

Marriage Rights and the Household Division of Labor

Alyssa Schneebaum

Institute for Institutional and Heterodox Economics
Vienna University of Economics and Business

November 2018

Introduction

This paper is about the household division of labor (DoL).

Introduction

This paper is about the household division of labor (DoL).

- Intersection between economic policy, work and labor markets, and feminist economics
- DoL is a key topic in economics
 - Mainstream theory (e.g. Becker 1965): couples engage in a DoL to maximize efficiency based on comparative advantage
 - Feminist economics: DoL emerges out of norms, social values, political and social institutions
 - Household DoL is a core issue connecting patriarchy and capitalism
- Compelling way of understanding people's experiences in the economy

How I do it

- US states introduced laws recognizing same-sex couples for **marriage, alimony, and joint taxation** throughout 2000-2015.

How I do it

- US states introduced laws recognizing same-sex couples for **marriage, alimony, and joint taxation** throughout 2000-2015.
- I exploit these policy changes to measure the effect of these legal changes on couples' division of labor.

Variation in State Law Changes

Table: Timing of legal changes in 50 states and Washington, DC

Year	Joint Tax Filing	Alimony	Marriage
2000	VT	VT	
2004	MA, NJ	MA	MA
2005		CT, CA	
2006	CT	DC	
2007	CA, DC	NJ	
2008	OR	NH, OR, WA	CT
2009	IA	IA, NV	VT, IA
2010			NH, DC
2011	IL, NY	IL, NY, RI	NY
2012	DE, HI, ME	DE, HI, ME	ME, WA
2013	MD, MN, NM, RI	CO, MD, NM, MN	(8)
2014	(14)	(15)	(18)
2015	(11)	(15)	(16)

Notes: States without separate tax rates for couples are not included in the joint tax filing column.

Research questions

- Does access to **joint taxation** incentivize a household DoL?
- Does access to **alimony** incentivize a household DoL?
- Does access to **marriage** incentivize a household DoL?

Research questions

- Does access to **joint taxation** incentivize a household DoL?
- Does access to **alimony** incentivize a household DoL?
- Does access to **marriage** incentivize a household DoL?

- Which institution has stronger effects?
 - Tells us about the relative strength of **legal** and **financial** versus **social** institutions in affecting labor market participation/work decisions

Some relevant literature

Division of Labor

- Extensive literature on DoL in different-sex couples around the world (via labor force and time-use surveys) (e.g. Lam et al. 2012); unmarried couples more egalitarian in time spent than married couples (e.g. Dominguez-Folgueras 2013)
- Same-sex cohabiting couples more egalitarian than different-sex couples (Schneebaum 2013; Giddings et al. 2014)

Some relevant literature

Division of Labor

- Extensive literature on DoL in different-sex couples around the world (via labor force and time-use surveys) (e.g. Lam et al. 2012); unmarried couples more egalitarian in time spent than married couples (e.g. Dominguez-Folgueras 2013)
- Same-sex cohabiting couples more egalitarian than different-sex couples (Schneebaum 2013; Giddings et al. 2014)

Research design in the spirit of no-fault divorce laws

- ...effect on labor supply (Voena 2015; Genadek 2018); fertility (Belido & Marcen 2015, Stevenson 2007); intramarital violence (Stevenson & Wolfers 2008)

Some relevant literature

Division of Labor

- Extensive literature on DoL in different-sex couples around the world (via labor force and time-use surveys) (e.g. Lam et al. 2012); unmarried couples more egalitarian in time spent than married couples (e.g. Dominguez-Folgueras 2013)
- Same-sex cohabiting couples more egalitarian than different-sex couples (Schneebaum 2013; Giddings et al. 2014)

Research design in the spirit of no-fault divorce laws

- ...effect on labor supply (Voena 2015; Genadek 2018); fertility (Belido & Marcen 2015, Stevenson 2007); intramarital violence (Stevenson & Wolfers 2008)

Data

- Data come from the 2003-2016 American Community Survey
- Identifying same-sex couples
- Several thousand SSCs in data each year (circa 0.5% of all couples)
- Vast labor market and demographic information at individual and household level

Defining the DoL

Absolute Difference

- The absolute difference in the number of hours worked in labor force by people in a couple

Ratio

- The ratio of hours worked of the people in a couple
($0 \leq \text{ratio} \leq 1$)

Both Participate

- The share of couples in which both members of the couple participate in the labor force

Both Work Full-Time

- The share of couples in which both members of the couple work full time (≥ 35 hours/week)

Econometric modeling: difference in differences

Econometric modeling: difference in differences

Predicting the DoL

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{taxes}_{st} + \beta_2 \text{alimony}_{st} + \beta_3 \text{marriage}_{st} + \beta_X X_{ist} + \beta_t I_t + \beta_s I_s + e_{ist} \quad (1)$$

Econometric modeling: difference in differences

Predicting the DoL

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{taxes}_{st} + \beta_2 \text{alimony}_{st} + \beta_3 \text{marriage}_{st} + \beta_X X_{ist} + \beta_t I_t + \beta_s I_s + e_{ist} \quad (1)$$

The role of children

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{child}(\text{age})_{ist} + \beta_2 \text{taxes}_{st} + \beta_3 \text{taxes}_{st} * \text{child}(\text{age})_{ist} + \beta_4 \text{alimony}_{st} + \beta_5 \text{alimony}_{st} * \text{child}(\text{age})_{ist} + \beta_6 \text{marriage}_{st} + \beta_7 \text{marriage}_{st} * \text{child}(\text{age})_{ist} + \beta_X X_{ist} + \beta_t I_t + \beta_s I_s + e_{ist} \quad (2)$$

Independent Variables

Independent Variables

- Couple-level controls for race, ethnicity, age, disability, education, highest income, state, year, N children
 - For example: multiracial (white-black); one Hispanic; aged 25-34 and 35-44; none disabled; both HS degree; highest income is \$42,000, one child
- Plus state/year controls: unemployment rate; GDP/capita; anti-discrimination laws
- DV for age category of the youngest child (0-1; 2-5; 6-17)

▶ Descriptives

Same-Sex Male Couples

Same-Sex Male Couples

Model without children: Men

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Taxation	0.387 (0.265)	-0.014* (0.006)	-0.025*** (0.007)	-0.020** (0.007)
Alimony	0.021 (0.282)	0.008 (0.006)	0.017* (0.007)	0.024** (0.008)
Marriage	-0.525 (0.333)	0.004 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.009)	-0.005 (0.009)
N	73004	70124	73004	73004
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Male Couples; Model with Children

Model with children: Men

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Youngest Child < 2	6.877*** (0.632)	-0.168*** (0.013)	-0.160*** (0.016)	-0.156*** (0.018)
Youngest Child 2-5	6.747*** (0.513)	-0.135** (0.011)	-0.118*** (0.013)	-0.124**** (0.014)
Youngest Child 6-17	0.918 (0.501)	-0.027* (0.011)	-0.051*** (0.013)	-0.049*** (0.014)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Male Couples; Model with Children; Taxation

Model with children: Men

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Joint Taxation	-0.081 (0.277)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.011 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.008)
Tax × Child < 2	1.512 (0.846)	-0.019 (0.018)	-0.045* (0.022)	-0.021 (0.024)
Tax × Child 2-5	2.450*** (0.689)	-0.063*** (0.015)	-0.054** (0.018)	-0.077*** (0.019)
Tax × Child 6-17	0.918 (0.501)	-0.027* (0.011)	-0.051*** (0.013)	-0.049*** (0.014)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Male Couples; Model with Children; Alimony

Model with children: Men

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Alimony	0.272 (0.294)	0.003 (0.006)	0.012 (0.008)	0.019* (0.008)
Alimony × Child < 2	-0.907 (1.082)	0.010 (0.023)	-0.013 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.031)
Alimony × Child 2-5	-2.637** (0.890)	0.051** (0.019)	0.002 (0.023)	0.008 (0.025)
Alimony × Child 6-17	0.502 (0.650)	-0.003 (0.014)	0.022 (0.017)	0.008 (0.018)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Male Couples; Model with Children; Marriage

Model with children: Men

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Marriage	-0.173 (0.341)	-0.003 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.009)	-0.012 (0.010)
Marriage × Child < 2	-1.897 (1.229)	0.064* (0.026)	0.056 (0.032)	0.054 (0.035)
Marriage × Child 2-5	-1.748 (1.032)	0.038 (0.022)	0.028 (0.027)	0.066* (0.029)
Marriage × Child 6-17	-3.867*** (0.744)	0.064*** (0.016)	0.028 (0.019)	0.054* (0.021)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Female Couples

Same-Sex Female Couples

Model without children: Women

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Taxation	0.112 (0.254)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.023*** (0.007)	-0.002 (0.007)
Alimony	-0.374 (0.276)	0.011 (0.006)	0.013 (0.008)	0.003 (0.008)
Marriage	0.049 (0.317)	0.006 (0.007)	0.014 (0.009)	0.027** (0.009)
N	77570	74107	77570	77570
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Female Couples; Model with Children

Model with children: Women

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Youngest Child < 2	7.110*** (0.465)	-0.173*** (0.010)	-0.168*** (0.013)	-0.138*** (0.014)
Youngest Child 2-5	5.669*** (0.393)	-0.139*** (0.009)	-0.100*** (0.011)	-0.144*** (0.011)
Youngest Child 6-17	2.613*** (0.286)	-0.049*** (0.006)	-0.083*** (0.008)	-0.065*** (0.008)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Female Couples; Model with Children; Taxation

Model with children: Women

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Joint Taxation	0.217 (0.273)	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.023** (0.007)	-0.007 (0.008)
Tax × Child < 2	-0.366 (0.651)	0.013 (0.014)	-0.013 (0.018)	0.003 (0.019)
Tax × Child 2-5	-0.739 (0.551)	0.028* (0.012)	-0.001 (0.015)	0.003 (0.016)
Tax × Child 6-17	-0.195 (0.395)	0.009 (0.009)	0.010 (0.011)	0.024* (0.012)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Female Couples; Model with Children; Alimony

Model with children: Women

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Alimony	-0.062 (0.302)	0.004 (0.007)	0.005 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.009)
Alimony × Child < 2	-0.362 (0.835)	0.006 (0.019)	-0.004 (0.023)	-0.033 (0.024)
Alimony × Child 2-5	-1.495* (0.702)	0.028 (0.016)	0.059** (0.019)	0.085*** (0.021)
Alimony × Child 6-17	-0.992* (0.506)	0.019 (0.011)	0.020 (0.014)	0.020 (0.015)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

Same-Sex Female Couples; Model with Children; Marriage

Model with children: Women

	Abs. Diff.	Ratio	Both in LF	Both FT
Marriage	0.050 (0.340)	0.005 (0.008)	0.010 (0.009)	0.029** (0.010)
Marriage × Child < 2	-1.715 (0.882)	0.050* (0.020)	0.051* (0.024)	0.065* (0.026)
Marriage × Child 2-5	0.976 (0.737)	-0.020 (0.016)	-0.032 (0.020)	-0.044* (0.022)
Marriage × Child 6-17	0.151 (0.528)	0.002 (0.012)	0.022 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.015)
DoL higher when	> 0	< 0	< 0	< 0

The results suggest...

The results suggest...

- That joint taxation is most effectual suggests that people respond to economic incentives

The results suggest...

- That joint taxation is most effectual suggests that people respond to economic incentives
- Why not the other measures?
 - Alimony: too far in the future? Too pessimistic?
 - Marriage: SSCs live the institution differently?

The results suggest...

- That joint taxation is most effectual suggests that people respond to economic incentives
- Why not the other measures?
 - Alimony: too far in the future? Too pessimistic?
 - Marriage: SSCs live the institution differently?
- Joint taxation incentivizes a “male breadwinner” model of household labor supply
 - Where “male” breadwinner apparently refers to social gender, not biological sex

The results suggest...

- That joint taxation is most effectual suggests that people respond to economic incentives
- Why not the other measures?
 - Alimony: too far in the future? Too pessimistic?
 - Marriage: SSCs live the institution differently?
- Joint taxation incentivizes a “male breadwinner” model of household labor supply
 - Where “male” breadwinner apparently refers to social gender, not biological sex
- DoL is driven by the presence of children, regardless of social and institutional framework → prominence of care work

Marriage Rights and the Household Division of Labor

Thank you for your attention!

- Dominguez-Folgueras, Marta. 2013. "Is Cohabitation More Egalitarian? The Division of Household Labor in Five European Countries." *Journal of Family Issues* 34(12): 1623-1646.
- Giddings, Lisa, John Nunley, Alyssa Schneebaum, and Joachim Zietz. 2014. "Birth cohort and the specialization gap between same-sex and different-sex couples." *Demography* 51(2): 509-534.
- Gray, Jeffrey. 1998. "Divorce-Law Changes, Household Bargaining, and Married Women's Labor Supply." *American Economic Review* 88(3): 628-642.
- Lam, Chun Bun, Susan M. McHale, and Ann C. Crouter. 2012. "The Division of Household Labor: Longitudinal Changes and Within-Couple Variation." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(5): 944-952.
- Oreffice, Sonia. 2011. "Sexual orientation and household decision making: Same-sex couples' balance of power and labor supply choices." *Labour Economics* 18(2): 145-158.

- Ruggles, Steven, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2017.
- U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, “Per capita real GDP by state (chained 2009 dollars).”
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Average Annual Unemployment Rates by State” (April 2017 release).

Descriptives: DoL :: Different-Sex Married Couples

	None	Taxation	Alimony	Marriage
Both Participate	0.5887 (0.001)	0.5740 (0.000)	0.5715 (0.000)	0.5799 (0.001)
Both FT	0.4815 (0.001)	0.4603 (0.000)	0.4534 (0.000)	0.4645 (0.001)
Abs. Difference	20.46 (0.020)	21.03 (0.014)	21.02 (0.017)	20.75 (0.021)
Ratio	0.56 (0.000)	0.54 (0.000)	0.53 (0.000)	0.54 (0.000)

Descriptives: DoL :: Different-Sex Unmarried Couples

	None	Taxation	Alimony	Marriage
Both Participate	0.6802 (0.001)	0.6724 (0.001)	0.6791 (0.001)	0.6892 (0.002)
Both FT	0.5247 (0.002)	0.5107 (0.001)	0.5036 (0.002)	0.5194 (0.002)
Abs. Difference	16.42 (0.054)	16.88 (0.047)	16.65 (0.053)	16.51 (0.059)
Ratio	0.62 (0.001)	0.61 (0.001)	0.61 (0.001)	0.62 (0.001)

▶ Same-Sex Female

Descriptives: DoL :: Same-Sex Male Couples

	None	Taxation	Alimony	Marriage
Both Participate	0.7003 (0.006)	0.7084 (0.004)	0.7175 (0.004)	0.7181 (0.005)
Both FT	0.5905 (0.006)	0.5845 (0.004)	0.5887 (0.005)	0.5923 (0.006)
Abs. Difference	15.93 (0.234)	16.15 (0.137)	15.85 (0.161)	15.57 (0.193)
Ratio	0.65 (0.005)	0.65 (0.003)	0.65 (0.003)	0.66 (0.004)

Descriptives: DoL :: Same-Sex Female Couples

	None	Taxation	Alimony	Marriage
Both Participate	0.6804 (0.006)	0.6875 (0.004)	0.6933 (0.004)	0.6960 (0.005)
Both FT	0.5466 (0.006)	0.5483 (0.004)	0.5376 (0.005)	0.5425 (0.006)
Abs. Difference	16.18 (0.217)	15.94 (0.134)	15.85 (0.157)	15.75 (0.187)
Ratio	0.63 (0.005)	0.64 (0.003)	0.64 (0.003)	0.64 (0.004)

Descriptives: Children

	Share with child, youngest aged			N kids
	0-1	2-5	6-17	
Different-Sex Married	10.2	14.1	30.0	1.03
Different-Sex Unmarried	12.0	13.2	18.4	.75
Same-Sex Male	3.1	4.6	9.4	.37
Same-Sex Female	5.4	7.9	17.6	.53

Parallel trend assumption

