

CHAPTER 17

Gender and Unpaid Work

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Most commonly, research on gender and unpaid work focuses on housework, although there are at least two other types of unpaid labor that warrant attention. In this chapter I consider not only housework time, but also childcare time and time spent doing volunteer work. I consider housework and childcare separately because some aspects of child care are not included in most estimates of housework, but nonetheless constitute significant investments of time. For example, while a measure of housework normally would include estimates of time spent preparing meals for children (under a general estimate of time spent preparing meals), it would not necessarily include time spent working with children on homework or helping children get dressed for school. These latter activities are time consuming and involve work, and gender is associated with how much time individuals spend doing them (Coverman & Sheley, 1986). Thus, I evaluate research on gendered patterns of child care time separately from a consideration of housework time.

In addition, the summary of research on gender and unpaid work includes a review of the research on volunteer work. Since the 1970s sociologists have recognized that the activities of maintaining a home and children constitute work, even when unwaged, but we have been slower to incorporate measures of volunteer time into our analyses of gendered patterns of unpaid work time. Indeed, in measures of women's and men's total "work" time, volunteer work time is not included (Marini & Shelton, 1993), although much of the work associated with children, for example, is volunteer work that would be unmeasured in either housework or child care measures (e.g., PTO activities, soccer coach). Thus, the gender "equity" in total work time noted by some authors is based on an accounting that excludes an important category of unpaid work (Ferree, 1991). In addition

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Handbook of the Sociology of Gender, edited by Janet Saltzman Chafetz. Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, New York, 1999.

to summarizing gendered patterns of unpaid work, I review explanations of these patterns and assess their success in accounting for gender differences in unpaid work.

1. HOUSEWORK TIME

There are a variety of ways that housework time and the division of household labor have been measured. The highest quality estimates are based on time diaries typically completed for a 24-hour period (Marini & Shelton, 1993). This method results in the most detail, as well as in the most accurate estimates. Nevertheless, studies comparing the variety of ways that housework time has been measured indicate that direct questions about typical time expenditures result in some overestimation, but that measures of women's and men's shares of housework are similar no matter what the measurement method. This is especially true when the measures ask individuals to estimate their time spent on a variety of housework tasks (e.g., doing dishes, preparing meals, doing laundry, cleaning house) rather than on a generic category called "housework." Since time diary estimates are expensive, most studies rely on some sort of direct question.

No matter how housework time is measured, it is clear that gender is related to the distribution of housework. Women continue to spend significantly more time on housework than do men and this pattern is true whether or not women are employed (Berardo, Shehan, Leslie, 1987; Marini & Shelton, 1993; Presser, 1994). In the United States, most estimates are that women do between 65% and 80% of household labor (Greenstein, 1996). Studies done in other countries also consistently show that women do the majority of household labor, although the magnitude of the gender gap varies (Gershuny & Robinson, 1988).

Most of the studies of housework are based on samples of married women and men, a restriction that obscures the impact of marital status on the gender gap in housework time. In comparisons of married, single, and unmarried cohabiting women and men, researchers report that the gap between women's and men's housework time is greater among married couples than among either single women and men or cohabiting couples (McAllister, 1990; Stafford, Backman, & Dibona, 1977). Most the differences in the gender gap in housework time by marital status are due to variation in women's housework time (Shelton & John, 1993a; South & Spitze, 1994). Married women spend more time on housework than either cohabiting or single women.

Interestingly, remarried men appear to spend more time on housework than men in first marriages, although the reverse is true for women (Demo & Acock, 1993; Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). This pattern suggests that there may be some reevaluation of family roles for both women and men after divorce and that the result is a slightly more equal division of housework in second than in first marriages.

Recent time diary estimates of women's and men's housework time indicate that women spend 19.5 hours per week on housework compared to 9.8 hours per week for men (see Table 17-1). Estimates based on direct questions about housework time are higher than time diary estimates for both women and men but the pattern is similar. Data from the *National Survey of Families and Households* indicate that women spend approximately 37 hours per week on housework while men spend 18 hours per week (Greenstein, 1996; see also Kamo, 1991; Marini & Shelton, 1993).

Measures of task segregation indicate that household tasks are highly segregated as well (Blair & Lichter, 1991). Thus, in addition to men spending less time on housework

**TABLE 17-1. U. S. Housework Time
by Year and Gender**

Year	Hours Per Week	
	Men	Women
1965	4.6	27.0
1975	7.0	21.7
1985	9.8	19.5

Source: Robinson, J. P. (1988). Who's doing the housework? *American Demographics*, 10, 24–63.

than women, they spend their time on different household tasks than women (Berk, 1985). Berk and Berk (1979) find, in addition, that men are less likely than women to do more than one task at a time and that men's tasks are more likely to be discretionary than are women's (see also Meissner, Humphries, Meis, & Scheu, 1975). That is, men are more likely to spend time on tasks that can be scheduled for convenience than are women (e.g., yard care versus meal preparation). One reflection of the gender differences in household tasks may be the greater proportion of men who view their housework tasks as leisure or semileisure (Horna & Lupri, 1987). A final difference in housework time is related to the simultaneity of tasks. With respect to doing more than one task at a time, women are more likely than men to prepare a meal, make lunches for school and do laundry more or less at the same time (Berk & Berk, 1979). Moreover, a greater proportion of men's housework tasks are done with someone else, whereas women are more likely to do tasks alone (Horna & Lupri, 1987; Sullivan, 1996).

1.1. Housework in Other Countries

Possibly because of Sweden's reputation for governmental encouragement of gender equity at home, there are a relatively large number of studies of the gender division of unpaid labor in Sweden. Swedish women spend significantly less time cooking and grocery shopping than U.S. women and Swedish men spend more time cooking and cleaning house than their American counterparts, although there are no significant gaps in Swedish and American women's and men's time spent washing dishes or doing laundry (Calasanti & Bailey, 1991). Moreover, there is still a gap between Swedish women's and men's total housework time (Juster & Stafford, 1991; Wright, Shire, Hwang, Dolan, & Baxter, 1992). Gustafsson and Kjulin (1994) report that Swedish men do approximately 35% of the housework and childcare and their time estimates are similar to figures for the United States (see also Juster & Stafford, 1991).

While Swedish couples have been studied to determine the impact of state efforts to encourage gender equity at home, Japanese couples often are of interest because of their supposed traditionalism (Moringa, Sakata, & Koshi, 1992). In fact, studies of Japanese couples help illustrate the relatively minor differences among industrialized countries. Researchers' reports of Japanese men's and women's housework time vary widely. Kamo (1994) finds that Japanese men do about 25% of the housework, whereas Juster and Stafford (1991) report that Japanese men spend only 10% as much time as women on housework. Moreover, Juster and Stafford's (1991) estimates of Japanese men's time are significantly lower than estimates for men in other industrialized countries. They report that Japanese men spend only 3.5 hours per week on housework compared to almost 14 hours for men in the United States and more than 18 hours per week for men in Sweden.

Interestingly, they report less variation in women's housework time across industrialized countries than in men's.

Sanchez (1994a) has studied men's participation in household labor in Java, Sudanese Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, and the United States. Although she does not have time estimates, she does find differences in the percentage of men who regularly participate in household labor (as reported by their wives). The range is from 60% for Korea to 17% for Sudanese Indonesia. It is not, however, clear that all wives are referring to the same type of "help." Juster and Stafford (1991), using time estimates, report that women in rural Botswana and Nepal spend significantly more time and men less time on housework than in industrialized countries.

There is quite a bit of variation in women's and men's housework time across societies, but in no instance do men and women spend an equal or near equal amount of time on housework. Moreover, variations in the amount of time spent on housework do not vary systematically with the availability of labor saving household technology, suggesting that it does not always operate to reduce household demands (Robinson, 1980).

1.2. Historical Trends in Housework Time

There are a number of studies documenting the impact of technological innovations on both the character of housework and how it is divided. Some emphasize the labor saving aspects of new technologies (Bose, 1979; Bose, Bereano, & Malloy, 1984; Day, 1992; Jackson, 1992), while others focus on the way innovations affect women's and men's housework differently (Cowan, 1983). Cowan (1983), in particular, details how new household technologies not only made some tasks easier, but created new tasks. An example she provides is the invention of the stove, which raised expectations regarding an appropriate meal and involved additional work to clean and maintain the stove. She recognizes that the stove improved the standard of living for most households, but also that it increased the workload for women. In addition, she details how the stove decreased the need for large quantities of wood, and thereby reduced some of men's housework.

As technological innovations made housework easier, they also justified reducing middle-class women's reliance on servants. This trend not only left work for middle-class women to do, it also led to a greater homogenization of the standard of living. As poor women were not hired as domestic servants they were able to work to maintain their households at a middle-class standard, thereby reducing class differences in the quality of home life (Jackson, 1992; Strasser, 1982). Bose (1979) argues that as women were drawn into paid labor they were increasingly able to maintain their housework standards because of technological innovations that made housework less time consuming and less physically demanding (see also Bose et al., 1984; Day, 1992).

Oakley (1974) focuses on the extent to which industrialization and men's movement into the paid labor force made "housework" increasingly invisible (see also Cowan, 1983). Men's absence from the home during the day and their participation in paid work encouraged housework activities to be viewed as something other than work. In addition, the work of maintaining a household was visible only to those who were home during the day—women and young children.

That housework was invisible to many members of the family does not mean that it was not time consuming. New technologies that encouraged higher standards of living (e.g., better and/or more complicated meals because of the stove, cleaner bathrooms be-

cause of indoor plumbing) meant that although housework became somewhat easier during the nineteenth and the first half of twentieth centuries, women did not spend significantly less time on it (Cowan, 1983; Robinson, 1985). Oakley (1974) reports that women in the United States were spending more time on housework in 1945 than in 1929. Later studies indicating that women's household labor has decreased over time also show that their total work time (including paid work time) has not declined (Robinson, 1985).

More recent investigations of the impact of technology on household labor time suggest that even modern conveniences, such as the microwave oven, do not significantly reduce women's housework time. Robinson and Milkie (1997) report that women who own microwave ovens spend only 4 minutes less per day cooking than women without microwave ovens and those with automatic dishwashers spend only 1 minute less per day cleaning up after meals than those without dishwashers. Thus, "labor-saving" devices save less than is commonly assumed. This may reflect the higher standards associated with owning labor-saving appliances (e.g., washing clothes more often if you own a washing machine), or simply inefficiencies of the appliances (e.g., rinsing dishes before loading them in the dishwasher).

A number of studies evaluate relatively recent shifts in men's housework time or in their proportional share of housework time. Researchers vary in the extent to which they report significant change in the division of housework. Some argue that the division of household labor has become more equal over time (Robinson, 1988), while others report little shift in the division of household labor (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Much of the disagreement reflects differences in how shifts in housework time are interpreted. Those studies that document men's increased responsibility for housework often measure men's relative share, obscuring the fact that men's share most often increases because of a decrease in women's housework time, rather than an increase in men's (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992b; Goldscheider & Waite, 1991; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Spitze, 1986). Coverman and Sheley (1986) report that men's housework time was stable from 1965 to 1975, although they estimate that their relative share went from 28% to 34% during the same period because women reduced their housework time by almost an hour per day.

One explanation for how households are maintained, given women's decreased housework time and men's modest increases, suggests that couples are relying more on purchased services, such as lawn care, dry cleaning, and grocery delivery (Brines, 1993). However, operationalizing such rates of "commodity substitution" has proven difficult (for an attempt see Brines, 1993).

Gershuny and Robinson (1988) report that from the 1960s to the 1980s, women's housework time decreased, even after paid work time and number of children were taken into account (see also Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Robinson, 1988). Women in the 1960s spent about 8 more hours per week cooking meals, cleaning up after meals, cleaning house, and doing laundry than women in the 1980s, whereas men spent about 2 hours more on these tasks in the 1980s than in the 1960s (Robinson, 1988). In spite of the convergence, a large gap between women's and men's housework time remains (see Table 17.1).

Trends in men's and women's housework time in a variety of other countries generally are similar to U.S. trends (Gershuny & Robinson, 1988). From the 1970s to the 1980s, when men's proportional share of housework in the United States increased modestly, men's share of housework in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Norway also increased, although there was no shift in Holland (Gershuny & Robinson, 1988) (see Table 17.2). Nonetheless, in every nation women do at least 80% of the housework.

TABLE 17.2. Cross-cultural Comparisons of Minutes Spent per Day on Housework and Proportional Share of Housework Time by Country, Year, and Gender

Year	United States		Canada		United Kingdom		Holland		Norway	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
1970s (Minutes)	175	20	203	29	202	17	211	28	259	25
1970s (Proportion)	89.7	10.3	87.5	12.5	92.2	7.8	88.3	11.7	91.2	8.8
1980s (Minutes)	156	38	158	40	188	37	210	27	195	35
1980s (Proportion)	80.4	19.6	79.8	20.2	83.6	16.4	88.6	11.4	84.8	15.2

Source: Gershuny, J., & Robinson, J. (1988). Historical changes in the household division of labor. *Demography*, 24, 550.

1.3. Race and Housework Time

The gendered pattern of housework time varies somewhat by race as well, although the studies are not completely consistent. Researchers either report that black couples divide housework similarly to white couples (Broman, 1988, 1991; Cronkite, 1977; Hossain & Roopnarine, 1993; Wilson, Tolson, Hinton & Kiernan, 1990) or that the division of housework among black couples is more equal than among white couples (Beckett & Smith, 1981; Ross, 1987; Shelton & John, 1993b). In spite of the inconsistency in research findings, it is clear that although black women and men are more likely than their white counterparts to think that housework is women's responsibility (Cronkite, 1977), they do not divide it less equally. One of the more interesting patterns with respect to race is the relationship between men's paid work time and their housework time. Among black men, the more time they spend on paid work the more time they spend on housework, while the reverse is true for white men (Shelton & John, 1993b). This patterns suggests that the way black men interpret family responsibilities may be different than the way white men interpret them.

The gender gap in housework time differs between Mexican-Americans and Anglos, although most research suggests that the image of the patriarchal Mexican-American family is exaggerated. Golding (1990) reports that although Mexican-American men do less housework than Anglo men, the difference is due to differences in educational level. Similarly, Shelton and John (1993b) find that there is no difference in the housework time of Mexican-American and Anglo men once sociodemographic characteristics are taken into account.

2. CHILD CARE

Most research suggests that men have increased their time spent on childcare more than is the case for housework (Darling-Fisher & Tiedje, 1990; Pleck, 1985; Presser, 1988). This, however, usually means interaction with children rather than care of infants and toddlers (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991; Pleck, 1985). Similarly, men are more likely to be

childcare “helpers,” leaving women responsible for the care of children (Ehrensaft, 1987; Brannen & Moss, 1987). Researchers consistently report that women, in general, continue to spend more time on childcare than men (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993; Wilson, Tolson, Hinton, & Kiernan, 1990). Leslie, Anderson, and Branson (1991) report that among employed women and men, men spend an average of 36 minutes per day caring for their children compared to 1 hour and 12 minutes for women. Coverman and Sheley’s (1986) examination of the changes in men’s childcare time from 1965 to 1975 found that despite wives’ increasing labor force participation, men’s childcare contributions did not change significantly.

In other research, Barnett and Baruch (1987) show that the gap between the amount of time parents and children are home together and awake and the amount time spent in solo interaction with children is greater for men than for women. Men are at home and awake when their children are there an average of 29.4 hours per week compared to 44.45 hours for women; men spend only 5.48 hours per week in solo interaction with their children compared to 19.56 hours per week for women, regardless of the wife’s employment status. This significantly larger gap between time available and time spent in solo interaction is consistent with other researchers’ reports that women are more likely to be *responsible* for the care of children than men (Gerson, 1993).

Research on Sweden reveals that child care patterns are similar to those in the United States, although men do proportionally more in Sweden than in the United States. Gustafsson and Kjulín (1994) report that men spend approximately 5.0 hours per week on “active child care” compared to 9.7 hours for women (see also Lamb, Hwang, Broberg, Bookstein, Hult, & Frodi, 1988). These estimates are similar to those for the United States (see Leslie, Anderson & Branson, 1991). As is the case for the United States, Lamb et al. (1988) find that men spend more time playing with children than caring for them. In other words, more of men’s childcare time is discretionary than is the case for women, and men spend more time on relatively pleasurable aspects of childcare than do women (e.g., playing with children versus changing diapers). Unlike other researchers, Hannah and Quarter (1992) report that Canadian men and women spend similar amounts of time on childcare but that women spend significantly more time on housework than do men, although they do not report on the nature of men’s and women’s childcare activities. This is in contrast to Homa and Lupri’s (1987) findings that although Canadian fathers have a relatively high degree of participation in childcare, mothers still are responsible for the greatest proportion of childcare tasks.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEWORK AND CHILDCARE

The variety of perspectives that have been developed to account for the division of household labor can, in most cases, be applied to understanding childcare time as well. In the majority of cases, however, childcare is considered only to the extent that care of children is measured in housework items (e.g., meal preparation, indoor cleaning), rather than in a separate measure of childcare.

There is a large body of literature that focuses on accounting for the division of household labor. At least three dominant explanations for the division of household labor have emerged from this research tradition, although none of them alone or in combination can fully account for the pattern of the division of housework. The most common

explanations for the division of household labor identify time constraints, ideology, and relative resources as possibly accounting for it (Ross, 1987; Shelton, 1992).

The time constraints approach, also known as the demand/response capability (Coverman, 1985) or situational view (England & Farkas, 1986), conceptualizes the division of household labor as a consequence of other demands on individuals' time. This explanation identifies women's greater household labor time as a consequence of their fewer hours spent in paid labor and number and ages of children (Greenstein, 1996; Silver & Goldscheider, 1994).

The majority of studies evaluating the impact of women's and men's paid work time on their housework time find that the more time individuals spend in paid labor the less time they spend on housework (Acock & Demo, 1994; Brines, 1993; Demo & Acock, 1993) and childcare (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; McHale & Huston, 1984). However, most studies also note that the association is stronger for women than it is for men (McHale & Huston, 1984) and that women continue to do more housework and childcare than men no matter how much time they spend in paid labor (Beckett & Smith, 1981; Kamo, 1991; Newell, 1993). Thus, although, paid work time is associated with housework time, it cannot account for all of the gender gap in housework time.

A number of studies investigate the relationship between women's paid work time and their husbands' housework time. These studies report inconsistent findings, with some indicating that husband's housework time is responsive to their wives' paid work time (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Brines, 1993; Nickels & Metzen, 1982), although many report a weak or nonexistent association (Levant, Slattery, & Loiselle, 1987). Particularly problematic are studies that evaluate the effect of wives' paid work time on men's relative share of housework (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992a; Kamo, 1988; Ross, 1987). Measuring relative share of housework makes it impossible to identify the source of any variation in men's share. It may be due to shifts in women's and/or men's actual housework time. Since it is clear that women reduce their housework time in response to paid work demands, at least some portion of the association between women's paid work time and men's relative share of housework will be due to changes in wives' housework time.

Among those who have evaluated the impact of wives' paid work time on husbands' housework and childcare time, some find a weak association (Blair & Lichter, 1991) and some find no statistically significant relationship at all (Brayfield, 1992). Beckett and Smith (1981) report that paid labor time affects white women's child care time more than it affects their husbands' time and Tuttle (1994) finds that wives' work hours are negatively associated with husbands' childcare participation (see also Barnett & Baruch, 1987; John, 1996). Similarly, Leslie et al. (1991) find that women's paid work time is associated with the amount of time they are responsible for their children, but that it has no effect on the time husbands are responsible.

Men's housework *tasks* also may be affected by their wives' or their own paid work time. Atkinson and Huston (1984) report that men do more female-typed tasks in response to their wives' greater paid work time while Blair and Lichter (1991) find that household tasks are more segregated the more time men spend in paid labor. These studies point to an important aspect of the division of household labor—the gendered nature of the housework tasks that women and men undertake.

Rather than simply evaluating husbands' and wives' paid work time, Kingston and Nock (1985) examined the impact of work schedule on the division of household labor (see also Blair & Lichter, 1991; Brayfield, 1995; Presser, 1994; Wharton, 1994), while Presser (1988) evaluated the impact of shift work on child care time. These studies find

that off-scheduling (husbands and wives working somewhat different hours) is associated with men spending more time on housework (Kingston & Nock, 1985) and childcare (Presser, 1988). That is, when men have time at home when their wives are at work they do more housework than when they work the same hours as their wives. A few studies also have documented a similar positive effect of off-scheduling on women's housework time (Pleck & Staines, 1985).

Although a wife's paid work time is not clearly associated with her husband's housework time, her employment may be associated with it. That is, it may be wife's employment *per se*, rather than hours spent in paid labor that affects husband's household labor time. In addition, employment may be even more strongly associated with housework time than paid work time for women. Studies comparing dual-earner and single-earner households indicate that women do most of the housework no matter what their employment status (Berardo et al., 1987; Bergmann, 1986; Mederer, 1993; Pleck & Staines, 1985), but that women in dual-earner households share more of the responsibility for household tasks than women in single-earner households (Maret & Finlay, 1984). The sex typing of household tasks is similar in single-earner and dual-earner households (Coltrane, 1990; Mederer, 1993).

Just as paid work time has a greater effect on women's than on men's household labor, children also affect women's housework time more than men's (Gershuny & Robinson, 1988; Shelton, 1992). Berk (1985) found that the presence of a single infant increased the total monthly household tasks by more than 400 hours, adding more than 105 minutes to each household work day. Studies using representative samples report that the more children and the younger the children in a household the more time women, and to a much smaller extent, men, spend on housework (Brines, 1993; Presser, 1994).

The greater effect of both children and paid work on women's than on men's housework poses some problems for the time constraints explanation of the division of household labor. The perspective provides no rationale for the different effects of time constraints (e.g., paid work and children) on women's and men's housework time. In addition, it is difficult to determine the extent to which there is a simple, unidirectional effect of paid work time on housework, or whether there are reciprocal effects (but see Kalleberg & Rosenfeld, 1990). Thus, both the nature of the empirical association between paid work time and housework time and the explanation itself have serious limitations with respect to helping us understand the gendered division of household labor.

A second approach to explaining the division of household labor focuses on ideology or gender role attitudes to account for women's greater housework time (Huber & Spitze, 1983; Spitze, 1988). According to this explanation, women's greater household labor time can be explained by reference to their own and their husband's attitudes about who should do the housework. Thus, the hypothesis is that the more egalitarian women's and men's sex role attitudes, the less housework women will do and the more housework men will do. In general, studies support this explanation, although the strength of the association varies by gender and men's attitudes have more impact on their wives' household labor than wives' attitudes have on their husbands' housework time.

The majority of studies indicate that the more egalitarian men's gender role attitudes, the more equal the division of household labor (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992b; Kamo, 1988; Ross, 1987), although some report that this effect is due mostly to the impact of men's attitudes on women's housework time, rather than to the effect of men's attitudes on their own housework time (Presser, 1994; Sanchez, 1994b). This pattern is consistent with a number of qualitative studies that illustrate the extent to which women's

housework time is a function of their husbands' expectations (DeVault, 1991). Wives' responsiveness to their husbands is also supported by studies indicating that women's gender role attitudes are less strongly associated with their housework time than are their husbands' gender role attitudes (Presser, 1994), although Greenstein (1996) reports an interaction effect between wives' and husbands' gender role ideologies.

With the exception of a few studies that have poor measures of either gender role attitudes (Brayfield, 1992) or housework time (Ross, 1987), the findings regarding the impact of gender role attitudes on housework time are consistent. Nevertheless, when considering the entire gender gap in housework time, gender role attitudes can account for only a small part of it. In addition, although attitudes are associated with housework time, the variation is around a very unequal base, so that, in general, even those couples with egalitarian attitudes have an unequal division of household labor, one that is only somewhat less unequal than other couples'. Men with traditional gender role attitudes are not any less likely to participate in childcare than men with more egalitarian attitudes (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; McHale & Huston, 1984) and some find that men with more traditional childcare attitudes spend more time on child care (Tuttle, 1994).

One of the oldest approaches to understanding the division of household labor is based on Blood and Wolfe's (1960) study of relative resources and their impact on decision-making. This approach is based on the view that individuals will seek to minimize their time spent on housework (because it is unpleasant) and that they will use any resource advantage to do so. Thus, the spouse with the most resources will use them to negotiate his or her way out of housework (Brines, 1993) or childcare (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Deutsch et al., 1993; John, 1996). Resources most often are conceptualized and measured as education, occupational prestige, and earnings.

An alternative explanation for the expected relationship between relative resources and housework time is offered by neoclassical economists who argue that relative resources will be associated with household labor time because of *households'* attempts to most efficiently allocate effort (Becker, 1981, 1985). According to the neoclassical model, the person with the most resources will maximize utilities for the household by concentrating his or her effort in paid labor while household utilities will be similarly maximized if the individual with fewer resources devotes him- or herself to household labor. The important distinction between the relative resource and neoclassical models involves the conceptualization of the family. In the relative resource model individuals seek to maximize utilities whereas in the neoclassical model families seek to maximize utilities. Since women's earnings are generally lower than men's, both models are consistent with women doing more housework than men, although for different reasons.

With important exceptions, the empirical evaluations of the relative resource model support it. The smaller the earnings gap between husbands and wives the more equal the division of household labor (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Presser, 1994) and child care (Deutsch et al., 1993). However, Leslie et al., (1991) find no significant effect of the mother's relative earnings on the division of childcare work. In addition, although the greater the woman's earnings relative to her husband's the less time she spends on housework, the size of the effect is small (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Moreover, the fact that the majority of wives earn less than their husbands creates problems for interpreting the effect. The relative resource model predicts that not only should an individual's relative earnings be associated with the division of household labor when the wife earns less than the husband (as is true in the majority of households), but that this association should hold for those households where the wife earns more than the husband. Somewhat prob-

lematically for the relative resource explanation, Brines (1994) reports that men who are economically dependent on their wives compensate by not increasing their housework time, a pattern that she interprets as supporting a "gender display" interpretation for the division of household labor. Whether the gender display interpretation works or not, the unequal association between women's and men's earnings and housework time, as well as the pattern for couples where the wife earns more than the husband, pose problems for the relative resource/neoclassical explanation for the division of household labor.

Educational attainment is often used as a supplemental measure of resources, but is more problematic than earnings because education is associated with gender role ideology, thus making interpretation of any association between education and housework difficult. In fact, men's level of education is typically positively associated with their own and negatively associated with their wives' housework time, suggesting that education may be a better measure of ideology than of resources (Haddad, 1994; Presser, 1994; South & Spitze, 1994). Women's educational level is negatively associated with their housework time (Bergen, 1991; Brines, 1993; South & Spitze, 1994), supporting both the relative resource and ideology explanations. Women with more education have more resources and may be able to negotiate or buy their way out of housework, but those with more education also typically have more egalitarian attitudes and may spend less time on housework in response to attitudes rather than resources (Huber & Spitze, 1983).

Studies investigating the impact of occupational prestige on household labor are even less consistent. Some find that men's occupational prestige is negatively associated with their housework time (McAllister, 1990), while others find that it is positively associated with housework time (Berk & Berk, 1978; Deutsch et al., 1993). It is not clear that it is the resources associated with occupational prestige that account for the association. Aytac (1990) finds that the husbands of wives who are decision-makers on the job spend more time on housework than men whose wives are not decision-makers. Men's decision-making authority on the job also may account for some of the association between occupational prestige and housework time. Further undermining the usefulness of the relative resource explanation is the finding that women's occupational prestige is not associated with their housework time (McAllister, 1990).

As a consequence of the failure of the time constraint, ideology, and relative resource explanations to adequately account for the gender gap in housework time or for variables measuring time constraints, ideology, or resources to be associated in expected ways with housework time, some researchers have proposed a social construction of gender (Berk, 1985; Potuchek, 1992; West & Zimmerman, 1987) or gender display (Brines, 1993, 1994) explanation for the gendered division of household labor (DeVault, 1991). A basic premise of the gender display explanation is a reconceptualization of housework; within this approach, housework may be a resource for the production of gender or a way to display gender, rather than simply something that women and men seek to minimize (Berk, 1985; West & Fenstermaker, 1993). As such, this approach potentially may account for economically dependent men's low involvement in housework (Brines, 1994), economically successful women's involvement in housework (Silberstein, 1992), as well as for the anomalous findings with respect to measures of time constraints, ideology and resources.

For example, the gender differences in the way paid work time and children are associated with housework time may be partially accounted for by the gender display model. Women may respond to children differently than men because, through their response, they attend not only to the needs of children but also produce themselves appropriately as women. In addition, the meaning attached to employment may be different for

men and women. For men, employment may help them construct themselves as men, thus freeing them to participate in housework, whereas men who are not able to construct themselves as men through employment may resort to other forms of "gender display" (Brines, 1994). Silberstein (1992) argues that a similar dynamic may account for economically successful women's participation in some forms of housework; through their employment they fail to construct themselves as women, so they too resort to other forms of gender display (in this case participation in household labor) that may appear irrational if housework is conceptualized only as a means of producing a meal or a clean house rather than also gender itself.

4. VOLUNTEER WORK

An important but often neglected type of unpaid work is volunteer work. Those studies that consider it generally seek to understand women's and men's participation in volunteer activities and only incidentally make a connection between household work and volunteer activities. The best known studies of women's volunteer work focus on its status production (Daniels, 1988) or class maintenance (Ostrander, 1984) effects. Mueller (1975) argues that women also may participate in volunteer work because it enhances their human capital (see also Schram & Dunsing, 1981), although there is no indication that volunteer work enhances human capital in a way that translates into employment (Blau, 1976).

Blau (1976) asserts that women participate in volunteer work because of the constraints placed on them by their families, especially children. That is, they volunteer because time constraints make paid work impossible. An alternative interpretation is that participating in volunteer activities is an extension of childcare and housework responsibilities. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1982) and Booth (1972) document women's greater participation in "domestic" or "expressive" voluntary associations compared to men's greater participation in job-related volunteer associations. Domestic associations include youth and neighborhood associations, both of which involve activities closely related to what is typically defined as housework and childcare. In spite of this, research on women's unpaid work has focused almost exclusively on housework and childcare done in the home (Daniels, 1988 is an exception).

Hayghe (1991) reported that 18.8% of women performed unpaid volunteer work for school or other educational institutions, compared to 10.5% of men. In addition, women were more likely to participate in religious organizations. Of those who did volunteer work, women typically worked more weeks per year than men, although their hours spent per week on volunteer activities were similar. The majority of both women and men spent less than 5 hours per week on volunteer activities, around 20% spent from 5 to 9 hours, and the remainder spent 10 hours or more per week on volunteer activities.

If women's participation includes parent-teacher organizations, organizing children's recreational activities, or other activities related to children it can be counted as additional childcare. Their neighborhood and community activities are an extension of the status production aspects of their housework (Daniels 1988; Ostrander, 1984) and some of these activities may be communal versions of housework (neighborhood cleanup campaigns).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Gender remains strongly associated with women's and men's patterns of unpaid work. The amount of time invested in unpaid work as opposed to paid work, the distribution of

unpaid work time among specific tasks, and the patterns of care and responsibility are all determined to a large degree by one's gender. Women continue to spend more time than men on housework, whether they are employed or not; they continue to do more of the work involved in caring for children and to take more responsibility for that work; and finally, women's volunteer activities are more likely to be related to family than are men's.

There have been numerous attempts to explain the gendered patterns of time spent on housework and childcare and, although there is support for each of them, none can fully account for the gendered patterns of unpaid work time. The gender display approach offers some hope for better understanding the relationship between gender and unpaid work time, but efforts to evaluate its usefulness are necessarily indirect. That is, there is no simple way to determine the extent to which unpaid work time is an expression of gender; we can only determine whether a particular pattern is consistent with the gender display model.

It remains clear that the nature of women's and men's participation in housework, childcare and volunteer work are different and that changes in women's labor force participation are not sufficient to eliminate gender differences in unpaid work activities.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported, in part, with funds from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, The University of Texas at Arlington and Oberlin College. Joseph Nehrenberg, Sheryl Skaggs, Sarah Wyatt, and Jessica Christensen provided research assistance. Daphne John provided helpful comments.

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