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Cohabiting Partners and Domestic Labor in Low-Income Black Families

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Abstract

This article examines the division of domestic labor in low-income cohabiting Black stepfamilies. We analyze survey data collected from 136 such families in order to understand how stepparent gender and relationship length impact the distribution of domestic labor. We hypothesize that women do more domestic work than men across all three family types, and that stepfathers are more involved in domestic labor in established relationships compared to new relationships. Findings indicate that cohabiting stepfathers in both new and established cohabiting Black stepfamilies make substantial contributions to domestic labor. These families demonstrate a division of labor consistent with traditional gender roles, though both partners agree on how much work each does. Parents, regardless of gender, are more involved in domestic labor than stepparents.

Keywords

Black families; cohabitation; division of labor; parenting; stepfathers

A growing body of family research focuses on domestic labor in marriages and cohabiting relationships. This research examines how much work each partner does in areas such as household chores and parenting activities. Most of this research examines these trends among the general population or middle class couples, and little extant research examines domestic labor among low-income cohabiting Black couples raising children. In this paper we examine domestic labor, particularly household chores and parenting activities, in low-income urban Black cohabiting heterosexual couples raising adolescent children. We seek to understand how gender and relationship length are related to the division of domestic labor responsibilities in such families, especially parenting, in light of growing concerns about single parenting, father involvement, and child well-being in "single mother" Black families.

Previous Research

This analysis contributes to a growing body of research on three topics in Black family studies: family structure and cohabitation, the gendered division of labor, and relationship formation and duration. Below we review relevant work in these three areas and explain how the present study contributes to them.

Family Structure and Cohabiting Stepfamilies

Scholars and policy makers are concerned with the low marriage rate and corresponding high single mothering rate in the low-income Black population. Marriage rates decline with income, and low-income Blacks have the lowest rates (Golub, Strickler and Dunlap 2012); 42% of Black adults are married and 62% of Black families are headed by a single-parent (Chambers and Kravitz 2011). Though marriage rates are low in this population, cohabitation and increasingly serial cohabitation is common (Furstenberg 2007). The Black population has higher rates of serial cohabitation than any other racial or ethnic group (Lichter, Turner and Sassler 2010). Serial cohabitation is commonly viewed as an adaptation to economic hardship, especially for single mothers, who may cycle between partners in response to economic circumstances (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Lichter and Qian 2008; Sassler and Miller 2011). Dissolution rates among low-income cohabiting couples are exceptionally high, which sets the stage for the formation of new relationships, including new cohabiting relationships (Carlson, McLanahan and England 2004; Lichter, Qian and Mellot 2006).

However, as scholars such as Naomi Gerstel (2011) have pointed out, a narrow view of family structure and of “single” motherhood does not capture the reality of day-to-day life in many Black families. While some Black mothers are single in terms of their official marital status, and perform challenging domestic work, they are often not raising their children alone. A large body of research dating back over 40 years has found that such families get by, in part, through the strength of women-centered kin and friendship networks (Edin and Lein 1997; Peek and Fothergill 2008; Reid and Reczek 2011; Stack 1974). Research into extended parenting networks has tended to focus on tight-knit women-centered social networks. Scholars generally attribute men’s lower levels of involvement in parenting in this population to social-structural forces such as financial insecurity, an imbalanced sex ratio due to mass incarceration and high mortality rates among young black men, and a lack of “marriageable men” with good financial prospects (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Western and Wildeman 2009).

In spite of these barriers, many Black men *are* involved in daily household and family life. Though their contributions are often unseen and difficult to quantify (Coles and Green 2010; Connor and White 2006; Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson 2009), a growing body of research on the topic of low-income Black men and fathering is rendering their involvement in domestic labor more visible. This research identifies and specifies the numerous ways Black men are involved in fathering. For example, while scholars have noted the involvement of grandmothers in parenting their grandchildren in low-income Black populations, Lempert (1999) found that grandfathers also frequently serve as parents to their grandchildren. Jarrett, Roy and Burton (2002) found that Black men often serve as social fathers to their friends’ children and the children of extended family members.

This growing body of work on fathering has explored the involvement of married biological fathers, cohabiting biological fathers, non-resident biological fathers, social fathers, and married stepfathers (Adamsons, O’Brien and Pasley 2007; Laughlin, Farrie and Fagan 2009; Woldoff and Cina 2007). However, scholars have conducted relatively little work on

(unmarried) cohabiting Black “stepfathers” (Sweeney 2007). Until the last decade, cohabiting couples raising children were largely overlooked in research on stepfamilies (Coleman, Ganong and Fine 2000). One way Black men are increasingly involved in families and parenting is through cohabiting relationships with women who have children from prior relationships (and less commonly, though increasingly, through serving as single fathers). Serving as a cohabiting stepfather is one dimension of what Madhavan and Roy (2012) call *flexible fathering*, strategies marginalized Black men employ to maintain ties to parenting. In this paper, we contribute to the stepfathering literature by examining cohabiting stepfathers. This topic is important, as research suggests that close to 25% of children born to single mothers will live with a stepfather (either marital or cohabiting) by the time they are five years old (Berger et al. 2008), and cohabiting stepfamilies may be different than marital stepfamilies.

Gender and Domestic Labor

A large body of research on domestic labor such as housework and childcare finds that, among heterosexual couples, women do more of this work - a result of structural constraints, gender socialization, and cultural norms (Coltrane 2000; Davis and Greenstein 2009; Evertsson and Nermo 2004; Hochschild 1997; South and Spitze 1994). This is especially true for couples who are raising children (Baxter, Belinda and Haynes 2008; Finley, Mira and Schwartz 2008). Craig and Mullen (2010) found that parents have less equal domestic workloads than non-parents in five countries, and that this difference is especially pronounced in the US.

Most research into division of labor in heterosexual couples examines married couples (Gerson 2010; Hochschild 1997), but a growing body of recent research examines the division of labor in cohabiting couples. This work has demonstrated that cohabiting couples express more gender egalitarian beliefs about the division of domestic labor than married couples. However, research into the actual practices of such couples reveals that women still do the majority of the domestic labor (housework and childcare), though the division of labor is more in line with egalitarian beliefs than the division of labor in married couples (Baxter, Haynes and Hewitt 2010; Bianchi, Milkie and Sayer 2000)

Recent research has found that gender ideology flexibility in earning and caring responsibilities in families of all socioeconomic categories faced with crises “provides the most effective way for families to transcend the economic challenges and marital conundrums that imperiled their children’s well-being” (Gerson, 2010, p. 10). Similarly, Madhavan and Roy (2012) find that flexible fathering, such as serving as a cohabiting stepfather, contributes to the well-being of children. This suggests that, despite the recent poverty policy focus on promoting marriage among low-income Black families (Heath 2009), cohabiting relationships may also be beneficial to partners and their children *if* both partners contribute to domestic labor and participate in parenting. In this study we examine gender of the stepparent in order to understand how this relates to the division of domestic labor in cohabiting stepfamilies, a population for which this issue has not yet been examined.

Relationship Formation and Duration

Researchers have examined how individuals enter into cohabiting relationships as compared to marital relationships. Scholars such as Manning and Smock (1995) and Stanley, Rhoades, and Markmann (2006) find that cohabiting relationships are often formed through a "sliding" or gradual process, as opposed to the deliberative decision-making process that is usually associated with marital relationships. This suggests that cohabiting stepparents may gradually become more involved in household and co-parenting activities over the course of a cohabiting relationship as they become more established in the household, and that during the interim the custodial parent takes responsibility for the majority of domestic work.

The nature of cohabiting relationships, as compared to marriages, can lead to role ambiguity in which household and parenting responsibilities are unclear and changing (Hofferth and Anderson 2003; Manning and Lamb 2004). The gender of the individual joining a household may also affect the division of labor, as outlined above. Given the gendered nature of the division of domestic labor in heterosexual relationships, it is likely that cohabiting stepmothers take on more of the household domestic labor and do so earlier on in the relationship than cohabiting stepfathers.

To date, few researchers have examined how length of relationship and stepparent gender impact the division of domestic labor in cohabiting unions. Though cohabiting relationships tend to be more egalitarian than marital relationships, as outlined above, recent research suggests that this may change over time, with cohabiting couples adopting more traditionally gendered roles with relation to domestic labor as the relationship continues (Miller and Sassler 2010; Poortman and van der Lippe 2009). In our analysis we examine whether gender and relationship length play a role in stepparent involvement in domestic labor.

Methods

We contribute to the research on domestic labor in cohabiting families by studying an understudied population (low-income Black cohabiting stepfamilies) and by examining the understudied but theoretically important variables of relationship length and stepparent gender. A strength of our data is that we collected information from the parent, the stepparent, and a focal child in the family. These data paint a more complete picture of the cohabiting partner's role in the household and whether such perceptions are shared across family members. In this paper, we compare the distribution of domestic labor in new cohabiting stepfather families with established cohabiting stepfather families, and with stepmother families, in order to understand if there is a difference in the domestic roles of each partner by relationship length and gender. We hypothesize that (a) Women do more domestic labor than men across all three family types examined, and (b) Stepfathers in established relationships do more domestic labor than stepfathers in new relationships.

Sample

Data come from the Impact of Transient Domesticity on African American Families Study, funded by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). All

survey procedures were approved by the researchers' IRB. The overall purpose of the study is to understand cohabiting and co-parenting relationships among low-income urban Black families. This study examines relationships and parenting arrangements among low-income Black families on their own terms, identifying the strengths, challenges, and further needs of these families.

The project recruited 136 cohabiting stepfamilies from low-income Black communities using known field contacts, posters, and contacts at various agencies. All families included a heterosexual cohabiting (unmarried) couple, in which at least one of the partners had primary responsibility for an adolescent child (age 10–17) and at least one partner was Black. All of the families were recruited in low-income neighborhoods of New York City such as the South Bronx, East New York, and Harlem. Many of the respondents were recruited in government subsidized housing projects. The custodial parent, cohabiting stepparent, and focal child were each surveyed separately in a mutually convenient, private location, usually a separate room in the family's home. Each adult subject provided informed consent. Each child provided assent and informed consent was obtained from the custodial parent. The custodial parent and child were surveyed in each family. In 30 families, we were not able to survey the stepparent.

Measures

Performance of domestic labor was measured using an adapted version of the "Who Does What?" (WDW) instrument (Cowan and Cowan 1992). The original WDW was developed to compare men and women's responsibility for domestic activities in two-parent heterosexual households (Cowan and Cowan 1992). The WDW asks how often the man or the woman performs various household and parenting activities in three areas that define subscales: household chores (8 questions, e.g., does the laundry), family decision making (7 questions, e.g., decides how to spend time at home), and child supervision (19 questions, e.g., helps child with homework). The response categories ranged from 1 for the woman does it all to 9 for the man does it all and with a 5 indicating that the partners share the task equally.

Each adult participant was asked how often they were responsible for each WDW activity using the following response categories: 0 - almost never (about 0%–10% of the time); 1 - sometimes (11%–35%); 2 - about half the time (36%–65%); 3 - most of the time (66%–90%); and, 4 - almost always (91%–100%). Children were asked the child supervision subscale questions only. The study examined the average score across all 34 questions and the average score within each of the three subscales.

The reliability of each scale and each subscale as reported by custodial parent, stepparent, and child were estimated using Cronbach's alpha. In general these scales showed strong internal consistency, indicating that the adapted WDW instrument provides reliable measures of the various components of domestic labor for low-income urban Black cohabiting families. For the custodial parent's reports regarding their own domestic labor, Cronbach's alpha was .87, and the reliability scores on the subscales were .68, .70 and .89 for household chores, family decisions and child supervision, respectively. The custodial parents' reports regarding the stepparent had an overall reliability of .94 and on subscales .

80, .78 and .95. The stepparent's reports regarding the custodial parent and own domestic labor showed similar levels of reliability. The child's reports of child supervision by the custodial parent (.89) and the stepparent (.94) were highly reliable.

Additionally, the custodial parent and child were asked several questions about the nature and quality of the relationship between the stepparent and the child. Both the parent and child were asked whether they consider the cohabiting partner to be a (co)parent. The parent was asked how they would characterize the partner-child relationship using the following range of responses: 1 - warm and friendly; 2 - polite but engaged; 3 - cold; 4 - authoritarian; and, 5 - unfriendly or hostile. The child was asked to affirm or disaffirm the following statement, "I have a good relationship with my parent's partner." and, "I have a hostile relationship with my parent's partner." using the following response categories: 0 - not true; 1 - sometimes true; and, 2 - often or very true.

Analyses

We examined variation across relationship length and custodial parent's gender in performing domestic labor, and the quality of the stepparent-child relationship. The variation in family types was coded as follows: new ($n=50$) - the custodial mother has been living with her partner for 12 months or less; established ($n=74$) - the custodial mother has been living with her partner for more than 12 months; and custodial father ($n=12$) - the woman is the cohabiting partner.

Ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression was used to examine how custodial parent's domestic labor varied across family type, controlling for several other factors: age, housing subsidization, having ever been married, number of prior relationships, number of children in the household and child's gender. Housing subsidization was used as a measure of socio-economic status (SES) because it included more cases than the household income variable. Household income could not be accurately measured for the 30 cases for which the stepparent did not complete the interview. A similar model was estimated for stepparent domestic labor. Both of these models were based on WDW information provided by the custodial parent.

Bivariate analysis was used to examine how participation in domestic labor varied across family types, subscales, partners, and who reported the information. ANOVA was used to test whether the distribution of domestic labor varied across family types. A two-sided paired T-test was used to test whether the participants on average tended to report that the amount of domestic labor performed by stepparents differed significantly from the amount performed by custodial parents. Bivariate analysis was used to similarly examine how the quality of the stepparent-child relationship varied with family type and across who reported the information. The Pearson χ^2 statistic was used to test whether stepparent-child relationship quality varied across family types.

Results

Demographics

Table 1 presents the demographic composition of the sample. Most of the families involved an established cohabiting relationship with a stepfather (54%). The next most common family type was new cohabiting relationships with a stepfather (37%), followed by stepmother families (9%). Almost half the families (45%) had only one child living with them; others had two (24%) and nearly a third had three or more (32%). Most of the families were poor (53%) earning less than the federal poverty threshold, others (30%) earned at the near poor level (between 100% and 200% of the poverty threshold), and some earned more than twice the threshold (17%). As another measure of SES, more than half the families (58%) lived in housing projects or subsidized public housing. Nearly all of the adults were Black (98% of women and 95% of men). Most of the adult women were in their thirties (47%) or forties (32%), which reflects the inclusion criterion that one of the partners had to have custody of an adolescent. The adult men were slightly older on average with the modal age in the forties (34%) and a larger percentage age 50 and above (24% versus 10% for women). Some of the adults had been to college (24% and 14%) but few (5% and 3%) had completed a college degree. More than a third (35%) of the women and a quarter (25%) of the men had ever been married. However, nearly all the adults had lived with a partner previously either with or without having been married: 14% and 12% had not, 40% and 36% had one prior cohabiting relationship, 28% and 26% had two prior cohabiting relationships, and 18% and 26% had three or more prior cohabiting relationships. There were slightly more girl (52%) than boy children included in the sample. Nearly all of the children were Black (98%). Their ages were fairly evenly split across the age categories with 16–17 year olds slightly less represented (15%).

Domestic Labor

Table 2 presents the results of the OLS regression analysis of the variation in custodial parent and stepparent participation in domestic labor, as reported by the custodial parent. On average, the custodial parent tended to perform most of the work. The constant of 2.81 indicates that custodial parents whose characteristics match the reference population (established stepfather, unsubsidized home, age 30–39, never married, 1 prior relationship, with only one child, a boy) tended on average to do most of the work; a score of 2.81 is close to 3.0, which corresponds to the “most of the time” response category. These parents did substantially more than the stepparent in a similar family where the constant is 2.10, which is close to 2.0 corresponding to the “about half the time” category. The average response was .39 lower for custodial fathers. There was no variation in the amount of work performed by stepparents by family type, number of children in the household, housing subsidization, ever being married, or child’s gender. Younger custodial parents in their twenties tended to perform more domestic labor (.34). None of the variables associated with the stepparent’s domestic labor was statistically significant.

Table 3 presents the bivariate analyses of the variation in domestic labor performed across family types and broken out into the three subscales of the WDW instrument. Overall, the custodial mother on average reported that she does most of the work (2.9–3.0), whether in a

new or established relationship. These mothers reported that stepfathers did significantly less domestic labor (1.8–1.9). However, this labor gap appears to have more to do with custody than gender. Custodial fathers reported performing almost as much of the domestic labor (2.6) as the custodial mothers. (The difference was marginally significant at the $\alpha=.10$ but not the $\alpha=.05$ level, as shown in the fourth column.) Furthermore, stepmothers performed significantly less of the domestic labor (2.0) than custodial fathers (2.6). Their rate was comparable to those of stepfathers. (The difference was not statistically significant, as shown in the last column.)

Looking down the table indicates how the variation in domestic labor performed differed across the three subscales. Custodial parents reported that they were the most involved with child supervision and mothers (3.1–3.2) were significantly more involved than fathers (2.7). Custodial parents reported being somewhat less involved with household chores (2.5–2.7) and family decisions (2.5–2.7). Conversely, mothers reported that stepfathers were somewhat more involved with family decisions (2.1–2.2) than household chores (1.8–1.9) or child supervision (1.7–1.8). Custodial fathers were not that much more involved with child supervision (2.7) than other domestic labor activities (2.5). Unlike stepfathers, stepmothers were more involved with child supervision (2.2) than other domestic labor activities (1.7–2.0).

A comparison of the first two rows indicates the extent that the stepparents' perceptions regarding the distribution of domestic labor were in accord with the custodial parents' perceptions. The stepparents' reports regarding the amount of domestic labor performed by the custodial parent (2.6–2.9) are consistent with those reported by the custodial parents (2.6–3.0). However, they report that they (the stepparent) performed slightly more of the domestic labor (2.0–2.2) than the custodial parents reported they performed (1.8–2.0). This pattern is reflected in each of the three subscales. The last row examines children's reports regarding child supervision. Children reported that their custodial mothers were less involved in child supervision (2.7) than the mothers themselves reported (3.1–3.2). Similarly, the children reported that stepfathers were slightly less involved in child supervision (1.5–1.6) than the stepfathers themselves reported (1.9–2.0). In custodial father families, the children's reports regarding supervision by the father (2.8) and the stepmother (2.2) are more consistent with those reported by the adults (2.7 and 2.2–2.3, respectively).

Quality of the Cohabiting Stepparent-Child Relationship

Overall, children had positive relationships with their cohabiting stepparent. Table 4 provides several indicators of the quality of the stepparent-child relationship. Of note, the variation in quality across family types for each was not statistically significant. About three quarters (73%–76%) of the parents viewed the cohabiting partner as a coparent. Most of the custodial mothers (72%–78%) reported that their child had a warm and friendly relationship with their stepfather, and most of the others reported the relationship was polite but engaged (17%–25%). Few reported that the relationship was cold (2%–3%) or authoritarian (0%–2%) and none reported an unfriendly or hostile relationship. More custodial fathers than custodial mothers reported that the stepparent-child relationship was cold (9%) or

authoritarian (9%), though the difference in this rate across family types was not statistically significant.

Similarly, children mostly reported having a positive relationship with their stepparent. Children were about as likely as their custodial parent to view the cohabiting partner as a coparent (68–75%). Regarding having a good relationship, the majority reported that this was often or very true (58–71%). Only a few reported (2%–8%) reported this was not true. Similarly when asked if the relationship was hostile, the majority (67%–86%) affirmed that this was not true. Only a few children (0%–6%) reported that this was often or very true.

Discussion

Our findings do not support Hypotheses A and B. Overall our findings suggest that, among low-income Black cohabiting stepfamilies with an adolescent, cohabiting stepparents make a substantial contribution to the domestic labor with respect to household chores, family decisions, and child supervision. There were no differences with regard to length of the relationship, and limited differences with regard to gender of the custodial parent. Stepparents were described by both the custodial parent and the child as having almost universally positive relationships with the child. These findings are consistent with the idea that cohabiting stepparents make positive contributions in low-income Black families to both their partners and their partners' children. This section describes limitations to this study, identifies important directions for future research and family policy, and discusses the significance of the findings with regard to developing a richer understanding of cohabitation and serial cohabitation.

These findings support the idea that cohabitation may have become an institutionalized family structure within the low-income Black population. Of particular note, we had anticipated that the experiences in new cohabiting families would be different from those that were more established, in line with the “sliding versus deciding” paradigm of cohabiting relationship formation, but this was not the case. New cohabiting stepfathers contributed to domestic labor as much as established cohabiting stepfathers did, and were viewed positively as coparents by both the custodial mother and her child. This suggests that there are norms and expectations associated with cohabitation, and that partners tend to adhere to them from the very beginning of moving in together. This also suggests that there may be more of a deciding process, as opposed to a sliding process, involved in establishing cohabiting stepfamilies. Future research should examine this process in this population to expand understanding of cohabiting stepfamily formation.

Gender analysis also revealed some interesting findings with regard to relationship norms. Though custodial mother families demonstrated a division of labor consistent with traditional gender roles, with men performing significantly less domestic labor than they did, both partners agreed on how much work each did. This suggests that there are gendered norms and expectations in cohabiting stepfamilies, and relatively little role ambiguity. Custodial fathers are an interesting case. They performed household chores and made family decisions as often as custodial mothers, but performed less child care than custodial mothers. Custodial fathers and stepmothers performed about the same amount of child supervision.

Custodial fathers are much less common than custodial mothers, but their prevalence is growing within the low-income Black population, and further work should examine these families with a larger sample.

Policies designed to serve low-income Black families should consider the cohabiting stepfamily as a common family form in its own right, not only as a temporary or unstable family form. Our research suggests that this family form can be beneficial to the adults and children who compose them. Social programs that work to strengthen father involvement in Black low-income families should include cohabiting stepfathers in their outreach and learn about the important parental roles they can play in the lives of low-income adolescents. Evaluations of such programs should explore the unique needs and challenges that cohabiting stepfathers face.

The findings from this study are intriguing, but the limitations to the study suggest restraint in generalizing the findings, pending further research. The first limitation is that this study focused only on low-income cohabiting Black stepfamilies in New York City. Findings need to be confirmed with samples from other locations, including non-urban populations. Additionally, future studies are needed with groups that differ by income and race/ethnicity to determine whether the phenomena observed are primarily associated with Black families, low-income families, or are primarily associated with the intersection of these characteristics. Further longitudinal research is also needed with cohabiting stepfamilies to see whether the quality of cohabiting relationships tend to improve over the life course. One possibility is that after a series of unsatisfying cohabiting relationships, custodial parents become better at developing new relationships that better serve their families. The findings presented raise questions regarding the social arrangements underlying the observed quality of coparenting in cohabiting families. Future research should examine how parents make the transition to a cohabiting relationship, how couples negotiate domestic labor responsibilities, and how children factor into relationship decision-making and responsibilities.

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Table 1

Sample Demographics

Family Characteristics (n = 136)		
<i>Family Type</i>		
New stepfather		37%
Established stepfather		54%
Stepmother		9%
<i>Number of Children in Household</i>		
1		45%
2		24%
3 or more		32%
<i>Family Income</i>		
Below 100% FPL		53%
100–199% FPL		30%
200% FPL and above		17%
<i>Lives in a housing project or other public housing</i>		58%
Adult Characteristics		
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Women	Men
Black	98%	95%
Hispanic (non-Black)	2%	5%
White	0%	0%
Other	1%	0%
<i>Age</i>		
20–29	10%	18%
30–39	47%	24%
40–49	32%	34%
50+	10%	24%
<i>Education</i>		
No HS diploma	37%	30%
HS diploma/GED	35%	53%
Some post-secondary	24%	14%
College degree	5%	3%
<i>Ever Married</i>	35%	25%
<i>Number of Prior Relationships (Marriages + Cohabitations)</i>		
0	14%	12%
1	40%	36%
2	28%	26%
3 or more	18%	26%
Child Characteristics		
<i>Gender</i>		
Female		52%

Male	48%
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	
Black	98%
Hispanic (non-Black)	2%
White	0%
Other	0%
<u>Child Age</u>	
10 – 11	26%
12 – 13	30%
14 – 15	28%
16 – 17	15%

Table 2

Variation in Domestic Labor of Custodial Parent and Stepparent as Reported by Custodial Parent, Multivariate Analysis using Ordinary Least Squares Regression

	Custodial Parent's Domestic Labor	Stepparent's Domestic Labor
Constant	2.81	2.10
<i>Family Type</i>		
New stepfather	.03	-.02
Established stepfather ^a	.00	.00
Stepmother	-.39*	-.07
<i>Number of Children in Household</i>		
1 ^a	.00	.00
2	.01	.11
3 or more	.10	.21
<i>Housing Subsidization</i>		
Lives in public housing	.00	.15
Lives in an unsubsidized home ^a	.00	.00
<i>Age</i>		
20–29	.34*	-.40
30–39 ^a	.00	.00
40–49	.09	-.02
50+	.10	.19
<i>Ever Married</i>		
No ^a	.00	.00
Yes	-.05	.06
<i>Number of Prior Relationships</i>		
0	-.15	-.26
1 ^a	.00	.00
2	.13	-.32
3 or more	-.06	-.29
<i>Gender of Child</i>		
Male ^a	.00	.00
Female	.03	-.16
R ²	12%	12%

^aReference Category

[†]significant at the $\alpha=.1$ level;

* significant at the $\alpha=.05$ level;

** significant at the $\alpha=.01$.

Table 3
Variation in Domestic Labor across Household Partners, Family Type, and Participant Reporting

Scale Reporter	Report about Custodial Parent by Family Type			Report about Stepparent by Family Type ^a		
	New	Established	Step mother	Sig ^b	New	Established
Overall						
Parent	3.0	2.9	2.6	†	1.8**	1.9**
Stepparent	2.9	2.8	2.6	*	2.0**	2.1**
Household Chores						
Parent	2.7	2.6	2.5		1.8**	1.9**
Stepparent	2.5	2.4	2.2		2.1*	2.3
Family Decisions						
Parent	2.7	2.6	2.5		2.1**	2.2**
Stepparent	2.7	2.5	2.5		2.3**	2.2**
Child Supervision						
Parent	3.2	3.1	2.7	*	1.7**	1.8**
Stepparent	3.2	3.1	2.7	*	1.9**	2.0**
Child	2.7	2.7	2.8		1.6**	1.5**

^a T-test comparison between the parent and partner's household participation is provided.

^b ANOVA test of the variation with relationship type.

† significant at the $\alpha=.1$ level;

* significant at the $\alpha=.05$ level;

** significant at the $\alpha=.01$.

Table 4

Variation in Quality of Stepparent and Child's Relationship across Family Type, and Participant Reporting

	Report about Cohabiting Partner by Family Type		
	New	Established	Step mother
Consider partner to be a coparent as reported by			
<i>Parent</i>	73%	76%	75%
<i>Child</i>	70%	68%	75%
Parent reports child and partners relationship is			
<i>Warm and friendly</i>	78%	72%	54%
<i>Polite but engaged</i>	17%	25%	27%
<i>Cold</i>	2%	3%	9%
<i>Authoritarian</i>	2%	0%	9%
<i>Unfriendly – hostile</i>	0%	0%	0%
Child reports relationship with partner is good			
<i>Often or very true</i>	71%	63%	58%
<i>Sometimes true</i>	26%	31%	33%
<i>Not true</i>	2%	6%	8%
Child reports relationship with partner is hostile			
<i>Often or very true</i>	6%	4%	0%
<i>Sometimes true</i>	10%	10%	33%
<i>Not true</i>	84%	86%	67%

None of the relationships were significant at the $\alpha=.1$ level