

The Family Context of Gender Intensification in Early Adolescence

Ann C. Crouter, Beth A. Manke, and Susan M. McHale

The Pennsylvania State University

CROUTER, ANN C.; MANKE, BETH A.; and MCHALE, SUSAN M. *The Family Context of Gender Intensification in Early Adolescence*. CHILD DEVELOPMENT, 1995, 66, 317-329. This longitudinal study of 144 young adolescents (ages 9-11 at phase 1) examined the hypothesis that boys and girls would experience increased "gender-differential socialization" across a 1-year period in early adolescence, and that such patterns would be stronger in families in which (a) parents maintained a traditional division of labor, and (b) there was a younger sibling of the opposite gender. Longitudinal analyses of 3 aspects of family socialization (adolescents' participation in "feminine" and "masculine" household chores; adolescents' involvement in dyadic activities with mothers and fathers; parental monitoring) revealed that gender intensification was apparent for some aspects of family socialization but not others. In addition, when gender intensification was apparent, it generally emerged in some family contexts but not in others. Only dyadic parent-adolescent involvement was characterized by an overall pattern of gender intensification in which girls became increasingly involved with their mothers and boys with their fathers; this pattern was exacerbated in contexts where adolescents had a younger, opposite-sex sibling.

Researchers interested in development in early adolescence have noted that boys and girls during this period exhibit increasing divergence in several key psychosocial domains (Galambos, Almeida, & Petersen, 1990; Hill & Lynch, 1983). Over time, there is a widening gap in certain domains of school achievement, such as math (Linn & Petersen, 1986), sex-role attitudes, and masculinity (Galambos et al., 1990), and indicators of psychological adjustment such as self-esteem and anxiety (Hill & Lynch, 1983; Simmons, Blyth, Van Cleave, & Bush, 1979).

It has been proposed that this increasing divergence in the psychosocial functioning of boys and girls in early adolescence "is the result of increased socialization pressure to conform to traditional masculine and feminine sex roles" (Galambos et al., 1990, p. 1905). In early adolescence, it is argued, boys and girls are treated increasingly differently, with independence encouraged in males and compliance encouraged in females (Hill & Lynch, 1983). Huston and Al-

vez (1990) explain: "Social pressures for sex-appropriate behavior are relatively benign during middle childhood, particularly for girls. With the onset of puberty, however, both psychological and social forces act to increase awareness of gender roles and efforts to adhere to them" (p. 158).

Empirical evidence for these differential socialization processes is scarce; research in this area has tended to focus on boys' and girls' diverging patterns of psychosocial functioning in early adolescence and to *infer* that socialization experiences underlie them. In a review of the literature on the gender intensification hypothesis, Hill and Lynch (1983) noted that: "Despite the many sensible and intriguing notions about the mechanisms underlying differential gender socialization during adolescence, most existing studies focus upon gender differences alone and do not include conceptually relevant explanatory or mediating variables in their designs" (p. 203). Research is needed not only on the hypothesized divergence in

Parts of this article were presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, New Orleans, LA, March 1993. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Todd Bartko, Sue Crowley, Vicki Harris, Alan Hawkins, Michelle Hostetler, Shelley MacDermid, Maureen Perry-Jenkins, and Brenda Seery, Mike Rovine's methodological consultation, and the constructive suggestions of two anonymous reviewers. The research was supported by grant R01 HD-21050 from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Ann C. Crouter and Susan M. McHale, Co-Principal Investigators and a grant from Penn State's Center for the Study of Child and Adolescent Development. Correspondence should be addressed to Ann C. Crouter, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, S-110 Henderson Building, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802.

318 Child Development

boys' and girls' psychosocial outcomes in early adolescence, but also on changes over time in their *day-to-day socialization experiences*. In this article, gender intensification refers to divergence over time in adolescent boys' and girls' daily experiences in their families.

What might be some of the key dimensions of family life that would signal gender intensification? Adolescents' involvement in housework is one promising candidate because housework is a domain of activity that is sex-typed for both children and adults (Berk, 1985; Duckett, Raffaelli, & Richards, 1989; McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981) and has been described as an activity in which children learn about gender roles (Goodnow, 1988). Moreover, using cross-sectional survey data on children ages 6 to 16, White and Brinkerhoff (1981) reported that sex-typed patterns of participation in housework increased with age.

We might also expect to see adolescents spend more time in joint activities with the parent of the same sex. Fathers and sons and mothers and daughters may increasingly pair up in early adolescence because parents see socializing their same-sex child as part of their role, because community groups create activities for same-sex parent-adolescent dyads (e.g., scouts, Little League), and because same-sex parent-adolescent pairs may share more interests (Huston, 1983). Finally, Hill and Lynch (1983) suggest that parents may become increasingly protective of girls, while tolerating greater independence in boys. If this is so, we might expect to see parents become more engaged in monitoring the activities, whereabouts, and companions of daughters and perhaps less vigilant about monitoring sons.

An important question to consider with regard to gender intensification in family socialization processes is whether (1) these processes are normative phenomena, experienced by young adolescents regardless of family context; (2) family context plays a moderator role in exacerbating (or minimizing) gender intensification; or (3) gender intensification processes emerge in some family contexts but not in others. The second and third perspectives both imply interaction effects, that is, between context and gender; but they are distinct from one another conceptually. The second option—that context plays a moderator role in the development of gender differences—implies that

gender intensification is a universal phenomenon but that its strength is increased or decreased by contextual conditions; the third option suggests that gender intensification might be apparent in some contexts but not in others. Working from an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983), we expected that gender intensification in family socialization would not necessarily be characteristic of the experiences of all children, but would depend in part on their family contexts. Specifically, we were interested in two characteristics of the family environment: (1) the traditionality of parents' division of housework, and (2) the presence of a younger sibling of the opposite sex.

Parents' division of housework is potentially important because it is a visible indicator of how parents handle gender roles. We expected that gender intensification patterns would be stronger for adolescents growing up in households in which their parents maintained a "traditional" division of labor, with wives performing the great majority of the household tasks (McHale, Crouter, & Bartko, 1992), and weak for youth growing up in families characterized by a more "egalitarian" parental division of labor. Parents with a traditional division of labor, we reasoned, would be more likely to assign household chores on the basis of sex and to model sex-typed patterns of involvement in housework than would parents with a more egalitarian division of labor in the marriage.

We also suspected that gender intensification might be greater in families in which there was an opposite-sex sibling. In their cross-sectional study, White and Brinkerhoff (1981) reported a weak effect indicating that the presence of a sibling of the opposite sex increased the extent to which children's chores were allocated along gender lines. Similarly, Brody and Steelman (1985) found that parents reported more sex-typed attitudes about the household chores boys and girls should perform when they had offspring of both genders. In addition, the presence of a sibling of the opposite sex may encourage parents to "pair off" with the same-sex child in joint activities (see Huston & Alvarez, 1990, for a discussion of the possible role of sibling gender).

In the literature, gender intensification has generally been conceptualized as a normative process. One exception is a study by Lynch (1981; see Hill & Lynch, 1983) comparing the extent to which fathers with androgynous versus traditionally masculine

personality characteristics emphasized expressive (i.e., feminine) behavior in their daughters. Lynch found that while both traditionally masculine and androgynous fathers placed more emphasis on expressiveness in later pubertal than early pubertal daughters, the contrast was most striking for traditionally masculine fathers. Thus, gender intensification was exacerbated in familial settings in which fathers had traditionally masculine personality characteristics and was muted in contexts in which fathers described themselves as more androgynous. We know of no studies, however, that have examined the impact of features of family context on longitudinal patterns of adolescent girls' and boys' socialization experiences in the family.

The present study examined continuity and change across a year in early adolescence in three dimensions of familial socialization hypothesized to exhibit increased sex-typing over time: (1) adolescents' involvement in household chores (i.e., "feminine" and "masculine" household tasks); (2) adolescents' involvement in dyadic activities with their mothers and fathers; and (3) mothers' and fathers' monitoring of their adolescent's activities, companions, and whereabouts. Gender intensification would be indicated by girls becoming more involved in feminine household tasks, experiencing more involvement in dyadic activities with their mothers (and not with their fathers), and receiving more parental monitoring over time. Boys, on the other hand, were expected to become more involved in traditionally masculine household tasks and in joint activities with their fathers (but not mothers), and to receive less parental monitoring over time. The possible moderating role of parents' division of labor and the presence of a sibling of the opposite sex was the focus of the analyses.

Method

Sample

These analyses were conducted on a longitudinal data set collected to examine the interconnections between parental work, family dynamics, and the psychosocial functioning of young adolescents (see Crouter, MacDermid, McHale, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; McHale et al., 1990). To select the sample, letters were sent home with fourth and fifth graders in several school districts in central Pennsylvania. Families were selected to participate in the study based on the following criteria: (1) the fourth or fifth

grader was the oldest child in the family, and there was at least one younger sibling; (2) the family was "intact" (step-families were excluded); and (3) the father was employed full-time (mothers' work hours were variable). At phase 1, the sample consisted of 152 families. At phase 2, which took place a year later, 144 families remained in the study; they constitute the sample for this investigation. In general, participating families were white, middle and working class, and resided in small towns, cities, and rural areas. Analyses comparing the background characteristics of families with a "traditional" and a more "egalitarian" division of labor (defined below) are presented in the Results.

Procedures

At both phases, families participated in two types of data collection: home interviews and a series of telephone interviews.

Home interviews.—At each phase, a team of interviewers interviewed mothers, fathers, and target adolescents about work and family life, as well as family members' subjective evaluations of their family relationships, roles, and activities.

Telephone interviews.—In the 2 to 3 weeks following the home interviews, families were telephoned on 7 different evenings (5 weekdays; 2 weekends) and asked, in a systematic way, about the activities in which they were involved during that particular day. These calls, which lasted from 30 to 40 min, took place shortly before the adolescent's bedtime so that we would have a complete record of the youth's activities and experiences that day. Three of these calls involved separate interviews with mother and adolescent, three were with father and adolescent, and the seventh and final call involved all three family members. The telephone data were the source of information about adolescents' involvement in household chores, parent-child involvement in joint activities, parental monitoring, and parents' division of household work.

Measures

Background characteristics.—During the home interviews, demographic data were collected on family size, age and gender of family members, and parents' educational levels, work hours, and incomes. In addition, parents reported their occupational titles, which were subsequently coded for occupational prestige, using Stevens and Hoisington's (1987) coding scheme.

320 Child Development

Adolescents' participation in household tasks.—In each telephone interview, adolescents were asked whether they had performed each of 12 household tasks. For each task performed, they were asked how many times they had performed the activity, how long they had spent on the task, and with whom they had performed the task. Our categorization of household chores along gender lines was based both on the literature (e.g., Medrich, Roizen, Rubin, & Buckley, 1982; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981) and on analyses of the extent to which these activities were differentially performed by boys and girls in our sample (see McHale et al., 1990). Our index of involvement in feminine tasks was created by aggregating time (i.e., minutes) spent making beds, cleaning, preparing food, doing dishes, and doing laundry across all 7 days. Involvement in masculine tasks was created by aggregating time spent taking out the garbage, doing outdoor work, and handling home repairs across all 7 days. (Four gender-neutral tasks, e.g., feeding pets, were omitted from the analyses reported here because they are not sex-typed.) At phase 1, girls on average spent 126 min in feminine ($SD = 97$) and 35 min in masculine tasks ($SD = 109$). For boys, the means were 74 min for feminine ($SD = 72$) and 52 min for masculine tasks ($SD = 83$).

Parent-child joint activities.—The household tasks data, described above, were embedded in a larger interview designed to assess participation in 32 activities in which young adolescents are often involved (see Crouter & Crowley, 1990). These 32 activities included indoor leisure (e.g., watching television, playing a video game), outdoor leisure (e.g., involvement in sports activities), family activities such as meals, and personal development activities (e.g., working on homework; attending a religious service). For each activity, the adolescent was asked whether he or she had performed the activity that day, and, if so, for each occurrence of the activity, how much time was spent on the activity, and who else was involved. For these analyses, we created an index of parent-child involvement that reflected time spent in dyadic activities involving only the adolescent and the parent in question. We focused on dyadic involvement because it may better reflect parents' and adolescents' preferences and choices than parent-adolescent activities in which other people are present (see Crouter & Crowley, 1990).

Measures based on our telephone activity data have been shown to be both reliable and valid. In the analyses reported here, we rely on adolescents' reports of housework and dyadic activities with parents because we have more days of data from adolescents than from parents (i.e., seven versus four telephone interviews). Previous studies based on this data set have reported satisfactory levels of "interrater reliability," as assessed by correlations of parents' and adolescents' reports of activities performed together, as well as high test-retest reliability for questions asked twice during the same telephone interview (see McHale et al., 1990). In addition, the measures have face validity and have been shown in other studies to be correlated with other indices of family and individual functioning in meaningful ways (see Crouter & Crowley, 1990; McHale et al., 1990, 1992). At phase 1, girls on average spent 102 min in joint activities with their mothers ($SD = 90$) and 48 min with their fathers ($SD = 60$). Boys at phase 1 spent 91 min on average in dyadic activities with their mothers ($SD = 132$) and 73 min with their fathers ($SD = 85$).

Parental monitoring.—We developed our measure of parental monitoring based on Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber's (1984) approach to this issue. We asked parents and adolescents a set of questions each night that the parent could answer correctly only if he or she had monitored the adolescent's experiences that day. Question topics included school experiences such as homework and tests, leisure activities, household chores, purchases, where and with whom the adolescent spent time that day, and the quality of the adolescent's interactions with siblings and friends. The monitoring items were identical for mothers and fathers at phases 1 and 2. Within each phase, however, different questions were asked each night, and mothers and fathers were asked the monitoring items in different sequences so that they could not prepare for the questions in advance (see Crouter et al., 1990, for a list of the monitoring items). To create an index of parental monitoring, we computed the percent of monitoring items answered *incorrectly* across days; thus, lower scores indicate better monitoring. While we do not have direct measures of the reliability of this measure, it has face validity and closely resembles the measure developed by Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber (1984) which has been shown to be reliable and valid. Our

measure also correlates in meaningful ways with adolescents' school achievement and perceptions of school competence, and with parents' and adolescents' views of adolescents' problem behavior (Crouter et al., 1990), phenomena identified as "outcomes" of poor parental monitoring in other studies (e.g., Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). At phase 1, the mean for maternal monitoring was 21.6 for girls (SD = 13.5) and 20.8 for boys (SD = 11.3). The average paternal monitoring score at phase 1 was 27.4 for girls (SD = 16.2) and 24.1 for boys (SD = 15.3).

Parental division of labor.—Husbands and wives reported their involvement in each of 11 household tasks. (The same household tasks were reported by parents and adolescents, with the exception of "sibling caregiving," which was reported only by adolescents.) To ascertain the *division* of labor, we created a ratio variable reflecting wives' share of the total parental task load: the total amount of time wives spent on all household tasks divided by the total amount of time spent by both parents on housework. To categorize families on the basis of the traditionality of parents' division of labor, we performed a median split on the ratio variable. Families in which mothers performed more than 75% of all housework were categorized as "traditional," while those in which mothers performed less than

75% of the household chores were categorized as "egalitarian" (see McHale & Crouter, 1992; McHale et al., 1992).

Results

Background Characteristics of Traditional and Egalitarian Family Contexts

We first compared families with a traditional versus a more egalitarian division of labor on background characteristics in order to describe these contexts more completely (see Table 1). A series of one-way ANOVAs revealed that wives in traditional families worked fewer hours, earned less money, and held jobs of lower occupational prestige than wives in egalitarian families. In addition, husbands in traditional families worked more hours than their counterparts in egalitarian families. These differences should not be seen as "confounds"; instead, they can be interpreted as antecedents of the division of labor because wives with fewer job-related resources are less able to negotiate with their husbands for a more equitable division of labor (McHale & Crouter, 1992). Thus, traditional and egalitarian families represent contrasting family ecologies that differ not only in terms of parents' division of labor but also in terms of the "resources" wives bring to the family from the world of work.

TABLE 1
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

	TRADITIONAL FAMILIES (n = 72)		EGALITARIAN FAMILIES (n = 72)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Family size	4.5	.67	4.4	.70
Adolescent's age	10.4	.62	10.4	.62
Sibling's age	7.5	1.71	7.2	1.77
Wife's age	36.3	4.10	35.8	3.6
Husband's age	37.8	4.93	37.4	4.6
Wife's education ^a	4.6	1.15	4.9	1.5
Husband's education	5.1	1.46	5.4	1.5
Wife's work hours (weekly)	11.38	14.95	23.71	18.44
Husband's work hours (weekly) ..	50.2	11.9	45.2	9.2
Wife's job prestige ^b	42.1	13.0	48.1	16.32
Husband's job prestige	53.3	15.8	53.3	15.4
Wife's income	\$3,568	\$4,961	\$10,160	\$10,264
Husband's income	\$30,033	\$5,099	\$29,195	\$12,793

^a Educational level was measured on a 7-point scale, with 1 equivalent to < grade 8, 5 to completion of a bachelors degree, and 7 to completion of an advanced degree.

^b National Opinion Research Council Prestige Codes (Stevens & Hoisington, 1987). Job prestige data were available only for wives who held paid employment (n = 97).

322 Child Development

Data Analytic Strategy for Analyses Focused on Gender Intensification

To examine the possible role of context in adolescents' experience of gender intensification, our analysis plan called for a series of mixed-model ANOVAs with repeated measures, with participation in feminine tasks, participation in masculine tasks, involvement in dyadic activities, and parental monitoring as the dependent variables. These analyses utilized a 2 (adolescent gender) \times 2 (sibling gender) \times 2 (parental division of labor) \times 2 (time) design, with time as a repeated measure. The analyses of dyadic involvement and parental monitoring included "parent" (i.e., mother vs. father) as a second repeated measure.

We were interested primarily in those interactions that involved both time and adolescent gender because, depending on the pattern of means, these could signal gender intensification. In the results to follow, we do not report significant findings that are tangential to the questions we are asking. We first report any significant main effects, and then report the time \times adolescent gender interaction (or parent \times time \times adolescent gender interaction in those analyses in which "parent" was included as a repeated measure), because such findings may signal an overall pattern of gender intensification. We then report any higher-order significant interactions involving both time and adolescent gender because these might indicate: (1) that gender intensification was exacerbated in some contexts and minimized in others, or (2) that gender intensification was apparent in some settings and not apparent in others. When we found significant interactions involving time and adolescent gender, we performed "special post-hoc comparisons" with Bonferroni corrections, as recommended by Hertzog and Rovine (1985).

We performed special post-hoc comparisons because, in light of the literature on gender intensification, we were not interested in all possible comparisons; this strategy maximizes our statistical power. We could not perform a priori contrasts because we did not have sufficient theoretical grounds on which to predict whether parental division of labor and sibling's gender: (1) would have independent or combined effects on the dependent variables, and (2) would both be relevant for each of the four dependent variables.

Adolescents' Involvement in Feminine Household Tasks

The ANOVA focused on adolescents' involvement in feminine household tasks revealed main effects for time and gender, with adolescents generally decreasing their involvement in feminine tasks over time and girls spending more time in feminine tasks than boys, $F(1, 136) = 7.16, p < .01$; $F(1, 136) = 21.02, p < .01$, for time and adolescent gender, respectively. The time \times adolescent gender interaction was *not* significant, $F(1, 136) = .53, N.S.$, indicating that an overall pattern of gender intensification was not apparent. However, a significant four-way interaction (time \times adolescent gender \times sibling gender \times parental division of labor) was found, $F(1, 136) = 4.85, p < .05$. To follow up, we compared the longitudinal pattern for girls from traditional families with younger brothers with that of the rest of the sample because girls from traditional families would be the group expected to become most involved in feminine tasks, especially if their younger sibling was a brother. This comparison was not significant, $F(1, 136) = 1.47, N.S.$ We then conducted the same comparison *separately* for each phase. No significant differences emerged at phase 1; however, at phase 2, girls from traditional families with brothers performed significantly more feminine tasks than other adolescents, $F(1, 136) = 7.25, p < .01$. As can be seen in Figure 1, adolescent girls in traditional families with brothers had a longitudinal pattern suggestive of gender intensification in that they maintained a high level of involvement in these activities over time, while the rest of the sample evidenced declining participation. (Group means and standard deviations can be found in Table 2.)

Adolescents' Involvement in Masculine Household Tasks

The analysis of participation in masculine tasks revealed no significant main effects. In addition, the time \times adolescent gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 136) = .02, N.S.$, indicating that no overall pattern of gender intensification was found. A three-way interaction (time \times parental division of labor \times adolescent gender) was significant, however, $F(1, 136) = 6.77, p < .05$. In the follow-up analysis, we compared boys in traditional families with all other adolescents because they were thought to be the group most likely to be most involved in masculine tasks. As is apparent in Figure 2,

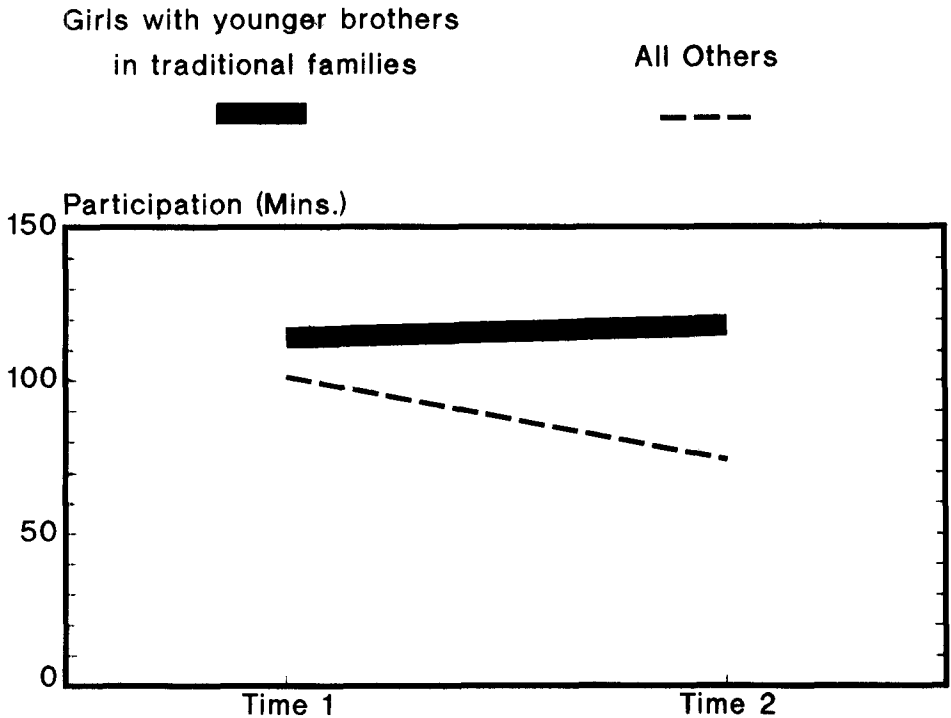


FIG. 1.—Adolescents' participation in feminine household tasks

the contrast was significant, albeit at the level of a trend, $F(1, 136) = 3.25, p < .08$. (Because only four groups were involved in the interaction, we include them all in Fig. 2; the follow-up analysis, however, simply compared boys in traditional family contexts with all other adolescents.) While boys in traditional families increased their involvement in masculine tasks over the year, other adolescents generally decreased their participation in these activities. (See Table 3 for group means and standard deviations.)

Adolescents' Involvement in Joint Activities with Mothers and Fathers

With regard to adolescents' involvement in dyadic activities with parents, we found a main effect for parent, indicating that mothers were more involved in joint activities, overall, than were fathers, $F(1, 136) = 9.12, p < .01$. This finding was qualified by a parent \times time \times adolescent gender interaction, $F(1, 136) = 5.88, p < .05$, indicating an overall pattern of gender intensification: Boys increased their involvement with father over time, and girls increased their involvement with mother. This pattern was further qualified by a time \times adolescent gender \times sibling gender interaction, $F(1,$

136) = 9.78, $p < .01$. Consistent with our previous analyses, we expected that having a sibling of the opposite sex would predispose an adolescent to spend more time with his or her same-sex parent. Indeed, the follow-up test revealed that boys with younger sisters exhibited a greater increase over time in their joint activities with fathers than did all other adolescents, $F(1, 140) = 5.42, p < .05$, and girls with younger brothers increased their involvement in dyadic activities with mothers more over time than did all other adolescents, $F(1, 140) = 9.84, p < .01$ (see Figs. 3 and 4 and Table 4).

A strict interpretation of the "gender intensification hypothesis" would suggest that boys with younger sisters and girls with younger brothers would not only *increase* the time spent with the same-sex parent but would *decrease* the time spent with the parent of the opposite sex. This expectation, however, was not supported by our data (see Figs. 3 and 4). Boys with younger sisters did not spend less time with mothers over time than did other adolescents, $F(1, 140) = .08, N.S.$ Similarly, girls with younger brothers did not spend less time with fathers over time than did other adolescents, $F(1, 140) =$

TABLE 2
 MEANS (and Standard Deviations) FOR MINUTES SPENT IN
 FEMININE HOUSEHOLD TASKS BY PARENTAL DIVISION OF LABOR,
 CHILD'S GENDER, AND YOUNGER SIBLING'S GENDER

	Time 1	Time 2
Traditional families:		
Boys with younger brothers (<i>n</i> = 15)	57.9 (57.4)	31.2 (26.6)
Boys with younger sisters (<i>n</i> = 16)	51.1 (46.3)	49.8 (53.7)
Girls with younger brothers (<i>n</i> = 17)	114.2 (75.1)	118.9 (82.0)
Girls with younger sisters (<i>n</i> = 24)	132.9 (128.3)	89.9 (52.1)
Egalitarian families:		
Boys with younger brothers (<i>n</i> = 15)	77.2 (83.6)	81.7 (85.3)
Boys with younger sisters (<i>n</i> = 18)	102.1 (87.5)	61.6 (41.8)
Girls with younger brothers (<i>n</i> = 17)	137.7 (83.2)	87.6 (91.4)
Girls with younger sisters (<i>n</i> = 22)	121.3 (95.6)	97.9 (83.2)

.62, N.S. In this analysis, however, the main effect for the post-hoc comparison *was* significant, $F(1, 140) = 8.93, p < .01$, indicating that girls with younger brothers spent less time alone with their fathers than did others overall but that this pattern did not become more pronounced over time.

In summary, with regard to longitudinal patterns of dyadic involvement with the same-sex parent, an overall gender intensification pattern was apparent, and this pattern was exacerbated for adolescents who had a sibling of the opposite sex. We found no evidence, however, that this particular dimension of gender-differential socialization was stronger in families with a traditional parental division of household work. In addition, we did not find evidence of decreases over time, and/or increasing divergence between boys and girls, in the amount of time spent with the parent of the opposite sex.

Parental Monitoring

In contrast to the analyses of adolescents' involvement in housework and their involvement in joint activities with parents,

the analysis of parental monitoring revealed no gender intensification pattern. Main effects were found for time, $F(1, 136) = 12.21, p < .001$, and parent, $F(1, 136) = 27.22, p < .001$, indicating that parents became better monitors over time, and mothers were generally better monitors than fathers. In addition, a time \times parental division of labor interaction was found, $F(1, 136) = 6.40, p < .05$; mothers and fathers in traditional families became better at monitoring over time, while their counterparts in egalitarian households maintained their level of involvement in monitoring over time. The time \times adolescent gender interaction, however, was not significant, $F(1, 136) = 1.46, N.S.$ In addition, there were no significant higher-order interactions involving time and adolescent gender.

Discussion

These results revealed some evidence of gender intensification in family socialization experiences in early adolescence, but the picture, as is often the case in ecologically oriented research, is complex. Gender

Boys in traditional families

Boys in egalitarian families

Girls in traditional families

Girls in egalitarian families

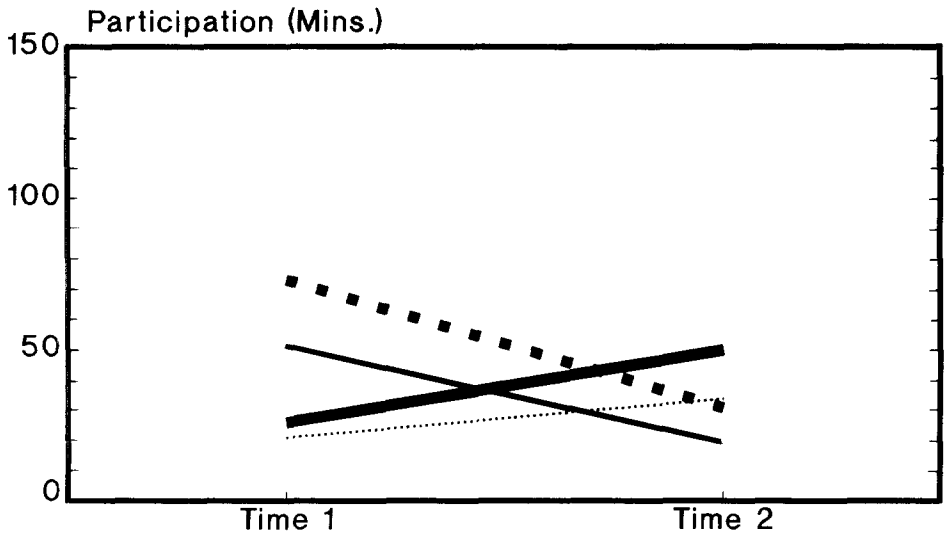


FIG. 2.—Adolescents' participation in masculine household tasks

intensification depends in part on the dimension of family socialization that is examined and on the nature of the familial context. Both the traditionality of parents' division of labor and the presence of an opposite-sex sibling mattered for some aspects of the gender intensification of adolescents' family experiences, but not for others. These results highlight the importance of looking at gender intensification in family socialization experiences "in context."

Adolescents exhibited an increasingly sex-typed pattern of involvement in feminine household tasks over time when their parents divided chores along traditional gender lines *and* when a younger sibling of the opposite sex was present. The pattern of gender intensification in masculine task involvement appeared for boys, regardless of the sex of the younger sibling, when parents divided housework along traditional lines. Parents' division of labor was not re-

TABLE 3
MEANS (and Standard Deviations) FOR MINUTES SPENT IN
MASCULINE TASKS BY PARENTAL DIVISION OF LABOR
AND CHILD'S GENDER

	Time 1	Time 2
Traditional families:		
Boys (<i>n</i> = 31)	26.4 (38.1)	50.0 (112.9)
Girls (<i>n</i> = 41)	51.1 (149.6)	19.1 (35.6)
Egalitarian families:		
Boys (<i>n</i> = 33)	72.9 (104.8)	31.1 (45.1)
Girls (<i>n</i> = 39)	21.4 (44.4)	34.6 (93.3)

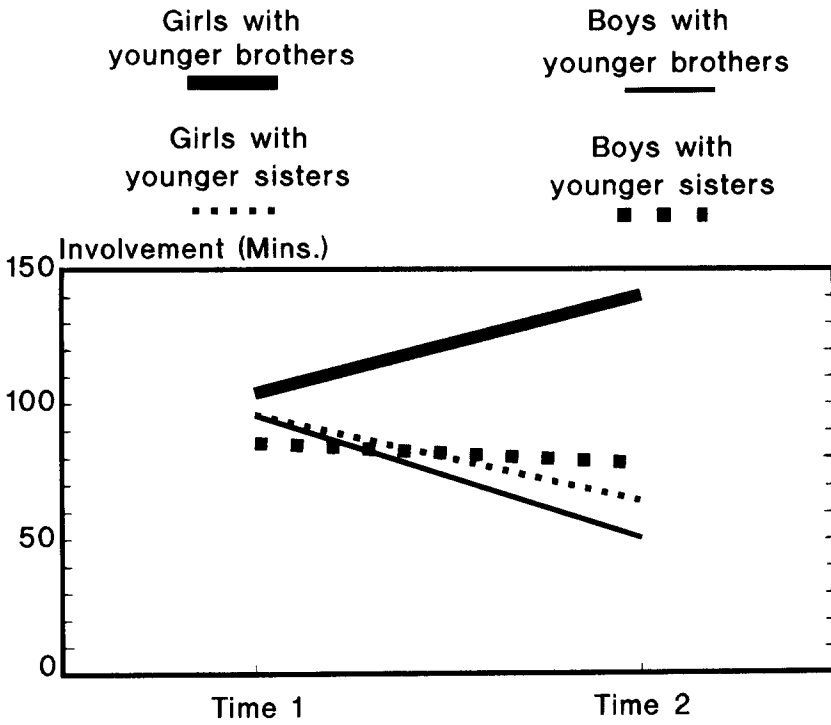


FIG. 3.—Adolescents' dyadic involvement with mother

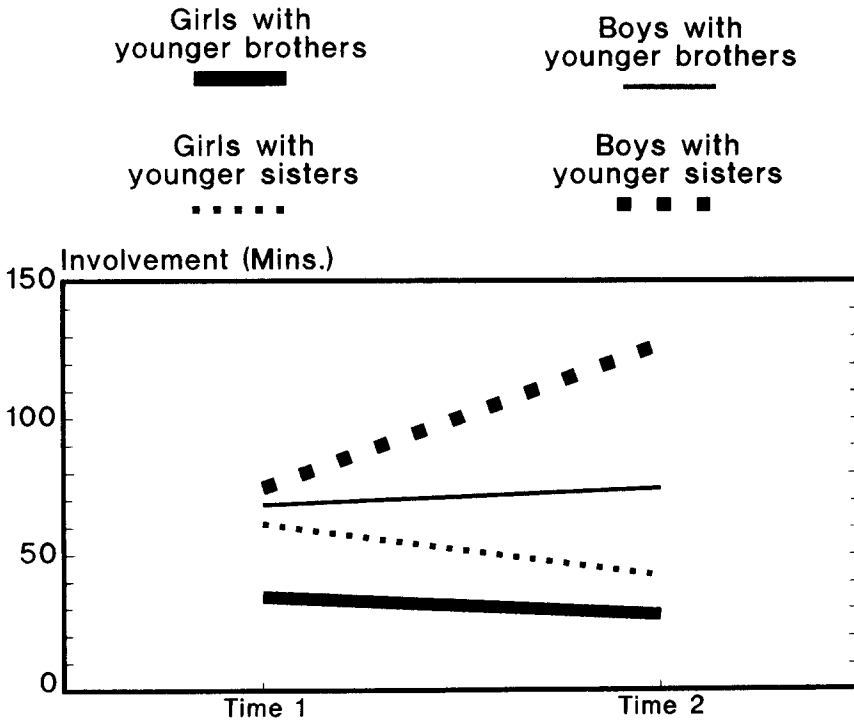


FIG. 4.—Adolescents' dyadic involvement with father

TABLE 4

MEANS (and Standard Deviations) FOR MINUTES SPENT IN DYADIC INVOLVEMENT WITH PARENTS BY CHILD'S GENDER AND YOUNGER SIBLING'S GENDER

	DYADIC INVOLVEMENT WITH MOTHER		DYADIC INVOLVEMENT WITH FATHER	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Boys with younger brothers ($n = 30$)	95.6 (121.4)	50.4 (66.7)	68.4 (94.4)	74.3 (141.7)
Boys with younger sisters ($n = 34$)	85.4 (147.3)	77.8 (86.5)	74.6 (71.0)	126.7 (190.5)
Girls with younger brothers ($n = 34$)	103.7 (88.1)	140.3 (129.9)	34.7 (46.7)	27.7 (41.5)
Girls with younger sisters ($n = 46$)	95.8 (88.1)	64.1 (64.1)	61.4 (68.2)	42.2 (54.7)

lated, however, to joint activities with same-sex parents. The general pattern here was one of gender intensification exacerbated by the presence of a younger sibling of the opposite sex. Finally, we found no evidence of gender intensification in parental monitoring.

A finding that merits further comment is that the traditionality of parents' division of housework was related to adolescents' increasingly sex-typed patterns of involvement in feminine and masculine household chores over time, but not to longitudinal patterns of adolescents' involvement in dyadic activities with same- and opposite-sex parents. Because parents' division of labor and adolescents' involvement in housework both involve the same activity—household chores—a modeling process may be the mechanism underlying these results. Girls whose mothers perform the majority of chores stand out for their involvement in tasks like cooking, cleaning, and laundry, a pattern that mirrors their mothers' activities. The gender intensification pattern is most apparent for girls with younger brothers, suggesting that parents in traditional households may be more likely to allocate tasks along gender lines when they have children of both genders. This pattern is consistent with Brody and Steelman's (1985) results about the linkages between sibling structure and parents' attitudes regarding household chore allocation. Similarly, boys whose parents exhibited traditional roles become increasingly involved in masculine tasks over time. A corollary of these findings is that, at

least with regard to involvement in housework, young adolescents experience less gender-differentiated socialization when they grow up with fathers who take on a larger share of housework.

The traditionality of parents' division of housework, however, was not associated with longitudinal patterns of boys' and girls' dyadic activities with mothers and fathers. Instead, the salient feature of family context was the sex of the second-born sibling. This is a particularly interesting aspect of family context because it is generally not "selected" by anyone. A roll of the reproductive dice determines whether a sibling is a brother or a sister; this feature of family context has implications for certain features of gender-intensified socialization in early adolescence. Specifically, girls spend more time in dyadic activities with their mothers over time when they have brothers, and boys spend more time in joint activities with their fathers when their next-born sibling is a sister.

Exactly why this pairing off along gender lines occurs is unclear. It may have to do with parental beliefs that young adolescents benefit developmentally from time spent with the same-sex parent (Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992). Alternatively, parents and their same-sex children may share attitudes, skills, and preferences about activities; in exercising those common psychological predispositions, they may find themselves involved in joint activities (Heider, 1958; Huston, 1983).

328 Child Development

Although several discussions of the gender intensification hypothesis have suggested that parents become more protective of daughters than of sons in early adolescence, we found no evidence for this process with respect to parental monitoring. Several explanations for our failure to find a pattern of gender intensification in our monitoring data come to mind. First, the measure may not focus on the right issues; items include such topics as homework and school tests, household chores, and sibling and peer relations. These items may not tap parental concerns about safety and girls' vulnerability in the face of their emerging sexuality. It is also possible that parental protectiveness of daughters does not emerge until later in adolescence and that our monitoring measure would detect gender intensification patterns in an older sample. Alternatively, social-historical change may be an explanation. Hill and Lynch's (1983) review of the gender intensification hypothesis appeared a decade ago. Parents of young adolescents today may see the world as an uncertain and dangerous place for adolescents, a worldview that would result in similar increases in monitoring over time of both boys and girls.

The strengths of this study include the detailed measures of family socialization experiences gathered across 7 days, the longitudinal design, the focus on family processes rather than psychological outcomes, and the ability to draw upon data from mothers, fathers, and young adolescents. The fact that a diverse set of family socialization experiences was examined is an additional strength because the analyses revealed that gender intensification characterized some but not all of the patterns of change and that contextual features were related to some aspects of family socialization but not to others.

The limitations of the study suggest several avenues for future research. First, the study encompassed only a year. At the beginning of the study, children were 10½ on average; given that early adolescence roughly encompasses the years from 10 to 14 (Elliot & Feldman, 1990), we have covered only the first slice of it. Second, we had only two occasions of measurement, which means that it is difficult to disentangle change over time from regression toward the mean effects. Ideally, an investigation such as this one should cover a longer period of time and include more occasions of measurement so that, in addition to the linear patterns explored here, more complex patterns of

change over time could be examined. In a study that encompasses more of the adolescent period, it would also be useful to measure adolescent development with indicators that are more conceptually sophisticated than the marker of age (Hill & Lynch, 1983; Wohlwill, 1973). Galambos et al. (1990), for example, examined pubertal timing (i.e., early, late, and on time) with regard to gender intensification in masculinity, femininity, and sex role attitudes. Galambos and her colleagues did not find systematic relationships between pubertal timing and gender intensification patterns in these psychosocial outcomes. It is possible that parents' response to their children's changing physical appearance may be linked to gender intensification in some dimensions of family socialization. We could not analyze the effects of pubertal status in this study, however, because too few adolescents (particularly the males) in our sample had experienced pubertal change by the second phase of data collection.

Finally, the findings with regard to sibling gender suggest the importance of collecting longitudinal family process data not only on a "target adolescent" but on other children in the family. For example, a "within-family" design would permit comparisons of family socialization experiences of same- and opposite-sex siblings with mothers and fathers to test hypotheses about whether sons and daughters in the same family experience increasingly divergent, sex-typed patterns of family socialization, and whether such divergence is greater in families in which parents maintain traditional marital roles than in more egalitarian family contexts. This approach is in line with the burgeoning interest in developmental research in families as "non-shared environments" (Dunn & Plomin, 1990). Testing this notion with a "within-family design" promises to reveal much about the intersection of person, process, and context, the three central focuses of the ecology of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983), and would go a long way toward putting gender intensification processes "in context."

References

- Berk, S. F. (1985). *The gender factory: The appointment of work in American households*. New York: Plenum.
- Brody, C. J., & Steelman, L. C. (1985). Sibling structure and parental sex-typing of children's household tasks. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, 265-273.

- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Crouter, A. C. (1983). The evolution of environmental models in developmental research. In W. Kessen (Ed.), P. H. Mussen (Series Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 1. History, theory, and methods* (pp. 357-414). New York: Wiley.
- Crouter, A. C., & Crowley, M. S. (1990). School-age children's time alone with fathers in single- and dual-earner families: Implications for the father-child relationship. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 10*, 296-312.
- Crouter, A. C., MacDermid, S. M., McHale, S. M., & Perry-Jenkins, M. (1990). Parental monitoring and perceptions of children's school performance and conduct in dual-earner and single-earner families. *Developmental Psychology, 26*, 649-657.
- Duckett, E., Raffaelli, M., & Richards, M. H. (1989). "Taking care": Maintaining the self and the home in early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 18*, 549-565.
- Dunn, J., & Plomin, R. (1990). *Separate lives: Why siblings are so different*. New York: Basic.
- Elliot, G. R., & Feldman, S. S. (1990). Capturing the adolescent experience. In S. Feldman & G. R. Elliot (Eds.), *At the threshold: The developing adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Galambos, N. L., Almeida, D. M., & Petersen, A. C. (1990). Masculinity, femininity, and sex role attitudes in early adolescence: Exploring gender intensification. *Child Development, 61*, 1905-1914.
- Goodnow, J. (1988). Children's household work: Its nature and functions. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*, 5-26.
- Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hertzog, C., & Rovine, M. (1985). Repeated-measures analysis of variance in developmental research: Selected issues. *Child Development, 56*, 787-809.
- Hill, J. P., & Lynch, M. E. (1983). The intensification of gender-related role expectations during early adolescence. In J. Brooks-Gunn & A. Petersen (Eds.), *Girls at puberty: Biological and psychosocial perspectives* (pp. 201-228). New York: Plenum.
- Huston, A. C. (1983). Sex-typing. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), P. H. Mussen (Series Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, personality, and social development* (pp. 387-467). New York: Wiley.
- Huston, A. C., & Alvarez, M. M. (1990). The socialization context of gender role development in early adolescence. In R. Montemayor, G. R. Adams, & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *From childhood to adolescence: A transitional period?* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Linn, M. C., & Petersen, A. C. (1986). A meta-analysis of gender differences in spatial ability: Implications for math and science achievement. In J. S. Hyde & M. C. Linn (Eds.), *The psychology of gender: Advances through meta-analysis* (pp. 67-101). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lynch, M. E. (1981). *Paternal androgyny, daughters' physical maturity level, and achievement socialization in early adolescence*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University.
- McHale, S. M., Bartko, T., Crouter, A. C., & Perry-Jenkins, M. (1990). Children's housework and their psychosocial functioning: The mediating effects of parents' sex role behaviors and attitudes. *Child Development, 61*, 1413-1426.
- McHale, S. M., & Crouter, A. C. (1992). You can't always get what you want: Incongruence between sex role attitudes and family work roles and its implications for marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54*, 537-547.
- McHale, S. M., Crouter, A. C., & Bartko, W. T. (1992). Traditional and egalitarian patterns of parental involvement: Antecedents, consequences, and temporal rhythms. In D. Featherman, R. Lerner, & M. Perlmutter (Eds.), *Life-span development and behavior* (Vol. 11). New York: Erlbaum.
- Medrich, E. A., Roizen, J. A., Rubin, V., & Buckley, S. (1982). *The serious business of growing up: A study of children's lives outside school*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Patterson, G. R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1984). The correlation of family management practices and delinquency. *Child Development, 55*, 1299-1307.
- Sigel, I. E., McGillicuddy-DeLisi, A. V., & Goodnow, J. J. (1992). *Parental belief systems: The psychological consequences for children* (2d ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Simmons, R. G., Blyth, D. A., Van Cleave, E. F., & Bush, D. M. (1979). Entry into early adolescence: The impact of school structure, puberty, and early dating on self-esteem. *American Sociological Review, 44*, 948-967.
- Stevens, G., & Hoisington, E. (1987). Occupational prestige and the 1980 U.S. labor force. *Social Science Research, 16*, 74-105.
- White, L. K., & Brinkerhoff, D. B. (1981). The sexual division of labor: Evidence from childhood. *Social Forces, 60*, 170-181.
- Wohlwill, J. (1973). *The study of behavioral development*. New York: Academic Press.

This document is a scanned copy of a printed document. No warranty is given about the accuracy of the copy. Users should refer to the original published version of the material.