

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

The College of the Liberal Arts

**THE FAMILY SYSTEM AND DETERMINANTS OF  
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP QUALITY**

A Thesis in

Sociology and Demography

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

August 2014

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## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of my research is twofold: 1) to examine which processes in the family system shape parent-child relations and 2) compare whether these processes are different for mothers versus fathers. These processes include the division of paid and domestic labor, marital quality, perceptions of fairness regarding domestic labor, parental depression and parental involvement with children. I address these objectives using the National Survey of Families and Households, using measures derived from father, mother, and child respondents. A series of OLS regression analyses reveals similarity in the processes that contribute to both mother-child and father-child relationship quality, with evidence supporting a spillover effect of marital satisfaction into the parent-child relationship. However, modeling the effect of mother characteristics on father-child relationship quality shows that discord within the marital dyad due to perceptions of unfairness has implications for father-child relationship quality.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

For several decades, researchers have been studying the division of labor within families. There is evidence that the way this often gendered, micro-economic process is structured has implications for the marital dyad and, quite possibly, the larger family system. The conflict around the organization of paid and unpaid labor can influence the tone of the relationship among parents, which may then directly or indirectly impact parent-child interactions. Less attention has been paid to how the organization of labor—both paid and unpaid—structures parent-child relationships. It is important to study how family level processes shape the quality of parent-child relationships, particularly father-child relationships, because research suggests father-child interactions are more susceptible to influence from other family dynamics. Moreover, stronger father-child relationships are socially desirable and the increased participation of men in more traditionally feminine household labor may be one pathway to achieving stronger parent-child relationships.

The gendered division of labor in the home is nearly ubiquitous and can serve as a major source of marital tension. Mothers do more of the domestic labor and are more involved with children, at least if involvement is quantified by temporal measures. In other words, time is expected to be a major determinant of the function and quality of the parent-child relationship. Fathers, who normally spend a greater proportion of their time away from the home and a smaller proportion of their time engaged in domestic labor

than mothers, could therefore be at a disadvantage with respect to building high quality relationships with their children. Yet, contemporary fathers that live amongst their children are at an advantage when compared to non-residential fathers in regards to their capacity to build and maintain high-quality relationships with offspring. Proximity and time are the basis of most measures attempting to explain parenting behavior. However, researchers have begun to look beyond the dichotomy of presence versus absence with regards to fathers. Research has shifted to investigating more qualitative aspects of parenting, such as emotional warmth and demonstrations of affection. Research that shows how fathers build high-quality relationships marked by emotional closeness is necessary to make even further gains in fatherhood scholarship.

My study addresses this need. It is guided by the following questions:

- 1.) To what extent does the organization of labor between partners impact parent-child relationships?
- 2.) Do other family processes occurring between parents have an impact on the quality of parent-child relationships?
- 3.) Does the strength or quality of parent-child relationships differ between parents?
- 4.) What characteristics or traits among parents reduce the quality of parent-child relationships?

These questions will be explored using the second wave of data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), an ideal data source for examining many questions related to contemporary families (Sweet and Bumpass 1996).

The main focus of my paper is how the organization of labor affects parent-child relationship quality. I contribute to prior research in three ways. First, most studies have explored parental involvement as the outcome, with less attention paid to perceptions of closeness and other measures of the quality of the relationship, especially in studies

regarding fathering. Using data derived from the NSFH, this analysis includes a composite measure created from six indicators of the parent-child relationship as perceived by the focal child respondent. The use of the child's report for the dependent variable is strength in and of itself, as potential bias from the parent is reduced. Second, I examine differences and similarities in parenting by mothers and fathers. Though mothers are generally more involved in virtually all household tasks, including childcare, it is worth considering whether the quantity of time necessarily predicts the closeness of the parent-child relationship. Finally, my work is able to use reports derived from each person in the family unit, using mother, father, and child characteristics that may predict better relationships between parent and child.

The ways that fathers contribute to the quality of their relationships with their children and which characteristics of fathers themselves, as well as which family level mechanisms promote or detract from the quality of the relationship is still an area ripe for research. The review of relevant literature in Chapter 2 outlines how mothers are still responsible for the bulk of domestic work, including both housework and childcare. Moreover, ideals concerning the allocation of housework and childcare may result in perceiving the arrangement as unfair, which has implications for the marital dyad. Furthermore, discord in the marital dyad has the potential to impact the parent-child dyad, especially the relationship between father and child. How much and how often fathers contribute, and how mothers view these contributions, differ by the constraints on mothers' time; that is, their involvement in paid labor. Additionally, the way fathers interact with children and the characteristics that promote that involvement do not necessarily indicate that the involvement is positive. In other words, the literature



suggests that fathers who are unhappy in other realms of their lives may indeed interact with their children but in ways that do not promote closeness or positive affect.

## Chapter 2

### Background

#### Division of Household Labor

The influx of women into the paid labor force resulted in an explosion of family scholarship from multiple disciplines and perspectives, especially with regard to the responsibility for and organization of housework. Although research suggests that household labor and childcare are distinct but interrelated phenomena (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992; Coltrane 2000), parental involvement and parent-child relationship quality are both couched in the gendered division of labor more broadly. Responsibility for children, accessibility to children, and the kinds of interactions had with children are all shaped by other household or family level processes (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008). Many of these processes are integral to the daily maintenance of the household unit and, as such, are highly routinized (Barnett and Shen 1997). Moreover, this routine household maintenance is usually a gendered practice that lies at the crux of family relationships.

One of the strongest and most replicated findings in the household labor scholarship is that in virtually all permutations of social grouping characteristics or statuses—race, age, marital status, presence of children, socioeconomic status, and education—in which a heterosexual couple cohabits, women will perform more of the domestic, unpaid labor to maintain that household than men do (Coltrane 2000; Baxter, Hewitt, and Haynes 2008; Hook 2006). This “second shift” (Hoschild and Machung

1989), or the onus of housework on working women with families, is sometimes cast as a failure of the feminist movement. In any event, the term implies that women are doing double duty, with research linking the responsibility for housework and childcare to outcomes such as stress, depression, and marital tension for wives (Barnett and Shen 1997).

However, some research suggests that the disparity between women and men is not as large when the sum of both paid and unpaid labor hours are calculated. Men are more likely to work for pay for more hours than women do, so that the time a woman spends maintaining a household roughly makes up the difference. In other words, the sexes spend a roughly equivalent proportion of their time engaged in labor, but it is a difference in kind, not quantity. Rexroat and Shehan (1987) examined the family life cycle and the allocation of paid and unpaid labor across time. The authors found that the difference in time men and women spend in both paid and unpaid work is small before children but becomes quite exaggerated once young children are present in the household. In a similar vein, Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes (2008) identify the transition to parenthood as the primary mechanism driving the gendered division of labor. Moreover, it appears that men may create a demand for more domestic labor than they perform (South and Spitze 1994), resulting in a net increase in housework for their partners.

That women do more of the domestic labor in the home is a given. Comparative studies, however, find that men are spending more time doing more in the home and family setting than earlier counterparts. Hook's (2006) cross national study shows how men's contributions in the home have increased over time in response to women's labor force participation, while Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer and Robinson (2000) found that the rate

of increase in unpaid labor time among men actually exceeds the rate of increase in paid labor among women. However, Hook (2006) also suggests that further gains in men's housework is unlikely with the passage of time and will stall out if social policies that support families are not implemented.

The inequitable division of labor in the home is related to negative outcomes for women, including depression and stress. MacDonald et al (2005) found that unpaid work was a significant source of stress for women but not men, and that the performance of routine housework was more stressful for women than the performance of childcare. Ross and Mirowsky (1988) find that, for employed women, the difficulties arranging childcare was a significant source of depression among women. For men, there was no association between depression and either having children or the arrangement of childcare. Pittman, Kerpelman, and Solheim (2001) show that women and men respond differently to each other's work stress. Women try to compensate for men's stressors outside of the home by performing more housework, while men do not alter their performance of domestic labor in response to their partner's stress. Sayer's (2005) finding of the emergence of a leisure time gap between men and women suggests that women are more acutely affected by a time crunch, exacerbating distinctions in how time is structured for women and men in families. Employed mothers cut back on personal time or chores to maintain levels of involvement with children that are comparable to those of non-working mothers (Bianchi 2000). Moreover, the experience of stress or depression on the part of women can have implications for the marital relationship.

Research suggests that the gendered division of labor in which women perform the bulk of domestic duties can have consequences for the harmony of the family system.

And it is not necessarily the way domestic labor is split that is the problem. That is, an exact 50%-50% split of time and tasks may not even be necessary in order to achieve more harmonious relations. Research suggests that the type of tasks may have greater implications than how many hours couples are devoting to housework. Barnett and Shen (1997) separate tasks by their immediacy. In other words, low schedule control tasks are those that cannot be postponed and are central to the daily functioning of the family system, while high schedule control tasks are infrequently performed and can be shifted easily to respond to other demands in one's schedule. Low-schedule control tasks are those that tend to illicit more stress for their performance. Other researchers have called the daily tasks either "female" or "routine" labor, with a tendency to move away from identifying tasks with a gender signifier (such as "female") as it seems to normalize the gendered performance of certain tasks. In any event, studies suggest that when men help shoulder more of the routine tasks, even when the total domestic burden is still inequitable, women are less likely to experience negative outcomes.

There are particular situations and combinations of characteristics where some men carry a larger share of the domestic workload. One fairly consistent finding that has emerged in the scholarship is that, among dual earner couples, the allocation of domestic labor is spread a little more equally between both partners than in single-earner couples (Coltrane 2000; Brayfield 1995). Consistent with a relative resources theoretical orientation, other scholars find that both a woman's education and her proportion of the household earnings are significant factors related to the sharing of household labor (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992; Kamo 1988). Studies testing gender ideology have received less attention as of late; however, the ideology of husbands, but not wives, is generally

found to be a significant predictor of husband's participation in domestic labor. When men have more egalitarian views, they tend to do more in the home. Greenstein (1996) looked at the interactive effect of both partner's gender ideology and found that egalitarian attitudes among husbands did not predict more contributions from husbands if their wives had more traditional gender role attitudes.

Men's participation in the family has changed over time, even though women's entry into the labor force did not prompt broad, sweeping changes in the organization of family life. Men have become slightly more responsible for domestic labor and are spending more time in contact with their offspring. The division of household labor and all of its related factors shape the context in which parenting and childcare take place.

## Chapter 3

### Theory

Seeking a comprehensive explanation of parenting behavior, I utilize a family ecology framework and blend two theoretical orientations—human capital theory and gender ideology theory—to examine parenting in the context of the family system, including both parents and the child. The gendered organization of family life and the consequences of the division of labor within families are discussed with respect to those mechanisms that predict engagement in the family system.

#### **Framework for Understanding the Family System: Family Ecology**

The family ecology perspective posits that the family system is interrelated and that processes among different dyads in the unit have implications for the whole system. According to this perspective, dysfunction in the form of marital conflict can impact the quality of the marital partnership in addition to the parent-child dyad. Similarly, positive interactions between parents can have spillover effects in which the quality of parent-child relations are reinforced and stabilized. Generally, research finds that the quality of the father-child relationship suffers more than the mother-child relationship as a result of marital conflict and instability (Belsky, Youngblad, Rovine and Volling 1991). Fathers tend to withdraw from family relationships in times of conflict and this has consequences for the father-child dyad. In a similar way, parents experiencing symptoms of depression, either chronically or acutely, may withdraw from family relationships, with implications for the quality of those relationships. Women generally experience depression more

frequently than men (Kessler 2003), so depression may be a more salient factor in mother-child than in father-child relationships. Taking into account these factors is important when discussing the quality of parent-child relations. According to the ecology perspective, we expect that parents who report high marital quality will have better quality relationships with children than parents who report low marital quality. We also expect that fathers will have better quality relationships with children when mothers are experiencing symptoms of depression.

My study also draws upon two competing theoretical orientations to explain parent-child relationship quality. The tangible and intangible resources of families are showcased in three economic-oriented frameworks that revolve around the use of time, power, or capital (Kamo 1988). Broadly speaking, these frameworks fit within the relative resources theoretical orientation. In addition to resources, norms and values shape behavior in social systems, and the family unit is no exception. Gender ideology theory suggests that norms and values about what it means to be a man or a woman in general and in the family especially are at the crux of the gendered differences in roles and responsibilities with respect to family organization.

### **Relative Resources**

Human capital theory posits that the division of domestic labor can be explained by role specialization. The skills and abilities of an individual are utilized to maximize efficiency. Parents will specialize when it comes to household labor into what each partner does best and is best equipped to handle. Typically, mothers, as child-bearers,



assume the role of primary caregiver from infancy onward. Mothers may then minimize their time engaged in paid labor in order to maintain their parental role. Research finds that mothers of infants are less likely to work than mothers of older children, and that mother's time spent in market labor increases as children age. According to this theoretical orientation, mothers have the time and expertise to perform the bulk of the domestic labor, including both housework and childcare. Fathers, on the other hand, spend more time in paid labor. In the role of primary breadwinner, fathers have less available time for childcare and housework and have more resources to negotiate out of responsibility for undesirable tasks. Applying this theory to the quality of parent-child relationships, we would expect that the parent that is less involved in market labor and more involved in domestic labor will have more exposure to children and therefore have better quality relationships with children. Given that mothers are typically more involved in domestic labor by almost any measure, they should have better relationship quality with children than fathers will.

### **Gender Ideology**

Whereas human capital theory suggests that the gendered division of labor is a practical and rational allocation of tasks, gender ideology theory suggests that our norms and beliefs about being women and men influence how housework and childcare is arranged. Traditionally, women have been the caregivers, responsible for the bulk of childcare and daily household maintenance. Men have traditionally been responsible for bringing in more of the monetary and material resources for their families as the primary

breadwinner, even when women are employed. These patterns remain, according to this theory, due to cultural constructions of gender. Women are thought to be generally more nurturing, and therefore will do the kinds of work that expresses this tendency to nurture, such as providing a clean home, cooking, and otherwise caring for the basic and daily needs of their partner and children. Men are generally thought to be providers, who identify with work as the primary way in which they perform as husbands and fathers. According to this theory, couples with very traditional ideas would be marked by a sharp division of household labor, while couples with more egalitarian ideas will have a more equitable division of labor. However, this assumes a match in couples on gender ideology. It stands to reason that some couples will have a mismatch. Generally, research has found that men with traditional views do not necessarily respond with a more equitable division of labor if the wife has egalitarian ideas. Thus, the gender ideology of the father generally has more weight in how housework and childcare is allocated. With this in mind, I will control for gender ideology to isolate the effects of the organization of paid and unpaid labor on the way parent-child relationships are constructed.

## Chapter 4

### Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

A family ecology framework helps identify and specify which factors are influencing the various relationships within the family unit. Additionally, gender ideology theory and relative resources theory highlight how we expect said factors to act upon one another. That is, the family ecology framework drives the selection of measures, while the theoretical orientations outlined above drive how the analytical model will be specified.

Inspired by a family ecology framework, this study aims to examine how family-level mechanisms, or the context in which parenting occurs, shapes both mothering and fathering behavior. In other words, how do parents construct their relationships with children and in what ways do factors—including paid and unpaid labor, parental depression, marital quality, perceptions of fairness, and parental involvement—act on the behavior of the other parent, such that some promote and others limit the quality of relationship to be had between parent and child. One of my study's major aims is to explore potential direct effects of family-level dynamics on the quality of father-child relationships.

The exploration of the research questions outlined above is conducted with the NSFH, a longitudinal, nationally representative study of 13,007 households. The NSFH contains a wealth of information about contemporary families, including: relationships with parents, children, and other significant family members, detailed household

arrangements, life histories, economic circumstances, and well-being. My analysis utilizes the second wave of data, in which responses from a main, spouse, and focal children respondent were collected, when applicable. The reasons for using this dataset are twofold. First, the breadth of measures available on families is an asset for examining the kinds of research questions driving this study. Second, because the NSFH unit of analysis is the household, all members of the family have been interviewed, with separate survey instruments for children and spouses. A noted deficiency in father scholarship is the reliance on mother reports for father behaviors, as mothers tend to underreport fathers' time spent in childcare and housework. Not only does my research benefit from the inclusion of the father respondent for father behaviors, but it also allows for the examination of the outcome—parent-child relationship quality—from the child's perspective, thereby reducing parental biases in the outcome studied.

The research questions outlined above point toward some general expectations and hypotheses. First, the literature suggests that the division of labor in the home may drive the structure of all family relationships. When the division of labor in the home is more equitably divided or when an unequal distribution is perceived as just, parents are less likely to experience stress, depression, and anxiety, and will also have more a more satisfactory marital relationship. The main hypothesis of this study is that the gendered division of household labor has negative implications for father-child relationship quality, given the impact of a demonstrated unequal or perceived unfair division of labor on family-level dynamics. In line with previous research that suggests father's engagement in routine labor has more meaning to the wife than does father's time in sporadic labor, I expect to find a positive relationship between father's proportional contribution to both

routine and sporadic housework and father-child relationship quality, but the effect for routine housework should be stronger.

The amount of time that both fathers and/or mothers work represents constraints on their time available for family labor. Research shows that fathers do marginally more domestic labor—housework and childcare—in dual-earner couples and that this increase may present men in families with more routine opportunities to bond with children. Mother's work hours are therefore expected to be positively related to father-child relationship quality, while father's work hours will be negatively related to the outcome.

Whether mothers perceive the division of labor as unfair or not impacts their personal happiness as well as their satisfaction within the relationship. This is presumably because the routine nature of housework provides a near-daily opportunity for tension in the household. When there is no sense of injustice, then it follows that there is no routine issue applying constant pressure on either the marital relationship or mothers' happiness. Thus, the expectation is that any sense of unfairness on the part of mothers operates through their experiences of depression and perceptions of marital happiness to negatively affect father-child relationship quality.

Parental involvement is conceptually distinct from both housework and childcare, even if it is not temporally distinct (Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane 1992). That is, though they may childcare may occur concurrently with parental involvement, childcare—the routine work that involves providing for a child's physical needs—is related but different from the process of connecting emotionally with a child. My study includes three measures of parental involvement and hypothesizes that such involvement serves as a protective force,

promoting better quality relationships between fathers and children even when fathers are not heavily invested in housework.

In summary, the guiding hypotheses are as follows:

**Labor:** The father's share of both routine and sporadic labor in the household will contribute to better quality relationships with children. Father's share of routine labor should have a stronger effect on parent-child relationship quality than father's share of sporadic labor. Mother's hours in paid labor will promote father-child relationship quality, while father's hours in paid labor will reduce father-child relationship quality.

**Perceptions of fairness:** Mothers who perceive that both housework and childcare arrangements are unfair to them will not be significantly different from mothers who do not perceive unfairness with regards to mother-child relationship quality. However, mothers' perceptions of unfairness with regard to housework and childcare will significantly predict father-child relationship quality. Fathers who perceive unfairness with regards to housework, but not childcare, will have poorer relationships with children when compared to fathers who do not perceive the arrangement of housework as unfair.

**Marital quality:** Both mothers' and fathers' reports of marital quality will be positively related to mother-child relationship quality and father-child relationship quality.

**Parental depression:** Mothers' depression will be negatively related to mother-child relationship quality, but positively related to father-child relationship quality. Fathers' depression will be negatively related to both mother-child and father-child relationship quality.

**Parental involvement:** Parental involvement will be positively related to parent-child relationship quality.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Method**

#### **Data and Sample**

I utilize data from Wave 2 of the NSFH, which is based on a multi-stage probability sampling design. The first wave of data, collected between 1987 and 1988, included a sample of 13,007 respondents, in which one adult (age 19 or older) per household was randomly selected as the “main” or referent respondent in relation to whom family and household information was organized. The first follow up or second wave of data, which I use, was collected between 1992 and 1994 and involved re-interviews of 10,007 of the original "main" respondents from the first wave of study. In addition, this second wave of data collection included interviews with the spouse of the main respondent and interviews with the focal child respondent. The focal child respondent is a child of the main respondent that was chosen at random during the first study wave; however, the focal children are not interviewed themselves until the second wave.

The sample for the present study includes only those households in which the main and spouse respondents are married and the focal child respondent is the biological child of both parents. Additionally, the focal child respondent is limited to those children between the ages of 10 and 19 living in the household with both parents at the time of the survey. I have restricted the sample based on these particular characteristics for multiple

reasons. First, the dependent variable, parent-child relationship quality, is derived from reports from the children in order to reduce potential reporting bias by mothers about father behaviors and vice versa. The only interviews with focal children that delved into the aspects of relationships with parents were conducted with older focal children, aged 10 to 19. Secondly, investigating married couple families in which the focal child is a biological child of both parents helps to reduce the confounding effects of family structure, including divorce, cohabitation, non-residential parenting, and step-parenting. Despite the increasing diversity in American households, the majority of minor children continue to reside in married, two-parent households (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 2013). My final analytic sample consists of 610 two-parent households with a focal child.

## **Measures**

### **Outcome: Parent-Child Relationship Quality**

My dependent variable, parent-child relationship quality, was measured with a six item scale based on child's responses to questions about the qualitative aspects of the relationship with their mother or father, respectively. The responses to these measures are coded from 1=*almost every day* to 5=*never* in response to: 1) *How often does your [parent] criticize you?* and 2) *How often does your [parent] praise you or give you a compliment?* The next two questions ask focal children to estimate 3) *If you felt depressed or unhappy, how likely would you be to talk to your [parent]?* and 4) *If you had*



*a major decision to make, how likely would you be to talk to your [parent]? Responses ranged from 1=definitely wouldn't to 5=definitely would. Finally, focal children were asked to estimate 5) How much do you admire your [parent]? On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is no admiration at all, and 10 is a tremendous amount, how much do you admire her? and 6) Taking all things together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with your [parent]? Higher scores indicate better parent-child relationship quality. Item 2 (praise) was reverse-coded to maintain alignment with the other items. The alpha for the composite measures was 0.76 and .78 for mother-child and father-child relationship quality, respectively.*

### **Independent Measures**

Three separate measures of parental involvement are used in this study: quality time, physical affection, and school participation. Both parent respondents received identical survey instruments, meaning parents were asked identical questions on all items presented below. Having identical items for each parent that is derived from the self-reports of each parent is an advantage over earlier studies that utilize mother reports of father behaviors.

To assess quality time, respondents were asked two questions: *Last week, did you spend time with (focal child), just the two of you, for example, working on homework or a project, in leisure activities, or just having private talks?* and *About how many hours did you do this with (focal child)?* Responses to the first question were 1=yes and

2=*no*. Responses to the second question were the estimated number of hours. The hours estimate measure was recoded to include respondents who had answered “no” to the first question, receiving a score of 0=*no hours*. This measure is an improvement over previous measures, particularly of father involvement. Items that capture parents’ contact with children but do not specifically refer to their undivided attention to offspring in child-centered activities are a disadvantage.

The variable for physical affection was derived from the responses to two questions: *Some families are very physical in expressing affection and others are not so physical. During the last week, have you given (focal child) a hug or kiss to express your affection?* and *About how many times in the last week have you done this?* Responses to the first question were 1=*yes* and 2=*no*. Responses to the second question were the estimated instances of physical affection. The physical affection estimate measure was recoded to include respondents who had answer “no” to the dichotomous question, receiving a score of 0=*no affection*.

A measure of school participation was used to assess each parent’s involvement in their offspring’s education. The following items were used to create the four item scale:

1) *In a typical school week, how many days do you check on whether (focal child) did (his/her) homework or other school assignments?;* 2) *In a typical school week, how many days do you help(focal child) with (his/her) homework or other school assignments?;* 3) *In a typical school week, how many days do you talk with (focal child) about school activities or events?;* and 4) *In a typical school week, how many days do you talk with (focal child) about things (he/she) has learned in school?* Each item is coded from

0=*never* to 7=*every day*. After summing and standardizing the items, the alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was 0.65 for mothers and 0.71 for fathers.

Marital quality was measured by the responses to four scaled items of perceived happiness and satisfaction in the home: 1) *Taking all things together, how would you describe your marriage?*; 2) *how happy are you with the work your spouse does around the house*; 3) *how happy are you with the work your spouse does x as a parent*; and 4) *overall, how satisfied with are you with your family life?*. All responses ranged from 1=*very unhappy/very dissatisfied* to 7=*very happy/very satisfied*. After summing and standardizing the items, the alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was 0.81 for mothers and 0.77 for fathers.

The division of labor in the household was measured by two variables for sporadic and routine labor. The responses to five scaled items for sporadic labor estimated the number of weekly hours respondents spent in each of the following tasks: 1) *outdoor and other household maintenance tasks*; 2) *shopping for groceries and other household goods*; 3) *paying bills and keeping financial records*; 4) *automobile maintenance and repair*; 5) *driving other household members to work, school, or other activities*. The following four items comprised the measure for routine housework: 1) *preparing meals*; 2) *washing dishes and cleaning up after meals*; 3) *cleaning house*; 4) *washing, ironing, mending*.

Perceptions of fairness were measured with two separate items that asked parents to identify how they felt about fairness in their relationship with regards to specific areas. The first item asked about fairness in regards to household chores and the second measure asked about fairness in regards to child care. Responses ranged from 1=*Very*

*unfair to me* to 5=*Very unfair to partner*. Each of the fairness variables were recoded into a dichotomous measure so that any indication of unfairness toward the respondent (1=*very unfair to me* or 2=*somewhat unfair to me*) was set equal to 1 and all other responses were set equal to 0.

Parental depression was derived from a three item scale based on each respective parent's responses concerning their own experiences of depression. Responses to each of the three items were dichotomous with 0=*no* and 1=*yes*. The three items asked respondents to indicate whether: 1) *in the past year have you had 2 weeks or more during which you felt sad, blue, or depressed or when you lost all interest in things that you usually cared about or enjoyed*; 2) *have you felt depressed or sad much of the time in the past year*; and 3) *have you had 2 years or more in your life when you felt depressed or sad most days, even if you felt okay sometimes?* A higher value indicates more acute depressive symptomology than a lower value.

### Control Measures

Child age and child sex are included in this study as controls, in addition to measures for parent income, education, age, and gender ideology. Child age measures child's age at time of interview, with a range of 10 to 19 (mean age = 13.5). Child sex is a binary measure that was recoded to and 0=*Male* and 1=*Female* (sample = 50.7% female). Income is a continuous measure of individual, not household, income in response to the question: *About how much income from wages, salaries, commissions, and tips did you receive in the last 12 months, before taxes and other deductions?* Parent age is also a

**Comment [A1]:** Is this the best way to report these?

continuous measure. Parent education is derived from five dichotomous measures that asked respondents to indicate whether they had a particular educational credential (1=*Yes* and 2=*No*). These measures include responses to: 1) *Do you have a high school diploma?* and 2) *What degrees or certificates have you received?* with separate responses for a) *Associate's Degree*; b) *Bachelor's Degree*; c) *Master's Degree*; and d) *Doctorate*. Respondents who reported no high school diploma were assigned a value of 0=*less than high school*" on the educational measure and those who did were assigned a value of 1=*high school*". Remaining respondents who reported attaining a postsecondary degree or degrees were assigned a value starting at 2=*Associates Degree*" to 5=*Doctorate*" based on highest educational credential obtained.

Gender role ideology was measured by the responses to nine scaled items about gender role attitudes: 1) *It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family*; 2) *it is all right for children under three years old to be cared for all day in a day care center*; 3) *a man can have a fully satisfying life without getting married*; 4) *marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended except under extreme circumstances*; 5) *preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed*; 6) *it is all right for a man to have a child without being married*; 7) *the bible is God's word and everything happened or will happen exactly as it says*; 8) *it is all right for a couple with an unhappy marriage to get a divorce when their youngest child is under age 5*; 9) *a woman can have a fully satisfying life without children*. Each item is coded from 1=*strongly agree* to 5=*strongly disagree*. After recoding certain items then standardizing and summing all items, the alpha reliability

coefficient was 0.75 for mothers and 0.73 for fathers. A high value on the scale indicates more gender traditionalism.

### **Missing Data and Analytic Strategy**

According to Schafer and Graham (2002), recovering missing values is necessary in order to make sound inferences from data. Multiple imputation is a technique by which natural variability is restored and the likelihood of biased parameter estimates is minimized (Acock 2005). I employed Stata's multivariate normal imputation, a procedure which is robust to departures from normality (Schafer and Olsen 1998). I used the study variables to impute five datasets for estimation.

To determine the degree of similarity between parents on all characteristics, descriptive statistics and t-tests for all study variables are presented in Table 1. Tables 2 through 5 show parent predictors of parent-child relationship quality, cycling through four permutations of predicting either mother-child or father-child relationship quality using either all mother or all father characteristics. Each of the four models presented in each table were estimated using ordinary least squares regression. Controls for parent gender ideology, child age and sex, and parent income, educational level, and age were included in all four models in each table.

## Chapter 6

### Results

#### Between Parent Differences

Table 1. Two-tailed paired t-test differences in mother and father means

	Mother		Father		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Parent-child relationship quality	32.77	5.0	31.73	5.5	5.76 ***
Work hours	32.21	16.1	43.91	15.3	-14.20 ***
Routine housework	29.39	17.2	8.11	8.8	25.56 ***
Sporadic housework	10.47	8.9	12.87	9.6	-4.65 ***
Perceptions--childcare	0.20	0.4	0.03	0.2	9.84 ***
Perceptions--housework	0.41	0.5	0.06	0.2	15.74 ***
Marital satisfaction	31.19	5.9	32.65	4.9	-6.41 ***
Parental depression	0.67	1.0	0.56	0.9	2.27 *
Quality time	4.13	6.4	3.58	5.2	1.82
Affection	9.73	13.5	5.80	11.1	6.45 ***
School participation	13.77	5.3	10.69	5.8	11.67 ***
Gender ideology	29.36	5.8	30.39	5.5	-4.55 ***
Income	17740.74	15805.4	38847.40	26623.0	-19.03 ***
Education	1.47	1.1	1.64	1.3	-3.91 ***
Age	40.08	5.5	42.41	6.2	-14.60 ***

N=610

Notes: \* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

Table 1 shows means and standard deviations for the outcome variable and all predictors utilized in the following analyses. The t-test statistic indicates significant differences between mothers and fathers on almost all study variables. Mothers and fathers are not significantly different in terms of quality time spent with children; however, this is the only measure for which a significant difference between parents was not observed. Fathers in this sample work significantly more hours for pay, perform more

of the sporadic housework, are more satisfied in their marriages and are more traditional in their gender role attitudes. Fathers are also significantly older, more educated, and have a higher individual income than mothers. Mothers perform significantly more routine housework, are more likely than fathers to perceive housework and childcare as unfair, are more depressed, and generally more involved with children.

The differences seen between mothers and fathers in Table 1 are generally in line with expectations based on prior research, particularly in regards to demographics and the division of paid and unpaid labor. Though fathers are no more likely than mothers to be employed (analyses not shown here), attachment to paid labor does differ significantly by parent. Fathers in this sample specialize as breadwinners, with an average number of work hours that approximates full-time status, while mothers provide the bulk of routine housework. This role specialization is also reflected in the significant difference in mean reported income for each parent; the paid labor of mothers appears supplemental to that of fathers. Moreover, the sum of mean routine and sporadic housework indicates that mothers report “working” in the home an average of approximately 40 hours a week, double the average hours of total housework for fathers.

The sum of hours each parents spends per week working, in both paid and unpaid labor, roughly approximates the total contribution each parent makes to the family economy. Summing the average work hours, routine housework, and sporadic housework measures does support the idea of a skewed labor burden by gender. The average mother’s total contribution is higher than that of the average father’s total contribution, and this difference is significant (analysis not shown here). This may contribute to the differences in the proportion of fathers versus mothers who hold perceptions about the



unfairness of the division of domestic labor (both housework and childcare) and have implications for both mental health and marital satisfaction, as mothers are both less satisfied in their marriages and more depressed than fathers. Yet, these parental differences in labor contribution do not extend to the provision of quality time with children, as mothers and fathers in this sample report no significant difference in the average amount of quality time spent per week with children. This may suggest more similarity in the processes that contribute to better quality relationships with children for parents, regardless of gender, than the skewed division of labor would otherwise suggest. In sum, the sample used in this study is similar to samples used in other family research.

#### **Predicting Father-Child Relationship Quality with Father Characteristics**

In Table 2, I use father characteristics to predict father-child relationship quality. Father's marital satisfaction emerges as a significant predictor of father-child relationship quality in Models 3 and is not mediated by the addition of father-involvement variables in Model 4. Consistent with hypotheses, this positive relationship shows that fathers who are satisfied in their marital relationship have positive gains in the quality of their relationship with their children.

Parental involvement is expected to contribute to better quality parent-child relationships. None of the father involvement variables were significantly related to father-child relationship quality. Earlier analyses (not shown here) suggest that father school involvement is positively related to father-child relationship quality but that this effect is mediated by the inclusion of the control variable child age. The significant and

negative effect of the control variable, child age, shows that older children report lower quality relationships with fathers than do younger children. The mediation of the school involvement effect by child age suggests that fathers are less involved with children's schooling when children are older.

Table 2. Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Father Characteristic Variables Predicting Father-Child Relationship Quality

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Father work hours	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Father routine housework	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02
Father sporadic housework	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02
Father perceptions--childcare		-1.39	-1.07	-1.13
Father perceptions--housework		-1.19	0.17	0.17
Father marital satisfaction			0.23 ***	0.23 ***
Father depression			-0.06	-0.07
Father quality time				-0.03
Father affection				0.02
Father school participation				0.04
Gender ideology	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.00
Child age	-0.63 ***	-0.63 ***	-0.61 ***	-0.56 ***
Child sex	-0.26	-0.32	-0.29	-0.37
Father income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Father education	0.34	0.36	0.30	0.26
Father age	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
Intercept	36.45	36.44	29.78	29.32
R-square	0.07	0.07	0.11	0.11

N=610

Notes: \* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

*b* = unstandardized regression coefficients

### Predicting Father-Child Relationship Quality with Mother Characteristics

Table 3 shows the regression models predicting father-child relationship quality using only mother characteristics. Contrary to expectations, mother work hours has no significant effect on the quality of the father-child relationship. Model 2 suggests that

mother's perceptions concerning the division of labor may be a more salient factor in its impact on father-child relationship quality than the actual distribution of labor between any one couple, no matter how skewed it may or may not be.

Table 3. Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Mother Characteristic Variables Predicting Father-Child Relationship Quality

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Mother work hours	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02
Mother routine housework	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
Mother sporadic housework	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	0.00
Mother perceptions--childcare		-2.29 ***	-1.37 *	-1.53 **
Mother perceptions--housework		-0.58	0.37	0.29
Mother marital satisfaction			0.24 ***	0.22 ***
Mother depression			0.06	-0.03
Mother quality time				0.03
Mother affection				0.04 *
Mother school participation				0.09
Gender ideology	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.01
Child age	-0.58 ***	-0.57 ***	-0.56 ***	-0.43 ***
Child sex	-0.18	-0.16	-0.22	-3.56
Mother income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mother education	0.15	0.16	0.08	0.01
Mother age	-0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01
Intercept	39.68	39.85	31.22	29.12
R-square	0.07	0.10	0.15	0.17

N=610

Notes: \* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

*b* = unstandardized regression coefficients

Mother perceptions regarding the distribution of labor is a significant predictor of father-child relationship quality. Reports of father-child relationship quality are significantly lower among families in which mothers perceived the arrangement of childcare as unfair (see Models 2 through 4) when compared to those families in which mothers did not perceive childcare as unfair. This relationship is almost halved with the addition of marital satisfaction and depression in Model 3, showing that the effect of

perceptions of fairness is partially explained by mother's marital satisfaction. Moreover, mother's marital satisfaction, in Models 3 and 4, demonstrates a significantly positive relationship with father-child relationship quality.

Mother's involvement has a significant effect on father-child relationship quality, as seen in Model 5. There is a positive relationship between both mother's affection and father-child relationship quality. Of the controls, child age is significant and negatively related to father-child relationship quality across all models. More mother characteristics than father characteristics affect father-child relationship quality. The effect of marital satisfaction on father-child relationship quality is of similar direction and magnitude for mothers and fathers. However, it was hypothesized that father, not mother, perceptions of unfairness with regards to domestic labor would emerge as a significant predictor of father-child relationship quality. The findings in Tables 2 and 3 do not support this hypothesis. Mother perception of unfairness with regards to childcare has implications for the father-child dynamic and may demonstrate a "spillover" effect between the marital dyad from which children are not insulated. Further examination of family processes in Tables 4 and 5 may help clarify the mechanics observed in Tables 2 and 3.

### Predicting Mother-Child Relationship Quality with Mother Characteristics

Table 4. Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Mother Characteristic Variables Predicting Mother-Child Relationship Quality

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Mother work hours	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.00
Mother routine housework	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Mother sporadic housework	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mother perceptions--childcare		-1.22 *	-0.72	-0.87
Mothers perceptions--housework		-0.29	0.16	0.05
Mother marital satisfaction			0.12 **	0.09 *
Mother depression			-0.22	-0.31
Mother quality time				0.05
Mother affection				0.03
Mother school participation				0.09
Gender ideology	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.05
Child age	-0.54 ***	-0.54 ***	-0.53 ***	-0.40 ***
Child sex	0.81	0.83	0.78 *	0.69
Mother income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mother education	-0.09	-0.08	-0.15	-0.22
Mother age	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
Intercept	39.02	39.10	35.07	33.06
R-square	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.14

N=610

Notes: \* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

*b* = unstandardized regression coefficients

In Table 4, I use mother characteristics to estimate mother-child relationship quality. Mother's labor—either paid or unpaid—did not emerge as a significant predictor of mother-child relationship quality (Model 1). It was hypothesized that mother perceptions of unfairness would have no significant effects on mother-child relationship quality; however, the results in Table 4 show findings contrary to expectations. Mother perceptions regarding the arrangement of childcare are significantly related to mother-child relationship quality, such that mothers who perceive childcare as unfair to them have significantly lower quality relationships with children than do mothers who have no

perceptions of unfairness in childcare (Model 2). However, this significant effect disappears from all remaining models when other covariates are entered in Models 3 and 4.

Mother's marital satisfaction is positively related to mother-child relationship quality in a similar direction in comparison to fathers. However, the effect of marital satisfaction does not appear to be as strong for mothers as it is for fathers. Moreover, the effect of marital satisfaction on mother-child relationship quality is reduced when mother involvement is added in Model 4. Further analyses (not shown) indicate that mother's school involvement attenuates the effect of mother marital satisfaction on mother-child relationship quality, suggesting that mothers are more involved in child schooling when they are more satisfied in their marital relationships.

As seen in Tables 3 and 4, mother's perceptions of unfairness with regards to childcare impact both mother-child and father-child relationship quality. The negative impact of mother perceptions of unfairness on parent-child relationships is stronger on father-child relationship quality than on mother-child relationship quality. Moreover, the effect is rendered insignificant in the mother-child relationship model but not in the father-child relationship model. In addition, it was hypothesized that marital satisfaction of both parents would promote better quality relationships with children. Findings presented in Tables 2 and 4 support this hypothesis; however, mother marital satisfaction has a smaller impact on mother-child relationships than father marital satisfaction has on father-child relationships. Taken together, these findings suggest that father-child relationships may be more susceptible to both negative and positive spillover from the marital dyad than mother-child relationships.

### Predicting Mother-Child Relationship Quality using Father Characteristics

Table 5. Summary of Simple Regression Analyses for Father Characteristic Variables Predicting Mother-Child Relationship Quality

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Father work hours	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Father routine housework	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	0.00
Father sporadic housework	0.05 *	0.05 *	0.04	0.05 *
Father perceptions--childcare		-0.23	0.00	0.17
Father perceptions--housework		-1.65	-0.93	-1.14
Father marital satisfaction			0.14 **	0.14 **
Father depression			0.12	0.15
Father quality time				-0.12 *
Father affection				0.00
Father school participation				0.05
Gender ideology	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05
Child age	-0.57 ***	-0.57 ***	-0.57 ***	-0.53 ***
Child Sex	0.85 *	0.78 *	0.80 *	0.61
Father income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Father education	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.00
Father age	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Intercept	37.73	37.65	33.59	33.14
R-square	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.12

N=610

Notes: \* $p \leq 0.05$  \*\* $p \leq 0.01$  \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

*b* = unstandardized regression coefficients

Finally, Table 5 shows results for predicting mother-child relationship quality using father characteristics. Consistent with hypotheses, father's labor has significant effects on mother-child relationship quality. Specifically, father's performance of sporadic housework is positively related to mother-child relationship quality across all models except Model 3. However, contrary to expectations, father performance of routine labor is not significantly related to mother-child relationship quality.

I hypothesized that father perceptions of unfairness would have impacts on father-child relationship quality, but the findings in Table 2 do not bear this out. When

controlling for child age and sex and parental gender ideology, educational level, and income, father perception of fairness with respect to neither housework nor childcare significantly predicts of mother-child relationship quality in Model 2. Father's marital satisfaction remains a significant predictor across models 3 and 4, consistent with expectations that parental marital quality would have positive effects on parent-child relationships.

Only one indicator of father-child involvement shows a significant relationship with mother-child relationship quality, in Model 4. Father's one-on-one time with children is negatively related to the outcome, even with controls for child age. Father's quality time with children has significantly decreases mother-child relationship quality, irrespective of child age. Similar to the findings seen in Model 4 in both Tables 2 and 3, fathers have more significant effects on mother-child relationship quality than mothers have on mother-child relationship quality.

Marital satisfaction is a consistently significant predictor across all tables. The effect of mother and father marital satisfaction on mother-child relationship quality is similar in magnitude (Tables 4 and 5). Moreover, the similarity of the effect size is also seen in Tables 2 and 3. The marital satisfaction of both parents seems to be slightly more important for father-child relationships than for mother-child relationships. Additionally, controls for child age show similarly consistent patterns across all analyses.



## Chapter 7 Conclusions and Discussion

Though research has documented how the gendered organization of domestic labor impacts the marital dyad, less attention has been paid to how the performance of housework and associated processes influence the parent-child relationship. Using data from the NSFH, I employed ordinary least squares multiple regression to determine the extent to which the organization of household labor drove other family processes that could have implications for parent-child relationship quality. My study's primary objective was to achieve a deeper understanding of how family processes related to the division of household labor contribute to the construction of parent-child relationships.

In the investigation of these processes, this study explored how each parent affects the relationship with their child in addition to how each parent affects their spouse's relationship with their child. Significant predictors for parent-child relationship quality were identified that demonstrated the interconnectedness of the family system, such that each parent had significant impacts on their own and their spouse's relationship with their child. However, hypotheses that posited that the organization of family labor structured family processes and ultimately shaped parent-child relationship quality were largely unsupported.

With the advantage of measures derived from the family system—father, mother, and child—I was able to explore family processes that contribute to the quality of parent-child relationships. This research confirms gender differences in how parents contribute to the family economy with regards to the organization of paid and unpaid labor. There are significant differences in how mothers and fathers are spending their time and

organizing tasks. Though mothers are doing significantly more of the stressful, day-to-day family labor, it appears to have no significant impact on either mother-child or father-child relationship quality. For mothers, interpretations of the division of labor appears more important to the harmony in the family system than the actual distribution of tasks.

These differences in the way mothers and fathers spend their time was expected to explain the marginal differences between mother-child and father-child relationship quality. However, with one exception, neither time spent in housework (sporadic or routine) nor hours spent in paid labor successfully explained the outcome; only father hours in sporadic housework was positively related to mother-child relationship quality. Generally, the relative resources explanation—that parents specialize into a more domestic or breadwinner role—is confirmed (see Table 1) but is not a sufficient explanation for the way children interpret their relationship with either parent.

Utilizing an ecological framework illuminates how spouses shape one another's relationship with their child and finds evidence for a spillover effect from the marital dyad into the parent-child dyad. This research demonstrates similarity between parents with respect to mother effects on mother-child relationships and father effects on father-child relationships. Namely, that marital satisfaction is the only parent characteristic among these predictors that has significant effects on the quality of parent-child relationships. The marital satisfaction of both parents was found to have a positive impact on mother-child and father-child relationship quality, although it may be a more salient factor for father-child relationships than mother-child relationships.

This study is not without limitations. The variance in parent-child relationship quality is not adequately explained by the measures included in this study. Future research should seek to further explore what family processes contribute to the quality of parent-child relationships. In this study, a control for child age reveals poorer parent-child relationship quality as children age and this moderately strong effect is fairly consistent regardless of the combination of parental characteristics and outcome being predicted. The implication here is that child characteristics related to aging and withdrawal processes beginning in adolescence is more important to explaining the quality of relationships with older children than family level processes. Moreover, this may be an artifact of sample specification, in which households with a child age 10 to 19 were chosen for study. A sample that included children with a wider age range may provide different results than what is found in this research. In sum, an ecological framework that includes more child characteristics may identify better predictors of parent-child closeness. In addition, the techniques chosen for this study do not take into account the possibility of bi-directional influences. That is, the possibility that parent-child relationship quality is a possible determinant of marital quality. A structural equation modeling design would more truly closely approximate the paths of influence in the family system.

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Appendix A. Parent reports of labor, family process, and demographic variables: within parent correlation matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Parent-child relationship quality	-	0.04	0.03	0.08	-0.05	-0.07	0.21 ***	-0.09 *	0.04	0.13 **	0.17 ***	0.01	0.01	0.06	-0.03
2 Work hours	-0.04	-	-0.04	0.00	0.06	-0.06	0.06	-0.02	-0.05	0.11 *	-0.09	0.02	0.26 ***	0.00	-0.07
3 Routine housework	0.09 *	-0.16 ***	-	0.43 ***	0.09 *	0.18 ***	-0.09 *	0.03	0.02	0.06	0.13 **	-0.08	-0.06	-0.03	0.03
4 Sporadic housework	0.02	-0.01	0.55 ***	-	0.06	0.08	0.06	-0.02	0.14 **	0.10 *	0.10 *	0.06	-0.05	-0.06	0.02
5 Perceptions of childcare	-0.11 *	-0.01	0.09 *	0.10 *	-	0.40 ***	-0.15 ***	-0.01	0.03	0.03	0.05	-0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.01
6 Perceptions of housework	-0.09 *	-0.01	0.02	0.04	0.31 ***	-	-0.31 ***	0.13 **	-0.06	-0.02	-0.04	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.07
7 Marital satisfaction	0.20 ***	-0.10 *	0.00	-0.07	-0.04 ***	-0.43 ***	-	-0.24 ***	0.12 *	0.08	0.17 ***	0.15 ***	-0.12 *	-0.05	-0.01
8 Depression	-0.09 *	0.07	0.09 *	0.11 *	0.09 *	0.01	-0.29 ***	-	0.01	-0.02	-0.12 *	-0.01	0.00	-0.11 *	-0.04
9 Quality time	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.07	-0.06	0.04	-	0.10 *	0.30 ***	-0.02	0.01	0.08	0.00
10 Affection	0.15 **	-0.06	-0.02	0.01	0.00	-0.04	0.06	0.01	0.16 **	-	0.18 ***	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.07
11 School participation	0.21 ***	-0.11 *	0.10 *	0.11 *	0.05	-0.02	0.17 ***	0.00	0.22 ***	0.25 ***	-	-0.11 *	0.00	0.26 ***	-0.04
12 Gender ideology	0.09 *	0.03	0.21 ***	0.07	0.03	-0.02	0.07	0.02	-0.05	0.06	0.04	-	-0.13 **	-0.15 ***	0.01
13 Income	-0.12 *	0.38 ***	-0.25 ***	-0.09	-0.07	0.01	-0.04	-0.05	0.11	-0.02	-0.04	-0.27 ***	-	0.48 ***	0.15 ***
14 Education	-0.04	-0.09	-0.15 ***	-0.11 *	-0.02	0.02	0.04	-0.16 ***	0.12 *	0.05	0.11 *	-0.20 ***	0.41 ***	-	0.20 ***
15 Age	-0.11 **	-0.13 **	-0.06	-0.07	0.01	0.02	-0.07	-0.06	0.03	0.00	-0.16 ***	0.02	0.19 ***	0.22 ***	-

Note: Lower triangle comprises correlations among mothers. Upper triangle comprises correlations among fathers.

\* $p \leq 0.05$  \*\* $p \leq 0.01$  \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

Appendix B: Parent reports of labor, family process, and demographic variables: between parent correlation matrix

	Father-child relation ship quality	Father work hours	Father routine housework	Father sporadic housework	Father perceptions-- childcare	Father perceptions-- housework	Father marital quality	Father depression	Father quality time	Father affection	Father school participation	Father gender ideology	Father income	Father education	Father age
Mother-child relationship quality	0.64 ***	-0.03	0.00	0.09 *	-0.04	-0.09 *	0.15 ***	-0.04	-0.08	0.08	0.12 *	0.06	-0.03	0.01	-0.06
Mother work hours	-0.10 *	0.18 ***	0.07	0.02	0.00	-0.07	0.00	0.08	-0.06	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	-0.13 *	-0.11 *	-0.10 *
Mother routine housework	0.05	0.04	-0.19 ***	0.05	-0.05	-0.08	0.05	-0.01	-0.02	-0.10 *	-0.15 **	0.23 ***	0.00	-0.10 *	-0.04
Mother sporadic housework	-0.02	0.05	0.00	0.06	-0.03	0.01	-0.05	0.03	0.01	-0.02	-0.07	0.06	-0.03	-0.08	-0.05
Mother perceptions--childcare	-0.19 ***	0.02	-0.12	0.01	-0.04	0.02	-0.17 ***	0.06	-0.09 *	-0.03	-0.16 ***	0.06	0.00	-0.04	0.01
Mother perceptions--housework	-0.12 **	0.00	-0.14 **	-0.03	-0.03	-0.01	-0.15 ***	0.05	0.00	0.01	-0.06	-0.03	0.01	0.03	-0.03
Mother marital satisfaction	0.31 ***	0.03	0.02	0.02	-0.07	-0.12 **	0.46 ***	-0.15 ***	0.03	0.10 *	0.15 **	0.11 **	0.00	0.08	-0.02
Mother depression	-0.08	-0.07	0.07	0.06	0.10 *	0.07	-0.17 ***	0.11 *	0.05	-0.05	-0.01	0.04	-0.11 *	-0.13 **	-0.04
Mother quality time	0.06	-0.06	0.05	0.05	0.10 *	-0.01	0.01	0.00	0.19 ***	0.02	0.14 **	-0.04	0.05	0.13 **	0.01
Mother affection	0.17 ***	-0.09	0.05	0.04	-0.01	0.05	0.11 *	-0.09 *	0.07	0.30 ***	0.16 ***	0.13 **	0.02	0.04	0.01
Mother school involvement	0.22 ***	-0.07	-0.03	0.05	0.02	-0.05	0.18 ***	-0.09	0.05	0.07	0.35 ***	0.01	-0.05	0.07	-0.08
Mother gender ideology	0.03	0.02	-0.21 ***	0.00	-0.02	0.01	0.08	-0.06	-0.08	-0.04	-0.10 *	0.51 ***	-0.12 **	-0.10 *	0.04
Mother income	-0.06	0.03	0.07	-0.05	0.09	0.07	0.03	-0.06	0.07	0.03	0.19 ***	-0.23 ***	0.24 ***	0.29 ***	0.18 ***
Mother education	0.04	0.00	0.04	-0.05	0.05	0.07	-0.01	-0.09 *	0.08	0.09 *	0.22 ***	-0.20 ***	0.30 ***	0.62 ***	0.14 ***
Mother age	-0.08	-0.02	0.00	-0.03	0.00	0.01	-0.04	-0.03	0.03	0.05	0.00	-0.02	0.21 ***	0.23 ***	0.78 ***

\*p ≤ 0.05 \*\*p ≤ 0.01 \*\*\*p ≤ 0.001