

Economic Dependence, Gender, and the Division of Labor in the Home: A Replication and Extension

The fundamental question in the study of the gendered division of household labor has come to be why, in the face of dramatic changes in women's employment and earnings, housework remains "women's work." As a possible answer to this question, Brines (1994) presented a provocative conceptual model of the relationship between economic dependence and the performance of housework by wives and husbands. She concluded that the link between economic dependence and housework follows rules of economic exchange for wives, but among husbands, a gender display model is operative. This paper replicates and extends Brines' model by (a) replicating her work using a different data set; (b) adding additional controls to the model, including a measure of gender ideology; and (c) modeling a distributional (as opposed to absolute) measure of housework. For a measure of hours spent doing housework, the results of my analyses are consistent with Brines' suggestion of separate gender-specific processes linking economic dependence and amount of housework performed. For a distributional measure of housework, on the other hand, my analyses contradict Brines' findings and suggest that both husbands and wives are acting to neutralize a nonnormative provider role when they do housework. Further analyses suggest that

the phenomenon is more likely one of deviance neutralization than of gender display.

The past 15 years have seen a veritable explosion of research on the gendered division of household labor. This time period has also seen dramatic increases in labor-force participation of married women, with an increasing number of wives becoming primary breadwinners in their households. Despite these changes, however, married women still do the majority of housework. In the face of these shifts from traditional gender-based economic roles, the fundamental question in this area has come to be: Why does housework remain women's work?

The consensus of the empirical literature is that the division of household labor tends to be relatively traditional. Wives perform a far greater proportion of household tasks than do their husbands in households where the wife earns more than her husband (Atkinson & Boles, 1984) and even in households where the husband is not employed (Brayfield, 1992). This combination of market and nonmarket work is likely to force married women into working what Hochschild called the "second-shift" (Hochschild, 1989).

Not only do married women perform far more household labor than their husbands; the kinds of household tasks that wives and husbands perform differ. Many researchers (for example, Blair & Lichter, 1991; Brayfield, 1992; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Mederer, 1993) have noted that household labor remains highly segregated by sex. Women primarily do the tasks that traditionally

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have been thought of as “women’s work” (e.g., cooking, laundry, housecleaning), whereas men primarily do “male” tasks (e.g., yard work, auto maintenance). Lennon and Rosenfield reported that men do about 70% of the traditionally male tasks, whereas women perform about 75% of the traditionally female tasks.

To explain these gender-based inequalities in task allocation and in task type, social scientists have developed at least four major conceptual approaches. Each of these perspectives (with the exception of the gender ideology perspective) implicitly or explicitly assumes that housework is seen as an undesirable task and that husbands and wives attempt to minimize the amount of housework they do. Each of the four approaches suggests processes or factors that affect this division of household labor.

The relative resources (or resource bargaining) approach takes an exchange-based perspective. The division of household labor is seen to result from implicit negotiation between spouses over inputs (e.g., earnings) and outcomes (e.g., who does the housework) in the household. In general, the research literature supports this perspective (for example, see Blair & Lichter, 1991; Ferree, 1991; Kamo, 1988). The relative resources approach might account for the observation that housework remains women’s work by arguing that because wives tend to bring fewer resources into the negotiation process, they are less able to produce an outcome in which the housework is equally divided between themselves and their husbands. The relative resources approach would seem to suggest that recent increases in the earnings levels of wives should have produced proportional decreases in the amount of housework wives do, but longitudinal data do not seem to support this hypothesis.

The time availability perspective draws on human capital theory (for example, see Becker, 1991) and focuses on how family members’ time is allocated between market and domestic work. This perspective implies that there should be a strong association between the number of hours a wife works outside the home and the number of hours she spends doing domestic work. Although most studies find that employed wives spend a decreased number of hours doing housework, these differences tend to be small. The time availability approach, therefore, does little to explain why housework remains women’s work.

The third approach is that of gender ideology. Gender ideologies are how a person identifies

oneself with regard to marital and family roles traditionally linked to gender. Gender ideology can be distinguished from gender identity, which Goffman (1977, p. 315) suggested is “the deepest sense of what one is,” in that gender identities are self-definitions such as male or female, whereas ideologies are the elements that make up that definition. Two men who think of themselves as male (their gender identity) can have different ideas about what being male implies (their gender ideologies). One man may assert that being male means believing that domestic labor is women’s work, whereas another man may feel that being male means doing an equal share of household work. Marriage and other intimate relationships provide arenas in which these ideologies are played out. In addition to its manifest functions of providing emotional and economic support and enhancing childbearing and childrearing, marriage also serves the latent function of providing an opportunity for husbands and wives to behave in ways that validate their identities as male and female, that is, to display the visible aspects of their gender ideologies.

Scholars employing this perspective have assumed that activities such as the routine performance (or nonperformance) of household chores will reflect the gender ideologies of husbands and wives. Many researchers have hypothesized that the division of household labor among couples who hold more traditional beliefs about gender and marital roles will be relatively traditional (that is, the wife will do the bulk of the domestic labor), whereas couples holding less traditional (i.e., more egalitarian) ideologies will have a more balanced division of labor. The findings of studies employing the gender ideology perspective generally have been consistent with this prediction (e.g., Blair & Lichter, 1991; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Kamo, 1988; Presser, 1994; Sanchez, 1994); husbands holding more egalitarian gender ideologies tend to perform more hours of housework and a greater proportion of household labor, whereas traditionally oriented husbands tend to do less. Some researchers, however, have either failed to find such an effect (e.g., Coverman, 1985; Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston, & McHale, 1987; Geerken & Gove, 1983) or found an effect only in particular situations (e.g., Blair & Johnson, 1992; Coltrane & Ishii-Kunz, 1992). In general, it appears that studies examining the absolute amount of housework (e.g., those that have examined the number of hours per week spent doing housework) do not tend to find effects of gender

ideology on husbands' contributions to housework, whereas those that have studied relative contributions to housework (e.g., husbands' percentage of total hours spent on household tasks) typically do find effects of ideology. A gender-ideology-based explanation of why housework remains women's work might suggest that although women's ideologies have been changing, men's have not. Supporting this explanation, research by Greenstein (1996a) indicated that the division of household labor approaches equality only in marriages where both the wife and the husband hold nontraditional (egalitarian) gender ideologies.

The fourth approach to understanding the gendered division of household labor, the economic dependency model (for example, see Brines, 1994), suggests that housework is women's work because wives are more likely to be economically dependent on their husbands. Because of this dependency, wives can be expected to allocate more time to domestic work than can their husbands. Brines' (1994) findings provided support for this model. She found a negative relationship between the proportion of family income that wives earn and the amount of time they spend on housework.

Brines suggested that two separate gender-specific processes link economic dependence and performance of housework. For wives, the relationship between economic dependence and housework follows basic exchange principles: As wives' economic dependence decreases, the amount of housework they do (measured in hours per week) also decreases. Brines called this the dependency perspective. In her analyses of data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), Brines found a negative linear relationship between the wives' proportion of family earnings and the number of hours of housework they performed per week.

Brines argued that a different process is at work for husbands. Here, she found a curvilinear relationship in which husbands at the extremes of the dependence continuum do the least housework, whereas husbands whose earnings are approximately equal to those of their wives do the most. Her explanation of this result is based on what she called the "gender display" perspective. Under this reasoning, couples who violate the traditional structure of the breadwinner husband with a dependent wife might be expected to resort to more traditional divisions of housework to achieve "gender accountability" in terms of how they are viewed by their partners, their friends, and themselves.

I find problematic Brines' contention that men and women use different processes to relate their economic dependence to the amount of housework they perform. Her explanation of this difference was a structural one, based on what she saw as differences in how "manhood" and "womanhood" are culturally defined. Brines contended that although manhood is an achieved status (the boy "becomes" a man) womanhood is perceived as an ascribed status, because womanhood is seen "as a natural condition, in part because women's bodies and reproductive capacities are seen as placing them closer to nature" (Brines, 1994, p. 683). Thus, she argued, nonnormative economic roles pose a greater threat to the identities of dependent husbands than to breadwinner wives. The result is that husbands and wives tend to invoke two different gender-specific strategies to their behavior. The amount of housework wives do is predicted to be a positive monotonic function of economic dependence; breadwinner wives do not feel the need to overcompensate for their nonnormative economic role by doing more housework than might be expected under a dependency model. However, dependent husbands are theorized to react to their nonnormative role by doing less, not more, housework as their economic dependence increases.

The situation in households characterized by breadwinner wives and dependent husbands, then, is one in which the amount of housework performed by both the wife and the husband decreases as the wife's share of household income increases. There are a number of mechanisms through which this outcome might occur that do not implicate tenuous assumptions about the cultural framing of manhood and threats to claimed identities. Specifically, it seems likely that in households where the wife is the primary breadwinner, a greater share of market earnings is directed toward purchasing household goods and services in the market, thus resulting in fewer total hours of housework performed in households with breadwinner wives and dependent husbands. Although Brines did control for restaurant meal expenditures in her analyses, she assumed a non-additive effect, that is, that the consumption of market goods and services affects the division of household labor in the same manner for all types of marriages.

The purposes of this paper are fourfold. First, I attempted to replicate Brines' findings, which were based on the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), using the National Survey of Families

and Households (NSFH; Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988) data set. There are at least two advantages to using the NSFH data for this project. First, whereas the PSID asks a global question concerning the amount of housework the respondent performs (“About how much time do you spend on housework in an average week [excluding child care]—I mean time spent cooking, cleaning, and doing other work around the house?”), the NSFH (as detailed below) asks a series of questions about nine different household activities. Second, the NSFH includes measures of gender ideology that allow us to study these effects on the process of the division of housework.

On the other hand, there are limitations in the NSFH data as well. Unlike the PSID, which gathered extensive information about work history, there is no detailed information in the NSFH about unemployment spells. Thus, although Brines was able to assess the effects of short- and long-term joblessness, I cannot. Second, the NSFH does not provide specific information concerning the reasons why a respondent might be out of the labor force. Brines was able to limit her analyses to marriages in which neither partner was jobless because of retirement, physical disability, schooling, or confinement to an institution; I was able only to crudely approximate these conditions by restricting my sample to married couples where both spouses were under age 65 and neither spouse’s ability to hold paid employment or perform housework was affected by disability or enrollment in an educational institution.

Second, I have added additional conceptually relevant controls to the basic model. In an attempt to see whether the findings in Brines’ analyses were caused by variables not included in the model, I estimated models that added controls for factors that are likely to be related to the division of housework. I included terms for region of residence and whether the couple resides in a metropolitan area because it seems likely that the division of housework may vary by region and whether the residence is urban. I added a dummy variable indicating Hispanic background. I included a second-order term for number of children in the household because the literature (e.g., Kamo, 1991) suggests that the effect of the number of children on the amount of housework is nonlinear.

Most important, I added an indicator of gender ideology to the model. It seems reasonable to assume that if the phenomenon Brines observed is, in fact, a gender display, its operation is somehow related to gender ideology. It may be, for example,

that when the gender ideologies of the wives and husbands are taken into account, the gender display effect will be minimized, or it may be that gender ideology functions as a moderating or control variable in the gender display process. Consider the possibility that the operation of the gender display process is contingent on gender ideology. It may be that traditional husbands and wives who occupy nontraditional provider roles may feel compelled to resort to more traditional divisions of housework to achieve “gender accountability” but that nontraditional husbands and wives do not.

Third, I examined Brines’ models when the dependent variable of interest, housework, is measured on a distributional or relative (as opposed to absolute) basis. In Brines’ analyses, the dependent measure of housework is the self-reported number of hours of household tasks performed per week. From a sociological viewpoint, however, there are conceptual advantages to employing a distributional (that is, relative as opposed to absolute) measure of housework. There are many factors that might operate to affect the number of hours of housework performed by wives and husbands: preferences for cleanliness or elaborate meals; work schedules that dictate dining out; demand for domestic labor in terms of home size and complexity; and relative preferences for non-market (domestic) goods and services as opposed to those purchased in the market.

On the other hand, analyses of a distributional measure of housework—for example, the percentage of total housework hours performed by wives and their husbands—are more likely to capture the distributive justice or equity aspects of the division of housework. Because an important thrust of the literature on household labor has been the interpretation of reactions to inequalities in the division of household labor in the context of equity (for example, see Greenstein, 1996b; Sanchez, 1994; Thompson, 1991), it may be worthwhile to conceptualize the relationship between dependence and housework within this framework. Regardless of how much total domestic labor is performed, it seems reasonable that any justice phenomena that might operate in terms of the division of housework are likely to reflect the relative (as opposed to actual) amounts of housework performed.

My fourth goal was to recast this problem in the more general context of deviance neutralization (Goode, 1978; Sykes & Matza, 1957). My model of this problem suggests that when a rela-

tive or distributive measure of housework is considered, wives and husbands respond in the same way when they find themselves in nonnormative provider roles in the family. I predicted that both husbands and wives would engage in deviance neutralization to reduce the costs of being perceived as deviant. This model argues that both breadwinner wives and dependent husbands will react to their nonnormative role by exaggerating the stereotypical level of housework that they perform. Breadwinner wives, according to this model, would do more housework than expected from a linear dependency model, whereas dependent husbands would do less.

Atkinson and Boles (1984) introduced this idea to the literature in a study of marriages that were organized around the wife's career. They found that husbands and wives used the "concealing" and "covering" processes identified by Goffman (1963) to help reduce the stigma of their deviant roles. Husbands concealed by limiting their social interaction and by remaining silent about their wives' careers, for example; they also covered by making humorous remarks about their wives' careers. Although Atkinson and Boles (1984, p. 865) noted that "wives appeared to emphasize some aspects of their traditional role as much as possible to make up for their participation in a traditionally male role," the design of their study precluded a comparison of the relative amounts of housework performed by breadwinner and dependent wives. The NSFH data allow such a comparison.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT

The data for these analyses came from the first wave of the National Survey of Families and Households, a national probability sample of 13,017 adult respondents interviewed in 1987 or 1988. In married couple and cohabiting households, a questionnaire was also administered to the respondent's spouse or partner. The analyses here focus on the 2,912 married couples who provided codable responses to all of the measures in the analyses. For each couple, both the husband and wife were under age 65, and neither spouse was disabled or enrolled in an educational institution. All analyses used the NSFH couple weights to adjust for oversampling, differential probabilities of selection, and differential response rates.

Dependent Variables

Indicators of housework. Each spouse was asked to indicate "the approximate number of hours per week that you, your spouse/partner, or others in the household normally spend" preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning house, doing outdoor tasks, shopping, washing and ironing, paying bills, doing auto maintenance, and driving other household members to work and school. I calculated total hours spent doing all tasks by wives, husbands, related children in the household, and others in the household. I also calculated relative or distributional versions of these measures by computing the proportion of all hours spent on these tasks that the husband and wife performed.

To minimize the number of cases lost because of missing data on the household task items, missing responses to the task items were coded as having spent 0 hours in that activity for respondents who answered at least seven of the nine individual tasks. Those who responded "some time spent (amount of time unspecified)" were coded as having spent 1 hour in that activity. I also experimented with alternative methods of dealing with the missing data, for example, coding all missing data as 0 hours and substituting the mean value for the "some amount spent (amount of time unspecified)" response. Consistent with the findings of South and Spitze (1994) from this same data set, I found that the treatment of the missing data essentially did not affect my substantive conclusions.

Inspection of the NSFH housework data indicates numerous respondents who reported total hours in domestic plus market labor of more than 168 hours per week. Such responses may reflect invalidity in the self-reports of hours spent in housework or (more likely) the fact that respondents performed many household tasks concurrently. To adjust for this problem, I coded any respondent who reported spending more than 100 hours per week in any activity as having spent 100 hours in that activity. There are so few of these cases, however, that coding them to any plausible value has no effect on the substantive implications of the analyses.

Independent Variables

Economic dependence. The measure of economic dependence employed was the same used by Brines (1994), originally suggested by Sørensen and McLanahan (1987), where economic depen-

$$\text{dependency} = (\text{earnings}_{\text{self}} - \text{earnings}_{\text{partner}}) / (\text{earnings}_{\text{self}} + \text{earnings}_{\text{partner}})$$
 The potential values of this measure range from -1 , which indicates that the respondent is completely dependent on his or her spouse for economic support, to $+1$, meaning that the respondent provides complete earned-income support to his or her spouse; a value of 0 means that neither partner is economically dependent on the other, that is, that the partners have equal earnings. Note that this measure is perfectly correlated with wife's (or husband's) proportion of family earnings (assuming no other earners in the family).

Traditionalism. NSFH respondents were asked a series of questions that were used to construct a summated scale of gender ideology. On a 1–7 scale where $1 = \text{strongly approve}$ and $7 = \text{strongly disapprove}$, respondents were asked how much they approved of “mothers who work full-time when their youngest child is under age 5” and “mothers who work part-time when their youngest child is under age 5.” On a 1–5 scale, where $1 = \text{strongly agree}$ and $5 = \text{strongly disagree}$, respondents were also asked how much they agreed with the following four items: “It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family”; “Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed”; “Parents should encourage just as much independence from their daughters as their sons”; and “If a husband and wife both work full-time, they should share housework tasks equally.” Appropriate item scoring was reversed to produce a scale where higher scores indicate more traditional gender ideologies. Because the individual items had different ranges, the items were first standardized and then summed, yielding a Cronbach's α of $.68$ for the wives and $.66$ for the husbands. The summated scores were standardized to a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 .

Control Variables

There are a number of background characteristics of the wives, husbands, and their marriages that I included in the model as statistical controls. Number of related children in the household is included because the number of children in the household undoubtedly affects the amount (and probably the distribution) of housework. A squared term for the number of children was included in the models because the literature

(Kamo, 1991) suggests that the effects of the number of children on the amount and division of housework may be nonlinear. Relative resources theory suggests that both the respondent's education in years and his or her hours employed per week should affect the division of household labor. The logged value of total family income was included. Finally, because it is possible that the division of housework varies across ethnic, regional, and urban-rural groups, I included measures of respondent's race, region of residence, and whether the couple lived in an SMSA.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents weighted means and standard deviations for the entire sample of couples. Overall, the 2,912 marriages and the wives and husbands are fairly representative of the population of marriages that existed and the men and women who were married during the study period (1987–1988). The couples had been married an average of 17 years. About 70% lived in metropolitan areas. The couples averaged about 1.5 children. Mean total family income was about \$38,000. Children in the households performed, on average, about 3 hours of housework per week, whereas others (over the age of 19 years) in the household contributed about 1 hour.

The husbands' average age was about 40 years; wives were about 2.5 years younger. About 8% of the wives and husbands were African American, and about 6% were Hispanic. The husbands and their wives tended to have some postsecondary education, with means of 13.3 and 13 years of formal education respectively. Wives average about 38 hours of housework (about 64% of the total) per week, whereas husbands average about 17 hours. Wives average about 24 hours per week in market labor; husbands averaged about 40 hours.

The economic dependence scores indicate, as expected, that wives tended to be economically dependent on their husbands. The wives, on average, earned about 28% of total couple income. The wife earned at least 40% of the couple's income in about 31% of the couples and had earnings at least twice that of her husband in about 6% of the couples.

One issue that should be considered with these data is the problem of possible sample selection bias resulting, in part, from the structure of the

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Couple Characteristics	
Duration of marriage (in years)	16.93 (11.02)	
Region of residence		
Northeast	19.0%	
North Central	27.6%	
South	33.3%	
West	20.1%	
Residing in metropolitan area	70.6%	
Number of related children in household	1.29 (1.26)	
Total family income	\$50,123 (\$50,790)	
Hours per week of housework by children	3.07 (8.04)	
Hours per week of housework by others	1.59 (10.71)	
	Wives	Husbands
Age (in years)	38.06 (10.50)	40.51 (10.93)
Race		
African American	5.4%	5.8%
Hispanic	6.2%	6.2%
White, non-Hispanic and other	88.4%	88.0%
Education (in years)	13.01 (2.43)	13.35 (2.79)
Economic dependence	-.468	.468
Housework		
Total hours of housework per week	37.31 (22.56)	16.67 (14.53)
Percentage of all hours spent on housework	63.5%	30.3%
Market labor hours per week	24.09 (19.24)	42.53 (16.15)
Traditionalism score	98.79 (14.97)	99.39 (15.26)

Note: Unweighted $N = 2,912$ married couples for all analyses. Table entries are means (percentages for categorical variables) and, in parentheses, standard deviations.

NSFH interviews. The married couples included in these analyses were composed of a primary respondent (either the husband or wife) and a secondary respondent (in these analyses, the primary respondent's spouse). Of the 6,785 married, spouse-present, primary respondents in NSFH (Wave 1), 5,648 had spouses who completed at least part of the secondary respondents' interview. Comparison of background characteristics of couples who provided codable responses to all variables in these analyses to those who did not shows that although there are some statistically significant differences between the two groups, there are no substantial or systematic differences, especially on those variables central to these analyses. The wives in the analytic sample, for example, performed an average of 37.6 hours of household labor and 33.1 hours of market labor per week, compared with 37.8 and 31.9 hours for those wives not in the analytic sample. Husbands in the analytic sample performed about 17.7 hours of housework and 44.4 hours of market labor, compared with 17.6 and 41.4 hours for those husbands not in the analytic sample.

For comparison to Brines' analyses, I present

two figures representing the relationship between wives' economic dependence and hours of housework performed (in Figure 1) and between wives' economic dependence and proportion of hours of housework performed (in Figure 2). Note that Figure 1 suggests a generally negative relationship between wives' economic dependence and the number of hours of housework performed per week (wives who have no earnings perform, on average, about 45 hours of housework per week, whereas wives who are the sole earners perform about 30 hours) and a weak positive relationship for husbands (husbands who have no earnings perform about 18 hours of housework per week, whereas those who are the sole earners perform about 15 hours).

The relationships between wives' economic dependence and proportion of total hours of housework performed presents a different picture. Here, the relationship for wives is decidedly non-linear, as is the relationship for husbands. These figures represent bivariate relationships, however; the following analyses add a number of theoretically relevant predictors to the model.

FIGURE 1. OBSERVED HOURS OF HOUSEWORK PERFORMED PER WEEK BY HUSBANDS AND WIVES BY LEVEL OF WIFE'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

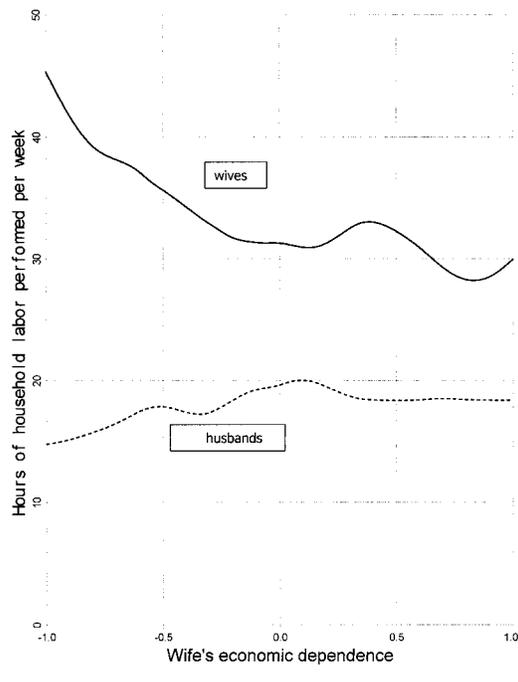
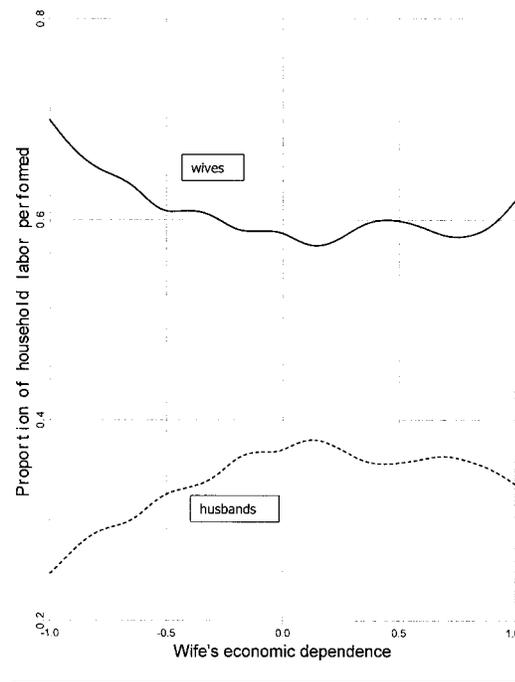


FIGURE 2. OBSERVED PROPORTION OF HOUSEWORK PERFORMED BY HUSBANDS AND WIVES BY LEVEL OF WIFE'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE



Replication

The analyses presenting the replication appear as Model I in Table 2 and Table 3 for wives and husbands, respectively. All of these analyses use the seemingly unrelated regressions (SUR) technique to estimate the effects of the independent and control variables on the dependent measures of housework. The SUR technique is especially appropriate for situations where the error disturbances across comparable equations are assumed to be correlated because of unmeasured characteristics common to each model. In these analyses, I assume that there are unmeasured (and probably unmeasurable) characteristics of the marriages and the households that are related to the division of housework. Thus, Model I in Table 2 (wives' data) and Model I in Table 3 (husbands' data) are comparable and are estimated jointly using SUR, as are the three other comparable models. The principal advantage of the SUR technique in these analyses is that it allows for more efficient estimators of the parameters than does OLS regression.

Model 1 in Table 2 presents a replication of Brines' analyses for wives. My results are essen-

tially similar to Brines'. In particular, I observed a linear negative relationship between wives' economic dependence and amount of housework performed (as in Brines' analyses, the second- and third-order effects of economic dependence did not approach statistical significance and are not included in Model D); this relationship is depicted graphically in Figure 1. Thus, I draw the same conclusion from Model I that Brines does: The linear dependency model provides the best fit to the wives' data. Wives' hours of housework decreases as their economic transfer to their husbands increases.

My results for husbands (Model I in Table 3) are also similar to those obtained by Brines. As can be seen in Figure 1, there is a second-order curvilinear relationship between economic dependence and husbands' hours of housework in the same inverted U-shape she observed in the PSID data. As husbands' economic dependence increases, their housework contributions also increase, but only to a point; around the midrange of dependence, the husbands' housework contributions begin to decline. Brines interpreted this result as evidence of the gender display model.

TABLE 2. SUR MODELS PREDICTING MEASURES OF HOUSEWORK FOR WIVES

Variable	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Adjusted model R ²	.122*	.138*	.151*	.163*	.163*
Constant	46.33*	31.82*	59.18*	54.63*	53.22*
Economic dependence (Economic dependence) ²	-3.36*	-2.95*	-3.88*	-4.00*	-4.01*
Age	.01	-.03	.00	-.01	-.01
African American	1.04	.82*	-3.56*	-3.89*	-3.89*
Hispanic		-5.89*		.50	.50
Education	-.98*	-.86*	-.11	-.05	-.05
Number of children (Number of children) ²	2.73*	2.65*	.63	.07	.07
Ln (family income)	.23	.39	.38	.53	.53
Housework by children	.17*	.15*	-.67*	-.69*	-.69*
Housework by others	.07*	.09*	-.27*	-.26*	-.26*
Hours employed per week	-.22*	-.20*	-.05*	-.05*	-.05*
Traditionalism		.15*		.03*	.04*
In metropolitan area		-3.14*		-3.03*	-3.03*
In Northeast		-.54		2.19	2.19
In South		.84		4.07*	4.07*
In North Central		.82		2.06	2.06
Interaction of traditionalism and dependence ²					-.03

Note: Sample size for all analyses 2,912. * = coefficient that is at least twice its standard error. Cell entries are metric (unstandardized) regression coefficients. Model I = hours of housework per week; Model II = hours of housework per week, expanded; Model III = % of total housework hours per week; Model IV = % of total housework hours per week, expanded; Model V = % of total housework hours per week, expanded.

TABLE 3. SUR MODELS PREDICTING MEASURES OF HOUSEWORK FOR HUSBANDS

Variable	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Adjusted model R ²	.056*	.061*	.100*	.115*	.115*
Constant	24.91*	30.04*	38.08*	42.00*	44.10*
Economic dependence (Economic dependence) ²	-1.77*	-1.66*	-4.22*	-4.30*	-4.29*
Age	-.12*	-.09*	-.13*	-.13	-.13*
African American	3.66*	3.74*	2.41	2.73*	2.74*
Hispanic		.34		.47	.48
Education	.11	.04	.13	.12	.13
Number of children (Number of children) ²	-.13	1.17*	-1.21*	-1.69*	-1.68*
Ln (family income)	.01	-.08	.46	.38	.37
Housework by children	.30*	.31*	-.18*	-.18*	-.18*
Housework by others	.04	.04	-.14*	-.15*	-.15*
Hours employed per week	-.10*	-.10*	-.04*	-.04*	-.04*
Traditionalism		-.05*		-.03*	-.05*
In metropolitan area		.26		2.38*	2.38*
In Northeast		-1.07		-2.56*	-2.59*
In South		-1.47*		-3.43*	-3.46*
In North Central		-.40		-1.79	-1.81
Interaction of traditionalism and dependence ²					.05

Note: Sample size for all analyses 2,912. * = coefficient that is at least twice its standard error. Cell entries are metric (unstandardized) regression coefficients. Model I = hours of housework per week; Model II = hours of housework per week, expanded; Model III = % of total housework hours per week; Model IV = % of total housework hours per week, expanded; Model V = % of total housework hours per week, expanded.

FIGURE 3. PREDICTED HOURS OF HOUSEWORK PERFORMED PER WEEK BY HUSBANDS AND WIVES BY LEVEL OF WIFE'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

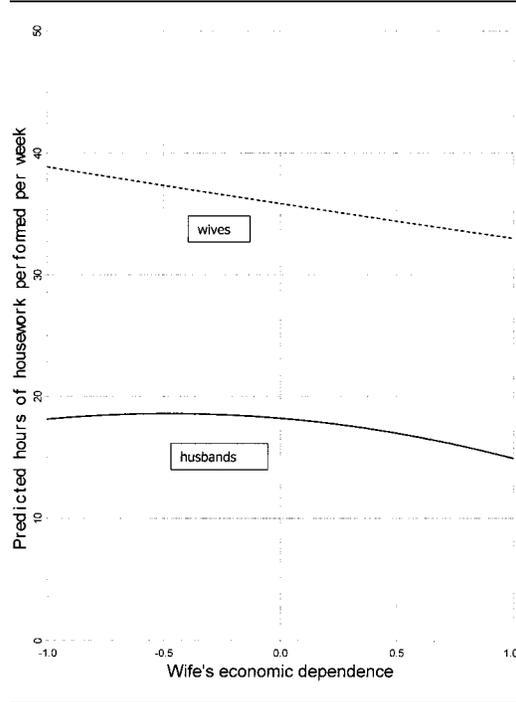
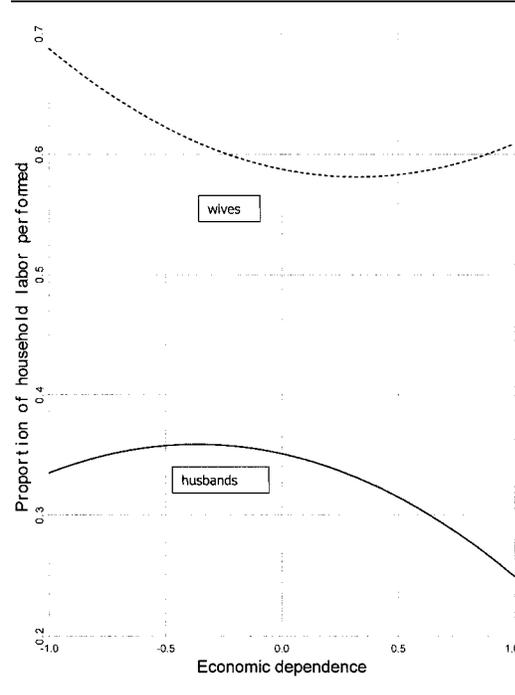


FIGURE 4. PREDICTED PROPORTION OF HOUSEWORK PERFORMED BY HUSBANDS AND WIVES BY LEVEL OF WIFE'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE



Extension of the Model

Models II in Tables 2 and 3 present the results of an expanded model for wives and husbands, respectively. Even with controls for region of residence, metropolitan residence, and gender ideology, the basic conclusions drawn from Models I are maintained. We also see statistically significant effects of metropolitan residence (for wives), however, and, most important, effects of gender ideology. Consistent with conventional wisdom, traditional wives perform more housework, whereas traditional husbands perform less. Both Models II represent statistically significant increases in prediction power (R^2) over the corresponding Models I.

Model II demonstrates the same gender display processes as noted in Model I. For wives, the linear effect of dependence on hours of housework suggests that an exchange process (rather than a gender display process) is operating. For husbands, the squared term for economic dependence is statistically significant, suggesting a gender display process. Thus, even when additional controls are added to the model, Brines' conclusions about

separate gender-specific processes are supported. These relationships are depicted in Figure 3.

Distributional Measures of Housework

I present in Models III of Tables 2 and 3 analyses analogous to those in Brines' paper and in Models I but employing a distributional measure of the division of housework: the percentage of all hours of housework that are performed by wives and their husbands. Recall from Table 1 that wives, on average, contribute about 64% of all hours of housework, whereas husbands contribute about 30% (the remaining 6% is performed by children and other household members).

Using this distributional measure of the division of housework, I obtained estimates for husbands similar to those in Model I. For husbands, essentially the same conclusions drawn by Brines and from my Models I can be drawn from the Model II: a curvilinear (second-order) inverted U-shaped pattern suggesting a gender display process. This relationship is depicted in Figure 4. Starting from the right-hand side of the figure, husbands do progressively more housework until just after the midway point of economic depen-

dence, that is, the point at which husbands and wives are earning approximately equal salaries. After that point, even though husbands' economic dependence is increasing, they do progressively less housework.

For wives, however, the results are not consistent with Model I or Brines' analyses. Contrary to Brines' findings, there is a statistically significant squared term for economic dependence. The sign of the dependence terms suggests a U-shaped pattern (not inverted as in the case of the husbands). In other words, the effect of economic dependence of wives on the distributional measure of housework also seems to be a gender display process. Figure 2 suggest that as wives become less economically dependent on their husbands, the proportion of housework performed declines, reaching its minimum just past the midway point (where wives and husbands are earning approximately equal salaries). From that point, the proportion of housework performed by wives again turns upward.

In Models IV in Tables 2 and 3, I extend the model employing a distributional measure of housework by adding the same controls I employed in Models II. Even with these additional controls, the conclusions drawn from Models III are upheld. Contrary to Brines' findings using an absolute measure of housework, analyses employing a distributional measure suggest both husbands and wives are exaggerating the stereotypical level of housework performed. The breadwinner wives are doing more housework than would be predicted under an economic dependency model, whereas the dependent husbands do less.

Interactive Effects of Gender Ideology

In Models V, I add an interaction between the squared term for dependence (for both wives and husbands) and the gender ideology measure. This effect is not statistically significant for either husbands or wives.

DISCUSSION

I began this paper by setting four objectives. First, I successfully replicated Brines' analyses of the PSID using data from the NSFH with hours of housework performed per week as the dependent variable. As in Brines' paper, I observed a linear (dependency) relationship between economic dependence and hours of housework performed for

wives, and a curvilinear (gender display) relationship for husbands. Next, I extended the model by adding controls for region of residence, urbanness of residence, a second-degree term for number of related children in the household (to test for nonlinear effects), and gender ideology. Adding these controls did not change the finding that gender-specific processes link economic dependence and number of hours of housework performed for married men and women.

Nonetheless, when I extended the model to use a distributional (as opposed to absolute) measure of housework performed, I obtained results that contradict Brines' conclusion that "married men and women appear to respond quite differently to issues of dependency" (p. 682). When the dependent measure of housework is distributional (the proportion of total hours spent on housework performed), I observed that breadwinner wives tended to do more housework than would be predicted under an economic dependency model, but that dependent husbands did less. In Brines' terms, both wives and their husbands are exhibiting a gender display process when the outcome variable is a proportion of total hours spent on housework.

That the same process seems to link economic dependence and proportion of housework performed by husbands and wives is a far more parsimonious finding than that of Brines. More important than parsimony, however, is the question of why this process is occurring. Is it gender display, or is it some other process? If it is a gender display process, we would expect that its operation is somehow related to gender ideology, but Model IV shows clearly that the relationship between economic dependence and proportion of housework performed is nonlinear even with a measure of gender ideology in the model. Furthermore, the lack of a statistically significant interaction term between gender ideology and the squared term for dependence in Model V suggests that the nonlinear effect is not conditional on ideology. Nontraditional husbands are as likely to do a smaller share (and nontraditional wives to do a larger share) of household labor as traditional husbands and wives.

The lack of effects of gender ideology on this "gender display" process leads me to interpret this finding in the more general context of deviance neutralization. As a result of their nonnormative economic roles, breadwinner wives and economically dependent husbands occupy deviant identities. Atkinson and Boles' study showed just how extreme reactions to these deviant identities

can be. Speaking to a breadwinner wife, one woman said “I’d rather die than end up like you” (Atkinson & Boles, 1984, p. 864). In conversation with a man whose wife was an office manager, another man asked, “Does she manage you, too?” (Atkinson & Boles, p. 864).

One mechanism for neutralizing this deviant identity is to overcompensate for it by exaggerating behaviors or appearances that contradict the deviant identity. Breadwinner wives might try to neutralize their deviant economic identity by doing far more housework than might be predicted by the time availability or relative resources models. Economically dependent husbands, on the other hand, might attempt to neutralize their deviant identity by doing far less housework than these models would predict. These are precisely the results observed in Models III and IV. The proportion of housework done by wives and their husbands is most equal at about the midpoint of the economic dependence continuum, that is, at the point where wives and husbands have approximately equal earnings. These inequalities increase as we move away from the midpoint of economic dependence in both directions, however. Although dependent wives are predicted to do the largest share of housework (about 68% of the total), the share of housework performed by wives decreases as their economic dependence decreases. Then, at about the midpoint of economic dependence, their share of housework starts increasing so that the model predicts that wives who are primary breadwinners will do more housework than wives who earn about the same amount as their husbands. This overperformance of housework corroborates the notion that a deviance neutralization process is taking place.

A similar process, albeit in the opposite direction, seems to occur among the husbands. Starting from the right-hand side of Figure 4 and moving toward the left, the model predicts that economically dependent husbands will do the least housework (about 25% of the total) whereas husbands who are sole breadwinners are predicted to do more of the total housework (about 33%).

Although wives earned more than their husbands in about 15% of these couples, only about 4% of the wives earned as much as two thirds of household income. Couples who are on the far right-hand side of Figure 4 (i.e., couples characterized by a breadwinner wife and an economically dependent husband) are relatively unusual in today’s society, but are more common than they were 20 years ago and will almost certainly be

even more common 20 years from now. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask who, exactly, are these couples characterized by wives who are primary breadwinners? Survey research in general, and secondary analysis in particular, is ill-equipped to answer this question, which is best answered by qualitative, in-depth studies, such as that conducted by Atkinson and Boles.

On the other hand, it is apparent that for the majority of married couples—those characterized by relatively traditional employment roles—the relationship between economic dependence and performance of housework is essentially linear and negative. For example, the predicted proportion of housework performed by wives is highest (about 68%) when wives are totally economically dependent upon their husbands; this figure falls in a generally linear fashion to about 59% toward the midpoint of economic dependence (where wives and husbands have equal earnings). Similarly, if we examine the predicted proportion of housework performed by husbands from the economic dependence midpoint (where husbands are predicted to perform about 35% of the housework) to the extreme right-hand side of Figure 4 (husbands who are completely economically dependent on their wives are predicted to perform about 26% of the housework), we also notice a generally linear downward trend.

One question that might be raised about these findings has to do with the composite nature of the housework variable. As noted above, summing the number of hours involved in each of nine common household tasks creates the housework variable. It is conceivable that combining routine (or “feminine”) tasks with nonroutine (“masculine”) tasks in the measure of housework might obscure the processes involved. It might be argued that an economically dependent husband who won’t do the dishes might be engaging in a gender display, but for such a husband to cut back on his yard work suggests a different process at work. Additional analyses (not reported here) show a statistically significant curvilinear relationship between economic dependence and (a) proportion of “feminine” tasks performed (preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning house, and washing and ironing) and (b) proportion of “masculine” tasks performed (auto maintenance, outdoor tasks). A similar relationship was noted for “gender-neutral” tasks (paying bills, driving other household members to work and school, and grocery shopping), although these effects failed to meet conventional levels of statistical significance. Thus,

these analyses support the argument that the operative process is one of deviance neutralization rather than gender display.

Another perspective that might be invoked to explain these findings is Hochschild's principle of "balancing." Hochschild noted that although there was no statistically significant relationship between a husband's relative earnings and how much housework he performed, among the husbands in her study who earned less than their wives, none shared housework with their wives. She explained this outcome by suggesting that "if men lose power over women in one way, they make up for it in another way. . . . In this way, they can maintain dominance over women. How much responsibility these men assumed at home was thus related to the deeper issue of male power" (Hochschild, 1989, p. 221). The precise mechanism through which this balancing process is supposed to operate, however, is unclear.

What do the findings of this study tell us about the relationship of economic dependence to performance of housework by wives and their husbands? First, in terms of the amount (hours) of housework performed, they suggest that different processes are operating for wives and husbands. For wives, there appears to be a monotonic negative relationship between economic dependence and hours of housework performed, with economically dependent wives doing the most housework. For husbands, there appears to be a nonlinear relationship in which husbands married to women with approximately equal earnings do the most housework.

Second, in terms of the proportion of housework performed, the data suggest that both wives and husbands who occupy nonnormative earner roles (that is, breadwinner wives and dependent husbands) seem to exaggerate the amount of housework they do in the direction of appearing more consistent with the norm for their gender.

Third, the data strongly suggest that the effects of economic dependence on proportion of housework performed might best be conceptualized as the result of a more general deviance-neutralization process rather than one specifically of gender display. There are two key pieces of evidence that these effects may not be gender processes. First, the curvilinear effects of economic dependence are still present even when gender ideology is included in the model; and second, there is no interaction between gender ideology and the curvilinear aspect of the relationship.

The findings presented in Table 3 and Figure

4 suggest an interesting implication for future trends in gender equity in marriage. The couples that most closely approach an equal distribution of housework tend to be those couples in which the breadwinner role is shared, that is, those couples in which each spouse brings home about half of the family earnings. As marriages in this country continue the trend toward dual-earner couples with increasingly equal incomes, it would appear that a likely outcome would be a continuing trend toward equality in the household division of labor.

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