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Attitudes of Gender Roles in the Family
Sociological Relevance

- Social change as a result of the women’s movement; more women integrated into the workplace that has created a shift toward more egalitarian attitudes
- Society still promotes traditional gender roles that expect men to be the primary breadwinners and encourage women to take care of the family
- Women still are often faced with choosing between their careers and their families
Three Gender Role Focus Topics

- The division of household labor between men and women
- Childrearing practices of mothers and father
- Dual-career versus single-career marriages
Questions and Hypotheses

• Is there a general trend toward attitudes of gender role equality and egalitarianism regarding family and work decisions among UNH students?

• $H_1$: There will be a general trend among both men and women toward egalitarian gender role attitudes

• Is there a difference between men and women’s attitudes toward gender roles regarding family and employment decisions?

• $H_2$: Men’s gender role attitudes will be less egalitarian than women’s
Questions and Hypotheses

- Is there a difference in gender role attitudes regarding family and employment decisions between those raised in a traditional family versus those raised in an egalitarian family?
- \( H_3 \): Men and Women’s gender role attitudes will be more egalitarian if they were raised by parents who both had careers.

- Is there a difference in gender role attitudes toward childcare practices between those who attended day care as children versus those who were cared for at home?
- \( H_4 \): Men and women’s gender role attitudes will be more egalitarian if they attended day care as children. The major discrepancy in gender role attitudes between men and women will be in regards to childcare practices (men’s attitudes will be more traditional than women’s)
Instrument of Measurement-Survey

- 14 items to measure gender role attitudes in the family (dependent variables)
- Taken from two sources: the Dual Career Family Scale, and a scale used in a study by Cassidy and Warren called Family Employment Status and Gender Role Attitudes
- Survey with a 4 point scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree
- 11 demographic items including gender, daycare attendance as a child, and family structure (independent variables)
Limitations of the Survey

• Interviews capture more in depth qualitative data regarding gender role opinions
• Some respondents wanted to apply each item to a specific situation- commented that it “depended” on certain things- type of employment, number of hours per week
Sampling

- UNH students
- Cluster Sampling through General Education courses
- 315 respondents: 187 women, 128 men
Analyses

• Independent samples $t$-tests to compare gender role attitudes between men and women
• One-way ANOVA’s to compare gender role attitudes to day care attendance as a child, parents’ working status, and family structure
• Two-way ANOVA to compare gender role attitudes with mother’s working status and again with day care attendance, while controlling for gender
Results

- $H_1$: Overall there is a general trend toward egalitarian gender role attitudes
- $H_2$: Women scored higher than men on almost all items as more egalitarian
Results- Hypotheses with Partial Support

• Respondents with mothers who worked full time (compared to part-time or not working outside the home) were much more egalitarian on items #4, 12, and 14.

• Reflects socialization: those who were raised by an “egalitarian family” will report more egalitarian views.

• Two-way ANOVA reveals the persistence of this relationship when controlling for gender
Results - Hypotheses with Partial Support

• Respondents who attended day care reported more egalitarian attitudes on items #2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12 as compared to those who did not attend day care as children

• Reflects socialization: those who attended day care as children are more likely to be supportive of taking on both work and family roles

• Two-way ANOVA reveals the persistence of this relationship when controlling for gender
Similarities Between Men and Women’s Attitudes

• Both men and women held the most egalitarian attitudes with regard to husbands and wives sharing the duty of raising children (#6)

• Both men and women held the most traditional attitudes with regard to a woman being able to make her first priority a career rather than a family (#13)
Differences Between Men and Women’s Attitudes

- Item #2- “Men should share household duties **equally** with women”
- Item #12 “It is much better for everyone involved if the husband is the major provider for the family”
- Women more egalitarian than men in both
- Biggest discrepancies did **not** concern day care
Larger Implications

- Society is not reflective of these attitudes and the shift from traditional to egalitarian views
- Maternity leave, day care availability in the workplace, wage gap
- Not just a women’s issue—men’s issue too
- Public Policy as a means to bridge the gap between family and work roles