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**Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage**

This paper addresses the question of whether men’s participation in housework leads to a higher sexual frequency in marriage. The authors present two theories that could be driving this relationship: the first postulates that sex is viewed as an item that can be exchanged for household chores within a relationship whereas the second argues that sexual frequency is higher when traditional gender roles are maintained in a relationship. The authors main empirical strategy is to use data from Wave II of the NSFH to regress sexual frequency on husbands’ and wives’ share and total hours spent on core and non-core housework as well as several other control variables (religion, age, income, education, time spent alone with spouse etc.). They interpret a negative and statistically significant coefficient on the husband’s share of core housework, and a positive statistically significant coefficient on his share of non-core housework as evidence that sex is not an “exchange item”, but instead spawned through traditional gender relationships.

My main issue with this paper is that the authors do not provide a causal argument. They simply look at correlations within the data, while controlling for some observable demographics. However, given the intimate and personal nature of sexual relations, there are surely variables of interest that are left out. More specifically, the authors’ proposed causal mechanism is that husbands that do a smaller fraction of core housework and a larger fraction of non-core housework are “more alpha” and therefore get more sex. However, there could be an omitted variable that drives husbands share of core housework up and sexual frequency down. For example, a pregnant woman may need more help in core housework from her husband, and also be less likely to have sex.

Two other issues I have with the empirical strategy are as follows. Firstly, I don’t think the authors adequately explain why there is a positive coefficient on total hours spent on core housework. Secondly, the authors do not exploit the richness of the data to run interactions. One interaction that I would be interested in is that between whether the husband/wife was employed full time and his/her share/hours spent on core/non-core housework. I would expect differing relationships between household work and sexual frequency given employment status. Another interaction that I would be interested in is that between “high” and “low” total housework households and total/share of housework. This is mainly driven by the differing signs between husbands share and total hours spent on core housework. The differing signs could be driven by a situation where overall, more core housework by men leads to more sex, but there is just less sex in a super busy household. At the end of the day, both of these interactions tie back to the fatal flaw of this paper, that there is no exogenous variation in the husband’s time spent doing housework. Without this variation, the authors claims are tenuous at best.

**Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty**

In this paper, the authors run two experiments to identify the effects of motherhood on getting a job. In the first experiment, they recruit 192 college students to read two job applications each. The job applications have been vetted to be similar, and the two applications each student sees come from the same gender and race. The authors vary gender and race across the different laboratory study participants. The main result of the paper is that women that have resume characteristics indicating motherhood get lower ratings from the study participants and are less likely to be hired. No similar trend can be seen in male applicants.

Overall, I find this paper to be quite thorough and well done. The authors identify a causal local average treatment effect when they compare similar applicants who only differ via their “motherhood”. They may even get further than that if the two synthetic applications they considered were “similar enough”. The authors did not mention whether they randomized which version of the fake application they applied the parental characteristics to. I think this is an important question when regarding causality. The second question that I have about the paper is why the paper did not also randomize race and gender as well. It could be that the main effect of interest was the motherhood penalty, and the researchers chose to focus on that. However, I was curious as to whether there was anything else at play.