Is G. Becker right?
The Division of Labor in Households reexamined

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Venice, 30th of November, 2009
Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical considerations
3. Data
4. Results
5. Summary
1. Introduction

- There is a vast number of classical studies investigating male and female income: Mincer und Polachek 1974; Polachek 1975; Mincer und Polachek 1978; Marini 1989
- But what about job market participation in the course of time?
2. Theoretical considerations

- „sex-role-specialization“ stabilizes marriages (Parsons 1968)
- Following Becker (1981) in an efficient household only the one spouse showing comparatively greater advantages in the market specializes completely, e.g. in earning income from employment.
- Relative advantages in human capital should enhance the probability of being employed.
- However, traditional gender-specific role models may prohibit rational decisions concerning the division of labor in households.
2. Theoretical considerations

- Gender-specific role models in the course of time: From traditional roles to gender equality (Inglehart/Norris 2005)
  - Gross domestic product / gender equality scale, pooled WVS 1995-2001, $R^2=0.54$
  - Current most egalitarian countries: Finland, Sweden, West Germany, Canada
  - Attitudes towards traditional roles: Poland, Turkey, Morocco
  - In postindustrial countries attitudes towards gender equality increase faster compared to agrarian countries
2. Theoretical considerations

- gender-specific role models in the course of time in Germany:
  - Most radical changes occurred in the 1980’s (German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2007)
  - Traditional male role concepts diminish, female self-confidence rises (Volz/Zulehner 2009)
  - Women’s educational expansion (Blossfeld 1992)
  - mothers’ employment, MZ 1976-2004 (Konietzka/Kreyenfeld 2009, forthcoming)
2. Theoretical considerations

- H1: Relative advantages in human capital increase the probability to be employed.
- H2: Due to changing attitudes towards gender equity, especially for women this mechanism asserts only with time.
3. Data

- This topic is part of the project “Social and economic change in (West) Germany“
  - managed by Christof Wolf (German Microdata Lab)
  - third party funding: Leibniz-Gesellschaft
- The German Mikrozensus: 1 percent of the German resident population is randomly selected
- One wave contains about 800,000 cases, 70% are for scientific use (Scientific Use Files). The cumulated file (1962-2005) contains more than 13 million cases
- Data has been collected every year since 1957 (since 1991 “East” Germany is included as well)
- Only parts of the questionnaire are to be answered voluntarily
- Predominantly face-to-face design (14% of the data are collected by postal questionnaires)
3. Data

- Number of cases: 3.4 million married individuals, private households, age 21-63, W-Germany (13 waves, 1976-2005)
- ILO-concept to measure employment is not used,
  - because it mixes full-time, part-time and marginal employment
  - and maternity leave means being occupied (since 1996)
- Definition of being employed:
  Everybody who works 15 or more hours a week and is getting paid.
### 3. Data

*Descriptive Statistics*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std-Dev</th>
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MZ 76-05
3. Data

*Descriptive Statistics*

Share of women showing higher education:
3. Data

*Descriptive Statistics*

Women, age 26-33 and children (0-3 years)
## 4. Results

### Logistic Regression, $DV=employment$

<table>
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<td>0.033</td>
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</table>

* $p < 0.007$ (Bonferroni adjustment)
5. Summary

- Marriage partners showing educational advantages are more likely to be employed.
- Especially for women this mechanism asserts only with time.
- Traditional role models inhibit rational decisions concerning the division of labor in households.
- So G. Becker was ahead of the times…
Thanks for your attention!

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