Who should do the housework?
Evidence from a factorial survey on the attitude towards sharing domestic labor in Germany

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Conclusion

• Modal attitude of women and men: Gender egalitarianism
• Importance of situations: attitude differentials due to couple characteristics
• Importance of resources for attitude formation: fundamental association between couples’ relative employment and attitude towards housework sharing (in line with equity, power, and time availability approaches)
• Only marginal gender differences in the attitude towards housework sharing

Results

Figure 1. Idealized and conditioned attitude towards housework sharing

Figure 2. Predicted attitudes towards housework sharing by couple characteristics

Figure 3. Influence of respondent characteristics on the attitude towards housework sharing

Design, Data and Methods

• Factorial survey
• Online survey, German opt-in online panel hosted at Freiburg University
• Respondent sample:
  • 1,120 German women and men
  • 58% women
  • Mean age: 47.6 years
  • Mostly living in intimate relationships with partners, either cohabiting or married
  • Half of the respondents have children
  - Respondents have high commitment to gender egalitarianism, generally and regarding housework in particular
  • Sample is higher educated, men are older, women younger than in total population, but covers a broad age range (18-86) and all educational levels

Initial vignette sample:

• 120 vignettes from 684 ‘plausible vignettes’ (D-efficiency: 92; ensuring level balance and factor orthogonality)
• 30 blocks with 4 vignettes each
  - 1 block was randomly assigned to each respondent (random order of vignettes within block)
• 6 Factors:
  - Marital status (married | unmarried)
  - Parenthood and age of children (no | newborn | kindergarten | school)
  - Men’s employment (not employed | part-time | full-time)
  - Women’s employment (not employed | part-time | full-time)
  - Women’s relative income (less than | same as | more than partner)
• Rating task: “Who should do the housework?”, 7-point scale explicitly maps the possible arrangements
• Direct measurement of attitudes without interpretation

Vignette example

An unmarried couple is living together. They don’t have children.
The man is working full-time, the woman is not employed.
The woman has 1800 Euros per month at her disposal. With this money, the woman contributes less to the household income than her partner.
Who do you think should do the housework in this couple?

University education, age, having a partner, having children, and parental housework division do not influence attitudes (on 95% significance level)
Disapproval of traditional roles shift attitude slightly towards greater male involvement for women and men
Minor gender differences only on 90% significance level

Analytics

• Standard linear random intercept model (level 1: vignette factors, level 2: respondent characteristics)
• Margins at the means: adjusted predictions setting covariates to the sample means (outcomes don’t change if setting covariates to the observed values of reference categories)

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