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SHOULD MEN VACUUM MORE?

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Cross-national surveys show that among heterosexual couples who share a household, women tend to perform more housework than their male partners. Many feminists believe that this must be unjust, the assumption being that justice requires an equal distribution of housework between the sexes. My aim in this contribution is to challenge this view. To do so, I distinguish three possible interpretations of it. The first says that heterosexual co-residential partners, construed broadly to include married individuals, should do as much housework as their partner and not more. The second interpretation maintains that they should split evenly the housework that must be done to realize a minimally decent living standard. And the third maintains that the housework co-residential male and female partners each perform as a group ought to be equal, whether or not the constituent loads are equalized on an individual household level. All three versions are found to be untenable.

Keywords: Housework, domestic labor, romantic relationships, gender inequality, feminism

Introduction

Studies have shown that perceived unfairness in the distribution of unpaid housework is a common source of friction among heterosexual couples, one that reduces relationship quality for both partners and that especially for women is a not uncommon reason to end the relationship.[1] But what constitutes a fair distribution of unpaid housework—henceforth "housework" *simpliciter*—between heterosexual partners? According to many feminists, the answer cannot be one where women tend to perform a greater share of housework than their male partners, as is currently the case within most societies.[2] For example, already back in the 1980s, philosopher Susan Okin wrote that underlying the

problem of gender inequality is "the unequal distribution of the unpaid labor of the family" and that "an equal sharing of family responsibilities . . . . is the great revolution that has not happened."[3] Although men in Western societies are doing significantly more housework since the 1960s—for example, in the United States, their time spent on it has doubled from four hours per week in 1965 to about nine hours per week in 2011[4]—the internet remains full of articles critical of persisting gender gaps. Melissa Hogenboom, BBC journalist, for instance, laments the fact that "even in couples who think that they have achieved an equal division of labor, the more hidden forms of care generally end up falling to the woman,"[5] whereas Bloomberg columnist and editor Sarah Green Carmichael has called for an "Equal Housework Day" on August 29,[6] the day on which US women should cease doing household chores for the rest of the year to equalize the overall load.[7]

The aim of this article is to challenge the notion that gender equality in housework is required by justice. To do so, the article identifies three possible interpretations of such equality. The first interpretation says that heterosexual partners who share a household, whom I refer to as "co-residential partners" irrespective of their marital status, should perform equal amounts of the housework that is done. The second interpretation maintains that they should perform exactly half of the housework that must be done to realize a minimally decent living standard. And the third maintains that the housework co-residential male and female partners each perform as a group ought to be equal, whether or not the constituent loads are equalized on an individual household level. While accepting that there is a moral presumption in favor of splitting essential housework evenly within any given romantic relationship (including within homosexual ones) and that current macro-level gender disparities in the amounts of performed housework might be too large, I find that all three versions are unsustainable.

Before delving into these matters, notice that the terms "housework," "domestic work," and "household labor" are used interchangeably in this article to refer to any activity necessary for having a clean, tidy, and well-functioning household, including vacuuming, mopping, decluttering, food preparation, garden maintenance, home repairs, and taking out the trash. On my understanding, such activities might also include the provision of material care to other household members (e.g., young children, aging parents), which, like most of the chores just mentioned,[8] tends to be disproportionally done by women.[9] Another preliminary is that we do not need to settle here exactly how the amount of housework that someone performs must be measured; the arguments provided are compatible with different understandings. Suffice it to say that my own understanding is that we should consider the amount of time an average person would need to complete the chores being performed.

Micro-level Equality in Housework

Let us start, then, by looking at the problems plaguing the first interpretation of the notion that justice requires an equal distribution of housework between the sexes, which may be formulated as follows:

> *Micro-level equality*: Each co-residential heterosexual partner should do exactly half of the housework that is done.

To see why this principle is difficult to defend, suppose Alf and Betty live together as a couple and that Alf suffers from a cleaning compulsion that causes him to clean their home six times a week. Suppose further that Alf does not want the home to be cleaned any less than that. Under these conditions, the micro-level equality principle would require Betty to either put in six weekly cleaning and tidying shifts as well or, insofar as Alf is willing to do three fewer shifts every week, three such shifts. Yet, even in the latter case, this seems overly demanding, given that such frequent cleanings are not only highly time- and energy-consuming but also well exceed what is necessary to maintain an adequate level of hygiene and orderliness.

In response to this objection, the micro-level equality principle might be revised thus:

> *Micro-level equality**: Each partner should do exactly half of the housework that must be done to maintain a minimally decent standard of living (call this "essential housework").[10]

This version avoids the implausible outcome that Betty should clean and tidy her shared home more than once a week, assuming that doing so once allows her and Alf to maintain an acceptable living standard (as will usually be the case).[11] Still, upon reflection, it too looks untenable. One thing it fails to take into account is that most people do not simply care about how much housework they perform but also about *how pleasant or unpleasant* a particular chore or set of chores is. For example, many of us dislike vacuuming, mopping, and cleaning but enjoy cooking, perhaps because it is more of creative activity than removing dust and dirt.[12] What this suggests is that *even if* Alf does more essential housework than Betty, for them to have unequal loads of this work may still be justified by virtue of the fact that Betty does more of the less pleasant chores.

Another relevant consideration left out—the current list is not meant to be exhaustive—is that some individuals have *less time to perform housework* than their co-residential partner, which may have various causes. Some have jobs that require them to work longer hours than their partner if their partner works at all. Others might be providing informal care to an indigent parent at the parent's place. Admittedly, for people to have less time to do an equal amount of the housework necessary for maintaining a minimally decent living standard is *not always enough* to justify them doing a smaller share. Consider a case where

Alf has a full-time job and where his partner Betty does 90 percent of all the essential housework; to the extent that Alf could work part-time at another, equally rewarding, job, and this would not deprive him and Betty of an adequate quality of life, the fact that Alf currently has less time to perform housework than Betty does not in and of itself justify him doing less than an equal amount of essential housework (although perhaps it does so when additional conditions are satisfied, such as that Betty is happy for Alf to keep his current job). By contrast, in other cases, dividing unevenly the housework that must be done to enjoy a minimally decent living standard does look justified. For example, if for Alf to leave his full-time job would force Betty and him to live in poverty for the foreseeable future because of the long time it will take for them to find part-time jobs that are sufficiently well-paid, preserving the status quo seems to be morally permissible if not required.

While more variables are omitted by *micro-level equality** that can potentially justify uneven distributions of essential housework, such as differences in physical ability between partners,[13] I should stress that nothing I have said hitherto precludes there being a *presumption* in favor of co-residential partners sharing equally in this type of housework. Since performing household chores can, and often does, consume considerable time and energy and carries non-trivial opportunity costs in many cases (not only might it render people more financially insecure due to the earnings they forgo, but it may also deprive them of professional experiences that would have strengthened their CV), there are good reasons for thinking that such a presumption exists. However, if the foregoing observations are correct, then there will *often be factors present that override this presumption*, such that even of essential housework we can no longer say that it should always, or even merely generally, be distributed equally between co-residential partners.

Macro-level Equality in Housework

At this point, a critic might concede that on an individual household level, any principle requiring co-residential partners to perform equal amounts of housework, or equal amounts of essential housework, is indefensible because of the wide range of cases where deviating from these egalitarian norms is morally permissible, if not required. Yet, as far as heterosexual partners are concerned, they might say that justice still requires an equal distribution of housework on *a societal level*, which I will refer to as "macro level-equality."

> *Macro-level equality*: the amount of housework that co-residential male and female partners each perform as a group ought to be equal whether or not the loads are equalized on an individual household level.

On this view, for any given heterosexual co-residential couple to have an unequal distribution of housework *simpliciter*, or an unequal distribution of the housework

necessary for maintaining a minimally decent living-standard, is not necessarily unjust. Yet to the extent that women or men *collectively* perform more housework than is performed collectively by their co-residential opposite-sex partners, this is thought to necessarily reflect an injustice.

It should be clear that such disparities are not a mere hypothetical. As various surveys have demonstrated, we live in a world where the members of one sex, namely women, perform on average more housework within heterosexual co-residential relationships than men do, especially after childbirth.[14] But does this necessarily betoken an injustice?

To answer this question, the first thing to observe is that there are contexts where such inequalities seem at least partially unjust. This is most obviously so when a portion of women wish to do more paid work yet are unable to do so because their state does too little to help people to combine employment with unpaid housework and care-work, as might be true when early childhood education and care is not (sufficiently) subsidized or when there exists no legally mandated paid parental leave.[15] One reason for this is that being able to combine these two types of labor within one's life is necessary for many individuals to enjoy employment-related and housework-related goods that they require for living minimally decent lives. On the employment side, these goods include salaries, pensions, and—depending on the society in question—company-based health insurance, while on the housework-side, they include a clean and tidy and well-functioning home. However, even when romantic partners *can enjoy all these goods* as a result of a division of labor whereby one person acts as a breadwinner and the other as a homemaker (whereby the breadwinner's health insurance and pensions would extend to the homemaker), the high opportunity costs of such divisions suggest that a lack of meaningful opportunities to combine paid employment with housework within one's personal life may still be unjust. To see this, we must recall that being a homemaker tends to make people more financially dependent and to deprive them of professional experiences that could benefit them significantly should they wish to (re)enter the labor market, which particularly in an age where almost half of Western marriages end in divorce can prove expensive. At the same time, being a breadwinner may—and often will—also come with high opportunity costs even if these will generally be lower than those of being a homemaker. So much at least is suggested by studies indicating that performing housework has considerable potential to promote our well-being and health, provided we are not overwhelmed by the tasks at hand,[16] as well as studies showing that housework can help to facilitate personal growth and give meaning to our lives, which is true especially—but not exclusively—when it involves providing care to dependent others.[17]

What if a country has enacted policies that allow people to (adequately) combine paid employment with domestic labor, but its women continue to do more housework than their male co-residential partners? (For a possible example

of such a society, one might look at Sweden; despite having some of the most generous family-support policies in the world, a significantly greater share of Swedish women [74 percent] report performing housework at least 1 hour a day than do Swedish men [56 percent].)[18] Would we be warranted in inferring that such persisting disparities must betray an injustice?

I think the answer is negative. The reason is that when it comes to housework, women on average appear to have *higher standards* than men. By this, I do not mean that there are necessarily differences in how clean and orderly the members of each sex would ideally want their home to be, although those might well exist. Rather, what I mean is that women are generally prepared to maintain higher levels of cleanliness and orderliness. One important source of evidence for this comes from surveys indicating that, on average, single US women without children spend almost twice as much time cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry as do single childless US men.[19] Although it is theoretically possible that these disparities simply reflect diminished abilities in performing housework, such that for women to attain the same housework standards as men, they need to invest more time, this is unlikely when we consider that there are no large average sex differences in intelligence defined as the ability to solve problems in an efficient manner,[20] and that the more people perform particular chores, the more skilled they tend to become at them. (In line with this, there are studies in which both men and women disproportionally report female members of their household to be not just not worse at doing housework but *better*.)[21] Other evidence for higher female housework standards is provided by studies showing that women experience greater distress than men when confronted with mess and clutter,[22] as well as by ones in which heterosexual partners disproportionally nominate the female party as holding higher standards.[23]

However, if women indeed tend to have elevated housework standards, then assuming these inequalities do not magically disappear when they start living with male partners, it looks *unfair* to simply expect the latter to adopt their standards. Even when these individuals can be expected to do more vacuuming, cleaning, laundry, and so on, than they would if they lived alone, perhaps based on the principle that co-residential partners should make mutual sacrifices in order to live harmoniously, fairness seems to require that they *meet their partner somewhere in the middle*, that is, that they settle for a standard that lies between their own standard and that of their partner.

A critic might respond that such mutual compromises cannot be required when women's higher housework standards are *exactly at or below* the level necessary for maintaining a minimally decent standard of living (see the previous section). This is because, in such cases, for them to lower their standards will either prevent them and their fellow household members from living in a reasonably sanitary and orderly home or cause them to move further away from this prospect, both of which seem unduly demanding.

There undoubtedly are households that fit this bill. Still, despite the absence of studies that have looked at this issue directly, it appears that women's higher standards more often lie *above the minimal decency-threshold*. One piece of support for this is provided by the finding that cleaning compulsions are much more common among women than they are among men.[24] Another is offered by research demonstrating that the rise in cleanliness standards within high-income societies has contributed to the prevalence of asthma, allergies, and various autoimmune disorders by depriving young children in particular of adequate exposure to beneficial bacteria.[25] Still other supporting evidence derives from the already mentioned fact that, on average, single childless US women do almost twice as much core housework as single childless US men.[26] Even if the latter disproportionally fail to maintain a basic level of cleanliness and orderliness, it beggars belief that the average amount of core housework performed by single childless men would be *only about half* of what is needed to meet this standard.

At this stage, a critic might retort that even when the higher housework standards of many women exceed what is required for a minimally decent quality of life, the discrepancies in standards between the sexes remain morally problematic if, and when, they are caused by unjust socialization practices whereby women are taught to care more about hygiene and tidiness than their male counterparts do.

What to make of this view? One thing to note about it is that (unjust) social norms do seem to play a role in the production of these discrepancies and thereby indirectly in the production of sex disparities in the amounts of performed housework. For example, one US study showed that ascribing a relatively tidy room on a photo to either a man (John) or a woman (Jennifer) had a significant impact on how the participants evaluated the character of the proclaimed owner. Specifically, the researchers found that women with relatively tidy rooms were judged as "less clean, less moral, and less likely to be viewed positively by visitors" than men with the same rooms.[27] Other research has demonstrated that irrespective of geographical region, such divergent expectations already exist from a young age,[28] with McClelland and Sliwa arguing recently that they not only lead to differences in the extent to which men and women feel responsible for maintaining a clean and tidy home but also in the degree to which they *perceive* the environment as affording specific household chores.[29] Since there is no reason as to why women should be doing more housework than men simply because of their sex or gender, and since we saw there can be, and often are, large costs attached to its performance, what these findings suggest is that macro-level sex disparities in the amounts of performed housework by heterosexual co-residential partners will generally, if not always, be partially unjust.

However, I want to propose that said disparities are unlikely to be entirely unjust, as they appear to be co-produced by biological factors for which neither men nor society as a whole is to blame. According to what is known as Parental Investment Theory, women's reproductive success throughout human evolution

was shaped much more heavily than men's by investments in offspring and family as a result of them enjoying vastly fewer opportunities to reproduce and having to go through 9 months of gestation followed by several months of breastfeeding.[30] Based on these unique evolutionary pressures, one would expect certain average psychological differences between the sexes to have developed, including one pertaining to domestic work. Specifically, one would expect modern-day women

- to be, on average, more child- and home-care oriented than men
- to enjoy, on average, household chores such as food preparation, home aesthetics, family scheduling, and child-care-related tasks more than men
- to wish, on average, to take greater responsibility for these chores than men do
- to be, on average, more likely to want to be the primary homemaker than are men

What is apposite for us is that, among many other evolutionarily expected psychological differences,[31] these differences have been reported in several countries, including the United States, Belgium, and The Netherlands and have been shown to exist *even among* younger generations and populations, such as college students, who are embedded in socially progressive environments.[32] Further support for the role of biology in shaping macro-level sex disparities in performed housework alongside other gender-related behavioral differences is provided by, *inter alia*, the fact that there is no known culture where women are not on average more care- and home-oriented than men;[33] the fact that these same differences are found among non-human animals—including our closest living relatives, the primates—that lack gender role beliefs;[34] the fact that psychological differences between the sexes, including differences in empathy, already exist among neonates;[35] and the fact that, contrary to what one would expect based on social learning theories, women's personalities and career choices are more stereotypically feminine in more gender-equal countries, with the strongest sexual dimorphism being reported in Scandinavia.[36]

To be clear, accepting that hardwired psychological differences between men and women most likely help fuel sex disparities in the amounts of performed housework does not rule out that these disparities may be currently *too large* in many countries because of the aforementioned influence of sexist norms and/or political failures to ensure that people can (sufficiently) combine paid employment with unpaid housework. This is undoubtedly the case within patriarchal countries such as India where men spend, on average, a mere 19 minutes a day doing housework as opposed to 298 minutes for women, which is one of the largest disparities in the world,[37] but might also be true in more gender-equal societies. All that I am claiming is that justice does not require that such disparities disappear *completely*.

To appreciate this, we must recall that women's housework standards often appear to go beyond those necessary for keeping a minimally sanitary and orderly home. Not only are cleaning compulsions relatively common among their sex,[38] but increases in the incidence of asthma, allergies, and various autoimmune disorders suggest that some households in high-income societies have adopted overly demanding cleanliness norms.[39] Additionally, we saw that the fact that single childless women in the United States perform, on average, almost double the amount of core housework performed by single childless men[40] makes it highly unlikely that the former's average would be at or below the minimum for an adequate standard of living, as this would imply that the average single childless male in this country effectively lives in a pigsty. However, if all this is correct, then to achieve macro-level gender equality as far as housework divisions between co-residential heterosexual partners are concerned, it seems necessary that (i) many men start adhering to their female partner's gratuitously high standards by doing half or more of the work required to satisfy those standards[41] and/or that (ii) many women start lowering their standards.

Let us examine each of these options. As to (i), even if most men can be expected to go *some way* toward meeting their female partner's gratuitously high housework standards in order to live harmoniously and possibly also to compensate their partner for any unjust socialization effects that helped cause the latter to care more about cleanliness and tidiness than they do (see my earlier comments), the notion that people should not take *at least somewhat greater responsibilit*y than their romantic partners for their gratuitously high housework standards looks implausible inasmuch as these standards partially reflect biologically shaped preferences for which neither their partners nor society as a whole is responsible. This is not simply because having such preferences tends to make it psychologically less taxing for individuals to do housework, although at least when, all else being equal, each partner performs at least half the chores necessary to maintain a minimally sanitary and organized household, this appears morally relevant.[42] Ronald Dworkin's insight that we are generally[43] responsible for any expensive innate preferences that we possess is relevant as well.[44] On this view, just as others are not morally obligated to dedicate resources—for example, time, energy, money—to helping us meet any innate tastes for plover's eggs or vintage claret that we might have,[45] so we cannot without further reason expect them to help us satisfy any hardwired preferences for levels of cleanliness and tidiness that exceed what is required for a minimally decent living standard, as such preferences, too, are plausibly construed as expensive. Yet, if these observations are accurate, then even if a certain portion of men are duty-bound to do more housework than they do at present, expecting those whose partners have gratuitously high standards to perform half or more of the housework necessary to meet their partner's standards must be unreasonable.

Suppose I am right about this. In that case, and this brings us to (ii), the macro-level equality principle can be true *only if* many women in heterosexual co-residential relationships are duty-bound to lower their housework standards. Since it would be unduly demanding to expect anyone to forego a minimally decent level of hygiene and order at home or, alternatively, to accept a level that is even further removed from this bare minimum than the current one, I assume here that such duties can only be plausibly held by women with gratuitously high standards.

This raises the following question: Is a large share of this group morally required to do less housework? One immediate thing to note is that such duties are not typically endorsed by feminists, which is unsurprising once we consider that doing less housework than one desires may, and frequently does, take a toll, as McClelland and Sliwa explain:

> We have said that Jill's perception of a counter as 'to be wiped down' does not compel her to wipe down the counter. But her perception of this soliciting affordance creates a felt tension that can only be relieved by performing the task in question Resisting the urge to act on this affordance requires the effortful exercise of self-control. And this problem cannot be avoided by simply ignoring the affordance in question. Affordances pull on your attention, so to keep her attention elsewhere Jill would have to make an extended mental effort. Thus, even when Jill chooses to ignore the splatters on the counter or to wait for Jack to take down the recycling, these choices generate a cognitive burden.[46]

Now, there are situations where people seem morally required to lower their housework standards *even if* this means that they will suffer such burdens. The most obvious one was mentioned already, namely when for them to maintain their current standards results in in an overly clean household in which the immune systems of other residents are significantly weakened due to a lack of exposure to beneficial microbes. Yet while this suggests that existing sex disparities in the amounts of performed housework will partly reflect a failure of some women—who it was noted suffer disproportionally from cleaning compulsions—to lower their standards when they should, the fact that doing less housework does not normally have such strong benefits for others makes it plausible to think that such cases are the *exception* rather than the rule, especially when the kinds of costs discussed by McClelland and Sliwa are added to the equation. To help see this, notice that even if I am right that many women have gratuitously high housework standards, that is, ones that surpass the requirements of a minimally sanitary and organized home, this does not entail that their standards always or even generally pose a health hazard; in most cases, they will not.

To summarize, then, I started by proposing that if a significant subset of women in heterosexual co-residential relationships have gratuitously high housework standards, as I argued is likely, then it follows from the macro-level equality

principle that many men must be duty-bound to do at least half of the housework necessary for meeting their partner's excessive standards and/or that many women must be duty-bound to lower their standards. Since neither option is plausible even if a certain portion of men should be doing more housework and a certain portion of women less housework than they are currently performing, I conclude that the macro-equality principle is untenable too.

Concluding Remarks

Much feminist writing assumes that only an equal distribution of housework between heterosexual co-residential partners can be just. However, if my arguments in this article are sound, then there are strong reasons for doubting this claim. On an individual household level, there was found to be only an *easily overridden presumption* to divide essential housework evenly, while on a societal level, the role of biology in helping to produce sex disparities in the amounts of performed housework was found to justify *at least some level of inequality*. If correct, then although these macro-level disparities are clearly too large within countries such as India, the onus of justification lies with feminists to show that they are also excessive within, for example, Slovenia and Denmark, where women similarly perform more housework than men, but the latter devote, on average, a respectable 114 minutes and 107 minutes a day to it, respectively.[47] Based on these findings, my suspicion is that countries such as Slovenia and Denmark might have already achieved justice on this front.

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NOTES

1. Frisco and Williams, "Perceived Housework Equity"; Ruppanner, Brandén, and Turunen, "Does Unequal Housework Lead."

2. Wilkins and Lass, "Household, Income"; McMunn et al., "Gender Divisions"; Parker and Wang, "Roles of Moms and Dads."

3. Okin, *Justice, Gender*, 3–4; compare Veltman ("Sisyphean Torture").

4. Pew Research Center, "Modern Parenthood Roles of Moms and Dads Converge as They Balance Work and Family."

5. Hogenboom, "Hidden Load."

6. Carmichael, "Women Shouldn't Do."

7. The estimate being that they spend on average 47 minutes per day more on such work than their male partners spend.

8. Ruppanner, "We Can We [*sic*] Reduce."

9. Eurocare, "Gender Dimension"; Ferrant, Pesando, and Nowacka, "Unpaid Care Work."

10. Which I take it requires, among other things, that surfaces do not have visible layers of dirt and dust; that floors and tables be clutter-free; and that there is no old trash lying around.

11. Exceptions might include ones where some members of the household are allergic to dust mites, which are microscopic eight-legged creatures that cause some to experience symptoms such as sneezing and coughing and potentially also asthmatic responses. See Marcin ("Dust Mite Allergy").

12. Compare Beauvoir (*Second Sex*, 541).

13. For example, someone might be less able to do laundry, wash up, vacuum, mop, and so on, than their co-residential partner because they have a disability or because they suffer from a disease that causes them to be bedridden. When this is the case, unequal distributions of housework between partners will usually be justified as well.

14. Wilkins and Lass, "Household, Income"; McMunn et al., "Gender Divisions"; Parker and Wang, "Roles of Moms and Dads."

15. Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig, "Cultural and Institutional Factors"; Pedulla and Thébaud, "Can We Finish."

16. Chu et al., "Perks of Doing Housework"; Lee and Tang, "What Type of Housework."

17. Leipold, Schacke, and Zank, "Personal Growth"; Hanley et al., "Washing Dishes"; Schulz and Sherwood, "Physical and Mental Health." Notice that if these observations are accurate, then introducing publicly funded vouchers that allow employed individuals to outsource household chores to paid workers, as, for example, Belgium has done, might not be the right approach, or simply not the only measure that is needed within this area. Compare Raz-Yurovich and Marx ("Outsourcing Housework").

18. European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index."

19. Sayer, "Complexities."

20. Irwing and Lynn, "Intelligence."

21. van Hooff, "Rationalising Inequality"; Beagan et al., "'It's Just Easier.'"

22. Saxbe and Repetti, "No Place Like Home."

23. van Hooff, "Rationalising Inequality"; Beagan et al., "'It's Just Easier.'"

24. Clough, "Gender and the Hygiene Hypothesis."

25. Bach, "Hygiene Hypothesis."

26. Sayer, "Complexities."

27. Thébaud, Kornrich, and Ruppanner, "Good Housekeeping."

28. Clough, "Gender and the Hygiene Hypothesis," 490–91.

29. To illustrate this phenomenon, the authors give the following example:

> When Jill enters the messy kitchen, she sees the dishes as to be washed, the floor as to be swept, the refrigerator as to be restocked, the counter as to wiped, the recycling bin as to be taken out, the ripe bananas on the counter as to be used up. Jack, of course, sees that there are dishes in the sink, that the bananas are more brown than yellow, or that the refrigerator is empty. But these perceptions do not "tug" at him—they do not present the corresponding task as to be done. Others do present a task as to be done but only to a weaker degree: as something to be done sometime or eventually, not now. Yet others will present him with a strong soliciting affordance but at a later point than Jill: Jill perceives the recycling to be taken out when the bin approaches fullness, while Jack will perceive the same strength affordance when it is about to overflow. (McClelland and Sliwa, "Gendered Affordance," 510)

30. Trivers, *Parental Investment*; Buss, "Psychological Sex Differences."

31. Archer, "Reality and Evolutionary Significance."

32. Bleske-Rechek and Gunseor, "Gendered Perspectives"; Rhoads and Rhoads, "Gender Roles"; Audenaert, "De Taakverdeling"; Traag, "Opleiding En Werk."

33. Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz, "Cross-National Variation"; Wood and Eagly, "Cross-Cultural Analysis."

34. Geary, Male, Female.

35. Connellan et al., "Sex Differences."

36. Stoet and Geary, "Gender-Equality Paradox Is Part"; Stoet and Geary, "Gender-Equality Paradox in Science"; Balducci, "Linking Gender Differences."

37. Dhar, "Indian Men."

38. Clough, "Gender and the Hygiene Hypothesis."

39. Bach, "Hygiene Hypothesis."

40. Sayer, "Complexities."

41. I say, "or more," given that men who perform more housework than their female partner could compensate for men who do less than their female partner.

42. By contrast, when someone does perform less than half of the minimally necessary housework, it seems that, all else being equal, the fact that this person might derive less satisfaction from this activity than their partner or suffer greater disutility from it does not count for much, if it counts at all.

43. "Generally," because Dworkin does require that we identify with those preferences.

44. Dworkin, Sovereign Virtue.

45. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 48–59. For criticism, see Cohen ("Expensive Taste").

46. McClelland and Sliwa, "Gendered Affordance Perception," 11.

47. Mccarthy, "*Where in the World Do Men Do the Most Housework?"*

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