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 investments:
- Size of gaps varies by family background:
  - Small gaps between childless men and women
  - Widened for those living with children
- Intra-family labour division as an important factor: women are more likely to withdraw from the labour market than men to provide family-related services:
  - 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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unitary model</th>
<th>Relative productivity differences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bargaining models</td>
<td>Relative productivity or resources (cooperative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity utility model</td>
<td>Utility gains from compliance with social norms</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Game

Step 1: Who does which task?

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

Collect additional measures:

- Personality trait measures
- Gender-role attitudes
- Performance
- Stress
- Exhaustion
- Enjoyment of task

Stage 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual work</th>
<th>Dictator labour division</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
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</table>

Stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bargaining over labour division w/o contracting option</th>
<th>Bargaining over labour division w/ free contracting option</th>
<th>Bargaining over labour division w/ costly contracting option</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Bargaining over Labour Div.: Ex ante fix a sharing rule (50/50)</td>
<td>Via chat</td>
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Step 3: A decides what share to invest into their common pool (if any).

Step 4: Investments are increased by x%.

Step 5: Ex-ante fix a sharing rule.

Previous Findings (Görges, 2014)

[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.]

1. Couples are significantly more likely than strangers to realise efficient outcomes when this creates inequality between them. (100% vs. 66%, X²(1)=10, p=0.001)

2. 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%, X²(1)=3.2, p=0.037) but not if they play with a stranger.

3. For men, familiarity with their female partner does not alter behaviour.

4. 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.

Literature cited