The Intra-Household Allocation of Administrative Tasks

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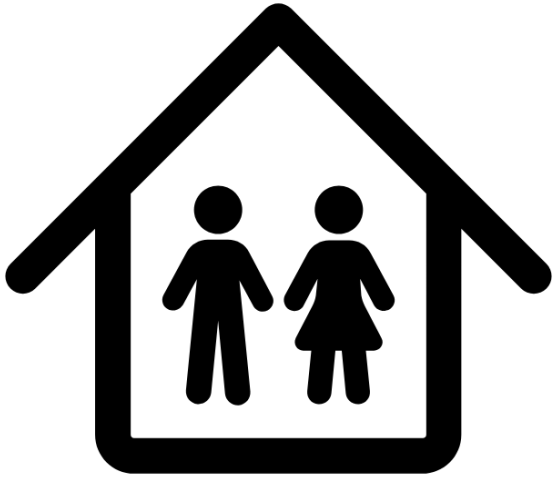


Motivation

- Administrative tasks matter for policy uptake, consumer choice
  (Herd & Moynihan 2019; Sunstein 2021)
- But little evidence on intra-household allocation
  - Studies suggest gender allocation, but mostly qualitative or about house/care work (Charmes 2019, Schneebaum and Mader 2013, Emens 2015, Daminger 2019)
  - Admin tasks may create invisible “parallel shift” which contributes to well-being gender gap (Emens 2015, Blanchflower & Bryson 2022)

→ How are administrative tasks allocated in the household?

→ Survey administrative experiences: **time-use, well-being, responsibilities**

Online survey of everyday administrative tasks

10 administrative domains, 5 common tasks in each

Income and tax	Retirement	Government benefits	Bills	Goods and services
Savings and investments	Debt	Health	Caring for children	Caring for adults

→ **How much time** did you spend on each task?
→ **How did you feel** while doing these tasks?
→ **Who is responsible** for this domain?

Example: time-use

As a reminder, examples of government benefits (excluding child- and health-related benefits) may include:

- Universal Credit
- Jobseekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit, Support for Mortgage Interest, other housing benefits
- Council Tax Support
- Fuel or heating assistance/ allowance
- Other benefits relevant to you

	How many times did you do this task over the past MONTH?	How long did this task typically take? (each time)
Researching benefits	...	...
Applying for benefits	...	...
Providing documentation or doing assessments to show eligibility for a benefit	...	...
Contacting government offices about your benefits	...	...

Example: emotions

	0 - Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6 - Very much	Not applicable
Happy / enjoying myself	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Competent / capable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Frustrated / annoyed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bored / impatient for it to end	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Stressed / under pressure	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Worried / anxious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Example: responsibility

✱In general, **who would you say is responsible for completing administrative tasks relating to GOVERNMENT BENEFITS** in your household?

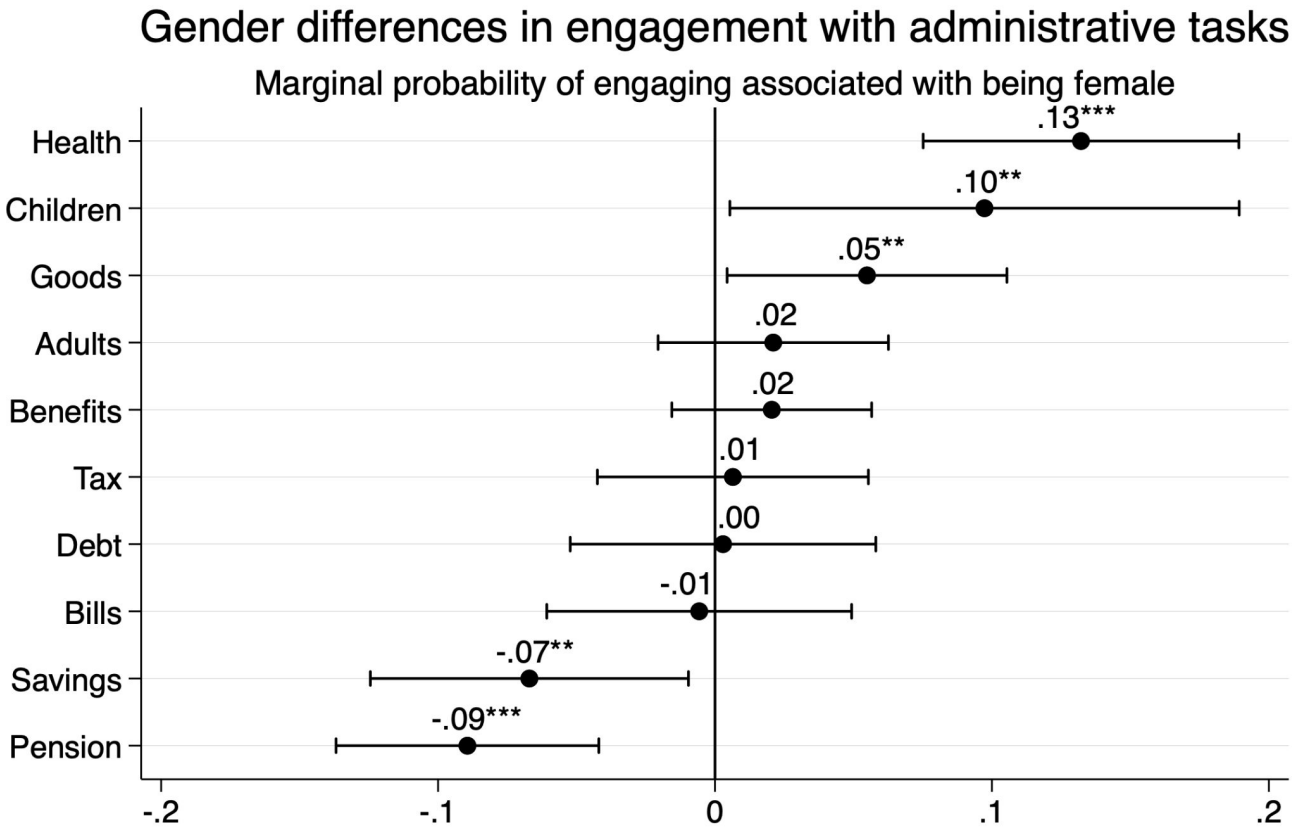
- ○ Always me
- ○ Usually me
- ○ My spouse/partner and I equally/together
- ○ Usually my spouse/partner
- ○ Always my spouse/partner
- ○ Always or usually someone other than me or my spouse/partner
- ○ Don't know / Other / These tasks are not applicable to my household

Results from 1,176 cohabiting UK adults

	Estimation sample				Full survey dataset	
	Men		Women			
	Mean/%	SD	Mean/%	SD	Mean/%	SD
Age (years)	50.02	14.95	45.81	14.86	42.85	16.87
Female (%)	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.60	.49
University degree (%)	.57	.50	.52	.50	.51	.50
Full-time job (%)	.53	.50	.36	.48	.39	.49
Household income > £30,000 (%)	.65	.48	.65	.48	.52	.50
Living with children (%)	.37	.48	.38	.49	.30	.46
Living with spouse/partner (%)	1.00	.00	1.00	.00	.56	.50
Health (1-5)	3.89	.70	3.83	.74	3.76	.75
Financial well-being (0-100)	55.78	12.62	53.97	12.59	52.63	12.41
Time pressure (1-5)	2.78	.92	2.94	.91	2.91	.91
Observations	474		702		2243	

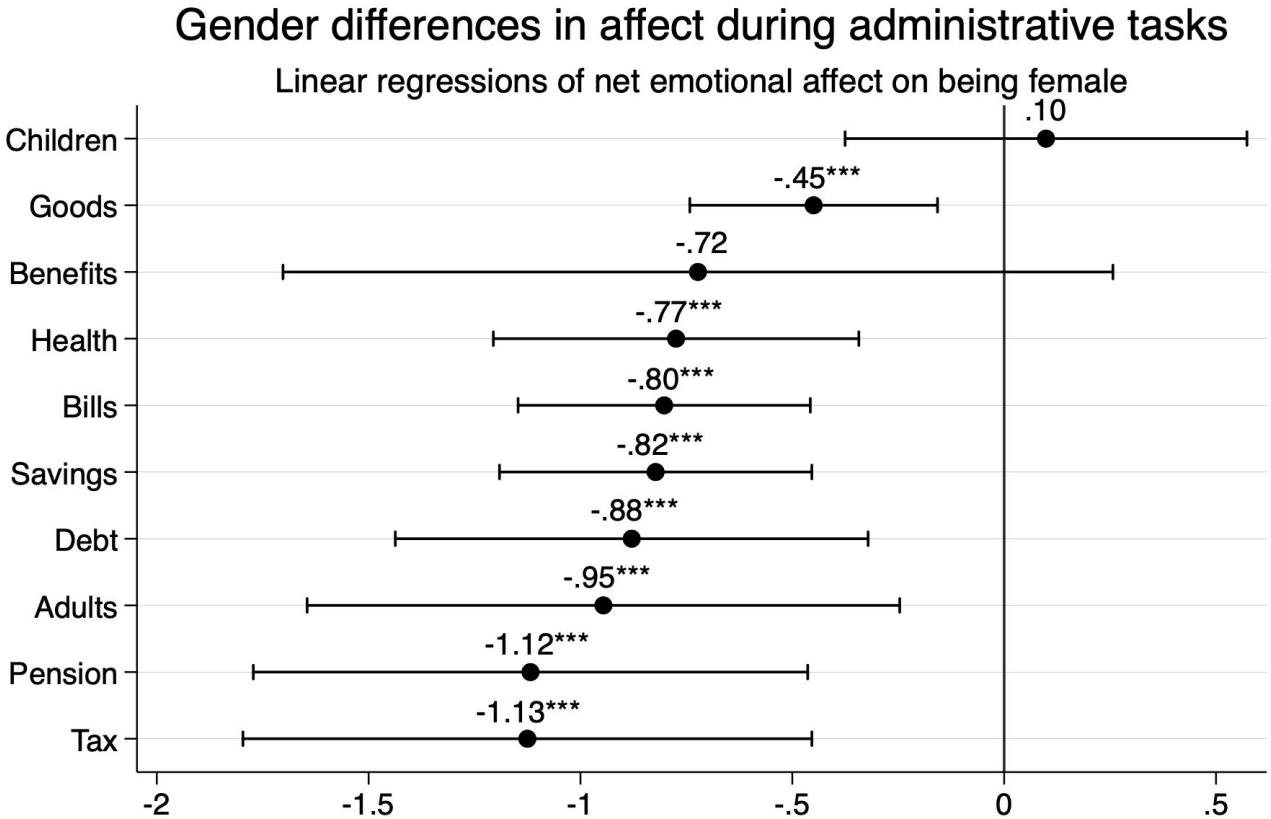
Notes: All analyses are restricted to the estimation sample (474 men and 702 women). Health is the average of physical and mental health (Likert scales). Financial well-being scores are based on the US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (2017) 5-item scale. Time pressure scores are based on Peters and van der Lippe's (2007) 4-item scale. 127 participants (6% of the dataset) did not disclose income and 28 participants (1% of the dataset) did not disclose gender or identified outside of the gender binary; these participants are excluded from summary statistics on income and gender, and from analysis models which include income.

There is a gender allocation of (some) tasks



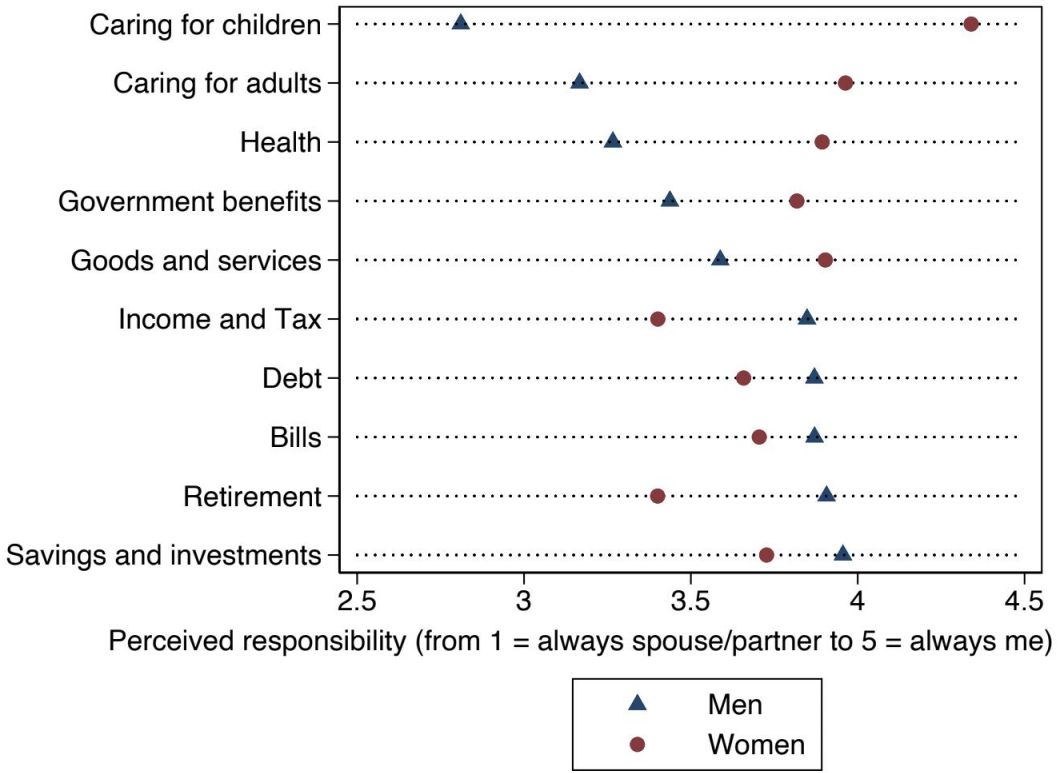
Notes: The “children” model is restricted to participants with children. * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01.

Gender well-being gap maps onto task allocation

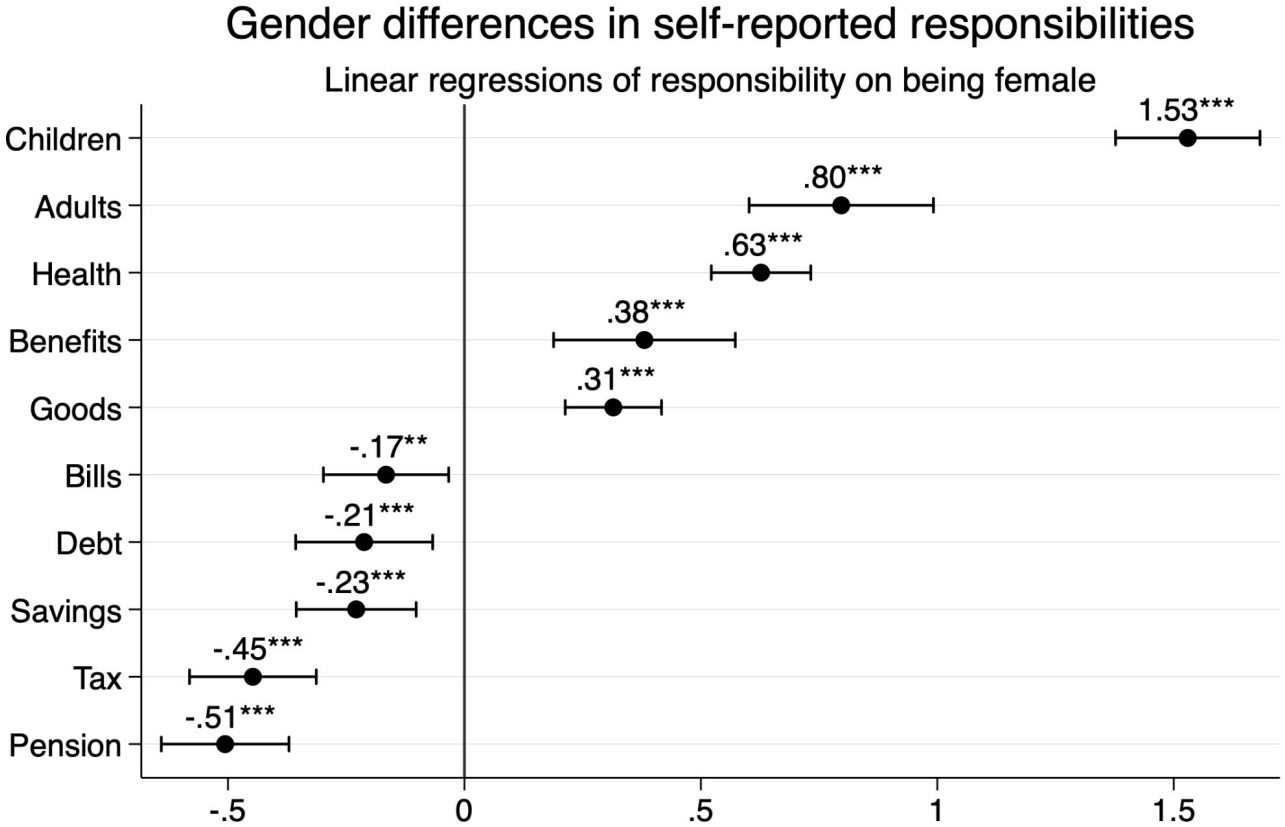


Notes: Coefficients indicate the change in net affect during tasks (from -6 most negative to +6 most positive) associated with being female. Samples restricted to those who engaged with domain. * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01.

Descriptive results on self-reported responsibilities

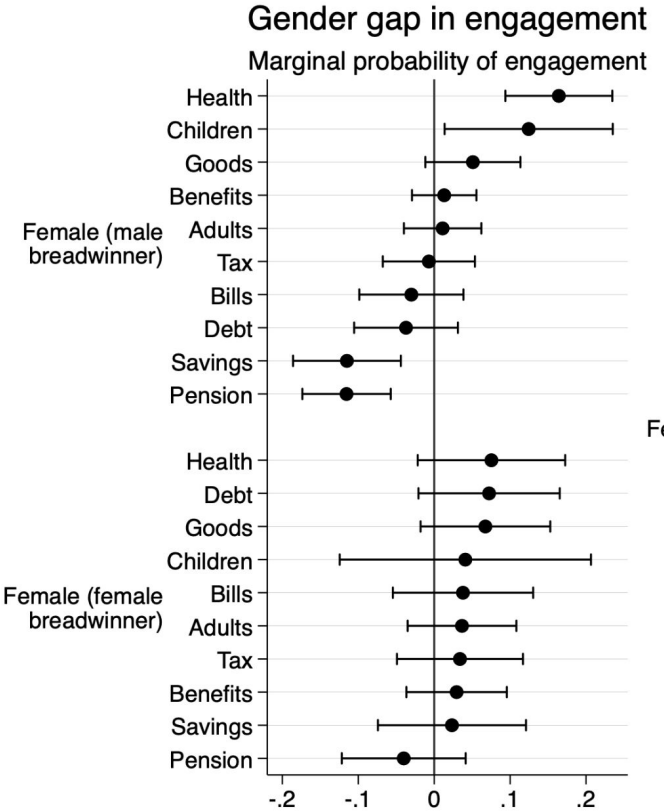


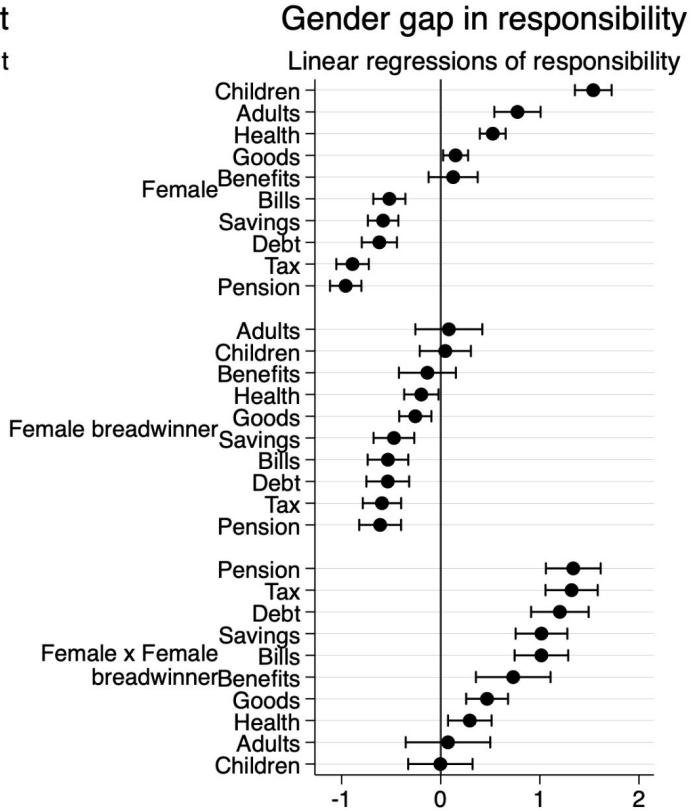
Stronger differences for responsibility than time-use



Notes: Coefficients indicate the difference in responsibility for tasks (from 1 “always partner” to 5 “always me”) associated with being female. * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01.

Mechanism: bargaining power or gender norms?





Notes: The first column uses logistic regressions to show the marginal increase in the probability of engaging, associated with being female, at both values of Female breadwinner. The second column uses linear regressions to show the changes in responsibility associated with being female, having a female breadwinner, and the interaction of these two (base levels male/male breadwinner).
Female breadwinner=1 if a female participant or male participant's female partner has an equal or greater income compared to male partner. * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01.

Takeaways

This paper shows:

- Administrative tasks are a locus of gender inequality in the household
- Impact on time-use and well-being
- Not fully explained by bargaining power
- Policies that create administrative burdens are not gender-neutral!

SCAN ME FOR FULL PAPER!

Appendix

Time-use: underlying tables

	Tax	Pension	Benefits	Bills	Goods	Savings	Debt	Health	Children	Adults
Part 1: Logistic regressions (marginal probability of engaging in domain)										
Female	.01	-.09***†	.02	-.01	.05**	-.07**	.00	.13***†	.10**	.02
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.05)	(.02)
Observations	1176	1176	1176	1176	1176	1176	1176	1176	442	1176
Part 2: Linear regressions (time-use in minutes, conditional on non-zero time-use in that domain)										
Female	-.62	4.35	-16.34	1.24	.88	-6.23**	.66	2.12	-6.44	-.28
	(2.18)	(3.83)	(14.65)	(2.48)	(2.07)	(2.66)	(3.19)	(1.69)	(5.67)	(9.61)
Constant	9.30***	10.90***	27.14*	15.93***	18.84***	20.25***	12.56***	8.17***	22.56***	28.09***
	(1.86)	(1.74)	(14.50)	(1.94)	(1.65)	(2.37)	(2.64)	(1.29)	(5.05)	(8.07)
Observations	255	225	123	760	875	655	383	512	276	173

Notes: The first part of the model shows the marginal probability of engaging with each domain associated with being female, using logistic regressions. The second part of the model shows coefficients from linear regressions of daily administrative time-use in minutes (pro-rated for the "past month" timescale group) on being female, conditional on having spent a non-zero amount of time on this domain, hence the discrepancies in observations. The model relating to children is restricted to participants who indicated that they have a child living in the household (for both parts of the model).

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, † $p < .05$ after Benjamini-Hochberg correction for multiple hypothesis testing.

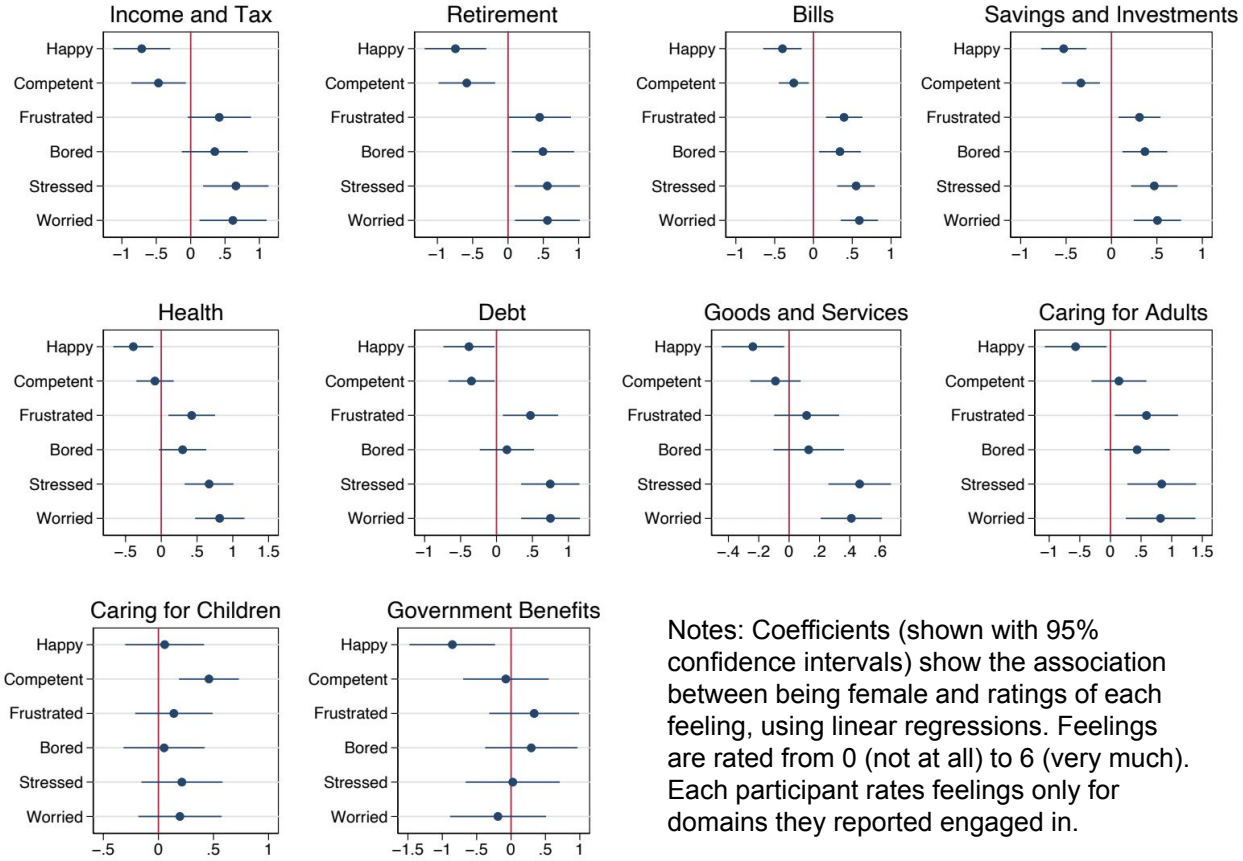
Well-being: underlying tables

	Net affect by domain (from -6 to +6)									
	Tax	Pension	Benefits	Bills	Goods	Savings	Debt	Health	Children	Adults
Female	-1.13***†	-1.12***†	-.72	-.80***†	-.45***†	-.82***†	-.88***†	-.77***†	.10	-.95***†
	(.34)	(.33)	(.49)	(.18)	(.15)	(.19)	(.28)	(.22)	(.24)	(.35)
Constant	1.12***	2.27***	-.26	1.53***	2.13***	2.68***	.71***	1.20***	1.96***	1.40***
	(.25)	(.21)	(.39)	(.14)	(.12)	(.13)	(.22)	(.18)	(.19)	(.29)
Observations	264	226	126	766	881	651	385	514	307	174

Notes: Each linear regression includes participants who engaged in the domain over their randomized timescale (past day or month) and thus were asked to report feelings during tasks in this domain. Net affect is the average of happy and competent minus the average of frustrated, bored, stressed, and worried. Each feeling is rated on a 0-6 scale ("not at all" to "very much"), hence net affect ranges from -6 to +6. Net affect is only computed in each domain for participants who rated all feelings (i.e. did not answer "not applicable" for any feelings) in this domain. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, † $p < .05$ after Benjamini-Hochberg correction for multiple hypothesis testing.

Why are care work and benefits different?



Notes: Coefficients (shown with 95% confidence intervals) show the association between being female and ratings of each feeling, using linear regressions. Feelings are rated from 0 (not at all) to 6 (very much). Each participant rates feelings only for domains they reported engaged in.

Responsibilities: underlying tables

	Responsibility by domain (from "1 - always partner/spouse" to "5 - always me")									
	Tax	Pension	Benefits	Bills	Goods	Savings	Debt	Health	Children	Adults
Female	-.45***†	-.51***†	.38***†	-.17**†	.31***†	-.23***†	-.21***†	.63***†	1.53***†	.80***†
	(.07)	(.07)	(.10)	(.07)	(.05)	(.06)	(.07)	(.05)	(.08)	(.10)
Constant	3.85***	3.91***	3.44***	3.87***	3.59***	3.96***	3.87***	3.27***	2.81***	3.17***
	(.05)	(.05)	(.07)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.06)	(.08)
Observations	1071	936	636	1167	1162	1116	899	1144	518	524

Notes: Responsibility is rated on a 5-point scale for each domain. Discrepancies in observations are due to participants answering that a domain is not relevant to their household, or that someone other than them or their partner is responsible for this domain, or "don't know/other" in the questionnaire. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, † $p < .05$ after Benjamini-Hochberg correction for multiple hypothesis testing.

Bargaining power and identity: underlying tables

	Tax	Pension	Benefits	Bills	Goods	Savings	Debt	Health	Children	Adults
	Marginal probability of engaging in each domain (at both values of the female breadwinner indicator)									
Female (male breadwinner)	-.01	-.12***†	.01	-.03	.05	-.11***†	-.04	.16***†	.12**	.01
	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)	(.04)	(.06)	(.03)
Female (female breadwinner)	.03	-.04	.03	.04	.07	.02	.07	.08	.04	.04
	(.04)	(.04)	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.08)	(.04)
Observations	1173	1173	1173	1173	1173	1173	1173	1173	440	1173
	Responsibility for each domain (rated from 1- always spouse/partner to 5 – always me)									
Female	-.89***†	-.96***†	.13	-.52***†	.15**†	-.58***†	-.62***†	.52***†	1.54***†	.77***†
	(.08)	(.08)	(.13)	(.08)	(.06)	(.08)	(.09)	(.07)	(.09)	(.12)
Female breadwinner	-.59***†	-.61***†	-.13	-.53***†	-.26***†	-.47***†	-.53***†	-.20**†	.05	.08
	(.10)	(.11)	(.15)	(.10)	(.08)	(.10)	(.11)	(.09)	(.13)	(.17)
Female x female breadwinner	1.32***†	1.34***†	.73***†	1.02***†	.47***†	1.02***†	1.20***†	.29***†	-.00	.07
	(.13)	(.14)	(.19)	(.14)	(.11)	(.13)	(.15)	(.11)	(.17)	(.22)
Constant	4.04***	4.10***	3.48***	4.05***	3.68***	4.11***	4.04***	3.33***	2.80***	3.14***
	(.06)	(.06)	(.09)	(.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.06)	(.05)	(.08)	(.09)
Observations	1069	934	633	1164	1159	1114	896	1141	516	523

Notes: The first set of models uses logistic regressions to show the marginal increase in the probability of engaging with each domain associated with being female, at both values of the female breadwinner dummy. The second set of models uses linear regressions and shows the changes in responsibility for each domain associated with being female, having a female breadwinner, and the interaction of these two (base levels male/male breadwinner). The second set of models vary in the number of observations due to participants who answer that a domain is not relevant to their household or that someone other than them or their partner is responsible for this domain, or "don't know/other" in the questionnaire. The female breadwinner variable is one if a female participant or a male participant's female partner has an equal or greater income compared to their male partner. Only participants who have children in the household are included in the "Children" models (they are explicitly excluded in the first set of models based on demographic characteristics, and in the second set there is an option for participants to report that this responsibility does not apply to their household). Robust standard errors in parentheses. * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01, † p < .05 after Benjamini-Hochberg corrections for multiple hypothesis testing.

Time pressure and affect

	Net affect (weighted average across domains)		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
Female	-.67***†	-.54***†	-0.37***†
	(.13)	(.12)	(0.12)
Time pressure		-.92***†	-0.58***†
		(.07)	(0.08)
Controls			Yes
Constant	1.83***	4.41***	-2.07***
	(.10)	(.21)	(0.52)
Observations	1107	1107	1065

Notes: Net affect is weighted across domains by each domain's share of participants' total administrative time-use. Each feeling is rated on a 0-6 scale ("not at all" to "very much"), hence net affect ranges from -6 to +6. Net affect is only computed in each domain for participants who rated all feelings (i.e. did not answer "not applicable" for any feelings) in this domain. Only participants who reported engaging in a particular domain over their randomized timescale (yesterday or past month) are asked to rate feelings for this domain. Time pressure is a 5-point scale averaged over 4 items, a higher score indicates higher time pressure (Peters and van der Lippe 2007). Control variables include having a degree, having a full-time job, having children in the household, age (categorical), health (average), income (categorical), and financial well-being, hence participants who did not disclose their income are excluded from model (iii).

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, † $p < .05$ after Benjamini-Hochberg correction for multiple hypothesis testing.

Time pressure and multi-tasking

	Time pressure (rated from 1 lowest to 5 highest)			
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
Female	0.15***†	0.15***†	0.13**†	0.11**†
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Responsibility		0.04	-0.04	-0.00
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Engagement			0.15***†	0.08***†
			(0.01)	(0.01)
Timescale control			Yes	Yes
Demographic controls				Yes
Constant	2.78***	2.63***	2.54***	4.14***
	(0.04)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.19)
Observations	1176	1175	1175	1128

Notes: Time pressure is averaged over 4 items (Peters and van der Lippe 2007). Responsibility is averaged across all domains and ranges from 1 ("always my spouse/partner") to 5 ("always me"); discrepancies in observations are due to participants answering that a domain is not relevant, someone other than them or their partner is responsible for this domain, or "don't know/other" in the questionnaire. Engagement is the number of domains for which each participant reported doing any administrative tasks. Control variables include having a degree, a full-time job, children in the household, age (categorical), health (average), income (categorical), and financial well-being; hence participants who did not disclose their income are excluded from model (iv). The randomized timescale control (past month of past day) is included because number of domains varies by group. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, † $p < .05$ after Benjamini-Hochberg correction for multiple hypothesis testing.