Economic Dependency, Gender, and the Division of Labor at Home[1]

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Why does housework remain "women's work"? Some scholars argue that economic dependency compels wives to exchange unpaid labor for a share of the husband's income. Others claim that wives perform housework—and husbands avoid it—to enact symbolically their femininity or masculinity. This article examines both perspectives and finds that among wives the link between housework and the transfer of earnings in marriage complies with rules of economic exchange. However, the more a husband relies on his wife for economic support, the less housework he does. It appears that by doing less housework, economically dependent husbands also "do gender."

INTRODUCTION

The now decades-old "revolution" in women's status remains one of the more compelling tales of recent change affecting U.S. society. Yet, there exists ample evidence that this revolution is "incomplete" (Bergmann 1986; Hewlitt 1986; Fuchs 1988) or, more recently, that it has "stalled" (Hochschild and Machung 1989). One province of work and family life in particular has lagged behind the pace of change manifest in other arenas, a puzzling backwater that informs the notion of a stalled revolution: Housework remains primarily "women's work" despite substantial change in women's employment patterns and in attitudes once thought to undergird the sexual division of labor.

This is not to deny *some* evidence of change in the division of household labor. Recent findings indicate that husbands now do more housework—

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and wives less—than their counterparts in 1965 (Robinson 1988). But the distribution of household responsibilities remains more unequal than many anticipated following the entry of married women into the labor force and the increase in egalitarian attitudes. Cross-sectional studies confirm the ongoing nature of the puzzle, particularly with respect to husbands' behavior. Wives' employment leads to only a very slight increase (1–2 hours per week) in husbands' housework time (Berardo, Shehan, and Leslie 1987; Berk 1985; Coverman 1983; Geerken and Gove 1983; Nickols and Metzen 1979; Pleck 1985; Robinson 1980). Even among those studies that have found a positive effect of egalitarian attitudes on husbands' participation in household tasks, the practical size of the effect is quite small (Blumstein and Schwartz 1991; Berk 1985; Ferree 1990; Hiller and Philiber 1986; Huber and Spitze 1983; Robinson 1977; Ross 1987; Stafford, Backman, and Dibona 1977). Others have failed to detect a significant relationship between the two (Araji 1977; Beckman and Houser 1979; Pleck 1985).

Clear solutions to the puzzle of housework have proven elusive. Among the conceptual alternatives offered, a class of models has emerged that frames the process by which housework remains "women's work" largely in terms of economic or quasi-economic rules of exchange (Brines 1993). Informed in part by an awareness of the still-sizable gap in men's and women's wage rates (Bianchi and Spain 1986; Fuchs 1988), these models view wives' continued responsibility for housework as a manifestation of how household duties are brokered between spouses according to a "logic of the pocketbook" (Hochschild and Machung 1989).

This article presents an analysis of one of these models, where the rules governing the division of housework are tied to relations of economic support and dependency (hereafter referred to as the dependency model).[2] Within the class of perspectives mentioned above, the dependency model is of interest for a number of reasons. First, the conceptual link between economic dependency and the supply of unpaid household labor lies at the heart of a feminist critique launched against the conventional view of stratification, in particular for its failure to address the relationship between gender and class (Acker 1988; Crompton and Mann 1986; Delphy 1984; Delphy and Leonard 1986; Walby 1986). This model,

[2] Along with the economic dependency model, two other perspectives make up the class of economic or quasi-economic exchange models; they draw respectively from human capital theory (see esp. Becker 1981) and from resource-bargaining theories of family power (Blood and Wolfe 1960; McDonald 1981). Although these models exhibit substantial conceptual overlap, each embodies a distinct set of assumptions and gives rise to different empirical implications. A systematic analysis of the entire class of models is beyond the scope of this paper; see Brines (1993) for the results of evaluating each one separately.

therefore, is central to an approach that has stimulated debate over many fundamental questions—ones that extend beyond the subject of housework per se. Second, scholarship on women that addresses a more general audience has adopted the language of economic dependency to explain persisting inequalities in the division of household labor (see, e.g., Bergmann 1986; Hewlitt 1986; Fuchs 1988). Third, although many studies have examined the effects of a husband's and wife's earnings on participation in housework and childcare—with mixed results (Blumstein and Schwartz 1991; Berk 1985; Berardo et al. 1987; Bird, Bird, and Scruggs 1984; Coverman 1985; Huber and Spitze 1983; Rexroat and Shehan 1987; Ross 1987; Spitze 1986)—the concept of economic dependency is rarely operationalized directly and its effects on housework have yet to be examined systematically.

There is, more broadly, another reason why the dependency model is of special concern. The dependency perspective adheres to the view that the relations behind the household division of labor are fundamentally economic (Walby 1986). The logic offered on behalf of this view is formally gender neutral, even though the distribution of initial conditions (earnings) and consequences (performance of housework) most decidedly are not. But the model's emphasis on the status of dependency itself suggests an alternative logic. Both economic dependency and the doing of housework carry tremendous symbolic weight as markers of gender, of being accountably feminine when one is dependent and does housework and accountably masculine when one earns most of the family income and leaves the housework to others (Fenstermaker, West, and Zimmerman 1991; West and Zimmerman 1987). From this perspective, the link between dependency and housework might derive not from relations of economic or quasi-economic exchange but from gender relations that regulate symbolic displays of masculine or feminine accountability. In contrast to the dependency model, this view relies not on a gender-neutral logic but on one where the rules exist, in part, to facilitate the reproduction of gender itself (Berk 1985).

In the interest, then, of gaining additional leverage on the salience of economic dependency, the following analysis enjoins the logic of "gender display" as a counterpoint. First, I outline the assumptions and implications of both the dependency model and the display perspective as they apply to housework behavior. Second, I develop alternative specifications of the effect of dependency on housework time that follow from the two contrasting views. Third, I test these specifications against recent data drawn from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan 1989), a longitudinal survey of U.S. households. Taken as a whole, the findings call for a reassessment

of the dependency model and the underlying paradigm of exchange upon which it is based.

CONCEPTUALIZING DEPENDENCY

The dependency model of the division of labor at home is based on a deceptively simple idea: Household labor is provided in return for economic support (Delphy 1984; Walby 1986). According to this view, because most married women earn less than their husbands and depend on them to some extent for support, wives continue to perform most of the domestic tasks. The model does not anchor the essence of this relation in normative or cultural values associated with gender-appropriate behavior. Normative expectations reinforce the underlying mode of exchange by lending a sense of "naturalness" to the vast majority of outcomes, but the expectations themselves are not what lie at the heart of the process. Rather, the exchange is rooted in a materialist relationship, one governing the distribution of labor and resources (money) within marriage (Acker 1988). The foundation for the exchange thus resides in a relation between the positions of "main breadwinner" and "dependent"; it is not determined, in the final instance, by the gender of those who occupy these positions (Delphy and Leonard 1986).[3]

According to this model, the exchange relation between main breadwinners and dependents is contractual; money is exchanged for labor under a code stipulating the rights and obligations of parties to the contract—here, of marriage. The nature of this contract, however, departs substantially from that of paid labor in that housework is "neither exchanged in a calculated bargain for a wage which varies in proportion to the effort expended, nor with an employer who may be changed easily;

[3] A recent volume by Delphy and Leonard (1992) is not included among those considered here as representative of the dependency perspective. In this work, the authors depart from other explications of the model (including their own) by (1) denying *any* association between the level of maintenance dependents receive and the amount of work they do—rendering the concept of exchange inapplicable—and (2) insisting on the validity of defining married women as a dependent "class." These claims are based partly on the argument that, regardless of their actual circumstances, women occupy a specific location in the social relations of production that compels their unpaid labor and partly on the observation that female household heads are too few and too poor to merit conceptualization on the same terms as male household heads. Regrettably, Delphy and Leonard's revised analysis takes on the features of a closed theoretical system, making it impossible to extract falsifiable propositions about the relationship between gender, economic dependency, and the performance of unpaid labor.

rather the exchange is indirect, although nonetheless present" (Walby 1986, p. 34).

Because spouses cannot be easily changed, the marriage contract inhibits the operation of a free market for exchange. The marriage contract thus ensures that the conditions of trade between the main breadwinner and the dependent approach those of a bilateral monopoly (England and Farkas 1986). But the nature of what the dependent has to trade introduces an asymmetry. Housework—unpaid labor performed within the household—is by definition without exchange value in the classic sense; that is, it is nonportable or illiquid as a form of currency beyond the specific relationship, unlike what the main breadwinner brings to the trade. This difference in the fungibility of resources allows for the emergence of an unequal exchange relation between the two parties.

The advantage such asymmetry confers upon the main breadwinner paves the way for exploitation, although the extraction of what might be considered the surplus labor of dependents need not arise through direct coercion or exploitation. Such strategies are not unknown, of course, but they oppose the ideological underpinnings of the marriage contract, where the values of love, mutual trust, and commitment disallow both coercion and, as a rule, pursuit of the zero sum. In this respect, there exists a tension between norms typically governing the exchange of resources for labor (i.e., to drive the hardest bargain possible) and norms of social exchange aligned with the code of marriage (see Curtis 1986).

This provision for both economic and social forms of exchange lends a quasi-economic flavor to the model's view of the microdynamics governing housework and economic dependency. One can imagine several ways in which "the 'harsh' rules of the marketplace are 'softened' by bonds of love and friendship" (Curtis 1986, p. 181).[4] Proponents of the dependency model underscore the advantages that can accrue to main breadwinners through a strategy not of raw exploitation but of benevolent despotism, where they "may choose to forego many privileges—though they can have them again at any time" (Delphy and Leonard 1986, p. 64). In effect, the breadwinner can extend the "favor" of choosing not to exploit fully the dependency of others. The irony is that, in showing such restraint, the main breadwinner is better able to "persuade his dependents to at least acquiesce and ideally to work with wholehearted enthusiasm" (Delphy and Leonard 1986, p. 64).

[4] Curtis continues: "But where one might well ask, 'With friends like these what need do I have for enemies?'" (1986, p. 181).

But maneuvers aligned with the principles of social exchange are not the province of main breadwinners alone. According to the model, dependents may "resist and/or try to manipulate their situation in various ways and with varying degrees of success" (Delphy and Leonard 1986, p. 64; see also Hartmann 1981). Social exchange processes furnish opportunities for such manipulation and in fact tend to promote the interests of persons, like dependents, whose resources are comparatively limited (Blau 1964; Curtis 1986). In this connection, Curtis (1986, p. 180) speculates that "women often do housework because they expect some unspecified benefaction in the future, to be decided upon by the partner in the relationship they are establishing and perpetuating, and not because a contract has determined the amount of bed and board equivalent to so many hours of housework." The rub is that dependents' use of housework as a vehicle of social exchange can lead to Curtis's (1986, p. 179) paradox, where the main breadwinner receives a market value of housework that is greater than his or her own income, even though the housework is only a portion of what the dependent contributes to exercise a partial claim on that income.

Curtis's paradox raises the question of how one might best conceptualize the meaning of dependency for those who rely on a spouse for support. A husband or wife might be considered dependent, for example, only to the extent that he or she relies upon the breadwinner for subsistence. Under this conceptualization, anyone with the ability to support himself or herself (and children) after the loss of the breadwinner's contribution would be considered independent. However, when comparing current income against expected income were the spouse's support withdrawn, a dependent spouse is unlikely to base decisions (e.g., about whether to exchange housework for support or to exit the marriage) merely on whether the expected income stream can meet subsistence needs. Social and economic psychologists have found that when people compare alternatives under conditions of uncertainty, they focus on gains or losses relative to their current state (changes in wealth) and not on absolute levels of reward (states of wealth; Tversky and Kahneman 1986). People also experience the displeasure of loss more keenly than the satisfactions of an equally sized gain (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Gray and Tallman 1987), suggesting that dependents are probably most sensitive to prospective declines in their current income standard. Others have proposed that the balance of power in households rests on the control and allocation of surplus, above and beyond resources used for mere subsistence (Blumberg 1991; Coleman 1991). Taken together, these considerations suggest that dependency is best defined in terms of one spouse's reliance upon the other for his or her current income standard.

DEVELOPING TESTABLE SPECIFICATIONS

Note that the preceding discussion of the dependency model is absent of language indexing gender. This exercise illustrates the underlying gender neutrality of the logic behind the model's conceptualization of the exchange relation. In the literature, however, dependency is generally framed as if it were a status of wives or women exclusively and as if it applies to them as members of a group (see Acker 1988; Walby 1986). Rarely do expressions of the model separate dependency and its effects from the gender of most of those who occupy this status (for an exception, see Delphy and Leonard 1986).

This tendency to elide the categories of "dependent" and "wife" draws from the model's view of macrolevel structures that contextualize the personal relations of redistribution between spouses. According to this view, the status of dependency affects all married women, regardless of whether or not one is actually dependent upon a man, because the *assumption* of women's dependency is built into employment practices, sex-segregated occupational structures, state welfare policy, and the institutionalization of the "family wage" (see esp. Acker 1988). These socioinstitutional arrangements reinforce wives' dependency on their husbands. Men as a group do not confront analogous structures and practices that serve to perpetuate dependency, and, in any case, husband-dependents are few in number. Thus, identifying dependency with wifehood is not considered particularly problematic from the point of view of the model.[5]

The difficulty with this formulation lies in its overdeterminism. By collapsing the status of "wife" into that of "dependent," it prohibits any attempt to evaluate the salience of dependency vis-à-vis that of gender. It defines away, for instance, the question of how well actual economic dependency within marriage accounts for the division of household labor. Nor does this point of view permit an assessment of the extent to which the structural context of wives' dependency modifies outcomes that would otherwise follow from a gender-neutral logic of exchange.

The analysis of the model presented here proceeds with these questions. It begins with a gender-neutral specification of the effect of economic dependency (or alternatively, providership) on participation in

[5] Among advocates of the dependency model, some disagreement exists over whether structures generating dependency locate women (Delphy 1984; Delphy and Leonard 1986; Acker 1988) or wives (Walby 1986) as a group or class. Because this article analyzes only married persons and cohabitors, the latter view is more directly addressed here. In any event, the debate over whether women or wives constitute a class does not bear substantively on the hypotheses I investigate.

housework, in other words, the specification that follows directly from the model's logic of exchange at the microdynamic level. In light of the claim that the division of household labor rests in the relation between the positions of main breadwinner and dependent, results consistent with a gender-neutral specification would constitute strong support for the model.

The argument regarding the importance of socioinstitutional arrangements that presume women's dependency, however, opens avenues for another specification that is consistent with the model. This line of reasoning suggests that wives, as women, confront occupational, legal, and political or policy structures that accentuate the status of dependency and its consequences for future life chances more powerfully for them than for men. Because men generally encounter more favorable wage and promotional prospects than do women, chances are high that a dependent husband could subsist on his earnings alone should the marriage dissolve; his odds of gaining economic independence are better than those facing most married women. Married men's greater structural opportunities for independence are thus likely to set limits on any exchange disadvantage that might arise as a consequence of dependency upon their wives. In comparison, limited structural opportunities leave dependent wives much more subject to imbalance in the current exchange relation.

Thus, the model's view of macrolevel arrangements suggests that actual dependency within marriage might have a greater effect on the housework behavior of wives than on that of husbands, even if the logic governing the exchange relation at the microdynamic level is gender neutral. A pattern of outcomes that conforms to this specification would, then, be reconcilable with this view.[6]

Figures 1–4 illustrate the various specifications of the relationship between economic dependency or providership and participation in housework that are plausible under the model. Figure 1 depicts a simple linear relation as a point of departure. Conceptual features of the model, however, suggest that the relationship is unlikely to be linear in its proportions. Rather, the consequences of asymmetry suggest a pattern of cumulative disadvantage associated with greater dependency and cumulative advantage accruing to greater providership. Greater degrees of dependency, for instance, are likely to register increasingly larger shares of "debt" and compel increasing rates of "payment." Figure 2 illustrates the form of this nonlinear relationship, where the magnitude of the effect of dependency or providership on housework increases with the degree of dependency or providership.

[6] However, such patterns could lend only qualified support to the model, because they are equally consistent with what one would expect if the rules of the exchange relation are themselves gendered.

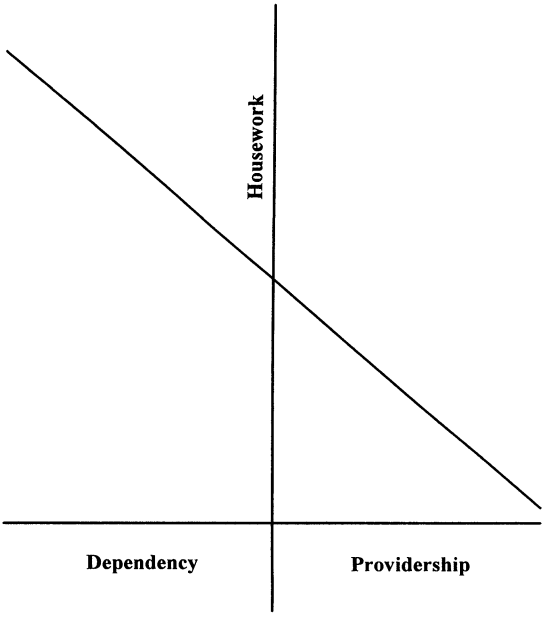

FIG. 1.—Linear model ($Y = \alpha + \beta X; \beta < 0$)

The relationships portrayed in figures 1 and 2 represent gender-neutral specifications of the link between household labor performance and economic support. Empirical patterns that conform to either specification, and that do not reveal significant gender differences in the magnitude of the relationship, would lend considerable support to the model's view of exchange at the microdynamic level. But patterns of this type are not the only ones plausible under the dependency perspective. Figures 3 and 4 depict the case where the relationship takes the same functional form (that of fig. 2) for wives and husbands, but where the size of the relationship is greater for wives. Such a pattern would lend support to the idea that dependency or providership is more salient for married women's behavior as a consequence of institutional structures that presume women's dependency.

HOUSEWORK, DEPENDENCY, AND SYMBOLIC EXCHANGE: A COUNTERPOINT

Figures 1–4 show the most plausible theoretically motivated associations between the receipt or provision of economic support and housework

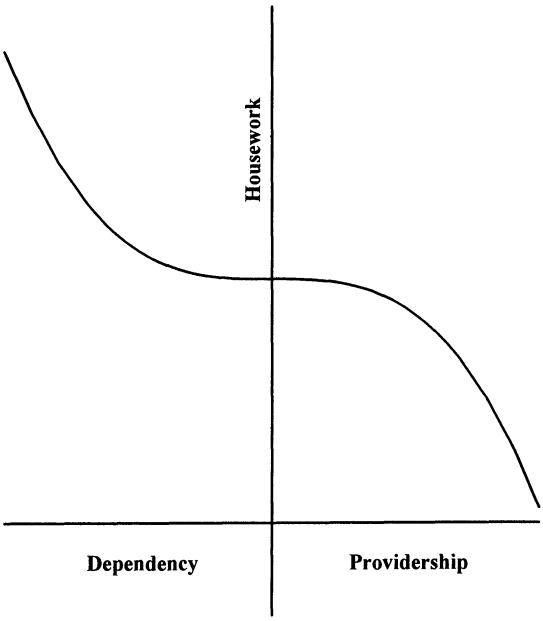

FIG. 2.—Cumulative disadvantage model ($Y = \alpha + \beta X^3$; $\beta < 0$)

under the dependency model. These hypothetical associations build from gender-neutral logics of interpersonal exchange, emphasizing economic trading practices, but allowing for processes of social exchange that might overlay the fundamentally economic relation between main breadwinners and dependents. Other versions of the association preserve a gender-neutral functional form but allow for differences between wives and husbands in the salience of the relationship between dependency and housework.

Images of economic or social exchange do not, however, exhaust the possibilities for conceptualizing patterned interaction between husbands and wives. An entirely different image of exchange locates gender at the heart of such interaction, where ongoing behavioral displays of masculinity and femininity become routinized within the institution of marriage (Goffman 1977; West and Zimmerman 1987). According to this perspective, while marriage provides a setting for childbearing, the division of labor, and other material aspects of life, it also provides a stage for the enactment of claims, particularly those attached to "the deepest sense of what one is—one's gender identity" (Goffman 1977, p. 315). Part of what individuals invest in when they establish an intimate union, then,

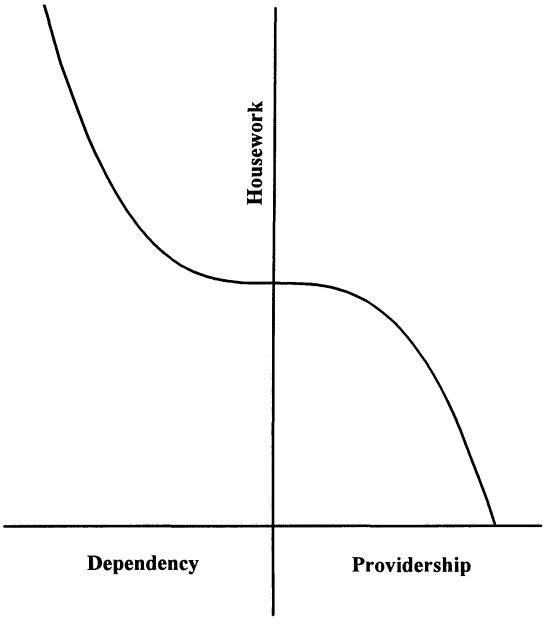

FIG. 3.—Cumulative disadvantage: wives ($Y = \alpha_w + \beta_w X^3$; $\beta_w < 0$, $\beta_w < \beta_h$).

is a socially sanctioned arrangement offering recurrent opportunities to advance claims about the self as "naturally" male or female.[7]

The division of household labor can be viewed as part of the scaffolding that supports the interpersonal enactment of gender within marriage. Berk's (1985) exhaustive analysis of the allocation of time and tasks in household production, for example, concludes that the division of household labor serves the dual purpose of producing gender as well as consumable goods and services (see also Fenstermaker et al. 1991). This dual purpose pivots on the cultural association of household labor with "women's work." The routine performance or nonperformance of housework facilitates gender display, because "for a woman to engage in it and a man not to engage in it is to draw on and exhibit the 'essential nature' of each" (West and Zimmerman 1987).

[7] In this respect, Goffman (1977, p. 321) argues that the "marital bond—whatever else it is—can be seen as having the consequence of more or less permanently attaching an audience directly to each performer, so that wherever the male or female goes, an appropriate other will be alongside to reciprocate the enactment of gender expressions."

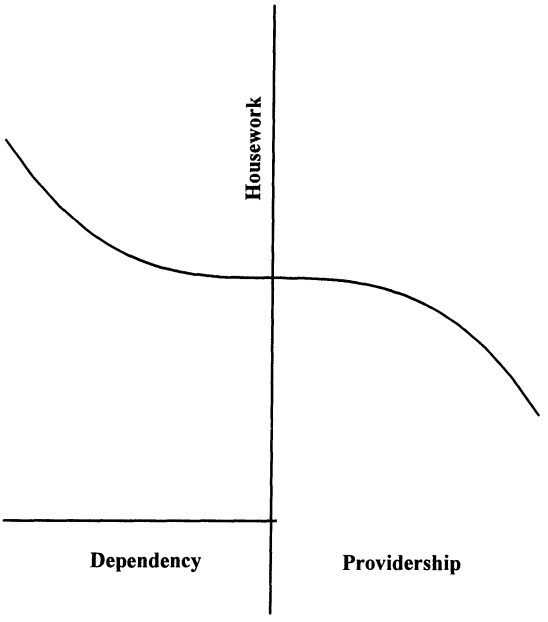

FIG. 4.—Cumulative disadvantage: husbands ($Y = \alpha_h + \beta_h X^3$; $\beta_h < 0$, $\beta_h > \beta_w$).

This perspective has been put forth to account for the "unexplained residual" difference that persists between wives' and husbands' housework contributions, net of labor force participation levels, professed sex-role attitudes, and the like (e.g., Berk 1985; West and Zimmerman 1987; Thompson and Walker 1989). But the validity of this perspective has been difficult to ascertain directly, short of evidence provided by a few ethnographic studies (Hochschild and Machung 1989; Hood 1983; DeVault 1991). Moreover, as a residualist explanation of "net" gender differences it competes with other, equally plausible accounts, including those that emphasize the consequences of women's structural disadvantage in achieving economic independence.

Coupling the issue of dependency with the "doing" of gender via housework provides a special avenue for gaining leverage on this problem and, in turn, on the implicit debate between adherents of the "display" perspective and those of the dependency model. It requires, however, that one examine the other side of gender display. The focus on housework as women's work and not men's leaves the equation incomplete. What, in terms of positive content, do people regard as "men's work"?

The answer surfaces routinely in a variety of contexts: "men's work" remains associated with primary providership for the family (Blumstein and Schwartz 1991; Hood 1983; Liebow 1967). The association between "men's work" and providership not only reflects widespread personal beliefs about adult male competency, but is, following the flipside of the argument regarding women's dependency, embedded in socio-institutional structures. To the extent that these structures remain predicated on the ideal of durable heterosexual unions, institutions presume male providership just as much as they presume female dependency. Drawing upon the display perspective, then, the problem becomes one of how institutionalized normative expectations regarding female dependency *and* male providership are managed reflexively at the level of "private" domestic relations, no matter what the actual material circumstances confronting a couple might be.

One means of approaching this problem is to ask: What happens among couples who violate the norms prescribing the gender of main breadwinner and dependent? The display perspective suggests that such arrangements throw an uncustomary wrench into the dynamics of symbolic interaction between wife and husband. Neither partner, on these grounds, engages in behavior that exhibits or affirms their "essential natures" as men and women. So with respect to the internal dynamics of these partnerships, one normatively sanctioned arrangement providing for the everyday enactment of gender is unavailable. Furthermore, deviation from the dependency norm risks a couple's social accountability. Research on couples where the wife is considered occupationally senior lends support to this view, in that people in gender-atypical partnerships often encounter negative judgments from relatives, friends, and colleagues (Hornung and McCullough 1981; Atkinson and Boles 1984). The findings of one study in particular attest to the problems such couples face in managing others' perceptions of their accountability as "real" men and women:

> Husbands were perceived as losers, e.g., lazy, irresponsible and unmasculine. One father said of his son, who was relocating for his wife's career: "If he were any kind of man, he wouldn't be following her like that." Wives are seen as "unladylike," domineering, and manipulative. One comment addressed to the husband of an office manager was, "Does she manage you too?" A wife was asked, "What kind of drugs do you give him anyhow?" A young woman said to an older female colleague, "I'd rather die than end up like you." [Atkinson and Boles 1984, p. 864]

Because breadwinner wives and dependent husbands appear to contend with both a narrower arena for symbolic exchange and the negative reactions of others, the logic of display suggests that they are likely to compensate by adopting gender-traditional behaviors elsewhere in the

marriage.[8] Under this view, one would *not* expect couples supported economically by wives to divide "women's work" in a manner consistent with the terms of the dependency model. Indeed, these couples may resort to traditional housework arrangements as a means of reclaiming gender accountability in the eyes of self, partner, and others. Hochschild and Machung's (1989, p. 221) study of 50 dual-earner couples is highly suggestive in this regard: one-fifth of the husbands who earned more than their wives shared the housework; one-third of those who earned about the same shared; but among those who earned less than their wives, none shared.[9] Concluding on the basis of intensive interviews that wives and husbands often approach housework as a means of "balancing" interpersonal power, they argue that "the more severely a man's identity is financially threatened—by his wife's higher salary, for example—the less he can afford to threaten it further by doing 'women's work' at home" (p. 221).

The basis of the relationship between economic support and housework suggested here departs fundamentally from the gender-neutral underpinnings of the dependency model. At the same time, the display perspective offers a means of accounting for the latter model's plausibility on prima facie grounds. When a couple's relations of support and dependency align with normative expectations regarding the gender of those who exchange "women's work" for the fruits of "men's work"—in other words, when the wife is dependent and the husband is the main breadwinner—the exchange of housework for support poses no problem from the point of view of gender enactment. Here, normative expectations and actual circumstances correspond in ways that allow husbands and wives to do gender as they exchange resources for labor according to quasi-economic rules. For these gender-typical unions, the relationship between dependency and housework would then take the form presented in figure 5. Note that this form is identical to the dependency model's "cumulative disadvantage" specification shown in figure 2, except that here both normative expectations and distributive realities regarding the gender of providers and dependents are recognized explicitly.

The extension of this pattern suggested by the display perspective appears in figure 6. When expected and actual relations of support and dependency *diverge* along gender lines, the rules governing housework

[8] Indeed, wives in the above-mentioned study said that they engaged in traditionally feminine displays "as much as possible" vis-à-vis their husbands, taking special pains to appear attractive, to arrange romantic interludes, and to "cater" to their husbands in order "to make up for their participation in a traditionally male role" (Atkinson and Boles 1984, p. 865).

[9] In Hochschild and Machung's study, "sharing" husbands were those who contributed between 45% and 55% of the total time a couple spent on household tasks.

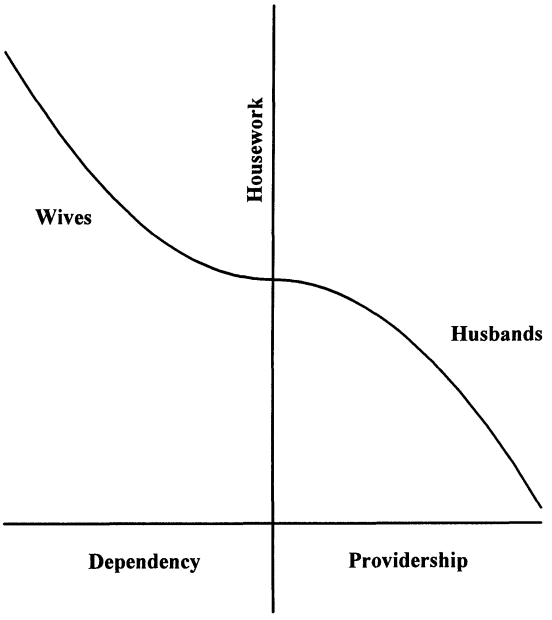

FIG. 5.—Distributional image

change. The reassignment of housework as women's work among these couples becomes a means by which wives and husbands can interpersonally compensate for restricted symbolic opportunities and social deviance. The greater the degree of deviance, the greater the threat to both partners' gender accountability and, in turn, the greater the likely level of investment in compensatory traditional behavior. Figure 6 thus represents the display perspective's counterpoint to the dependency model specifications shown in figures 1–4. The analyses presented below are designed to adjudicate among the various possibilities.

DATA AND MEASURES

The Sample

The data used in this paper are drawn from family and individual records contained in wave 20 of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID; Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan 1989) and pertain to activities in the year 1985. The PSID collects yearly data on the economic and demographic activities of members of nearly 5,000 U.S. families originally sampled in 1968. The sample of couples used here is confined to (1) black and white husbands and wives 18 years old or older in

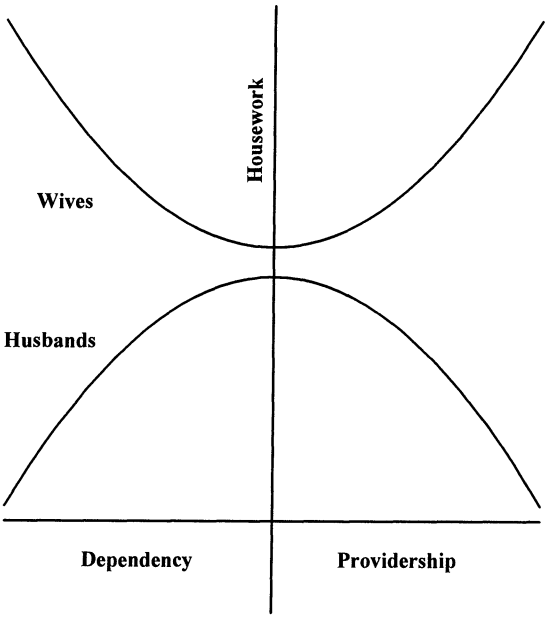

FIG. 6.—Display model ($Y = \alpha + \beta X^2$; $\beta_h < 0$, $\beta_w > 0$)

unions that had commenced by 1983 and remained intact through 1986,[10] and (2) members of unions where neither partner was jobless at the time of the 1985 interview due to retirement, physical disability, schooling, or confinement to an institution. Only unions that remained intact between 1983 and 1986 are sampled so as to provide a reasonable window on the durability of economic support and dependency relations. This fairly long time span is crucial for assessing outcomes among those in gender-atypical partnerships, given the popular assumption that most of these arrangements are temporary (due, e.g., to a husband's unanticipated unemployment or strike spell) and hence are unlikely to affect long-standing patterns of housework behavior. I exclude couples with a retired, disabled, institutionalized, or student partner, because it is unclear how the model of economic dependency would apply to couples with a spouse who is unable to work for pay. Exclusion of unions with a disabled

[10] Married unions include cohabiting partnerships that began at least one year before the time of the 1983 interview and that remained intact, regardless of any change in legal status, through 1986. Although the analysis targets activity in the year 1985, the sample includes only couples who remained together through 1986, because PSID employment, earnings, and hours data for any year t are provided on records for interview year $t + 1$.

partner is further justified by the possibility that disabled spouses are unable to do much work, be it paid or unpaid. Model estimation is performed separately for wives and husbands.

The Dependent Measure

The natural log of an individual's weekly housework time in 1985 serves as the dependent variable, where the raw PSID values (in hours) are transformed to pull in outliers.[11] The raw values come from responses to the following question asked of husbands and wives in separate interviews: "About how much time do you spend on housework in an average week (excluding child care)—I mean time spent cooking, cleaning, and doing other work around the house?" Although this type of measure does not elicit time estimates that are as precise as those from the diary-accounting method, the PSID measure is considered appropriate for analyses that compare summary estimates of routine activity at the household level (Hill 1985; Robinson 1985). Moreover, comparisons between time-diary instruments and stylized measures such as the PSID's indicate that the two types of measures are roughly equal in terms of reliability (Hill 1985). Given that this article concerns itself with how relations of support and dependency are tied to partners' general performance of housework and that, among large-scale surveys, only the PSID provides reliable economic data from which dependency and providership can be traced over a series of years, the PSID measure seems best suited to the task at hand.

Measures of Dependency or Providership

Dependency or providership is measured both over a period of three years (1983–85) and contemporaneously (1985). Both measures are adapted from Sørensen and McLanahan's (1987) original measure of a wife's economic dependency. Here, the formula

$$\text{income transfer} = (\text{OEARN} - \text{SEARN})/(\text{OEARN} + \text{SEARN})$$

applies to both wives and husbands, where OEARN and SEARN equal one's own labor income and one's spouse's labor income, respectively. For the measure of long-term economic transfer, labor income is computed over the years 1983, 1984, and 1985 (in 1985 dollars); for the measure of contemporaneous transfer, only data on 1985 earnings is used. I assume, as the measure's originators do, that husbands and wives pool their earned income and share it equally. Values of these measures range

[11] Raw values of "0," i.e., no time spent on housework, are recoded to ".01" before transformation.

from "1," meaning that one provides complete earned-income support to his or her spouse, to "−1," meaning that one completely depends upon his or her spouse for such support; a value of "0" means that both partners contribute the same amount to the couple's earnings pool. Other values can be interpreted in the following way: for negative values, multiplying the absolute value by 100 gives the percentage of one's income share received from the spouse; for positive values, multiplying the value by 100 gives the percentage one contributes to the spouse's share.

Each measure is used in separate rounds to test the alternative dependency and display specifications of the effect of dependency or providership on housework. Distinguishing between long-term and contemporaneous patterns of income transfer is important because women's and men's responses to the same level of dependency are probably conditional on whether their circumstances have persisted for some time. For couples with gender-atypical support arrangements, the question of precedence is perhaps especially germane. Among those who have participated in such arrangements for a number of years (whether by design or circumstance), contemporaneous housework behavior is probably based on the expectation that these support patterns will endure. Analyzing the effects of contemporaneous dependency might reveal different patterns if couples entering atypical arrangements in any given year tend to do so involuntarily or regard their situation as temporary.

Control Measures

Several individual sociodemographic and household variables are entered into the models as controls and, taken together, represent a baseline that corresponds to standard models of the household division of labor.[12] Table 1 presents the coding of these variables and their predicted effects for husbands and wives.

The hypothesized effects of these variables are inspired by the results of previous research. Individual attributes such as age, race, and educational attainment are viewed as important predictors of housework behavior, because they capture variation in patterns over the family life cycle, in subcultural practices, and in general lifestyle propensities or values (Berk 1985; Coverman 1985; Huber and Spitze 1983; Rexroat and Shehan 1987; Ross 1987). Young married women at the onset of childbearing age, for instance, appear to do less housework than their

[12] Preliminary analyses tested for the effects of marital status (whether married or cohabiting), the age of the youngest child, and the numbers of teen-aged and young-adult children present in the household. Because none of these effects were significant in the baseline models, I dropped them from the analysis.

TABLE 1

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND PREDICTED EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES*

VARIABLE	HUSBANDS		WIVES		PREDICTED EFFECT	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Husbands	Wives
Housework time (hours per week)	6.62	6.82	24.99	15.84		
Dependency measures:†						
Long-term economic transfer (1983–85)	.51	.42	−.52	.43		
Contemporaneous economic transfer (1985)	.50	.47	−.50	.47		
Sociodemographic control variables:						
Age	39.00	10.68	36.62	10.31	−	+
African-American	.23	.42	.23	.42	+	−
Education (0 = less than eighth grade; 8 = postgraduate work)	5.02	1.74	4.90	1.54	+	−
Employment:						
Employed part-time	.15	.36	.33	.47	+	+
Joblessness, short-term	.02	.13	.02	.13	0/−	0
Joblessness, long-term	.01	.11	.01	.09	?	++
Household Measures:‡						
N of children:						
0–2 years old	.28	.52			+	+
3–5 years old	.30	.53			0	+
6–13 years old	.63	.87			0	+
Others' weekly housework time	4.75	9.72			0	−
ln(family income)	10.44	.78			+	−
Restaurant meal expenditures	.29	.48			0	−
N	2,312		2,301			

* Data are unweighted.
† Predicted effects are those motivated by the dependency perspective.
‡ Means and SDs for these variables are identical for husbands and wives and thus are not repeated for wives.

counterparts in the middle to late childbearing years; wives' housework time remains high until the "empty nest" period, whereupon it declines through the retirement stage (Hafstrom and Schram 1983; Rexroat and Shehan 1987; but see Berk 1985). However, preliminary analysis of the data revealed that the curvilinear age effect becomes linear for wives when either economic transfer measure is introduced, whereas the age effect remains linear across all models for husbands. To preserve parsimony, all analyses discussed below estimate only the linear effect of age.

Because of PSID data limitations, comparisons by race are confined here to African-Americans and whites. Previous findings, though scattered, suggest that African-American husbands and wives share housework to a greater extent than do white couples (Ross 1987; Scanzoni 1971). This finding is consistent with research indicating that African-American men and women are less likely than whites to base expectations on the ideal of distinct and complementary work roles within the family (Jones 1985).

Education embodies levels of human capital investment, lifestyle preferences, and attitudes; its effects on housework behavior are thus complex and difficult to interpret unambiguously. Nonetheless, several studies find that wives with more education do less housework, whereas highly educated husbands do more, suggesting that education primarily captures an attitudinal effect (Berardo et al. 1987; Coverman 1985; Farkas 1976; Goldscheider and Waite 1991).

Household compositional factors, as well as those related to income and consumption practices, affect both the supply and demand for household labor. Children, particularly those under school age, tend to increase the household labor time of wives (Berk 1985; Nickols and Metzen 1979; Shelton 1992). Married fathers of young children appear to do more housework than other husbands (Berardo et al. 1987; Coverman and Sheley 1986; Rexroat and Shehan 1987), but there is little evidence that the presence of older children affects the housework responsibilities of fathers. At the same time, the performance of tasks by family members other than the wife or husband (representing primarily older children) appears to substitute for a share of the wife's housework (Waite and Goldscheider 1992).

The effect of family income, while often the object of theoretical speculation, is relatively understudied empirically. Greater financial resources facilitate the purchase of domestic services that, presumably, relieve a share of the task burden that otherwise would be performed by the wife. Income also captures class differences, where lower- or working-class men and women appear to be less egalitarian in their values (Mason and Bumpass 1975; Mason, Czajka, and Arber 1976) and, again presumably, in their household-labor patterns. These arguments suggest that higher

family incomes reduce the housework time of wives; the class hypothesis further implies a positive effect of family income on husbands' time (i.e., as family income goes up, so does the housework time of husbands).

Income is, however, at best a proxy for the purchase rate of goods and services that may replace the time of family members. To better gauge how such purchases affect the division of household labor, the model includes a measure of the annual amount spent on restaurant meals relative to the sum spent on food prepared at home; as in the case of maid or domestic services, such expenditures should be related to a reduction in wives' housework time.

The set of dummy terms for employment is designed to address two concerns. The first relates to how labor force attachment affects a person's time availability, as well as the elasticity of household labor arrangements. Part-time workers are likely to spend more time on household tasks than do the fully employed; previous research shows that this pattern holds for both wives and husbands, although the effect is much greater for wives (Shelton 1992). The nonemployment terms differentiate between those who were temporarily laid off or unemployed at the time of interview but worked for at least 12 weeks during the year and those who were not employed (but in the labor force) for a longer period of time. I make this distinction by strength of labor-force attachment in part because the recently jobless are likely to anticipate reemployment and, as a consequence, might be less inclined to invest greater amounts of their time in housework. A second reason for making this distinction is related to the display perspective. Recent studies of the effect of male unemployment on families show that unemployed husbands do not substantially increase their participation in housework. In fact, one study suggests that some of these husbands resist housework because they perceive it as further threatening their male identity (Morris 1990; Wheelock 1990; see also Turner 1992). Hochschild and Machung (1989) report a similar pattern among the "semi-unemployed" husbands in their study. Thus, quite apart from predictions aligned with the notion of time availability, joblessness may have a negative effect on husbands' housework time—particularly among the long-term unemployed, whose prolonged experience might intensify any distress over lost claims to male accountability.[13] The final term for employment status is that of "housewife"; because only a handful of husbands in the PSID sample are so classified, this term is included only in the analysis for wives.

[13] The image of unemployed husbands' resistance to household work is consistent with reports of husbands' negative affective response and hostile marital interactions arising from economic hardship, including those linked to unstable employment over the past year (Liker and Elder 1983; Conger et al. 1990).

REGRESSION RESULTS

Table 2 presents unstandardized OLS coefficients and SEs from model estimation for wives. Because the dependent variable is logged, small coefficients can be interpreted as the percent change in housework hours associated with a one-unit increase in the independent variable (Wonnacott and Wonnacott 1979). Model 1 reports the results for models including controls only. Models 2–4 test alternative specifications of the effect of long-term economic transfer; models 5–7 comprise the same set of tests for the effect of contemporaneous transfer. Both the linear and the cubic polynomial specifications are consistent with the premises of the dependency perspective, the latter attempting to model the consequences of cumulative disadvantage or advantage. The second-order model, on the other hand, represents the functional form of the effect of economic transfer under the gender display perspective.[14]

The effects of sociodemographic and household-level variables shown in table 2 are generally consistent with those reported elsewhere. Moreover, the estimates for measures through other family members' housework time remain strikingly stable across models. Among these measures, only family income fails to exhibit a significant effect across all models. The unanticipated positive association between wives' housework time and that of other family members suggests that the time of others might not substitute for that of the wife once rates of household expenditure on other substitutes, such as dining out, are taken into account.

The results for the employment terms in model 1 are consistent with the time-availability perspective. Housewives, followed by the long-term jobless and wives employed part-time, spend more time on housework than do fully employed wives. But differences by employment status are not reducible to matters of time availability alone. Wives who have been jobless for a brief spell also do more housework than those who work full-time, but here the difference is explained completely by the greater economic dependency of the former. More generally, married women who work part-time or are not employed do more housework than fully employed wives partly because the former are more dependent on their husbands' earnings.

Models 2–4 report the results of estimation using the three-year measure of economic dependency or providership; models 5–7 show the effects of the contemporaneous measure. The pattern of effects and the proportions of variance explained across specifications are essentially the same regardless of whether earnings transfer is measured currently or

[14] For an explanation of the technique used to fit the polynomial models, see the appendix.

TABLE 2

OLS MODELS OF WIVES' 1985 HOUSEWORK TIME USING ALTERNATIVE SPECIFICATIONS OF DEPENDENCY OR SUPPORT

		LONG-TERM (THREE-YEAR) TRANSFER			CONTEMPORANEOUS TRANSFER		
	CONTROL VARIABLES (1)	Linear (2)	Cumulative Disadvantage (3)	Gender Display (4)	Linear (5)	Cumulative Disadvantage (6)	Gender Display (7)
Age	.006***	.006***	.006***	.006***	.007***	.007***	.007***
	(.001)	(.001)	(.004)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
African-American	−.109***	−.102***	−.100**	−.101***	−.103***	−.101**	−.102***
	(.031)	(.030)	(.031)	(.030)	(.030)	(.031)	(.030)
Education	−.031***	−.025**	−.025**	−.025**	−.024**	−.023**	−.024**
	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)	(.009)
N of children:							
0–2 years old	.170***	.168***	.168***	.168***	.166***	.166***	.166***
	(.028)	(.027)	(.027)	(.027)	(.027)	(.028)	(.028)
3–5 years old	.130***	.119***	.120***	.118***	.126***	.126***	.125***
	(.025)	(.025)	(.025)	(.025)	(.025)	(.025)	(.025)
6–13 years old	.010***	.093***	.093***	.093***	.097***	.097***	.097***
	(.016)	(.016)	(.016)	(.016)	(.016)	(.016)	(.016)
ln(family income)	−.011	−.026	−.024	−.025	−.037	−.036*	−.038*
	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.018)	(.018)	(.018)
Restaurant meal expenditures	−.087***	−.088***	−.088***	−.088***	−.092***	−.094***	−.092***
	(.026)	(.026)	(.026)	(.026)	(.026)	(.026)	(.026)
Other family members' housework time	.003*	.003*	.003*	.003*	.003*	.003*	.003*
	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)

Employment:							
Employed part-time	.240***	.181***	.180***	.181***	.161***	.154***	.159***
	(.031)	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.033)	(.034)	(.034)
Joblessness, short-term	.198*	.114	.113	.111	.099	.085	.095
	(.098)	(.099)	(.099)	(.099)	(.099)	(.100)	(.010)
Joblessness, long-term	.459**	.330*	.330*	.325*	.245^{+}	.249	.234
	(.145)	(.146)	(.147)	(.146)	(.148)	(.152)	(.152)
Housewife	.657***	.510***	.510***	.504***	.463***	.464***	.454***
	(.033)	(.042)	(.045)	(.044)	(.046)	(.054)	(.053)
Economic transfer:							
X		−.214***	−.214***	−.219***	−.232***	−.231***	−.238***
		(.038)	(.040)	(.040)	(.038)	(.043)	(.042)
X^2			.021	.025		.010	.017
			(.060)	(.060)		(.055)	(.054)
X^3			.069			.089	
			(.106)			(.093)	
Constant	2.646***	2.736***	2.706***	2.730***	2.864***	2.824***	2.853***
	(.180)	(.179)	(.184)	(.180)	(.182)	(.188)	(.185)
R^2	.253	.263	.264	.264	.265	.266	.265

NOTE.—N = 2,301; SEs are in parentheses. Models based on ln of hours of housework per week.
$^{+}P < .10$.
$^{*}P < .05$.
$^{**}P < .01$.
$^{***}P < .001$.

over the long term, although the effects are somewhat greater for the contemporaneous measure.

For all three specifications (linear, cumulative disadvantage, and gender display) the first-order term suffices to fit the data; this remains true for the effects of long-term and contemporaneous dependency. On grounds of parsimony, then, the simple linear specification (models 2 and 5) provides the superior fit. The contemporaneous effect translates into approximately a 2.3% increase in housework time for every 10% of the wife's share of combined earnings received by the husband and a reduction of the same magnitude for every 10% of the husband's share contributed by the wife. Note, however, that the positive sign of the second-order estimates is consistent with the predictions of the display perspective. The findings under this specification also show that the greater housework time of unemployed wives is largely explained by their contemporaneous levels of dependency upon the spouse.

The results for husbands depart substantially from the patterns observed for wives. Table 3 reports Tobit estimates for models of husbands' housework; these estimates are generated using a maximum-likelihood procedure that corrects for limited dependent variables.[15] Although the Tobit estimates tend to be larger in magnitude than OLS estimates (results not shown), the two procedures produce the same pattern of findings.

The effects of sociodemographic and household-level control variables yield few surprises. The positive association of other family members' housework time was unexpected, but the practical impact is small: a husband's housework time increases by approximately 1.4% for every hour of housework done by family members other than the wife. Table 3 also indicates that the chain of associations between the number of very young children, levels of economic transfer, and husbands' housework time suppresses the positive association between very young children and the latter. The presence of each infant or toddler increases a husband's housework time but is also associated with greater levels of providership, which in turn reduces husband's time and partly undoes the positive effect of very young children.

More provocative findings surface among the set of terms for husbands' employment. Only those husbands who have recently lost their jobs do more housework than the fully employed, and the increment in the former's time is relatively large. Compared to the long-term unemployed

[15] Among cases retained after listwise deletion of missing cases, 15% of husbands—but no wives—reported "0" hours of housework in 1985. The sizable proportion of husbands who load on this lower-boundary value (log = −4.605) can lead to biased and inconsistent OLS estimates (see Tobin 1958). Maximum-likelihood methods correct for this problem.

then—who have been free for months to make adjustments in their behavior—the recently jobless contribute more to the work of the home. Husbands who have been unemployed for a longer period of time do no more housework than their fully employed counterparts, and there is some evidence that they may do even less; the negative estimate for the effect of long-term joblessness reaches significance ($P < .10$) under model 5. These results are not only irreconcilable with the time-availability perspective but are suggestive of particular resistance among the long-term jobless against doing "women's work."

Alternative specifications of the effect of long-term dependency or providership on husbands' housework time appear in models 2–4; contemporaneous effects appear in models 5–7. Taken together, these models attest to the salience of economic dependency among men. Note, for example, that measures of economic transfer contribute proportionately more to the R^2 values for husbands than for wives. The increment for husbands, moreover, is substantial; depending on the specification, including information on the degree of economic transfer leads to an approximate R^2 improvement of 20%–27%.

The signs of the economic transfer estimates in table 3 all align with predictions under the linear, cumulative disadvantage, and gender display specifications. But the display specification clearly provides the best fit, regardless of whether one examines earnings transferred in the current year or over the past three years.

Certain shifts in the pattern of coefficients across models 5–7 pinpoint the conditions under which husbands tend to withdraw from housework as a consequence of their dependency. Consider the negative effect that emerges for the long-term jobless under model 5. When the measure of current economic transfer takes the linear form, the long-term jobless appear to do less housework than the fully employed, net of any economic dependence upon their wives. When the second-order term for economic transfer is added to the equation (models 6 and 7), the negative quadratic effect absorbs the effect for long-term joblessness; thus, among these men it is not joblessness per se but dependency that accounts for their lower levels of housework. Interestingly, dependency does not account for the greater housework time of the short-term unemployed. Note further that for all models that include a second-order term (models 3, 4, 6, and 7), the positive effect of family income drops below significance. It appears, then, that lower-income husbands do less housework because they are more likely to depend on their wives for economic support and respond by avoiding housework to reclaim their constitutive masculinity.

Taken together, the above findings illuminate the circumstances under which dependent husbands resist doing housework: those in lower-

TABLE 3

TOBIT MODELS OF HUSBANDS' 1985 HOUSEWORK TIME USING ALTERNATIVE SPECIFICATIONS OF DEPENDENCY OR SUPPORT

		LONG-TERM (THREE-YEAR) TRANSFER			CONTEMPORANEOUS TRANSFER		
	CONTROL VARIABLES (1)	Linear (2)	Cumulative Disadvantage (3)	Gender Display (4)	Linear (5)	Cumulative Disadvantage (6)	Gender Display (7)
Age	−.038***	−.030***	−.028***	−.028***	−.032***	−.028***	−.028***
	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)
African-American	.093	−.026	−.048	−.054	−.007	−.046	−.046
	(.141)	(.140)	(.141)	(.141)	(.141)	(.141)	(.141)
Education	.310***	.311***	.308***	.310***	.307***	.313***	.313***
	(.035)	(.035)	(.035)	(.035)	(.035)	(.035)	(.035)
N of children:							
0–2 years old	.316**	.454***	.480***	.482***	.453***	.493***	.493***
	(.121)	(.122)	(.122)	(.122)	(.123)	(.123)	(.123)
3–5 years old	−.008	.110	.134	.129	.077	.098	.098
	(.113)	(.113)	(.113)	(.113)	(.113)	(.113)	(.112)
6–13 years old	.036	.097	.109	.109	.080	.088	.088
	(.071)	(.070)	(.071)	(.071)	(.070)	(.070)	(.070)
ln(family income)	.184*	.149+	.126	.119	.175*	.094	.094
	(.080)	(.079)	(.081)	(.080)	(.079)	(.083)	(.083)
Restaurant meal expenditures	.071	.059	.047	.050	.067	.059	.059
	(.118)	(.117)	(.117)	(.117)	(.117)	(.117)	(.117)

Other family members' housework time	.015*	.015*	.014*	.014*	.014*	.014*	.014*
	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)
Employment:							
Employed part-time	.259	.116	.150	.147	.120	.179	.179
	(.159)	(.159)	(.159)	(.159)	(.160)	(.160)	(.160)
Joblessness, short-term	1.212**	.936*	1.005*	.995*	.961*	.992*	.992*
	(.431)	(.428)	(.428)	(.428)	(.429)	(.430)	(.428)
Joblessness, long-term	.085	−.758	−.549	−.518	−1.032^{+}	−.138	−.141
	(.532)	(.539)	(.548)	(.547)	(.558)	(.643)	(.616)
Economic Transfer:							
X		−.976***	−.975***	−.975***	−.786***	−.728***	−.728***
		(.140)	(.140)	(.140)	(.129)	(.130)	(.130)
X^2			−.658*	−.664*		−.768***	−.768***
			(.261)	(.261)		(.229)	(.227)
X^3			−.374			.005	
			(.471)			(.410)	
Constant	−1.691*	−1.191	−.933	−1.055	1.452^{+}	−.697	−.695
	(.827)	(.821)	(.825)	(.840)	(.182)	(.848)	(.862)
−2 log-likelihood	10357.4	10309.6	10302.4	10303.0	10320.4	10309.0	10309.0
R^2 (from OLS models)	.080	.100	.103	.102	.094	.100	.100

NOTE.—N = 2,312; SEs are in parentheses. Models based on ln of hours of housework per week.

$^{+}$ $P < .10$.

* $P < .05$.

** $P < .01$.

*** $P < .001$.

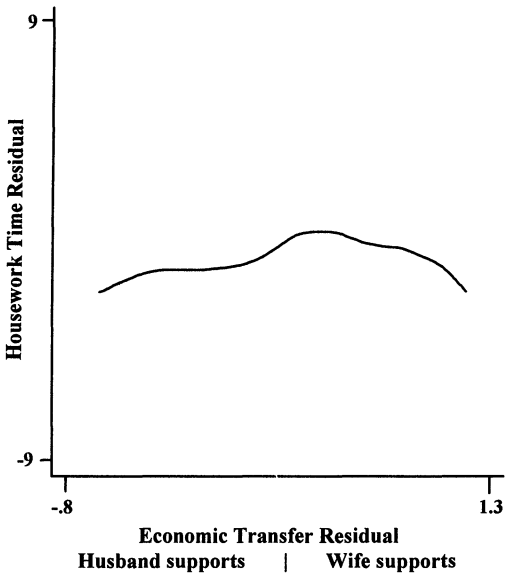

FIG. 7.—Husbands' median housework time by contemporaneous economic ransfer (residuals).

income households and those who are dependent in a given year as a result of prolonged joblessness. These are precisely the associations foreshadowed in qualitative studies of the effects of male unemployment (or underemployment) on household behavior (Hochschild and Machung 1989; Morris 1990; Wheelock 1990).

Figures 7 and 8 give further shape to the empirical relationship between economic transfers in marriage and the division of labor at home. Using the contemporaneous measure of dependency or providership, the figures depict the median spline of the residuals for housework time by the residuals for current economic transfer for husbands and wives, respectively. For each figure, the two sets of residuals come from separate regressions on the variables included under model 1 (see tables 2 and 3). These data-generated profiles thus show the net association between contemporaneous dependency or providership and housework time. Movement up the vertical axis represents an increase in housework time, whereas movement from left to right ranges from the case of complete dependency to that of complete support of the spouse.

Figure 7 reflects the concave association between contemporaneous transfer and husbands' housework time modeled in table 3. Recall that

FIG. 8.—Wives' median housework time by contemporaneous economic transfer (residuals).

this association persists net of the effects of the variables included under model 1 and thus cannot be reduced to patterns found only among the long-term jobless or the less affluent.[16]

Figure 8 provides greater leverage on the contemporaneous form of the association for wives. The negative relationship is strikingly linear over approximately three-quarters of the range of net values for the economic transfer measure—well into territory where the wife provides substantial support to the husband. The upward inflection evident thereafter is linked to the positive high-order estimates reported in table 2. This does not, however, reflect a statistically significant bend in the relationship between providership and wives' housework time. In short, figure 8 reveals a modicum of evidence suggestive of display behavior on the part of some breadwinner wives at the same time that it shows why the linear specification of the association provides the best, most parsimonious fit.

[16] Additional tests for interactions between husband's economic dependency and family income did not yield evidence of nonadditive effects. Moreover, the polynomial estimates remained quite robust across models (not shown) that tested for interactions among dependency, family income, and employment.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Why does housework remain "women's work"? While development of a fundamentally economic account has moved in one direction (e.g., Acker 1988) and that of a fundamentally cultural account in another (e.g., Fenstermaker et al. 1991), quantitative research continues to preoccupy itself with variables and procedures that offer little real leverage on either perspective. Both perspectives remain compelling, in part because they provide intuitively appealing interpretations of the persistent housework gap between married men and women. But both also pose operational hurdles that have made it difficult to adjudicate between them. This paper shows how one can gain insight by juxtaposing different specifications of the form of the relationship between economic dependency and housework behavior.

Both the dependency and display perspectives assume that the link between economic dependency and housework is governed by symmetrical processes for women and men. On the one hand, these processes involve the exchange of unpaid labor for support, on the other, the display of gendered compensatory behavior—but either way the same process is said to apply equally to husband and wife.

However, married men and women appear to respond quite differently to issues of dependency or providership. Wives respond in ways consistent with the dependency model. The same is not true for husbands. Regardless of whether economic patterns of support between wife and husband are measured contemporaneously or over a period of years, dependent husbands do less housework the more they depend on their wives for income. This dynamic is particularly evident among (though not limited to) married men in low-income households. Men currently dependent on their wives as a consequence of prolonged joblessness are also prone to disavow household work. Quite possibly, any tendency among working-class or poor men to embrace an ethic of exaggerated masculinity (Morris 1990; Rubin 1976) might predispose these husbands to resist housework as evidence mounts of "failure" at the male provider role.

What explains why findings emerge on behalf of a display interpretation for men but not for women? If the logic of gender display rests on the notion that interactional pressures compel both men and women to act accountably male or female, why would breadwinner wives be exempt from these pressures? The anthropological record on sex-role asymmetry offers a possible answer. Conceptions of what sets women apart from men tend across cultures to regard manhood as a developmental accomplishment, something that, through rite or initiation, must be *achieved* (Herdt 1982; Paglia 1990; Rosaldo 1975). Womanhood, on the

other hand, is more often seen as a natural condition, in part because women's bodies and reproductive capacities are seen as placing them closer than men to nature (Beauvoir 1953; Ortner 1975; Ortner and Whitehead 1981). Another asymmetry, perhaps more specific to Western societies, concerns women's primary responsibility for early child care and socialization—and men's relative remoteness from it (Chodorow 1978). The consequence for a young boy's developing gender identification is that he tends to define masculinity "in negative terms, as that which is not feminine or involved with women," rather than in terms that might arise through a close personal identification with the father (Chodorow 1975, p. 50). For a girl, the process of developing an identity as a girl is continuous with her early primary identification with the mother; in other words, gender-identity formation does not require that she transfer her primary identification from the female to the male parent.

Both of the above asymmetries set the stage for what has been referred to elsewhere as the sexual sociology of adult life, where conceptions of masculinity and femininity continue to organize experience and behavior (Chodorow 1975). But the flexibility of these conceptions differs for women and men. The cultural framing of manhood as an accomplishment makes claims to masculinity more precarious than those of "natural" womanhood, more demanding of ongoing behavioral "proof," and less accommodating of departures from the norm (Gerson and Peiss 1985; Lehne 1989).[17] Status violations are thus more likely to pose a threat to claimed identity and compel a compensatory response among dependent men than among breadwinner women. That response becomes all the more explicable if, as Chodorow (1975, 1978; also Williams 1989) argues, masculinity is defined fundamentally by a rejection of that which is "female."[18]

These asymmetries in gender-identity formation do not point to a single solution for households, but they do suggest that, for breadwinner wives and dependent husbands, social and interactional pressures conspire to limit the possibilities. One solution might take the form of an adaptive compromise, where each partner gets to apply a preferred logic to his or

[17] In a related vein, Paglia's (1990, p. 125) analysis of Western art and literature suggests that in the West "masculinity has been the most fragile and problematic of psychic states," where, compared to men, "women have ironically enjoyed a greater symbolic, if not practical freedom."

[18] The greater "tolerability" of female normative transgression is reflected in cultural accounts of the wife as breadwinner, which is considered permissible, perhaps even laudable, as long as she is seen as performing a duty on behalf of the family, with attendant claims to the personal sacrifice of not being able to remain at home. No such accounting mechanism exists for dependent husbands, at least insofar as it preserves an unshakable claim to customary definitions of a masculine self.

her own behavior: she gets to do less housework as she provides, while he gets to do gender as she provides. But this seems an unstable equilibrium: work that would otherwise enhance household well-being is left undone; meanwhile, dependent husbands realize greater leisure along with compensatory display opportunities, while their wives seem destined to trade one form of labor for another. Where norms of equity compete with the terms of such a compromise, the additional strains placed on the relationship may call forth another solution: that of divorce (see Hochschild and Machung 1989).

Exploring the possibility of multiple equilibria is beyond the scope of this article. But investigation of the various possibilities promises to shed new light on the consequences of shifts in the balance of economic power between women and men. Such shifts are becoming more commonplace as a result of structural changes in the economy, where men in traditional industries increasingly confront long periods of unemployment (Morris 1990; Wheelock 1990). The extent to which higher rates of long-term male joblessness might precipitate different, less traditional patterns of behavior or exacerbate tensions around male performance of "women's work" poses an immediate problem for research. And a renewed focus on working-class husbands and wives—who are at once more likely to achieve economic parity and more traditional in sex-role attitudes—promises to reveal even more about how economic and cultural processes situate gender in everyday life.

APPENDIX

Estimating Polynomial Models

Figures 1–4 and 6 depict polynomials of the kth degree ($k = 1, 2, 3$), where for any k the lower-order terms are set to zero. For the purposes of estimation, however, setting the lower-order terms to zero might impose undue constraints on the model. Because theory does not strongly motivate these restrictions, the lower-order terms are included in the equations for the display (second-degree) and cumulative disadvantage (third-degree) models of the relationship between dependency and housework. No constraints are imposed on any of the parameters.

Unfortunately, estimation of full-order polynomial models typically runs into problems of multicollinearity. Often, these problems are not resolvable through simple centering of the predictors, especially for models of third degree or higher.

I use an alternative strategy to circumvent collinearity problems. The goal is to ensure that the predictors for the polynomial terms are uncorre-

lated with each other. One technique involves creating new predictors for the polynomial terms—X^*, X^{2*}, X^{3*}—that are orthogonal functions of the simple polynomials—X, X^2, and X^3 (centered about their means). The procedure regresses X^2 on X and sets X^{2*} equal to the residuals. It then regresses X^3 on X and X^{2*}, and sets X^{3*} equal to the residuals from the second regression.

The estimates for the starred terms have a different interpretation from those of the original, simple terms. However, the multiple R^2 values and regression F-tests obtained by fitting the simple and starred terms are exactly the same (see Kleinbaum, Kupper, and Muller 1988; and Seber 1977).

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