

Men who do the housework are more likely to get the girl

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Marriage rates in different countries can be linked to views on who is responsible for doing the housework.

(PhysOrg.com) -- An Oxford study suggests that if you want to settle down, your chances of getting married or living with someone are probably highest in Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries and the United States.

According to the study, men in those countries are more likely than their Australian counterparts to do the household chores and thereby make marriage a more attractive option to their nation's women.

According to an Oxford economist, marriage and cohabiting rates in developed countries can be linked to attitudes towards the roles of men and women, and views on who is responsible for doing the [housework](#)

and looking after the children.

Both men and women have shown they are more likely to want a live-in relationship with the opposite sex if they think their partner will do a share of the housework and childcare duties.

The study constructs an 'egalitarian index' of 12 developed countries, based on responses to questionnaires about gender, housework and childcare responsibilities. Norway and Sweden top the egalitarian index, with Great Britain in third place, followed by the United States. At the bottom of the index are Japan, Germany, and Austria, with Australia languishing as the least egalitarian.

Data about the number of women in partnerships was then compared against the index. Women of similar age and educational background were compared across the participating countries to see if their country's rating on the egalitarian index bore any relation to whether they were living with a man or not. Other controlling factors, such as female unemployment, were taken account of.

The study found that women living in less egalitarian countries were between 20 and 50 per cent less likely to be living with a man than comparable women living in a more egalitarian country. For instance, the findings would predict that the average British woman was 8.5 percentage points more likely than a similar Australian woman to be in a live-in relationship.

Study author Dr Almudena Sevilla-Sanz, an ESRC-funded researcher at the Centre for Time Use Research at Oxford University, concludes that women living in countries with the highest proportion of egalitarian men are more likely to marry or live with a man.

The study also suggests that a more egalitarian woman in any country is

less likely than a less egalitarian woman to set up home with a man because, everything else being equal, most men would choose a woman who they can rely on to do housework and look after the children. While egalitarian men seem to be viewed as a better bet by women, egalitarian women are seen as a less safe bet by men.

Dr Sevilla-Sanz said: 'In egalitarian countries you might, in principle, expect to see women preferring to remain single rather than face the prospect of spending more time doing household chores. However, this study shows that in egalitarian countries there is less social stigma attached to men doing what was traditionally women's work.

'For instance, if paternity leave is the social norm, more men take it. This leads to men in egalitarian societies taking on more of a domestic role so the likelihood of forming a harmonious household becomes greater, resulting in a higher proportion of couples setting up households in these countries.

'If developed countries want to look at why the birth rate in their country is falling, we need to focus on the drivers for whether couples decide to live together and start a family. It seems to show what couples ask "Will I be better off?". Women in less egalitarian countries are saying "No". Countries with a low birth rate face the challenge of a shrinking workforce in coming decades with questions about who will pay for public services and social support.'

The representative sample of 13,500 [men](#) and [women](#), aged between 20-45 years old from each of the 12 countries, was taken from the same survey carried out in 1994 and 2002 as part of the International Social Survey Program.

Provided by Oxford University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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