South Korean Children's and Adult's Reasoning about the Fairness of Housework Division

Allegra J. Midgette

Scholars have found that while women across cultures do on average two-thirds of all household labor, only 20-30% of women find these gendered distributions unfair (Coltrane, 2000; Mikula, 1998). Meanwhile, previous research on moral reasoning about gender inequality demonstrates that men and boys tend to employ mostly conventional, or norm affirming, reasoning and therefore also find women doing most of the housework as legitimate. In other words across ages and genders, individuals have been found to be less morally critical of gendered unequal distribution of labor in the home than expected. The challenge for moral developmental researchers and scholars of household labor is to ascertain how family members come to accept seemingly apparent unequal distribution of gendered housework. A limitation of previous research has been that scholars mainly focused on only one of the members of a household's evaluations of gendered housework (mostly women) and focused their research within the United States. To address these shortcomings, Allegra is currently in Seoul studying the moral reasoning employed by children (9-11, 12-14, & 16-18) and at times their parents (12 families) about the gendered division of housework. In this seminar Allegra will introduce previous work in this area (including the data that she already collected in China with 60 children and 12 families) and share preliminary data already collected in Seoul. After reviewing together some of the data,   the following questions will be discussed: 1) How do children make sense of inequality in the division of housework? 2) How do parents make sense of this issue, and does it differ from their children's understandings? 3) What are the implications for future research in this area?

Allegra J. Midgette is a 4th year Ph.D. student studying Human Development & Education at U.C. Berkeley. Allegra received her M.A. in Human Development & Education at U.C. Berkeley in December of 2015. Allegra graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor's Degree in Education (Human Development) in the Spring of 2014, with honors, Magna Cum Laude, and Phi Beta Kappa. Prior to attending Berkeley, Allegra was involved in researching Chinese teachers' beliefs about teaching moral education, American students' moral psychology, and teachers' beliefs about whether morality should be taught at home or at school. She has also worked as a research assistant with Dr. Larry Nucci in the DBME lab on a project to incorporate moral education into middle school history and social studies classes. Allegra received the Pamela and Kenneth Fong Fellowship(2016-2017) to conduct dissertation research in Northeast Normal University in Changchun, China. Allegra received the Center for Korean Studies Continuing Graduate Student Fellowship in order to collect data in Seoul, South Korea for the Fall of 2017. Her current research interests include children's social and moral transgressions and their employment of self-correcting strategies, analyzing and integrating both developmental and cultural processes in understanding moral development (CHAT), and the role of education in moral development.

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