

The University of Calgary

The Division of Housework Between Dual-earner Couples:
An Exploratory Study

By
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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters of Science

Department of Educational Psychology

Calgary, Alberta
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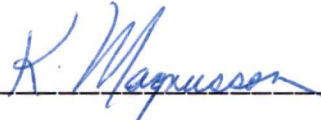
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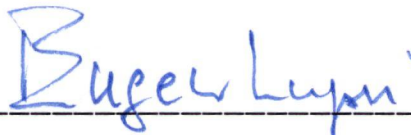
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Division of Housework Between Dual-earner Couples: An Exploratory Study" submitted by Shan A. Robertson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science.



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ABSTRACT

This study was exploratory in nature. The purpose of this study was to: (i) design a new division of housework measure that did not have some of the flaws of instruments used in previous research about the division of household labour, and (ii) attempt to replicate previous findings in the literature about the unequal division of housework between dual-earner couples and some of the variables previous studies found which might predict this pattern.

To accomplish these two aims, 10 couples participated in the instrument development phase of the study, and 27 dual-earner couples participated in the replication phase of the study.

The dependent variables examined were: (i) husband's perception of the amount of time he spent on housework minus his perceptions of the amount of time his wife spent on housework, and (ii) wife's perceptions of the amount of time her husband spent on housework minus her perceptions of the amount of time she spent on housework. The independent variables assessed that might predict the pattern of housework distribution were: (i) difference between husband's and wife's time spent at paid work, (ii) difference between husband's and wife's annual income, (iii) husband's sex-role attitude, and (iv) wife's sex-role attitude.

It was found that both husbands and wives perceived that wives spent significantly more time on housework than husbands. Further, both husbands and wives perceived that wives spent significantly more time on the combination of paid work and housework than husbands. In addition, husbands' and wives' perceptions about time wives spent on housework differed, but husbands' and wives' perceptions about time husbands spent on housework did not differ.

However, the variables difference in husband's and wife's time spent at paid work, difference between husband's and wife's annual income, husband's sex-role attitude, and wife's sex-role attitude were not significantly related to either husband's or wife's perceptions of the difference in time spent on household tasks.

The implication of these results and suggestions for future research are discussed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Time Availability	6
Economic Resources	8
Sex Role Ideology	9
Research Limitations	12
Time Measure	12
Scale for Sharing	13
Incomplete List of Tasks	14
One Spouse's Perceptions Only	15
Sex-role Ideology Measures	16
Generalizability Limitations	16
Present Study	17
Independent Variables	17
Relative Time at Paid Work	18
Relative Incomes of Spouses	18
Husbands' and Wives' Sex-role Attitudes	18
Dependent Variables	19
Hypotheses	19
CHAPTER 3: METHOD	21
Phase one: Instrument Development	21
Adaptations to the FRI	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CON'T)

SECTION	PAGE
Phase two: Research Study	28
Subjects	28
Measures	30
Demographic Variables	30
Annual Income Measure	30
Time at Paid Work Measure	32
Sex Role Attitudes Measure	32
Household Task Distribution Measure	34
Procedure	37
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	41
Descriptive Data for Variables	41
Hypothesis 1	43
Hypothesis 2	46
Hypothesis 3	52
Hypothesis 4	56
Hypothesis 5	57
Hypothesis 6	59
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	61
Why Do Spouses' Perceptions Differ?	62
Why Do Wives Do More?	64
Implications for Counselling	71
Methodological Considerations	72
Future Research	76
REFERENCES	79

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
Table 1. Number of Couples (N=10) Who Agreed Either They Or Their Spouse Complete The Tasks Listed In The Family Responsibility Index	25
Table 2. Items Added From Subject Questionnaires to. Constitute the Revised Family Responsibility Index	26
Table 3. Final Set of 83 Items Included on the Revised Family Responsibility Index	27
Table 4. Sample Demographic Characteristics	29
Table 5. Highest Educational Level on Wives and Husbands (N=27)	31
Table 6. Descriptive Data for Annual Income, Attitude Toward Women, and Time Spent at Paid Work for Husbands and Wives	42
Table 7. Husbands' and Wives' Perceptions of the Amount of Time Per Week They and Their Spouse Spend on Household Tasks	44
Table 8. Amount of Time Per Week at Paid Work Plus Husbands' and Wives' Perceptions of the Amount of Time Spent on Family Work	48
Table 9. Mean of Spouses' Perceptions of the Amount of Time They and Their Partner Spend on Household Tasks Per Week	50

LIST OF TABLES (CON'T)

TABLE	PAGE
Table 10. Results of the Multiple Regression Analyses Assessing the Effects of the Independent Variables on the Dependent Variables Husbands' Perceptions and Wives' Perceptions of the Difference in Time Spent on Housework	53
Table 11. Second Set of Multiple Regression Analyses Examining the Relationship Between the Independent Variables and the Two Dependent Variables, Controlling for the Five Covariates	55

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the percentage of women who participate in the labour force has increased. In 1988, 57.4% of all women were employed either full-time or part-time, compared to 38.3% in 1970 (Statistics Canada, 1990). In particular, there was a large increase in labour force participation among married women between 1975 and 1988. In 1975, 41.6% of married women were employed. In 1988, the percentage increased over 17 percentage points to 59.1% of married women (Statistics Canada, 1990). The percentage of married, employed women with children under 15 years of age has also increased. In 1976, 34.9% of married women with preschool children, and 49.0% of married women with children between the ages of 6 and 15 years were employed. In 1988, the labour force participation rate of married women with preschool children increased over 27 percentage points to 62.2%, and the participation rate of married women with children between the ages of 6 and 15 years increased 23 percentage points to 73.0% (Statistics Canada, 1990). The traditional arrangement of wife as homemaker and husband as sole breadwinner no longer describes the majority of Canadian marriages.

Married women's increased involvement in paid work outside the home, however, has not been accompanied by equivalent changes in work distribution inside the home. Numerous studies have found that dual-earner couples, where both husband and wife are employed, still have specialized roles within the home. They still divide household tasks traditionally according to gender: the husband is primarily responsible for traditionally "masculine" tasks and the wife is primarily responsible for traditionally "feminine" tasks. Specifically, the wife generally takes responsibility for laundry, housecleaning, cooking and child-care, and the husband generally takes responsibility for car maintenance, yard work, and household repairs (Atkinson & Boles, 1984; Beckman & Houser, 1979; Berheide, 1984; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Krausz, 1986; Lawrence, Draugh, Tasker & Worniak, 1987; Nyquist, Slivken, Spence & Helmreich, 1985; Sack & Liddell, 1985). Not only do spouses divide tasks traditionally according to gender, but many studies have found that employed wives also do much more housework than their employed husbands do (Beckman & Houser, 1979; Condran & Bode, 1982; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Lawrence et al, 1987; Lupri, 1988; Lupri & Mills, 1987; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Sack & Liddell, 1985; Spitze, 1986; Tavecchio et al, 1984; Yogev, 1981). Thus, employed wives have double

duty: they are working for pay outside the home and working for their families inside the home.

There are negative consequences of women's double duty. One consequence is the damaging effects on the marital relationship. Therapists report that inequality in the home is a common presenting problem in marital and family conflicts (Krausz, 1986). This contention is supported by research that has found women's double-duty to be related to role strain (Bird & Ford, 1985), wives' lack of leisure time (Chambers, 1986), poorer marital adjustment (Sack & Liddell, 1985), and marital dissatisfaction (Belskey, Lang & Huston, 1986; Nicola & Hawkes, 1985; Ruble, Fleming, Hackel, & Stangor, 1988; Yogev, 1983; Yogev & Brett, 1985). Another negative consequence of women's double-duty is their reduced ability to compete with men in the work force. Cairns (1981), the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1987), Model (1981), and Stafford, Backman, and Dibona (1977) all argued that as long as women are burdened with the major responsibility for housework, they will have little time or energy to devote to occupational demands. This circumstance seriously undermines women's ability to compete with their male counterparts.

Intervention on many levels is probably necessary to reduce the negative effects of women's double-duty on their

marriages and on their ability to compete in the work force. In order to plan appropriate counselling interventions, it is important to determine what variables are associated with the division of labour in the home. The present study explored the current literature on the division of housework for variables that might be associated with a more equal distribution of housework. A review of the literature found that time availability, economic resources, and sex-role ideology of spouses were some of the variables that may be related to how household tasks are shared between spouses. However, the researcher found that there were various methodological flaws common to many of the studies about the division of housework and the variables related to it.

The methodological flaws of the studies included several problems with the measure of how housework is divided between spouses. The typical problems included: not using a time measure, so that each spouses' time spent on housework was not determined; using an incomplete list of household tasks, so more accurate assessments of housework division could not be obtained; and asking only one spouse about how housework was divided, resulting in possible subject perception bias. These flaws cast doubt on the reliability of the results of these studies. Do wives really spend more time on housework than husbands? Do time availability, economic

resources, and sex-role ideology of spouses really predict how housework is divided?

The study was exploratory in nature. Given the flaws with the existing instruments for measuring how spouses divide housework, a new instrument was created. With this instrument, the study attempted to replicate some of the findings of previous research about the division of housework between married working spouses and the variables that predict the patterns of work distribution.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the research on the division of housework between married working spouses revealed that wives do much more housework than husbands (Beckman & Houser, 1979; Condran & Bode, 1982; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Lawrence et al, 1987; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Sack & Liddell, 1985; Spitze, 1986; Tavecchio et al, 1984; Yogev, 1981). The review also revealed several variables that may be related to the division of housework. These variables are time availability, economic resources, and sex-role ideology of spouses. The following three sections describe the findings of studies that have explored the relationships of each of these three variables with the division of labour between spouses. A fourth section discusses the methodological limitations of these studies, and the final two sections detail the purposes and hypotheses of this study.

Time availability

One variable that may be related to how housework is divided between spouses is time availability. According to Blood and Wolfe (1960), the amount of time each partner spends at work is related to how housework is divided between the spouses; the spouse who spends more time at paid work spends less time on housework. If husbands typically spend

more time at paid work than wives, they would be expected to spend less time on housework.

Several studies have found that the number of hours the husband spends at paid work is related to increased participation in housework. Model (1981) found greater male participation in housework to be related to shorter working hours for the husband. Coverman and Sheley (1986) and Rexroat & Shehan (1987) found that the more time males spent in paid work, the less time they spent in housework. Similarly, Atkinson and Boles (1984) found that husbands of wives in nontraditional occupations spent fewer hours at work than their wives did, and that the couples had a near equal distribution of household tasks. Caution should be used when interpreting the results from this study, since the sample was selected to represent nontraditional couples.

The number of hours wives work for pay outside the home may also be related to the division of housework. Stafford et al (1977) found that the more hours a wife worked outside the home, the less responsible she was for household tasks. Similarly, other studies have found that the greater the number of hours the wife was employed outside the home, the greater the husband's performance of traditionally female tasks (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Krausz, 1986) and of all household tasks (Krausz, 1986; Model, 1981). According to

these studies, it appears that the number of hours husbands and wives spend at paid work is related to the distribution of housework between them.

Economic resources

A second variable that may be related to the division of labour in the home is the economic resources of spouses. Blood and Wolfe (1960) argued that resources, such as income, determine the power distribution in the relationship. This power can be translated into the ability to avoid tasks, such as housework, that offer no pay and minimal social prestige. According to this hypothesis, husbands and wives who contribute equal incomes to the relationship should have equal power, and, consequently, experience shared roles.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between income and the division of labour in the home. Bird, Bird, and Scruggs (1984) found that as wives' incomes rose, the wives reported increased participation by husbands in the more time consuming tasks of meal preparation and cleaning. Maret and Finlay (1984) found that those women with higher incomes than other women in the study were more likely not to have sole responsibility for household tasks; similarly, women whose husbands had lower incomes than other husbands in the study were more likely not to have sole responsibility for household tasks. These researchers argued that it may be the

wife's relative contribution rather than her absolute contribution that increases her domestic power and, thus, the probability of her husband sharing household tasks.

Some studies have found support for Maret and Finlay's (1984) argument. Harrell (1985) found that the greater the wife's contribution to the total household income, the more likely her husband was to become involved in cooking and cleaning. Model (1981) found that when incomes of spouses were nearly equal, husbands showed a higher rate of participation in household duties than husbands who earned more than their wives. In the previously mentioned Atkinson and Boles (1984) study, wives earned considerably more than their husbands did, and the couples spent nearly equal time on household tasks.

Sex-role ideology

A third variable that may be related to the division of housework is sex-role ideology. The term 'sex-role ideology' is defined as people's beliefs about what are appropriate behaviors for males and females. Sex-role ideology includes sex-role attitudes and sex-role orientation. The argument here is that people with traditional sex-role ideology will adhere to a traditional division of labour in the home.

Sex-role attitude refers to the beliefs an individual has about appropriate characteristics and behaviors for males and

females (Schau, 1984). Sex-role attitudes are considered "traditional" if they conform with the stereotypic social beliefs about men and women, and are considered "nontraditional" if they diverge from these stereotypic beliefs. Women are stereotypically viewed as domestic, warm, emotional, physically weak, and passive, whereas men are stereotypically viewed as intelligent, unemotional, physically strong, independent, active, and aggressive).

Some studies have supported this hypothesis, that sex-role attitudes of spouses may be related to household task distribution. Greater sharing of tasks has been found to be associated with less traditional sex-role attitudes of wives (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Beckman & Houser, 1979; Koopman-Boyden, & Abbott, 1985; Stafford et al, 1977), and of husbands (Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Lee, 1986).

Somewhat related to sex-role attitude is sex-role orientation. Both sex-role attitude and sex-role orientation refer to the rating of people's characteristics as gender appropriate. Sex-role attitude refers to the way an individual rates other people's characteristics, whereas sex-role orientation refers to the way an individual rates his/her own characteristics. Sex-role orientation is the extent to which an individual has internalized "masculine" and/or "feminine" stereotyped traits (Schau, 1984). Thus, a man who rates

himself high on a number of stereotypically "masculine" traits or a woman who rates herself high on a number of stereotypically "feminine" traits would be considered to exhibit a traditional sex-role orientation.

Studies have found that the sex-role orientation of husbands may be related to the distribution of household tasks. Husbands' non-traditional sex-role orientation has been found to be associated with more sharing of housework (Bird et al, 1984; Denmark, Shaw, & Ciali, 1985; Harrell, 1985). Husbands who rate themselves as traditional in sex-role orientation have been found to be less likely to contribute to performance of household tasks (Nyquist et al, 1985).

There is inconsistency in the research on the relationship of wives' sex-role orientation to the distribution of household labour. Some studies have shown that a wife's non-traditional sex-role orientation is associated with greater sharing of household tasks by the husband (Krausz, 1986; Model, 1981). However, other studies have not supported this relationship (Bird et al, 1984; Denmark et al, 1985). The discrepant results may be due to the different measures of sex-role orientation that these four studies used. Two of the studies did not use reliable measures of sex-role ideology (Krausz, 1986; Model, 1981).

In summary, the research findings described above suggest that time-availability, economic resources, and sex-role ideology may be related to the distribution of household tasks. Number of hours employed, income level, and husbands' and wives' sex-role attitude are all variables possibly associated with distribution of household labour. However, there are serious limitations in the research design of most of the studies about the distribution of housework.

Research limitations

The design limitations of many of the studies about the division of household work include: (i) not using a measure of the amount of time spent on household tasks, (ii) using a scale for the housework questionnaire that does not specify with whom the spouse shares the housework, (iii) not using a complete list of household tasks, (iv) relying on only one spouse's perceptions of the distribution of housework, (v) not using reliable and valid measures of sex-role ideology, and (vi) using a sample which limits the generalizability of the results. These limitations are described in more detail below.

Time measure

Numerous studies about the division of household tasks do not use a measure of the amount of time spent on household tasks. Instead, respondents were asked to indicate on a Likert scale the extent of their responsibility for each task in a

typical week (Beckman & Houser, 1979; Condran & Bode, 1982; Harrell, 1986; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Krausz, 1986; Lee, 1983; Model, 1981; Nyquist et al, 1985; Spitze, 1986; Stafford et al, 1977; Tavecchio et al, 1984). The problem with using a Likert scale is that this procedure does not allow for an accurate measure of the amount of time each spouse contributes to each task. By rating spouses' performance of each task as a relative contribution rather than as an amount of time, important data are lost. For instance, the husband may be primarily responsible for five tasks that each take 10 minutes of his time, while the wife is primarily responsible for five tasks that each take 30 minutes. If time is not taken into account, the data appear to indicate that both spouses are contributing equally to the performance of household tasks. Although many studies used a Likert scale, some studies did ask for an estimate of the amount of time spent on housework (Atkinson & Boles, 1984; Barnet & Baruch, 1987; Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Denmark et al, 1985; Lawrence et al, 1987; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Yogev, 1981).

Scale for sharing

Some studies used a scale on the household task questionnaire that does not compare one spouse's contribution to the housework with the other spouse's contribution (Harrell,

1985; Lee, 1983; Maret & Finlay, 1984). The scales ask whether the respondent does the task most of the time, some of the time, shares it with someone else or someone else does the task. It is unclear whether "someone else" is referring to the other spouse, to children, or to a hired housekeeper. Therefore, caution must be used when interpreting how spouses in these studies distribute housework.

Incomplete list of tasks

For some studies, the questionnaire concerning household tasks did not include tasks assumed to be traditionally performed by males (Denmark et al, 1985; Maret & Finlay, 1984; Model, 1981; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). Assessing only traditionally "female" tasks can result in a biased assessment of time spent in housework. Since husbands are more likely to perform traditionally "masculine" tasks, their participation in housework may be underestimated. Some studies did not even indicate what tasks were included on the questionnaires (Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Sack & Liddell, 1985), making it difficult to assess their methodological designs.

Many studies used both traditionally masculine and feminine tasks. Typically, these studies assessed chores assumed to be traditionally "feminine", such as meal preparation, meal cleanup, house cleaning, laundry, and grocery

shopping, and chores assumed to be traditionally "masculine", such as home repairs, yard work, and car repairs (Atkinson & Boles, 1984; Barnet & Baruch, 1987; Beckman & Houser, 1979; Condran & Bode, 1982; Harrell, 1985; Lawrence et al, 1987; Lee, 1983; Maret & Finlay, 1984; Spitze, 1986; Stafford et al, 1977; Tavecchio et al, 1984). Although both masculine and feminine tasks were included, important information is still lost when a few broad categories are used. Although wives may do most of the house cleaning tasks, husbands may contribute by taking on a few house cleaning tasks. Therefore, to more accurately assess each spouse's contribution, specific tasks in each of the broad categories should be identified. Only a few studies have a reasonably comprehensive list of household tasks within each category (Bird et al, 1984; Denmark et al, 1985; Krausz, 1986; Nyquist et al, 1985).

One spouse's perceptions only

In numerous studies, only one of the spouses was asked for his/her perceptions of the distribution of housework (Beckman & Houser, 1979; Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Harrell, 1985; Krausz, 1986; Lawrence et al, 1987; Maret & Finlay, 1984; Model, 1981; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Sack & Liddell, 1985; Spitze, 1986; Stafford et al, 1977; Yogev, 1981). Previous research has found that spouses differ in their perceptions of the division of labour, with husbands perceiving

a more egalitarian distribution of tasks than wives do (Atkinson & Boles, 1984; Condran & Bode, 1982; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Nyquist et al, 1985). Therefore, relying on only one spouse's perceptions may bias the results.

Sex-role ideology measures

A reliable and valid measure of sex-role ideology was not used in several of the studies (Beckman & Houser, 1979; Krausz, 1986; Lee, 1983; Maret & Finlay, 1984; Model, 1981; Stafford et al, 1977). If a measure is not reliable, it increases the error variance in the study, which can account for variability and inconsistency in results across studies.

Generalizability limitations

Some studies used samples that were not representative of the general population of married couples, which limits the generalizability of their results to the population of married dual-earner couples. Examples of such subjects include females in traditionally male occupations (Atkinson & Boles, 1984), highly educated women (Yogev, 1981), couples without young children (Atkinson & Boles, 1984; Denmark et al, 1985; Stafford et al, 1977), couples with preschool children (Krausz, 1986), low-income couples (Model, 1981), high-income couples (Hiller & Philliber, 1986), or samples from outside North America (Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Tavecchio et al, 1984).

Present study

The main limitation of the studies about the division of labour was that the measures of the division of housework did not accurately assess how each spouse contributes to the completion of housework. Additional limitations were unreliable measures of sex-role ideology and samples unrepresentative of the population of married dual-earner couples. These methodological limitations needed to be addressed by additional research. Therefore, one purpose of the present study was to design and test a new division of housework measure that did not have the previously described flaws. The second purpose was to verify previous findings about the division of housework between dual-earner couples and some of the variables which might predict the pattern of this division. The study attempted to determine whether wives spend more time on housework than husbands, and if time availability, relative income, and sex-role ideology are related to the distribution of household tasks between dual-earner couples.

Independent variables

The four independent variables in this study were: relative time spent at paid work, relative incomes of spouses, husbands' sex-role attitudes, and wives sex-role attitudes. These are described in more detail below.

Relative time at paid work Although both spouses may be employed full-time, they may differ in how much time they spend at paid work. Men average 41.0 hours per week at paid work, whereas women average 33.3 hours per week (Statistics Canada, March 1990). The absolute amount of time spent at paid work may not be as important as which spouse has more time left over to contribute to housework. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, relative time availability was assessed by subtracting the amount of time wives spend at paid work from the amount of time husbands spend at paid work.

Relative incomes of spouses Similarly, the absolute income of each spouse may not be as important as which spouse contributes more money, therefore more power. Therefore, this study assessed relative income of husbands and wives by subtracting wives' income from husbands' income.

Husbands' and wives' sex-role attitudes The relationship husbands' and wives' sex-role attitudes have on the division of labour were assessed separately. Husbands' and wives' total score on the 25 item version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale were used as the measure of their sex-role attitude.

Dependent variables

The dependent variables in this study were husbands' and wives' perceptions of the relative time spent on household tasks per week. Since it is possible that husbands and wives differ in their perceptions of the distribution of housework, their perceptions were analyzed separately. Husbands' perceptions of the amount of time they spent on each of a list household tasks were subtracted from the amount of time they thought their wives spent on the same tasks. This procedure was used to compute a difference score between husbands' perceptions of the amount of time spent on household tasks per week by self and by wife. Similarly, wives' perceptions of the amount of time they spent on the same list of household tasks were subtracted from the amount of time they thought their husbands spent on these tasks. This procedure was used to compute a difference score between wives' perceptions of the amount of time spent on household tasks per week by husband and by self.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were:

H1: There will be a significant difference between husbands' and wives' perceptions of the amount of time spent on household tasks. Specifically, (H1a) wives will report spending more time on household tasks than their husbands'

report their wives spend on tasks, and (H1b) husbands will report spending more time on tasks than their wives report their husbands spend on tasks.

H2: There will be a significant difference in the amount of time wives and husbands spend on housework. Specifically, both husbands and wives will report that wives spend more time on household tasks than husbands.

H3: The relative incomes of the spouses will be significantly related to the division of housework. Specifically, similarity in income between spouses will be positively related to equal time spent on household tasks.

H4: The relative number of hours spent at paid work will be significantly related to the number of hours spent on housework. Specifically, similarity in the number of hours spent at paid work will be positively related to equal time spent on household tasks.

H5: Sex-role attitude will be significantly related to the division of household tasks. Specifically, both husbands' and wives' nontraditional sex-role attitudes will be positively related to equal time spent on household tasks.

H6: Relative income, time available, and sex-role attitude together will predict a greater amount of the variance in the amount of time spent on housework than any of these three variables alone.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The following chapter is a description of the research methodology and design of this exploratory study. The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved the development of a comprehensive measure of how spouses divide housework. The second phase of the study involved sample selection and data collection. The first section of this chapter describes the development of the instrument for measuring how tasks are divided between spouses. The second section of this chapter describes the sample, the measures used for gathering data on the independent and dependent variables, and the procedures for obtaining this information from the subjects.

Phase one: Instrument development

A search of the literature showed that one of the most comprehensive instruments for measuring how household tasks are distributed between spouses is the Family Responsibility Index (FRI), developed by Alley (1984). It consists of 54 items covering both traditionally male and traditionally female tasks. The items on the questionnaire are divided into 10 sections: yardwork, laundry, housecare and upkeep, kitchen cleanup, family business, light housecleaning, heavy housecleaning, car care, family care, and meal preparation.

Subjects are asked to rate on a five-point scale the extent of their responsibility for each task in a typical week, with one indicating that the wife is primarily responsible, three indicating husband and wife share responsibility equally, and five indicating that the husband is primarily responsible. The scale also includes a response category for items which do not apply to either the husband or wife. The FRI appears to be a reliable measure of household task distribution. Alley (1984) administered the FRI to two groups of dual-earner couples. Between-spouse correlations for the first group ranged from .64 to .89, with a mean r of .82. For the second group, correlations ranged from .00 to .82, with a mean r of .79. The moderately high agreement between spouses suggests that the FRI is a reliable measure.

Adaptations to the FRI

There are two problems with the Alley (1984) Family Responsibility Index (FRI). One problem is that the rating scale does not allow for a measure of the amount of time each spouse contributes to each task. As discussed in Chapter 2, important data are lost when spouses' performance of each task is rated as a relative contribution using a Likert scale rather than as an actual amount of time. A second problem is that it is not known whether the list of 54 items on the original FRI is a complete, representative list of the household

tasks typically performed by couples. A comprehensive list of specific tasks within each of the broad categories is needed in order to accurately assess each spouse's contribution.

Therefore, in order to make the FRI more responsive to the researcher's concerns about previous research, two adaptations were made to the measure.

One adaptation to the FRI was to the response scale. The scale was changed in order to measure time spent on household tasks. Instead of a Likert scale, subjects were asked to answer the following two questions for each task: (i) How long does it take you to do the task? (ii) How often do you do the task? Subjects' responses to these questions were used to calculate how much time per week was spent on each task.

The second adaptation to the FRI was the addition of household tasks to the list. The 54-item list of household tasks was presented to 10 married women at the University of Calgary and their spouses in order to ensure that the original FRI was a representative list of household tasks typically performed by couples. Five of these women were graduate students and five were secretaries. These women and their spouses were asked to indicate if the instructions on the questionnaires were clear. They were also asked to answer the following question for each item: Do either you or your spouse complete this task? At the end of each of the 10

sections, the women and their spouses were also asked to indicate tasks that are completed in their homes but that were not included on the list.

All ten couples indicated they understood the instructions to the questionnaires. The majority of the couples indicated that they performed most of the tasks included on the original FRI (see Table 1), and added several tasks to the list (see Table 2). The criteria for item inclusion was to include all tasks mentioned by subjects in this phase. No original FRI items were excluded from the questionnaire. Since some of the couples sampled for this phase did not own or rent houses, or did not have children, they indicated that they did not perform some of the tasks (e.g. yardwork, housecare and upkeep, or family care). Although items in some of the categories in the questionnaire did not apply to these couples, other couples who own or rent homes or have children may perform those tasks. Therefore, to exclude such tasks would result in the loss of important information. The main purpose was to gather as complete a list of routinely performed household tasks as possible. The result was a comprehensive list of 83 household tasks (see Table 3). Once the questionnaire was revised, the second phase of the study was started.

Table 1

Number of Couples (N = 10) Who Agreed Either They or Their Spouse
Complete the Tasks Listed in the Family Responsibility Index

Yardwork		Light housecleaning	
* mow lawn	6	* clean bathroom	8
* trim and/or edge lawn	6	* vacuum rugs	8
* plant and tend flower garden	7	* wash floors	8
* water lawn and flower garden	7	* dust furniture	8
* plant and tend vegetable garden	7	* change beds	8
* service lawn and garden tools	5	* care for indoor plants	8
* trim bushes, fertilize lawn & garden	8	* make beds	7
		* empty garbage	7
Laundry		Prepare meals	
* wash clothes	10	* plan meals/buy food	10
* put clothes away	10	* prepare meals	10
* iron clothes	9		
Housecare and upkeep		Car care	
* indoor painting	7	* check and add gas, oil, etc.	9
* outdoor painting	6	* decide when car needs servicing	9
* physical upkeep of house exterior	6	* buy and change tires/take to garage to have tires changed	9
* household repairs (e.g. fix taps)	7	* perform routine servicing (e.g change oil and antifreeze)/take to garage	9
* household remodeling	7		
* put up storm windows/screens	2	Family care	
Kitchen clean-up		* buy clothes for self	10
* put dishes in dishwasher/wash dishes	8	* buy clothes for family members	8
* empty dishwasher/put dishes away	8	* make dental/doctor appointments	10
* clean stove and put cookware away	8	* take children to dentist/doctor	6
Family business		* stay with children when sick	5
* balance check book	10	* care for family pets	6
* pay bills	10	* take care of preschool children	3
* prepare income tax forms	7	* teach, help, and discipline children	8
* make major financial decisions	9	* arrange for childcare	3
Heavy housecleaning		* organize family recreation/entertainment	7
* wash windows and drapes	8	* keep in touch with relatives/friends	10
* wash walls	8		
* clean refrigerator and stove	8		
* shampoo rugs and furniture	7		
* polish floors	7		

Table 2

Items Added From Subject Questionnaire to Constitute the Revised Family Responsibility Index

Yardwork

- * rake lawn
- * shovel snow from walk/driveway
- * sweep sidewalks
- * clean and maintain garage/shed
- * fix fence
- * pick up litter

Laundry

- * machine wash clothes
- * hand wash clothes
- * put dirty clothes in hamper
- * mend and/or sew clothes
- * sort clothes for seasons/charity

Kitchen clean-up

- * clean stove and counter tops
- * clean appliances

(e.g. toaster, microwave)

- * clean drawers and cupboards

Family business

- * major purchases (e.g. car, furniture)
- * prepare and monitor family budget
- * take care of insurance

Heavy housecleaning

- * wash drapes/curtains
- * defrost and clean refrigerator
- * clean oven

Light housecleaning

- * pick up and put away toys, books, etc.
- * sweep floors

Prepare meals

- * plan meals
- * buy food
- * put away groceries
- * prepare and serve snacks
- * set table
- * serve food
- * make lunches for school/work
- * put away leftover food

Car care

- * repair car/take to garage to be repaired
- * clean car

Family care

- * "taxi driver" for family members
 - * change children's diapers
 - * bathe children
 - * feed children
 - * dress children
-

Table 3

Final Set of 83 Items Included on the Revised Family Responsibility Index

Yardwork	* clean oven
* mow lawn	* shampoo rugs and furniture
* trim and/or edge lawn	* polish floors
* plant and tend flower garden	Light housecleaning
* water lawn and flower garden	* clean bathroom
* plant and tend vegetable garden	* vacuum rugs
* service lawn and garden tool	* wash floors
* trim bushes, fertilize lawn and garden	* dust furniture
* rake lawn	* make and/or change beds
* shovel snow from walk/driveway	* care for indoor plants
* sweep sidewalks	* empty garbage
* clean and maintain garage/shed	* pick up and put away toys, books, etc.
* fix fence	* sweep floors
* pick up litter	Prepare meals
Laundry	* plan meals
* machine wash clothes	* buy food
* hand wash clothes	* put away groceries
* put dirty clothes in hamper	* prepare meals
* put clean clothes away	* prepare and serve snacks
* iron clothes	* set table
* mend and/or sew clothes	* serve food
* sort clothes for seasons/charity	* make lunches for school/work
Housecare and upkeep	* put away leftover food
* indoor painting	Car care
* outdoor painting	* check and add gas, oil, fluids, etc.
* physical upkeep of house exterior	* repair car/take to garage to be repaired
* household repairs (e.g. fix taps)	* buy & change tires/have tires changed
* household remodeling	* routine servicing/take to garage
Kitchen clean-up	* clean car
* put dishes in dishwasher/wash dishes	Family care
* empty dishwasher/dry; put dishes away	* buy clothes for self
* clean stove and counter tops	* buy clothes for other family members
* clean appliances(e.g.toaster,microwave)	* make dental/doctor appointments
* clean draws and cupboards	* take children to dentist/doctor
Family business	* "taxi driver" for family members
* balance check book	* stay with children when sick
* major purchases (e.g. car, furniture)	* care for family pets
* pay bills	* take care of preschool children
* prepare income tax forms	* teach, help, and discipline children
* make major financial decisions	* arrange for childcare
* prepare and monitor family budget	* organize recreation/entertainment
* take care of insurance	* keep in touch with relatives/friends
Heavy housecleaning	* change children's diapers
* wash windows	* bathe children
* wash drapes/curtains	* feed children
* wash walls	* dress children
* defrost and clean refrigerator	

Phase two: Research study

Subjects

The target sample for this research study was married dual-earner couples living together in the same residence. Female subjects names were selected from the University of Calgary telephone directory, and questionnaire packages were mailed to them through campus mail (see Procedures section for a detailed description of the selection process). A total of 27 dual-earner married couples participated in the study. On average, couples had been married for 16.41 years. Fourteen of the 27 couples had children under 18 years of age living at home. The average age of the youngest child under 18 years living at home was 8.54 years. The mean age of the wives in this sample was 40.00 years, and the mean age of the husbands was 41.22 years (see Table 4). The educational levels of wives ranged from completion of high school to completion of a Master's degree: nine women had completed grade 12, eight had a college diploma, two had some university, six had a Bachelor's degree, and two had a Master's degree. The educational levels of husbands ranged from completion of high school to completion of a Doctorate degree: three men had completed grade 12, six had a college diploma, one had some university, three had a trade, nine had a Bachelor's degree, three had a Masters, one had a medical degree, and one had a

Table 4

Sample Demographic Characteristics

	mean	s.d.	range
Length of marriage (yrs)	16.41	11.21	1-35
No. children at home	1.64	0.89	1-4
Age of youngest child (yrs)	8.54 yrs	5.13	1-16
Age of wife (yrs)	40.00 yrs	10.72	24-60
Age of husband (yrs)	41.22 yrs	11.05	26-68

Doctorate degree (see Table 5). On average, wives earned \$22,735 annually, and husbands earned \$39,269 annually. The average amount of time spent at paid work in a week for wives was 33.19 hours, and for husbands was 42.07 hours. Six wives and two husbands were working part-time, about 20 hours a week, and one husband had retired.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire Demographic information about each spouse was gathered via questionnaire. The following variables were included: age, length of marriage, number of children under 18 years of age, age of youngest child, education level, and occupation. These measures served as demographic descriptors of the sample of subjects, as well as control variables for regression analyses.

Annual income measure Included on the demographic questionnaire was a question on individual income. Subjects were asked to report their gross annual income. A couple's relative income was calculated by subtracting the wife's annual income from the husband's annual income. A positive value indicated that the husband had a higher income, whereas a negative value indicated the wife had a higher income. Relative income served as one of the first of four independent variables.

Table 5

Highest Educational Level of Wives and Husbands (N=27)

	Wives		Husbands	
	N	%	N	%
grade 12	9	33.3	3	11.1
college diploma	8	29.6	6	22.2
trade diploma	-	-	3	11.1
some university	2	7.4	1	3.7
Bachelor's degree	6	22.2	9	33.3
Master's degree	2	7.4	3	11.1
Doctorate degree	-	-	1	3.7
medical degree	-	-	1	3.7

Time at paid work measure Also included on the demographic questionnaire was a question on the amount of time spent at paid work. A couple's relative work time was calculated by subtracting the wife's time spent at paid work from her husband's time spent at paid work. A positive value indicated that the husband spent more time at paid work than his wife, whereas a negative value indicated that the wife spent more time at paid work than her husband. Relative time spent at paid work served as the second of the four independent variables.

Sex-role attitudes measure Sex-role attitude of spouses was measured by the 25-item short version of the Attitude Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). The scale was designed to measure commonly held attitudes toward the role of women in society. Respondents are required to indicate their agreement with each statement on a four point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly". For items 1, 4, 5, 10, 13-17, 19, 20, 22 and 23, "agree strongly" was coded as 0, and "disagree strongly" was coded as 3. For the remaining items, "disagree strongly" was coded as 0, and "agree strongly" is coded as 3. A total score is obtained by adding across all items, with the potential total score range from 0 to 165. Low scores indicate conservative,

traditional attitudes towards women, and high scores indicate liberal, non-traditional attitudes.

The Attitude Towards Women Scale (AWS) is a reliable measure of sex-role attitude. The 25-item short version has been found to correlate highly with the 55-item full scale, which indicates interitem reliability. Loo and Logan (1977) found correlations between the two versions to be $r = 0.87$ for females and $r = 0.84$ for males. Similarly, Smith and Bradley (1980) found the correlation between the two versions to be $r = 0.99$. Reliability analyses of the 25-item scale produced Cronbach's alpha of .90 for males and .87 for females (Smith & Bradley, 1980).

The AWS is also a valid measure of sex-role attitude. A scale that measures what it is supposed to measure is considered valid. Active feminists have been found to score significantly higher on the AWS than college students and their mothers (Kilpatrick & Smith, 1974), indicating that active feminists have more liberal, non-traditional attitudes toward women. Since active feminists advocate equality between the sexes, and they score higher than other women on the AWS, then the AWS distinguishes active feminists' attitude toward women from other women's attitude toward women. This finding suggests that the scale measures what it is supposed to measure, and, therefore, is a valid measure of attitudes

toward women's role in society. Husbands' and wives' scores on the Attitude Towards Women Scale served as the third and fourth independent variables of the present study.

Household task distribution measure The revised Family Responsibility Index (FRI) devised in the first phase of the study was used to measure individuals' perceptions of the amount of time they and their spouses spend on housework in a week. Each spouse completed two copies of the revised FRI: one for him/herself and one for his/her spouse. The two revised FRI questionnaires filled out by the wife were used to calculate two sets of data. The questionnaire labelled 'wife answers for herself' was used to calculate her perception of how much time she spends on household tasks, and the questionnaire labelled 'wife answers for her husband' was used to calculate her perception of how much time her husband spends on household tasks. Similarly, the two revised FRI questionnaires filled out by the husband were used to calculate two additional sets of data. The questionnaire labelled 'husband answers for himself' was used to calculate how much time he perceives he spends on household tasks, and the questionnaire labelled 'husband answers for his wife' was used to calculate how much time he perceives his wife as spending on household tasks.

Some household tasks included on the revised FRI are probably not performed on a weekly basis, but rather on a biweekly, monthly, or yearly basis. The result is that on some weeks, spouses may spend more or less time doing household tasks than they do on other weeks. For instance, suppose the lawn is mowed twice a month, and it takes one and a half hours to complete. Every two weeks out of a month, the individual who mows the lawn spends at least an extra hour and a half on housework. An attempt was made in this study to get a measure of the amount of time spent on housework in the "average" week. A task score was calculated for each task by multiplying the amount of time in minutes spent performing the task by how often that task is performed monthly. The task score was then converted to minutes per week by dividing the time in a month by four. If a task was performed less frequently than monthly, including the time spent on these tasks in the "average" time per week would result in unrepresentative data. Instead, these tasks were coded to indicate infrequent performance, and were not included in the calculation of total time spent per week on housework.

For each of the four revised FRI questionnaires completed by the couples, total perceived time spent on housework per week was calculated by summing the task scores for all tasks performed on a monthly to weekly basis.

This process yielded the following scores: (1) wife's perception of how many minutes per week she spends on household tasks (Wife/Self), (2) wife's perception of how many minutes per week her husband spends on household tasks (Wife/Husband), (3) husband's perception of how many minutes per week he spends on household tasks (Husband/Self), and (4) husband's perception of how many minutes per week his wife spends on household tasks (Husband/Wife). For simplicity, the above abbreviations in brackets will be referred to in subsequent discussion.

There were two dependent variables in this study. One variable was the wife's perception of how much time she spends on housework in relation to how much time she thinks her husband spends on housework. This was calculated by subtracting Wife/Husband from Wife/Self in order to obtain one dependent variable called Wife/Diff. The second variable was the husband's perception of how much time he spends on housework in relation to how much time he thinks his wife spends on housework. This was calculated by subtracting Husband/Self from Husband/Wife in order to obtain the second dependent variable called Husband/Diff. For both variables, a positive score indicated that the wife spends more time on housework, whereas a negative score indicated that the

husband spends more time on housework. A score of zero indicated that both spouses spend equal time on housework.

Procedure

Questionnaire packages were mailed to individuals where the chance of both partners working full-time was greater. Since 78.2% of married men in 1990, compared to 60.8% of married women, were employed (Statistics Canada, March 1990), it seemed that a female subject was more likely to have an employed partner than a male subject was. Therefore, the chance of getting couples where both partners work for pay would be greater if female rather than male employees were contacted.

The University of Calgary phone directory was used to compile a list of 500 women. Masculine names (e.g. Edward, Peter) and names preceded with the title "Miss" were excluded from the list of potential respondents. Also, feminine names with a Doctorate title preceding them were omitted from the list because, in a university setting, the high proportion of female employees who have doctorates would have biased the sample towards women with very high educational levels. This bias would have prevented the generalization of the findings to a wider population of female employees. Once these names were excluded from the phone directory, the pages of the directory were shuffled thoroughly. A die was then rolled and

the number five appeared. Every fifth feminine name with the title "Mrs." or "Ms." preceding it was selected until 500 names were obtained.

Each of the 500 employees was mailed a questionnaire package containing an instruction sheet describing the study and two sets of questionnaires, one addressed to the husband and one addressed to the wife. Each set of questionnaires contained a demographic questionnaire, an Attitudes Toward Women Scale, and two revised Family Responsibility Index questionnaires. The instruction sheet informed subjects that the researcher was a graduate student on campus studying how married couples divide household tasks, such as housecleaning and yardwork. Subjects were informed that both they and their spouse would be asked to complete separate copies of the questionnaires in the envelope, and were asked not to discuss their answers with each other while doing the questionnaires. Subjects were asked to place the completed questionnaires in the self-addressed envelope and return them through the campus mail.

The first mailout of questionnaires yielded a return-rate of approximately 40%. Of the 500 questionnaire packages mailed out, 199 were returned. However, only 19 of these surveys were completed. There were 180 questionnaires returned unanswered. Thirty-six questionnaires were returned

indicating that the respondents did not fit the criteria of the study (i.e. single, divorced, separated), 36 were returned indicating that the people no longer worked at the University, 5 were returned indicating employees were not in that department, 5 were returned indicating it would take too much time to complete, and 88 were returned with no explanation provided. Of the 19 questionnaires returned answered, two were discarded, since too much data were missing. Thus, a total of 17 usable questionnaire packages were appropriate for inclusion in the present study.

It was not possible to ensure that all of the 500 subjects who were sent questionnaires met the criteria of being married dual-earner couples who are living in the same residence. Since about 40% of new marriages end in divorce (Canadian Advisory Council of the Status of Women, 1987), many of the women contacted may have been separated or divorced. Also, some of the women may have been single (never married), or may have been widowed. Therefore, the return rate of questionnaires sent to eligible respondents was unknown.

Since the number of usable questionnaires did not allow for study validity, a second method of soliciting subjects was attempted. With the approval of the head of the ethics committee for the Faculty of Education, an additional 50

subjects who were not on the first mailing list were selected. They were telephoned and invited to participate in the study. Only those women who agreed to participate were mailed the questionnaire packages through campus mail. The questionnaire packages in this mailout contained the same information as the questionnaire packages used in the first mailout. Of the 50 individuals contacted, 33 fit the criteria of the study. Sixteen of these individuals agreed to participate, and the same set of questionnaire packages were mailed through campus mail. Twelve questionnaires were returned, ten of which were completed. Two questionnaires were returned unanswered, one respondent indicated that the questionnaire was too time-consuming to complete, and the other respondent indicated that her husband did not want to participate. The two sampling procedures yielded 27 questionnaire packages which formed the basis of the research study. The small sample is a limitation of this study, since "small samples lower the power of statistical tests so that with very small samples even large population effects will not be statistically significant" (Neale & Liebert, 1986, p. 98-99). Therefore, the results of this study must be interpreted cautiously.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

A variety of statistical analyses were conducted on the data. The results of the descriptive data analyses conducted on the independent and dependent variables are outlined and discussed in the first section of this chapter. The hypotheses of the study were tested by using pair-wise t-tests for the first and second hypotheses, and multiple regression analyses for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth hypotheses. The second through seventh sections describe in detail the findings relevant to each of the six hypotheses.

Descriptive data for variables

Descriptive data analyses were conducted on the three independent variables: annual income, attitude toward women, and time spent at paid work (see Table 6). On average, wives earned \$22,735, and husbands earned \$39,269. The average amount of time spent at paid work in a week for wives was 33.19 hours, and for husbands was 42.07 hours. The average score for wives on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale was 63.89, and for husbands was 61.41. One-tailed probability pairwise t-tests were conducted on these means. Wives and husbands were found to differ significantly in their annual income ($t = 4.66$; $p < .001$), the amount of time spent at paid

Table 6

Descriptive Data for Annual Income, Attitude Toward Women,
and Time Spent at Paid Work for Wives and Husbands.

	mean	s.d.	range	t-value
Income				
wives	\$22,735	\$8,399	\$8,000-50,000	4.66***
husbands	\$39,227	\$15,953	\$12,000-65,000	
Time at work (hrs)				
wives	33.19	7.68	8-45	2.74**
husbands	42.07	5.13	0-90	
Attitude				
wives	63.89	7.40	50-75	-1.77*
husbands	61.41	8.55	35-72	

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

work ($t = 2.74$; $p < .01$), and their attitudes toward women ($t = -1.77$; $p < .05$).

Means were calculated on the data gathered from the questionnaires assessing time spent on household tasks. Four sets of means resulted: wives' perceptions of the amount of time they themselves spend on various household tasks (Wife/Self), wives' perceptions of the amount of time their husbands spend on various household tasks (Wife/Husband), husbands' perceptions of the amount of time they themselves spend on various household tasks (Husband/Self), and husbands' perceptions of the amount of time their wives spend on various household tasks (Husband/Wife) (see Table 7). Wives reported that they spend 50 hrs 08 minutes per week on household tasks and that their husbands spend 24 hrs 34 minutes per week on household tasks. Husbands reported that they spend 22 hrs 59 minutes per week on household tasks and that their wives spend 41 hrs 25 minutes per week on household tasks. The differences between these means were assessed to test hypotheses one and two.

Hypotheses 1

The first hypothesis predicted that husbands' and wives' perceptions of the amount of time spent on household tasks would differ. Specifically, the hypothesis stated that wives would report spending more time on household tasks than their

Table 7

Husbands' and Wives' Perceptions of the Amount of Time Per Week They and Their Spouse Spend on Household Tasks.

	Mean	SD	Range
Wife/Self	50 hrs 08 min	29 hrs 53 min	8 hrs 44 min to 112 hrs 04 min
Wife/Husband	24 hrs 34 min	21 hrs 34 min	4 hrs 16 min to 92 hrs 53 min
Husband/Self	22 hrs 59 min	16 hrs 48 min	6 hrs 41 min to 75 hrs 27 min
Husband/Wife	41 hrs 25 min	26 hrs 23 min	4 hrs 46 min to 102 hrs 34 min

husbands' report their wives spend on tasks, and husbands would report spending more time on tasks than their wives report their husbands spend on tasks.

One-tailed probability pairwise t-tests were conducted on the following means: Wife/Self (50 hr 8 min) compared with Husband/Wife (41 hr 25 min), and Husband/Self (22 hr 59 min) compared with Wife/Husband (24 hr 34 min). Wife/Self and Husband/Wife were found to be significantly different ($t = -1.77$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, it appears that wives perceive themselves as spending more time on household tasks than husbands perceive wives spend on household tasks. However, there was no significant difference between husbands' perceptions of the amount of time per week they spend on housework and wives' perceptions of the amount of time per week their husbands spend on housework ($t = -0.46$; NS). Therefore, it appears that husbands perceive they spend the same amount of time on household tasks that wives perceive husbands spend on household tasks.

Thus, there was support for hypothesis 1A but not for hypothesis 1B. There was a discrepancy between spouses' perceptions of the amount of time the wife spends on household tasks, but no discrepancy on the spouses' perceptions of the amount of time the husband spends on household task. On average, wives believed that they spent

about 50 hours per week doing housework, whereas husbands believed their wives spent about 41.5 hours per week. This is a significant discrepancy in perception of about 8.5 hours. On average, husbands believed that they spent about 23 hours on housework, which is similar to wives' estimate of 24.5 hours for their husbands, a nonsignificant difference of about 1.5 hours.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be a significant difference between husbands and wives on the amount of time each spent on housework. It was expected that wives spend more time on household tasks than husbands. Both husbands and wives should perceive that the wife spends more time on housework than husbands.

One-tailed probability pairwise t-tests were conducted on the following means: Wife/Self (50 hr 8 min) compared with Wife/Husband (24 hr 34 min), and Husband/Self (22 hr 59 min) compared with Husband/Wife (41 hr 25 min). A significant difference was found between Wife/Self and Wife/Husband ($t = 4.92$; $p < 0.001$), and between Husband/Self and Husband/Wife ($t = -4.08$; $p < 0.001$). Both husbands and wives perceive that the wife spends significantly more time on household tasks than the husband.

Hypothesis 2 was supported. According to wives' perceptions, they spend approximately 50 hours per week on housework, whereas their husbands spend about 24.5 hours. Therefore, wives think they spend 25.5 hours more per week on housework than their husbands. According to husbands' perceptions, their wives spend about 41.5 hours per week on housework, whereas they spend about 23 hours on housework. Therefore, husbands think their wives spend about 18.5 hours more on housework than they do.

Wives may spend more time on housework because they spend less time at paid work than their husbands. It was thought that wives' time at paid work plus housework may be nearly equal to husbands' time at paid work plus housework. In order to explore this possibility, spouses' hours spent on housework per week were added to hours they spent at paid work per week, and then husbands' and wives' total time were compared. It was found that wives spend more hours per week on paid work and housework together than do husbands (see Table 8). If we consider wives' perceptions, they estimate that they spend more than 83 hours working and their husbands spend about 66.5 hours working. Therefore, they estimate that they spend 16.5 hours per week more than their husbands on the combination of paid and family work. If we consider husbands' perceptions, they estimate that their wives spend

Table 8

Amount of Time Spent Per Week at Paid Work Plus Husbands' and Wives' Perceptions of the Amount of Time Spent Per Week on Family Work

	Family work	Paid work ^a	Total
Wife/Self	50 hrs 08 min	33 hrs 11 min	83 hrs 19 min
Wife/Husband	24 hrs 34 min	42 hrs 04 min	66 hrs 38 min
Husband/Wife	41 hrs 25 min	33 hrs 11 min	74 hrs 36 min
Husband/Self	22 hrs 59 min	42 hrs 04 min	65 hrs 03 min

^a Husbands' time spent at paid work is reported by husbands only, and wives' time spent at paid work is reported by wives only.

about 74.5 hours working, whereas they spend about 65 hours working. Therefore, they estimate that their wives spend 9.5 hours per week more than they do on paid and family work.

Since spouses' differed in amount of time spent on household tasks overall, the researcher thought it would be useful to compare husbands' and wives' perceptions of time spent on each of the ten tasks categories. The following question was asked: on which task categories did spouses perceive equal time spent, and on which task categories did spouses perceive significant differences between husbands and wives?

One-tailed pair-wise t-tests were conducted on the amount of time spent on each of the ten task categories (see Table 9). Means for Wife/Self were compared with means for Wife/Husband to determine if wives perceived the amount of time they spend on each of the ten task categories differed significantly from the amount of time their husbands spend on the tasks. Similarly, means for Husband/Self were compared with means for Husband/Wife to determine if husbands perceived the amount of time they spent on each of the ten task categories differed significantly from the amount of time their wives spent on the tasks.

There was agreement between spouses on eight out of the ten task categories. Both husbands and wives perceived

Table 9

Mean of Spouses' Perception of the Amount of Time They and Their Partner Spend on Household Tasks Per Week

	Wife/Self	Wife/Husband	Husband/Wife	Husband/Self
Laundry	6 hrs 54 min	1 hrs 08 min***	6 hrs 46 min	1 hr 28 min***
Kitchen	7 hrs 35 min	2 hrs 43 min***	4 hrs 16 min	2 hrs 51 min*
Light hswk	5 hrs 10 min	2 hrs 00 min***	5 hrs 37 min	1 hr 55 min***
Heavy hswk	0 hrs 17 min	0 hrs 02 min***	0 hrs 11 min	0 hrs 02 min**
Meals	15 hrs 09 min	5 hrs 42 min***	12 hrs 46 min	4 hrs 07 min***
Family care	10 hrs 40 min	6 hrs 38 min**	7 hrs 56 min	6 hrs 45 min
Yardwork	3 hrs 03 min	3 hrs 37 min	2 hrs 31 min	3 hrs 22 min
Car	0 hrs 25 min	1 hrs 06 min	0 hrs 23 min	1 hr 36 min
House upkeep	0 hrs 04 min	0 hrs 57 min*	0 hrs 07 min	0 hrs 34 min*
Business	0 hrs 51 min	0 hrs 41 min	0 hrs 52 min	0 hrs 19 min*
Total	50 hrs 08 min	24 hrs 34 min***	41 hrs 25 min	22 hrs 59 min***

* p < 0.050

** p < 0.010

*** p < 0.001

that there was a significant difference between spouses on amount of time spent on five out of six of the traditionally "feminine" tasks. Specifically, both husbands and wives perceived that wives spend significantly more time than husbands on the following traditionally "feminine" tasks: laundry, kitchen clean-up, light housework, heavy housework, and meals. Both husbands and wives agreed that there was a nonsignificant difference between spouses in time spent per week on two of the traditionally "masculine" tasks: yardwork and car care. In addition, both husbands and wives agreed that husbands spend more time on housecare and upkeep than wives.

Spouses disagreed on the amount of time spent per week for the following two task categories: family care and family business (see Table 9). Specifically, wives reported that they spend significantly more time on family care than their husbands, but husbands do not report a significant difference in time for this task category. Also, husbands reported that their wives spend significantly more time on family business than they do, but wives did not perceive a difference.

Generally speaking, the "masculine" tasks were not very time consuming tasks, but the "feminine" tasks were very time consuming. With the exception of yardwork, the "masculine" task categories took less than one hour per week each to complete. Spouses seemed to share half of the "masculine"

tasks, and the ones that they did not share were not very time consuming. However, with the exception of heavy housecleaning, the "feminine" task categories took more than four hours per week each for wives to complete (even more if you consider wives' perceptions), but husbands do not contribute anywhere near equal amounts of time to these tasks. The "feminine" tasks are significantly more time consuming than the "masculine" tasks, and wives bear the brunt of the responsibility for them.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis of this study was that similarity in income between spouses would be positively related to equal time spent on household tasks. Two regression analyses were conducted using the forced entry method. One regression calculated the relationship between independent variable difference in spouses' incomes and dependent variable Wife/Diff, and the second regression calculated the relationship between independent variable difference in spouses' incomes and dependent variable Husband/Diff (see chapter 3 for calculation of the dependent variables). The results were found to be nonsignificant (see Table 10). Difference in spouses' incomes was not found to be significantly related to either Wife/Diff ($R^2 = 0.0088$; F ratio

Table 10

Results of the Multiple Regression Analyses Assessing the
Effect of the Independent Variables on the Dependent Variables
Husbands' Perceptions and Wives' Perceptions of the Difference
in Time Spent on Housework

Independent variable	R ²	F ratio	p
Difference in income			
Wife/Diff	0.0088	0.2132	0.6485
Husband/Diff	0.0501	1.2654	0.2718
Difference in time at paid work			
Wife/Diff	0.1496	4.3972	0.0463
Husband/Diff	0.1173	3.3216	0.0804
Husbands' attitude toward women			
Wife/Diff	0.0014	0.0344	0.8543
Husband/Diff	0.0136	0.3440	0.5628
Wives' attitude toward women			
Wife/Diff	0.0243	0.6230	0.4374
Husband/Diff	0.0010	0.0254	0.8746
All independent variables entered			
Wife/Diff	0.2024	1.3324	0.2908
Husband/Diff	0.1391	0.8485	0.5104

= 0.2132; NS) or Husband/Diff ($R^2 = 0.0501$; F ratio = 1.2654; NS).

A second set of regression analyses were conducted, controlling for the possible influence of several demographic variables. The following five variables were used as covariates: educational level of wife, educational level of husband, age of wife, age of husband, and number of children under 18 years of age living at home. The covariates were entered into the regression equations first; then difference in income was entered. This procedure allows for an examination of the change in variance (R^2) of the dependent variable which the independent variable may be responsible for. Even when controlling for these demographic variables, the R^2 for either dependent variable Wife/Diff or Husband/Diff did not change significantly (see Table 11). Even with the covariates considered, difference in spouses' incomes did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in either husbands' perception or wives' perception of relative time spent on housework. In addition, no trends toward an increase in R^2 were observed. The covariates alone accounted for about 10.0% of the variance in Wife/Diff and about 10.9% of the variance in Husband/Diff. When the variable difference in spouses' incomes was added, the covariates plus difference in spouses' incomes accounted for about 11.9% of the variance in

Table 11

Second Set of Multiple Regression Analyses Examining the
Relationship Between the Independent Variables and the Two
Dependent Variables. Controlling For the Five Covariates

Independent variable	R ² with covariates only	p	R ² with independent variable added	p
Difference in income:				
Wife/Diff	0.100	0.811	0.119	0.850
Husband/Diff	0.109	0.782	0.149	0.762
Difference in time at paid work:				
Wife/Diff	0.100	0.798	0.207	0.534
Husband/Diff	0.105	0.777	0.209	0.528
Husbands' attitude toward women:				
Wife/Diff	0.100	0.798	0.104	0.878
Husband/Diff	0.105	0.777	0.108	0.868
Wives' attitude toward women:				
Wife/Diff	0.100	0.798	0.121	0.831
Husband/Diff	0.105	0.777	0.124	0.821
Four independent variables entered simultaneously:				
Wife/Diff	0.100	0.811	0.289	0.682
Husband/Diff	0.109	0.782	0.279	0.711

Wife/Diff and for about 14.9% of the variance in Husband/Diff. Thus, hypothesis 3 was not supported in this study.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis of this study was that similarity in the number of hours spent at paid work would be positively related to equal time spent on household tasks. Two regression analyses were conducted using the forced entry method. One regression equation calculated the relationship between independent variable difference in time spent at paid work and dependent variable Wife/Diff, and the second calculated the relationship between independent variable difference in time spent at paid work and dependent variable Husband/Diff. The results of these analyses suggested some support for the fourth hypothesis (see Table 10). Difference in time spent at paid work was found to be significantly related to Wife/Diff ($R^2 = 0.1496$; F ratio = 4.3972; $p = 0.0463$), and the relationship between difference in time spent at paid work and Husband/Diff approached significance ($R^2 = 0.1173$; F ratio = 3.3216; $p = 0.0804$).

Similar to the analyses for hypothesis three, a second set of regression analyses were conducted, controlling for the possible influence of the above mentioned five covariates. As before, the covariates were entered into the regression equation first, and then the variable difference in time at paid

work was added. When controlling for the five demographic variables, R^2 for either dependent variable Wife/Diff or Husband/Diff did not change significantly (see Table 11). When the covariates were considered, difference in time spent at paid work no longer accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in either husbands' perception or wives' perception of relative time spent on housework. Although R^2 did not show a significant change, there was a trend toward an increase in R^2 . The covariates alone accounted for about 10.0% of the variance in Wife/Diff and about 10.5% of the variance in Husband/Diff. When the variable difference in time spent at paid work was added, the R^2 almost doubled. The covariates plus difference in time spent at paid work accounted for about 20.7% of the variance in Wife/Diff and for about 20.9% of the variance in Husband/Diff. Thus, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis of this study was that both husbands' and wives' nontraditional sex-role attitudes will be positively related to equal time spent on household tasks. Four regression analyses were conducted using the forced entry method. One regression calculated the relationship between independent variable husbands' attitude toward women and dependent variable Wife/Diff, and a second regression

calculated the relationship between independent variable husbands' attitude toward women and dependent variable Husband/Diff. A third regression calculated the relationship between independent variable wives' attitude toward women and dependent variable Wife/Diff, and a fourth regression calculated the relationship between independent variable wives' attitude toward women and dependent variable Husband/Diff. Again, the results were found to be nonsignificant (see Table 10). Husbands' attitude toward women was not found to be significantly related to either Wife/Diff ($R^2 = 0.0014$; F ratio = 0.0344; NS) or Husband/Diff ($R^2 = 0.0136$; F ratio = 0.3440; NS). Similarly, wives' attitude toward women was not found to be significantly related to either Wife/Diff ($R^2 = 0.0243$; F ratio = 0.6230; NS) or Husband/Diff ($R^2 = 0.0010$; F ratio = 0.0254; NS).

Regression analyses were conducted again, this time controlling for the possible influence of the five demographic variables. The covariates were entered into the regression equation first; then independent variable husbands' attitude toward women was entered. This was also done for the independent variable wives' attitude toward women in a separate equation. When controlling for these demographic variables, R^2 for neither dependent variable Wife/Diff nor Husband/Diff changed significantly (see Table 11). Even with

the covariates considered, neither husbands' nor wives' attitude toward women accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in either husbands' perception or wives' perception of relative time spent on housework. In addition, no trends toward an increase in R^2 were observed. The covariates alone accounted for about 10.0% of the variance in Wife/Diff and about 10.5% of the variance in Husband/Diff. When husbands' attitude toward women was added, the covariates plus husbands' attitude toward women accounted for about 10.4% of the variance in Wife/Diff and for about 10.8% of the variance in Husband/Diff. When wives' attitude toward women was added, the covariates plus wives' attitude toward women accounted for about 12.1% of the variance in Wife/Diff and for about 12.4% of the variance in Husband/Diff. Thus, hypothesis 5 was not supported in this study.

Hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis of this study was that relative income, time available, and sex-role attitude together will predict a greater amount of the variance in the time spent on housework than any of these three variables alone. Two multiple regression analyses were conducted: one with dependent variable Wife/Diff and the second with dependent variable Husband/Diff. The four independent variables were entered into the regression equations simultaneously. The

results were nonsignificant (see Table 10). None of the four independent variables were found to be significantly related to either Wife/Diff ($R^2 = 0.2024$; F ratio = 1.3324; NS) or Husband/Diff ($R^2 = 0.1391$; F ratio = 8485; NS).

As for the analyses for the other hypotheses, a second set of regression analyses were conducted to control for the possible effects of the five covariates. When controlling for these demographic variables, R^2 for either dependent variable Wife/Diff or Husband/Diff did not change significantly. Even with the covariates considered, the four independent variables together did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in either husbands' perception or wives' perception of relative time spent on housework (see Table 11). However, although a significant change was not found, a trend toward an increase in R^2 was observed. The covariates alone accounted for about 10.0% of the variance in Wife/Diff and about 10.9% of the variance in Husband/Diff. When the four independent variables were added, the R^2 almost tripled. The covariates plus the four independent variables accounted for about 28.9% of the variance in Wife/Diff and for about 27.9% of the variance in Husband/Diff. Thus, hypothesis 6 was not supported in this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

A review of the literature on the division of labour between dual-earner couples showed consistent significant differences between husbands and wives in time spent on household tasks. The review also suggested that variables of relative income, time spent at paid work, and sex-role attitude of spouses were significantly related to spouses' division of labour. However, it was noted that there were common methodological flaws among these studies. Thus, the purpose of this study was to attempt to replicate the above findings of previous research, while controlling for several methodological issues.

This chapter will be a discussion of possible explanations and implications of the results summarized in the previous chapter. The first section will detail hypotheses about why spouses' perceptions about the amount of time spent on housework may differ. The next section discusses possible reasons why wives spend more time on housework than husbands. The third section will suggest possible implications of the findings for counselling. The fourth section will outline the methodological strengths and weaknesses on this study. The final section will summarize recommendations for future

research, based on methodological considerations of this study and the implications of the findings of this study.

Why do spouses' perceptions differ?

An important finding of this study was that spouses' perceptions of the amount of time spent on household tasks differed. Wives' perceptions of the amount of time they themselves spend on household tasks differed from their husbands' perception of the amount of time their wives spend on household tasks. However, wives' perceptions of the amount of time their husbands spend on household tasks did not differ from husbands' perceptions of the amount of time they spend on household tasks. This raises an interesting question. Why do spouses' perceptions differ for wives' time but not for husbands' time?

When specific task categories were looked at, it was found that spouses seem to share the traditionally male tasks, but the wives seem to spend more time than husbands on the traditionally female tasks. It is possible, then, that both males and females will have more similar perceptions of the amount of time it takes to perform traditionally male tasks than traditionally female tasks. Since wives spend much more time performing traditionally female tasks than do husbands, they may be more aware of the time it takes to perform these tasks. It may be that husbands are not as accurate as wives in

their estimations of the amount of time it takes to perform "feminine" tasks.

Another possible explanation for the discrepancies in spouses' perceptions may be related to the nature of the performance of these tasks. Many of the traditionally male tasks may take a longer period of time to perform compared with many of the traditionally female tasks. For instance, mowing the lawn may take one hour, whereas wiping countertops may take 5 minutes. It is possible that both spouses are more aware of, therefore possibly more accurately perceive, the amount of time it takes to mow the lawn compared to wiping countertops. Many of the traditionally female tasks take 15 minutes or less to perform, and they are repetitive and often performed following a schedule (Berheide, 1984). Accuracy in perception may be reduced since they are almost habitual actions, and therefore spouses may be less likely to be aware of the time it takes to perform "feminine" tasks.

There is a third explanation for why spouses may differ on the amount of time wives spend on housework. According to Berheide (1984), women perform a majority of tasks alone, they tend to perform several tasks at once, and they often have to "supervise" others while they perform tasks. If the wives in this study performed most of their tasks alone and

simultaneously, their husbands may not be aware of the total amount of time it takes them to complete the tasks; therefore, the husbands' perceptions may not be as accurate. In addition, if wives are "supervising" their husbands, they may be much more accurate in their perceptions of the amount of time it takes their husbands to complete the tasks.

Why do wives do more?

A central question of this study was: why do employed wives spend more time on housework plus paid work than husbands? The independent variables relative time spent at paid work, relative income and husbands' and wives' sex-role attitude did not seem to be related to division of labour. The lack of significant results may be due to the small, heterogeneous sample of this study rather than to no relationship existing between variables (for additional discussion, see methodological limitations section). It could also be that there are numerous additional variables that are related to how spouses divide time among household tasks. As with much of social research, the issue is multivariate in nature.

One possible reason why wives do more housework than their spouses is that they want to. For some women, the family role may be the most important role in their lives. These women may place the value of the enactment of the

family role over their employment and community roles. Hiller and Philliber (1986) found that a large minority of women had personal attachment to their childcare and housekeeping roles. They found that 43% of wives reported that it was important to be better than their husbands in childcare, and 38% of females reported it was important to be better than their husbands in housework.

An important question to have asked the women in the present study may have been whether they had strong attachment to their careers and/or whether they were working to help meet the financial needs of the family. A career has been defined as an occupation to which the individual has strong personal commitment, requires a high degree of education, and involves a continuous development or series of promotions (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978). It is possible that women who have careers may make more demands on their husbands regarding sharing housework, whereas women whose employment roles are secondary to their family roles may not make such demands.

Some women may not expect their spouses to share the housework; consequently the housework is not shared. Hiller and Philliber (1986) found that most husbands and wives expected to share childcare tasks, but fewer expected to share the housework. About 84% of husbands and wives agreed that

they expected to share childcare, whereas only 2% of couples expected the wife to have major responsibility for childcare. Interestingly, 38% of husbands and wives expected to share housework, whereas 30% of couples expected the wife to have major responsibility for housework. Wives expectations of their husbands were not assessed in the current study, and it is quite possible that the wives did not expect more of their husbands and were quite happy with the division of labour.

The wives in this study may not expect more participation in housework from their husbands because they think they are lucky to get the "help" that they do. Berheide (1984) found her sample of wives was happy with the "help" they got from their husbands. Even though these women spent much more time per week on housework than their husbands, and over half of them were employed, they thought it was better than no help at all, better than their mothers had it, and that the household was their responsibility anyway.

Another possible reason why women do most of the housework is that they resign themselves to do so. Many women may welcome more assistance from their husbands, but believe that "If I don't do it, it doesn't get done" (Berheide, 1984, p. 44). In many cases, this may very well be true. Wives may ask their husbands to share, but their husbands may refuse, forget, or not do the task on time. The problem is that

many women would be appalled at the thought of not doing their "job". Social norms dictate that the woman's role is to be the care giver, and going against such norms may be very difficult for some women.

It is likely for some women that they would rather do the housework than argue with their spouses. Berheide (1984) comments that some women are reluctant to argue with their spouse over such a "trivial" issue. This notion that housework is "trivial" stems from the societal belief that "work" is defined as paid work. If housework is not considered work, it is not valued, and is, therefore, "trivial".

Some working wives may be more skilled than their husbands at household tasks and this may account for their greater responsibility for the housework. Men have not been trained from birth to take care of the house and the family, and, consequently, may lack some of the skills necessary to do the tasks. Many women may think the effort it takes to supervise their husbands while they complete the housework is not worth it. Berheide (1984) states that wives are often reluctant to ask for help because it is easier to do the tasks themselves. Women are probably more efficient at performing these tasks, often performing several tasks at once. If the men do participate in the housework, they may take longer to do some tasks than it would take the wives, and they may not

do them as well as their wives. Some women may prefer to do the tasks themselves rather than have to redo tasks that were not completed to their standards or to have to train their husbands to do them to the wives satisfaction. The problem with this is that these wives would place the majority of the burden back onto their own shoulders.

This brings us to another possibility. Are women more fastidious than men regarding housework and family care? We are bombarded daily with messages from the media that the only way to get a house clean is with product X. The majority of advertising for housecare, family care and food products is directed toward women. A successful, happy woman is depicted in advertising as one who has a spotless bathroom and clean, well-fed children. With such frequent, overt and subtle messages, it would not be surprising if many women bought into the idea that they are not being a "good" wife or mother unless their home is perfect. However, some women may need to ask themselves whether their family will get ill if the kitchen floor is not cleaned and waxed twice a week, or if they do not get a gourmet dinner every night. Essentially, some women may not be aware that the drive to have a perfect home is not necessary to the smooth functioning of their home. The flipside of this issue is that men may be buying into the idea that their wives are responsible for the housework, and may

subtly or not so subtly pressure their wives to be the perfect homemaker.

Men may not be doing half the housework because they do not perceive that their wives spend much more time on housework plus paid work than they do. In this study, men perceived that their wives spent only 9.5 hours more per week than they did on housework plus paid work. This was quite different from wives' perceptions of 18.5 hours more than their husbands. Husbands may rationalize that 1 hour 20 minutes more per day for their wives is not that much. However, if husbands underestimate their wives' actual time spent on housework, then they may not realize how much more time their wives spend on tasks than they do. It would be interesting to note husbands' reactions to an objective measure of housework division between spouses. Would they be more willing to participate if they thought their wives were spending 3 hours per day more than they were on housework?

Another factor that may be preventing males from greater participation in the home may be society's attitudes toward the implied nontraditional male role. If a husband is likely to be negatively evaluated for participation in performance of household tasks, he may be less inclined to share them. Male and female college students tend to evaluate

male homemakers less positively than female homemakers (Rosenwasser, Gonzales & Adams, 1985). There is a lack of social value given to the "feminine" role of homemaking, since it is not defined as "work", and this lack of appreciation for the work does not give men the incentive to share. In addition, men who share the housework may not get a great deal of social support from their peers or employers. With no perceived support, they probably become less likely to share the tasks. It is quite likely that men may even face ridicule when participating in the homemaker role to an equal degree as their wives, which further deters them from sharing the housework.

Another reason why men may not do their share of the housework is that they don't like to do it. The nature of traditionally "masculine" tasks is quite different from the nature of the traditionally "feminine" tasks. "Masculine" tasks usually are performed infrequently, and there is some choice in when they are to be performed. "Feminine" tasks, however, are performed routinely, they are necessary, they are described as monotonous and tedious to perform, and there often is no choice about when they can be done. It is the "feminine" tasks that males do not share, and probably do not want to share.

Implications for counselling

The finding that many wives spend more time on the combination of housework and paid work than their husbands has several implications for counselling. An unequal division of housework may have possible harmful effects for the wives and on the marital relationship. Therefore, counsellors should be aware of the possible negative consequences of women's double duty.

An unequal division of household tasks may have a negative effect on the marital relationship. The monotonous, repetitive nature of housework can be frustrating, and many wives are exposed to this frustration more frequently than their husbands are. Wives may feel that their spouses do not appreciate them and take them for granted, and this may lead to wives resenting their spouses. This resentment may lead to disagreements over how the housework should be divided, which may contribute to marital dissatisfaction and dissolution. Some women may not confront their spouses about their frustration with the housework, since they may believe that it is their responsibility. These women may continue performing the lioness's share, and not have leisure time for themselves or have quality time with their spouses, which can result in marital dissatisfaction. Marital counsellors need to be aware of the impact that housework can

have on marital satisfaction. They need to help couples negotiate a mutually satisfying division of tasks. Since husbands and wives probably have different perceptions of how much time wives spend on housework, counsellors could assist couples by helping them: (i) determine what tasks need to be performed and how often, (ii) decide how much time each task takes, and (iii) decide how these tasks will be divided between them.

Some wives may choose to alleviate the strain of doing most of the housework by lowering their involvement in their employment role. Some women may reduce their time at work, such as seeking part-time employment, so that they can devote more time to the family and home. However, the potentially negative result of this decreased involvement in the workforce is that these women will not make as much money as women who spend more time and energy at work. Women considering the alternative of fewer hours at work should be informed of the possibility that, in the future, they may become the sole financial providers for themselves and their children, and that their current involvement in the workforce may affect their ability in the future to be financial providers.

Methodological considerations

The results of this study should be viewed cautiously since there are several methodological weaknesses. Lack of

statistical power and heterogeneity of subjects may partially account for the nonsignificant results of this study, the method of gathering information from subjects affects the generalizability of the results to the general population, and the time measure used in the study has several problems.

One possible explanation for the nonsignificant results is the lack of statistical power of this study. With very small samples, even large population effects will not be statistically significant (Neale & Liebert, 1986); therefore, the risk of concluding that there is no relationship when in fact there is one (Type II error) is greater. Since this study's sample consisted of 27 couples, statistical power was low, therefore increasing the risk of concluding that there is no relationship between the variables when in fact there is one.

A second explanation for the lack of significant results lies with the heterogeneity of the sample. If subjects vary among themselves on variables that are related to the dependent variable, then these variables produce uncontrolled variance (Neale & Liebert, 1986), which decreases the ability to obtain true effects; therefore, the risk of concluding that there is no relationship when in fact there is one (Type II error) is increased. Subjects in this sample varied in age, education level, occupation, income, and presence and age of children, all variables that may be related to the division of

housework. Therefore, these variables may have contributed to uncontrolled variance, and nonsignificant results probably were produced.

Another methodological consideration is the method of gathering information. Although subjects were randomly selected from the University population of employees, subjects may not have responded in a representative manner. In this study, information was obtained via questionnaire, and questionnaires are subject to self-selection bias. In addition, selection bias of subjects tends to increase directly as a function of the difficulty involved in obtaining subjects (Neale & Liebert, 1986). The return rate of this study was quite low, probably due to the time consuming nature of the questionnaire packages. Therefore, it is likely that the subjects were not a representative sample of married dual-earner couples, thereby reducing the generalizability of these results.

A third methodological consideration is that there are several problems with the measure of time spent on housework. Total time spent on housework in a week was calculated by determining the amount of time spent on each task in a week, then summing across all tasks. The problem with this procedure is that it does not take into account the possibility of simultaneous performance of tasks. For example, an individual may cook and watch children at the

same time. However, due to the nature of the scale, the time spent on each of these tasks would be recorded separately. Thus, the calculation of total time spent on housework may not be accurate if several sets of tasks are performed simultaneously.

In addition, the time measure does not take into account efficiency or quality of task performance. For example, one spouse may spend 15 minutes once a week cleaning the bathroom, whereas the other spouse may take 25 minutes. This information does not reveal how well the bathroom was cleaned or how much effort was expended to do so. The spouse who spent 15 minutes may have done a: (i) poorer job with less effort, (ii) poorer job with more effort, (iii) better job with less effort, or (iv) better job with more effort than the spouse who spent 25 minutes. The time measures obtained from the sample does not indicate whether husbands' were more or less efficient in the performance of their share of housework, or whether the quality of their housework was better or worse than their wives. In the labour force, quality work is valued over poor work, and work completed efficiently is valued over work completed inefficiently. The same should hold true for housework.

This study, however, has several strengths. First, a measure of the amount of time spent on housework was used,

which overcomes the problems of a Likert scale discussed in Chapter 2. Second, a comprehensive list of household tasks typically performed by couples was employed. The revised FRI included both traditionally male and female tasks, and in the development phase of the revised FRI, there was strong agreement across couples about which household tasks were frequently performed (see Table 1). Third, both spouses were asked their perceptions of amount of time spent on housework, thus avoiding the bias of only one spouse. Also, the Attitudes Toward Women Scale used to measure sex-role attitude was a reliable and valid measure.

Future research

Future researchers in the area of the distribution of household tasks should be cautious with several methodological issues. It is important for researchers to direct their attention to large sample sizes in order to increase the statistical power of their studies and avoid the increased risk of making Type II errors. If sample size is sufficiently large, heterogeneity of subjects should not pose a large threat to statistical conclusion validity. Rather than continue to use the questionnaire format, researchers should consider gathering information via formalized systematic personal interviews, (Neale & Liebert, 1986). In addition, reliable and valid measures should be employed.

Researchers must also assess both spouses' perceptions of the time spent on household tasks, since it has been shown that spouses do differ in their perceptions about housework. One possible area of inquiry could be to follow up on the reasons for the discrepancies between spouses perceptions. Future research could study whether individuals who more frequently perform tasks are more accurate in their perception of the amount of time it takes to complete the tasks than individuals who perform the tasks less frequently. Or, researchers could study whether individuals are less accurate in their time estimates for routinely performed tasks that take short amounts of time to complete as compared to irregularly performed tasks that take a relatively long time to complete. Another possibility for future research is whether spouses perceptions differ because husbands do not see their wives performing the tasks and, therefore, are not as accurate in their perceptions of the time it takes to complete them.

There are numerous other possibilities for future research in the area related to the division of housework between dual-earner couples. There are possibly numerous variables that may predict why the division of labour is not equal. When exploring why couples do not share housework, the following questions could be addressed:

- (i) Do some wives do more housework than their spouses because they want to? Attachment to the family role compared to the employment role may be a significant variable in predicting division of labour.
- (ii) Do some women not expect their spouses to share the housework?
- (iii) Does the belief that "If I don't do it, it doesn't get done" hinder women's chances of getting their partners to share?
- (iv) Does the fear of arguing with their spouse over the "trivial" issue of housework prevent women from demanding their spouses' participation?
- (v) Do women do more housework because it is preferable to supervising and training their husbands to do the tasks properly?
- (vi) Are women more fastidious than men regarding housework and family care ?
- (vii) Are men not doing half the housework because they do not perceive that there is a great discrepancy in time spent on the combination of paid work and housework?
- (viii) Do men avoid equal participation because of society's attitudes toward housework and people's reactions to men who do housework?
- (ix) Do men not do their share of the housework because they don't like to do it?

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