

BEING QUEER IN THE DOMESTIC SPHERE: A PRIMARY EARNER FRAMEWORK  
APPROACH

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# BEING QUEER IN THE DOMESTIC SPHERE: A PRIMARY EARNER FRAMEWORK APPROACH

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## **Abstract:**

This thesis explores the division of nonmarket labor between same-sex and different-sex couples. The specialization hypothesis suggests that one member of the couples specializes in market labor while the other specializes in nonmarket labor. Gay couples, however, have been shown to follow different patterns of division of labor than heterosexual couples. I seek to answer if same-sex couples and different-sex couples divide nonmarket labor in the same way. I hypothesize that everyone follows the specialization hypothesis to an extent, but that gay couples follow this pattern less often. By running ordered probit regressions on survey data I collected to compare straight primary earners with gay primary earners and straight secondary earners with gay secondary earners, I rejected my hypothesis. There are, however, instances of the hypothesis being confirmed depending on the specific chore being investigated and what control variables are being held constant.

Key words: Nonmarket labor, LGBTQ+, same-sex couples, gender roles, specialization, division of labor

JEL codes: D13, D16, J12, J16

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ON MY HONOR, I HAVE NEITHER GIVEN NOR RECEIVED  
UNAUTHORIZED AID ON THIS THESIS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daphne Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'W'.

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Signature

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ABSTRACT

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## **Introduction**

There is a lot of existing literature detailing the distribution of labor for married couples. The literature, vastly conducted on heterosexual couples, generally finds that women tend to do more nonmarket labor than men and that this discrepancy in household division of labor only grows after children are introduced into the household (Badgett, 2001, Bauer, 2015, Kurdek, 2007, Yavorsky et al., 2015). This unequal division of labor is often attributed to the gender pay gap creating a comparative advantage for men's participation in the labor market, specialization within a household, and women using housework as a way to "act out" their gender within a marriage (Badgett, 2001, Bauer, 2016, Bertrand et al., 2015, Klawitter, 2014, Yavorsky et al., 2015).

There is less research about division of nonmarket labor for same-sex couples. The literature that is available does not typically include differences in power such as pay gaps and earning potential between partners in their model (Antecol and Steinberger, 2011 Badgett, 2001, Bauer, 2016, Goldberg and Perry-Jenkins, 2007, Kurdek, 2007, Martell and Roncolato, 2016, Yavorsky et al., 2015). While it is true that traditional gender roles do not adhere to the traditional earning patterns of same-sex couples, there is still a primary earner and a secondary earner within a same-sex relationship.

Antecol and Steinberger (2011) created a framework for understanding division of market labor for same sex couples that labeled each partner either a primary or a secondary earners. I use this framework to compare the division of nonmarket labor between same-sex and opposite-sex marriages. There has not yet been much literature that explores how earnings, separate from gender, influence the division of nonmarket labor. Splitting same-sex couples into primary earners and secondary earners and doing the same for opposite-sex couples can shed light on how much earning differences, not just the gender pay gap and binary gender roles, contribute to the division of nonmarket labor within couples.

I used an ordered probit model to run pairs of regressions and then I compared those regressions side-by-side. The dependent variable, a specific chore, measured how likely a primary earner or a secondary earner is to do all of or most of a task. I ran four regressions for each dependent variable where each dependent variable was one of seven chores. I compared primary earners in same-sex relationships with primary earners in different sex relationships. I also compared secondary earners in same-sex relationships with secondary earners in different-sex relationships. I regressed three strongly female-typed chores (cooking meals, buying groceries, and cleaning the kitchen), two slightly female-typed chores (cleaning the bedroom and cleaning the bathroom), and two male-typed chores (managing the budget and IT).

The data comes from a survey I created where participants answer how likely they are to participate in certain chores and who society expects is responsible for the chores. I conducted a principal component analysis to create an index of societal expectations. The regressions considered factors that were known to influence behavior within couples such as gender, marital status, and education (Barban et al., 2021, Bauer, 2016, Bertrand et al., 2015, Kurdek, 2007, Shelton and John, 1993, Twiggs et al., 1999). I ran four regressions each for seven different chores, some male-typed, some female-typed. I compared primary earners in same-sex relationships with primary earners in different-sex relationships and I compared secondary earners in same-sex relationships with secondary earners in different-sex relationships.

My hypothesis is that straight primary earners and straight secondary earners follow the specialization hypothesis, while gay primary earners and gay secondary earners also follow the specialization hypothesis, but less often.

When I combined all of the chores I regressed, my hypothesis was rejected. Examining one chore at a time or comparing two chores allowed for a more nuanced understanding of when my

hypothesis was confirmed or rejected. My hypothesis was rejected for budgeting and technology, the two male-typed chores. My hypothesis was also rejected for cooking, but accepted for cleaning the kitchen, despite the female-typing of both of those chores.

My regressions yielded interesting information that was not related to the hypothesis too. Marital status, if a couple was married or unmarried cohabitating partners, did not affect same-sex couples in the same way it affected different-sex couples. With much of the research on the topic of same-sex nonmarket behavior having been conducted prior to marriage equality, this result adds to a newer group of findings from multiple disciplines that despite the legal status of marriage being the same for everyone, marital status appears to have a different affect for same-sex couples than different-sex couples.

When conducting regressions, I put careful thought into what control variables to include. While it was tempting to include a measure of the size of the likelihood to participate in a certain chore, my regression only resulted in if someone was or was not likely to participate in a chore, not how likely they were. Therefore, I chose not to include certain control variables such as a measure of earning differences. I also created an interaction variable for the gender of each partner. People, especially those in queer relationships, exist outside of the gender binary. The gender of one member of the couple is closely related to the gender of the other member, but not perfectly related. In order to capture gender dynamics and include nonbinary people, I created an interaction variable to accommodate their presence.

Given the complex nature of the domestic sphere, people's personal relationships with their partners, and especially same-sex relationship's nontraditional nature, this survey is more of an introductory investigation into the division of nonmarket labor for same-sex couples and does not seek

to fully explain the division of nonmarket labor. The sample size and nature of categorical variables make it impossible to discern the effect size or the results, only the direction of the pattern.

This study makes several key contributions to the literature. This research focusses on LGBTQ+ individuals, an underrepresented demographic in research. Furthermore, I delved deeper than simply comparing straight couples and gay couples because I identify a power dynamic, earning status, within the relationships that allow me to compare them more thoughtfully. Lastly, this research is important because much of the research done on gay people, including Badgett's foundational book *Money, Myths and Change* (2001), was written well before marriage equality for same-sex couples. Not only has society at large become more accepting, both legally and socially, of queer people, but same-sex couples have also taken strides towards gender equality. Therefore, it is important that more research is done taking into account the current sociopolitical climate.

This paper begins with a note on language. Next, there is a literature review, acquainting the reader with relevant research and context. After that I explain my methodology. Then comes results followed by a discussion of those results, explaining them clearly and connecting them to my hypothesis. Lastly, I conclude the paper by summarizing key findings and identifying areas for future research.

### **A Note on Language**

Both gender and sexuality are a spectrum. Therefore, it is important to explain the terms I use throughout the rest of this paper. I will refer to women married to women as lesbians and men married to men as gay men. Bisexual people make up a large portion of the LGBTQ+ population, but this thesis examines people in committed relationships that are classified as either same-sex or different-sex. In order to include everyone on the gender spectrum, I needed to specify how I would classify transgender

and nonbinary people. None of the literature I reviewed had any mention of transness or nonbinariness. In order to properly categorize these people, I included a question in my survey includes a space to elaborate on gender identity and sexuality which I made in the hopes that I will gain any necessary insight to categorize or exclude each relationship in an appropriate way for my analysis. Cisgender or transgender status isn't necessary for my own data collection, but in the event of a respondent elaborating on gender, I will group transgender people with their identified gender category, and I will group nonbinary people on a case-by-case basis. When it is relevant, I will specify either transgender or cisgender. My research question hinged on relationship type and I ultimately allowed respondents to self-select if they were in a different-sex relationship or a same-sex relationship regardless of their specific gender identity.

## **Literature Review**

### **LGBTQ+ Family Economics**

The field of research surrounding the LGBTQ+ community is a growing area. In 2001, M. V. Lee Badgett published the most comprehensive work on queer people in the economy so far. Badgett outlined two different lenses through which to understand the purpose and structure of a family. A family can be seen as a unit whose only goal is to be as efficient possible, structuring itself to increase their own family unit's utility as much as possible. A family can also be seen as having the goal of increasing efficiency in an equitable manner, evenly distributing utility between couples, considering things like race and gender dynamics, differences in bargaining power, and emotional and physical intimacy, in addition to efficiency. While total efficiency and utility are still important to this family, they will trade maximal utility and efficiency for lower levels of equitably distributed labor. While same-sex partnerships may be considered "irrational" through the lens of total efficiency because of their inability to biologically reproduce, the more well-rounded view of a family unit recognizes that

many tasks aside from giving birth become more efficient when people form couples. Additionally, a more equitable view of the family can accommodate for more “inefficient” methods of having children such as adoption or artificial insemination (Badgett, 2001). Understanding different possible motivations behind forming family units (such as efficiency, intimacy, economic stability, and more) is vital for interpreting how these families function.

When spouses cohabitate, they combine their resources to create one shared household. Each couple finds their own distribution of market labor and nonmarket labor dictated by personal preference, comparative advantage in market or nonmarket labor, and gender roles. Many economists attribute the division of labor within a marriage to specialization and comparative advantage. The specialization hypothesis dictates that one spouse will have a comparative advantage in market labor while the other has a comparative advantage in nonmarket labor. (Although when it comes to reproduction, cisgender women have an absolute advantage in giving birth and nursing.) These comparative advantages cause one member of the household to specialize in market labor and the other to specialize in nonmarket labor.

### **Earning Patterns**

Due to the gender wage gap men typically have the advantage in market labor leaving women with the comparative advantage in nonmarket labor (Andresen and Nix, 2022, Andresen and Rose, 2000, Antecol and Steinberger, 2015, Bauer, 2015, Badgett, 2001, Yavorsky et al., 2015). In same-sex couples, researchers usually group same-sex couples into both being primary earners (gay men) or both being secondary earners (lesbians). Same-sex cisgender couples were socialized as the same gender and do not have a gender pay gap between the two of them, so the same gender-based reasons for specialization do not apply in the same way. Within each couple there is still an earning difference between partners that would lead to specialization for each relationship that cannot be generalized to

gender differences and that influences how these couples divide work between themselves. Very few models incorporate earnings differences for same-sex couples in part because the model where the man is considered the breadwinner and the woman is the secondary earner is so engrained in the economic approach to analyzing the distribution of nonmarket labor.

Literature has consistently shown that women tend to do more nonmarket labor than men (Badgett, 2001, Bauer, 2015, Kurdek, 2007, Yavorsky et al., 2015). This varies across lesbian couples and gay man couples with lesbians splitting their nonmarket labor most evenly, switching off between tasks regularly. Gay men split their nonmarket labor slightly less equally than lesbians and tend to specialize in specific tasks more than lesbians (Badgett, 2001, Kurdek, 2007, Yavorsky et al., 2015). Economists interpret this pattern in line with the specialization hypothesis where one member of the family has a comparative advantage in market labor while the other has a comparative advantage in nonmarket labor. This causes specialization within couples (Badgett, 2001, Bauer, 2016, Klawitter, 2014, Kurdek, 2007).

Out of all sexual orientations and genders studied, straight married women do the most nonmarket labor and straight married men do the least nonmarket labor (Badgett, 2001). Before having children, men recorded doing three more hours of total work (market and nonmarket) per week. After the transition to parenthood, economic theory predicts that women would decrease their time doing market labor and men would increase their time doing market labor. Children “traditionalize” the pattern of nonmarket work and cause fewer tasks to be carried out jointly and one partner tends to become the primary caregiver to the child. More tasks get added to families’ household management and societal norms and expectations cause the women to take on the burden of the additional nonmarket labor (Bauer, 2016). Using time diaries and survey data, Yavorsky et al. (2015) showed that, upon the transition to parenthood, straight women do more than two hours more work than pre-parenthood while

men increase their total work by forty minutes. Neither one of the parents significantly changed their time participating in market labor, leaving women to complete more total work. Men were shown to significantly decrease their time doing nonmarket labor by five hours per week once they were parents, furthering the division of labor in heterosexual marriages.

## **Division of Labor**

Total work is comprised of nonmarket and market labor, but new research is being done in sociology on an additional component of work: cognitive load. Historically, cognitive labor has been ignored in part because it is intangible and therefore difficult to quantify. Cognitive labor can be defined by the following four step pattern: 1) anticipating needs 2) identifying options to meet these needs 3) decide which options to peruse and 4) monitoring the results (Daminger, 2019). Daminger found cognitive load to be a gendered process with the burden falling on the woman within different-sex marriages. Mentally anticipating, thinking of, and reacting to household management takes a toll on one's mental capacity. The book *Fair Play* by Eve Rodsky (2019) coined the term "the she-fault parent". This term refers to when, in a different-sex marriage, the woman becomes the default parent and household manager and faces the unequal burden of household management (or cognitive labor). Tasks that are not tangible, can't be placed on a to-do list, and are often a never-ending process typically become the women's responsibility in different-sex marriages. My research does not address cognitive load due to its difficulty to quantify, but Daminger (2019) concludes that the unequal distribution of cognitive load means that the disparity in total work between couples is even larger than research limited to tangible labor suggest.

On an individual level, straight men do not always earn more than straight women. In marriages where wives out earn their husbands, the woman also increases her nonmarket labor. By earning more than their husbands, breadwinning wives are deviating from their prescribed gender roles. Therefore,

they compensate for their gender deviance by leaning into more female-typed tasks such as housework (Bertrand et al., 2015, Shelton and John, 1993). This pattern of activity does not align with the specialization hypothesis. Doing more housework despite having a comparative advantage in market labor is an example of women “doing” their gender and going out of their way to do actions that reframe their gender in an orthodox way.

## **Gender and Society**

Doing gender is a sociological concept where gender is not viewed as natural categories, but rather gender is a social construct created through actions. These acts take place within society which has designated acts and behaviors as masculine and feminine. People then do acts that align with their gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Of note, butch and femme lesbian couples do not follow the same patterns of different-sex marriages regarding gendered tasks and division of labor within marriages (Badgett, 2001). Gendered acts are part of a more complicated web of societal structures and expectations. Lots of tasks have a lot of invisible work behind them in a way that is tied to gender. For example, sourcing second-hand infant gear is typically done through a network of mothers. While husbands are also parents, most of these parent networks are centered around mothers and their mom-friends. Therefore, a mother will have an easier time sourcing infant gear by making other mom-friends than a father, who has to infiltrate a predominantly female group. An individual acting outside of their gender prescription does not counteract the way that society is structured to reinforce the gender binary on a systemic level.

Another curious glimpse into the performance of gender is seen in the transition from a straight woman cohabitating with her boyfriend to a married woman now living with her husband. Cohabitating, unmarried women's household work times were more closely associated with single women's household work times than with married women's household work patterns. In this case, the woman is performing

this household work as a way of acting out her wife status, not because of having a man as a housemate (Shelton and John, 1993). These instances of performative gender illustrate how the specialization hypothesis is not the only thing that dictates the division of labor within a household.

A version of performative behavior relating to one's status plays out in lesbian families too. When a non-biological mother in a lesbian relationship becomes a legal parent, the mother's role takes on a more legitimate parental role (Goldberg and Perry-Jenkins, 2007). The phenomenon of legal status affecting the behavior of families suggests that the specialization hypothesis is only part of the reason couples behave as they do. Societal constructions of gender and economic theory intersect to shape the behavior of each family unit.

The more equal division of labor within same sex couples is often attributed to the lack of a comparative advantage regarding tasks that women are often socialized to do such as cooking and cleaning (Badgett, 2001). If both people within a couple are more similarly suited for a task, there is less of a comparative advantage. Twiggs et al. (1999) made a key contribution to the literature by quantitatively ranking how strongly feminine-typed certain household chores are and identifying correlations between how femininely the chore is viewed and which of these chores men contribute to. Twiggs et al. (1999) found that men who participate in chores that are more strongly associated with femininity and womanhood also do more chores overall. Twiggs' reasoning is as follows: If a man breaks a gender expectation of doing a strongly feminine-typed task, he doesn't have to overcome additional gender expectations to do less feminine-typed tasks. For example, according to Twiggs' research, cooking dinner is a highly feminine-typed task and doing dishes is a less feminine-typed task. Twiggs et al. concluded that if a man cooks dinner, he has already overcome a gender expectations barrier that prevented participation in the less feminine-typed task of doing the dishes. Societal gender expectations and the gender wage gap influence how couples divide nonmarket labor. Twiggs et al.'s research

illustrates the complex way in which different chores are more or less gender typed and more or less related to each other.

Qualitative research points towards barriers to participation in household tasks related to gender roles. If a husband participates in what is deemed the most “female-typed” chores, he has already overcome the gender barrier to participation for the less “female-typed” tasks and is therefore more likely to participate. This study found doing dishes to be the least “female-typed” task and preparing meals to be the most “female-typed” (Twiggs et al., 1999). Married gay couples have been shown to do less nonmarket labor than different sex couples and lesbian couples. The question arises as to how the nonmarket labor gets completed in these marriages. One explanation is due to gay men’s income. There is a gay male disadvantage in earning potential, but gay men still tend to earn more than women of any sexual orientation. Therefore, they have more disposable income and may outsource some of this nonmarket labor (turning it into market labor) (Badgett, 2001, Martell and Roncolato, 2016). Gender-typed labor does not seem to lose its gender association in same-sex marriages. Men and women, regardless of sexual orientation, were socialized within their gender and carry some societal pressures and face gender barriers through their marriage. Still, if one member of the household has a comparative advantage in market labor, the other partner may specialize in household labor even without a gender advantage.

### **Primary Earner Framework**

All of the aforementioned research assumes that at the population level, straight men have a comparative advantage in the market economy over straight women, and one of the models incorporated a comparative advantage framework for lesbian couples. Essentially, because the gender wage gap does not exist in same-sex relationships, the models ignore other non-gender factors that create comparative advantages for nonmarket and market labor within same-sex couples.

Similar to the gender wage gap, which is modeled with straight people in mind, there are earning gaps based on sexuality. Straight men earn more than gay men, and lesbians earn more than straight women but less than gay men. The “gay disadvantage” for earnings compared to straight men and the “lesbian advantage” for earnings compared to straight women is well documented (Badgett, 2001, Klawitter, 2014). Additionally, within each same-sex couple, one partner will make more than the other. Bargaining power between partners influences how decisions are made and how labor is distributed. In a different-sex marriage, gender differences play a role, but other factors, such as education, race, and earning potential impact bargaining power regardless of gender division within a relationship (Badgett, 2001). Antecol and Steinberger (2011) made a key contribution to the literature by incorporating earning differences between same-sex partners into their model.

Antecol and Steinberger frame the difference in earnings by dividing same-sex couples into “primary earners” and “secondary earners”. Their analysis focused on comparing lesbian primary earners to straight men. Antecol and Steinberger’s hypothesis that primary earners in same-sex couples match the pattern of straight men regarding was confirmed. Primary lesbian earners work 475 more hours in the labor market than their partners and are less likely to leave the labor market. Secondary lesbian earners’ labor supply more closely mirrored that of straight married women, while primary lesbian earners’ labor supply more closely mirrored that of straight married men. The similarities between straight men and primary earning lesbians also mirror the pattern of labor supply after the transition to parenthood. Both straight married women and secondary? lesbian partners decrease their labor supply after becoming parents (Antecol and Steinberger, 2011). By looking at earnings for same-sex couples as a predictor of labor supply, Antecol and Steinberger identified a power dynamic separate from gender that influences how families make decisions.

## **Nonmarket Labor**

For the purposes of this paper, nonmarket labor refers to unpaid work done outside of the market economy. This includes work is usually in, around, or relating to the household (Johnson, 2013). Factors such as gender and earning potential affect the division of total (market and nonmarket) labor.

Understanding how societal influence affects the division of labor is necessary for interpreting my research question. Comparing the division of nonmarket labor between different-sex couples, lesbian couples, and gay couples through a primary earner framework is more complex than measuring the time each person spends on chores. In order to more fully understand the patterns behind the division of labor that these couples tend to settle on, we can look to relevant literature and economic theory.

Badgett (2001) walked readers through navigating seemingly “inefficient” family structures by pointing out that while efficiency is a factor in why families form, families provide other value outside of increasing efficiency such as intimacy and stability. Therefore, not conforming to the specialization hypothesis is not considered “irrational”. While both gay men and lesbians divide domestic labor rather evenly, lesbians switch off different tasks with their partner while gay men specialize on their own tasks in a way that results in equal time spent on nonmarket labor (Kurdek, 2007). This is a difference between same-sex couples where no member of the couple has a comparative advantage that arises from how they were socialized to do or not do housework. There are many reasons this distribution of labor may occur, and understanding more about how a comparative advantage in market labor that is not tied to gender can provide insight.

The primary earner framework coined by Antecol and Steinberger (2011) is used to analyze the division of market labor. Dividing lesbians into primary and secondary earners has clear parallels to the gender pay gap where men tend to earn more than women. A paper that looks at earning differences within couples and the effects of those earning differences on labor supply directly ties earning potential

to labor supply. I believe that earning differences between same-sex couples also shed light on nonmarket labor.

A lot of literature exists relating the division of labor for different-sex couples to earning differences between men and women, specialization after having children, gender expectations within marriage, and more. When it comes to understanding the division of labor for same-sex couples, it becomes difficult to draw parallels to different-sex couples. Rather than separate the gender of the spouses and the earnings of the spouses, the vast majority of papers choose to generalize men as being the breadwinner and the woman being the secondary earner. (Antecol and Steinberger, 2011). The literature surrounding the division of labor in different-sex couples relies heavily on gender differences such as socialization, the gender pay gap, and societal expectations. When the differences between partners are no longer tied to gender, the same models cannot be used to understand the couple.

I have not found an official explanation for this in the literature, but one possible explanation is that gender roles and earnings go hand in hand and reinforce each other. Andresen and Nix (2022) isolated causes of the child penalty by comparing same-sex and lesbian couples who adopted children and gave birth biologically. They ruled out cisgender women's absolute advantage in giving birth as well as men's comparative advantage in the labor market as reasons that women make less money after a child enters the home. Andersen and Nix concluded that the drop in earnings for mothers after birth in different-sex couples was not due to the biological ability for cisgender women to give birth or because of a comparative advantage for men in earnings. Instead, it is attributed to gendered preferences for childcare, gender norms, and discrimination. When it comes to earning potential after the transition to parenthood, it appears that gender and earnings are intertwined.

When same-sex couples divide their nonmarket labor, it is not due to gender differences or gender discrimination. Gender and earnings are not intertwined in the same way for same-sex couples.

Earnings still play a role. By more deeply examining the division of nonmarket labor through the primary earner framework, we can gain insight into how and if same-sex couples choose to specialize. While I am using the primary earner framework for same-sex couples, I am not using the same framework for different-sex couples. Instead, I will generalize that men are the primary earners in their partnerships. Gender roles and earnings are inextricably linked. Performative acts of gender cause breadwinning women to do more housework even when their market labor hours are higher than their husbands (Bertrand et al., 2015). Because husband-wife gender roles are linked to behavior in nonmarket and market labor, I will compare straight men with gay and lesbian primary earners, and I will compare straight women with gay and lesbian secondary earners.

The perception of time spent on daily activities is not equivalent to actual time spent on said activities. Yavorsky's study on the gender division of labor across the transition to parenthood (2015) specifically examines the inconsistencies in people estimating how much time they spend on tasks. By using time diaries and longitudinal surveys, Yavorsky measured the patterns of overestimates and underestimates for time spent on total work compared to time diaries. While time-diaries are more accurate than longitudinal data which itself is more accurate than cross-sectional data, I conducted a cross-sectional survey. This is due to the time and budget constraints of my thesis. I stratified by task to increase the accuracy of my responses (Yavorsky, 2015). While there are methodological concerns for accuracy in a cross-sectional survey, perception of time is a valuable measure in and of itself. The perception of the division of labor is related to relationship quality and perceived equality (Kurdek, 2007). Working within the constraints of my undergraduate thesis, a cross-sectional study gives me valuable, appropriately accurate data that can help answer my research question.

## **Measuring Same-sex Relationships**

The US census is one marker of the level of recognition and acknowledgment of same-sex couples within mainstream society. Marriage is not just a set of legal rights, it is a status that is acted out by spouses (Shelton and John, 1993). Gay marriage was nationally legalized in 2014. Prior to that, there was a slew of options for same-sex couples living in nonlegalized marriages to describe their status. In the 1990 and 2000 census, there were options for Unmarried Partner (UP) and Husband/Wife (H/W) for the relationship to householder. There was a separate question for marital status. While cleaning the census data, the US Census Bureau changed some of the same-sex couples that answered that they were husbands of the male householder or wives of the female householder causing an undercount of same-sex couples. Different-sex couples that were in unmarried domestic partnerships and same-sex couples in unmarried domestic partnerships were lumped together in the counting. Overall, the over 40% of same-sex unmarried partners were misclassified as different-sex unmarried partners in the 2000 census (Black et al., 2006). The way in which these questions were coded provided no clear option to state to the government that same-sex couples lived in partnerships that resembled marriages. This lack of recognition exemplifies how, even if same-sex couples act similarly to different-sex couples, same-sex couples' status is not recognized by society in the same way that the relationships of different-sex couples are.

## **Methods**

### **Data**

The goal of this thesis is to assess if same-sex couples and different-sex couples follow the same pattern of dividing nonmarket labor based on earner status. To find this out, I recruited survey participants through Prolific, where they were paid for their time. Prolific allows the researcher to select

certain demographics. I selected for individuals in the US and the UK who lived with their partner and did not have kids. I initially had 240 respondents, but I eliminated eight of them because they left certain answers blank or wrote in an answer that placed them outside of the demographic that I selected for.

There is a great deal of precedent to have more data on different-sex couples than same-sex couples because a lot of studies get their data from sources that survey the general population, such as the US census, where there are more people in different-sex relationships than same-sex relationships. However, given my limited sample size due to the quantity of queer people on Prolific and my limited budget for recruiting participants, the sample sizes ended up being nearly equal. (119 respondents in straight relationships and 113 respondents in gay relationships) I recruited my participants in two buckets, one bucket for people who identified as gay, and one bucket for any sexuality. Some people who were in the general bucket were in same-sex relationships and some people in the gay bucket were in different-sex relationships.

Getting data from both members of a couple is preferable, but there is precedent to use data from only one couple member (Martell and Roncolato, 2016). I have some data about the other partner such as demographic information, education, income information. Some datapoints, such as marital status and length of cohabitation, have the same answer for each partner. Other datapoints were about what the respondent perceived within their relationship. While perception is subjective and not the same within a couple, perception is still quite valuable for studies such as this one. It matters how relationships actually divide labor, but how individuals perceive the division of labor is also key. Yavorsky's study on the gender division of labor across the transition to parenthood (2015) specifically examines the inconsistencies in people estimating how much time they spend on tasks. By using time diaries and longitudinal surveys, Yavorsky measured the patterns of overestimates and underestimates for time spent on total work compared to time diaries. Despite time-diaries being more accurate than longitudinal

data which itself is more accurate than cross-sectional data, I conducted a cross-sectional survey. This is due to the time and budget constraints of my thesis. Stratifying questions by task increased the accuracy of my responses (Yavorsky, 2015). While there are methodological concerns for accuracy in a cross-sectional survey, perception of time is a valuable measure in and of itself. The perception of the division of labor is related to relationship quality and perceived equality (Kurdek, 2007). Working within the constraints of my undergraduate thesis, a cross-sectional study gives me valuable, appropriately accurate data that can help answer my research question.

My data contained ordinal categorical variables, unordered categorical variables, and numerical variables. The dependent variable for each regression was an ordinal categorical variable. The categories for the chores that are included in the regression as dependent variables include “primary earner does all/most”, “equal/either/neither”, and “secondary earner leads/does most”. I used an ordered probit regression model to compare different demographic groups’ likelihood of participating in certain tasks based on categorical dependent variables.

I chose to focus on the following 7 household tasks: preparing meals, getting groceries, cleaning the kitchen, cleaning the bedroom, cleaning the bathroom, organizing budget and finances, and taking care of, maintaining, and updating technology. These tasks include both female-typed tasks (meals, grocery, kitchen), more neutral but feminine-leaning tasks (bathroom, bedroom) and male-typed tasks (budget, IT). I ran four regressions for each of the 7 tasks. I ran a regression looking at the likelihood of if a primary earner in a different-sex relationship is likely to do a certain chore based on certain control factors. I ran the same regression for primary earners in same-sex relationships, secondary earners in different-sex relationships, and secondary earners in same-sex relationships. Then, I compared the primary earners in same-sex relationships and the primary earners in different-sex relationships with

each other and I compared secondary earners in same-sex relationships with secondary earners in different-sex relationships.

By comparing two different regressions with each other, I can tell when the groups I am comparing follow the same pattern and when those patterns differ. My hypothesis, that all groups follow the specialization hypothesis but that same-sex couples follow it to a lesser extent, would be confirmed if there are less significant results that follow the specialization hypothesis for same-sex couples than for different-sex couples. If different-sex couples follow the specialization hypothesis and same-sex couples either have no significant values for whether or not they follow the specialization hypothesis or negate the specialization hypothesis all together, this also confirms my hypothesis. In these cases, different-sex couples' behavior are predicted by the specialization hypothesis while same-sex couples' behavior is not predicted by the specialization hypothesis.

Traditionally, one would compare the two populations I am comparing in the same regression, but I did not do that. While splitting the regressions up makes it difficult to compare the results with each other, it does allow for clearly seeing if one population adheres to the specialization hypothesis which is still useful information.

These regressions are meant to show what datapoints do and do not relate to the specialization hypothesis. As a reminder, the specialization hypothesis refers to the concept where one partner specializes in market labor and the other specializes in nonmarket labor. By structuring my analysis around earner status, I can compare how much couples share or switch off tasks. My hypothesis is that both straight and gay couples conform to the specialization hypothesis, but that straight couples conform to it less often. Conforming to the specialization hypothesis means that a secondary earner is reported to be doing the majority of a task.

One part of the survey the participants took included asking participants who they thought society deemed in charge of various household tasks. There was a 5-point scale that went from “always men”, assigned a value of 1, to “always women”, assigned a value of 5. I used these datapoints for two things. I was able to gender-type each task by tabulating the values for each individual task, a method borrowed from Twigg’s 1999 paper. A completely masculine-typed task would have a value of 1 and a completely feminine-typed task would have a value of 5. Taking the average revealed the mean value of all of the participant’s beliefs. This gender-typing of tasks allows me to compare side-by-side which tasks people associate with women doing them and which are more associated with men doing them. Table 1 shown below shows the average rating as well as the minimum and maximum values that were selected.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics: Gender-type of various household chores

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Meals	232	4.013	.718	1	5
Grocery	232	4.03	.752	1	5
Kitchen	232	4.246	.718	2	5
Trash	232	2.155	.898	1	5
Bath	232	3.957	.749	1	5
Lawn	232	1.728	.738	1	5
Bed	232	3.879	.723	2	5
Laundry	232	4.172	.687	2	5
Budget	232	2.491	.873	1	5
IT	232	1.797	.719	1	5
Travel	232	3.767	.997	1	5
Car	232	1.457	.601	1	3
Home	232	1.556	.669	1	4

Note 1: Each chore was included in the index of societal expectations created in the PCA, but only the seven highlighted chores are included in the main regressions that are the focus of this paper.

Note 2: Survey participants were asked to rate each chore on a scale from 1 to 5. The option to choose 1 or 5 was available for all chores, but for some chores, the distribution did not include one end of the scale.

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You will notice that the chores that don't include 1 (always man) are feminine-typed and the chores that don't include 5 (always woman) are feminine-typed.

I asked the societal expectation questions to gauge how my sample viewed gender norms regarding different chores. I used people's societal expectations to conduct a principal component analysis (PCA). This econometric tool is used to isolate latent variables that would explain the unseen factors that explain the pattern in people's expectations regarding who is responsible for different household chores. The first component that the PCA generated explained over 40% of the underlying factor that influences what people's expectations for who completes various household chores are. The rest of the components of the PCA explained exponentially less of the underlying factors and were therefore not included in the regressions. Therefore, I only included the first principal component (pc1) in the regression. Including pc1 isolates when people have particularly gendered expectations, or particularly ungendered expectations when most others have very gendered expectations.

## Theory

My survey focused on the division of labor within actual relationships. Initially, I constructed an 8-point scale that went from "I do it all" to "my partner does it all". I simplified it to a 3-point scale so that it would be more suited to ordered probit regressions. The 3-point scale signified if one person did all or most of a task, if no one took the lead on a task, or if the other person took the lead or did most of the task. Then, coupled with the respondent's income information, I relabeled the data so that the 3-point signified if the primary earner did all or most of a chore, if it was equal, or if the secondary earner did most or all of a chore.

$$Y_{\text{chore}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{pc1}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{Coh}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{Inc}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{Gen1}} + \beta_5 X_{\text{Gen2}} + \beta_6 X_{\text{Gen1}} * X_{\text{Gen2}} + \beta_7 X_{\text{Mar}} + \beta_8 X_{\text{Ed1}} + \beta_9 X_{\text{Ed2}} + \varepsilon \quad \text{Equation}$$

I conducted 4 regressions each for every dependent variable (the 7 highlighted chores in table 1), one with different-sex primary earners, one with same-sex primary earners, one with different-sex secondary earners, and one with same-sex secondary earners. My control variables included an index of the respondent's views on societal expectations of various household chores created from a PCA (pc1), length of cohabitation (Coh), total combined income (Inc), the survey respondent's gender (Gen1) and the respondent's partner's gender (Gen2). To accommodate for the high level of collinearity that arose from same-sex pairs mostly consisting of two members of the same gender but sometimes being in relationships with nonbinary people, I created an interaction variable. This was not the right econometric approach for same-sex couples and makes less sense for different-sex couples who were all classified as either man-woman or woman-man. I also included marital status (Mar), the respondent's level of education (Ed1), and the respondent's partner's level of education (Ed2). The education of one partner is also linked to the education of another partner (Barban et al., 2021). However, the level of collinearity for education of one partner and education of the second partner is significantly less than the level of collinearity regarding the genders of the couple. Therefore, I did not include an interaction variable for education.

Income and the index of societal expectations regarding various household chores are numerical variables, gender is an unordered categorical variable, and cohabitation length, marriage status, and education are ordinal categorical variables. Marriage status is a binary variable where being married is more traditional than being unmarried. Therefore, there is an order to how traditional marriage status is. Since marriage equality is a rather recent development in both the US and the UK, there is more historical context necessary to fully interpret the meaning of this status, which is included in the discussion.

## Econometric Issues

While people identified the chores in their relationship based on their likelihood of participating in a chore, I was interested in whether a primary earner or a secondary earner was taking part in a chore. I used a series of “if” commands to replace the values one way for respondents who were primary earners and a different way for people who were secondary earners.

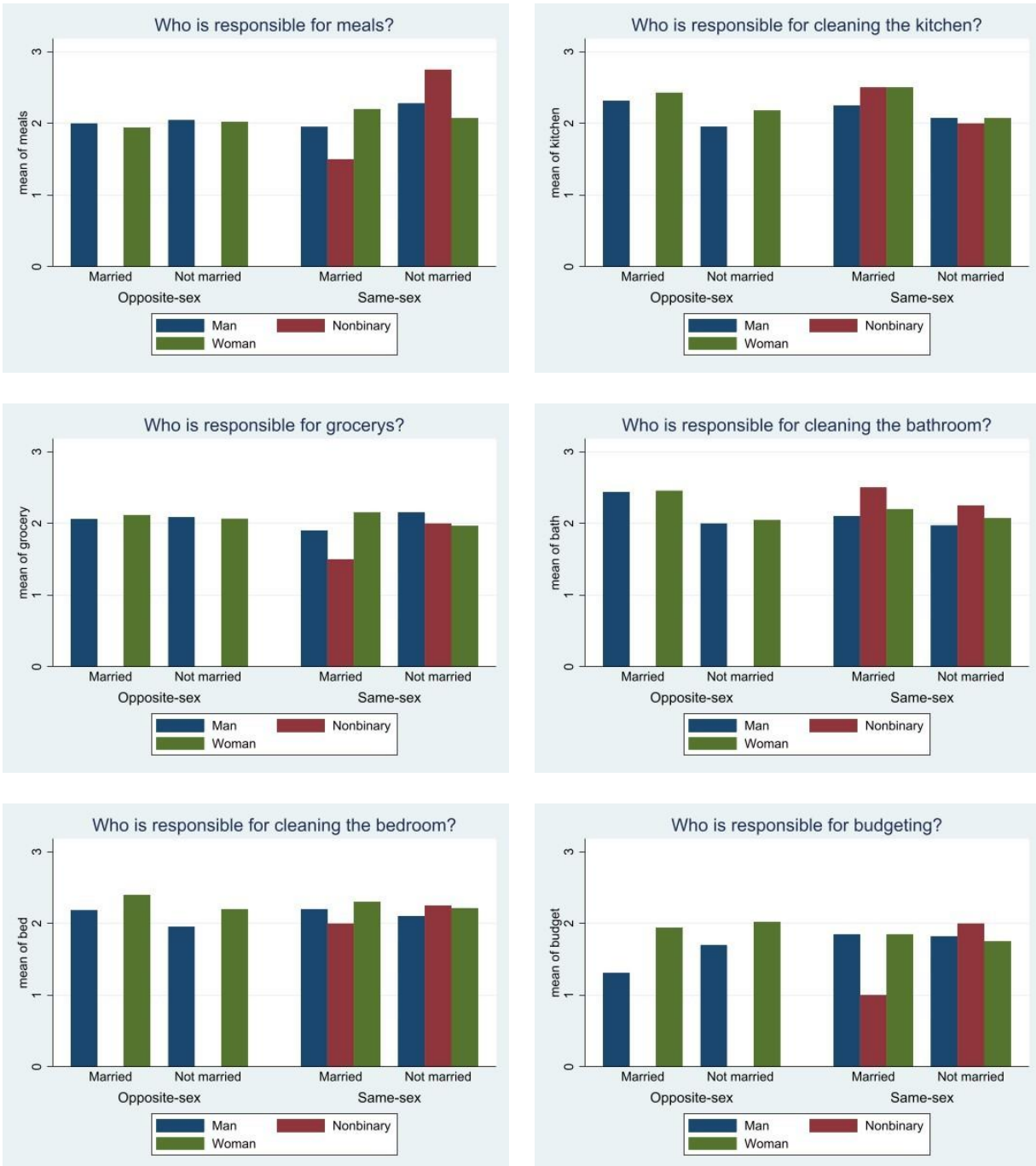
I grouped people who earned equal amounts as their partners with primary earners. I did this because my experiment compared primary and secondary earners. There were only 16 respondents who reported equal earnings, and one of those couples specified that one member actually earned more than the other, even though they selected the “equal” option for who earns more money. The binary division of earnings allowed for a direct comparison with an already limited number of datapoints. My survey had 55 straight primary earners, 60 gay primary earners, 64 straight secondary earners, and 53 gay secondary earners. Removing 16 of those datapoints would have made those numbers even smaller.

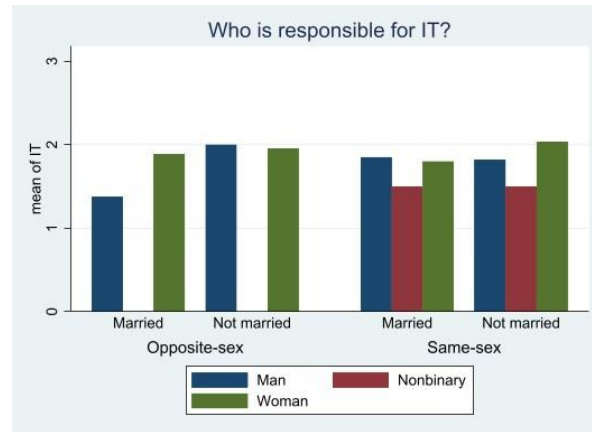
The following tables describe the extent to which different demographic groups participate in household chores. For figure 1, a series of bar charts, shown below, a higher value on the y-axis means that secondary earners do the task, while a lower value means that primary earners do the task. The graphics do not show the distribution of the data but rather the mean. This allows for clearer comparison between chores as well as different subgroups. I chose to show the mean stratified by demographic group so that one can visually see how different demographics have different average answers. While visualizing distribution would be interesting, given the limited categories for who is responsible for certain tasks as well as an effort to keep the visuals simple and intuitive, I settled for a bar chart with 3 different demographic categories that are known to correlate with specific behaviors of division of labor: marriage status, relationship type, and gender.

Table 2: Who participates in various household chores?

<b>Tabulation of Meals</b>			
Meals	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	75	32.33	32.33
Equal/either/neither	64	27.59	59.91
Secondary earner leads/does most	93	40.09	100.00
Total	232	100.00	
<b>Tabulation of Grocery</b>			
Grocery	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	57	24.57	24.57
Equal/either/neither	103	44.40	68.97
Secondary earner leads/does most	72	31.03	100.00
Total	232	100.00	
<b>Tabulation of Kitchen</b>			
Kitchen	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	48	20.69	20.69
Equal/either/neither	88	37.93	58.62
Secondary earner leads/does most	96	41.38	100.00
Total	232	100.00	
<b>Tabulation of Bath</b>			
Bath	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	64	27.59	27.59
Equal/either/neither	70	30.17	57.76
Secondary earner leads/does most	98	42.24	100.00
Total	232	100.00	
<b>Tabulation of Bed</b>			
Bed	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	43	18.53	18.53
Equal/either/neither	100	43.10	61.64
Secondary earner leads/does most	89	38.36	100.00
Total	232	100.00	
<b>Tabulation of Budget</b>			
Budget	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	86	37.07	37.07
Equal/either/neither	101	43.53	80.60
Secondary earner leads/does most	45	19.40	100.00
Total	232	100.00	
<b>Tabulation of IT</b>			
IT	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Primary earner leads/does most	92	39.66	39.66
Equal/either/neither	80	34.48	74.14
Secondary earner leads/does most	60	25.86	100.00
Total	232	100.00	

Figure 1: Who is responsible for various household tasks stratified by marital status, gender, and relationship type





Note 1: On the vertical axis, 1 refers to primary earner leads/does most while 3 equates to secondary earner leads/does most. Therefore, the higher the bar on the bar chart, the more the task is done by the secondary earner. The other characteristics (marital status, gender, and relationship type) have all been correlated with behavior regarding the division of nonmarket labor (Andresen and Nix, 2020, Bertrand et al., 2015), hence their inclusion in the graphics. Gender affects behavior in different-sex couples, but gay men and lesbians exhibit different behavior as well (Badgett, 2001, Kurdek, 2007, Yavorsky et al., 2015), which is why gender is included for same-sex couples as well.

Looking at tale 2 and figure 1 together provides a full understanding of the overall distribution of who contributes to what chore based on demographic. Figure 1 visualizes how different demographics that are known to be associated with different behavior: gender and marital status (Bauer, 2016, Bertrand et al., 2015, Kurdek, 2007, Shelton and John, 1993, Twiggs et al., 1999). I included gender stratification within same-sex couples because gay men and lesbians have been shown to divide labor differently (Badgett, 2001, Kurdek, 2007, Yavorsky et al., 2015). Seeing the visual of how contributions to chores differs is a reminder that relationship type is one of many factors that influence behavior. Figure 2 shows how respondents responded to answering who does most of the task. The survey the respondents responded to asked if the respondent participated in a chore and if the respondent was the primary earner. Using “if” statements, I re-labeled the answers to state if the primary earner or the

secondary earner was responsible for certain chores, allowing for interpretation in line with the specialization hypothesis and my own hypothesis. With a general understanding of the gender-typing of

## **Results**

Throughout my results and discussion, I focus exclusively on significant findings in the results and analysis. Because of my ordered probit analysis, limited sample size, and side-by-side comparison of two regressions for each chore and each earner type, the results can be a little bit challenging to interpret. The most direct comparisons are when the values for same-sex and different sex people of the same earning status are both significant. In situations where equivalent coefficients are significant for both same-sex and different-sex populations, one can easily conclude that they do or do not follow the same pattern.

While I am focusing only on significant values, the number of control variables applied to each of the 7 household tasks resulted in enough significant values to provide interesting, meaningful results. As a reminder, I am only looking at the direction of the pattern, not the magnitude of the findings. This is partly because interpreting the magnitude of the coefficient is difficult for an ordered probit model and because my hypothesis asks how often different people follow the specialization hypothesis, not how much they specialize (partial specialization or total specialization). Additionally, when I ran my regressions on stata, the program included a note saying that my standard errors are deemed “questionable”, likely due to my sample size and numerous dummy variables. While this points to an issue in my model, my job in writing an undergraduate thesis is to follow the research process with integrity. I recognize that more thorough research would have more robust statistical significance. I used the data I was able to get and conducted econometric analysis to the best of my availability given that data. Overall, I believe my results still yield meaningful results.

Table 4: Regression Results: Comparing Different-sex and Same-sex Primary Earners

VARIABLES	Meals (different-sex)	Meals (same-sex)	Kitchen (different-sex)	Kitchen (same-sex)	Grocery (different-sex)	Grocery (same-sex)	Bath (different-sex)	Bath (same-sex)	Bed (same-sex)	Bed (same-sex)	Budget (different-sex)	Budget (same-sex)	IT (different-sex)	IT (same-sex)
Societal expectations	0.00413 (0.0765)	-0.0458 (0.0710)	0.0863 (0.0791)	-0.0244 (0.0799)	0.0924 (0.0782)	0.0834 (0.0769)	-0.0304 (0.0833)	0.0277 (0.0775)	0.0237 (0.0729)	-0.0126 (0.0748)	0.0604 (0.0895)	-0.217*** (0.0834)	0.0163 (0.120)	-0.140* (0.0775)
Cohabitation: 0-6 months	0.537 (1.063)	1.612 (0.988)	-0.993 (1.136)	4.348*** (1.224)	-1.970* (1.130)	0.918 (0.986)	-1.855 (1.133)	-0.838 (0.922)	0.633 (1.072)	0.802 (0.959)	-6.625 (479.6)	-0.0651 (0.979)	2.959 (75.31)	0.285 (0.937)
Cohabitation: 6 months-1 year	-5.438 (897.0)	1.776* (0.936)	-6.725 (752.3)	3.906*** (1.233)	-9.084 (830.1)	0.421 (0.943)	0.642 (1.435)	-2.143*** (0.922)	-6.143 (766.0)	1.152 (0.916)	-6.769 (797.2)	-0.523 (0.987)	5.733 (2.142)	-0.194 (0.965)
Cohabitation: 1-2 years	0.725 (0.894)	1.827* (0.964)	-2.537** (0.991)	3.529*** (1.139)	-2.368** (0.974)	0.0787 (0.950)	-0.593 (0.937)	-0.755 (0.934)	-0.594 (0.851)	1.504 (0.942)	-0.768 (1.006)	-0.220 (0.944)	3.666* (2.018)	-0.129 (0.905)
Cohabitation: 2-3 years	-0.624 (0.994)	1.034 (0.927)	-1.649* (0.975)	1.577 (1.148)	-3.137*** (1.175)	-1.137 (0.952)	-1.450 (1.065)	-0.772 (0.925)	-1.175 (0.938)	0.646 (0.901)	0.727 (1.069)	-0.513 (0.939)	2.284 (1.767)	-0.716 (0.932)
Cohabitation: 3-5 years	-0.143 (0.843)	1.754* (0.889)	-1.732** (0.865)	2.059** (1.009)	-1.829** (0.852)	-0.739 (0.838)	-0.175 (0.851)	-1.454* (0.817)	-0.784 (0.753)	-0.419 (0.825)	0.309 (0.871)	0.101 (0.873)	4.887** (2.190)	0.232 (0.856)
Cohabitation: 5-10 years	-0.155 (0.763)	1.368* (0.765)	-1.001 (0.763)	2.846*** (0.921)	-1.785*** (0.843)	0.213 (0.714)	-0.133 (0.825)	-0.857 (0.692)	-0.705 (0.725)	0.718 (0.698)	0.0399 (0.895)	-0.846 (0.720)	1.284 (1.710)	0.288 (0.697)
Cohabitation: 10-15 years	-4.270 (897.0)	1.328 (0.924)	0.493 (1.452)	1.968* (1.033)	3.811 (827.0)	0.436 (0.914)	5.186 (635.9)	-0.0393 (0.940)	-6.681 (766.0)	0.336 (0.897)	-5.868 (797.2)	-0.630 (0.943)	-5.316** (2.118)	0.459 (0.861)
Cohabitation: 15-20 years	0.191 (0.790)	0.299 (0.918)	-0.601 (0.796)	3.327*** (1.131)	-2.456*** (0.918)	-1.127 (0.965)	-2.004** (0.873)	-1.791* (0.941)	-1.006 (0.780)	-0.545 (0.936)	2.113* (0.972)	0.576 (0.929)	-8.214 (405.6)	0.208 (0.889)
Total combined income	-2.96e-06 (4.13e-06)	-9.58e-07 (2.35e-06)	8.68e-07 (3.89e-06)	-5.75e-06** (2.58e-06)	3.99e-07 (3.89e-06)	-2.21e-06 (2.69e-06)	-9.57e-06* (5.28e-06)	2.47e-06 (2.43e-06)	-1.66e-06 (3.75e-06)	4.08e-06 (2.67e-06)	3.93e-06 (5.03e-06)	-4.09e-06 (0.6)	0.5*** (1.17e-05)	-1.22e-06 (2.39e-06)
Respondent is a man	0.0347 (1.215)	-5.223 (301.9)	1.946 (1.422)	5.522 (830.9)	1.267 (1.283)	3.416 (346.7)	6.940 (635.9)	5.622 (846.7)	0.829 (1.292)	5.337 (663.4)	-5.673 (797.2)	-6.410 (618.9)	-1.829 (1.664)	-5.611 (509.9)
Respondent is nonbinary	-1.296 (1.044)	-1.296 (1.044)	-1.296 (1.044)	-5.572 (589.2)	-1.122 (1.054)	1.066 (1.054)	0.561 (1.079)	-1.122 (1.120)	-1.122 (1.120)	-1.122 (1.120)	-5.244 (435.7)	-5.244 (435.7)	-6.047 (322.8)	-6.047 (322.8)
Respondent's partner is a man	-0.517 (1.205)	5.530 (301.9)	0.800 (1.381)	-3.826 (830.9)	1.190 (1.253)	-2.587 (346.7)	5.251 (635.9)	-6.437 (846.7)	-	-5.393 (663.4)	-4.341 (797.2)	6.965 (618.9)	3.217* (1.720)	5.567 (509.9)
Respondent's partner is nonbinary	7.095 (294.1)	7.095 (294.1)	7.095 (294.1)	7.027 (589.2)	0.707 (1.756)	0.707 (1.756)	-0.696 (1.628)	-0.696 (1.628)	0.772 (1.763)	0.772 (1.763)	7.312 (435.7)	7.312 (435.7)	1.260 (603.5)	1.260 (603.5)
Marital Status	0.117 (0.509)	0.227 (0.477)	1.423*** (0.527)	-0.500 (0.527)	0.566 (0.483)	-0.517 (0.527)	-0.617 (0.549)	0.480 (0.498)	-0.187 (0.458)	-0.147 (0.519)	1.169* (0.591)	-0.897 (0.550)	2.045* (1.099)	0.225 (0.497)
Respondent's highest level of education is high school	-0.777 (1.020)	-0.491 (0.719)	0.597 (1.031)	0.395 (0.748)	2.195*** (0.950)	0.583 (0.859)	-0.202 (1.084)	-1.611*** (0.797)	1.319 (0.920)	-1.714* (0.966)	1.099 (1.203)	2.137** (0.928)	3.330** (1.692)	0.849 (0.730)

Table 4 continued from previous page

VARIABLES	Meals (different-sex)	Meals (same-sex)	Kitchen (different-sex)	Kitchen (same-sex)	Grocery (different-sex)	Grocery (same-sex)	Bath (different-sex)	Bath (same-sex)	Bed (different-sex)	Bed (same-sex)	Budget (different-sex)	Budget (same-sex)	IT (different-sex)	IT (same-sex)
Respondent's highest level of education is some college	0.311 (0.956)	-0.123 (0.721)	-0.219 (0.993)	-0.0346 (0.759)	2.182** (0.945)	-0.934 (0.806)	-0.656 (1.103)	-1.468* (0.812)	0.928 (0.903)	-1.643* (0.897)	0.599 (1.181)	1.810** (0.893)	-3.475* (1.835)	0.862 (0.728)
Respondent's highest level of education is a bachelor's degree	-0.370 (0.791)	-0.559 (0.605)	0.0664 (0.838)	-1.168* (0.631)	0.650 (0.721)	-1.118 (0.692)	0.200 (0.841)	-1.919*** (0.715)	0.821 (0.749)	-2.859*** (0.814)	1.085 (1.055)	1.490** (0.758)	-1.165 (1.185)	0.947 (0.615)
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is high school		0.828 (1.018)		0.837 (1.102)	0.115 (1.105)			7.705 (395.3)	2.872** (1.272)			-1.896 (1.321)		-0.575 (1.082)
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is some college	1.324 (1.269)	1.479 (0.970)	8.197 (752.3)	1.302 (1.111)	-0.597 (1.170)	1.086 (1.084)	0.966 (899.3)	8.101 (395.3)	-11.83 (1.059)	2.448** (1.000)	-2.802 (1.127)	-1.932 (1.279)	-2.318 (2.037)	-0.517 (1.078)
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is a bachelor's degree	2.141 (1.269)	1.460* (0.970)	8.482 (752.3)	2.025* (1.111)	0.471 (1.170)	2.428** (1.084)	2.163 (899.3)	8.028 (395.3)	-11.21 (1.059)	2.487** (1.187)	-2.509 (1.127)	-0.685 (1.279)	-5.045 (2.037)	-0.102 (1.077)
Respondent's highest level of education is a master's degree	0.518 (1.032)		1.499 (1.090)		2.861*** (1.170)		1.140 (1.101)		1.653 (1.059)		0.600 (1.381)		1.367 (2.037)	
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is some high school	8.812 (1.386)	3.354 (896.3)			0.849 (1.170)		1.786 (899.3)		-10.93 (1.059)		-8.262 (1.259)		-5.843 (2.037)	
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is some college	1.800 (1.269)	8.233 (752.3)			0.550 (1.170)		2.973 (899.3)		-11.18 (1.059)		-1.909 (1.127)		0.159 (2.037)	
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is a master's degree	2.442 (1.269)	9.426 (752.3)			2.091 (1.170)		2.451 (899.3)		-10.06 (1.059)		-3.247 (1.127)		-6.344 (2.037)	
Observations	55	60	55	60	55	60	55	60	55	60	55	60	55	60

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Note: A primary earner being responsible for most of or all of a task is associated with a negative value and a secondary earner being responsible for most or all of a task is associated with a positive value. The specialization hypothesis as well as my own hypothesis predict that secondary earners will do the majority of tasks. A positive significant value, signifying that the secondary earner does the majority of the chore, confirms the specialization hypothesis. A negative value rejects the specialization hypothesis.

Throughout my results and discussion, I focus exclusively on significant findings in the results and analysis. Because of my ordered probit analysis, limited sample size, and side-by-side comparison of two regressions for each chore and each earner type, the results can be a little bit challenging to interpret. The most direct comparisons are when the values for same-sex and different sex people of the same earning status are both significant. In situations where equivalent coefficients are significant for both same-sex and different-sex populations, one can easily conclude that they do or do not follow the same pattern.

While I am focusing only on significant values, the number of control variables applied to each of the 7 household tasks resulted in enough significant values to provide interesting, meaningful results. As a reminder, I am only looking at the direction of the pattern, not the magnitude of the findings. This is partly because interpreting the magnitude of the coefficient is difficult for an ordered probit model and because my hypothesis asks how often different people follow the specialization hypothesis, not how much they specialize (partial specialization or total specialization). Additionally, when I ran my regressions on stata, the program included a note saying that my standard errors are deemed “questionable”, likely due to my sample size and numerous dummy variables. While this points to an issue in my model, my job in writing an undergraduate thesis is to follow the research process with integrity. I recognize that more thorough research would have more robust statistical significance. I used the data I was able to get and conducted econometric analysis to the best of my availability given that data. Overall, I believe my results still yield meaningful results.

### **Primary Earners**

Table 4 shows results from 14 regressions. One regression for different-sex primary earners and one regression for same-sex primary earners for seven different household tasks. Each column represents a different regression. A positive coefficient is associated with the secondary earner being

more likely to do most or all of a task, supporting the specialization hypothesis, and a negative coefficient is associated with the primary earner being more likely to do most or all of a certain task, not supporting the specialization hypothesis. Comparing primary earners in straight relationships and primary earners in gay relationships yielded interesting results. The duration of cohabitation impacts who participates in various chores. Straight primary earners that have been living with their partner for 1-2 years, 2-3 years, and 3-5 years reported that secondary earners were more likely to be in charge of groceries for the household. Meanwhile, straight primary earners who had been cohabitating for 0-6 months, 6 months-1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, and 15-20 years all produced significant negative coefficients. A negative coefficient means that these primary earners were more likely to be in charge of household groceries. These results do not support the specialization hypothesis or the hypothesis of this paper.

Gay primary earners were more likely to take the lead on preparing meals when they have been living with their partner for 1-2 years, 3-5 years, and 5-10 years because table 4 shows negative significant value for those lengths of cohabitation. Meanwhile, length of cohabitation did not yield any significant results for straight primary earner's contributions to cooking meals. A lack of significant direction regarding who takes the lead on chores suggests that the chores are shared. The hypothesis of this paper is not confirmed in this situation because gay primary earners do not follow the specialization hypothesis while straight primary earners neither follow nor deviate from the specialization hypothesis. While gay primary earners are less traditional than their straight counterparts, no one in this scenario follows the specialization hypothesis. Straight primary earners were, however, less likely to lead cleaning the kitchen when they have been living together for 6 months-1 year, 2-3 years, 3-5 years, and 15-20 years. Length of cohabitation did not yield any significant results for gay people. Straight primary earners being less likely to clean the kitchen supports the specialization hypothesis. Meanwhile, gay

primary earners not being more or less likely to clean the kitchen confirms this paper's hypothesis since different-sex couples follow the specialization hypothesis and same-sex couples don't follow any significant pattern.

Straight primary earners were more likely to take charge of IT when they've been living with their partner for 1-2 years, 3-5 years, but less likely to take charge of IT if they have been living with their partner for 10-15 years. Sometimes. Straight primary earners follow the specialization hypothesis as it relates to IT while other times they do not. In this situation, I cannot draw conclusions as it relates to my hypothesis. There were no significant coefficients for various cohabitation lengths for gay primary earners regarding IT.

Interestingly, there was only one significant value for IT for all variables for all gay primary earners: the index of traditional beliefs. When the index is positive, it signifies that women are typically expected to do the task and when the index is negative, it signifies that men are typically expected to do the task. Standard deviation also affects the behavior of the index. The index of societal beliefs was significant and positive for same sex primary earners for IT. This negates the specialization hypothesis. The other male-typed task, budgeting, also produced significant negative results for the index of societal expectations. Gay primary earners were less likely to lead both budget and IT. The index had no significant effect on the female-typed or egalitarian chores. In this case, gay primary earners negate the specialization hypothesis while straight primary earners do not. This pattern supports my hypothesis because same-sex primary earners neither support nor reject the specialization hypothesis while same-sex primary earners reject the hypothesis, exemplifying how same-sex couples follow the specialization hypothesis less often than different-sex couples.

Marital status, whether a couple is married, yielded three significant results for straight primary earners and zero significant results for same-sex primary earners. Straight primary earners who are not married to their partners have significant

negative coefficients for grocery shopping, managing money, and managing technology, meaning that straight primary earners are more likely to take the lead on those chores. Meanwhile, marriage status does not have any significant impact for same-sex couples. Straight primary earners being more likely to defy the specialization hypothesis if they are not married while not affecting same-sex couples suggests that marital status means different things for same-sex couples and different-sex couples.

Education seems very significant in determining whether or not a gay primary earner is in charge of cleaning their bedroom. If the primary earning gay person has completed some college or has a bachelor's or master's degree, the coefficient is positive, and they are less likely to take charge of cleaning their bedroom. At the same time, when the primary gay primary earner's partners have completed some college or have a bachelor's or master's degree, the coefficient is negative and the gay primary earner is more likely to take charge of cleaning their bedroom. A gay primary earner's partner having a bachelor's degree actually makes the primary earner more likely to cook meals, buy groceries, clean the kitchen, and clean the bedroom. Education provides insight into earning potential, but earning potential is less relevant than current earning status and income.

Straight primary earners are less likely to clean the bathroom and bedroom if they have some college, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree, while they are more likely to clean the kitchen if they have completed some college or received a bachelor's degree. Gay primary earners are more likely to manage money if they have completed high school, completed some college, or a bachelor's degree. More results regarding primary earners can be seen in table 4.

## Secondary Earners

Table 4 shows results from 14 regressions. One regression for different-sex secondary earners and one regression for same-sex secondary earners for seven different household tasks. Each column represents a different regression. A positive coefficient is associated with the secondary earner being more likely to do most or all of a task, supporting the specialization hypothesis, and a negative coefficient is associated with the primary earner being more likely to do most or all of a certain task, not supporting the specialization hypothesis. The index of societal beliefs around division of labor provided a lot of significant insights for secondary earners. Gay secondary earners showed positive, significant coefficients for cleaning their bathrooms and bedrooms based on the index, but a negative coefficient for manage the couple's money. These results support the specialization hypothesis that the secondary earner does the majority of cleaning the bathroom and the bedroom, but reject the specialization hypothesis because gay primary earners do the majority of managing money. Straight secondary earners also showed a positive significant coefficient for manage money based on the index of societal beliefs regarding household chores, rejecting the specialization hypothesis for managing money for straight primary earners, and therefore rejecting the hypothesis of this paper.

Straight secondary earners produced positive, significant coefficients for cooking meals when they've been cohabitating for 6 months-1 year, 5-10 years, and 10-15 years, meaning they were less likely to take the lead on cooking meals. This rejects the specialization hypothesis. Straight secondary earners had positive coefficients managing technology when they've been living together for 6 months–1 year and for 3-5 years, meaning they were more likely to take the lead on, supporting the specialization hypothesis.

Marriage status was only significant for secondary earners in one chore for secondary earners. Gay secondary earners were more likely to do the majority of cooking meals when they were not

Table 5: Regression Results: Comparing Different-sex and Same-sex Secondary Earners

VARIABLES	Meals (different-sex)	Meals (same-sex)	Kitchen (different-sex)	Kitchen (same-sex)	Grocery (different-sex)	Grocery (same-sex)	Bath (different-sex)	Bath (same-sex)	Bed (same-sex)	Bed (different-sex)	Budget (same-sex)	II (different-sex)	II (same-sex)
Societal expectations	0.0259 (0.0861)	0.0870 (0.103)	-0.0534 (0.0885)	0.0972 (0.0965)	-0.0422 (0.0874)	0.0263 (0.0965)	-0.101 (0.107)	0.194** (0.0953)	0.0292 (0.0934)	0.348*** (0.117)	-0.196** (0.0865)	-0.166* (0.102)	-0.0670 (0.101)
Cohabitation: 0-6 months		-3.283 (891.0)		-4.337 (746.3)		6.833 (502.6)		-5.741 (977.8)		-6.426 (869.2)		11.64 (1.621)	-4.654 (301.8)
Cohabitation: 6 months-1 year	-2.331** (0.963)	-3.925 (891.0)	-1.955** (0.849)	-3.987 (746.3)	-1.549* (0.845)	1.214 (1.697)	-1.067 (0.870)	-5.356 (977.8)	0.208 (0.881)	-6.708 (869.2)	0.865 (0.749)	1.584** (0.840)	-4.410 (301.8)
Cohabitation: 2-3 years	-1.221 (0.883)	-4.018 (891.0)	-1.014 (0.824)	-5.400 (746.3)	0.696 (0.783)	0.714 (1.713)	-0.418 (0.852)	-4.919 (977.8)	0.351 (0.868)	-6.219 (869.2)	0.104 (0.715)	0.396 (0.895)	-4.908 (301.8)
Cohabitation: 3-5 years	-0.754 (0.802)	-3.211 (891.0)	-1.055 (0.837)	-4.410 (746.3)	0.429 (0.722)	0.471 (1.632)	-0.842 (0.871)	-5.390 (977.8)	-1.134 (0.824)	-7.031 (869.2)	0.823 (0.711)	1.712** (0.823)	-5.017 (301.8)
Cohabitation: 5-10 years	-1.286* (0.679)	-3.956 (891.0)	-1.065 (0.649)	-4.858 (746.3)	-0.141 (0.570)	1.365 (1.476)	0.195 (0.678)	-5.442 (977.8)	-0.596 (0.653)	-6.112 (869.1)	0.816 (0.533)	4.425 (1.431)	-6.370 (301.8)
Cohabitation: 10-15 years	-2.217** (1.066)	-3.365 (891.0)	-1.572 (0.983)	-4.837 (746.3)	-0.161 (0.849)	1.045 (1.575)	-0.157 (1.031)	-5.550 (977.8)	1.125 (0.824)	-5.697 (869.2)	0.745 (0.903)	4.411 (1.431)	-6.513 (301.8)
Cohabitation: 15-20 years	-1.038 (0.827)	-3.731 (891.0)	-0.189 (0.912)	-5.768 (746.3)	0.951 (0.827)	1.804 (1.651)	5.908 (325.9)	-6.693 (977.8)	0.736 (0.989)	-8.582 (869.2)	1.619** (0.707)	4.378 (1.431)	-4.228 (301.8)
Total combined income	-2.66e-06 (6.54e-06)	-7.39e-07 (2.07e-06)	-1.38e-05** (6.79e-06)	-3.86e-06* (1.98e-06)	4.03e-06 (6.29e-06)	-2.10e-06 (1.96e-06)	5.81e-06 (7.44e-06)	2.53e-06 (2.05e-06)	-5.02e-06 (7.08e-06)	1.35e-06 (2.29e-06)	7.78e-06 (6.54e-06)	9.96e-07 (7.03e-06)	-4.42e-06** (2.12e-06)
Respondent is a man	0.712	9.132	-0.597	-10.53	0.187	7.297	-	-5.376	-	-11.00	-0.743	1.962***	-1.362
Respondent is nonbinary	(0.496)	(891.0)	(0.515)	(836.6)	(0.481)	(1.051)	(0.633)	(919.6)	(0.556)	(1.031)	(0.463)	(0.571)	(1.996)
Respondent's partner is a man		-0.574 (1.460)		4.596 (746.3)		1.226 (1.531)		5.877 (977.8)		7.776 (869.2)		-5.759 (1.431)	-2.417 (1.663)
Respondent's partner is nonbinary		3.254 (891.0)		-5.856 (746.3)		3.344 (754.9)		-1.745 (1.383)		-3.867 (1.229)		16.20 (2.021)	1.278 (2.228)
Respondent is a man and their partner is a man		-0.412 (1.142)		4.746 (523.7)		6.036 (331.1)		-0.201 (1.031)		4.028 (606.4)		-7.242 (947.5)	1.188 (1.073)
Respondent is nonbinary and their partner is nonbinary		-12.25 (1.260)		16.20 (1.121)		-10.64 (1.294)		6.920 (1.661)		14.36 (1.605)		-36.22 (2.756)	-0.427 (2.833)
Marital Status	0.0334 (0.483)	1.083* (891.0)	-0.0539 (0.490)	-0.214 (911.7)	-0.669 (0.481)	0.686 (331.1)	-0.317 (0.548)	0.118 (1.342)	-0.283 (0.556)	0.657 (1.060)	0.199 (0.463)	-0.397 (0.571)	-0.605 (2.431)
Respondent's highest level of education is high school		3.715**		1.541		7.480		0.225		1.153		5.821	-0.946
Respondent's highest level of education is some college	1.003 (0.653)	(1.522) (891.0)	-1.409* (0.515)	(1.174) (836.6)	0.734 (0.481)	(502.6) (1.051)	0.295 (0.633)	(1.084) (919.6)	-0.0538 (0.556)	(1.314) (1.031)	-0.383 (0.463)	0.687 (0.571)	(1.232) (1.996)

Table 5 continued from previous page

VARIABLES	Meals (different-sex)	Meals (same-sex)	Kitchen (different-sex)	Kitchen (same-sex)	Grocery (different-sex)	Grocery (same-sex)	Bath (different-sex)	Bath (same-sex)	Bed (different-sex)	Bed (same-sex)	Budget (different-sex)	Budget (same-sex)	IT (different-sex)	IT (same-sex)
Respondent's highest level of education is bachelor's degree	0.486 (0.565)	1.942 (1.303) 2.997**	-1.159* (0.661)	1.009 (1.064) 0.876	0.384 (0.587)	6.940 (502.6) 7.103	0.0970 (0.631) 0.774	-0.147 (0.973) 0.606	-0.0897 (0.604) 0.0619	1.083 (1.188) 2.501*	0.164 (0.547) 0.948	7.745 (760.8) 8.251	0.109 (0.613) 0.614	0.901 (1.080) 2.467**
Respondent's highest level of education is master's degree														
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is high school		1.473 (0.551)		1.138 (1.214)		502.6 (0.689)		1.079 (0.606)		1.324 (0.0619)		760.8 (0.948)		1.215 (2.467**)
Respondent's highest level of education is some college	-0.775 (0.535) -0.588	1.059 (1.433)	0.466 (0.563) 0.339	1.011 (0.820) 0.886	0.384 (0.545) -0.431	0.967 (0.840) 0.449	0.111 (0.691) -0.604	0.934 (0.789) 0.281	0.286 (0.599) 0.0163	1.043 (0.880) -0.223	0.452 (0.531) 0.434	1.959** (0.876) 1.850**	0.647 (0.647) 0.716	1.063 (1.093) 0.614
Respondent's highest level of education is master's degree		0.965 (1.064)	0.531 (0.531)	0.835 (0.763)	0.518 (0.518)	0.825 (0.825) -0.242	0.605 (0.605) 0.106	0.780 (0.780) 0.106	0.565 (0.565) 0.197	0.867 (0.867) 0.197	0.513 (0.513) 2.016**	0.896 (0.896) 2.016**	0.592 (0.592) 1.108	0.845 (0.845) 1.108
Cohabitation: 6 months-1 year	-0.597 (1.084) -0.706	0.952 (0.952)	-0.468 (0.917) -2.060	0.806 (0.806)	0.504 (0.874) -0.0284	0.857 (0.857)	1.522 (0.935) -0.128	0.761 (0.962) -0.609	1.342 (0.962) -0.609	0.866 (0.866) 0.197	0.844 (0.841) -5.857	0.922 (0.922) 0.197	7.191 (236.4) 1.320	0.868 (0.868) 0.197
Respondent's highest level of education is some high school														
Respondent's highest level of education is high school	1.246 (0.262)		1.379 (1.249*)		1.306 (0.0249)		1.349 (1.038)		1.366 (0.0951)		342.9 (0.158)		1.334 (0.179)	
Respondent's partner's highest level of education is some high school	0.615 (0.407)		0.736 (1.130)		0.645 (0.244)		0.764 (0.967)		0.671 (0.346)		0.588 (1.972**)		0.657 (2.070**)	
Respondent's highest level of education is high school														
Observations	64	53	64	53	64	53	64	53	64	53	64	53	64	53

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

Note: This table is interpreted in the same way as table 4 where a negative value is associated with the primary earner leading a task, opposing the specialization hypothesis and a positive value is associated with a secondary earner taking the lead on a task, supporting the specialization hypothesis. See the note on table 4 for further details.

married, supporting the specialization hypothesis.

Gay secondary earners who have completed high school, some college, or a master's degree produced positive, significant coefficients and were therefore more likely to take charge of meals. Meanwhile, education does not seem to affect straight secondary earner's likelihood of cooking meals because there were no significant values. Straight secondary earners who have completed high school, some college, or a bachelor's degree produced positive, significant coefficients meaning they were less likely to take charge of cleaning the kitchen, supporting the specialization hypotheses. Their gay counterpart's likelihood of cleaning the kitchen was not affected by education. Interestingly, if straight secondary earner's breadwinning partners have completed high school, the secondary earner is more likely to clean the kitchen.

If gay secondary earner's breadwinning partners have completed some secondary some college, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree, the same-sex secondary earner is more likely to take the lead on managing money, conforming to the specialization hypothesis.

When a secondary earner is a straight man, the model shows significant negative coefficients for cleaning the bedroom and the bathroom, going against the specialization hypothesis for cleaning the bedroom and bathroom, while the model shows a significant, positive coefficient for straight men managing IT, meaning he is more likely to manage technology, negating the specialization hypothesis for IT. Straight people whose partners are men (women) are more likely to manage IT as well. The regressions on secondary earners show that IT has 4 significant positive values, values that show that the secondary earner takes the lead on IT. If secondary earners have been living with their partner for 1-2 years, 3-5 years, and 5-10 years or if they are a man, they are more likely to take the lead on IT, a male-typed task. Meanwhile, same-sex secondary earners are more likely to handle IT if they have completed

high school or some college and are less likely to take the lead on IT if they have a higher total combined income.

## **Discussion**

I hypothesized that people in same-sex relationships will follow the pattern of the primary earner doing less nonmarket labor, but to a lesser extent than people in different-sex relationships. The hypothesis was confirmed for some situations and rejected for others. My research was based on Twiggs et al.'s reconceptualization of measuring participation in household tasks (1999) and Antecol and Steinberger's 2011 primary earner framework. Twiggs et al.'s research gender-types various household tasks and measures the extent that husbands participate in a task. Antecol and Steinberger apply a primary earner framework to lesbian couples and compare them with straight men and women, whose relationships are more clearly influenced by the gender pay gap and traditional gender roles to understand patterns in market labor. My unique contribution was applying the primary earner framework to same-sex and different-sex couples as a way of finding more patterns in sharing nonmarket labor.

For all people in same-sex relationships (primary and secondary earners combined), there were 30 significant values that support the specialization hypothesis and 17 significant values that negate the specialization hypothesis. For all people in different-sex relationships there are 20 values that support the specialization hypothesis and 25 values that negate the specialization hypothesis. Gay respondents have a larger number of significant values that support the specialization hypothesis than straights, disproving my hypothesis that both gay and straight individuals follow the specialization hypotheses but that individuals in same-sex couples follow the specialization hypothesis less. However, looking at individual chores and individual control variables yields more interesting results. Figure 1 visualizes how even within relationship type, gender, race, and marital status all affect behavior. Coupled with additional context, these results can yield an interesting story.

In an effort to directly connect the theory to the hypothesis and analysis, I compared gay primary earners with straight primary earners and gay secondary earners with straight secondary earners. While traditional gender roles are still at play, the specialization hypothesis was widely referenced as a potential cause for unequal division of market labor with performing gender as a secondary explanation.

## **Marriage**

One section of the results requires additional context in order to properly interpret. Marital status (married or unmarried) was controlled for in this study. Marriage has been shown to “traditionalize” the roles within a relationship by gender (Bauer, 2016). Bauer’s paper, however, only included different-sex couples, so the same conclusion cannot be drawn for same-sex couples without additional research. Same-sex marriage equality is a relatively recent development, happening nationwide in 2015 in the US and in 2014 in the UK. Furthermore, while gay men and lesbians do have normal, traditional marriages, same-sex marriage is inherently untraditional and is inherently nonheteronormative (Heaphy, 2018). This study found that for primary earners, marriage status yielded a significant impact, with straight primary earners who are unmarried being more likely to do male-typed tasks (budget and IT) and one female-typed task (grocery shopping). Marriage did not prove to have any affect for same-sex primary earners, suggesting that while straight primary earners were influenced by marital status, their gay counterparts were not, or at least not in the same way. their behaviors are not influenced by marriage status in the same way as straight couples are.

When analyzing marriage status, my hypothesis is less interesting than simply observing the pattern because marriage status implies different things for same-sex couples and different-sex couples. The historical and cultural context of same-sex marriage and its newly legalized, nontraditional status do not show that same-sex couples following the same pattern as different-sex couples to a lesser extent. Instead, my results highlight how marriage status creates a certain pattern for different-sex couples and

an entirely different pattern (or lack thereof) for same-sex couples. This result begins to ask a different question; how exactly does marital status affect same-sex couples compared to different-sex couples?

## **IT**

We can look at how straight and gay primary and secondary earners share a chore through the lens of gender-typed chores. When respondents were asked who they thought society expected to handle IT, IT was revealed to be a strongly male-typed task. My results were not what my hypothesis predicted for secondary earners. I expected secondary earners to do less chores, regardless of what gender is typically expected to do them, but same-sex secondary earners were found to be more likely to oversee IT for several different control variables relating to cohabitation.

My hypothesis was not confirmed for primary earners regarding IT. There were 7 significant positive coefficients where straight secondary earners were responsible for IT and only one significant negative coefficient where straight primary earners were responsible for IT. Primary earners in different-sex relationships were more likely to oversee IT in many different situations. Meanwhile, only one value was significant for primary earners in same-sex relationships, the index of societal expectations yielded a negative value, meaning same-sex primary earners were more likely to manage technology if they held specific societal beliefs regarding household chores. This comparison of straight and gay primary earners shows that the masculine task is most commonly done by the breadwinner for straight couples, but less commonly done by the breadwinner for gay couples, or at least equally done by both same-sex members of the couple. While straight primary earners do follow the pattern I would expect from this chore, gay primary earners do not follow the same pattern to a lesser extent. Instead, gay primary earners follow the opposite pattern. I think this confirms my hypothesis because it is an example of same-sex couples not following expected patterns of behavior as much as different-sex couples.

Another factor behind earner status to consider is that IT is male-typed. Due to the gender wage gap where men typically out earn women, one could make a case for IT to be primary-earner typed as well. In that case, it would make sense for a primary earner to lead this chore. Exploring the role of gender roles' role in the division of household labor through a multidisciplinary approach could yield interesting, relevant conclusions around how the specialization hypothesis and “doing gender” interact.

### **Budget**

Secondary earners of all sexualities had significant data showing that the specialization hypothesis is rejected and thus rejecting the hypothesis of this paper. One possible cause of this general rejection of the specialization hypothesis relating to budgeting is that having specific skills can matter when managing money. If a primary earner works in a financial industry or grew up in a setting that gave them access to higher levels of financial literacy, it would make sense for them to be responsible for managing the couple's money.

Another reason for the rejection of the specialization hypothesis could be the gender-typing of the task. Working with money is a market task, so the partner more involved in the market economy may be better equipped to manage the couple's money.

### **Meals and Cleaning the Kitchen**

Cooking and meals are both female-typed chores, yet for primary earners, they yielded opposite results. Different-sex primary earners follow the specialization hypothesis for cleaning the kitchen and neither follow nor deviate from the specialization hypothesis for cooking meals since there were no significant values. At the same time, same-sex primary earners neither follow nor deviate from the specialization hypothesis for cleaning the kitchen and follow the specialization hypothesis for cooking

meals. This confirms the my hypothesis for cleaning the kitchen but shows the opposite pattern for cooking meals.

Secondary earners also displayed different results for meals and cooking. Same-sex secondary earners were more likely to prepare meals for certain levels of education while education did not affect the likelihood of different-sex secondary earners cooking meals. At the same time, straight secondary earners with a bachelor's degree or less for education were less likely to clean the kitchen while gay secondary earners' likelihood of cleaning the kitchen was not influenced by education level. This confirms the hypothesis for cleaning the kitchen, the most female-typed task, and rejects the hypothesis for cooking meals, the second most female-typed task. Due to the absence of significant values, the specialization hypothesis was neither upheld nor rejected for straight secondary earners cleaning the kitchen, but it was rejected for gay secondary earners cleaning the kitchen. Meanwhile, the specialization hypothesis for secondary earners cooking meals was neither upheld nor rejected for straight secondary earners, while it was upheld by gay secondary earners. While different-sex couples do act in a way that is less predictable by the model, no one in this situation follows the specialization hypothesis, which therefore rejects the hypothesis of this paper.

One potential reason for the opposite findings for meals and kitchen could be the nature of the task. While cooking meals and cleaning the kitchen are similar in that they are female-typed, nonmarket, domestic labor, they are not the same. My study did not consider people's preferences for certain tasks, only whether or not they participate in these tasks. In reality, preferences is hugely important in how couples divide tasks. *Fairplay* by Eve Rodsky (2019) includes a card game where couples divide household and family chores. Couples are advised to talk out who is responsible for what chore, and personal preferences play a part in the negotiation. It could be that some people choose to cook food even if they are the primary earner who, according to the specialization hypothesis, should specialize in

work outside the home. Comparing cooking and cleaning the kitchen shows that some tasks are linked and that while the specialization hypothesis may be at play, so are people's personal preferences.

## **Limitations**

There are many limitations to this research which is to be expected in an undergraduate thesis. Firstly, it would have been preferable to gather data from both partners in a couple to paint a fuller picture of how household chores are divided. Actually, time diaries would be the most accurate (Yavorsky et al., 2015), but I did not have the time nor resources to administer data collection in this way. Secondly, a more representative sample of participants would have made my results more widely accurate to the general population. My sample was overwhelmingly white and I did not accurately represent the economic landscape of the US or the UK. While it is unfortunate that my results were not representative samples of the population, the limiting factor was the number of cohabitating partners in same-sex relationships with no children. Having a representative sample was abandoned in favor of having approximately the same number of gay and straight participants. Lastly, when structuring my survey, I constructed the variables of interest in an ordinal categorical manner. This negated the size of the identified effect and made it so that only the direction (more or less likely to participate in a task) could be parsed from the results.

Using a different type of regression that compared same-sex and different-sex couples in the same model at the same time would've allowed for a direct comparison between groups and it would've given a simple answer to my hypothesis as well. Ultimately, given the time constraints of this research and my inexperience, I ended up running separate regressions and comparing them after the fact.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to better understand the distribution of nonmarket labor within same-sex couples compared to opposite-sex couples regarding earner status. By running an ordered probit model on categorical research and considering factors known to impact couples' behaviors such as length of cohabitation, education of each member of the couple, marriage status, total combined income, and expectations around domestic labor, I was able to conclude when same-sex couples followed the same pattern as different-sex couples. When the results caused the rejection of the hypothesis, it was often because one of the following reasons. Sometimes, primary earners followed the specialization hypothesis while secondary earners followed the opposite of the specialization hypothesis instead of just following the specialization hypothesis less. Other times, one group of earners did not follow or deviate from the specialization hypothesis due to lack of significant results or contradictory significant results while the other group rejected the specialization hypothesis. Lastly, sometimes, there were no significant results to draw conclusions from.

On a broad scale, my hypothesis that different-sex and same-sex couples follow the specialization hypothesis but that same-sex couples follow the specialization hypothesis less often is rejected. However, looking within individual tasks reveals specific instances when the hypothesis is confirmed as well as rejected. Marriage does not have the same effects on behavior for same-sex couples as it does for different-sex couples. This shows how same-sex marriages do not behave exactly like different-sex marriages despite them being legally the same due to marriage equality. Primary earners were more likely to do both male-typed chores. While this negates my hypothesis, it reveals a pattern of male-typed tasks being associated with primary earners. For IT, different-sex primary earners were a little bit more likely to manage technology, exemplifying how if we assume that primary earners do male-typed tasks, same-sex couples follow the pattern to a lesser extent. My hypothesis was confirmed

for cooking meals, but cleaning the kitchen produced opposite results despite both cleaning the kitchen and cooking meals being female-typed tasks. Examining two kitchen-related female-typed tasks suggests that personal preferences play an important role in who participates in what chores.

The scope of this research is fairly narrow. It cannot be generalized to more chores because the patterns found were not the same across the chores I investigated so it would be wrong to assume that additional chores followed the same pattern. This research does, however, fit into a larger understanding of how gay couples fit into an economy shaped around heterosexual consumers.

Each chore comes with specific This study seeks to identify the pattern of either participating in chores or not participating in chores and does not seek to qualify the breakdown of how much more than half of a task one person completes. Future research could incorporate earning differences between couples and see if the earning difference increases the disparity in sharing tasks. The use of time diaries would improve the accuracy of participants' reports.

Further research could include more thorough research on the same research question. Because same-sex couples are an understudied group, this particular framework has not been applied to domestic labor, so using more precise methods of data collection, specifically time diaries, would yield more rigorous results. Further research could also incorporate tasks associated with parenthood.

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## Appendix

### Survey on Division of Household Labor

#### Part 1: List of Chores

- Routine tasks
  - Preparing meals
  - Groceries
  - Cleaning kitchen
  - Cleaning bathroom
  - Cleaning bedroom
  - Taking out trash/recycling
  - Lawncare/landscaping
  - Laundry
- Sporadic tasks
  - Car maintenance
  - Home repair/maintenance (Changing lights, adding batteries to smoke detectors, replacing mouse traps, fixing doors, etc)
  - Managing/organizing money (savings/investments/paying off debt/paying bills/managing different credit cards)
  - Electronics and IT (getting new phone/computer, setting up password managers/managing passwords)
  - Organizing travel and gifts to/from family

#### Part 2: Expectations

For each task listed in part 1... ask...

- **Who is typically expected (by society/the world) to do this work?**
  - Usually man
  - Sometimes man
  - Equal/either
  - Usually woman
  - Always woman

#### Part 3: Employment and Earnings

- What is your level of employment?
  - Full-time, part-time, retired, unemployed, gigs or side-hustles, other
- What is your partner's level of employment
  - Full-time, part-time, retired, unemployed, gigs or side-hustles, other
- How much money do you typically earn in a month? (all sources of income including side-hustles, disability, pension, etc)

- Select salary range
  - \$0-\$9,999, \$10,000-\$24,999, \$25,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$149,999, \$150,000+
- How much does your partner typically earn in a month?
  - Select salary range
    - \$0-\$9,999, \$10,000-\$24,999, \$25,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$149,999, \$150,000+
- Over the last year, who has typically earned more money?
  - You or your partner
- What is your housing situation?
  - Own house or duplex unit, own apartment unit, rent house or duplex unit, rent apartment unit, live with other people, other (write-in)
- Who do you live with?
  - No one, partner's parents, your parents, partner's sibling(s), your sibling(s), other (write-in)
- How likely are you to have children in the next 5 years?
  - Extremely unlikely (0%), less than 50%, 50% likely, more than 50% likely, extremely likely (100%)

#### **Part 4: Breakdown of Chores in Your Relationship**

For the tasks listed in part 1...

- Who typically does this in your relationship?
  - I do it all
  - I lead/do most
  - Equal participation and leadership
  - Partner leads/does most
  - Partner does it all
  - Outsourced
  - Not applicable
- During the last month, how many hours per week did you spend on each of the daily tasks?
  - Hours per week

#### **Part 5: Demographics**

- How old are you?
  - Number
- How old is your partner?
  - Number
- What race do you identify with? Please check all that apply.
  - White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Latino
- What race does your partner identify with? Please check all that apply.

- White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Latino
- What is the highest degree you have completed? What is the highest degree your partner has completed?
  - Less than a HS diploma (1), HS (2), bachelors (3), masters (4), PhD/md (5)
- What is the highest degree your partner has completed?
  - Less than a HS diploma (1), HS (2), bachelors (3), masters (4), PhD/md (5)
- What is your current marriage status?
  - Married, unmarried domestic partners, neither
- How long have you been in a relationship with your partner?
  - Years/months
- How long have you been living with your partner?
  - Years/months
- What is your gender?
  - Man/woman/trans man/trans woman/nonbinary/other (write-in space)
- What is your partner's gender?
  - Man/woman/trans man/trans woman/nonbinary/other (write-in space)
- What type of relationship is this?
  - Different-sex or same-sex