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Zoe Dearborn Geyman, "An Exploration of Gender Roles and the Traditional Dual Gendered Parenting Model within Co-Fathered Families" (April 10, 2015). *MAD-RUSH Undergraduate Research Conference*. Paper 1.
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An Exploration of Gender Roles and the Traditional Dual Gendered Parenting Model within Co-Fathered Families

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Thanks to my advisor, Dr. Amy Paugh

Abstract:

In this paper I develop a working theory of gender as a constantly performed state of social mimicry that evolves in response to one's lived experience. Through analysis of transcript selections from the daily lives of two co-fathered families and relevant literature, I explore the gendered realities of gay parents, and introduce work, in this case referring to professional labor and its associated identities, as key to the gendering process. In the paper I also address the malleability of family units, and explore the ways in which gay fathers negotiate pressures to conform to the traditionally gendered family model. Ultimately, I conclude that the malleability of gender expression, specifically within the realm of home and family, is linked to socio-economic status and its associated lifeways.

Keywords: gay fathers, gender performance, identity

Introduction

This paper will attempt to explore the question of the necessity of traditional gender roles, present to whatever extent, within a family. Additionally, this paper will also address Judith Butler's question of "what kind of performance might reveal this ostensible 'cause' [of binary conception of bodies] to be an 'effect'" as written in her book *Gender Trouble*. By applying Ochs and Taylor's understanding of gendered parenting roles to nontraditional family roles, the gender binary becomes particularly evident. It is with this model that I study two non-traditional families in an effort to understand both the binary and its creation therein.

This paper is based on a study done by UCLA Sloan's Center on Everyday Lives and Family (CELFL) that shadowed 32 self-identified middle class families as they went about their daily lives. All were dual-earner households and lived in the Los Angeles area. From the study I have selected two families where both parents are gay men, and with the data available, have done a comprehensive study of each family's routines and dynamics. Using this data, this paper works to understand the possible gendered division of and implementation of masculine/feminine gender roles within same sex parents in correlation to gendered external

factors such as childcare groups, social interactions with primarily mothers or fathers, and each parent's balance between work and home life.

Literature Review

The previous paper was centered around ideas from Ochs and Taylor's "Father Knows Best" (1996). In this article Ochs and Taylor explain how mothers and fathers orient themselves within conversations and narratives in ways that negotiate, maintain, and socialize gender, primarily through the roles commonly adopted by each parent (Ochs & Taylor 1996: 100). Ochs and Taylor discuss the tendency of fathers to orient themselves as a primary recipient of family narratives and subsequently that "anyone who recurrently occupies this position [of primary recipient] is instantiated as 'family judge'". As noted earlier, the introducer [of the narrative] is critical to the assignment of primary recipient" (Ochs & Taylor 1996: 106). Concurrent with their role as the family judge, fathers frequently problematized narratives that were directed to them. While problematizing was done by parents of both genders, Ochs and Taylor note that "women were more often saying in essence, 'No, that's not the way it happened'" (Ochs & Taylor 1996: 113) whereas men tended to target "on grounds of incompetence" (Ochs & Taylor 1996: 118). This idea of the family judge was of critical importance to the first paper, and was the basis to most of our analysis.

Key to the working theory of this paper, Alessandro Duranti's paper "The Relevance of Husserl's Theory to Language Socialization" discusses language as a means of manifesting modifications to the phenomenal self. Duranti writes that "in trying to socialize their students to developing a 'jazz way' of listening to music jazz instructors are asking those students to engage in 'intentional modifications' of their ordinary or previous ways of listening" (Duranti 2009: 210), an idea that combined with his statement that "playing good solos comes from hearing

great masters” (Duranti 2009: 211), sparked my concept of gender as a learned behavior that is continually shifting as a reflection of one’s company, an idea that I explore through my analysis of the CELF families’ transcripts.

This idea is supported by Judith Butler’s concept of performing gender whereby one can “consider gender, for instance, as a corporeal style, an ‘act’ as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where ‘performative’ suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning” (Butler 1990: 139). Butler states that “gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts” (1990: 139). Combined, Duranti and Butler’s theories work to create an idea of gender as a constantly performed state of social mimicry, which evolves in response to one’s lived experience.

In her work “Indexing Gender” (1992), Elinor Ochs applies the concept of indexicality to gender and gender performance, with indexicality referring to different meanings associated with, or indexed by, an utterance or action. Ochs notes that “part of the meaning of any utterance is its social history, its social presence, and its social future” (338), making it possible for said utterance to index gender, and ultimately by invoking social history with social presence, alter the social future – in this case future gender. Relatedly, Stanton Wortham writes that “when confronted with an ongoing event, people will understand it as coherent when the (largely indexical) signs that compose it come increasingly to presuppose that a particular type of event is going on” (2003: 191), leading me to understand that social structures, and here ultimately family structures, become what is performed, including how repeated invocations of gendered speech dynamics come to create a gendered understanding of a person. This idea is reinforced by Wortham’s statement that “Individuals’ identities become stabilized through events in which a

participant both gets represented as and enacts a particular identity” (2003: 193), a concept which enables said individual to shift from the “natural”, as Duranti would term it, to the “theoretical” and maintain that new gender role. Subsequently, this allows people to take on different and varied roles, instead of simply repeatedly doing certain kinds of culturally gendered work.

Deborah Tannen demonstrates ways through which family members differentiate between mothers and fathers by their speech and mannerisms. These gendered markers, when done repeatedly, become the ways in which people perform their genders and as such are integral actors in the genders of others. Tannen cites control acts within families as functioning as familial power gauges, specifically discussing the “non-deferent orders” mothers tended to receive from their children, and other instances of a child “continuing to speak to the mother in the same way they do as children” around the ages of ten or twelve, when they gradually shift to speaking to both fathers and other adults in a more respectful register (Tannen 2007: 183). Tannen also states that “mothers position themselves as child-care providers and their husbands as breadwinners” (Tannen 2007: 200). This idea that mothers associate their occupation with their status within the family correlates with Johan Pottier’s research in Rwandan co-ops, where “it also transpired that women only rarely distinguish between ‘leaders’ and ‘husbands’.” (Pottier 1989: 48) Despite this base correlation between leaders and husbands, Pottier also noted that “when women’s work is valued positively, women are cast into the role of superior men (‘valiant warriors’)” in a “linguistic maneuver” that Pottier is quick to note also exists in English (Pottier 1989: 52). This correlation between linguistic maneuvers and gender supports the concepts expressed in Duranti and Butler’s works, and adds a third dimension of one’s occupation and subsequent valuation as being related to gendering.

Wortham's notion of the coherency of an event only being achieved at the point where indexical signs are frequent and evident to the point of that event's undeniability also applies to the creation and legitimation of a family. In this sense, a family becomes a family after continued performance of understood family roles, by the family's use of "various cues to signal the interactional event they are enacting" (Wortham 2003: 191), such as typically gendered speech patterns. Diana Pash's work on gay co-fathers' relationship with female kin notes the importance of the legitimation of a nuclear family by the larger extended family. Many fathers in Pash's research have recounted anxieties over their fitness as parents, about which they report resentment and confusion, some citing the fact that they have extensive experience raising children: one of the fathers, Ray, even says "I've taken care of these boys, and I've taken care of these girls. I've taken care of friends and I've taken care of my relatives, you know, my brother, my cousins. My partner's sister sent kids to us because they couldn't handle them." (Pash 2008: 82)

In addition to citing conflicts with family members who believed fathers were not up to the task of raising a family, Pash also includes several accounts of female family members stating their perceived need for a female figure in the lives of the children (Pash 2008: 62, 86), and those of gay families who have adopted women into their families as "adopted aunts" (Pash 2008: 80). Pash recounts the story of Matt and his family: gay co-fathers and their adopted son who spent the first eighteen months of his life with a woman they know as "Mama Martha" (Pash 2008: 91) and notes that the family works to "maintain familial continuity with the woman who cared for [the son]" (Pash 2008: 92). Pash underscores the importance of female family members, saying that "fathers view the presence of sisters, mothers, aunts and others whom they call family as meaningful for children's socialization and as enriching families' overall life

experiences” (Pash 2008: 93) and through Mama Martha and other adopted mothers and grandmothers (Pash 2008: 71) introduces the idea that fathers may reach outside the family for this maternal attitude, creating a “more fluid and complex conception of family than previously understood” (Pash 2008: 95).

Pash introduces the perceived need for a female identity within the family by stating that “in American culture, men are not expected to be primary caregivers. In the absence of a female caregiver, some relatives may see male-only parenthood as a particularly difficult or unacceptable undertaking.” (Pash 2008: 59) In response to this perceived need, gay fathers attempt to either legitimate or prove their nurturing capabilities, or integrate extended female kin to the nuclear family as some form of female caregiver; this ultimately allows for fathers to attempt to provide this perceived femaleness or to outsource it to women with whom they are close.

The CELF Families

Using the works referenced in the Literature Review section, this paper analyzes the interactional patterns within the Broadwell-Lewis and Albert-Calihan families sourced from the CELF study. In an effort to contextualize the transcript selections to follow, I have included brief summaries of the two families and relevant information about the fathers’ occupations and routines. It is worth noting that all information is self-reported.

The Broadwell-Lewis family

The Broadwell-Lewis family consists of Chad Broadwell and Tim Lewis, and their children Edward (Eddie) and Elizabeth (Lizzie). Edward and Elizabeth are fraternal twins who were adopted internationally at three months old, and were twelve years old at the time of the

study. Likewise, Chad and Tim had been partners for approximately 20 years at the time of the study.

Both Chad and Tim seem to divide their household duties fairly evenly. Chad reports making dinner on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Sunday, whereas Tim lists “fix dinner for kids” throughout the weekdays except for Friday and Saturday. Similarly, not only do both fathers report readying Lizzie for and then driving her to school during the week, but both also helping Eddie and Lizzie with their homework in the evenings. Chad notes that he attends Eddie’s school meetings and swim lessons, while Tim cites taking Lizzie to her horseback riding lessons and going to tennis lessons with Eddie. Both fathers report doing “chores” or “clean house & laundry” on Sundays.

The Albert-Calihan family

Like the Broadwell-Lewis fathers, Rich and Frederick Albert-Calihan report having been together for over twenty years, and have adopted two genetically related children: Andrew, age seven and who was adopted first, and Amy, age ten. The family had recently moved to a new neighborhood, where they were “readily making friends”. Relatedly, the fathers report having turned the house into an “after school way-station for the neighborhood children that needed supervision” (CELF study) with both fathers would adjusting their work schedules at least once a week to enable at least one of the fathers to be home after school.

Rich volunteers as a parent assistant in Andrew’s class on Mondays, and seems to be the children’s primary caretaker: in addition to helping the kids with their homework most nights, Rich reports taking Amy to swim practice twice a week and to piano lessons once a week, and taking Andrew to gymnastics. Rich also notes that he returns home around 3 or 4 pm to “relieve nanny”. Aside from on Mondays, Frederick takes the kids to school in the morning, and takes

Amy to swim practice on Wednesdays. Frederick also mentions helping the kids with their homework in the evenings, and getting them ready for bed.

Demonstrated Behaviors

In accordance with the idea of indexing gender by performing certain gendered tasks (Tannen 2007: 200), I looked at how the fathers negotiated cooking and food service. The Broadwell-Lewis fathers were rarely both present for the recorded dinners, and both habitually are involved with food and its associated care role. Tim opens the transcript by asking “Ted do you want your salad on your plate or on a bowl? Either one” (F10 Tuesday Dinner 43:45:26). Partially through the meal, Chad offers to get more rice for Tim, and is also issued a directive to get rice for Grandfather as well, a move that demonstrates power.

54:42:17	Chad	((Puts hand on Father B's shoulder)) Do you want more rice?
54:44:08	Tim	[uh uhm] Give some to your dad though

(F10 Tuesday Dinner)

While both fathers participate in food preparation and service, Chad has seemingly taken charge of the family’s greater domestic realm. This split in domestic roles is particularly visible in the fathers’ negotiations over the home space itself, where Chad habitually problematizes Tim’s efforts regarding the home.

26:31:28	Chad	No:, No:, terrible. ((Referring to where Tim is suggesting to place the decoration)). You can put it below this on the door if you want.
26:40:18	Tim	Put what?
26:41:10	Chad	Right there.
26:42:16	Tim	No, that doesn't count.
26:43:26	Chad	Yeah, that's fine, if you want.
26:45:04	Tim	No, I don't want it there. I don't wanna (hold) (it)(hhh).
26:48:10	Chad	Just, stop. You gonna hang it ((points to place in the living room)) above the-above the window so it's right in the middle.
26:54:18	Tim	We could just stop.
26:55:16	Chad	I (xxx)-No I want that one up 'cause I think that one's beautiful and we (can) put it up last year. Especially if you look at Jesus on both

sides, it's kinda weird eyes. Show it to Diane, one side, the eyes are kinda big and kinda weird.

(F10 Tuesday Night)

Here, Chad situates himself as the domestic power using similar techniques to those described in Ochs and Taylor's work on the family judge. While Chad is not problematizing narratives, he is instead problematizing Tim's actions in regards to the home ("No:, No:, terrible"), demonstrating the same power inherent in paternal problematizations and subsequent role creations (Ochs & Taylor 1996: 118).

In contrast to the Broadwell-Lewis family's neutrality in the kitchen, Rich is the chef of the Albert-Calihan family. In the Tuesday dinner transcript, one of the researchers asks "Do you do most of the cooking Rich? Or do you sometimes trade off." Rich responds "Uh, I do most of it. Frederick does Wednesdays, pretty much." (F11 Tuesday Dinner 27:49:06) The caretaking dynamic of the family is evident in the following transcript, where Rich, who has just offered to cut Amy's chicken, serves Frederick seconds, who then issues Rich a reminder "there's more pineapple too" as a directive. After serving Frederick, Rich serves himself seconds, positioning himself secondarily to Frederick.

41:45:11	Rich	[(To Frederick))]There's one more chicken tender. Do you want it]
...		
41:48:15	Frederick	((To Rich)) Sure
41:53:05	Rich	((Gets up to serve Frederick)) (xxx)
41:55:10	Frederick	There's more pineapple too
...		
42:10:17	Rich	((Serves Frederick))
42:11:11	Frederick	Thank you

(F11 Thursday Dinner)

This, and many other similar instances, position Rich as the primary caretaker of the family – a role that Tannen suggests is strongly associated with motherhood (Tannen 2007: 200).

In addition to having two fathers, each family reports having female caretaking help. According to Pash, “Fathers view the presence of sisters, mothers, aunts, and others whom they call family as meaningful for children’s socialization and enriching families’ overall life experiences.” (Pash 2008: 93, 94) The Broadwell-Lewis family exemplifies this idea of female family members becoming partially integrated into the family unit, and even list Aunt Fran as a child caretaker on their family questionnaire. Aunt Fran is a part of the family dinner on Wednesday night, and seems to partially substitute for Tim, an idea that Chad supports by positioning Aunt Fran at the head of the table – a position that is traditionally reserved for heads of the family.

35:37:02	Chad	Okay- Lizzie you sit- Lizzie sits right here you're at the end Aunt Fran.
35:40:10	Aunt Fran	I am?
35:45:01	Aunt Fran	[Poppy I- (P) [Poppy I've ✓never been allowed to sit at the end in this: (P) house (P) what's the deal. ((sitting at end))

(F10 Wednesday Dinner)

Aunt Fran comments on the irregularity of the seating arrangement, drawing attention to the significance of the action and by asking “what’s the deal” introduces the idea that her new position is the result of some change, likely Tim’s absence. By offering and accepting the position at the head of the table, Chad and Aunt Fran have positioned Aunt Fran as a sort of pseudo-parent, an idea that is concordant to those expressed by the fathers in Pash’s study. In her work, Pash discusses the mutability of family structure as a result of external pressures for a family to conform to the tradition bi-gendered model. While these new family structures might stretch to include fictive kin, such as Mama Martha and other adopted grandmothers or aunts, these structures tend to incorporate existing female kin into the nuclear family unit. The relationship between the Broadwell-Lewis family and their Aunt Fran is mirrored by the fathers

in Pash's study, particularly in the understanding between Stan and his sister Ruth, who has "promised to help support the children should something ever happen to him." (Pash 2008: 76)

While the Albert-Calihan family does not interact with any female relatives during their participation in the study, the family does go out to dinner with a female friend, Chris, and her son. During this dinner Chris interacts primarily with Rich about parenting, and the two compare notes about their own childrearing experiences.

08:17:15	Chris	Well, since Jay only drinks water at home, I don't really care when he drinks Sprite out. that's definitely his -
08:24:15	Frederick	I've noticed him only drinking water
08:25:23	Chris	beverage of choice out of the house. Alright what do you think Rich?

(F11 Sunday Dinner)

When discussing their children's drinking habits, Chris engages with Frederick and then redirects the conversation to Rich, positioning him as the authority on children in the Albert-Calihan household.

In addition to comparing notes on childrearing, Chris and Rich also take on the role of spokesperson for their children, and order for them when the waiter comes to take the order. In the following transcript Chris and Rich ultimately work together to order for the children, with Chris involving Rich in her own son's order, and reminding him to "make sure he knows Jay's is a kids plate too"

10:55:08	Chris	He wants a hard taco, with the hard not soft. Just beef and cheese, only beef and cheese.
11:01:18	Waiter	Rice and beans on the side?
11:03:05	Chris	Um: rice - rice on the side. No beans, no beans. So rice on the side, and the crispy taco:, just beef and cheese, please. (LP) (xxx salsa).
11:22:28	Frederick	Andrew?
11:25:14	Waiter	Uh, quesadillas? One each? Rice and beans?
11:27:04	Rich	Yeah the kid - the kid meal - the kid plates. (P) No Amy's getting an enchilada. Wait. Wait - ok guys, calm down a little for a sec. Maybe - cause he got - Andrew? Did you - did you order your

quesadilla? Ques - cheese only, quesadilla. and you got the taco.
 Yeah. and then she: did you order Amy? The enchilada
 11:55:11 Chris Make sure he knows Jay's is a kids plate too
 11:57:28 Rich Yeah. And Jasons a kids plate too right, four kids plates?
 (F11 Sunday Dinner)

The dynamic between Frederick and Rich is also demonstrated in this passage, in that Frederick prompts Rich to become the spokesperson for and order for Andrew. In doing so, Rich also demonstrates his role as the spokesperson for Amy by referencing her order.

By maneuvering Rich into the role of spokesperson or authority on the children, Chris identifies Rich as doing the bulk of the childcare work. Pottier's work in Rwanda demonstrates how different types of work index gender, such that the worker in question's identity can functionally shift from a feminine to masculine gender in response to the type of work done (Pottier 1989). Here, Chris encourages Rich's identity to be understood as maternal instead of simply parental. Tannen writes that "mothers position themselves as child-care providers", a practice that Chris supports by reinforcing the idea that Rich is the family's authority on the children (Tannen 2007: 200).

Furthermore, Chris and Rich confirm their allied identities by enacting sameness between the two while negotiating their drink orders.

03:57:02 Waiter Ok, like anything to drink any beers? Any -
 03:58:24 Rich I'd like to try the la fiesta margarita - is it - it's a wine margarita?
 04:01:16 Waiter Wine margaritas. You like it blended or on the rocks?
 04:04:05 Rich On the rocks
 04:05:01 Waiter On the rocks, ok.
 04:07:05 Rich [I've never had a -
 04:07:05 Chris [I'll have the same
 04:08:28 Waiter Same for the rocks?
 04:09:07 Chris No. Scary
 (F11 Sunday Dinner)

Chris's use of "I'll have the same", referencing Rich's drink order, links herself to Rich – an idea that is further developed by the two justifying their drink orders as a parenting reward.

02:10:18	Rich	I want to try their La Fiesta margarita
02:12:26	Chris	√That sounds really good.
02:15:06	Rich	After that long: walk
02:16:07	Chris	((laughs))
02:17:04	Rich	A little longer than I thought
02:18:20	Chris	In that stressful, monitoring your children

(F11 Sunday Dinner)

Throughout their interactions during the Sunday Dinner, Chris and Rich engage as peers on the subject of parenting. Duranti's suggestion that people are socialized into varying roles by learning from and mimicking their peers manifests itself when Chris and Rich engage as peers to the exclusion of Frederick. Combined with Butler's work, this demonstrated peer relationship as parents, along with some enacted similarities, supports the concept that this "sameness" might extend beyond just parenting techniques and onto a gendered ontological realm.

The Family Judge

Concurrent with Ochs and Taylor's notion of the family judge, in both families one of the fathers oriented himself as the judge within the family.

Within the Broadwell-Lewis family, both fathers problematized a comparatively similar amount of the time. The Tuesday dinnertime conversation began as a narrative about a South Dakotan bureaucrat, and evolved into a discussion of the merits of different universities. In this transcript we see Tim become the elicitor of Grandfather's narrative, and when his initial bid for the floor fails he tries again:

49:28:02	Tim	So ((Name of grandfather)) how was your day for today?
...		
49:41:04	Tim	((Name of Grandfather)) Did you do anything this afternoon?
49:43:15	Elizabeth	He read.
49:44:20	Grandfather	I read the-finished the book up.
49:46:24	Tim	Oh, you finished it.
49:48:02	Chad	Oh √really?√

(F10 Tuesday Dinner)

Tim's second bid for the floor is accepted by Elizabeth and subsequently Grandfather. Tim then ends the exchange by repeating and confirming Grandfather's statement, but the role of primary audience is picked up by Chad, who becomes the elicitor and ultimate primary audience when he says "Oh √really?√"; with this statement Chad also begins backchanneling – a supportive role that is typically indexed as feminine (Lakoff 1975).

At the beginning of the South Dakota transcript, Chad subtly problematizes the use of salad bowls, instead of plates. While he doesn't explicitly frame the bowls as a problem, Tim's emotionally driven response indicates an underlying tension.

46:01:09	Chad	How come we got SALAD BOWLS tonight? (xxx) as much Christmas time as possible?
46:03:09	((All family members sit down at dinner table))	
46:05:13	Tim	I thought YOU:: would pitch a fit if we didn't have them.

(F10 Tuesday Dinner)

Exchanges such as these occur throughout the transcript, with small problematizations and judgments made by both fathers.

In contrast to the Broadwell-Lewis family, the Albert-Calihan fathers displayed a great imbalance in their problematization. By a large degree Frederick positions himself as the judge and chief problematizer of the family. Frederick primarily does this by asking evaluative questions towards the family. For example, the following excerpt occurs after Andrew had finished a game of swinging on the kitchen barstools.

30:52:01	Andrew	((Gets down from barstools, sighs in relief)) I passed the record
30:54:23	Frederick	[How many- How far did you count?
30:54:23	Andrew	[If I- If I let go at √sixty√ (P) then I WOULDN'T make the record.
31:01:13	Rich	((Embraces Andrew)) (xxx) lifeguard test?
31:02:18	Andrew	I went to (P) S:IXTY ONE
31:06:02	Rich	[How about a lifegaurd s-
31:06:02	Frederick	[Sixty √one√ good √jo:b√

(F11 Thursday Dinner)

This excerpt demonstrates the two fathers' differing responses and relationship with their children. In his exchange with Andrew, Frederick asks him a quantitative question, the answer to which he judges positively. Rich, however, congratulates Andrew with a hug without any question of measure or evaluation, and orients himself as a peer with Andrew by demonstrating prior knowledge of the scenario, and encouraging the game; in doing so, Rich engages with Andrew on Andrew's level, an action that is concurrent with Tannen's idea that children and mothers engage in a familiar register as opposed to children shifting to speaking with their father in a respectful register (Tannen 2007: 183).

Frederick demonstrates this tendency to position himself as the family judge throughout the dinner. While Andrew is still swinging, Frederick issues a directive to "Count out loud." (F11 Thursday Dinner 35:07:10) and then follows that with "I can't hear what number you're at." (F11 Thursday Dinner 35:37:02). In doing this, Frederick positions himself as the judge of Andrew's swinging, and problematizes Andrew's carrying out of this directive.

Later on in the dinner, Amy tells a narrative about a girl at school who is bullying her.

37:05:27	Amy	We didn't get first recesses but we did get lunch (LP) √free√ and Maya called- Maya wanted to- She said I took her SPOT (P) but I didn't (P) because Carmen and (Name of person) are my friends too
37:21:09	Amy	I have a right to √play√ with them sometimes don't I?
37:23:07	Rich	((Speaks with mouth full)) What time was that at lunch?
37:25:20	Amy	Uh huh ((Nods head once))
37:26:16	Rich	[So you're (xxx)-
37:26:16	Amy	[She said the √I√ took her place.
37:29:02	Rich	((Sympathizes with Amy)) [Ah::]
37:30:09	Amy	((Giggles)) I was (xxx) started- √Everybody√ called me Maya and I SPENT THE REST OF MY TIME IN THE BATHROOM STALL! (P) Thinking about how I could √stop√ her.
37:41:27	Rich	So did she (xxx)-
37:43:02	Frederick	What did you come up with.
37:47:05	Amy	That I wouldn't let it √bother√ me.
37:49:16	Frederick	((Speaks with mouth full and nods head)) Okay

(F11 Thursday Dinner)

While Rich asks a supportive question that would continue Amy's explanation of the narrative, and place evaluative focus on Maya, Frederick immediately asks "What did you come up with", and positions himself as the judge of Amy's actions. In her response to Frederick, Amy affirms her father's role as family judge by giving him material to evaluate. In addition to these two instances, Frederick frequently engages in this sort of conversational exchange, where he asks a family member an evaluative question and responds with a simple judgement, such as "Okay" or "Good" (F11 Thursday Dinner 39:21:13). As Wortham notes, people understand an event, or in this case role, as being true when the indexical signs indicate it as such. The compilation of Frederick's speech that demonstrates power or judgement, all of which index masculinity or fatherhood, continually create and solidify his role as father. (Wortham 2003)

Elicitation and Conversation Dynamics

By looking at instances of elicitation and directives being issued, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the typical conversational dynamics within the family and subsequently the dynamics within the fathers' relationships.

As seen in the Broadwell-Lewis family, Chad offers to get Tim more food, and instead of simply being taken up on or turned down, Tim responds with the additional directive of "Give some to your dad though" and continues on with his other conversation (F10 Tuesday Dinner 54:44:08). In issuing this directive, Tim asserts power over Chad, which could suggest a dominant role within the partnership. However, with regards to their children Tim and Chad demonstrate an equivalent amount of narrative or feelings elicitation, judgement, and directives.

In addition to directives and elicitation patterns in the Broadwell-Lewis family, there are seemingly high instances of conversational repair between the two fathers. Within the South

Dakota transcript, Tim cuts into Chad's narrative and initiates Chad's self-repair of an incorrect statement.

55:46:14	Chad	[Should be going to Stanford.
55:46:14	Tim	[Should be going to Harvard], should be going to Stanford

(F10 Tuesday Dinner)

In the above selection, both Chad and Tim issue different versions of the same statement at the same time. After Chad interjects, Tim realizes his statement that the kids should be going to Harvard was incorrect, and self-repairs the statement to that the kids should go to Stanford. Tim does not make any effort to save face, but continues on with his narrative, demonstrating a lack of competition or need to save face between the two fathers. Later in the South Dakota transcript, Tim repairs yet another of Chad's statements, although in this instance Chad initiates the repair.

12:44:00	Chad	Gail went to Harvard- [Where did she go undergrad?]
12:47:17	Tim	I think she went to-
12:47:26	Edward	Harvard!
12:47:25	Chad	I think she went to Cal.
12:49:02	Tim	Cal, right.
12:50:01	Edward	Harvard ✓[Law.✓ [Harvard, Harvard]
12:51:20	Chad	Gail went to Harvard Law school with us.

(F10 Tuesday Dinner)

While Tim still repairs Chad's statement, he enables Chad to save face by using doubt markers ("I think") and expressing equal uncertainty over Gail's alma mater. Chad ultimately saves face by confirming Tim's repair ("Cal, right") and reiterating the corrected statement ("Gail went to Harvard Law school with us."). In this way, Tim and Chad are mitigating the power inherent in conversational repair (Schegloff & Sacks 1977: 361-382).

Within the Albert-Calihan family, Rich and Frederick's opposing roles can be embodied in Ochs and Taylors' ideas of the "nurturer" and the "judge" (Ochs & Taylor 1996). These embodiments are evident in the following transcript selection, where in response to the same question, Rich issues a permissive and Frederick issues a directive.

34:53:29	Andrew	Now should I test it?
34:55:12	Rich	Now you can test it
34:56:05	Frederick	Go test it
(F11 Thursday Dinner)		

Rich's lack of directives combined with the frequent directives Frederick issues such as "Count out loud" (35:07:10), "Drink some juice" (33:01:23), and "Leave her alone" (44:52:16, all from F11 Thursday Dinner) suggests a distinct power dynamic present within the Albert-Calihan family which places Frederick as judge at the head of the family.

Drawing on Tannen's idea that the mother continues to relate to her child on a more peer based level, Rich's repeated use of doubt markers within his interactions with the children suggests that he is orienting himself as their peer (Tannen 2007). This is particularly evident during Rich's conversation with Amy about bullying.

39:53:15 Rich I don't think it sounds like she was trying to be mean. (P) But maybe you got hurt- Maybe your feelings got hurt. Did they

40:01:25 Amy ((Nods yes)) I (xxx)

40:05:28 Rich What if you had said (P) I'm not Maya...

(F11 Thursday Dinner)

By using doubt markers like “I don’t think” and “maybe”, Rich orients himself as an equal to Amy; he also does this by using speculative words like “What if...” which ultimately removes him from the role of absolute authority on the subject and allows Amy to share in that authority. This role shifts recalls Pottier’s “linguistic maneuvers” in that by habitually interacting with the children in the register of mother, or more specifically mother-peer, Rich’s role within the family becomes not that of father, but that of mother. This behavior is in direct contrast to Frederick’s frequent and authoritative use of directives which, due to their gendered and power-filled nature, firmly situate Frederick as father. (Tannen 2007; Pottier 1989)

Conclusion

In her work, Pash describes how gay fathers are subject to cultural narratives about the necessity of a female influence in children's lives. While some fathers find this female figure in sisters, aunts, or friends which they can incorporate into the more nuclear family, others resent the implication that they need an external source for maternal care (Pash 2008: 82). Here I have examined two case studies of how gay fathers negotiate this perceived need for a female influence in their children's lives.

The Broadwell-Lewis and Albert-Calihan families both identify as middle-class, but have notably disparate levels of income. The Broadwell-Lewis fathers earn on average \$500,000 per year, whereas the Albert-Calihan fathers earn approximately \$200,000. It is likely that this income disparity contributes to the levels of external childcare the fathers are able to provide for the family. While the Broadwell-Lewis fathers have a nanny who takes care of the children "everyday" (CELF study), the Albert-Calihan fathers report having a housekeeper-cum-nanny who both cleans the house and watches the children for a short period twice a week, before Rich comes home to relieve her.

In addition to the hired support structures the families can afford, the Broadwell-Lewis family also includes the children's Aunt Fran, Tim's sister, in their CELF survey, as one of the children's primary caretakers. By having access not only to external, hired support, but also support from the extended family, the Broadwell-Lewis fathers are able to fulfill this apparent need for female childcare, thus allowing them the agency to adopt whatever familial roles they are naturally inclined towards.

These external support structures are lacking in the Albert-Calihan family, and subsequently the fathers must fill the need for female care in other ways. In this family, Rich is shown to have adopted the maternal role. Likewise, Rich is notably less satisfied than Frederick:

he views the their relationship as weak, somewhat empty, feels somewhat lonely, and occasionally wishes he had decided not to get married. Conversely, Frederick reported none of these feelings.

The Broadwell-Lewis fathers, however, both report high levels of satisfaction in their relationship and experience as parents. I suggest that this is due to the Broadwell-Lewis family's considerable access to support, both via their financial ability to outsource some of the considerable burden of childcare, and through their family connections. Both of these systems of support allow the fathers the agency to fully engage in their own selfhoods, and to parent in whichever way suits them naturally. This can be seen in the fathers' division of household chores, relieving the nanny or Fran, and Chad's own adoption of the home as his domain where he can adopt the masculine dynamics outlined in Ochs and Taylor's work.

By combining Duranti and Butler's theories, we develop an understanding of gender as a constantly performed state of social mimicry, evolving in response to one's lived experience. It then becomes worthy to study how one's lived experience structures the ways in which gender can be accessed and understood. As seen in the two case studies above, a family's socio-economic status and existing support structures can deeply influence the agency a parent has to pursue their own selfhoods external to the requirements of parenthood.

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- Credit for transcripts and family information used goes to UCLA Center on Everyday Lives of Families.**