



Social reasoning about 'second-shift' parenting

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The present study investigated children's and adolescents' social reasoning about parenting roles in the home, specifically 'second-shift parenting' by a mother or father. Surveys were administered to children (age 10) and adolescents (age 13), nearly evenly divided by gender ($N = 200$) in which two hypothetical scenarios were evaluated. Participants were asked to evaluate and justify second-shift parenting arrangements for the family overall, for the parent in the role, and for the child in the family. Results showed that participants expected mothers rather than fathers to take on the second-shift role, and second-shift parenting was evaluated as more unfair for fathers than for mothers. Personal choice reasoning was used for justifying arrangements for the second-shift parent and moral reasoning was used for justifying arrangements for the child. Social reasoning about the context of parental caretaking roles was multifaceted and varied by age and gender of participant more so than by self-reported personal family arrangements.

Gender expectations and gender role norms typically emerge in the home context (Bronstein, 2006; Crouter, Whiteman, McHale, & Osgood, 2007; Leaper, 2002; Okin, 1989; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002). Although there has been an increase in fathers' active participation in many cultures, including the United States, family/work balance continues to be a topic of concern for most parents. Parents report that mothers spend 6–7 h per week devoted to childcare after working, while fathers spend 3–4 h in the 'second shift' of parenting (Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004; Palkovitz, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 2002). Moreover, while fathers in the role of 'stay at home dad' have tripled over a 10-year period from 1997—to 2007, the percentage remains very low (2.7%). Because researchers have demonstrated that gender expectations about family/work balance are related to children's and adolescents' gender role attitudes (Crouter & McHale, 2005; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002; Updegraff, McHale, & Crouter, 1996), examining children's and adolescents' judgements about parental roles as caretakers may contribute to understanding why the number of fathers as caretakers remains quite low in the United States. The present study, guided by social domain theory, investigated children's and adolescents' social reasoning about gender-related

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expectations regarding parental roles in the family. Particularly, this study examined reasoning about 'second-shift' parenting, a phenomenon in which working mothers are expected to function as the primary caretaker in the home regardless of employment status (Barnett, 2004; Barnett & Rivers, 2004; Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Hochschild, 1989; Nomaguchi, Milkie, & Bianchi, 2005; Perkins & DeMeis, 1996; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001).

While extensive research has been conducted regarding children's use of stereotypes to evaluate play activities, interests, values, and occupations (Liben & Bigler, 2002; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006; Steffens, Jelenec, & Noack, 2010; Weisgram, Bigler, & Liben, 2010), and research has demonstrated that children often view exclusion based on gender stereotypic expectations to be unfair (Killen, Sinno, & Margie, 2007), very little research has been conducted on how children reason about parental roles regarding caretaking, and when the issue of fairness of roles becomes a salient part of their evaluation. Children observe the constraints parents put on their roles and these observations influence their gender attitudes (Leaper, 2002).

Social domain theory has provided a heuristic for investigation of children's and adolescents' evaluations of gender roles by focusing on children's reasoning for their judgements (Stoddart & Turiel, 1985; Turiel, 1983). Social domain theorists (Killen *et al.*, 2007) have demonstrated that three distinct domains of social life – moral, social conventional, and personal – are reflected in individuals' judgements about social events, and that these conceptual categories are applied to complex social issues from childhood to adulthood. Reasoning about issues that involve stereotypes or cultural norms has often been shown to be multifaceted. Stereotypes can be accepted or rejected for various reasons, including being rejected because of unfairness (moral), being accepted because they fit cultural standards (social conventional) or because of personal choice of activities (personal) (Killen, McGlothlin, & Lee-Kim, 2002; Killen *et al.*, 2007).

Knowledge in all three domains has been shown to affect children's reasoning about gender stereotypes (Killen *et al.*, 2007). In peer contexts, most children reason that it is unfair to prohibit children from playing with toys or joining groups solely based on gender, but other children will maintain that exclusion is acceptable based on concerns for group functioning (Killen, Pisacane, Lee-Kim, & Ardila-Rey, 2001; Theimer, Killen, & Stangor, 2001). Within the home context, older children were more likely to judge that it would be unfair for mothers to give priority to daughters over sons for a gendered female task (e.g., baking or sewing) but acceptable for fathers to give priority to sons over daughters for gendered male tasks (e.g., fixing the car or mowing the lawn) (Schuette & Killen, 2009).

Although there has been little work investigating social reasoning about parental roles, research with adults shows that there are certainly cultural norms associated with these roles (Gorman & Fritsche, 2002; Hoffnung, 2004; Kaufman, 2005). Men and women continue to believe that the family would be better off with a father who works and a mother who stays home to take care of the children (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). Fathers continue to believe that the key way to show love for their family is by earning money (Townsend, 2002), and many mothers and fathers see the wife's income as secondary and therefore her role in the workforce as less important than her role in childcare (Nomaguchi *et al.*, 2005). Further, adults have been shown to rate women who have children as less competent in their profession and often overlook them for training or promotions in favour of women without children (Fuegen, Biernat, Haines, & Deaux, 2005). These findings further enhance the imbalance in many families of mothers in the position of 'second-shift' parent compared to fathers.

Only one study, to date, has implemented the social domain model to investigate social reasoning about parental roles regarding caretaking (Sinno & Killen, 2009). This study was conducted with children (ages 7 and 10) and it was shown that children considered it equally acceptable for mothers and fathers to work full time but they rated fathers staying at home as less acceptable than mothers. Examinations of children's justifications about working full time revealed that children thought it was the mother's personal choice to want a job. Whereas, children thought it was necessary for the father to work full time for family financial reasons. Age-related changes in regards to the caretaker role showed that 7-year-olds used more gender stereotypes than did 10-year-olds (e.g., mothers can only be nurturing; fathers will sit around if they are home). Findings from Sinno and Killen (2009) showed that children often rated the caretaker role as unacceptable for fathers, but the roles of caretaker and full-time worker as acceptable for mothers. These expectations may contribute to the 'second-shift' phenomenon as mothers, but not fathers, are expected to take on multiple roles in the family.

What has yet to be examined is how children evaluate family arrangements in which both parents are wage earners. Recent research has noted that 70% of all U.S. homes are comprised of dual-earning couples (Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006), impacting the need for 'second-shift' responsibilities. In addition, early adolescents' reasoning about parental roles may differ from children's reasoning as they are more likely to be asked about their future aspirations, including family and occupational goals, as they begin their identity search (Grotevant, 1998; Jantzer, Stalides, & Rottinghaus, 2009). Therefore, it is especially critical to investigate how children and early adolescents evaluate family arrangements involving two wage earners and whether children support or reject arrangements with one 'second-shift' parent. Most notably, with women doing a majority of the household chores and spending a majority of their time with their children as compared to men (Bianchi, 2000; Douglas & Michaels, 2004), the current study investigated the reasoning that children and early adolescents use when evaluating mothers compared to fathers in the 'second-shift' role. This study can provide an increased understanding of when children and adolescents draw on their knowledge of fairness and rights compared to when they draw from stereotypes to evaluate contexts in which there are strong societal gender expectations.

Goals and hypotheses

To investigate children's (10-year-olds) and adolescents' (13-year-olds) social evaluations about the caretaking role, a survey measuring decision making about hypothetical families who had second-shift mothers compared to second-shift fathers was administered. Participants were asked to evaluate and provide justifications about the family arrangement overall, as well as the arrangement for the second-shift parent and the child in the family.

There has been no prior research, that we know of, on how children and adolescents think about second-shift parenting and, therefore, hypotheses were based on prior research focused on attitudes about caretaking, social reasoning about gender roles, and judgements about gender exclusion. An over-arching expectation was that the 'second-shift' phenomenon would be multifaceted such that participants' reasoning would include fairness (moral reasoning), family structures and traditions (conventional reasoning), and an individual's choice regarding work and family roles (personal reasoning). It was also expected that evaluations would vary by age, gender, and personal family arrangement of the participant.

Evaluation of the overall family arrangement

Based on past research with adults showing that the caretaking role is most associated with mothers and that mothers are expected to perform well in this role (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004), it was hypothesized that family arrangements that present a mother as the second-shift parent would be rated more positively than those in which a father was in this role and that participants would use more conventional reasoning to justify their response. Further, based on research with adults (Perkins & DeMeis, 1996) as well as the Sinno and Killen (2009) findings, which note that fathers are not expected to be in the role of caretaking, it was hypothesized that participants would use personal choice reasoning when a father was in the second-shift role.

Evaluation for the second-shift parent

After participants evaluated the family arrangement overall, they were asked to evaluate the situation from the perspective of the parent in the second-shift role. Once again, based on gender role expectations shown by both children and adults (Ruble *et al.*, 2006), it was expected that participants would judge the second-shift arrangement for a mother more positively than for a father. Since past research with adults has noted that mothers are logging more hours in caretaking, it was expected that participants would reason that mothers who were in the role were doing so based on societal expectations (Barnett, 2004; Gorman & Fritsche, 2002; Hochschild, 1989; Perkins & DeMeis, 1996). Recent research has shown that fathers have been increasing their time spent with children in the home, but it was expected that participants would decide that fathers who were in the second-shift role would be doing so for personal reasons (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prattos, 2003).

Evaluation for the child

Participants were also asked to think about the family arrangements from the perspective of the child. Based on work with adults showing that parents are more supportive of family arrangements when mothers stay at home with the children (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001), it was expected that participants would more positively judge the family arrangements for the child when a mother was the second-shift parent. Because of conventions about mothers as 'natural' caretakers (Neff & Terry-Schmidt, 2002), it was also expected that participants would use more gender stereotyped reasoning to discuss why it would be better for the child to have a mother as a second-shift parent. In turn, it was expected that participants would use more moral reasoning about a father in the second-shift role because it would be unfair to the children to have someone with low competency in the home in charge (Sinno & Killen, 2009).

Participant demographic-related expectations

Based on previous age-related research, it was expected that the 13-year-olds would show an increased recognition of unfairness for the parents in the uneven division of caretaking compared to the 10-year-olds (Horn, 2003; Killen *et al.*, 2007; Spears-Brown & Bigler, 2004; Theimer *et al.*, 2001). For gender of participant, it was expected that female participants would be more likely to focus on issues of unfairness, given that female children are often faced with more of the burden of gender inequity in their own division of labour in the home (Barnett & Rivers, 1998; Crouter & McHale, 2005; Killen *et al.*, 2002). Finally, because past research has noted that division of parental labour in

the home is related to children's personal gender role aspirations, it was expected that participants with a personal family arrangement in which their mother did not work (or was primarily responsible for caretaking tasks) compared to participants from more egalitarian homes would judge arrangements with second-shift mothers more positively and use more conventional reasoning than they would for arrangements with a father in the second-shift role (Crouter *et al.*, 2007; Leaper, 2002; McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Sinno & Killen, 2009; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002).

Method

Participants

There were 200 participants consisting of 102 ten-year-olds ($M = 10.12$; $SD = .43$), 49 females and 53 males; and 98 thirteen-year-olds ($M = 13.08$; $SD = .40$), 59 females and 39 males. Participants were recruited by visits from the lead author to suburban public elementary and middle schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and represented the school district from which they lived. The school district is one of the largest in its state, with over 140,000 students. The school district office did not allow us to ask participants to record their ethnicity on the survey form; thus individual data for ethnicity were not obtained (nor was it related to the hypotheses of the study). The percentage of non-White students at the schools ranged from 30%—to 50%, which reflected the school district records for the region. Participants were from middle income and working class family backgrounds as indicated by mean income level of families as well as the number of reduced/free lunches provided per school. All participants reported that they had a mother and father in the home (in response to the question: 'In your home, do you live with your: 1) Mother only; 2) Mother and Father; 3) Father only; or 4) Guardian'). Because of time constraints, we did not assess whether these families were blended through divorce and remarriage. Parental consent forms were sent home a week prior to the survey administration. All participants received parental consent and assented to voluntary participation.

Procedure and design

All participants completed a 25-min survey. Participants completed the survey in their classroom per the requested time of the schools' principals and teachers. Two researchers were present at all times to answer questions. Participants were told that there were no right or wrong answers and that all information would be confidential and anonymous. Once students completed their survey, they were given a pen or pencil as compensation for their participation. A within-subjects design was used and participants responded to all items. Between-subjects variables included gender, age, and a personal family arrangement score. Power analysis revealed that the sample size of this study was sufficient for a medium effect size at the .05 significance level for up to a three-way interaction (Cohen, 1992).

Survey instrument

Scenarios

The two hypothetical scenarios, which were counterbalanced, included

Second-shift father. In the Smith family, there is a mother, a father, and their 7-year-old child. Both Mr. and Mrs. Smith work full time at a computer company. Mr.

Smith takes care of making dinner for the family, picking the child up from school, and getting their child ready for bed. On Saturdays, Mrs. Smith takes their child to the park.

Second-shift mother. In the Johnson family, there is a mother, a father and their 7-year-old child. Both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson work full time at a hospital. Mrs. Johnson takes care of making dinner for the family, picking up their child from school, and getting their child ready for bed. On Saturdays, Mr. Johnson takes their child to the park.

The caretaking tasks described in the scenarios were items frequently reported by parents when asked about their time spent with their children (Milkie *et al.*, 2004). Each of these tasks involved both a sense of physical or mental necessity and an emotional connection for the parent-child relationship to distinguish the role of the second-shift parent as one that involves caretaking and not just more household chores.

Judgements

After reading each scenario the following dependent measures were administered: (1) *evaluation of the second-shift arrangement* ('What do you think of this family arrangement? How good or bad is it?'); (2) *evaluation of the arrangement for the second-shift parent* ('How good or bad is this arrangement for the mom/dad?'); and (3) *evaluation of the arrangement for the child* ('How good or bad is it for the child that the mom/dad is doing more caretaking at home?'). Participants selected a rating from a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *very bad*; 6 = *very good*).

Reasoning

After participants rated each evaluation, the survey presented a 'why' question and participants selected from a list of five justification categories, derived from pilot testing with 10 participants per age group, and a previous study using similar measures (Sinno & Killen, 2009). The instructions allowed participants to choose more than one category but all opted for selecting only one category per assessment.

The five justification categories included: (1) *moral* (unfairness to the family or towards the other parent); (2) *social conventional* (family group functioning); (3) *societal expectations* (role expectations for mothers and fathers); (4) *personal choice* (autonomy and issues of the parent making his/her own decision); and (5) *gender stereotypes* (stereotypes about attributes associated with only mothers or fathers) (see Sinno & Killen, 2009; Smetana, 2006). See Table 1, for example, statements within each category. Statements were randomly ordered for each question so that participants were not likely to choose based on order of presentation. For reasoning selections, participants were assigned a 1 for each reasoning chosen and a 0 for those not selected.

Participants' report of personal family arrangement

Parental working status

In the *parental working status* assessment, participants reported about their parents' work outside the home. This was measured by asking: In your family, does your mother/father currently work? Full time, part time, no. For *parental working status*, participants were categorized in one of three categories: (1) both parents work full time, (2) father works full time and mother stays at home, or (3) part-time arrangements (e.g., mother and father both work part time, mother works full time, and father works part time).

Table 1. Description of social reasoning items

Social reasoning category	Examples of items
Moral (with focus on unfairness)	It is not fair for one parent to do more than the other One parent is not being fair to the family
Social conventional	It works well for the family Parents decided together that this was the best arrangement for the family
Personal choice	The parent (mother/father) chose this arrangement as best for them She/he does not have time to do what she/he wants to do for themselves
Societal expectations	She can focus on the children as most people expect her to do He can focus on work, as most people expect him to do
Gender stereotypes	The dad does not know how to take care of the kids like the mom does The mom knows how to take care of the kids better than the dad

Responses to the *parental working status* measure provided demographic information for the sample. Thirty-seven percent of the sample reported that both parents worked full time; 39% reported that only their father worked full time, and 24% reported that their parents worked in part-time arrangements. Thus, the sample was fairly evenly divided between the different possible family arrangements.

Parental caretaking duties

In the *parental caretaking duties* assessment, participants reported about their parents' caretaking in the home. This was measured by asking: Who does X? Mostly mother, mostly father, both equally. Caretaking tasks included the following (Milkie *et al.*, 2004): getting the kids ready for day care or school; picking the kids up from day care or school; reading to the kids at night; bathing the kids; disciplining the kids; making dinner for the kids; taking the kids to the park; taking the kids to practice; and comforting the kids when they are upset. In order to obtain a composite score for *parental caretaking duties*, a scale, which moved in progression towards the most traditional of caretaking expectations, was created for this study. For each caretaking task listed, participant selection of who performed the task was given: 1 point if they chose equal participation; 2 points if they chose a mixture of participation by their mother and father; or 3 points if they chose that the caretaking task was done by mostly their mother. Scores for each task were then summed and divided by 9, with a score range from 1.00 to 3.00 for analyses. Three categories were created based on the natural splits of the sample. Descriptive information drawn from the responses to the *parental caretaking duties* measure revealed that 33.5% reported equal participation from parents in caretaking duties, 45.5% reported a mixture of participation in duties by their parents, and 21% reported mostly mothers fulfilling caretaking duties.

Results

Hypotheses involving judgements of good/bad for each assessment were tested using repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs) with the second-shift parent as

the repeated measures factor. Hypotheses involving reasoning were tested using repeated measures ANOVAs with the second-shift parent and reasoning justifications as the repeated measures factors. Justifications were proportions of responses for each respective coding category and were only included in the analyses if more than .10 of the sample chose the category. *Post hoc* comparisons were performed using Bonferroni corrections for multiple comparisons. A recent review of published studies investigating social reasoning revealed that ANOVA models, instead of log-linear analytic procedures, are appropriate for this type of data because of the within-subjects (repeated measures) design (see Wainryb, Shaw, Laupa, & Smith, 2001, footnote 4).

There were no order effects found for scenario presentation, and therefore results are organized by the sets of hypotheses associated with each construct measured in the design. This included hypotheses regarding the evaluation of second-shift arrangement, the evaluation of the arrangement for the parent in the second-shift role, and the evaluation of the arrangement for the child. Effects of age and gender are included in the main analyses of each evaluation. Because of sample size and concerns about decreased power with low cell sizes, the personal family arrangement variables were included in separate analyses.

Evaluation of second-shift arrangement

Judgements

Participants first rated how good or bad the family arrangement was overall. Participants did not differ in their evaluation for the arrangement whether the mother was in the second-shift role ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.03$) or the father was in the role ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.06$) (M s = 3.82 and 3.71 were 'neutral' on the 1-6 scale).

Reasoning

Participants selected rationales for their ratings, and a 2 (gender) \times 2 (age) \times 2 (second-shift parent: mother, father) \times 3 (reasoning: social conventional, moral, personal choice) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for reason, $F(2, 392) = 110.72$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .36$. Participants selected conventional reasons ($M = .51$) most often, followed by concerns for fairness ($M = .42$), and then personal choice reasons ($M = .07$), all p s $< .05$.

As expected, the main effect for reasoning was qualified by a significant interaction effect for reasoning by second-shift parent, $F(2, 392) = 3.31$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, indicating that participants chose social conventional reasoning more when mothers ($M = .53$, $SD = .36$) rather than fathers ($M = .48$, $SD = .38$) were the second-shift parent, $p < .05$. Although it was expected that participants would choose personal choice reasoning about the arrangement when the father was in the second-shift role, it was found that participants instead focused on unfairness when fathers ($M = .47$, $SD = .39$) were second-shift parents more so than when mothers were second-shift parents ($M = .39$, $SD = .35$), $p < .05$.

As shown in Table 2, when reasoning about the family arrangements as a whole, 10-year-olds were more likely than 13-year-olds to choose moral reasoning and 13-year-olds chose more social conventional reasoning than 10-year-olds, $F(2, 392) = 4.91$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Thus, early adolescents took into consideration family functioning as a reason for the second-shift arrangement to be in place.

The influence of parental work status on social reasoning about the second-shift arrangement was also examined using a 3 (work status: both work, only father, part time) \times 2 (second-shift parent: mother, father) \times 3 (reasoning: social conventional,

Table 2. Proportion of social reasoning responses selected for evaluation of second-shift arrangement

	Mother as second-shift parent			Father as second-shift parent		
	Social conventional	Moral (unfairness)	Personal choice	Social conventional	Moral (unfairness)	Personal choice
Age 10						
Female	.48 (.38)	.47 (.38)	.05 (.15)	.47 (.37)	.50 (.35)	.02 (.09)
Male	.45 (.37)	.42 (.36)	.13 (.24)	.42 (.39)	.50 (.43)	.08 (.18)
Total	.47 (.37)	.44 (.37)	.09 (.21)	.45 (.38)	.50 (.39)	.05 (.15)
Age 13						
Female	.63 (.37)	.35 (.36)	.03 (.11)	.45 (.42)	.53 (.42)	.03 (.11)
Male	.56 (.29)	.32 (.29)	.12 (.21)	.60 (.33)	.31 (.32)	.09 (.19)
Total	.60 (.34)	.34 (.34)	.06 (.16)	.51 (.39)	.44 (.39)	.05 (.15)
Total	.53 (.36)	.39 (.36)	.08 (.18)	.48 (.39)	.47 (.39)	.05 (.15)

Note. $N = 200$. Proportions cannot exceed 1.0. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

moral, personal choice) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors, and revealed a significant interaction effect for reasoning by work status of parents, $F(4, 394) = 3.47, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$. As expected, for scenarios in which the mother was the second-shift parent, participants from families in which both parents worked full time ($M = .44, SD = .35$) and from families that had non-traditional part-time work status ($M = .46, SD = .37$) chose significantly more moral reasoning (unfairness) than participants from families with only fathers who worked full time ($M = .30, SD = .34$). In addition, as expected, participants with only fathers working full time used more social conventional reasoning ($M = .60, SD = .38$) compared to participants with mothers and fathers working part time ($M = .46, SD = .30$), $ps < .05$.

A 3 (caretaking perception: equal participation, mixture, mother) \times 2 (second-shift parent: mother, father) \times 3 (reasoning: social conventional, moral, personal choice) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors was conducted to test participants' perception of their own parents' caretaking in the home and revealed a significant interaction effect for reasoning by caretaking perception, $F(4, 392) = 3.39, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Participants who reported that their mothers did most of the caretaking selected more social conventional reasoning ($M = .60, SD = .40$) than did participants who reported that their parents equally participated in caretaking tasks ($M = .46, SD = .38$), $ps < .05$. In addition, participants who reported equal participation in caretaking by their parents selected more moral reasoning ($M = .51, SD = .39$) than participants who reported that their mothers did most of the caretaking duties ($M = .35, SD = .37$), $ps < .05$. There were no further significant differences in analyses based on the influence of personal family arrangement.

Evaluation of the arrangement for the second-shift parent

Judgements

After participants evaluated the family arrangements overall, they evaluated the arrangements for the parent in the second-shift role. Participants did not differ in their ratings of the arrangement when the father was in the second-shift role compared to when the mother was in the role, ($M = 4.05, SD = 1.10; M = 3.96, SD = 1.07$, respectively).

Table 3. Proportion of social reasoning responses selected for evaluation of the arrangement for the second-shift parent

	Mother as second-shift parent				Father as second-shift parent			
	Social conventional	Moral (unfairness)	Personal choice	Societal expectation	Social conventional	Moral (unfairness)	Personal choice	Societal expectation
Age 10	.16 (.28)	.23 (.33)	.20 (.33)	.45 (.47)	.22 (.33)	.19 (.31)	.50 (.41)	.09 (.22)
Age 13	.25 (.35)	.27 (.34)	.16 (.27)	.35 (.36)	.21 (.31)	.27 (.37)	.49 (.43)	.03 (.14)
Total	.21 (.32)	.25 (.33)	.18 (.29)	.40 (.41)	.22 (.32)	.23 (.34)	.50 (.42)	.06 (.18)

Note. $N = 200$. Proportions cannot exceed 1.0. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

However, there was a significant three-way interaction of second-shift parent by gender by grade, $F(1, 194) = 4.14, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .02$, which revealed that 13-year-old males rated the arrangement for the father in the second-shift role more positively than any other group ($M = 4.29, SD = .99$).

Reasoning

When providing a rationale for their ratings of the family arrangements for the parent in the second-shift role, a 2 (gender) \times 2 (grade) \times 2 (second-shift parent) \times 4 (reasoning: social conventional, moral, personal choice, societal expectations) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors revealed a main effect for reasoning, $F(3, 588) = 7.21, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Participants overall selected significantly more personal choice reasoning ($M = .34$) than social conventional ($M = .22$), societal expectations ($M = .23$), or moral (.23) (all $ps < .01$). This main effect was qualified by an interaction effect for reasoning by second-shift parent, $F(3, 588) = 54.45, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$, indicating that participants used more societal expectations when evaluating arrangements in which the mother was the second-shift parent than they did when the father was in this role (see Table 3). In contrast, participants chose more personal choice reasoning for fathers in the second-shift role than for mothers, $ps < .05$. This finding confirms expectations that fathers who are in the second-shift role are choosing to be there but mothers are caretaking because they are expected to do so.

It was expected that with age, there would be an increased use of recognizing the inequality in the roles for the parents. This expectation was confirmed by an interaction effect for reasoning by age, $F(3, 588) = 2.64, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Regardless of which parent was in the second-shift role, 13-year-olds used more moral reasoning compared to 10-year-olds who were more likely to use personal choice and societal expectation reasoning (see Table 3 for all means and standard deviations).

Evaluation of the arrangement for child

Judgements

Lastly, participants judged how good or bad the family arrangements were for the child in the family. As expected, a 2 (gender) \times 2 (grade) \times 2 (second-shift parent) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last factor revealed that participants rated an arrangement as better for the child when the mother, rather than the father, was the second-shift parent, $F(1, 193) = 4.50, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .02$ (mother: $M = 3.84, SD = .99$; father: $M = 3.67, SD =$

Table 4. Proportion of social reasoning responses selected for evaluation of the arrangement for the child

	Mother as second-shift parent			Father as second-shift parent		
	Social conventional	Moral	Gender stereotypes	Social conventional	Moral	Gender stereotypes
Age 10	.03 (.16)	.75 (.36)	.22 (.33)	.10 (.22)	.78 (.29)	.11 (.24)
Age 13	.03 (.11)	.73 (.35)	.25 (.34)	.05 (.18)	.86 (.31)	.10 (.25)
Total	.03 (.14)	.74 (.35)	.23 (.33)	.08 (.20)	.82 (.31)	.11 (.24)

Note. $N = 200$. Proportions cannot exceed 1.0. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

1.00). There was also a main effect found for gender of the participant, $F(1, 193) = 6.80$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, such that female participants judged both arrangements, regardless of parent in the second-shift role, more negatively for the child ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .93$) compared to male participants ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.00$).

Reasoning

Analyses of participants' reasoning behind their judgements in a 2 (gender) \times 2 (grade) \times 2 (second-shift parent) \times 2 (reasoning: moral, gender stereotypes) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors again revealed a main effect for reasoning, $F(2, 390) = 406.66$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .67$, showing that the vast majority of participants selected moral reasoning (that the arrangement is unfair for the child) ($M = .77$, $SD = .33$), with a small proportion choosing gender stereotypes ($M = .17$, $SD = .28$).

This main effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect for reasoning by second-shift parent, $F(2, 390) = 14.49$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, indicating that, as expected, participants selected more moral reasoning, noting the situation was unfair for the child when the father was the second-shift parent than when the mother was the second-shift parent. Additionally, participants chose significantly more gender stereotyped reasoning about the situation for the child when the mother was in second-shift parent role than when the father was in this role (see Table 4 for all means and standard deviations, $ps < .05$). When taking into account family life for the child, both children and early adolescents thought it was fairer for the child to have time with both parents but if they are with one, they use gender stereotypes about mothers being better in the caretaking role.

Discussion

The findings in this study demonstrated that children and early adolescents are actively constructing a concept of what second-shift parenting means for mothers, fathers, and children in the context of the family environment, regardless of their own personal family arrangement. Although research has indicated that being involved in both work and caretaking roles is physically and mentally beneficial for parents (Barnett & Hyde, 2001), children and early adolescents from a U.S. sample continue to expect mothers to take on the caretaking role (Raley *et al.*, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Children expect families to function better with mothers but not fathers in the second-shift parenting role.

The most novel finding was that participants used moral reasoning, choosing to focus on the unfairness of the role when fathers were the second-shift parent, but not when mothers were in the same role. Based on prior research (Bond *et al.*, 2003; Palkovitz, 2002; Sinno & Killen, 2009), it was expected that individuals would reason that fathers who were taking on a second shift would do so for personal reasons. However, participants judged it to be 'unfair' for fathers to take on extra caretaking duties. This study, then, provides a unique perspective on how children view parental roles and obligations. While previous research from the social domain model (Smetana, 2006; Stoddart & Turiel, 1985) has shown that children understand issues of gender equity among peers from an early age, the focus on equity and fairness in parental roles was apparent only when there was an arrangement that countered societal expectations. Personal choice reasoning about the father was used only when participants were asked directly how the second-shift role may be working out for him, but not necessarily for the whole family.

This finding calls for further research in understanding social cognition about second-shift parenting. There are potentially negative implications for child development when family members have low expectations for fathers to serve in the caretaker role. Extensive research on father involvement in families (see Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 2002) has demonstrated multiple benefits for children when fathers are involved in the daily routines of caretaking. Children excel in social, academic, and cognitive areas, and close relationships with their fathers provide a positive factor for predicting healthy child development (Cabrera, Fitzgerald, Bradley, & Roggman, 2007; Lamb & Lewis, 2004). Moreover, when fathers and mothers do not share caretaking roles, mothers who work full-time experience much more stress and fatigue in their jobs and at home (Barnett & Rivers, 2004; Cardenas, Major, & Bernas, 2004). Indeed, female children and early adolescents seemed to be aware of this fact as they rated the effects of second-shift parenting negatively overall for children.

Despite this awareness among females, participants overall judged, as expected, that it would be better if the mother was in the role of second-shift parent. In fact, some participants used gender stereotypes when rationalizing that it would be better for a child if a mother filled the second-shift role. This finding is congruent with research noting that many adults believe that mothers are more nurturing and 'naturally' fit for this role and would therefore be better at taking care of children (Hoffnung, 2004; Kaufman, 2005; Spade & Reese, 1991).

The age-related findings indicated that both moral and conventional reasoning increased with age but were differentially applied to parental roles. In the context of evaluating the benefits of the arrangement for the family overall, it was found that there was an increased age-related focus on the importance of convention. This focus on social conventional reasoning increased for second-shift mothers, rather than second-shift fathers. That is, mothers were expected, more so than fathers, to do 'double-duty' because it worked better for the family. One possibility in explaining the increased focus on conventions could be that adolescents in this sample are beginning the process of identity formation and are relying on gender norms for guidance about what the future has in store (Jantzer *et al.*, 2009).

In contrast, there was an increase in the use of moral reasoning with age when participants were asked to evaluate the arrangement from the perspective of the second-shift parents, or the experience of doing 'double duty'. It was more unfair for the father than for the mother to take on the second-shift role. This finding reflects other results from social domain theory, which has shown that, with age, individuals recognize

multiple factors that may affect decision making (Horn & Nucci, 2006; Smetana, 2005). For parental roles, then, age-related changes in reasoning were tied to which parent was taking on the second shift, showing that moral reasoning may become more prevalent when directing individuals' attention to the consequences of a situation on important relationships (Neff, Turiel, & Anshel, 2002). Additionally, this difference in reasoning may reflect a shifting standard for parents, as identified by Biernat and Manis (1994), in that what is unfair for fathers is not viewed as unfair for mothers.

With findings from the current study showing that children and adolescents view it as unfair for fathers to be in the second-shift parent role, there are many ways to extend this research. First, the current sample reported being from homes in which two parents were present. An important piece for further examination could include whether there is a differential influence on understanding parental roles in blended families, single-parent households, and two-mother/two-father households, or households in which the father is the primary caretaker. As stated by family dynamics researchers, there are micro-level characteristics of the immediate setting, such as who else is present in the home, which may determine whether parents' gender schemas are activated by children (McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003). It is possible then that the influence of perceptions of their own parents' roles in the home on social reasoning may be different in non-traditional family environments (Hofferth *et al.*, 2007). When parents are taking on the expectations for both male and female roles, children may be more flexible in their understanding of occupational and caretaking roles. In fact, they may interpret the messages about gender expectations differently, resulting in different reasoning about the family context in general.

Further, to extend generalizability, it would be prudent to investigate evaluations of parental roles more intentionally with various ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and religious groups, as has been done by other researchers who use the social domain model (Turiel, 2006; Wainryb, Smetana, & Turiel, 2008). Factors including ethnicity, religion, and social class have been linked to adults' gender role attitudes (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). These adults may be displaying different child-rearing goals or expectations for their children that might then affect the way that these children conceptualize gendered norms and how they reason about the caretaking role.

Additionally, the results of this study revealed that the role of a second-shift parent reflects a complex context, yet it is still unknown how individuals' social reasoning about parental roles might be related to their own expectations and later choices. Research with adults reveals that expectations about gender roles in the home affect behaviour (Hoffnung, 2004), but this notion has not been studied in a developmental manner nor taken into account the reasons that individuals have these underlying expectations of parental roles. It should also be noted that caution is in order for interpreting some of the findings in which the effect sizes were small.

With the call for areas of future research regarding developmental understanding of parental roles, it is important to remember why the issue of family/work balance is relevant to children's healthy social development. For mothers, working outside the home in a job that they enjoy allows for a continuation of their individuality in ideas and thoughts and improves their overall well-being. For fathers, an increased role in caretaking allows them to feel more integrated into family life and has mental health benefits for decreasing stress (Barnett, 2004). Parents who share the demands of multiple parenting roles have been shown to display better moods and have more energy at home. Children from these families, in turn, develop well, both academically and emotionally, and reinvest their energy back to the workforce and their own families later in life (Barber

& Eccles, 1992; Barnett & Rivers, 2004; Galinsky, 2000). Moreover, gender constraints in adult roles can change individuals' feelings about the importance of their role to a future family (Looker & Magee, 2001).

Examining children's and adolescents' reasoning about parental roles moves beyond examining children's gender knowledge to include the perspective of children in how they view family situations (Galinsky, 2000). Previous work grounded in the social domain model has shown reasoning about gendered roles is multifaceted and complex (Killen *et al.*, 2007; Schuette & Killen, 2009; Stoddart & Turiel, 1985). This study highlights that within a personally relevant, yet indirect, context of parental roles, children and early adolescents reason about second-shift parenting in a complex manner. Individuals used both social conventions of family structure and societal expectations about mothers' nurturance to reason that mothers are better 'fit' for the role of second-shift parent. However, participants also reasoned that second-shift parenting was unfair for the father having many implications for balancing work and family. Understanding how individuals evaluate family roles provides an important window into the factors that help contribute towards the goal of providing environments for children that reflect equality, equity, and fairness.

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