

Determinants of Male Family-Role Performance

Carolyn C. Perrucci, Harry R. Potter, and Deborah L. Rhoads
Purdue University

Three competing hypotheses are tested regarding determinants of husband's (vs. wife's) participation in 12 selected household/child-care activities. The research utilizes interview responses of husbands, although it compares responses of both husbands and wives in a proportionate stratified area-probability sample from adjacent midwestern cities. The socialization-ideology hypothesis receives the strongest, albeit modest, support of the three hypotheses. Only marginal support is found for the relative husband/wife resources hypothesis, emphasizing professional employment of wives. No support is found for the time-availability hypothesis. Implications for the further integration of work and family roles for men are considered.

Although recent theoretical writing about the family has emphasized an increasing integration of work and family roles for both sexes (Fogarty, Rapoport, & Rapoport, 1971, Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971), empirical studies have left open to question the extent as well as determinants of married men's participation in household and child-care activities (Pleck, 1977). More specifically, from the 1920s to the present, married women typically have performed a full week (50+ hours) of household work, although employed married women now spend only about half the time in housework as their unem-

The authors are affiliated with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Stone Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907. They are grateful for the help received from Brent Smith, who provided computer-programming assistance for this study. Requests for reprints should be sent to Dr. Carolyn C. Perrucci.

ployed peers (Vanek, 1974). The literature also clearly documents that married women, including mothers of young children, have been increasingly participating in the labor force (Waite, 1976, Waldman, 1970). With respect to married men, on the other hand, trend data indicate that their labor-force participation rates have been relatively full and constant over time (Ferriss, 1971), whereas the amount of household work performed has been relatively small (Blood & Wolfe, 1960, Bryson, Bryson, Licht, & Licht, 1976, Farkas, 1976, Stafford, Backman, & Dibona, 1977) and constant over time (Duncan, Schuman, & Duncan, 1973).

Husbands' family-role performance may very well be limited in comparison to that of wives in the aggregate, but individual variation in husband's family time exists and is of at least equal theoretical significance. The present study aims to extend extant research by examining determinants of husbands' (vs. wives') participation in 12 selected household/child-care activities. In doing so the study tests three competing hypotheses in the area: (1) the relative husband/wife resources hypothesis (Bahr, 1972, Blood & Wolfe, 1960, Stafford et al., 1977), (2) the subcultural or socialization hypothesis regarding values and ideology (Stafford et al., 1977), and (3) the time-available hypothesis (Stafford et al., 1977). The research is also innovative because it utilizes responses of husbands as the dependent variable although it compares responses of both husbands and wives.

According to the relative-resource hypothesis, husbands and wives command in their marriage a certain level of a variety of resources, including education and occupational prestige. (Although income is unquestionably a resource, its effects are usually ascertained under the rubric of yet a fourth "economic" hypothesis that posits that both husbands and wives divide up their time between marketwork, housework, and leisure, and that their decision is based upon a comparison of the husband's and wife's efficiency in both marketwork (i.e., relative wage rates) and housework. A recent study by Farkas (1976) finds no effect of husband/wife relative wage rates on the number of hours of housework performed by husbands. While such data are available in this study, they are not included because of the small number (51) of employed women.) The above-mentioned resources are power resources, and the spouse who controls the relatively greater share can presumably minimize his/her participation in undesired activities, including household work/childcare. If, with increases in the husband's educational level or occupational prestige, he does less housework (holding constant the wife's educational or occupational level), the relative-resources hypothesis is supported.

Research evidence for this hypothesis is inconclusive at this time (Blood & Wolfe, 1960, Farkas, 1976, Stafford et al., 1977, Hesselbart, 1976)

The socialization-ideology hypothesis posits that the household division of labor depends upon the nature of sex-role ideology acquired by women and men as children and/or adults. According to a rather traditional sex-role ideology, household work and child care have been considered to be the major role of married women, not men (Bem, 1970, Poloma & Garland, 1971). An egalitarian sex-role ideology, on the other hand, should be predictive of husband/wife household task sharing, regardless of power and authority considerations. A study of a small sample of married male college students found that time spent on performance of household tasks was less if their "ideal" partner, their reasons for marriage, the parental household division of labor, as well as men's current sex-role ideology were traditional (Stafford et al., 1977). Moreover, a national study of households (Farkas, 1976) found that low education of husband was associated with fewer hours of housework performed by him, whereas high education was associated with more housework. It was unclear from this study whether or not high education reflected a male ideology for egalitarian behavior. A study of Floridian couples, however, showed that both husband's education and his attitude toward women's equality affected the extent to which he shared household tasks with his wife (Hesselbart, 1976). Specifically, the higher the husband's education and the less opposed he was to women's equality, the more he shared tasks.

According to the time-available hypothesis, husbands and wives allocate household tasks and child care on the basis of time available to each spouse for such activities. Employment of the wife has been assumed to lessen her availability for the unpaid activities, and evidence has shown that employed wives spend less time doing housework than unemployed wives (Vanek, 1974). Data regarding the effect of wife employment on husband's participation, however, are conflicting. Blood and Hamblin (1958), Blood and Wolfe (1960), Hoffman (1960), Layne and Lowe (1977), and Safilios-Rothschild (1970) reported that the husband assumed a greater share of the housework if his wife was employed. A Greek study (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970) found that husbands participated more rarely and in fewer activities if their wives had high rather than low work commitment (i.e., accorded a high degree of importance to their work and would work regardless of financial need). Use of hired help, however, was more characteristic of wives with high, rather than low, com-

mitment On the other hand, Hesselbart (1976), Stafford et al (1977), and Bryson et al (1976) found that wife's employment was unrelated to husband's housework, although it led to greater use of commercial services (Nolan, 1963) and paid nonfamily help (Bryson et al, 1976) Powell (1963) discovered that when the oldest child was an adolescent, rather than younger, the husbands of employed women participated in fewer home activities than did the husbands of nonemployed wives

The number of children in the home is another variable that is assumed to lessen married women's time available for housework, but empirical evidence for this is inconclusive Farkas (1976) and Campbell (1970) reported that husbands helped increasingly with household tasks with the presence (vs absence) of children and as number of children increased, respectively Marital duration and husband's age, which may reflect family size and/or age of children, were found to be inversely related to husband's task participation by Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Silverman and Hill (1967), and by Olsen (1960), respectively Controlling for the presence of a preschool-age child, however, Hesselbart (1976) found no effect of marital duration on spouse task sharing Layne and Lowe (1977), moreover, have shown that as parity or child-spacing intervals increased, both mothers and fathers reallocated some child-care and cooking tasks to other family members (usually older children) but not to each other

METHODS

Data for this study were from the adjacent cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette, Indiana and were obtained by personal interviews in May 1972 A proportionate stratified-area probability sample was used, with census blocks placed in four strata on the basis of owned-housing value, which served as an indicator of social class Twenty-eight blocks were selected, with a random starting point designated for each block Interviewers attempted to contact every third house The interviewers worked in two-person teams (five female-male, four male-male) Interviews were done concurrently, but independently, with the husband and the wife Interviews were completed with 98 couples, there were an additional 30 households in the sample where no one was home or it was not possible to schedule an interview before the end of the data-collection phase

The dependent variable, husband's role performance, was based on the husband's response to how he and his wife shared 12 household activities The activities were listed in terms of who (1) did the grocery shopping, (2) got husband's breakfast on work days, (3) straightened living room when

company was coming, (4) mowed the lawn, (5) shoveled the sidewalk, (6) did the evening dishes, (7) repaired things around the house, (8) kept track of the money and bills, (9) was responsible for getting the car repaired, (10) was responsible for taking care of the children when they were sick, (11) bought the children's clothes, and (12) did the driving when traveling together. Response categories for each of the activities were (1) husband always, (2) husband more than wife, (3) husband and wife equally, (4) wife more than husband, (5) wife always, and (6) not applicable.

While the central focus of this paper is on husband's task performance, it is important to compare *his* responses with *his wife's* responses on his performance, particularly in view of the discrepancies reported on this issue (Scanzoni, 1965, Safilios-Rothschild, 1969). Husbands reported that they did these tasks more than their wives reported they did. Of the 12 activities, husbands said they did 6.4 activities (standard deviation 1.5) equally or more than their wives. Wives, however, said their husbands did only 5.9 (standard deviation 1.6) activities. The difference between the means is significant ($t=2.24$, $p \leq .05$, two-tailed test).

The specific measure used here asked who did each activity, with the response categories shown above. The score was obtained by counting the number of activities the husband said that he did *equally* or *more* than his wife, divided by the total number of items minus those that were not applicable, i.e., $12 - \text{number of not applicable activities}$. Activities involving lawns, sidewalks, and children were "not applicable" for as many as about one-third of the respondents. Succinctly, the dependent variable was the proportion of applicable activities the husband said he did equally or more often than his wife. This measure had substantial differentiation, with a range from .36 to 1, mean = .59, and standard deviation = .14, as shown in Table 1.

The predictor variables were placed in three broad categories for the purpose of describing them: those relating to ideology or belief about the family, those related to resources available, and those affecting time availability. The ideology indicators included eight Likert-type attitude items with five responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These are listed verbatim as the first eight items under "Ideology" in Table 1. Consideration was given to creating a composite score, but the interitem correlations were too low, with only one exceeding .50. It was felt that it would be preferable, therefore, to use each item separately. Although some of the items appeared to have related content, such as power or traditional roles, under conditions of social change there may be quite differential rates of change in ideology across specific issues, thus contributing to the apparent lack of a common underlying dimension. Three additional ideology indicators were whether the husband's mother worked, scored dichotomously (0=No, 1=Yes), the husband's rating of his marital happiness on a five-point scale (1=much happier, 5=much less happy), and the husband's preference to engage in leisure time activities with his wife (1 = "all the time," 5 = "never").

The resources variables included husband's and wife's education (eight

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Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for All Variables in Regression Analysis of
Husband's Family Role Performance

	Mean	Standard deviation
Dependent Variable		
Husband's role performance	59	14
Independent Variables ^a		
Ideology		
Young <u>children need</u> to be with their <u>mother</u> more than their father	2 66	1 04
A <u>working woman</u> should still be primarily responsible for taking <u>care</u> of the <u>house</u> and the children	2 78	1 04
A <u>pre-school child</u> is likely to <u>suffer</u> emotional damage if his or her mother works	2 97	1 13
Mature intended <u>women</u> to be <u>homemakers</u> and men to be workers	3 04	1 13
In cases of disagreement within the marriage, the <u>husband</u> should have the <u>final</u> say	3 46	1 05
Normally, a <u>son</u> should receive <u>more education</u> than a daughter	3 22	1 16
A <u>stable family</u> must have a dominant father	3 09	1 01
Women should <u>work</u> only if it is <u>financially necessary</u>	3 39	1 10
<u>Husband's mother worked</u>	41	49
<u>Husband's marital happiness</u>	1 89	77
Husband <u>prefers</u> to engage in <u>leisure</u> activities <u>with wife</u>	2 26	78
Resources		
<u>Husband's education</u>	5 15	1 92
<u>Husband's occupation</u>	4 41	2 77
<u>Wife's education</u>	4 57	1 52
<u>Wife housewife</u> ^b	45	50
<u>Wife works non-professional</u> ^b	42	50
Husband expects <u>wife to be working</u> full-time outside the home during next ten years	2 03	91
Time availability		
<u>Number of children</u> at home	1 80	1 55
<u>Marital duration</u>	12 92	10 16
<u>Husband's age</u>	36 50	11 60

Note Sample size drops to 74 in the regression analysis because of missing data

^a Underline indicates abbreviated variable names used in Table 2

^b Dummy variables

categories from less than seven years to postgraduate MA or PhD), husband's occupation, coded as a modified version of the Edwards occupational scale expanded to 12 categories, with low scores assigned to higher status occupations, and wife's occupation, treated as three dummy variables (1) housewife, (2) nonprofessional occupation, and (3) professional occupation. One other resource variable was whether the husband expected his wife to be employed full-time outside the house during the next 10 years (1=yes, 2=no, part-time work, 3=no).

Three different aspects of time were measured. One was the number of children currently living in the household (actual number coded with 8 = 8 or more). The second was length of marriage, in years, and last was husband's age in years.

RESULTS

As indicated above, three possible hypotheses for the division of household/child care labor among married couples are under consideration: (1) relative resources, (2) socialization-ideology, and (3) time availability. The initial comparison of these hypotheses was done by examining the zero-order correlation coefficients between the predictor variables and husband's task performance. These coefficients are generally low, with only two being statistically significant at $p \leq .05$ and in the predicted direction. Both of these are ideology items. "A stable family must have a dominant father," $r = .34$, and "Nature intended women to be homemakers and men to be workers," $r = .24$. A third, time-availability variable, number of children at home, has the next largest coefficient, but it is in the opposite direction of that predicted and thus does not support the time-availability hypothesis. Thus, initially it appears that the socialization-ideology hypothesis offers more of an explanation for husband's task performance than either of the other two hypotheses.

Next, the set of variables associated with each hypothesis was examined separately. Again, the ideology variables clearly have a stronger relationship to husband's task performance than either the resources or time-availability variables. The multiple-correlation coefficient for the set of ideology variables (entered in step-wise regression order) is .47 (significant at $p \leq .01$) for six variables. "A stable family must have a dominant father" is the strongest predictor among the ideology variables. None of the time-availability variables is related as predicted to husband's task performance. The multiple-correlation coefficient (.22, $p > .05$) for the three variables is not

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significant. Virtually all of this coefficient is accounted for by number of children at home, which, contrary to the hypothesis, is inversely related to husband's task performance. The resource variables, considered as a set by themselves, are not significantly related to husband's task performance, this holds for the multiple correlation ($.32, p > .05$) as well as each of the variables individually.

In order to further assess each hypothesis, the measure of husband's family-role performance was regressed on all of the independent variables in the study. Table 2 lists the independent variables in the order they entered the step-wise multiple-regression equation,

Table 2
Regression Analysis of Husband's Family Role Performance

<u>Independent Variables</u>	<u>Standardized Regression Coefficient</u>	<u>Predictor Significance</u>	<u>Multiple R</u>	<u>Multiple R Significance</u>
Stable family (I)	.381	.01	.34	.01
Wife housewife ^a (R)	-.415	.07	.38	.01
Work financially necessary (I)	-.402	.01	.43	.01
Husband's education (R)	.400	.07	.48	.01
Husband's occupation (R)	.302	.09	.53	.01
Women homemakers (I)	.202	.22	.55	.01
Prefer leisure with wife (I)	-.080	.56	.57	.01
Number of children (A)	-.111	.41	.57	.01
Working woman care house (I)	.084	.51	.58	.01
Children need mother (I)	-.131	.36	.59	.01
Husband final say (I)	.129	.33	.60	.01
Wife non-professional ^a (R)	-.187	.40	.60	.01
Wife's education (R)	-.141	.48	.60	.01
Marital duration (A)	-.370	.17	.61	.01
Husband's age (A)	.337	.22	.62	.01
Husband's mother worked (I)	.074	.57	.62	.01
Wife to be working (R)	.056	.65	.63	.02
Pre-school child suffer (I)	-.028	.83	.63	.03
Son more education (I)	.025	.85	.63	.04
Marital happiness (I)	-.013	.92	.63	.06

Note Sample size drops to 74 because of missing data.
Categories of predictor variables are designated as follows: ideology (I), relative resources (R); and availability (A).

^a Dummy variables

shows the standardized regression coefficients and significance level for each independent variable when all variables are in the equation, and shows the cumulative multiple R and its significance for each successive independent variable.

This analysis procedure allows us to examine (1) the order in which each independent variable is added to the regression equation and (2) how much variance is explained by each additional variable. Looking at the ordering of variables, there is no clear pattern of any one set of variables predominating in sequence. The first variable to enter is a socialization-ideology variable, however, three of the first five are resource variables, and a time-availability variable enters only eighth. The multiple correlation is significant through 16 ($p \leq .01$) or 19 ($p \leq .05$) variables with R being .62 or .63, respectively. Only the first 16 variables are considered as statistically significant in the remainder of the paper. Of these 16 variables, eight are socialization (of a possible 11), five are resource variables (out of six), and three (out of three) are time-availability variables. Although wife's occupation is a single variable in terms of subjects' responses, it was treated as a dummy variable in this analysis, two of the categories were entered as dummy variates, resulting in six, rather than five, predictor variables. The third response category, wife employed in a professional occupation, served as the residual (cf. Blalock, 1972). The remaining four variables, including one resource and three ideology measures, are not statistically significant at the .01 level and add very little to the multiple correlation.

Socialization-Ideology Hypothesis

To more adequately assess the three theoretical perspectives, it is useful to examine the variables within each perspective directly. The two statistically significant ($p = \leq .01$) variables in the regression equation are ideology variables. Specifically, the greater the husband's disagreement with the attitude "A stable family must have a dominant father," the more household/childcare activities he participates in. The husband's response to another marital-power ideology item, "In cases of disagreement within the marriage, the husband should have the final say," is also related in the same direction to his task participation in the home. In contrast, agreement (rather than disagreement) with "Women should work only if it is financially necessary" is significantly related to greater male family-role performance. In addition, the greater the husband's disagreement with "Na-

ture intended women to be homemakers and men to be workers" and "A working woman should still be primarily responsible for taking care of the house and the children," the more he participates in home activities, which is consistent with the socialization-ideology hypothesis, that is, the less traditional the husband's ideology regarding women's home and (paid) work roles, the more activities in which he participates. However, the opposite is found with regard to "Young children need to be with their mother more than their father", here, the greater the agreement, the greater the husband's participation.

Another ideology variable in the regression equation concerns the extent to which husbands prefer to engage in their leisure-time activities with their wives. Since both husbands and wives are assumed here to allocate their time between paid work, unpaid home work/childcare, and leisure, it is expected that (controlling for participation in paid-work roles) husbands who prefer to share leisure activities with their wives will also share home tasks with their spouses. Although the effect of such leisure preferences is not individually statistically significant for our sample of husbands, the direction of effect is consistent with the hypothesis and adds significantly to the multiple correlation.

Employment (vs nonemployment) of the husband's mother could affect his ideology and behavior (i.e., make him less traditional), especially if such employment were related to more task participation by husband's father (Stafford et al., 1977). In our sample, mother's employment is not individually significantly related to son's family-role performance but does contribute significantly to the multiple correlation, and the direction of effect is consistent with the socialization-ideology hypothesis.

Happiness in a marital relationship could influence a husband to participate with his wife in household/child-care activities, irrespective of other considerations (Farkas, 1976). Husband's perception of the happiness of his marriage relative to that of other couples is not significantly related to husband's role performance in this study. In addition, two other ideology items, "A preschool child is likely to suffer emotional damage if his or her mother works" and "Normally a son should receive more education than a daughter" are not significant, either.

Relative-Resources Hypothesis

The most important of the relative-resources variables is whether the wife is a housewife or professionally employed, which enters the

regression equation second. Although the regression coefficient is not individually significant, it indicates husbands whose wives are not employed do 12% fewer tasks than those whose wives are professionally employed. This is consistent with the relative-resource hypothesis. Similarly, husband's education and occupation and wife's education also are not individually significant, although the multiple correlation is significant when they are included. The regression coefficient for "wife nonprofessional" is not even marginally significant individually, and it adds very little to R, even though it is among the first 16 variables. One resource variable, "Husband expects wife to be working full-time outside the home during the next 10 years," is not significant and adds little to the regression equation.

Time-Availability Hypothesis

None of the three variables pertaining to availability of time is significantly related to husband's family-role performance, once other variables are controlled. Although the multiple correlation including all three of these variables is significant, it does not add a great deal to the coefficient. Number of children at home, which enters the regression equation eighth, appears to be the most important predictor of husband's task performance, although again not in the expected direction. Length of marriage and age of husband are not individually related to the dependent variable, although they enter the regression equation 14th and 15th.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to compare three different theoretical explanations for variations in husband's family/household task performance currently in the literature on the family. Multiple indicators were used for each theoretical perspective. The socialization-ideology hypothesis, that is, that husband's performance behavior results from an acquired belief that he should or should not assist with household tasks, received the strongest support of the three. That support was only modest, at best, however, since only two of the indicators had statistically significant zero-order relationships with task performance. When the effects of *all* other variables were partialled out in multiple-regression analysis, one of these indicators was no longer significant, but a third ideology indicator became significant, although the direction of its relationship was the opposite of that expected.

The comparative strength of the socialization-ideology hypothesis was seen when the indicators associated with each hypothesis were run in a multiple regression with husband's task performance. Here, of the three sets of indicators, only the multiple-correlation coefficient for the socialization indicators was statistically significant.

Only marginal support was found for the relative-resources hypothesis, which says that the spouse with the more resources will perform fewer household tasks. None of the relative-resources indicators was significant initially, however, in the multiple-correlation analysis, wives' being professionally employed rather than housewives was related to husband's performance, as was husband's education and occupation and wife's education. There was no support for the time-availability hypothesis. One of its indicators was the eighth variable to enter the step-wise multiple-regression equation, but the finding was that the greater the number of children in the household, the less the husband did, which was the opposite of what was expected.

The present study was not specifically directed toward investigation of the dual-career family, the theme of this journal issue, however, it focused on one aspect of family activity that may inhibit or facilitate wife participation in a career. This aspect is husband's degree of participation in housework/child-care activities, which is commonly viewed as a way to reduce work overload for wives and, hence, affect their occupational achievement (Fogarty et al, 1971, Miller, 1971).

An implication of these findings is that further integration of work and family roles for men depends substantially on socialization experiences that foster an ideology or belief that is consonant with sharing household/child-care tasks. Sharing may mean that the man does a substantial portion of the tasks himself or that he shares them equally with his spouse. Formal education may be one such socialization experience, for example, the zero-order correlations between husband's education on the one hand and the "Stable family must have a dominant father," "Nature intended women to be homemakers," and "Women should work only if it is financially necessary" ideology items on the other hand are .30, .55, and .50, respectively ($df = 72, p < .05$ for all). Highly educated men are also more likely than less educated men to be married to women of relatively high education ($r = .68$), who, in turn, are more likely than less educated wives to endorse an egalitarian ideology. As Miller (1971) has noted, the relative egalitarianism of husband/wife roles depends, in part at least, on wives' willingness to share what in our culture is

generally considered to be women's traditional role in the home. Additionally, highly educated men are more likely than their less educated peers to hold high-prestige occupations (-69). Pleck (1977) suggests that ultimately it will be ability to modify institutional work-role constraints that will permit greater participation in the home if men so desire (i.e., given an egalitarian ideology). It is possible that the necessary flexibility in institutional work-role constraints may be at least partially related to occupational prestige. It remains an important task of future research to investigate in even greater depth the effects that husbands' ideologies and resources have on family-role performance.

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