

## **A Comparative Look at Attitudes toward Gender and Division of Household Labor in Russia, Japan, Germany and the United States**

# **A Comparative Look at Attitudes toward Gender and Division of Household Labor in Russia, Japan, Germany and the United States**

**Tianyue Ma**

This article uses a comparative approach and a macro-institutional framework to examine the influence of historical, social, political and cultural contexts on attitudes toward gender and division of household labor (including childcare). Data used to answer the research questions come from the 2002 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) module on Family and Changing Gender Roles. Four countries that represent distinctive social, political, and economic systems are examined--US, West Germany, Russia and Japan. Findings show that attitudes toward gender and household labor differ across the four countries. Generally, respondents from Japan and West Germany show relatively more conservative attitudes, whereas those from the U.S. show more progressive attitudes. Russian respondents exhibit some kind of mixed attitudes toward gendered division of household labor. On some measures, e.g. attitudes regarding gender and childcare, respondents from Russia tend to be more progressive than those from the US, West Germany and Japan; but on other measures, e.g. attitudes toward gender roles (men's job as breadwinners and women's as homemakers), Russian respondents tend to be more conservative than respondents from the other three countries. The inconsistency of their responses to different measures reflects the complexity of the historical and cultural influence on gender attitudes in Russia. Findings also show a gap between men and women, with women being more progressive than men in attitudes toward gender and division of household labor. Male-female differences vary across countries. In the measure regarding men and childcare, the gender gap is greatest in the U.S, followed by West Germany, Japan, and least in Russia. In the measure regarding men and household work, Russia shows the greatest gender gap, followed by West Germany and the U.S, Japan shows the least. This variation in the size of the gender gap, again, reflects the complex influence of institutional and cultural on men's and women's attitudes toward gendered division of labor.

### **Introduction**

Gendered division of household labor is an important indicator of gender inequality. In most societies men's role is chief breadwinners and women's is household caregivers. The underlying assumption of this gender-role difference is gender inequality and male dominance. Yet the extent of gender inequality and the differentiation of gendered division of labor vary across

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**Tianyue Ma** holds an MA degree in Sociology from the Catholic University of America, Washington DC. She will begin her doctoral program this fall at the State University of New York, Albany.

societies.

Historically, the degree of gender inequality grows as society develops. In gathering or foraging societies where gathering contributes a lot to the daily diet, men and women have equal status. In most cases, men hunted large animals and women gathered food and sometimes hunted small games. As foragers, women developed food cultivation and become the cultivators. Women's labor force contribution is also significant in horticultural societies, which require only simple hand-tool technology in cultivation and slash-and-burn in farming. However women's status began to decline in agricultural societies (Boserup, 1970). Women's labor value depreciated as soon as they assumed mainly domestic work and reproductive roles. The decline of women's status, according to Rasmussen, is related to the impact of sedentarization, which increases women's workloads and undermines their bases of property (Brettell & Sargent, 2004).

Even in the same historical era, different societies also exhibit different gender relations. In societies where hunting and fishing predominate, women's status is lower than that in hunting and gathering societies. In horticultural societies where men control property values and involve in warfare, women's high status is mitigated by male authority. In agricultural societies, there are also exceptions for male-dominated gender relations (Bonvillain, 2006). In northwestern Portugal, women contribute most of the agricultural labor and are the legal recipients of major inheritance (Brettell, 1986). Today there are also societies where gender roles are not clearly defined. In a society named Tahiti, a part of French Polynesia Islands, sex differences are blurred where women are permitted to do almost everything that men do (Gilmore, 1990). Both genders perform most of the same tasks, and no jobs or skills are reserved for either sex by cultural dictate. The men routinely do the cooking; women do almost everything that men do outside the house (Gilmore, 1990). These exceptions give us evidence of diverse gender roles in different social and cultural communities.

In this article I argue that macro institutional factors are important indicators to understanding gendered division of household labor. More specifically, I examine how historical, social, political and cultural contexts influence people's attitudes toward both genders' family roles. I choose four countries—Russia, Japan, West Germany and the United States because they have quite different historical experiences and thus can represent considerable social, political and cultural diversity.

### **Gender and the Macro Structural Context**

Considerable research has been done on issues of gendered division of labor within a family (Fuwa, 2004; Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Baxter, 1997; Bianchi et al.2000; Coltrane 2000; Blair&Deaniel,1991;Greenstain, 1996). Some research focuses on how individual couples allocate their household labor. For example, in their book *Husbands and Wives: the Dynamics of Married Living*, Blood and Wolfe researched how couples interacted and assigned their

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household tasks in practical life. By revealing the dynamics of patterns in decision making, division of labor, economic functions, and having children, they argue that the exercise of power between spouses are not cultural prescriptive but “pragmatic”. “Rather than being motivated by ideological concerns, American families seem to be quite pragmatic in settling who does what around the house...The culturological approach fails to account for variations between families, but pragmatic factors do provide workable interpretations (Blood and Wolfe, 1960).” However, their findings were based on interviews with women in Detroit and Michigan—a limited geographic scope which cannot sufficiently demonstrate cultural and ideological diversity, and thus make the cultural effect on gendered division of household labor quite limited.

Different from Blood and Wolfe’s argument, Ridgeway and Gorrell develop a theory to demonstrate the importance of macro cultural beliefs on micro pragmatic performance. They argue that gender incorporates multilevel systems of difference and inequality just as those based on race or class. It involves “cultural beliefs and distributions of resources at macro-level, patterns of behavior and organizational practices at the interactional level, and the selves and identities at the individual level (Ridgeway and Gorrell, 2004).” Cultural beliefs about gender and social relational contexts are the core components that maintain and change the gender system. Gender beliefs are cultural rules that enact the social structure and distribute resources; whereas social relational contexts are the practical arenas where these beliefs or rules play. In everyday social relational contexts, we sex categorize others based on culturally presumed beliefs. By analyzing macro-cultural rules and micro-pragmatic interpersonal contacts, Ridgeway and Gorrell provide a multilevel scope to integrate gender relations into broad gender belief systems.

In line with Ridgeway and Gorrell’s multilevel analysis, Blumberg further articulated the dynamic relationship between macro-micro level social factors. She introduces the concept of “nesting model”, where the micro-level units, such as households, nest in a series of macro-level units such as community, class, state, and the world economy (Blumberg, 1984). She suggests that women’s economic power can be used in negotiation with their husbands as an individual power resource only in male dominated macro backgrounds (Blumberg 1984; Blumberg and Coleman 1989). Women may contribute high income compared to their husbands, but male have the privilege in actual bargaining of economic power by virtue of male dominance at macro-level. Therefore, male control over the political economy and male dominated ideologies at macro-level may act as “discount factors” against the power of individual women’s resources (Fuwa, 2004).

Taking this theoretical framework, my article is to examine to what extent the macro-structural elements influence people’s attitudes toward gendered division of household labor at micro-level. Previous studies have found that attitudes are considered as an important indicator of people’s practical life. A positive attitude toward the relationship between husband’s and wives’ egalitarian roles can predict a more equal division of household labor in practice (Fuwa, 2004). Furthermore, attitudes reflected in public opinion are important determinants of

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public policies and legislative initiatives. Research on attitudes can indicate possible changes to provide more fair gender system and more social opportunities for women (Hanson, 2004).

### **Context and Gender Attitudes on Division of Labor in the US, West Germany, Russia and Japan**

#### **The United States**

In the late eighteenth century the United States began its industrialization process. It had significant impacts on the change of gender relations. As capitalism develops, work becomes separated from the home. The domestic/public dichotomy is more fully realized. Women are encouraged to assume housework and childcare whereas men are expected as the breadwinners for their family. This gendered division of labor is beneficiary to capitalism by making use of women's devalued household labor force to support the capitalist system (Bonvillain, 2006).

Three feminist movements occurred in US since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which to some extent increased women's opportunities in employment, education, political participation, and other public spheres, and thus led to the ideological changes toward the support of egalitarian gender roles. Since the 1980s the hours of work that women spent at home begun to decline (O'Kelly and Carney, 1986). Between 1960s and 1990s, American men have doubled their housework hours while women have cut their housework hours almost in half (Bianchi, 2000). In 1965, women spent about 30 hours doing unpaid housework, reducing to about 24 hours in 1975, 20 hours in 1985, and 17.5 hours in 1995. In contrast, men's hours spent in housework raised from 5 in 1965 to 7 in 1975, to 10 in 1985 and maintained this level in 1995. In other words, in 1965 women spent about six times as much on housework as men. By 1995, the difference was less than twice as much. The decrease for women's domestic work was primarily due to the increased female labor force participation, women's postponed marriage and parental age, and having fewer children. In 1960s, the percentage of female labor force in workforce was 33.9, this number increased to 54.5 in 1985. In 2003, 54.6 percent of white married mothers with infants and 63.6 percent of African American married mothers with infants participated into workforce (Bonvillain, 2004).

#### **West Germany**

West Germany retained traditional gender-role beliefs even after the World War II. Women's roles are restricted to children, kitchen, and church (Hanson, 2004). Policies justify this value and encourage women to be good mothers rather than good workers (Gerhard, 1992; Goldberg, 1991; Nickel, 1992). Government also helps reinforce patriarchal patterns in various ways, including maintaining traditional household division of labor, relieving women's employment responsibilities, and assuming women's place being at home. Traditional family structure is also emphasized. Men are considered as breadwinner and women as domestic

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caregivers. Germany's welfare system provides pensions based on people's marital status rather than their employment record (Ostner, 1993, 1994).

Besides governmental policies, gender values of individuals also tend to be traditional. According to previous researches, only 58 percent of West Germany divorces were initiated by women in 1985 (Mohrmann, 1992). On average, women in West Germany only contribute to 18 percent of total family income (Statistisches and Bundesamt, 1992). Only about 73 percent of West Germany women had completed some form of occupational training (Winkler, 1990). About 58 percent of women worked part-time, compared to 91 percent full-time employed women in the East (Statistisches and Bundesamt, 1992; Kolinsky, 1992). Western German women often have to choose part-time or for intermittent employment for struggling between work and family. According to Adler & Brayfield, the "three-phase model" of women's employment has become the rule in the West: (1) employment before marriage and children, (2) withdrawal from the labor force until the children reach school age, and (3) reentry into part-time employment thereafter (Adler & Brayfield, 1996).

### **Russia**

Russia's special history makes its gender issues more complicated and inconsistent. In the prerevolutionary era, the majority of Russians were rural peasants who live under rigid, patriarchal family structures (Lapidus, 1978). After the Bolshevik faction seized the power, the communist regime officially supported gender equality and provided legal protection for women's political and legal rights. Work was central to the Soviet project and was defined as "a duty of all citizens of the republic (Akhapkin, 1970)". Women were prescribed to assume the roles of worker-mothers and household caregivers. During the Stalin Era, on one hand, motherhood and child rearing were proclaimed women's highest calling; while on the other hand, women were also encouraged to work full time to fulfill the state's needs. Women's labor force participation was still in ever-increasing numbers and in a wide range of jobs (O'Kelly and Carney, 1986). In the post-Stalin era, women's representation in the economic sphere is far higher than in the non-communist world. Women constituted 51 percent of the civilian labor force and had large numbers in professional employment that were traditional male-dominated occupations. Legislation forbid discrimination against women workers and required equal pay for equal work.

However, at the same time women still retain the burdens of household and child care. The domestic sphere was still women's responsibility and men were considered as primary breadwinners. In the post-communist era, the dual-earner family in which man is the chief breadwinner and woman takes primary responsibility of household management remains the norm in Russia (Ashwin and Lytkina, 2004). Facing with low birth rate and disintegrated families, Russian authorities try to promote women's image as "homemaker". Labor officials openly state that women should stay home and take care of children, leaving the responsibilities to take good jobs with men (Hockstader, 1995). This tendency of bolstering gender stereotypes is

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also fueled by media propaganda (Lindsey, 1997). For instance, media routinely tell stories that by working outside women would do harm to both themselves and the workplace.

Despite the media and officials' discouragement of "masculinized women", women's opportunities to express their own complaints increased, and this even rekindled the feminist fever. The government failed to halt the underground publications that exposed problems of sexual inequality that women faced (Clements, 1994). Women's movement to speak out their voice is considered as the essence of contemporary Russian feminism after decades of political silence. This progress in glasnost along with the influence of communist history can be seen as the force to counteract traditional gender stereotypes bolstered by officials and media.

### **Japan**

According to O'Kelly and Carney's research, Japan is probably the country with the least commitment to the principle of gender equality in the modern industrialized countries (O'Kelly and Carney, 1986). Long history of feudalism and internal warfare sustained and inter-reinforced patriarchal systems and ideologies. The Meiji Restoration did not aim to change traditional gender roles but rather reaffirmed the patriarchal doctrine by educating girls to assume domestic roles. The Civil Code adopted in 1898 retained traditional family law and ideology, limiting women's rights and giving husbands rights of full supervision over wives. The following Taishou and Showa era (1912~present) inherited Meiji's militaristic and aggressive foreign policy, emphasizing women's subordination to support the national militarism. The legislation on equal pay for equal work has never been well implemented; women earn only 54 percent of what men earn. In the domestic sphere, even if the modern wife does not have to live with a powerful mother-in-law, the domestic sphere is still their main responsibility with little or no help from her husband. Men are expected not only to stay on the job for extremely long hours, but also to stick to their coworkers in bars, restaurants or cabarets after work since social life with coworkers is further proof of one's commitment to the company (O'Kelly and Carney, 1986).

The cultural belief on women's life goal is to bear children. A women's role is ranked as mother first and wife second (Usui, 1991). Employment is not even considered in the ranking hierarchy (Lindsey, 1997). Full-time child-care is encouraged since very few husbands like to share child-care burdens. Women who work when their children are young are very few in Japan compared to other modern societies (O'Kelly and Carney, 1986). Since women are so defined and restricted to assume domestic drudgery, they are also authorized unlimited autonomy in control of domestic life and decision making within the family. According to Lebra's research, in Japan, women as a group are socialized as inferior to men in terms of esteem, power, honor, privilege, and authority. They are related to principles of domesticity, seclusion and inferiority. Yet the inferiority assigned to women can be balanced somewhat by powers of their domestic roles. In a family, wife maintains the authority of full management in control of household finance. Earning the money is man's responsibility whereas managing the money is women's

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(Lebra, 1984).

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review, I propose my research hypothesis that attitudes on gendered division of labor vary according to countries. Although each country has shown both progressive and conservative features in attitudes toward gendered division of labor, in general, I expect to see that respondents from Russia and US exhibit more progressive attitudes than respondents from West Germany and Japan.

Besides, previous cross-national research demonstrates that men tend to exhibit much more traditional attitudes than women across national contexts (Adler and Brayfield 1992; Alwin, Braun, and Scott 1992; Davis and Robinson 1991; Haller and Hoellinger 1994). Men are the beneficiaries of a gender hierarchical system and thus tend to be less supportive toward an egalitarian division of labor, whereas it is in women's interests by reducing their burden in private sphere and increasing their opportunities in the public sphere (Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997). Thus I expect that in general there is a gap in understanding gender equality between men and women, in which men are more conservative in issues of gendered division of labor than women.

Given the complexity of the relations between gender and culture, there might be an interaction between the two factors. Previous research documents that respondents from different countries exhibit different sizes of the gap between women's and men's gender role attitudes (Baxter and Kane, 1995). The gender gap is bigger in countries where both genders have more equal access to power and material resources than in those where women are more dependent (Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997). In this research, I propose that the gap in attitudes about gendered division of labor between men and women is bigger in the U.S. and Russia, based on their contexts in which women have relatively more equal access to social and material resources, and smaller in Japan and West Germany, where gender relations are less equal.

### **Data and Method**

This analysis uses data from the 2002 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) module on Family and Changing Gender Roles. ISSP is one of the important datasets that provide information on attitudes of gender and division of labor across a broad range of industrialized countries. The program collects comparable data on social attitudes, values, and politics by interviewing representative adults in each country. A stratified random sampling method was used to collect respondents' reports. Before adopting the final questionnaire, topics are pretested in various countries. The final questionnaire is ensured to be "meaningful and relevant to all countries" and "expressed in an equivalent manner in all relevant languages (the ISSP website <http://www.issp.org/info.htm>)". By compiling pre-existing social science projects and coordinating research goals, ISSP provides a valuable source for comparative research. In ISSP

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2002 family and gender role module, the sample sizes in US, West Germany, Russia and Japan are 1171, 936, 1798 and 1132.

### **Independent variables**

Country and sex are the two independent variables in my study. The interaction of the two independent variables is also included as an independent variable in my test.

### **Dependent variable**

The dependent variable is attitudes toward gendered division of labor between men and women. In ISSP 2002 for family and changing gender roles, three questions are related to this issue: 1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that a man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family? 2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that men ought to do a larger share of household work than they do now? 3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that men ought to do a larger share of childcare than they do now? The answer for each question is a four-score range choice: 1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. neither agree nor disagree 4. strongly disagree (8. can't choose). For question 2 and 3, the answers have been recoded as 4. strongly agree; 3. agree 2. neither agree nor disagree 1. strongly disagree, so that for each question, the higher the score is, the more liberal attitude the answer reflects.

### **Analyses**

Given my interest in attitudes regarding the division of household labor in four countries, I use multi-factor ANOVA and Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) test to examine whether attitudes on division of household labor between husband and wife differ by country and sex and whether there is any interaction between the two independent variables. Means of dependent variables are compared within and across countries to see if there is any significant difference in attitudes regarding gender and division of labor between different countries. Means of dependent variables are also compared between men and women in general and within countries.

### **Findings**

#### **Differences on Attitudes toward Gendered Division of Labor across Countries**

Table 1 shows the significant difference in attitudes toward gendered division of labor across four countries. As I expected, respondents in Japan and West Germany tend to be conservative in attitudes toward gender and division of household labor; whereas respondents in the U.S. tend to be progressive. In the question that measures to what extent the respondents agree that men's job is work and women's job is household (table 2), the U.S. has the highest score (3.73), followed by West Germany (3.55), Japan scores 3.4, the second least score of the group, and Russian scores 2.4, the least score among the four. In the question measuring attitudes toward men and the share of household work, US respondents score the highest (3.67), followed



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by Japan (3.57) and Russia (3.55), and West Germany shows the least score (3.52). In the question measuring gender and the share of childcare, Russia has the highest score (3.89), followed by the U.S. (3.84) and West Germany (3.71), respondents from Japan score the lowest (3.68).

**Table 1: ANOVA Test Showing the Descriptive Effects of Country and Sex on Gendered Division of Labor in the U.S., West Germany, Russia and Japan.**

Source	Men's job is work; women's job is household	Men should do larger share of household work	Men should do larger share of childcare
Model	254.430***	25.670***	29.983***
Country	328.665***	4.134**	9.824 ***
Sex	55.503***	89.797***	81.813***
Country*Sex	1.904	5.264***	5.299***

Note: 1. Scores in the table are F statistics

2. \*\* Significant at .01 level. \*\*\*Significant at .001 level

**Table 2: MCA Test to Compare Attitudes toward the Gendered Division of Labor between Men and Women in the U.S., West Germany, Russia and Japan.**

Independent Variable	Men's job is work; women's job is household	Men should do larger share of household work	Men should do larger share of childcare
country			
US	3.73	3.67	3.84
West Germany	3.55	3.51	3.71
Russia	2.4	3.55	3.89
Japan	3.4	3.57	3.68
Model F	328.665***	4.134**	9.824 ***
Sex			
Male	3.03	3.4	3.65
Female	3.24	3.71	3.92
Model F	55.503***	89.797***	81.813***

Note: 1. Attitudes were coded so that the higher scores represent more liberal belief on gender division of labor.

2. \* Significant at .05 level \*\* Significant at .01 level. \*\*\*Significant at .001 level

Although in the first question West Germany has the second highest score (3.55) among the four countries and in question 2 Japan shows the second highest score (3.57), it does not indicate that respondents from Japan tend to be progressive in attitudes measured by question 1 or West Germany tend to be progressive regarding attitudes measured by question 2. Note that both scores still show a great distance from the highest scores in each question (.18 difference

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between the U.S. and West Germany in the first question, and .20 between the U.S. and Japan in the second question), and the distances are even bigger than those from the lowest scores in each question (.15 between West Germany and Russia in question 1, and .06 between Japan and West Germany in question 2), which implies that attitudes held by Japanese and West German respondents are still conservative even in the two measures.

Statistics show that respondents from Russia exhibit an inconsistency in their attitudes regarding gender and division of labor. In the first question on attitude toward gender roles (men's job is work and women's job is household work), Russia has the lowest score among the four countries (2.4). In the second question on men and household work, Russia ranks the third (3.55), and in the third question concerning gender and childcare, Russia has the highest score (3.89) representing the most progressive attitude among the four countries in that question.

### **Differences on gender attitudes based on sex**

Table 1 shows that attitudes toward gender division of labor is significantly different between men and women across the three measures. As I expected, females show higher scores than males in each country and each measure. The differences between the two sexes on whether men should do larger share of household work and childcare are larger than that on whether men's job is work and women's job is within household.

Table 2 shows a significant interaction effect between country and sex on attitudes measured by question 2 and 3. The size of the gender gap varies by national context. However, my findings do not support previous arguments that countries with more gender equal contexts show bigger gender gap in attitudes toward gender and division of labor than those with less gender equal contexts. In question that measure gender role attitudes, gender gap is greatest in the U.S. (.42), followed by West Germany (.3) and Japan (.23), Russia shows the least (.2) gap. In contrast, in question measuring men and the share of household work, the attitudinal difference between women and men is biggest in Russia (.37), followed by West Germany (.29) and US (.26), Japan has the least gap (.13). In question on whether men should do larger share of childcare, Russia also has the largest gender gap with .41 points difference, followed by Japan (.28), West Germany and US has the smallest gender gap (.14).

Comparing answers from male respondents, males from Russia tend to be most conservative. It has the lowest scores in item 1 (2.28) and item 2 (3.26), and the second lowest score in item 3 (3.63). Males in Japan also tend to be conservative, with the lowest score in item 3 (3.53) and second lowest score in item 1(3.28). Yet on attitudes of whether men should do larger share of housework, Japan has a second highest score (3.50) among the four countries. Attitudes of US and West Germany male respondents tend to be progressive across the three questions. US male respondents have the highest scores in all of the three items ( 3.48 in item 1; 3.52 in item 2, and 3.76 in item 3). West Germany has the second highest scores in item 1 (3.39) and item 3 (3.64).

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**Table 3: Comparative Means Between Males and Females on Attitudes of Gender Division of Labor in US, West Germany, Russia and Japan**

Country		Men’s job is work; women’s job is household	Men should do larger share of household work	Men should do larger share of childcare
US	Male	3.48	3.52	3.76
	Female	3.90	3.78	3.90
	Difference (F-M)	0.42	0.26	0.14
West Germany	Male	3.39	3.36	3.64
	Female	3.69	3.65	3.78
	Difference (F-M)	0.3	0.29	0.14
Russia	Male	2.28	3.26	3.63
	Female	2.48	3.73	4.04
	Difference (F-M)	0.2	0.37	0.41
Japan	Male	3.28	3.50	3.53
	Female	3.51	3.63	3.81
	Difference (F-M)	0.23	0.13	0.28

**Note: 1. Attitudes were coded so that the higher scores represent more liberal belief on gender division of labor.**

**2. \* Significant at .05 level    \*\* Significant at .01 level.    \*\*\*Significant at .001 level**

For female respondents, as I expected, U.S. females hold more liberal attitudes than males across all of the three questions, with highest scores in item 1(3.90) and item 2(3.78), and second highest score in item 3 (3.90). Female respondents in Japan tend to be conservative, with lowest score in item 2 (3.63) and second lowest scores in item 1 (3.51) and item 3 (3.81). Answers from Russia and West Germany female respondents are mixed. In question 1, Russia females show the lowest score (2.48) whereas in item 2 they become the second highest in the group (3.26) and have the highest score in item 3 (4.04). Female respondents from West Germany exhibit progressive attitude in answering question 1(3.69), however, in question 2 and 3, they show relative low scores (3.65 and 3.78 separately) among the four countries.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

This research aims to examine the influence of macro-institutional factors—the historical, political and cultural contexts within a nation, on attitudes regarding gender and division of household labor. My theoretical framework is based on the argument that macro structural and cultural elements can influence the formation of concepts about gender relations at individual level. I examine the attitudes about gender and the division of household labor in four modern

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countries—Russia, Japan, Germany (west) and the United States. The four countries exhibit great institutional, historical, cultural differences which can represent the diversity in macro structures and ideologies. My findings support my hypothesis that there is a cross-cultural difference in attitudes toward gendered division of household labor. In general, the U.S. respondents exhibit more progressive attitudes whereas those from West Germany and Japan show more conservative beliefs.

According to Esping-Andersen (1990), gender relations in a nation are related to its social welfare policies. In liberal regimes such as the U.S., markets provide more welfare services, such as childcare or elder care, than the government do. This market-driven welfare policy encourages women to participate in the labor market and lead to their more progressive attitudes regarding gendered division of household labor. In contrast, Japan and Germany belong to conservative-corporatist regimes, whose welfare policies reinforce traditional family relations. The lack of services has reduced the level of female employment and results in their relatively more conservative gender attitudes than those from liberal welfare regimes.

Respondents from Russia show their inconsistency in different measures. They tend to be more progressive than those from the other three countries in question regarding gender and household work and question regarding gender and childcare; however they are more conservative in question regarding gender roles. This inconsistency reflects the complexity of the historical and cultural influence on gender attitudes in Russia. Russian respondents, both men and women, generally tend to hold a stereotypical belief that men should be the breadwinners and women be the homemakers, but women's heavily burdened household life in the domestic sphere make women express their wish to reduce their family burden and let men share more household work and childcare. This wish is reflected in the third table that measure male-female attitudinal difference in each country. While both Russian men and women tend to be more conservative in question 1 regarding the difference in gender roles, Russian women are more progressive in question regarding sharing household work and childcare, while Russian men are still more conservative in the two measures.

My results support my hypothesis that there is a gender gap in attitudes toward gender and division of labor across national context. Women tend to hold more progressive attitudes than men in all of the three measures across the four countries. My research has also shown an interaction effect between gender and country, indicating the size of gender gap in attitudes toward gendered division of labor differs by national context. However, my findings do not support the argument concluded from previous research that gender gap is greater in countries where women have more equal access to social and material resources than those where women are more subordinate. My findings in response to my first hypothesis have shown a more progressive attitude held by the U.S. respondents, however, the gender gap in the U.S. is not always the largest among the four countries. In the question measuring gender and household work, the gender gap in the U.S. ranks the third; in the question measuring gender and childcare, U.S. shows the least gender gap. Similarly, Japanese respondents, who show their relatively

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conservative attitudes, exhibit a second largest gender gap in question measuring gender and childcare, larger than those from the U.S. and West Germany. This difference in gender gap within a single national context reflects the complexity of the institutional influence on gender attitudes held by men and women. In some measures, men and women tend to hold similar attitude, whereas in other measures they tend to disagree with one another. The size of the gap between women and men is not necessarily bigger in the contexts where women have more equal access to social and economic resources, but varies according to the particular gender issues.

My research has indicated that the influence of macro structural and cultural elements on attitudes toward gendered division of labor is quite complex. As a formerly socialist country, Russia experienced the enforcement of formal gender equality in the socialist system and a backlash in gender beliefs in the post-communist era. The double burden of work and family duties loaded on women make Russian women wish to relieve their burden by returning to their traditional gender roles after the collapse of the USSR. However, women still expect men to share more household and childcare work. For future research, a systematic examination is needed to explore the influence of political change on the shape of gender attitudes held by men and women in formerly socialist countries. Moreover, future research should also examine how structural and cultural contexts differently influence gender attitudes held by women and men, which renders the size of the gender gap varies by particular gender issues even within a single national context.

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