

Housework over the Course of Relationships: Gender Ideology, Resources, and the Division of Housework from a Growth Curve Perspective

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OBJECTIVE

- To understand why the division of housework in couples remains gendered.
- To investigate the differential effect of partners' socio-economic resources and gender ideology on the division of housework.
- To assess whether this process differs between childless couples and those experiencing the first birth.

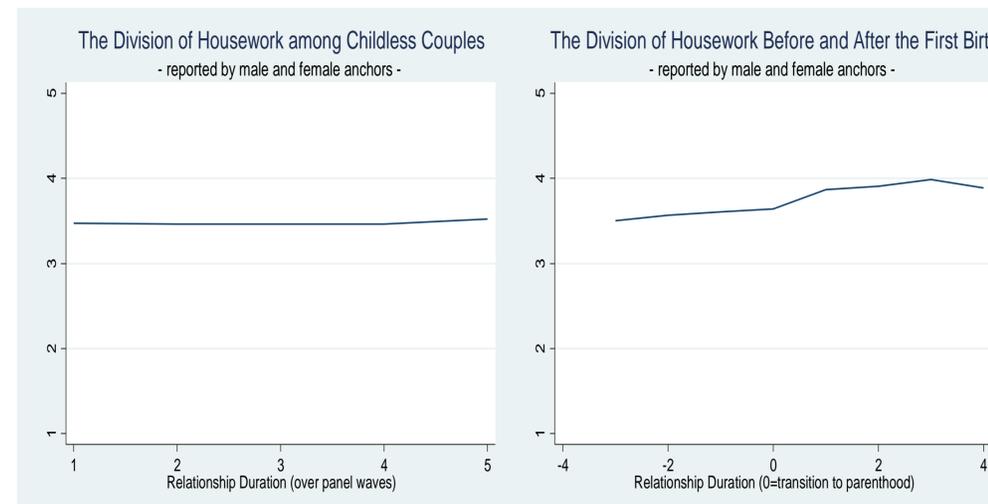
BACKGROUND

- The majority of housework and childcare is still carried out by women today (Treas and Lui 2013).
- Previous literature has focused on the impact of absolute and relative resources in predicting housework, with mixed and context-dependent findings (Dechant et al. 2014, Grunow et al. 2007, Kühhirt 2012, Schober 2013).
- Recent research point to the relevance of both partners' gender ideology (Aassve, Fuoci and Mencarini 2014, Evertsson 2014, Lewin-Epstein, Stier and Braun 2006, Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010).
- Few studies have been able to test both mechanisms simultaneously, due to data restrictions.

DATA AND METHODS

- The data come from the German *Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics* (pairfam), featuring yearly waves. We use waves 1-5 (2008-2013).
- Birth cohorts (anchors): 1971-73, 1981-83, 1991-93.
- Analytic sample: 489 childless couples, 285 couples experiencing first birth.
- Growth curve models (MLM, with random couple-level effects).
- Dependent process: Trajectories of the division of housework over time.
- Resource covariates lagged, ideology fixed at first observation.

DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK OVER TIME



Division of housework scale: 1=(almost) entirely him, 5=(almost) entirely her

RESULTS

Table 1: Coefficients from Growth Curve Models Predicting Changes in the Division of Housework as a Function of Relative Resources and Gender Ideology, Among Childless Couples

	Education Only		Income Only		Ideology Only		Full Model	
	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE
Fixed Effects								
Intercept	3.495***	0.204	3.129***	0.188	4.458***	0.264	4.66***	0.3
Level 1								
Relationship Duration (linear)	0.004	0.019	-0.005	0.019	0.009	0.018	-0.001	0.018
Level 2								
Time-Varying								
Her Enrollment	-0.322***	0.119					-0.296***	0.119
Her Low Education	-0.190	0.189					-0.201	0.183
Her High Education	-0.122	0.135					-0.070	0.131
His Enrollment	0.000	0.123					0.016	0.121
His Low Education	-0.025	0.188					0.046	0.181
His High Education FR	0.112	0.150					0.069	0.146
His High Education MR	-0.160	0.146					-0.164	0.141
She More Education	0.022	0.146					0.001	0.142
He More Education	0.027	0.148					0.046	0.144
His Log-Income			0.017	0.012			0.014	0.011
Her Income Ratio			0.028	0.107			-0.001	0.109
Time-Invariant								
Her HW-Ideology					-0.092***	0.035	-0.095***	0.035
His HW-Ideology					-0.196***	0.034	-0.188***	0.034
Random Effects								
Random Intercept	0.228	0.037	0.231	0.037	0.206	0.035	0.191	0.034
Random Slope Duration	0.005	0.002	0.005	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.005	0.003

Table 2: Coefficients from Growth Curve Models Predicting Changes in the Division of Housework as a Function of Relative Resources and Gender Ideology, Among Couples Who Experience the First Birth during the Panel

	Education Only		Income Only		Ideology Only		Full Model	
	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE
Fixed Effects								
Intercept	3.713***	0.364	3.991***	0.383	5.075***	0.410	4.931***	0.419
Level 1								
Relationship Duration								
Spline -4-0	-0.019	0.063	-0.027	0.064	-0.051	0.062	-0.022	0.064
Spline 0-1	0.347***	0.077	0.352***	0.078	0.364***	0.076	0.326***	0.078
Spline 1-2	0.037	0.058	0.009	0.061	0.051	0.058	0.020	0.061
Spline 2-3	0.051	0.075	0.071	0.077	0.038	0.075	0.057	0.076
Spline 3-4	-0.047	0.094	-0.059	0.094	-0.053	0.093	-0.047	0.094
Level 2								
Time-Varying								
Her Enrollment	-0.262	0.220					-0.252	0.215
Her Low Education	0.400	0.266					0.440	0.258
Her High Education	-0.297	0.219					-0.305	0.215
His Enrollment	0.199	0.217					0.243	0.213
His Low Education	0.157	0.275					0.052	0.266
His High Education	0.339	0.222					0.353	0.216
She More Education	-0.053	0.235					0.011	0.229
He More Education	-0.075	0.230					-0.158	0.225
His Log-Income			-0.013	0.015			0.00	0.01
Her Income Ratio			-0.251**	0.125			-0.15	0.12
Time-Invariant								
Her HW-Ideology					-0.143***	0.044	-0.130***	0.043
His HW-Ideology					-0.161***	0.037	-0.146***	0.036
Random Effects								
Random Intercept	0.344	0.068	0.342	0.068	0.287	0.060	0.296	0.062
Random Slope Spl. 0-1	0.311	0.089	0.312	0.089	0.335	0.090	0.313	0.088
Covariance	-0.178	0.064	-0.164	0.063	-0.164	0.061	-0.177	0.061

CONCLUSIONS

- A more gender egalitarian ideology expressed by either her or him in the first wave predicts a more gender egalitarian trajectory of the division of housework in subsequent years.
- No effect of absolute or relative resources on the gendered division of housework present when controlling for ideology.
- The housework division becomes more traditional after the birth of a first child. Otherwise, we didn't find any differences between childless couples and those who become parents in terms of what predicts the division of household labor.
- Findings are robust to alternative specifications of covariates (time-varying ideology, fixed resources etc.).