

Doing (and getting?) your fair share?

An experiment on intra-household labour division

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Motivation

Puzzle: Persisting gender gaps in labour market outcomes despite equal human capital investments¹

- Size of gaps varies by family background:
 - Small gaps between childless men and women
 - widen for those living with children²
- Intra-family labour division as an important factor: women are more likely to withdraw from the labour market than men to provide family-related services³.
- consequences:
 - unequal economic risk outside relationship
 - asymmetric bargaining power within the relationship

 Why do couples choose gender-specific labour division?

Theory: Why gendered labour division?

Unitary model⁴



→ Relative productivity differences

Bargaining models⁵



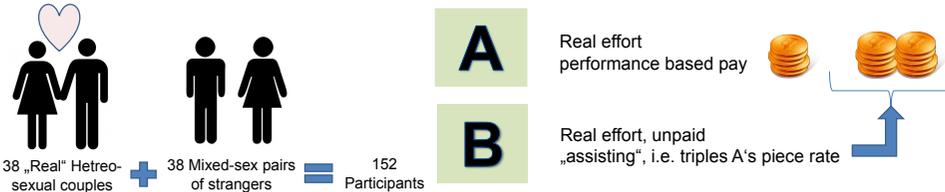
→ Relative productivity or resources (cooperative)
→ Preferences (non-cooperative)

Identity utility model⁶



→ Utility gains from compliance with social norms

The Game



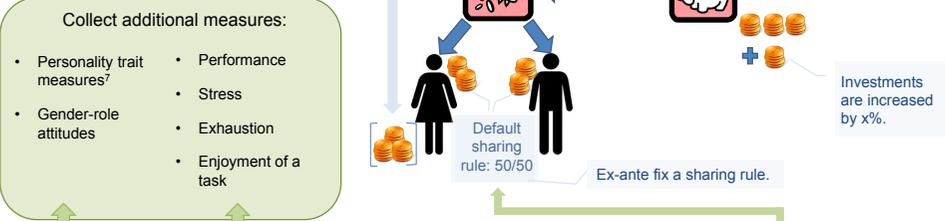
Step 1: Who does which task?



Step 2: Perform work (A/B) and receive income (A)



Step 3: A decides what share to invest into their common pool (if any).



Stage	1	2	3	4	5
Interaction	No	No	Via chat	Via chat	Via chat
Function	Practise, elicitation of productivity ³ , feedback ⁹	Elicitation of individual preferences	Couple/stranger comparison of efficiency loss (hold-up problem)	Comparison of a) use of contracting option Determinants Comparison of b) labour division and b) sharing rules	Comparison of differential impact of cost on use of contracting option

Previous Findings (Görges, 2014⁹)

[Note: Results from a reduced version of the experiment, in which 80 participants (20 real couples and 20 pairs of strangers) played only stage 3.]

- Couples are significantly more likely than strangers to realise efficient outcomes when this creates inequality between them. (100% vs. 60%, $X^2(1)=10$, $p=.001$)
- When dividing labour with their partners, women are significantly more likely than men to perform the unpaid task if they play with their „spouse“ (70%, $X^2(1)=3.2$, $p=.037$) but not if they play with a stranger.
- For men, familiarity with their female partner does not alter behaviour.

	Real Couples		Strangers	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
A-performers	14	6	13	15
B-Performers	6	14	7	5

- Robustness checks show: Performance, trust level, personality traits (Big 5, Locus of control, challenge & affiliation needs) and gender role attitudes fail to deliver plausible explanations for the differences between groups.



- Women in the familiar group choose the unpaid task more often despite the lack of (objective) differences in productivity and in personality traits.
- Increasing female productivity is not enough to achieve gender equality in the labour market.
- Review policy instruments that enhance/deter gains from labour division within couples.

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