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The Division of Labor in Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual New Adoptive Parents

Little research has investigated the division of child care and housework in adoptive or lesbian/gay parent families, yet these contexts “control for” family characteristics such as biological relatedness and parental gender differences known to be linked to family work. This study examined predictors (measured preadoption) of the division of child care and housework (measured postadoption) in lesbian (n = 55), gay (n = 40), and heterosexual (n = 65) newly adoptive couples. Same-sex couples shared child care and housework more equally than heterosexual couples. For the full sample, inequities in work hours between partners were associated with greater discrepancies in partners’ contributions to child care and masculine tasks; inequities in income between partners were related to greater discrepancies in contributions to feminine tasks. Participants who contributed more to child care tended to contribute more to feminine tasks. These findings extend knowledge

of how labor arrangements are enacted in diverse groups.

Of great interest to family scholars has been the division of labor in heterosexual couples and the fact that men’s participation in unpaid work has not kept pace with increases in women’s employment (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Research suggests that mothers in heterosexual couples tend to do more of the child care and housework, even when both parents work full time (Bartley, Blanton, & Gilliard, 2005; Peterson & Gerson, 1992). Heterosexual couples are particularly likely to take on specialized roles during the transition to parenthood, whereby women take on the majority of unpaid work (child care, housework) and men spend more time in paid work (Baxter, Hewitt, & Haynes, 2008; Kluwer, Heesink, & van de Vliert, 2002). Inequities in child care and housework are important in that they have been linked to poorer well-being and relationship quality in women in heterosexual and lesbian samples (Cowan & Cowan, 1988; Patterson, 1995).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR

Most studies of the division of labor during the transition to parenthood focus on heterosexual couples who are the biological parents of their children. A small literature has examined

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the division of labor across the transition to parenthood in lesbian couples in which one partner is the biological parent of the child (i.e., couples who become parents via donor insemination; Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2007; Reimann, 1997). Only a few studies have examined the division of labor in adoptive couples (Ciano-Boyce & Shelley-Sireci, 2002; Holditch-Davis, Sandelowski, & Harris, 1999). Research on the division of labor among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual adoptive couples is useful because within-couple differences related to bearing a child are absent, and this design enables a distinction between parent gender and sexual orientation as predictors of the division of labor.

The aim of this study was to examine the role of parents' gender and sexual orientation and the role of relative resources (partners' relative work hours, income, and education, measured preadoption) in predicting the postadoption division of child care and housework in new adoptive parents. We next review the literature on three areas: (a) the division of labor among same-sex couples, (b) the division of labor among adoptive couples, and (c) the role of time availability and relative resources in the division of labor.

The Role of Sexual Orientation, Gender, and Biology in the Division of Labor

Katz-Wise, Priess, and Hyde (2010) suggested that gender role attitudes and behaviors in families are best understood through *social structural theory*, developed by Eagly and Wood (1999), which was originally posed to explain men's and women's differential involvement in parenting and income-producing roles. Social structural theory holds that "the roles people occupy—which may be due to individual choice, sociocultural pressures, or biological potentials—lead them to develop psychological qualities and, in turn, behavior to fit those roles" (Katz-Wise et al., p. 18). Thus, societal gendered ideologies may influence initial selection into social roles, inasmuch as caretaking and housework are designated as "women's work" (Katz-Wise et al.). Furthermore, biological processes such as pregnancy and breastfeeding can shape selection into and performance of social roles (e.g., caregiving), as evidenced by research showing that fathers participate less in child care when mothers are breastfeeding (Earle, 2000; Gamble & Morse, 1993). This theory can be extended to a consideration of how heterosexual

and same-sex adoptive couples divide paid and unpaid labor, because such a design removes the influence of biological processes, allowing one to isolate the role of gender and sexual orientation in the division of labor.

Researchers also have proposed that gender inequality is maintained and reified through everyday interactions of "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987). According to Schilt and Westbrook (2009), doing gender reflects "the interactional process of crafting gender identities that are then presumed to reflect and naturally derive from biology" (p. 442). The division of family work is one way that (heterosexual, biological parent) couples do gender (South & Spitze, 1994). Thus, when researchers control for biology (e.g., who gives birth), they are able to examine the degree to which parental gender and sexual orientation influence doing gender via family work.

Research has consistently found that both lesbian and gay male nonparent couples share housework more equally than heterosexual couples (e.g., Kurdek, 1993, 2007), although ethnographic research by Carrington (1999) provided evidence that same-sex couples may be invested in portraying the division of housework as more egalitarian than it actually is. When same-sex couples become parents, they may, like heterosexual couples, show an increased tendency to specialize in paid or unpaid labor. The literature suggests that this does indeed occur, at least among lesbian couples who become parents via donor insemination. These couples share unpaid labor more equally than their heterosexual counterparts (Patterson, Sutfin, & Fulcher, 2004) but, within lesbian couples, biological mothers tend to spend more time in child care than nonbiological mothers, at least early on (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2007; Reimann, 1997). Goldberg and Perry-Jenkins found that lesbian biological mothers performed more child care than their partners 3 months postpartum. The women often pointed to biological factors (e.g., breastfeeding, the pregnancy) to explain differences in their parental roles. This finding could be interpreted as revealing a direct effect of biological factors or, alternately, the power of social discourses about biology in shaping their attributions (Hayden, 1995). It may also reflect the unacknowledged role of structural factors: Biological lesbian mothers likely have greater access to paid parental leave, as compared to nonbiological lesbian mothers, allowing them to stay home

longer (Goldberg, 2010a). Of note is that housework may be shared more equally than child care in lesbian new parents: Several studies have found no significant discrepancies in inseminating couples' contributions to housework, only child care (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins; Johnson & O'Connor, 2004). Thus, even among lesbian couples, who tend to enact more egalitarian roles than heterosexual couples (Patterson, 1995), biological factors may contribute to differentiated parental roles, a finding that is consistent with research on heterosexual couples showing that fathers participate less in child care when mothers are breastfeeding (Earle, 2000).

Of interest is what happens in same-sex and heterosexual adoptive couples in which neither partner is pregnant or breastfeeds. Do same-sex couples share more equally than heterosexual couples, given that the latter are more influenced by traditional patriarchal gender roles, or does the adoptive context neutralize differences across sexual orientation such that all couples share relatively equally?

The Role of Sexual Orientation and Gender in the Division of Labor of Adoptive Parents

The process of adopting is more egalitarian than that of pregnancy in that it demands both partners' active engagement in the process, and neither partner experiences the hormonal changes of pregnancy and breastfeeding, which may promote attachment (Goldberg, 2010b). In addition, both members of adoptive couples are often highly motivated to parent, often having spent years pursuing parenthood (Goldberg, 2010b). Such factors suggest that adoptive parents should share child care relatively equally, regardless of sexual orientation, although this tendency may not extend to housework in that it does not directly involve the long-awaited child.

The limited research has found that adoptive couples do share unpaid labor more equally than biological parent couples. Holditch-Davis et al. (1999) used observational methods to study 21 heterosexual adoptive couples and 49 biological parent couples, shortly after their children arrived home. The authors found that although fathers had less solo interaction time with their children than mothers in both groups, this discrepancy was smaller for the adoptive couples; that is, adoptive couples showed greater equality in their proportional contribution to child care.

Ciano-Boyce and Shelley-Sireci (2002) examined the division of labor in lesbian biological (inseminating) couples ($n = 10$), lesbian adoptive couples ($n = 26$), and heterosexual adoptive couples ($n = 22$). They found that heterosexual couples were less equitable in their division of child-care tasks (mothers performed more than fathers) than either lesbian adoptive or lesbian biological couples. There was also a trend toward lesbian biological couples dividing tasks less equitably than lesbian adoptive couples, with biological mothers performing more child care than nonbiological mothers. The authors reported no differences in the division of housework.

Although Ciano-Boyce and Shelley-Sireci's (2002) study is notable given the limited work in this area, the authors used small sample sizes and statistical techniques that did not account for the dependency of partners within couples. Furthermore, the study of couples with children of all ages precluded detection of inequities in the division of labor that might appear at the transition to parenthood. The findings suggest, however, that sexual orientation is a determinant of the division of labor, regardless of parenthood route.

Research on the division of labor among heterosexual, lesbian, and gay adoptive couples across the transition to parenthood is needed. Such work can help tease apart the relative salience of sexual orientation and parent gender in shaping the division of labor by controlling for route to parenthood and eliminating the biological differentials known to influence the division of labor (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010). Some scholars hypothesize that same-sex couples are more likely to enact egalitarianism because their relationships are not governed by gendered role constraints (Peplau & Fingerhut, 2007). Whereas heterosexual relationships often serve as a site for the symbolic enactment of gender relations via unpaid work (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; South & Spitze, 1994), same-sex relationships are less vulnerable to and less likely to embody heteronormative constructions of paid and unpaid work; indeed, both sexual orientation and partner gender combination (female–female, male–male, female–male) necessarily influence how gender is done. In that lesbians face structural disadvantages based on both their gender and sexuality, they may be uniquely sensitive to power imbalances in the relationship and thus share even more equally than gay men

(Goldberg, 2010a). Support for this hypothesis is mixed. Lesbian nonparent couples tend to share each task relatively equally, whereas gay male nonparent couples tend to specialize in certain tasks, but the relative frequency of performing housework within the couple is similar across lesbian and gay male couples (Kurdek, 1993, 2007). Of interest is whether lesbian adoptive couples share unpaid labor more equitably than gay adoptive couples, whether same-sex couples (regardless of gender) share more equitably than heterosexual adoptive couples, or whether sexual orientation and gender are weak predictors of the division of labor, whereby all adoptive couples share relatively equally.

Predicting the Division of Child Care and Housework

In addition to between-couple differences, we also were interested in the within-couple differences that predict the division of unpaid labor. Research on heterosexual couples' division of labor—which has often tended to examine child care or housework, but not both—highlights two domains as predictors of the division of child care and housework: (a) time availability (who is working more) and (b) relative resources (personal income or education relative to one's partner).

Work hours (time availability). A demand–response model (Barnett & Baruch, 1987), or the “practicality” model (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992), has been used to explain the division of labor in heterosexual couples. According to this theory, the greater the domestic demands on a father (based on the age and number of children and the mothers' work hours) and the greater his capacity to respond to them (based on his own work hours), the more he will contribute to child care (Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993). In line with this theory, spouses' relative (proportional contribution to) work hours is often examined as a predictor of contributions to child care as well as housework. Some studies have found that, regardless of women's work hours, women contribute more to both domains (Bartley et al., 2005). Others have found that, for both women and men, working more hours is related to lower personal contributions to child care and housework, but the effect of hours is stronger for men (McFarlane, Beaujot, & Haddad, 2000). Still

others have found that when women work more hours, husbands perform more child care, but not more housework (Deutsch et al.; Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane; Thomas & Hildingsson, 2009), although in some cases this association was only modest, suggesting that some couples partially rely on external child care to substitute for the mother's absence, as opposed to relying solely on fathers (Kittered & Pettersen, 2006).

Some scholars have attempted to explain the finding that women's work hours are more likely to increase men's contributions to child care than housework by arguing that child care is a more appealing form of labor for husbands than housework, because the former involves building a relationship with one's child, whereas the latter is viewed as more unsatisfying (Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009). Child care may also be seen as a less discretionary form of labor, particularly when wives are working (Peterson & Gerson, 1992). According to social structural theory, the structural constraints imposed by wives' work hours should lead men to do more child care, which is less optional than housework. In turn, regardless of sexual orientation, greater equity in the division of paid labor may promote greater equity in the division of child care, but not housework.

Relative resources: Income and education. The relative economic resource model suggests that the more equal husbands' and wives' financial contributions are, the more equally unpaid labor is divided (Coverman, 1985). Some studies have found that when women's incomes are more similar to their husbands, their own housework contributions are lessened, or their husbands' contributions increase (Deutsch et al., 1993; McFarlane et al., 2000; Presser, 1994; Stevens, Minnotte, Mannon, & Kiger, 2006). It is of note, however, that Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, and Matheson (2003) found that women's relative earnings decreased their own housework contributions only to the point of equality with their husbands; women whose relative income was more than 50% tended to do more housework. Furthermore, Gupta and Ash (2008) found that women's absolute earnings were a better predictor of their housework hours than their relative earnings. Authors who conceptualize resources in terms of education have sometimes found that when wives' education equals or exceeds that of their husbands, there are smaller discrepancies

in housework contributions (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Davis & Greenstein, 2004). Studies that have assessed absolute as opposed to relative education have often found that, among women, education, however, is negatively associated with housework, whereas for men the association is positive (Presser, 1994; Shelton & John, 1996; South & Spitze, 1994).

A smaller literature has linked partners' relative resources (percentage of contribution) and discrepancies (simple differences) in relative resources to the division of child care. For example, Stevens et al. (2006) found that higher relative income was associated with fewer hours engaged in child care for both husbands and wives. Patterson et al. (2004) found that, among lesbian inseminating parents, but not heterosexual biological parents, discrepancies in education level between partners was linked to discrepancies in child-care contribution, but not housework. Other studies have found relative resources to be related to housework, but not child care (Deutsch et al., 1993; Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). Indeed, resources may allow partners to buy out of relatively unappealing labor (housework), whereas work hours have more of an effect on child care.

A caveat on the measurement of housework.

The field as a whole, and the above-cited studies specifically, has tended to examine partners' contributions to traditionally "feminine" household tasks. Feminine tasks are more often done by women in heterosexual couples; they are also the least discretionary, are the most time consuming, and are performed most frequently. Traditionally masculine tasks, which are more rarely studied, are more often done by men in heterosexual couples; they are also more optional, are less time consuming, and are performed less frequently (Kroska, 2003; Noonan, 2001). In the current study we examined both feminine and masculine tasks. In turn, our examination of masculine tasks should be viewed as exploratory, and we do not offer specific hypotheses regarding this domain.

The Current Study

We used data from 55 lesbian, 40 gay, and 65 heterosexual adoptive couples to examine the role of parents' gender and sexual orientation and partners' relative work hours, income, and education in predicting inequities in the

division of child care and housework. Couples adopted children under age 20 months and were interviewed preadoption (Time 1 [T1]) and 3 to 4 months after adoptive placement (Time 2 [T2]). We used T1 work hours, income, and education to predict T2 child-care and housework divisions, given that we were interested in how pre-parenthood factors may set in motion patterns of the division of unpaid labor. The longitudinal nature of the design is a strength of the current study, given that much of the research on the division of child care and housework is cross-sectional. We used both partners' reports of their contribution to unpaid labor in order to assess the following two areas: (a) the degree of discrepancy (or inequity) between partners' contributions to child-care tasks, based on who does more care (i.e., primary vs. secondary child caretaker), and to household tasks, based on who does more tasks (i.e., primary vs. secondary household task manager), and (b) what factors predict the discrepancy between partners. Our five hypotheses were as follows:

1. There will be discrepancies in partners' reports of their contributions to child-care and household tasks (i.e., partners' contributions will not be equal).
2. Sexual orientation and gender will predict discrepancies in the division of child-care and feminine tasks such that same-sex couples will share both more equally than heterosexual couples, but lesbian couples will share the most equally (i.e., they will show the smallest discrepancies in their proportional contributions to both domains).
3. Proportional contribution to work hours, preadoption, will be related to discrepancies in contributions to child care, postadoption, such that when the primary child caretaker works a lower proportion of the work hours there will be greater discrepancies in the proportion of child care performed (i.e., the division of tasks will be less equal).
4. Proportional contribution to income and education, preadoption, will be related to discrepancies in contributions to feminine tasks, postadoption, such that when the primary task manager contributes a smaller proportion of the resources there will be greater discrepancies in the proportion of tasks performed (i.e., the division will be less equal).
5. The primary child caregiver will perform a greater proportion of the feminine household

tasks in heterosexual couples, but not in same-sex couples.

METHOD

Participant Recruitment

One hundred sixty adoptive couples (55 lesbian, 40 gay male, and 65 heterosexual) were included in the current study. To participate, couples had to be adopting their first child, and both partners had to be first-time parents. Adoption agencies were asked to provide study information to clients who had not yet adopted. Census data were used to identify states with a high percentage of same-sex couples (Gates & Ost, 2004), and an effort was made to contact agencies in those states. More than 30 agencies provided information to clients, often in the form of a brochure that invited them to participate in a study of the transition to adoptive parenthood; clients contacted the first author for details. Both heterosexual and same-sex couples were targeted through agencies to facilitate similarity in geographic location. In this sample, 36% of lesbian couples, 22% of gay male couples, and 45% of heterosexual couples lived in the Northeast; 27% of lesbian couples, 40% of gay male couples, and 37% of heterosexual couples lived on the West coast; 26% of lesbian couples, 30% of gay male couples, and 12% of heterosexual couples lived in the South; and 11% of lesbian couples, 8% of gay male couples, and 6% of heterosexual couples resided in the Midwest. Because some same-sex couples choose not to be open about their sexual orientation with their adoption agencies, several major gay organizations also assisted with recruitment.

Procedure

Members of each couple were interviewed separately over the telephone during the preadoption phase (T1) and 3 to 4 months after they had been placed with a child (T2). At each phase, they were sent a packet of questionnaires to complete within a week of the interview. Data collection occurred in 2005–2010.

Description of the Sample

The average ages of lesbian, gay, and heterosexual participants were 39.12 years ($SD = 5.92$),

38.70 years ($SD = 4.40$), and 38.33 years ($SD = 5.41$), respectively. Multilevel modeling (MLM; see the *Analytic Strategy* section) revealed no significant differences in age by group. Regarding race, 88% of lesbians, 86.5% of gay men, and 91% of heterosexuals were White. Chi-square estimates revealed no significant differences in race (White vs. person of color) by group. Mean education levels for lesbians, gay men, and heterosexuals were, respectively, 4.42 ($SD = 1.05$), 4.44 ($SD = 1.54$), and 4.45 ($SD = 0.99$), where 4 = “bachelor’s degree” and 5 = “master’s degree.” MLM revealed no significant differences in education by group. Mean family incomes for lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual couples were \$106,663 ($Mdn = \$92,250$, $SD = \$51,633$), \$177,030 ($Mdn = \$147,000$, $SD = \$119,383$), and \$127,620 ($Mdn = \$120,000$, $SD = \$64,854$), respectively. The sample was more affluent compared with national estimates: The average household incomes for same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples with adopted children are \$102,474 and \$81,900, respectively (Gates, Badgett, Macomber, & Chambers, 2007). Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed significant differences in family income by group, $F(2, 158) = 9.62$, $p < .001$. Post hoc analyses revealed that gay male couples had higher incomes than lesbian ($\gamma = 70,398$, $SE = 16,257$, $p < .001$) and heterosexual couples ($\gamma = 49,402$, $SE = 15,589$, $p < .01$). Mean relationship length was 7.45 years ($SD = 3.65$) for lesbian couples, 7.76 years ($SD = 3.74$) for gay male couples, and 8.82 years ($SD = 4.16$) for heterosexual couples. ANOVAs showed no significant differences in relationship length by group.

Children’s mean age at placement was 6.08 months ($SD = 8.34$) for lesbian couples, 1.70 months ($SD = 4.79$) for gay male couples, and 7.15 months ($SD = 8.78$) for heterosexual couples. ANOVAs revealed significant differences in child age by group, $F(2, 158) = 6.07$, $p < .01$. The children of gay male couples were significantly younger than the children of lesbian couples ($\gamma = 4.38$, $SE = 1.66$, $p < .01$) and heterosexual couples ($\gamma = 5.44$, $SE = 1.59$, $p < .01$). Forty-five percent of lesbian couples adopted a boy and 55% adopted a girl, 58% of gay male couples adopted a boy and 42% adopted a girl, and 43% of heterosexual couples adopted a boy and 57% adopted a girl. Chi-square estimates showed no significant differences in child gender by group.

Outcome Measures

Household tasks: Who does what? (Atkinson & Huston, 1984). Participants' reports of their proportional contribution to housework were assessed at T2. Prior research, including studies that have used this measure, has established that the so-called "feminine" tasks (i.e., the most repetitive, time-consuming, inflexible tasks) are disproportionately performed by women, and the so-called "masculine" tasks (i.e., the more infrequent, fast, flexible tasks) are disproportionately performed by men, warranting a conceptual and theoretical distinction between these two domains (Noonan, 2001). In line with prior work, we created two composite indices reflecting proportional contribution to feminine tasks (eight items) and masculine tasks (four items). The feminine items were making beds, cleaning, cooking, dish washing, laundry, running errands, preparing for events (e.g., birthdays), and buying presents for/making calls to family/friends. The masculine items were taking out the garbage, outdoor work, upkeep of cars, and small repairs. Participants indicated their proportional contribution to each task on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 (*usually/always my spouse*; 0%–20% personal contribution) to 5 (*usually/always myself*; (80%–100% personal contribution)).

These indices are reports of participants' contribution to specific tasks and do not represent unitary constructs (Grote & Clark, 2001). As such, alphas are not generally used to evaluate the reliability of measures of the division of labor (Levant, Slattery, & Loiselle, 1987).

Child care tasks: Child care responsibility (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Cowan & Cowan, 1988). Participants reported on their contribution to child care tasks at T2, using the same response scale as above. There were 15 child care tasks: feeding, bathing, dressing, changing diapers, soothing, putting the child to sleep, getting up at night, helping the child learn new skills, planning the child's activities, picking up after the child, playing, reading/singing, taking the child on an outing, taking the child to a doctor's appointment, and taking care of the child when he or she is sick.

Predictor Measures

Sexual orientation. We created three dummy codes: (a) *heterosexual* versus *same sex* (1, 0),

(b) *lesbian* versus *not* (1, 0), and (c) *gay male* versus *not* (1, 0).

Work hours. Participants reported on their work hours before (T1) and after (T2) the adoption. We used T1 hours as a predictor, given that we were interested in how pre-parenthood factors may set in motion patterns of the division of unpaid labor, and the use of T2 work hours as a predictor of T2 unpaid labor would prevent us from capitalizing on our longitudinal design. In follow-up analyses, we tested whether the same patterns were apparent when T2 hours were included.

Income. Participants reported on their personal annual salary at T1.

Education. At T1, participants reported on their educational level according to the following scale: 1 = *less than high school education*, 2 = *high school diploma/GED*, 3 = *associate's degree or some college*, 4 = *bachelor's degree*, 5 = *master's degree*, 6 = *PhD/MD/JD*.

Child age. The age of the adopted child, in months, was included as a control variable.

Analytic Strategy

We used MLM to predict both partners' reports of proportional contribution to child care and housework. MLM allowed us to consider both within-couple differences (i.e., to examine who contributes more to child care and housework to determine the discrepancies between partners' contributions) and between-couple differences (i.e., to examine sexual orientation and proportional work hours, income, and education as predictors of these discrepancies). MLM is one of the statistical modeling approaches (as is structural equation modeling) that can account for the dependency in the scores of partners nested in couples. Failure to account for the shared variance in partners' reports leads to inaccurate estimates of standard errors and related hypothesis tests (Sayer & Klute, 2005). Although partners in heterosexual couples are often distinguished on the basis of gender, this was not possible for same-sex couples. In addition, the important distinction for the purpose of our analyses was who performed a greater proportion of tasks. Thus, we distinguished partners within couples on the basis of child

caregiving and household task manager behaviors, identifying primary and secondary child caregivers, feminine task managers, and masculine task managers, within each couple. In the three cases in which both partners reported an equal division of child care, partners were randomly assigned. Because these cases were lesbian couples, dropping them would have made lesbian couples look less equitable than the data indicated.

We used Lyons, Zarit, Sayer, and Whitlach's (2002) approach to model the discrepancies in partners' reports of their contribution to tasks. The discrepancy between the two partners' contributions is modeled at Level 1; specifically, reports of the proportion of labor performed were regressed (in three separate models) onto dummy indicators for the primary child caregiver, primary feminine task manager, or primary masculine task manager ($-.5$ for the report of the secondary caregiver/manager and $.5$ for the primary caregiver/manager):

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{indicator}) + r_{ij}.$$

The intercept represents the average proportion of domestic labor (child care, feminine tasks, or masculine tasks in the three separate models), and the slope represents the discrepancy between the proportion performed, because there was exactly 1.0 unit between indicators. The sign of the slope indicates the direction of the discrepancy, with a positive slope indicating that the primary task person is doing more. Predictors for the average and the discrepancy can then be added at Level 2:

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_0 &= \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{couple type}) + u_{0j} \\ \beta_1 &= \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{couple type}) + u_{1j}.\end{aligned}$$

Because discrepancy analyses involve only two data points in the Level 1 analysis yet require two parameter estimates, it was necessary to divide the items for the child-care scale and the two housework scales into two parallel scales (Sayer & Klute, 2005). This enabled the estimation of not only the fixed effects for the average and the discrepancy but also the estimation of error variance. Before assigning items to either Scale A or Scale B, we paired them on the basis of their variance, so both parallel scales would have roughly equivalent variances (Sayer & Klute, 2005).

Our analyses then focused on what T1 factors predicted the magnitude of the discrepancy in tasks. In predicting the division of child care, for instance, we wanted to see how the relative work hours, income, and education of primary caregivers versus secondary caregivers were related to discrepancies in the division of care at T2. When primary caregivers have a higher proportion of work hours preadoption (i.e., when their contributions are more similar to their partners, because they tended to work fewer hours than their partners), does this result in less discrepant divisions of labor postadoption? Work hours, income, and education were calculated on the basis of who performed the greater proportion of the tasks being analyzed. The income variable used to predict child care, then, was the proportion of the couples' total income contributed by the primary caregiver. Predictors were entered for the intercept and the discrepancy in the division of unpaid labor.

Models were fit using HLM 6.07. The first set of analyses focused on discrepancies in the division of child care (using who performed the larger proportion of care as the distinguishing feature: Partners in each couple were identified as primary caregivers and secondary caregivers), the second set examined the division of feminine tasks (using who performed the larger proportion of feminine tasks as the distinguishing feature), and the third set examined the division of masculine tasks (using who performed the larger proportion of masculine tasks as the distinguishing feature). For each set of analyses, the first model examined whether the discrepancies in the proportion of work performed were significant and whether there was significant variation between couples. Then the predictors (child age, sexual orientation, work hours, income, education) were entered.

In a series of exploratory analyses, we examined the division of feminine tasks, using who performed the larger proportion of child care as the distinguishing feature, to determine whether the primary child caregiver tended to be the primary feminine task manager. We repeated these analyses with masculine tasks as the outcome. In separate analyses, we tested interactions between sexual orientation and the predictors. We also examined gender as a predictor in heterosexual couples. To check for multicollinearity, all predictors were entered separately and in combination with others as well as with interactions. Continuous predictors were centered

at their mean. Interaction terms were created by multiplying the mean-centered continuous predictors by sexual orientation.

RESULTS

Descriptive Data

T1 work hours, income, and education level by primary/secondary caregiver, feminine task manager, and masculine task manager status are shown in Table 1. Primary caregivers earned significantly less than secondary caregivers in all groups, worked significantly fewer hours than secondary caregivers in gay male and heterosexual couples, and had significantly more education than secondary caregivers in heterosexual couples. Primary feminine task managers worked significantly fewer hours and earned significantly less than secondary task managers in all groups; they had less education than secondary task managers in lesbian couples. Primary masculine task managers worked significantly more hours than secondary task managers in heterosexual and lesbian couples; they earned significantly less than secondary task managers in heterosexual couples. Also shown in Table 1 are the means and standard deviations for proportional hours, income, and education (the predictors in the models).

In Table 2, we present the means and standard deviations for child care and housework for each group and by primary/secondary child caregiver, feminine task manager, and masculine task manager status for each group. Also displayed in Table 2 are the proportions of primary child caregivers who were also the primary feminine task managers for each group. Chi-square estimates revealed that this proportion differed significantly by group, $\chi^2(2, N = 160) = 7.66$, $p < .05$. Follow-up chi-square estimates (using a Bonferroni correction) showed that the tendency for the primary caregiver to also be the primary feminine task manager was significantly more pronounced in heterosexual couples than in lesbian couples, $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 6.90$, $p < .01$. Thus, child care and feminine tasks were the least interconnected in lesbian couples.

Table 2 also includes the proportion of primary caregivers who were the primary masculine task managers. This proportion differed significantly by group, $\chi^2(2, N = 160) = 20.99$, $p < .001$. Chi-square estimates showed

that the tendency for the primary caregiver to also be the primary masculine task manager was more pronounced among lesbian couples than heterosexual couples, $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 16.12$, $p < .01$, and among gay male couples than heterosexual couples, $\chi^2(1, N = 105) = 16.50$, $p < .01$. Thus, child-care tasks and masculine tasks were the least interconnected (the most segregated) in heterosexual couples.

Finally, in Table 2 we present the proportion of primary feminine task managers who were also primary masculine task managers. The proportion differed significantly by group, $\chi^2(2, N = 160) = 9.12$, $p = .01$. Chi-square estimates showed that the tendency for the primary feminine task manager to be the primary masculine task manager was significantly less pronounced among heterosexual couples than lesbian couples, $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 8.06$, $p < .01$, and gay male couples, $\chi^2(1, N = 105) = 8.25$, $p < .01$. Thus, the performance of feminine and masculine tasks was the most segregated in heterosexual couples.

Average Discrepancies Across Couples

Given that we chose to distinguish partners on the basis of who did more child care and housework, it was important to test whether, on average, there were statistical differences in the proportion of labor performed by the primary and secondary caregiver, the primary and secondary feminine task manager, and the primary and secondary masculine task manager, in each couple.

Our first model included only the discrepancy indicator as a predictor. It showed that, on average, there were significant differences in the proportion of care performed by primary and secondary child caregivers, confirming our decision to distinguish between partners on the basis of care performed. Primary caregivers performed 0.83 units more care than secondary caregivers ($\gamma = 0.83$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < .001$). Next, we found that there were significant differences in the proportion of feminine tasks performed by primary and secondary feminine task managers. Primary feminine task managers were performing 1.2 units more feminine-type housework than secondary feminine task managers ($\gamma = 1.20$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$). Finally, significant differences also emerged in the proportion of masculine tasks performed by primary and secondary masculine task managers.

Table 1. Mean Work Hours, Income, and Education, by Primary/Secondary Child Caregiver Status, Primary/Secondary Feminine Task Manager Status, and Primary/Secondary Masculine Task Manager Status and as Proportional Contributions (N = 160)

Variable	Primary Child Caregiver	Secondary Child Caregiver	Primary Feminine Task Manager	Secondary Feminine Task Manager	Primary Masculine Task Manager	Secondary Masculine Task Manager	Proportion Based on Child Care Coding	Proportion Based on Feminine Tasks Coding	Proportion Based on Masculine Tasks Coding
T1 work hours									
Overall	34.52 (14.52)	42.27 (10.20)***	33.23 (15.21)	43.63 (7.96)***	40.58 (12.14)	36.27 (13.86)**	.31 (.24)	.41 (.17)	.54 (.19)
Lesbian	35.68 (12.89)	39.09 (11.53)	34.26 (13.73)	40.51 (9.83)**	39.59 (11.32)	35.18 (12.92)†	.37 (.25)	.44 (.15)	.54 (.16)
Gay	36.99 (11.25)	43.44 (7.24)*	36.96 (10.78)	44.09 (7.24)**	38.97 (11.74)	42.22 (7.03)	.35 (.23)	.45 (.12)	.47 (.12)
Heterosexual	32.25 (17.00)	44.30 (9.83)***	30.38 (17.76)	45.92 (5.55)***	42.31 (12.95)	33.93 (16.40)**	.25 (.29)	.36 (.19)	.58 (.23)
Personal income									
Overall	\$55,418 (\$40,995)	\$78,497 (\$72,136)***	\$52,397 (\$43,089)	\$81,074 (\$69,708)**	\$66,993 (\$41,519)	\$66,388 (\$73,538)	.41 (.23)	.39 (.22)	.54 (.24)
Lesbian	\$47,720 (\$34,970)	\$58,706 (\$33,143)†	\$46,192 (\$33,769)	\$60,234 (\$33,795)*	\$53,372 (\$27,144)	\$53,054 (\$40,572)	.43 (.23)	.42 (.22)	.54 (.16)
Gay	\$67,583 (\$35,489)	\$120,240 (\$124,280)*	\$66,710 (\$50,205)	\$117,778 (\$116,668)*	\$80,960 (\$52,218)	\$103,530 (\$120,363)	.41 (.20)	.38 (.19)	.47 (.12)
Heterosexual	\$55,202 (\$46,812)	\$72,405 (\$44,969)*	\$49,460 (\$44,324)	\$77,420 (\$45,061)***	\$70,157 (\$41,755)	\$56,419 (\$50,577)†	.40 (.26)	.36 (.24)	.59 (.26)
Education									
Overall	4.48 (1.03)	4.41 (1.06)	4.36 (1.04)	4.52 (1.06)	4.41 (1.11)	4.47 (0.99)	.50 (.08)	.50 (.08)	.49 (.08)
Lesbian	4.42 (1.15)	4.42 (0.94)	4.22 (1.15)	4.62 (0.89)*	4.51 (1.03)	4.33 (1.06)	.50 (.08)	.47 (.08)	.51 (.08)
Gay	4.31 (1.06)	4.64 (1.20)	4.27 (1.06)	4.66 (1.24)	4.34 (1.30)	4.58 (1.00)	.48 (.09)	.48 (.09)	.49 (.09)
Heterosexual	4.62 (0.89)	4.28 (1.08)*	4.52 (0.92)	4.37 (1.08)	4.38 (1.07)	4.51 (0.92)	.52 (.08)	.51 (.08)	.49 (.08)

Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses. T1 = Time 1.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Mean Proportional Contribution to Child Care, Feminine Tasks, and Masculine Tasks, by Primary and Secondary Status, and Degree of Interconnectedness Among Unpaid Labor Domains (N = 160)

Variable	Lesbian	Gay	Heterosexual
	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %
Child care tasks	3.11 (0.51)	3.05 (0.52)	3.15 (0.75)
Primary child caregiver	3.41 (0.50)	3.39 (0.42)	3.72 (0.56)
Secondary child caregiver	2.83 (0.33)	2.75 (0.38)	2.58 (0.44)
Feminine tasks	3.10 (0.75)	3.09 (0.72)	3.18 (0.94)
Primary feminine task manager	3.63 (0.60)	3.60 (0.53)	3.92 (0.55)
Secondary feminine task manager	2.60 (0.52)	2.66 (0.58)	2.41 (0.58)
Masculine tasks	3.13 (0.98)	3.15 (0.86)	3.11 (1.28)
Primary masculine task manager	3.81 (0.71)	3.65 (0.68)	4.14 (0.69)
Secondary masculine task manager	2.45 (0.71)	2.66 (0.74)	2.08 (.80)
Primary child caregivers and primary feminine task managers	65%	78%	89%
Primary child caregivers and primary masculine task managers	25%	27.5%	12%
Primary feminine task managers and primary masculine task managers	18%	25%	9%

Primary masculine task managers were performing 1.58 units more masculine-type housework than secondary masculine task managers ($\gamma = 1.58$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$).

Predicting Discrepancies in Child-Care Contribution

Sexual orientation (heterosexual/same sex), child age, T1 work hours (child caregiver's proportional contribution to work hours), T1 personal income (child caregiver's proportional contribution to income), and T1 education (child caregiver's proportional contribution to couple education) were entered into the model (see Table 3). Sexual orientation was a significant predictor of discrepancies in child care (i.e., there was a significant interaction between sexual orientation and the discrepancy indicator), such that heterosexual couples reported more discrepant (i.e., less equitable) divisions of child care than same-sex couples. T1 work hours predicted discrepancies in the division such that when the primary caregiver worked a higher proportion of hours preadoption, there was greater sharing (less discrepant contributions). Thus, discrepancies in child-care contribution were less when partners' work hour contributions were more equitable. Neither T1 proportional income nor education was significantly associated with discrepancies in child care contributions.

Predicting Discrepancies in Feminine Task Contribution

We added the same set of predictors to the model predicting feminine tasks (see Table 3). Sexual orientation was a significant predictor of discrepancies in feminine tasks: Heterosexual couples reported greater discrepancies than same-sex couples. T1 proportional income predicted discrepancies such that when the primary feminine task manager earned a higher proportion of income preadoption, task contributions were less discrepant postadoption; that is, discrepancies in task contribution were minimized when partners' income contributions were more equitable. Neither T1 work hours nor education was significantly associated with discrepancies in feminine task contributions.

Predicting Discrepancies in Masculine Task Contribution

We added the same set of predictors to the model for masculine tasks (see Table 3). Sexual orientation significantly predicted discrepancies in masculine tasks, with heterosexual couples reporting greater discrepancies. T1 proportional work hours predicted discrepancies in tasks: When the primary masculine task manager worked a higher proportion of hours (in this case, a less equitable division) preadoption, task contributions were more discrepant postadoption.

Table 3. Predicting Discrepancies in Proportional Contribution to Child Care and Housework Using Multilevel Modeling (N = 160)

Variable	Child Care Tasks Based on Primary Child Caregiver Coefficient (SE)	Feminine Tasks Based on Primary Feminine Task Manager Coefficient (SE)	Masculine Tasks Based on Primary Masculine Task Manager Coefficient (SE)
Intercept	3.06 (0.11)***	3.15 (0.12)***	2.97 (0.16)***
Heterosexual (dummy)	0.03 (0.04)	0.09 (0.04)*	-0.02 (0.05)
T2 child age	0.001 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.006 (0.004)
T1 proportional work hours	-0.08 (0.14)	0.11 (0.16)	-0.14 (0.20)
T1 proportional income	-0.12 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.12)	0.10 (0.15)
T1 proportional education	0.24 (0.21)	-0.07 (0.24)	0.30 (0.30)
Discrepancy	1.83 (0.35)***	1.84 (0.40)***	1.47** (0.47)
Heterosexual (dummy)	0.45 (0.11)***	0.44 (0.15)**	0.70 (0.17)***
T2 child age	0.002 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.01 (0.01)
T1 proportional work hours	-1.00 (0.45)*	-0.21 (0.63)	1.45 (0.67)*
T1 proportional income	-0.45 (0.34)	-1.14 (0.35)**	-0.16 (0.57)
T1 proportional education	-1.16 (0.68)	-0.57 (0.75)	-1.91 (1.00)

Note: Because the parameter estimates for the intercepts (couple average proportions) and their predictors are not meaningful for the purposes of this article, only the discrepancy scores and their predictors are discussed. The discrepancy scores and their predictors are bolded because these are the focus of this article. T2 = Time 2; T1 = Time 1.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Thus, discrepancies in masculine task contributions were greater when contributions to work hours were less equitable. Neither T1 proportional income nor education was significantly associated with discrepancies in masculine task contributions.

Follow-Up Analyses

Proportion of feminine tasks performed by primary and secondary caregivers. We used MLM to determine whether the primary caregivers also tended to be the primary feminine task managers (controlling for the division of child care at T2, using the average of both partners' self-reported contributions). There were significant differences in the proportion of feminine tasks performed by primary and secondary caregivers such that the primary caregiver was performing 0.89 units more feminine tasks than secondary caregivers ($\gamma = 0.89, SE = 0.09, p < .001$). To determine whether this tendency was greater in heterosexual versus same-sex couples, we added sexual orientation (and child age, as a control) to the model. Only T2 child care was significant ($\gamma = 1.83, SE = 0.15, p < .001$); regardless of parents' sexual orientation, persons who performed more child care also performed more feminine tasks.

Proportion of masculine tasks performed by primary and secondary child caregivers. We conducted the same set of analyses as above except with masculine tasks as the outcome. There were statistically significant differences in the proportion of masculine tasks performed by primary and secondary child caregivers. The primary caregiver performed 0.54 units fewer masculine tasks than secondary caregivers ($\gamma = -0.54, SE = 0.12, p < .001$). When sexual orientation was added to the model, it was significant ($\gamma = -1.44, SE = 0.28, p < .001$) such that when the primary caregiver was heterosexual, the negative discrepancies in masculine task contributions were greater. In other words, the primary child caregiver performed even fewer masculine tasks in heterosexual couples.

Differences between lesbian and gay male couples. To determine whether lesbian and gay male couples differed from each other in terms of discrepancies in the division of child care, feminine tasks, and masculine tasks, we replaced the heterosexual/same-sex dummy variable with two dummy variables: (a) lesbian (or not) and (b) gay male (or not). No significant differences in unpaid labor discrepancies emerged between lesbian and gay male couples.

Interactions. To assess whether the effects of T1 work hours, T1 personal income, and education on child care and housework discrepancies varied by group, we examined interactions between sexual orientation (heterosexual/same sex, lesbian/not, and gay/not) and these variables. No significant interactions emerged. Proportional work hours predicted child care and masculine tasks and proportional income predicted feminine tasks, regardless of sexual orientation.

Differences within heterosexual couples. Gender is the key distinguishing feature in the division labor among heterosexual parents. Thus, we examined whether there were significant differences in heterosexual wives' and husbands' contributions to child care and housework. We used a male/female dummy variable to predict proportional contribution to, as opposed to discrepancy in, unpaid labor. Wives contributed more to child care ($\gamma = 1.03$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < .001$) and feminine tasks ($\gamma = 1.34$, $SE = 0.13$, $p < .001$). Only six husbands (9%) were the primary child caregivers; only four (6%) were the primary feminine task managers, and only one of these 10 men (1.5%) were both the primary caregivers and primary task managers. Husbands contributed more to masculine tasks ($\gamma = -1.84$, $SE = 0.18$, $p < .001$). Only five wives (8%) were the primary masculine task managers; all of them were also the primary feminine task managers.

T2 predictors. To explore whether proportional work hours at T2 functioned differently than work hours at T1 in predicting discrepancies in child care, feminine tasks, and masculine tasks at T2, the models were rerun substituting T2 work hours for T1 work hours. This did not change the pattern of the findings: T2 hours showed the same pattern of associations.

DISCUSSION

This is the first study to examine the division of labor in lesbian, gay, and heterosexual adoptive couples. It builds on the single study of the division of labor in lesbian and heterosexual adoptive couples (Ciano-Boyce & Shelley-Sireci, 2002) and the related literature by employing a longitudinal design using sophisticated modeling techniques, and including gay adoptive fathers.

Because our sample, being adoptive parents, controlled for within-couple differences related

to biology (e.g., breastfeeding) that may shape contributions to domestic labor (Earle, 2000; Gamble & Morse, 1993) and included female same-sex, male same-sex, and heterosexual couples, we were able to further isolate the effects of gender and sexual orientation on domestic labor as well as the effects of other predictors, such as time availability and resources. Indeed, our findings revealed significant within-couple discrepancies in child care and housework, showing that, even in the absence of within-couple differences related to biological processes, adoptive couples, regardless of sexual orientation, do not share child care and housework entirely equally. Factors other than biology must be influential in creating discrepancies in partners' contributions to unpaid work—which include, but are likely not limited to, those that we explored.

On the basis of prior research and theorizing (Kurdek, 2007; Patterson et al., 2004), we expected that same-sex couples would share child-care and feminine tasks more equally than heterosexual couples and that lesbian couples would share the most equally. Our hypothesis was partly confirmed: Lesbian and gay male couples shared more equally in both domains as compared to heterosexual couples, but lesbian couples did not share more equally than gay male couples. Indeed, both gay men and lesbians may be less likely to “do gender” via family work inasmuch as they are enacting parenthood outside of the heterosexual context and are therefore potentially less vulnerable to the gendered expectations associated with different types of work (Goldberg, 2010a; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Alternatively, same-sex couples may report their arrangements as more equitable than they are because of internalized pressures to be egalitarian (Carrington, 1999); that is, they may be aware of dominant assumptions that they “should” be more equal than heterosexual couples and therefore report greater equality than exists on a day-to-day basis (Carrington; Goldberg, 2010a).

On the basis of both prior theorizing (i.e., the demand–response model; Deutsch et al., 1993) and some prior research with heterosexual biological parents (Kittered & Pettersen, 2006; Thomas & Hildingsson, 2009), we hypothesized that when the partner who was doing more of the tasks worked a higher proportion of the couple's total job hours, there would be lesser discrepancies in proportional contributions to child care, but not feminine tasks. This hypothesis was

confirmed: Consistent with social structural theory, greater equity in the division of paid labor promoted greater equity in the distribution of child care, but not feminine tasks. Likewise, on the basis of theory (Coverman, 1985) and some research with heterosexual biological parents (Deutsch et al.), we had hypothesized that relative resources (i.e., power) would matter more than time availability in predicting proportional contributions to feminine tasks. This hypothesis was also confirmed: Lesser inequities in income contributions were related to more equitable contributions to feminine tasks. As the more menial form of labor, feminine tasks were more likely to be affected by inequities in power or resources (and to be done by the “weaker” partner), but the same was not true for child care, which is a more valued type of labor (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992).

Our exploratory analyses with masculine-typed tasks revealed that when the primary masculine task manager worked a higher proportion of the work hours, there tended to be greater negative discrepancies in masculine task contributions between partners. Indeed, in both lesbian and heterosexual couples, primary masculine task managers tended to work more hours than secondary managers (see Table 1). Thus, task managers who worked more hours tended to retain greater responsibility for masculine tasks—which, unlike feminine tasks, can be performed at one’s leisure (e.g., on the weekend; Noonan, 2001). It is worth noting that, as we saw, partners who performed the majority of feminine tasks were not typically the same partners who performed the majority of masculine tasks. Instead—and in particular in heterosexual couples—these seem to be viewed as complementary domains, with one partner focusing on each domain.

We had hypothesized that, in heterosexual couples only, the partner who was primarily responsible for child caregiving would also take on more of the feminine housework, on the basis of research showing that lesbian couples show significant discrepancies in the division of child care, but not housework (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2007). We found, however, that the tendency for the primary caregiver to also be the primary feminine task manager was present for the entire sample, although it was less pronounced for lesbian couples. Thus, despite their positioning outside of the heteronormative family structure and their lack of vulnerability to

the biological processes that may shape unpaid labor patterns, same-sex couples do show a tendency to “specialize” in paid and unpaid labor in early parenthood, perhaps in part because of the influence of broader social structural conditions (e.g., workplace policies) that facilitate specialization in paid versus unpaid labor.

Our examination of both feminine- and masculine-typed tasks reveals some of the ways in which these domains may be differentially perceived and enacted as a function of gender and sexual orientation. Feminine and masculine tasks are especially likely to be experienced as segregated domains by heterosexual couples (Noonan, 2001). So-called feminine and masculine tasks may have different meanings for female and male same-sex couples, given their unique relational context and the fact that they tend to have less gender-typed attitudes (Goldberg, 2010a). Future qualitative work should explore this possibility in greater depth.

Limitations

Participants completed the follow-up soon after they adopted; longer term follow-up is needed to determine whether the patterns we observed represent short-term trends. We did not include a comparison sample of biological parents, limiting our ability to draw conclusions about how our findings may differ from those based on biological parent samples. In addition, our sample was relatively affluent. We must examine how patterns and predictors of the division of labor differ in low-income families. Carrington’s (1999) research on same-sex couples found that equal sharing of housework was most common in affluent couples who relied on paid help. In that higher income is associated with greater use of outside household help (Spitze, 1999), participants’ high income may have enabled them to buy their way out of some types of unpaid work, thus facilitating greater sharing. Alternatively, a lower income might promote greater sharing of unpaid work, under certain circumstances—namely, if partners are working opposite shifts, a strategy that sometimes is used to minimize child-care costs (Presser, 1994). Also, our sample was mostly White. As Moore’s (2008) study of the division of labor in Black lesbian stepfamilies indicates, meaning-making surrounding the division of labor can be influenced by race and ethnicity as well as their intersection with sexual orientation.

We also relied on self-reports. Carrington's (1999) sample tended to describe the division of housework as more egalitarian than he observed, indicating the need to pair self-report data with observational data. The potential for self-report bias is underscored by the fact that participants rated themselves as doing a greater share of unpaid labor than is possible (as Table 2 shows, the means are greater than 3). We did not include a measure of gender ideology, despite prior research showing that it may influence the division of labor (Greenstein, 1996). Given that same-sex couples may have more egalitarian gender ideologies than heterosexual couples (Fulcher, Sutfin, & Patterson, 2008), our findings on the relationship between couple type and the division of labor may have been due to gender ideology and may have disappeared had we controlled for it.

We did not assess children's temperament as a predictor. Temperament might moderate the relationship between work hours and contributions to child care such that persons who work many hours but view their babies as "easy" may do more care than those who work many hours but view their babies as difficult. Also, education was not linked to inequities in unpaid labor (Davis & Greenstein, 2004). Our failure to find an effect of education may have to do with how it was operationalized and with the low variability in education in the sample. Indeed, our focus on relative resources as opposed to absolute resources may have limited our ability to detect certain associations; some research has found absolute resources to be more influential than relative resources in determining the division of labor (Gupta & Ash, 2008; Shelton & John, 1996). Finally, given our strategy of differentiating partners (e.g., as primary/secondary caregivers), our findings for heterosexual couples' division of labor are not wholly comparable to other studies of heterosexual couples.

Conclusion

By studying all adoptive couples, we controlled for biological differences that can contribute to divergent contributions to child care in lesbian (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2007) and heterosexual couples (Earle, 2000). It is notable that we found that, even among this sample of parents who all entered parenthood via adoption, differences in the division of housework and child care related to sexual orientation emerged.

We also found that lesbian and gay male couples were more similar than different with regard to unpaid labor patterns, highlighting one way in which expected gender differences did not come to bear. As the first study of the division of child care and housework in gay male parents, our study makes a key contribution in revealing that this group shared tasks similarly to lesbian couples and more equally than heterosexual couples. Gender was, however, salient for heterosexual couples: Women were more likely to be the primary caregivers and feminine task managers. Thus, our diverse sample enabled us to explore the ways in which sexual orientation and gender may function within and across couples with respect to the division of unpaid labor.

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