” hypotheses wherein relative resources and time availability compete with the “gender-based explanation” (Coltrane 2010; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010). Recent studies that investigate housework in same-sex couples also follow a similar approach but often follow a “doing” versus “undoing” gender explanations (Deutsch 2007; Goldberg 2013). Namely, studies that focus on the division of housework in same-sex couples “take out” gender from the couples’ power dynamics (Moore 2008).

These frameworks make sense when studying couples but are less relevant to studying roommate households. Couples form a household that operates as a unit, a family. Although shared roommate households are formed to pool some resources, they do not operate as a unit where specialization between paid and unpaid work is a relevant strategy for any of its members. Past research investigated housework across living arrangements but has focused on single-person households (De Ruijter, Treas and Cohen 2005). Studying housework in roommate households allows us to study gender dynamics by “taking out” familial expectations but remain in a domestic setting of a “home” that is shared with other people.

The exclusive focus on families and couples stems from the implicit assumption that there are no power dynamics in non-familial households because housework in shared households does not carry the same meaning as it does in families. Berk (1985) articulated this fundamental assumption in her influential book, *The Gender Factory*:

“[...] we know that both men and women sometimes speak of “how different” or “how easy” it was when, prior to marriage, they lived in same-sex roommate arrangements. One might argue that not only are the demands of work likely to be lighter in that sort of arrangement, but more important, the process by which the labor is divided is subject only to considerations of *the work itself*, as that is all that is being produced. The production of gender relations through exercise of dominance and submission is largely irrelevant in such arrangements; as a result, the work of a “single” life seems so different, and so uncomplicated. Yet, it may be that, in households where the appropriation of another’s labor is possible, in practice the expression of work and the expression of gender (dominance and submission) are inseparable” (Berk 1985, pp.203-204 italics and quotation marks from original text).

Berk’s arguments bring up interesting questions about how women and men will invest in housework when they live with housemates. These questions have remained mostly unanswered. As Natalier (2003) empirically demonstrated, men’s masculinity is strongly connected to an active disengagement with housework when they live with other men. In other words, the men in Natalier’s study were doing gender while navigating gendered power dynamics in a non-familial context where women were not present. The question, however, is whether this pattern will persist when women and men live together as housemates.

There is reason to expect that both women and men will do gender when they live with same- or different-gender housemates. Although these households are shared with strangers and often temporary, they function as “home” (Heath et al. 2017), and gender is strongly associated with domesticity (Bowlby, Gregory and McKie 1997; Thébaud, Kornrich and Ruppner 2019). In a social relational context (Ridgeway and Correll 2004), wherein women are often perceived as responsible for housework and negatively judged when they do not follow these expectations (Thébaud, Kornrich and Ruppner 2019), people might reproduce gendered familial scripts in housework even though they are not in a familial setting (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999).

Berk (1985) assumes that women and men will not be roommates, but that is more acceptable today compared to 1985 when the book was published. Doing gender might be more pronounced in mixed-gender households, where gender becomes more salient (Ridgeway and

Smith-Lovin 1999). Doing gender via housework means that women do more housework while men do less. Both men and women are aware of gendered expectations and may act accordingly to avoid the consequences of not following gender norms (Brines 1994; West and Zimmerman 1987). Although doing gender implies more housework for women in general, it might result in greater housework for women living with men because men actively disengage from housework. This gender display will result in more work for women in mixed-gender roommate households than the amount of housework that women in same-gender households do.

But how will doing gender manifest across various housework tasks? If we follow the common typology of housework tasks, we can expect that women will spend more time doing “female-typed” tasks than men. Women spend more time than men doing chores such as cleaning, laundry, and cooking, even when they live alone (Sayer 2016). Moreover, Craig et al. (2016) found that women living in shared households spend more time doing “routine” tasks than men in shared households. Therefore, we can expect that women in American shared households will follow a similar general gender display. However, because gender is especially salient in mixed-gender settings (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999), the household’s gender composition might intensify gender display when women and men share their households with opposite-gender roommates. In other words, women in mixed-gender households would spend more time doing “female-typed” chores than men, but also compared to women in same-gender roommate households. Similarly, because men spend more time doing “male-typed” tasks even when they live alone (Sayer 2016), men in mixed-gender households might spend more time doing male-typed tasks compared to women but also compared to men in same-gender households.

Hypothesis 1: Women in mixed-gender households will spend more time doing “female-typed” tasks than men in mixed- and same-gender households and women in same-gender households.

Hypothesis 2: Men in mixed-gender households will spend more time doing “male-typed” tasks than women in mixed- and same-gender and men in same-gender households.

There are, however, circumstances that could challenge the gender script, as Berk (1985) implies. The nature of the social relations in shared living arrangements is legal or contractual (Glick and Van Hook 2011). The contractual aspect of the housemate agreement might have important implications for housework in mixed-gender households because women have equal legal status as men but without familial and romantic expectations (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Moreover, shared living households are based on the idea that household members pool resources. All household members are expected to equally contribute economic resources (Glick and Van Hook 2011; Heath et al. 2017), and non-economic resources, such as chores (Heath et al. 2017; McNamara and Connell 2007; Natalier 2003).

The contractual relationship implies that there are expectations and responsibilities that are different from those in familial households. As Berk argues, all that matters about housework is the “work itself.” Therefore, in contrast to housework in families and couples that carry a gendered meaning embedded in love and caring (Kroska 2003), housework in roommate arrangements does not carry such meanings. The contractual nature of the relationship means that people do housework to maintain a livable shared environment and nothing more (Heath et al. 2017; Natalier 2003). In other words, shared living arrangements may “protect” women’s housework time and potentially equalize it with men.

However, not all housework chores will necessarily be “protected” from gender display under roommates’ contractual relationship. What makes the roommate household a unique sociological setting is a subtle balance between what is shared among household members and what remains private. Household labor is often situated within a “separate spheres” context, wherein the home is considered “private,” and everything outside the home is “public” (Berk 1985; Ferree 1990). In shared households, these lines are blurred because even though roommates may grow to be friends, they are still strangers sharing a home (Heath et al. 2017). Therefore, there is a constant tension between the private (personal) and public (shared) aspects of daily life (Goffman 1978; Heath et al. 2017).

Participation in different housework chores might reflect the tension between the shared and the personal. For example, in contrast to families and couples, there is no reason to assume that housemates are doing each other’s laundry. Instead, laundry is a personal chore. And although housemates sometimes share meals, qualitative studies suggest that cooking is something that roommates do for themselves (Heath et al. 2017; Natalier 2003). Cleaning, in contrast, is a chore that is likely to benefit all household members. Qualitative studies suggest that the core tension surrounding housework is related to cleaning because it usually impacts the shared spaces (Heath et al. 2017; Natalier 2003). Therefore, another question to consider is whether and how doing gender will manifest across different types of chores, namely between chores that people do for their personal benefit and chores that benefit the household (Craig, Powell and Brown 2016).

If the contractual relationship mitigates gender display through housework, it is more likely to be apparent in chores that benefit the household and that roommates are more likely to share. The contractual perspective suggests that women in mixed-gender households will spend a

similar amount of time cleaning as women in same-gender households and men in mixed-gender households. Although (Natalier 2003) showed that men in all-men households resist participation in cleaning to assert their masculinity, men might be less prone to follow this approach when living with roommates who are women. In this scenario, although women and men are aware of gendered expectations, they are also mindful that their relationship is not familial, making gendered expectations inappropriate for this particular setting. Moreover, the underlying understanding of the shared living arrangement is an equal contribution of resources (Glick and Van Hook 2011; Heath et al. 2017). This “hyper awareness” and equal legal position in the household might grant women in mixed-gender households negotiation power that will result in men spending more time cleaning than they might spend if they were living with other men.

Hypothesis 3: Men in mixed-gender households will spend a similar amount of time cleaning as women in mixed-gender households, and more time than men in same-gender households.

It is less clear whether the contractual relationship will apply to chores that household members do for themselves, such as cooking. On the one hand, there is evidence that women and men in shared households dedicate a similar amount of time to domestic work that is personally for them (Craig, Powell and Brown 2016). However, women might invest more time doing them regardless of with whom they live because time-use data in the United States suggest that women spend more time to cooking than men consistently over time (Hook 2010; Sayer 2016). Therefore, the household gender composition will not matter for cooking and other personal chores, but women will still invest more time than men.

Hypothesis 4: Women will spend more time doing cooking and other personal chores than men regardless of the gender composition of the household.

Methodology

Data

I use the pooled American Time Use Survey (ATUS) from 2003 to 2019. The ATUS is conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to study how, where, and with whom Americans spend their time. It is a repeated cross-sectional survey with a nationally representative sample of American adults age 15 and older. One individual per household is randomly selected to participate in ATUS from a subset of households that have completed interviews for the Current Population Survey (CPS) several months prior to the time use survey. The ATUS asks respondents to walk the interviewer through the last 24 hours, starting at 4:00 AM the previous day and ending at 4:00 AM on the day of the interview. For every activity, the interviewer asks how long it lasted, who else was there, and where the activity took place. The sample is evenly split between weekdays and weekend days, and respondents are randomly assigned to days of the week or the weekend. Though the time use interview is limited to one individual in the household (i.e., the ATUS respondent), demographic information is available for household members through the CPS.

I limit my sample to ATUS respondents ages 18 to 34 who identified all other household members as either “housemate/roommate,” “roomer/boarder,” or “other non-relative.” I also restrict the sample to individuals who lived in households where all household members were 18-year-old or older, i.e., there are no children in the ATUS respondent’s household. To assure that familial or romantic expectations are not involved in the gendered household dynamics, I used the CPS direct question that was addressed to each household member in the CPS survey

asking if they had a partner living in the household. Meaning, I further exclude ATUS respondents who were living with couples. I also use the same direct question⁸ to exclude cases where the ATUS respondent classified a household member as a “housemate” in the ATUS survey but as a romantic partner in the CPS (Flood and Genadek 2019; Kreider 2008). These restrictions bring the final sample to 1,261 ATUS respondents who lived in shared living arrangements (43% women).

Measures

The dependent variables are the number of daily minutes that people do housework. “Female-typed” tasks include cleaning, grocery shopping, doing laundry, and cooking (preparation, presentation, and cleanup). “Male-typed” tasks include vehicle repair and services, outdoor chores such as attending the yard and exterior cleaning, and maintenance. Finally, following other scholars (Chesley and Flood 2017; Kroska 2003), I also include a gender-neutral category which comprises of chores such as paying bills, financial management, and using or waiting for household services. I have top-coded each housework chore to the 95th percentile to minimize skewed results due to outliers. Vehicle-related chores and maintenance were rare in the data and, thus I top-coded these chores to the 99th percentile (Quadlin and Doan 2018). For additional details on task classification see Appendix.

The main independent variable is the configuration of the respondent’s gender and the household’s gender composition. I use the ATUS survey to determine the respondent’s gender and the CPS to determine the household’s gender composition. This results in one categorical variable that distinguishes between four groups of ATUS respondents: (1) Women in mixed-

⁸ The direct question in the CPS is only available since 2007. Therefore, I cannot rule out that the ATUS respondents in the years prior to 2007 were living with a couple or a romantic partner they identified as housemate/non-relative in the ATUS.

gender households (n=125, 10%). These are ATUS respondents who are women and according to the CPS, they were living with at least one household member who was a man. (2) Women in same-gender households (n=344, 27%). These are ATUS respondents who are women, and according to the CPS, all their housemates were women. (3) Men in mixed-gender households (n=175, 14%). These are ATUS respondents who are men, and according to the CPS, they were living with at least one household member who was a woman. It is important to note that these men are not the housemates of the women in mixed-gendered households because the ATUS only collects time use for one household member. Therefore, the analysis in this study compares roommates across households and not roommates within households. (4) Men in same-gender households (n=617, 49%). These are ATUS respondents who are men, and according to the CPS, all of their housemates were men.

I also control for several variables that shape the relationship between gender and housework time. These controls include the type of shared living arrangement (housemate, boarder, or non-relative), household size, respondent's age (years), race, education, enrollment in school status, weekly earnings, weekly working hours, whether the respondent lives in a metropolitan area, survey year (before or after 2008) and whether time use is reported for a weekend or a weekday.

Table 1 shows detailed variable categories and the sample's descriptive statistics by gender configuration of the household. The current sample is predominantly White and highly educated. Shared living is a strategy for mitigating financial hardship (Bitler and Hoynes 2015; Glick and Van Hook 2011; Heath et al. 2017; Hughes 2003; Vespa 2017; Wiemers 2014). However, as qualitative studies suggest, some of these living arrangements are a solution for a temporary hardship while young adults cultivate their careers (Heath et al. 2017). This is evident

in the relatively high levels of education in the sample. Most of the young adults have at least some college education and between a third (men in mixed-gender households) and over half (women in mixed-gender households) have a BA or more.

Moreover, historical and structural racial difference in hardships may result in different shared living arrangements, wherein Black adults are more likely to share households with children and extended family members (Cross 2018; Kamo 2000; Raymo, Pike and Liang 2018). Among those who are young, single, and in early professional career stages, Black young adults are more likely to live alone (Marsh et al. 2007). Furthermore, studies show there is ethnic/racial discrimination in housemate selection, which results in ethnically/racially homogenous households albeit mixed gender (Carlsson and Eriksson 2015; Clark and Tuffin 2015; Gaddis and Ghoshal 2015; Gaddis and Ghoshal 2019).

I use ordinary least squares regression (OLS) to estimate the relationship between household's gender configuration and the time that women and men in shared living arrangements spend doing housework by type of task. I conducted a sensitivity analysis using zero-inflated Poisson regression due to many cases with zeros as often the case with time use data. Results (not shown) show that the findings using OLS are robust. All results are weighted using the ATUS survey weights.

Results

Women's and Men's Sex-Typed Housework

Table 2 shows the OLS regression results for time spent doing “female-typed,” “male-typed,” and gender-neutral tasks. First, comparing the time spent doing “female-typed” tasks, such as cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, and cooking, the first column in Table 2 shows that women in mixed-gender households spend a similar amount of time as women in same-gender

households and men in mixed-gender households, but significantly more time than men in same-gender households. Women with men roommates spend about 13 minutes more doing “female-typed” tasks than men living with other men. The gender composition of the household did not matter for women’s housework time that is dedicated to female-typed chores.

For ease of comparison between the four groups, Figure 1 shows the predicted number of minutes doing housework for each group using the models presented in Table 2. Figure 1 shows that women generally spend more time doing “female-typed” chores than men. Women in mixed-gender households spend 40 minutes, and women in same-gender households spend 39 minutes, compared with men in mixed- and same-gender households (32 and 27 minutes, respectively). The gender composition of the household does not matter for men’s housework as well. However, the differences between both groups of women and men in same-gender households are significant. These results only partially support Hypothesis 1.

Shifting our focus to “male-typed” tasks, the second column in Table 2 shows that women in mixed-gender households spend similar time doing “male-typed” tasks as women in same-gender households and men in mixed- and same-gender households. Figure 1 further highlights that although men in mixed-gender households spend the most time doing “male-typed” tasks (about 8 minutes, compared to 4 minutes in the other three groups), there are no significant differences between men or among any of the four groups. Meaning, men in roommate living arrangements are not doing gender by spending more time doing “male-typed” tasks. The household’s gender composition does not promote or intensify doing gender. The lack of difference could be because these chores are less common overall in roommate households and often are the responsibility of the owner or management company. Men have fewer

opportunities to do gender because these chores are less frequent and less necessary in shared households. The results do not support Hypothesis 2.

Finally, the third column in Table 2 shows a similar pattern for gender-neutral tasks, i.e., women in mixed-gender households spend the same amount of time doing gender-neutral housework, such as household management, as the other three groups. Figure 1 further shows that there are no differences in gender-neutral tasks across the four groups. Meaning, the respondent's gender and the household's gender composition do not matter for participation in gender-neutral housework tasks in roommate living arrangements.

To sum, the results suggest that gender and the household's gender composition do not matter for housework time when we distinguish between sex-types tasks except for a significant difference in time dedicated to "female-typed" tasks between women living with men and men living with men.

Breaking down "Female-Typed" Tasks

To further investigate whether and how doing gender manifests across different types of female-typed tasks, I examine "female-typed" chores separately. Table 3 shows the OLS regression results for cooking, cleaning, and other female-typed chores (e.g., laundry and grocery shopping). Figure 2 shows the predicted number of minutes that women and men spend cleaning and cooking separately from other female-typed chores that are more likely to be personal by the household's gender composition. These estimates are based on regression models in Table 3.

Starting with cleaning, Table 3 and Figure 2 show that women's cleaning time is similar regardless of the gender composition of their shared household. Women living with men spend about 14 minutes cleaning compared to women living with women who spent about 10 minutes. However, there is a significant difference between women and men in mixed-gender households.

Women living with men spend almost three times more time cleaning than men living with women (14 and 5, respectively). It is important to reiterate that these men and women are not living with each other. Instead, these are individual women and men who live with roommates of the opposite gender. The data does not detail whether time spent cleaning is dedicated to private or shared spaces in the household. Nonetheless, this is a remarkable difference that aligns with the gender ratio in cleaning in the general population, which is 2.8 (Sayer 2016). For reference, the gender ratio in core housework between married mothers and fathers is 3.3 (Bianchi et al. 2012). Interestingly, the gap between women living with women and men living with women is not significant even though women in same-gender households spend about twice more time cleaning.

There is also a significant difference between women and men in same-gender households. Women in mixed-gender households spend almost three times more, and women in same-gender households spend twice more time cleaning than men in same-gender households. However, there are no significant differences between men – both men in same- and mixed-gender households spend about 5 minutes cleaning. There are also no significant differences between women in same-gender households and men in mixed-gender households. These results do not support Hypothesis 3.

Shifting our focus to cooking, a different pattern emerges. First, all groups spend more time cooking than cleaning. Figure 2 suggests that much of the time spent doing “female-typed” chores is dedicated to cooking, which is considered a more personal chore in shared households. However, Table 3 shows no differences between women in mixed-gender households and the other groups. The only significant difference is between women and men in same-gender

households, wherein men living with men spend less time cooking than women living with women.

Finally, looking at other female-typed chores (laundry and grocery), which are also considered personal chores in shared households, we see a similar pattern to cooking. Although the young adults in the sample dedicate less time to these chores, there are no gender differences regardless of the gender composition of the household. Taken together, the results suggest that women living with men spend more time cleaning than men living with women, but men and women spend similar time doing personal chores. The results do not support Hypothesis 4.

To sum, the results suggest that women and men dedicate similar amounts of time to personal housework chores, but that women living with men spend more time cleaning, which is a shared chore, compared to their male counterparts.

Discussion

"Doing gender" is a prominent sociological explanation for the persistent gender inequality in housework. However, existing research almost exclusively focuses on families and couples even though demographic and economic shifts have changed young adults' living arrangements. In this paper, I offer an alternative setting for the study of "doing gender" in housework, namely shared living households where young adults live together but do not share romantic or kinship relationships. Using the American Time Use Survey, I find evidence to suggest that both women and men do gender when they live with roommates, but that this was most evident with cleaning and not for other personal housework chores. The gender composition of the shared household did not matter for men's housework. Still, it mattered partially for women suggesting that roommate households are sites of gendered power dynamics even among young adults.

Before discussing the results, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. The ATUS provides time-use information only for one person in each household and does not ask for whom the task is performed like the Australian time-use survey in Craig et al. (2016). This data limitation hinders comparing housemates within households, i.e., how roommates *share* housework time, and limits our ability to have a better distinction between personal chores and communal chores. The ATUS also does not provide more detailed task information. For example, cleaning consists of various gendered tasks, such as cleaning the bathroom versus taking out the trash. Future studies that will collect this information would deepen our understanding of the nuanced power dynamics across various configurations of shared households.

It is also important to consider how selection into same- or mixed-gender households might shape the results. People's preferences are essential in determining the households' composition (Carlsson and Eriksson 2015; Clark and Tuffin 2015; Gaddis and Ghoshal 2015; Gaddis and Ghoshal 2019). Women and men are aware of the stereotypes and social expectations about gender and housework (Heath et al. 2017; Thébaud, Kornrich and Ruppner 2019). Men and women who opt to live together as roommates might have different preferences for housework investment from women and men who chose to live with same-gender roommates. We could expect that men who live with women will increase their investment to level up or that the women will lower their investment to level down. As the results showed - this was not the case. An alternative selection pathway to mixed- or same-gender households would be demographic, but Table 1 showed that the groups were overall similar in their characteristics. Therefore, if distinct selection processes exist, they do not seem to bias the results in the expected direction.

Nonetheless, investigating housework in roommate households contributed to our understanding of doing gender beyond the couple in several ways. First, doing gender did not manifest through the performance of “male-typed” tasks. Men and women spent similar time doing outdoor or maintenance chores, regardless of the households’ gender composition. Overall, women and men spent a small amount of housework time doing male-typed chores. Given that roommate living arrangements are often rental, in urban areas, and temporary, there are fewer opportunities to perform maintenance or outdoor chores. Nonetheless, men did not assert their masculinity by doing more male-typed tasks. This result is consistent with prior research, which found that among heterosexual couples, men living in urban areas did not compensate for fewer opportunities to do “male-typed” tasks by doing more “female-typed” tasks (Quadlin and Doan 2018).

Second, men in shared living arrangements were exceptionally resistant to cleaning but not cooking, which is consistent with (Natalier 2003). Men’s resistance to cleaning and women’s higher investment in cleaning when they live with men compared to men living with women underscores that doing gender is a prominent underlying mechanism of gender inequality in housework that goes beyond the context of families and couples. The results illuminate that men assert their masculinity through the practice of avoidance regardless of whom they live.

Third, women in mixed-gender households reportedly spent almost three times more cleaning than men in mixed-gender households. Although there are no available details to determine whether cleaning takes place in private or shared spaces, the gender gap in cleaning time is remarkable and consistent with prior findings of the gender gap among married parents and the general population (Bianchi et al. 2012; Sayer 2016). Cleaning is a major shared chore in all households and a prime source for tension in roommate households (Heath et al. 2017;

Natalier 2003). Also, scholars have demonstrated that women and men share similar cleaning standards (Thébaud, Kornrich and Ruppanner 2019). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the time women spend cleaning benefits other household members and not just themselves. This is also plausible given that Craig et al. found that women in shared households generally spend more time on housework for the household than men in shared households (Craig, Powell and Brown 2016). In other words, men living with women roommates benefit from their roommate's cleaning.

Interestingly, women in mixed-gender households did not spend significantly more time cleaning than women in same-gender households. This finding suggests that although men in mixed-gender households might benefit from women's cleaning, there is no "added slack" for these women to pick up; if there is, they limit their cleaning time to how much they would have spent living with women. The total amount of time these young adults are dedicating to cleaning is exceptionally low compared with the general population and married couples (Bianchi et al. 2012; Sayer 2016), which further highlights the gap between women and men in mixed-gender households. Therefore, the contractual relationship seems to hinder an intensified gender display through cleaning, albeit not preventing it entirely.

The roommate relationship, however, did mitigate women's gender display through personal chores. Women living with men spent a similar amount of time doing "female-typed" chores that are personal, e.g., cooking, compared with women in same-gender households and men in mixed-gender households. The only significant difference was between women and men in same-gender households, highlighting men's resistance in all-men households to perform chores. The lack of differences between women and men in the time dedicated to personal

housework chores is striking compared with the gap in cleaning, which has a shared communal aspect.

In mixed-gender households, men seem to dedicate as much time to personal housework chores that benefit themselves as their women counterparts but significantly less to the chores that benefit the household. This pattern implies that men assert their masculinity in mixed- and same-gender shared households despite both women and men in these living arrangements being aware of the relationship's contractual nature. The men are particularly resistant to cleaning and contributing, on average, very little compared with the amount of time they dedicate to personal chores, such as cooking. Therefore, this finding suggests that the contractual relationship does not mitigate gender display through shared chores but equalize the display through personal chores.

Men's robust resistance to cleaning is not surprising but still fascinating given that these men are young adults. Younger generations tend to hold stronger egalitarian attitudes, although this trend has plateaued over the past several decades (Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman 2011; Scarborough, Sin and Risman 2019; Shu and Meagher 2018). Moreover, studies also find that young men would still prefer neotraditional roles at home (Pedulla and Thébaud 2015; Pepin and Cotter 2018). Taken together with Natalier's and Craig et al. studies, the current study contributes to a growing body of evidence that shows how the gendered division of labor in couples precedes union formation and exist beyond the family unit.

This study contributes to our understanding of "doing gender" outside the context of the couple or the family by showing that housework participation follows a heteronormative familial script, wherein cleaning is a feminine chore, regardless with whom people live. The findings suggest that housework production in roommate living arrangements are not merely limited to

the “work itself,” as (Berk 1985) argued. Instead, cleaning seems to carry a meaning of gender display - for men in particular. The findings collectively suggest that future research should pay more attention to understanding men’s resistance to cleaning chores, which seems to be a consistent and robust barrier to gender equality in household labor.

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Percentages /Mean (SD)			
	Women (mix)	Women (same)	Men (mix)	Men (same)
Independent variables				
Type of shared living				
Housemates/roommates	70.76	81.65	66.74	78.35
Boarder/roomer	7.46	9.04	7.04	9.02
Nonrelative	21.78	9.31	26.22	12.63
Two housemates or more	45.74	29.33	56.26	38.98
Age	24.63 (3.80)	24.33 (3.57)	25.31 (3.87)	25.01 (3.53)
Race				
White	83.16	77.53	78.29	79.94
Black	7.71	8.71	8.20	6.12
Other	9.13	13.76	13.50	13.94
Education				
Less than HS	5.50	0.76	7.93	4.63
HS	15.73	12.82	19.89	18.20
Some college/AA	36.19	32.12	35.82	35.62
BA or more	42.57	54.30	36.36	41.55
Student (% yes)	33.10	40.02	27.14	34.67
Weekly earnings				
Unknown/missing	2.94	1.74	8.51	2.12
Quantile 1	15.42	17.20	19.78	21.10
Quantile 2	36.28	25.79	20.31	18.21
Quantile 3	26.69	26.03	25.60	32.10
Quantile 4	18.66	29.24	25.81	26.47
Weekly working hours	31.02 (18.54)	30.96 (18.22)	31.09 (21.58)	31.62 (19.69)
Metropolitan area (% yes)	83.07	84.09	78.05	84.09
Dependent variables				
Total housework (minutes)	52.27 (64.31)	47.66 (54.06)	47.80 (55.76)	36.81 (47.80)
Female-typed chores	40.02 (54.40)	37.78 (45.28)	32.76 (46.00)	27.78 (40.31)
Male-typed chores	3.91 (19.59)	3.74 (16.65)	8.77 (30.95)	4.41 (18.26)
Neutral-typed chores	8.34 (18.24)	6.13 (15.19)	6.27 (20.55)	4.63 (13.41)
n	125	344	175	617

Women (mix) = women in mixed-gender households. Women (same) = women in same-gender households. Men (mix) = men in mixed-gendered households. Men (same) = men in same-gender households. Estimates are weighted. Ns are not weighted. Source: American Time Use Survey 2003-2019

Table 2. OLS regression results for female-typed, male-types, and gender-neutral tasks

	Female-typed	Male-typed	Gender-neutral
Women, same gender household ^A	-1.01 (6.27)	0.32 (2.12)	-1.91 (2.14)
Men, mixed gender household ^A	-7.95 (8.13)	3.63 (3.39)	-1.74 (2.48)
Men, same gender household ^A	-12.84* (6.01)	0.06 (1.85)	-2.89 (2.00)
Roomer/Boarder ^B	-4.40 (4.68)	0.99 (2.26)	3.00 (2.15)
Nonrelative ^B	4.15 (4.45)	4.12 (2.83)	0.59 (1.63)
Two housemates or more ^C	-1.72 (3.18)	1.13 (1.58)	-0.21 (1.22)
Age	1.14* (0.55)	0.80 (0.44)	0.14 (0.19)
Black ^E	-20.49** (4.48)	-16.32** (3.88)	-2.97 (1.54)
Other ^E	10.30 (6.07)	5.58 (4.77)	1.38 (2.57)
Weekly working hours	-0.17 (0.17)	-0.14 (0.13)	0.07 (0.12)
Less than high school ^F	-1.50 (8.12)	6.70 (7.40)	-0.68 (2.79)
High school ^F	-5.81 (5.54)	-4.90 (4.65)	2.69 (2.31)
Some college or AA ^F	-2.90 (4.94)	-3.87 (3.82)	4.27 (2.33)
Student ^G	-9.39 (5.29)	-8.35* (3.68)	-0.09 (2.74)
Weekly earnings missing ^H	5.92 (14.00)	-0.20 (7.67)	2.85 (6.74)
Weekly earnings 1st quantile ^H	15.76 (9.86)	13.89 (7.78)	0.14 (4.42)
Weekly earnings 2nd quantile ^H	8.16 (6.36)	7.58 (5.07)	-2.43 (2.71)
Weekly earnings 3rd quantile ^H	9.36 (4.87)	8.90* (3.84)	-1.03 (2.43)
Metropolitan	-2.44 (4.63)	-1.62 (3.80)	-2.15 (1.65)
Weekend ^I	7.74* (3.49)	6.77* (3.06)	0.52 (1.20)
Survey year after 2008	3.20 (4.18)	4.73 (3.40)	1.66 (1.50)
Constant	23.09 (19.12)	19.34 (15.18)	-3.35 (8.47)
R-squared	0.06	0.03	0.05

Robust standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Estimates are weighted.

Notes: A) ref. women in mixed gender households, B) ref. housemate/roommate C) ref. one housemate D) ref. age 25-34 E) ref. age 45 and older F) ref. White G) ref. college degree H) ref. not enrolled as student I) ref. weekly earnings 4th quantile J) ref. weekday.

Source: American Time Use Survey 2003-2019

Table 3. OLS regression results for cleaning, cooking, and other female-types housework tasks

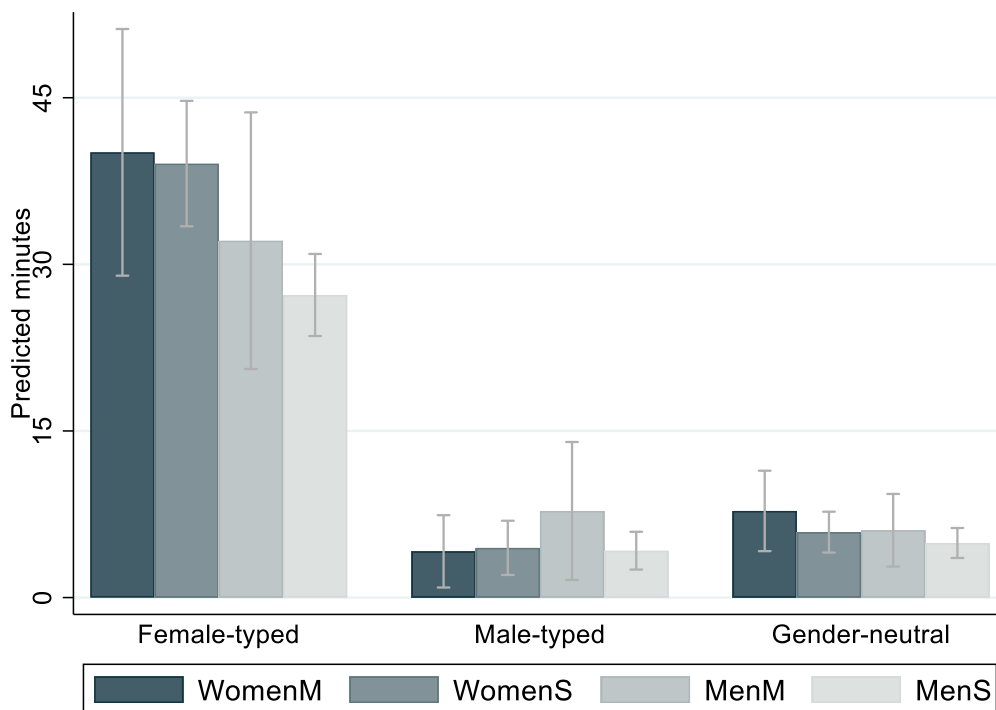
	Cleaning	Cooking	Other Female-typed
Women, same gender household ^A	-3.70 (3.80)	2.51 (3.28)	0.18 (2.75)
Men, mixed gender household ^A	-8.89* (4.16)	3.37 (5.83)	-2.43 (3.04)
Men, same gender household ^A	-9.00* (3.67)	-2.04 (3.05)	-1.80 (2.63)
Roomer/Boarder ^B	1.39 (2.98)	-3.14 (2.90)	-2.65 (2.15)
Nonrelative ^B	5.15* (2.46)	-1.30 (2.81)	0.29 (2.00)
Two housemates or more ^C	-2.21 (1.62)	1.08 (2.02)	-0.58 (1.49)
Age	0.24 (0.21)	0.30 (0.30)	0.26 (0.21)
Black ^E	-3.21 (2.10)	-6.52** (2.39)	-6.59** (1.48)
Other ^E	-2.03 (1.46)	9.40* (3.75)	-1.79 (1.82)
Weekly working hours	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.11 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.06)
Less than high school ^F	-0.29 (3.24)	4.91 (5.26)	2.08 (3.76)
High school ^F	1.49 (2.18)	-5.17^ (2.96)	-1.22 (2.20)
Some college or AA ^F	3.44^ (1.99)	-6.36* (2.50)	-0.95 (1.72)
Student ^G	-4.90** (1.82)	-0.87 (2.35)	-2.59 (1.74)
Weekly earnings missing ^H	6.77 (4.54)	1.32 (5.19)	-8.29** (1.81)
Weekly earnings 1st quantile ^H	4.22 (4.25)	9.46^ (4.99)	0.21 (3.66)
Weekly earnings 2nd quantile ^H	2.86 (2.66)	4.83^ (2.92)	-0.11 (2.56)
Weekly earnings 3rd quantile ^H	2.49 (1.89)	6.59** (2.46)	-0.18 (2.02)
Metropolitan	-1.29 (1.82)	-3.72 (2.55)	3.39* (1.48)
Weekend ^I	4.64** (1.53)	-0.65 (1.99)	2.78* (1.35)
Survey year after 2008	0.69 (1.76)	4.78* (2.03)	-0.74 (1.58)
Constant	5.56 (7.69)	10.88 (9.71)	2.90 (7.60)
R-squared	0.06	0.07	0.03

Robust standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Estimates are weighted.

Notes: A) ref. women in mixed gender households, B) ref. housemate/roommate C) ref. one housemate D) ref. age 25-34 E) ref. age 45 and older F) ref. White G) ref. college degree H) ref. not enrolled as student I) ref. weekly earnings 4th quantile J) ref. weekday.

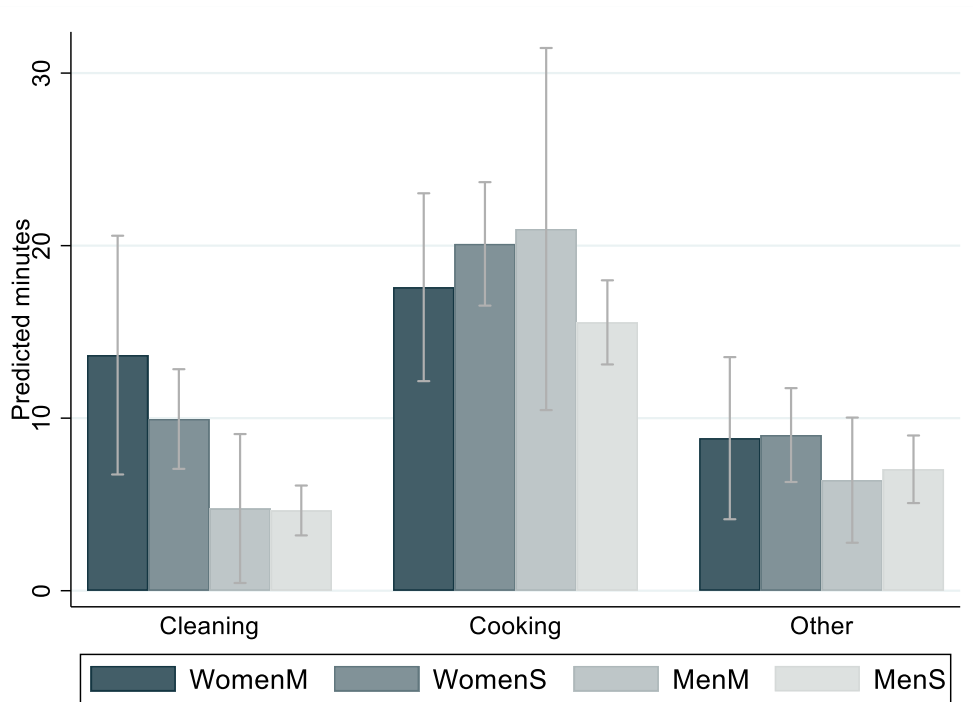
Source: American Time Use Survey 2003-2019

Figure 1. Time spent doing housework by sex-typed task, gender, and household's gender composition



WomenM = women in mixed-gender households. WomenS = women in same-gender households. MenM = men in mixed-gendered households. MenS = men in same-gender households. Estimates are weighted. Estimates are predicted values using the OLS regression models in Table 2. Source: American Time Use Survey 2003-2019

Figure 2: Time spent cleaning and doing other female-typed tasks by gender, and household's gender composition



WomenM = women in mixed-gender households. WomenS = women in same-gender households. MenM = men in mixed-gendered households. MenS = men in same-gender households. Estimates are weighted. Estimates are predicted values using the OLS regression models in Table 3. Source: American Time Use Survey 2003-2019

Appendix

Table A1. ATUS activity code for sex-typed classification

"Female-typed"		"Male-typed"		Gender neutral	
Task description	ATUS code	Task description	ATUS code	Task description	ATUS code
Interior cleaning	20101	Exterior Maintenance, Repair & Decoration	0204*	Household management	0209*
Laundry	20102	Lawn, Garden, and Houseplants	0205*	Household Services (not done by self)	0901*
Sewing, repairing, & maintaining textiles	20103	Interior Maintenance, Repair & Decoration	0203*		
Food & Drink Preparation, Presentation, & Clean-up	0202*	Appliances, Tools, and Toys	0208*		
Grocery shopping	70101	Home Maintenance/Repair/Décor/Construction (not done by self)	0902*		
		Lawn & Garden Services (not done by self)	0904*		
		Vehicle Maintenance & Repair Services (not done by self)	0905*		
		Vehicle repair and maintenance	0207*		

CHAPTER 5. Conclusions and Future Directions

In this dissertation, I explored the underlying gender dynamics of housework across three settings: repartnering, family complexity, and shared living arrangements. Taken together, the results demonstrate the overall stability and similarity of men's low housework participation across settings. Men's housework contributions were remarkably stable upon repartnering and exceptionally similar across most family structures and shared living arrangements. The results also signaled some exceptions. Men in stepmother families contributed higher shares of housework, and young adult men in shared roommate households dedicate similar time to personal housework chores, e.g., cooking, as women.

The Second Demographic Transition introduced many changes to people's familial and living arrangement experiences. The dissertation demonstrates that these demographic shifts uncover more sites for gender inequality in housework and highlights how "gender roles" are embedded in familial roles but at the same time exist beyond them. The role of the family as a "gender factory" has been established in prior scholarship (Berk 1985). However, the dissertation also shows that the gendered division of housework does not exist just in families and that some families are more egalitarian. The stability of men's low contributions across living arrangements, family structures, and life stages underscores the limited power of centering our research on couples and their economic and time resources. Current housework scholarship continues to exclusively test these explanations, which results in overlooking settings that could offer scholars new venues for theorizing about gender and understanding other underlying mechanisms for gender inequality.

The findings do not rule out or suggest that economic resources do not matter. Demographic characteristics (primarily economic) accounted for the change in housework upon

repartnering (Chapter 2) and most of the gap between men in stepmother families and men in other complex families (Chapter 3). However, in Chapter 3, we saw that men in complex families have different demographic profiles than men in two-biological parent families, yet their housework shares were almost identical. Moreover, in Chapter 4, men and women shared very similar profiles, and the economic variables did not explain housework. Economic and demographic forces matter for gender inequality in housework – but they are not a sufficient explanation.

Chapters 2 and 3 also challenged the relevance of applying the Incomplete Institution hypothesis to the study of housework and gender. The incomplete institution is a common framework in stepfamily research that focuses on stepfamilies' everyday lives. However, the results suggest that the differences between families that scholars often attribute to "ambiguity" are mostly driven by selection.

Collectively, the dissertation suggests that women and men "do gender" through housework upon repartnering, across most complex family forms, and in shared households. However, "doing gender" also has limited power in explaining men's housework behavior. The application of "doing gender" in housework research does not adequately acknowledge power (Geist and Ruppner 2018). It does not adequately emphasize men's power and entitlement in and beyond the familial context (Manne 2020). In other words, although "doing gender" is a relevant explanation for the results presented in this dissertation, it does not answer the question of *why* housework is such a forceful site for the creation of masculinity?

A man in Natalier's study provided an explicit explanation – "I'm not his wife." This quote underscores how the perception and construction of heterosexual family life are intertwined in housework participation and expectations. The dissertation empirically

demonstrates how this perception spills over various settings. However, the men in stepmother families have wives, and they contributed almost equally to housework. Understanding the strategies and perceptions within these families should be explored in future studies to help us understand what does encourage men to "step in" (England 2010).

The dissertation has some limitations that point to potential future research directions. First, Chapters 1 and 2 focus on heterosexual couples; however, repartnering and family complexity are an integral part of same-sex couples' family formation process. Future studies should incorporate these processes into the study of housework among same-sex couples as data becomes available to further enhance our understanding of undoing gender and gender relations beyond heterosexual couples (Goldberg 2013; Moore 2008).

Second, all three chapters are limited to the housework investment by the focal couple or the focal individual in a household, which excludes all other household members. This limitation generally applies to housework research in the United States. There is no household time diary of a nationally representative sample that is publicly available. This dissertation demonstrates the potential and need for these data.

Third, Chapter 4 focused only on non-familial shared households. However, doubling up, i.e., living with other relatives or extended family members, is increasingly common, especially as a strategy to navigate economic hardship (Cross 2018; Glick and Van Hook 2011; Pilkauskas and Cross 2018; Wiemers 2014). In a separate paper, I investigate parents' time use in doubling up familial households. Preliminary results suggest that doubling up has different benefits for mothers and fathers depending on their partnership status. Taken together, these studies underscore the complex gender dynamics in households that go beyond the focal couple. Distinguishing between "families" and "households" was necessary for family research amid

growing family complexity. However, my findings suggest that “households” should also receive attention as units of analysis to understand how gender organizes family life.

Finally, the dissertation shows that there is still a lot we do not understand about men’s housework. In this dissertation and other quantitative studies, the “common practice” models did not account for much of the variance in men’s housework. Moreover, the variance in men’s housework was significant across chapters. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to suggest new models, but future research should explore other mechanisms, for example, socialization (Guhin, Calarco and Miller-Idriss 2021). Socialization is not entirely absent from the study of housework – it is embedded in “doing gender.” However, socialization has not been explored empirically as other mechanisms because of data limitations. The only prospective study is limited to White adults born in the 1960s (Cunningham 2001). Scholars should revisit this question and incorporate two essential aspects: race/ethnicity and family structure. Incorporating race and family (in)stability would help us understand the intergenerational transmission of gendered behavior, which is crucial for understanding the potential of future change.

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