

Trübner, Miriam; Nisic, Natascha

Article — Published Version

Sociocultural barriers to outsourcing housework: Unraveling the non-use of domestic services

International Journal of Consumer Studies

Provided in Cooperation with:

John Wiley & Sons

Suggested Citation: Trübner, Miriam; Nisic, Natascha (2024) : Sociocultural barriers to outsourcing housework: Unraveling the non-use of domestic services, International Journal of Consumer Studies, ISSN 1470-6431, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, Vol. 48, Iss. 3, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.13042>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/294007>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Sociocultural barriers to outsourcing housework: Unraveling the non-use of domestic services

Miriam Trübner  | Natascha Nisic 

Department of Sociology and Quantitative Social Research Methods, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Mainz, Germany

Correspondence

Miriam Trübner, Department of Sociology and Quantitative Social Research Methods, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Mainz, Germany.

Email: truebner@uni-mainz.de

Funding information

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Grant/Award Number: 404875417

Abstract

The outsourcing of housework is broadly recognized as providing an impetus for increasing women's participation in the labor market and relieving the burdens of households with children and dual earners. Despite an objective need, demand for paid domestic services is low, even for households with sufficient financial resources. By drawing on a German survey of cohabiting couples aged between 30 and 60, we analyze households that have, to date, not used domestic services ($N = 1479$). Based on items about attitudes toward domestic services, we identify five distinct attitude profiles defined by diverse combinations and levels of sociocultural barriers to outsourcing housework, including gendered expectations, privacy concerns, aversion toward a servant culture, and trust and control issues. Our results establish that half of the sample exhibits scarcely any sociocultural aversion to the employment of domestic help. While some of these households report preferring to do housework within the family, households of higher social strata, in particular, express a need for external support, but are hindered by an insufficient supply of and access to appropriate paid domestic services. In contrast, the other half of the sample consists of subgroups of rejectors, revealing different levels of disapproval and normative-moral profiles concerning outsourcing. Interestingly, complete rejectors are often found in low-income households, indicating a strong connection between socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics. The results highlight the potential for future developments within the domestic service sector to meet customers' normative and moral concerns.

KEYWORDS

attitude, domestic help, housework, make-or-buy, outsourcing

1 | INTRODUCTION

As women have increasingly entered the labor market over the last decades, outsourcing domestic work and the use of care services has increasingly come to be viewed as a solution to the resulting work-life conflicts and competing time pressures, challenging the prevailing

societal arrangements of paid and unpaid labor within the household. In the future, the necessity of a more sustainable lifestyle can also be expected to create new tasks and add even more burdens to households' time and organizational capacities. Despite these societal changes and the documented positive effects of the use of these services on individuals' happiness (Whillans et al., 2017), actual

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2024 The Authors. *International Journal of Consumer Studies* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

consumption practices differ depending on the specific services used. Such services comprise outsourcing of domestic work like in-house domestic help for cleaning and out-of-home services like laundry services or substitutes like takeaway food, as well as care services (e.g., in-house babysitters or au pairs and out-of-home childcare facilities). Over the past few decades, there has been a notable surge in the reliance on external services such as daycare facilities, food delivery and restaurants, as well as the consumption of preprepared meals. Conversely, the engagement of in-home domestic help has remained unchanged at a low level (Kornrich & Roberts, 2018).

Working from the assumption that financial constraints are the primary explanation for the widespread hesitance to outsource housework to a third-party provider, one who comes to the home to do chores such as cleaning, tidying, cooking or doing laundry, a number of governments have introduced tax reductions on legally provided household services, as in Sweden (Eurofund, 2013) and Germany (Bundesministerium der Finanzen, 2020), or state subsidies in the form of vouchers, as in France or Belgium (Raz-Yurovich & Marx, 2018, 2019; Windebank, 2007). Financially supporting domestic outsourcing aims to further develop the household service sector and to support the reentry of (higher-skilled) women into the workforce by providing them with the means to harmoniously balance their professional responsibilities and familial and domestic duties (Morel, 2015). Research to date has, accordingly, focused on budget restrictions when explaining the demand for household services. However, as the extensive literature on the role of cultural aspects on consumption has shown (Katz-Gerro, 2004; Zelizer, 2010), consumption is driven and constrained by culturally formed preferences, norms, and values in many fields. Thus, it can be assumed that nonmonetary impediments will also keep people from taking advantage of domestic help. Care work and domestic labor are deeply rooted in cultural framings of gender, family, and the privacy of the home, as well as attitudes toward social inequality; this results in a nexus of complex normative expectations regarding how and by whom domestic work has to be performed. Recent research has increasingly pointed to such diverse nonmonetary barriers to outsourcing as trust and control issues (de Ruijter & van der Lippe, 2009; Nisic, 2018), gendered normative expectations (de Ruijter et al., 2005), preferences for doing housework (de Ruijter & van der Lippe, 2007; Windebank, 2010), the subjective assessment that domestic help is not worth the money (Windebank, 2010), and a reluctance toward employer–employee relationships in the private home (Bittman et al., 1999). However, most of these studies are limited to certain cultural aspects. The field of domestic labor research still requires a systematic account of different attitudes and cultural barriers toward domestic outsourcing and their interconnectedness, as well as the empirical analysis of their prevalence in society, allowing for the identification of subgroups holding specific belief systems. There is, to date, a lack of research that goes beyond an examination of individual barriers to outsourcing behavior by investigating the social stratification of these barriers. This research should, ideally, enable a more precise understanding of how different social factors are related to specific barriers and how the interactions of different barriers correlate with the nonuse of

domestic services. If these sociocultural barriers are not considered within a sociostructural context, explanations for the differing and reticent use of domestic services will remain incomplete, hindering further development of the service sector.

To fill this gap, we systematically elaborate on the different cultural dimensions that are interrelated with paid and unpaid domestic work. We then perform analyses based on a sample retrieved by an access panel in Germany ($N = 1479$) of respondents aged 30–60 who cohabit with their partner. In the first step, we use latent profile analysis (LPA) to identify different attitude profiles and cultural framings of domestic services among subpopulations based on a number of items that capture attitudes toward domestic outsourcing—specifically included in the survey for the purpose of this paper. In the second step, we identify socioeconomic and demographic background information and the household context associated with these attitude profiles and draw a picture of the prevalence and social structure of these attitudes and cultural framings.

Our study examines sociocultural barriers to outsourcing in Germany, a country characterized by a high valuation of privacy (European Commission, 2011) and a pronounced aversion to social inequality (Engelhardt & Wagener, 2018). Germany is also characterized by traditional gender role attitudes and a strong inclination toward a one-and-a-half earner model (Edlund & Öun, 2016), but also a mission to make the family and working life more egalitarian (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021). While in recent decades families with children have been increasingly using childcare to reconcile employment with family life (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020), outsourcing domestic work is still comparatively rare in Germany. Only about 8% of households employed a domestic worker occasionally or regularly in 2017 (Ernste, 2019). By international comparison, the German demand for domestic services is relatively low. In contrast, these services are used by 20% of households in Belgium and the Netherlands, 10% in Australia, France, and Romania, and less than 5% in Russia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria (Raz-Yurovich, 2014). However, precisely determining the extent of outsourcing domestic work in Germany is challenging, owing to factors such as the broad spectrum of sectors and employment relationships involved and the prevalence of informal, often underreported, arrangements (Nisic & Molitor, 2022). Studies estimate that, of the households that use domestic help at all, about 66%–88% of them do so informally (Ernste, 2019; Shire et al., 2017). While an increasing prevalence of online platforms providing domestic services can be observed (Huws et al., 2019), it is unclear how this digitalization has affected informal employment and the overall distribution of sources of employment, that is, the households themselves. Consequently, the marketization of domestic services in Germany has been explicitly promoted politically, with a focus on counteracting informal employment by simultaneously creating employment for low-skilled workers and supporting the employment potential of women whose participation in the labor market is hindered by household and care responsibilities (Bundesregierung, 2018, 2021). Since the cultural acceptance of domestic services precedes and potentially limits demand, as well as the scope and success of sociopolitical interventions, a deeper understanding of the reluctant attitudes toward outsourcing housework is crucial.

This article contributes to research on outsourcing in four significant ways. First, our study is the first to examine manifold potentially aversive motives simultaneously and in interrelation with each other, promising a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the reluctance to outsource domestic services. Second, by analyzing respondents' attitude profiles using LPA and relating them to their socioeconomic background, we can identify the social structure of these barriers. Third, in doing so, we identify heterogeneous subpopulations of nonusers, resulting in implications both for consumers and for the design of diverse arrangements of household services. Fourth, we contribute to the limited research on in-home consumption within the subfield of the home as a consumption hub, which primarily focuses on consumer interactions with technologies and tech actors (Tsiotsou & Boukis, 2022).

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical background used for the analysis and the literature review. Section 3, methodology, describes the data and sample, analytical strategy, and measures used. Section 4 reports the findings of the study. Section 5 addresses implications for consumption and notes some of the study's limitations, as well as avenues for future research. The paper ends with a conclusion in Section 6.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Outsourcing housework as a make-or-buy decision

Housework can either be done by the members of a household or outsourced (at least partially) by paying an external employee to do the work. This make-or-buy¹ decision for private households was first conceptualized by Becker (1965), who recognized households as producers and counterparts to the market. Within Becker's New Home Economics, it is assumed that actors are rationally seeking to maximize their utility through activities constrained by time and capital. Accordingly, time in employment generates income, which, in turn, can be spent on paying a domestic worker or buying time-saving appliances. Alternatively, income is forfeited when actors engage in housework themselves. When income and opportunity costs are high, actors will shift from making to buying, as outsourcing housework frees up time for other activities and creates benefits. In contrast, actors will prefer making instead of buying when income is scarce. According to Michael and Becker (1973), the income potential of households and a high educational level determine the demand for household services.

Empirically, the postulated relationships between socioeconomic background and outsourcing behavior are broadly confirmed. In particular, households with higher incomes, higher education, more hours worked, and large volumes of household labor can be shown to have a generally higher demand for outsourcing housework (Cornelisse-Vermaat et al., 2013; Nisic, 2018; van der Lippe et al., 2004).

2.2 | Sociocultural barriers of outsourcing

While studies have been able to confirm the positive relationship between socioeconomic background and the decision to outsource domestic work, a considerable number of wealthy dual-earner couples refrain from outsourcing housework despite their subjective demand and financial capabilities (Windebank, 2010). The ambiguity of the findings on socioeconomic determinants points to possible further mechanisms beyond time and money that underlie the outsourcing decision. Of particular relevance here are trust and control issues, privacy concerns, family and gender norms, reservations toward service relationships in the private home, and a general preference for keeping housework in the family.

2.2.1 | Gender and family norms

One major barrier to outsourcing is culturally deeply ingrained gender and family norms that create reluctance toward outsourcing domestic work. These norms can be traced back to the historical segregation between unpaid domestic (reproductive) and paid market (productive) labor in the process of industrialization, which assigned women to the household sphere, inside the home, and men to the market sphere, outside the home (Bock & Duden, 2007). This process of dividing productive and reproductive labor by gender was accompanied and justified by the emergence of a gender essentialist view, characterized by the conviction that there are fundamental differences between men's and women's preferences and competencies (Parsons & Bales, 1955). In the course of time, care and household activities became to be perceived as natural characteristics of women and expressions of love for the family rather than "labor", thus also defining female identity and providing a stage for performing and enacting gender and motherhood (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Manifold empirical studies confirm a decreasing yet persisting gendered division of labor in contemporary modern societies (e.g., Altintas & Sullivan, 2016). In this regard, on average, more women than men report enjoying housework (Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009), adhering to higher standards for housekeeping (Nisic & Trübner, 2023), and being more competent at domestic chores (Berg & Teigen, 2009). Studies also reveal that women, more than men, are expected to be responsible for housework, and on the same note, women are punished more severely socially when standards of a clean home are not met (Thébaud et al., 2021). While it is true that attitudes toward gender roles have become more egalitarian over the last decades, they also have become more complex (Scarborough et al., 2019). Current research has established that the core gender essentialist views are still prevalent in society (Pinho & Gaunt, 2024) and have even become renewed and fortified in some aspects, like in the gender ideology of "intensive mothering", where a specific focus is put on women's primary role as the caregiver of children (Ennis, 2014). These cultural framings of the domestic sphere as women's natural responsibility and their central arena for the expression of love lead to domestic and care work being ignored as a form of labor (Bock & Duden, 2007).

and thus to their devaluation in society (Hatton, 2017). As a consequence, the quality of home-produced services might be judged as being of higher value (Wicks et al., 2005), and resistance occurs regarding the marketization of these activities, especially among women (Moras, 2017), and the willingness to pay for domestic services. As Windebank (2010) postulates, affordability depends not only objectively on the household's financial resources but also on the subjective assessment of what the service is worth.

2.2.2 | Privacy concerns

Another barrier related to the segregation of the productive and reproductive sphere during industrialization, that is, the segregation of paid market work and unpaid care work, is the emergence of the household as the realm of privacy. In the course of this functional differentiation, the household has become a place of privacy and intimacy characterized by solidarity and reciprocity, in contrast to the public sphere of market work dominated by monetary remuneration and norms of efficiency (Parsons & Bales, 1955). In this context, studies on outsourcing domestic labor have found that considerable discomfort is generated for household members when a stranger enters the private sphere and engages in domestic tasks for pay (Diener et al., 2015). As inconveniences and discomforts associated with buying goods and services can prevent people from buying them entirely (Betancourt & Gautschi, 1990; Wicks et al., 2005), discomfort associated with privacy intrusion in the case of domestic help is likely to prevent households from buying domestic services. While other paid domestic tasks like childrearing and children's education are nowadays mainly outsourced to external facilities such as daycare centers, kindergartens, and schools, outsourcing housework still fundamentally entails it being performed inside the private home. While some housework-related tasks can also be accomplished externally (use of laundry services or a laundromat, or eating at restaurants or ordering takeaway), tasks such as cleaning and tidying up are located within the home by definition, thus necessitating allowing a third person who is not a member of the household access to a family's private sphere. As a consequence, hiring domestic help might involve feelings of discomfort with regard to disclosing personal matters. While households can limit the domestic worker's access to certain rooms or lock drawers and cabinets, the employee will inevitably still come into contact with personal belongings and learn about personal matters. This information makes the employer vulnerable, mainly due to information asymmetry, as the employer does not have access to similar personal information about the domestic worker (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977).

2.2.3 | Aversion to servant culture

Another relevant aspect of the formation of attitudes toward domestic outsourcing that has occurred in the (still ongoing) process of modernization is the moral rejection of asymmetrical work relationships in the private household, which can resemble premodern master-

servant relationships (Bittman et al., 1999). Modern societies are characterized by principles of equality and symmetry, which oppose the employment of domestic services, commonly perceived as low-status and poorly paid work (Bittman et al., 1999; Pfau-Effinger, 2010). Moreover, the fact that service workers are often migrants without legal status evokes egalitarian and anti-discriminatory sentiments and aggravates moral concerns, as employment might be viewed as a perpetuation not only of social inequalities but also of ethical hierarchies (Duffy, 2007).

According to official statistics in Germany, the majority (75%) of domestic workers² are German, and only 25% of workers have a migration background (Minijobzentrale, 2020). Regardless of these official figures, it can be assumed that the actual proportion of domestic workers with a migration background is higher. One reason for this is that the official statistics on household activities also include gardening, which is mainly performed by men. Another, more salient reason is that domestic workers registered as so-called "mini-jobbers" make up only a small part of the domestic helpers; the vast majority of domestic helpers are unregistered and work illegally (Anger & Ernste, 2022). As such, the assumption is that the share of domestic workers with a migration background is significantly larger. The prevailing employment conditions also mean that the use of domestic services is likely to collide with the value system of modern citizens, leading to expressions of discomfort with playing the role of an employer in the domestic sphere, especially one who is required to give instructions and who lets other people clean up their "mess".

2.2.4 | Trust and control issues

Finally, in recent literature, the role of trust in outsourcing decisions has been examined to better understand why households refrain from hiring domestic services. With a theoretical basis in transaction cost theory (TCA) (Williamson, 1981), these studies emphasize the information asymmetry between households and domestic workers, leading to trust problems and uncertainties about the worker's future performance (Abraham et al., 2023; Nisic et al., 2023; Raz-Yurovich, 2014). Not only is domestic service work mostly provided in the absence of the household members, but it is also generally challenging to monitor and assess its quality, creating the potential for opportunism and unsatisfactory work outcomes with regard to productivity, the quality of the services, and fraudulent intentions (Abraham et al., 2023; Raz-Yurovich, 2014). While the household members can evaluate the result of the cleaning process to some extent, the employee's work ethos is only verifiable to a limited degree. Uncertainties remain about domestic workers' commitment to hygiene standards and cleaning methods (e.g., the use of sustainable products), the careful handling of valuable objects, the speed with which tasks are completed, and domestic workers' potential intentions to steal personal belongings and respect privacy. Such informational asymmetries are aggravated in the household context due to the symbolic significance of domestic work and its central role in the well-being of household members, as outlined above. Overcoming or

avoiding these uncertainties and trust issues, however, involves additional costs for the employing households, that is, transaction costs, like monitoring the worker or searching intensively for a trustworthy worker—thus lowering the incentives for outsourcing at all.

Empirical research has confirmed that the ability to monitor a domestic worker by being present during work increases the likelihood of outsourcing (Nisic, 2018) yet imposes time costs of monitoring. Likewise, households' willingness to trust strangers is positively associated with outsourcing housework (Abraham et al., 2023; de Ruijter & van der Lippe, 2009; Nisic, 2018). However, concerning attitudes toward outsourcing, one can expect that the anticipation of uncertainties and potential trust issues will cause distress for some households and evoke negative attitudes toward outsourcing, in particular, if the service worker is unattended.

2.3 | Empirical expectations

As the preceding discussion has established, sociocultural reasons for rejecting domestic services are manifold and not exclusive but likely to intersect. Hence, first of all, we expect to determine various attitude profiles that differ in terms of the strength of aversive attitudes and their composition. Next, based on the outlined theoretical approaches and existing empirical studies, we assume that the likelihood of exhibiting a specific attitude profile will differ according to the respondent's characteristics and household context.

As the household is culturally assigned to women, we expect women to be more averse to outsourcing housework. In particular, women should have more issues with trust and privacy than men. We also expect women to feel more uncomfortable and socially judged when somebody else is doing “their” job and, as a result, to experience higher normative barriers than men. Research shows that families with young children are often among those who outsource household tasks (Nisic, 2018), which can be explained by the increased workload when raising children. However, evidence regarding the time-saving effects is mixed (Craig et al., 2016; Sullivan & Gershuny, 2013; van der Lippe et al., 2004). A recent study from Hong Kong analyzing families with live-in domestic workers shows that mothers utilize the saved time to engage in intensive parenting (Cheung & Lui, 2022). Although there are some indications of redistribution effects in the time usage of households with domestic help toward intensive parenting, we still suspect that among nonusers, the presence of children in the household will be associated with *higher* barriers to outsourcing, as the emotional significance of domestic work is aggravated in families with children, not only by means of intensive parenting (Ennis, 2014) but also by keeping domestic chores in the family, as this is seen as a symbolic act to create family bonds (Finch, 2007).

Expectations regarding the role of social strata—income and education—on outsourcing-averse motives are ambiguous and mixed. Research has shown that higher social strata are positively associated with egalitarian attitudes regarding gender roles (Knight & Brinton, 2017). Consequently, we expect people with higher

educational and financial status to feel less obliged to live up to gender-stereotyped expectations. Furthermore, people with higher income and higher educational levels have been proven to display stronger levels of approval for income inequality and lower levels of support for redistributive policies (Guillaud, 2013; La Roex et al., 2019). This could be associated with a greater willingness to assume the role of an employer and establish asymmetric relationships and less routine disapproval of status differences in the household when hiring domestic services. Despite that, more educated individuals and, in particular, academics are also generally found to more often express liberal and egalitarian orientations and adhere to more traditionally left-wing political attitudes, like equality, non-authoritarianism, and reduction of racial prejudice (Scott, 2022; Stubager, 2008). From this, a greater aversion toward an employer–employee relationship in academic households can be expected. However, recent research also points to differences in attitudes and political orientations among the more educated in the academic field (van de Werfhorst, 2020), leaving room for more heterogeneity among academic households. Considering this mixed evidence on the effects of education, we expect to find different subgroups of higher-educated individuals varying in their aversive attitudes toward inequality and status differences within the household.

Regarding trust issues, expectations are also ambivalent. While it is known that higher-income households spend more money on interior decoration, household appliances, and household items (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021), making the opportunistic behavior of domestic helpers more damaging, at the same time, higher-income households also have more financial means to replace potential damages caused. Therefore, we cannot predict trust or privacy issues depending on higher strata.

Concerning age, we assume older respondents experience more normative barriers with the employment of domestic workers, as age is positively correlated with traditional and more conservative views (Knight & Brinton, 2017). We also expect people of a higher age to be more likely to rely on other household members' help, as research has shown that the overall hours spent on housework decline for women over time, narrowing the gender gap of the division of labor for couples of higher ages (Leopold et al., 2018); these groups are thus likely to express a higher preference for doing housework themselves. In contrast, we do not expect different levels of privacy issues, trust issues, or issues related to the employment relationship between people of different ages.

Finally, we expect people living in bigger cities to have less aversive attitudes toward outsourcing than those living in rural areas. Bigger cities are when compared with rural areas, characterized by a greater supply of domestic workers and fewer familial relations (Schilling & Wahl, 2002). Thus, the practice of outsourcing domestic work will appear more conventional and acceptable to urban residents, reducing reservations against hiring help. People living in bigger cities are also less likely to adhere to traditional gender ideologies (Carter & Borch, 2005; Dirksmeier, 2015) and are generally more modern and unconventional (Otte & Baur, 2008), making them more likely to be open to the idea of outsourcing domestic work to a paid service provider.

Following theoretical assumptions and empirical research, we first intend to assess our sample's most prominent attitude profiles and examine their prevalence. Second, we aim to identify the socioeconomic and sociodemographic characteristics and household compositions most relevant to the identified attitudinal profiles.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Data and sample

The sample used for this study was provided by the commissioned research institute Norstat Group via an online access panel conducted in April 2020.³ We restricted our sample to respondents aged 30–60 who are in a permanent partnership and are living together with their partner. We employed this sample restriction to cohabiting couples as this subpopulation mainly consists of dual-earner couples and families with children, who are assumed to have an increased need for domestic help due to time pressure and an extensive workload. Norstat invited 6416 panelists; the response rate was 40.6%.

As panelists were incentivized for their participation, all questions were mandatory except gender, income, and the size of the respondents' hometown. In the case of the income question, we included a follow-up question, which remained optional. To ensure data quality, we implemented a quality check.⁴ If panelists failed this quality test, the survey was immediately terminated, and panelists could no longer participate in the survey. After screening out respondents who did not meet our sample criterion, failed the quality check, or did not finish the survey, our sample was reduced to 1886 valid respondents.

As our main interest lies in examining the untapped potential of domestic housework services, we restrict our sample to respondents who have never used domestic help (79.2%). This leads us to a final analytical sample of 1479 individuals. Table A1 offers an overview of the sample characteristics. The decision to focus the study on nonusers was based on the premise that understanding the perspectives of this particular group will offer insights into the reasons why a large part of the population is not making use of domestic help. By delving into the sociocultural barriers perceived by these nonusers, we can identify the potential for future developments within the domestic service sector to better meet consumers' concerns.

3.2 | Analytical strategy

In the *first* step, we employ LPA to detect the various outsourcing profiles in our sample. By doing so, we follow the assumption of a finite number of latent outsourcing profiles within the sample, profiles which consist of various combinations of the specific manifest attitudes toward outsourcing. LPA is similar to factor analysis (FA) or principal component analysis (PCA), with the difference that FA and PCA detect latent *dimensions* underlying the manifest variables by decomposing variables, while LPA detects latent *subpopulations*, decomposing respondents by assigning probabilities for profile membership. As

our main research interest lies in identifying the similarities of attitudes of subpopulations, namely the attitude profiles of respondents, we apply LPA instead of FA. To assess the optimal number of profiles, we use the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) (Nylund et al., 2007), the Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test, and the Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test (Lo, 2001). All models were estimated using Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2011).

In the *second* step, we analyze covariates to discover which socioeconomic and sociodemographic background information and household constellations are associated with individual attitude profiles. By doing so, we apply a one-step approach, where each individual is first assigned to the class with the highest posterior probability, then analyze the associations of covariates on profile membership by multinomial regression analysis estimated with Stata 17.0. Apart from this one-step approach, there are also the so-called three-step approaches—the BCH approach (Bolck et al., 2004) and VAM approach (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Vermunt, 2010)—which further consider the uncertainty in profile assignment when analyzing the association of covariates on profile membership. While the three-step approaches offer more nuanced and accurate analyses, simulation studies have shown that when entropy, an indicator for class separation, is high at a value of 0.8 or higher (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Clark & Muthén, 2009), analyses are equally efficient (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Clark & Muthén, 2009).

3.3 | Measures

We employ nine items measuring diverse attitudes, covering different sociocultural barriers to employing domestic help. All of these items range on a 6-point scale, with only the endpoints labeled “*strongly disagree*” (1) and “*strongly agree*” (6) (see Table A2 for the distribution of the answers). Before the items the respondents were presented with the following instruction: “Please respond to the following statements about domestic help. Domestic help workers are persons who are employed in private households, e.g. for cleaning, tidying, laundry or cooking.” Respondents were explicitly reminded to relate their answers to the following questions to the period before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The normative ascription to housekeeping becomes apparent by people anticipating others judging one's behavior and devaluing housework. The normative merit (or lack thereof) ascribed to housekeeping is expressed both by respondents anticipating being judged by others if they outsource their housework and by a devaluation of domestic work in general. We consequently operationalize *normative deviance* via the items “I would feel uncomfortable if my friends and acquaintances knew that I employ a domestic worker” and “I think domestic workers are not worth the money.”

Privacy invasion can be the result of a third person's presence in the home in general and of the domestic worker coming into contact with private and intimate belongings in particular. Accordingly, privacy issues are operationalized via two items: “I would feel uncomfortable

with a domestic worker in my home” and “I don't like the idea of a domestic help worker cleaning up my mess.”

Barriers to outsourcing can also stem from the *aversion toward an employer–employee relationship*. We measure this aversion via two items: “I would feel uncomfortable telling a domestic helper how to clean up my house” and “it would bother me if the domestic helper was at home at the same time as me.”

To measure *trust and control issues*, respondents were asked to rate the item “I would feel uncomfortable leaving my home and leaving the domestic worker unattended.”

Finally, we integrated two items that measure a preference for keeping housework in the family, possibly explained by a more general disapproval of and aversion toward outsourcing. For this, we utilize the items “I prefer to look after my own home” and “I do not need domestic help because other household members (e.g., partner, children) help.”

As covariates, we use the individual characteristics of *gender, age, and highest education level* (ranging on a 5-point scale from “secondary education diploma” to “university degree”). Household characteristics are measured via household *income* (measured by 10 income classes representing the percentiles of Germany's income distribution) and a dummy variable indicating whether or not *children* live in the household. The potential difference between rural and urban areas is operationalized via the *size of the respondents' hometown*, represented by a set of dummy variables (“less than 5000 inhabitants” (1), “5000–100,000 inhabitants” (2), “more than 100,000 inhabitants” (3)).

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Latent attitudinal profiles of outsourcing

LPA distinguishes five attitudinal profiles with regard to outsourcing. First, we calculated solutions with two to eight profiles to decide on the appropriate solution. Our calculations show that AIC and (adj.) BIC does not reach the lowest value; however, differences in values drop radically after the 5-profile solution. Moreover, entropy (highest for the 5-profile solution), the Vuong–Lo–Mendell test, and the Lo–Mendell–Rubin test (drop in significance for the 6-profile solution), as well as the interpretability of the results, justify a 5-profile solution (see Table A3 for selection principles). Table 1 shows the results of the 5-profile solution with the estimated means of each statement for each profile. A graphical representation of the results can be found in Figure A1, and descriptive characteristics of each profile in Table A4.

Do-it-yourself approver: The largest profile in our sample comprises almost one-third of the respondents (31.6%). Respondents in this profile are generally open to the idea of outsourcing. They do not feel uncomfortable with a domestic worker at home, whether or not they themselves are present. They also do not feel uncomfortable about the domestic worker cleaning up their mess or giving them instructions on how to clean. Moreover, they do not feel judged by others when employing domestic help and consider domestic help to be worth the money. Furthermore, respondents' concerns about

leaving a domestic helper unattended are lower than all other profiles, albeit still moderately concerned on the overall response scale. However, at the same time, they show the highest agreement with preferring to look after their own home and having other household members' help. Taking these aspects into consideration, we label them *do-it-yourself approvers*.

Rather, more men than women are represented in this attitude profile (56% vs. 44%); respondents are somewhat older—they are 46 years old on average—than other profiles; only half of the respondents have children. Respondents in this profile mainly live in medium-sized towns (47%). Over half of the respondents have, as their highest educational certificate, a secondary education diploma, and only 20.7% have a university degree. Income is above average, with most respondents in the fifth to eighth income percentile (67.2%). Only every sixth person reports having looked for domestic help before.

Personal rejectors: The second biggest profile comprises one-quarter of respondents (25.2%) and is labeled *personal rejectors*. Respondents in this profile show—just like the *DIY approvers*—a high preference for doing housework themselves. At the same time, they do not feel socially judged for using domestic services. However, respondents in this profile have comparably strong concerns when it comes to trust and privacy and high levels of reluctance toward the role of being an employer in a private home. In particular, they show comparably high ratings for feeling uncomfortable leaving a domestic worker unattended. They also exhibit the second highest ratings for feeling uncomfortable about domestic workers cleaning up their own mess and having a domestic worker in their home.

With 63.8% of respondents in the fifth to eighth income percentile, *personal rejectors* have a similar above-average financial background to the *DIY approver*, but are slightly better educated (18.2% have only a secondary school diploma, 24.9% a university degree). This profile comprises more women than men (63% vs. 38%). Only a minority has ever looked for domestic help (13.1%).

Moderate rejectors: The third profile captures 18.2% of the sample and is labeled *moderate rejectors*. Compared with the *personal rejectors*, the *moderate rejectors* also express concerns with regard to employing a domestic worker, although less strongly. However, for respondents of this profile, aversions are also the result of anticipated social norms and expectations concerning domestic services and housework: Respondents here have the second highest agreement ratings on feeling uncomfortable when friends and acquaintances know that they employ domestic help and are undecided about whether domestic help is worth the money.

Moderate rejectors are characterized by an equal share of men and women. As with *personal rejectors*, we find again a high educational background (28.6% holding a university degree) but an average financial background (48.7% are at least in the seventh income percentile). Most respondents have no experience searching for domestic help (88.8%).

Demanding approver: The fourth profile—16.6% of the sample—is the only profile that exhibits a low preference for doing housework within the family context. In particular, respondents here report that

TABLE 1 Results of latent profile analysis, $N = 1479$.

Attitudes	DIY approver	Personal rejectors	Moderate rejectors	Demanding approver	Complete rejectors
Uncomfortable if others knew	1.2	1.4	3.6	1.3	5.3
dh not worth the money	2.0	2.7	2.7	1.8	3.6
Uncomfortable with dh in my home	1.7	4.0	3.7	1.8	5.3
Do not like dh to clean my mess	2.2	4.6	4.1	1.9	5.7
Bothered if dh at home at the same time	2.1	3.2	3.1	2.3	4.2
Uncomfortable telling dh how to clean	1.7	4.2	3.9	2.0	5.5
Uncomfortable leaving dh unattended	3.4	4.7	4.4	3.3	5.4
Prefer to look after my own home	5.5	5.5	5.2	3.0	5.7
Other household members help	5.3	5.0	4.9	3.3	5.1
Class size (in %)	31.6%	25.2%	18.2%	16.6%	8.3%

Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.

they do not have other household members to help and do not prefer to clean their homes themselves. While they are moderately concerned about not being able to control the domestic worker, they are least concerned compared with the other attitude profiles and are characterized by a generally low reluctance toward using domestic services. Overall, they can be viewed as *demanding approvers*.

The *demanding approvers* have the highest educational and financial background compared with respondents of other profiles; 11% of respondents report having a household income of €6000 or more per month (10th income percentile), and 36.8% hold a university diploma. Fifty-seven percent of respondents have children who live in the household, one-third of respondents live in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants, and almost half of the respondents (43.5%) have already looked for a domestic helper. Thus, this profile combines all the characteristics that we expect to be in favor of outsourcing. This is in line with the high proportion of respondents that have already searched for domestic services, revealing the strong interest in outsourcing of this group.

Complete rejectors: The smallest profile, comprising 8.3% of the sample, has an all-encompassing negative stance toward domestic services concerning all dimensions—social, inequality, privacy, and trust-related—which is why this profile is labeled *complete rejectors*. Respondents strongly agree with feeling uncomfortable about leaving a domestic worker unattended, having a domestic worker in their home at all, and having them clean their mess. They also express strong discomfort with telling a domestic worker how to clean and, compared with the other profiles, are most bothered when the domestic worker is at home at the same time as they are. In addition, they show high ratings with regard to feeling uncomfortable if others know about them using domestic services and assign a low value to housework in general.

In the complete rejectors class, two-thirds of respondents are women; these respondents have a comparably moderate educational background (52% hold an intermediate secondary education) and low financial background, with 27.6% earning only up to €2200 per month

(fourth income decile and below), and they mainly live in small or medium-sized towns. Only a negligible number of people in this profile have ever looked for domestic help (4.9%). Thus, this group represents the almost complete counterpart to the *demanding approvers* regarding social attitudes and social structure.

We can thus summarize by distinguishing between the two profiles that are open to the outsourcing of domestic services, *do-it-yourself approvers* and *demanding approvers*, which make up about half of the sample, and the three profiles that are reluctant to hire domestic help, namely the *personal*, *moderate*, and *complete rejectors* making up the other half of the sample. Our descriptives reveal that these profiles are comprised of respondents differing in their background characteristics, in particular, concerning gender, education, income composition, and the size of the towns or cities they live in.

4.2 | Predictors of profile membership

We apply multinomial logistic regression analysis to identify whether socioeconomic and sociodemographic characteristics and household context are significantly associated with single attitude profiles in a multivariate setting. Table 2 shows the results of the average marginal effects of covariates.

We can see that women are significantly more likely to be *personal* and *complete rejectors* than men. These findings confirm empirical expectations about gender and women's more reticent attitudes toward outsourcing than men's, based on the theoretical considerations of cultural framing and the ascription of the roles of housework and the private sphere to women. In contrast, men are more likely to be in the profile of the *do-it-yourself approver*, a profile with a generally positive stance toward outsourcing, but where housework is preferably and mostly done within the family and by the household members. One may speculate that this finding can be explained by the still pervasive gendered division of labor among couples, where mainly men benefit from women doing the lion's share of housework.

Unexpectedly, having children is unrelated to attitudinal profiles. However, as there was no information on the number and age of the children, we could not consider the differing intensity of caring tasks and caring norms deriving from children's ages and dependency.

Furthermore, respondents' age is also decisive for membership of the attitudinal profile of the *do-it-yourself approver*. Older respondents being more likely to be in this profile confirms previous research identifying a decreasing gender gap in housework between couples over time, related to children becoming older and more independent. A lower workload also may make housework more pleasant.

Regarding social strata, people of higher income are more likely to be *demanding approvers* and less likely to be *moderate* or *complete rejectors*. High income is associated with less reluctance and fewer issues regarding domestic help, in line with our empirical expectations. However, most interestingly, education reveals an ambivalent association: First, and in line with the descriptive findings, regression results confirm that more educated respondents are less likely to be *do-it-yourself approvers* and more likely to be *demanding approvers*, hence more willing to “buy” than “make” domestic work than less educated respondents. At the same time, we find a tendency toward more educated individuals in groups with moderate reluctance levels, also due to social norms (*moderate rejectors*), whereas education shows no significant independent association with the *personal rejectors*, which have fewer normative barriers in the multiple regression setting.

Finally, the size of respondents' hometowns is only significant for the group of *complete rejectors*. People living in bigger cities are less likely to completely reject domestic services than those living in smaller towns with fewer than 5000 inhabitants. This general aversion toward domestic services is in line with existing research, which refers to systematic differences between the lifestyle of couples living in urban and rural areas.

5 | DISCUSSION

Our results allow us to identify five distinct attitude profiles varying in the composition and extent of different sociocultural barriers. While about half of the sample has a positive attitude toward employing domestic help, the other half is more reluctant toward domestic services, or objects to them completely.

Specifically, we found two profiles, the *DIY approvers* and the *demanding approvers*, that were generally open to outsourcing. People with these profiles express few trust or privacy issues; and they were neither negatively influenced by normative expectations nor did they dislike the concept of an employer–employee relationship. These profiles differ mainly by their preference for keeping the housework within the family. In particular, *DIY approvers* reveal a pragmatic approach to household work and domestic services. They prefer to handle these tasks themselves and receive support from other members of the household. This corresponds to the group's social structure, which is characterized by an intermediate educational level and above-average income profiles, reflecting the middle-class subpopulation. At the same time, on average, they are more advanced in their

family formation phase, which reduces time pressures and the volume of domestic work. In comparison, the *demanding approvers* is a group characterized by a high socioeconomic status who would like to outsource housework to third parties. Strikingly, more affluent social classes are not hindered from purchasing domestic services by their own internalized cultural reluctance, but rather by a lack of supply, as almost half of the respondents state being unsuccessful in their search for domestic work. People in this group can afford and want to buy domestic services.

In stark contrast, we identified the *complete rejectors*, a small group who carry such strong aversive attitudes that they are unlikely ever to make use of domestic services. This finding corresponds with other studies from Germany, which identified a similar proportion of strong objectors within the population (Nisic et al., 2023). As these complete objectors are predominantly found in rural areas and low-income households, a strong interconnection between socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics regarding their willingness and ability to use domestic services is visible. However, it is important to note that with the data at hand, it is unclear whether this negative attitude of low-income households truly reflects their genuine sentiments or whether psychological mechanisms are in force here, where respondents rationalize their inability to afford such services. However, either way, the findings still provide valuable insights into the differential perceptions of domestic work between high-income and low-income households. Indeed, the negative attitude, even if influenced by rationalization, expressed by low-income households highlights the influence of financial constraints on consumption decisions.

Between the approvers and complete rejectors are two groups with above-average educational and average financial backgrounds. The *moderate rejectors* showed moderate levels of concern in terms of trust and privacy, social normative barriers, and aversion toward the employment relationship, as well as a preference for DIY. The profile of *personal rejectors* differs inasmuch as people here express fewer normative barriers than respondents in the profile of the *moderate rejectors*. This highlights the expected ambivalent effects of higher educational status. Furthermore, while women are more likely to be in the reluctant groups, they are also more likely to exhibit trust and privacy issues, revealing the higher values they ascribe to intimacy and safety.

5.1 | Theoretical implications

We theoretically postulated, on the basis of economic theory, that households are confronted with a make-or-buy decision regarding housework as it can either be done by the members of a household or by paid service providers. While this economic perspective proved to be highly valuable for explaining the positive relationship between socioeconomic background and the decision to outsource domestic work in general, also considering sociocultural barriers allowed us to draw a more nuanced picture of consumer behavior regarding domestic outsourcing—in particular, for cases and subpopulations where economic determinants appear less predictive. Such subpopulations

comprise, for example, consumers with upper-middle socioeconomic backgrounds (*personal rejectors* and *moderate rejectors*), for whom partly normative considerations, but mainly concerns regarding privacy and the employment relationship, play an important role in their outsourcing decisions. Furthermore, the relevance of the trust barrier derived from TCA—especially pronounced among women—highlights the complexity of consumer behavior on the household level when service consumption is entangled with the private sphere and where household decisions are the result of joint decision-making by several household members.

5.2 | Implications for consumers

From the findings of this study, we derive specific implications for the consumption of each subgroup. First, it could be demonstrated that there is still potential for the outsourcing of housework services, especially for wealthier couples with high needs and low preference for engaging in housework themselves (*demanding approver*). While these households are not restricted by sociocultural barriers, they seem to struggle to find suitable domestic workers: about half of the respondents in this group stated that they had already looked for domestic help in the past. Second, as existing research has shown, bureaucratic hurdles are a potential reason for not employing domestic help (Diener et al., 2015), that is, the difficulty of the hiring process for domestic services might explain the nonuse of domestic services by this specific group. The increasing prevalence of online platforms providing domestic services (Huws et al., 2019) might be a promising way for this group to overcome initial inhibitions.

Besides the demanding approvers, the *personal rejectors* also reveal a heretofore neglected demand and may be reached by an adequate supply of suitable services, as this subgroup is mainly concerned with trust and inequality issues. Experimental research provides evidence that a domestic worker being personally recommended by a friend or acquaintance outweighs perfect ratings of domestic helpers on service platforms when it comes to the willingness to hire domestic help (Nisic et al., 2023), confirming the relevance of quality and trust.

5.3 | Implications for policymakers

This struggle to find suitable domestic workers—which could be recognized in the *demanding approvers*—might be the result of an insufficient provision of services. Hence, these households might profit from a general increase in the supply of household services. In Germany households are eligible for a 20% tax refund on the costs of registered household services up to an annual maximum of €4000 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2009). While this policy is intended to encourage the formal employment of domestic workers, a lack of awareness of these incentives and the accompanying administrative responsibilities might deter households from hiring domestic workers.

Furthermore, existing studies have indicated, in particular, that the formalization and professionalization of services (Nisic

et al., 2023), including training regarding hygienic (Toiviainen-Laine et al., 2009) and sustainable aspects of cleaning (Aulanko, 1997), might be a promising pathway to increasing the acceptance of domestic outsourcing. Hence, providing high-quality services might help overcome trust issues and counteract inequality issues related to domestic service work and the subjective assessment that domestic help is not worth the money. Furthermore, the plans of the current coalition agreement in Germany to introduce vouchers to relieve households with special needs, with a gradual benefit extension to all households (Bundesregierung, 2021), could eventually lead to a normative shift. In the long run, with increasing professionalization, the reticence of groups with moderate reluctance, in particular, among women, might be mitigated as outsourcing housework becomes more of a common practice.

5.4 | Limitations and direction for future research

Despite these novel insights, the study is not without limitations. First, while the analytical sample was intentionally targeted at cohabiting couples, the survey was only taken by one household member. Therefore, it is unknown how these barriers to outsourcing differ between partners. It would be interesting to shed light on the effects of attitude pairings of couples on the willingness to outsource in future research. Moreover, due to the focus on couples' double burden, we did not take into account further subgroups also in need of domestic support, like single parents, older individuals, or those with health limitations. Second, our study primarily aimed to analyze the sociostructural distribution of attitude profiles without factoring in elements related to the households' time availability for performing domestic tasks. As such, while we do possess information regarding the presence of dependent children in the household, we lack specific details about their number and ages, as well as the working arrangements of the couple. As the level of outsourcing is low, we know that time-restricting factors do not always translate into domestic outsourcing. Therefore, it seems promising for future research to also examine these time availability related factors in regard to outsourcing attitudes more closely. Third, even though our analysis provides a differentiated analysis of sociocultural barriers in the population, our analyses do not allow for conclusions to be drawn in regard to causal relationships, for example, between structural factors and attitudes. Finally, the survey was conducted in early April 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a time in which a significant number of individuals experienced increased time spent at home due to temporary leave from their jobs, job losses, and government-imposed social distancing measures. Research has documented that increased time availability, income changes, and the fear of infection led to a notable shift in in-home consumption patterns. Regarding food practice, research documented a change in cooking practices (Bender et al., 2022; Sarda et al., 2022), and with eating out being widely replaced by online food delivery services (Gavilan et al., 2021; Mehrolija et al., 2021). It can be expected that, especially during strict lockdowns, there were significant hurdles in the utilization of in-home

TABLE 2 Average marginal effects of multinomial regression analysis of attitude profiles, $N = 1479$.

	AME				
	DIY approver	Personal rejectors	Moderate rejectors	Demanding approver	Complete rejectors
Sex (ref.: male)	-0.10***	0.11***	-0.04 ⁺	-0.01	0.03*
Age	0.01***	-0.0004	-0.001	-0.002*	-0.002 ⁺
Children (ref.: no)	-0.01	-0.002	0.003	0.01	-0.001
Education	-0.03**	0.003	0.01 ⁺	0.02*	-0.003
Household income	0.01	0.01	-0.02***	0.01**	-0.01**
Town size (ref.: less than 5000 inh.)					
5000–100,000 inh.	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.01
>100,000 inh.	0.03	0.02	0.01	-0.01	-0.05**

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; ⁺ $p < .1$.

Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.

domestic services. To make a contribution to the literature on domestic outsourcing unrelated to the pandemic, respondents were explicitly asked to base their answers on pre-pandemic circumstances. While it could be possible that respondents reported more reluctant attitudes toward providing domestic workers access to their homes due to social distancing and the incipient lockdown, it is also possible that these extraordinary circumstances, which put extra time pressure and burden on households, even mitigated aversions toward outsourcing. We are unable to identify whether this exceptional situation influenced answering behavior. However, it is important to note that this study was conducted at the very onset of the pandemic and only 2 weeks after the first national lockdowns in Germany (which started at the end of March). During this period, most people anticipated a quick return to their normal lives. Moreover, a long-term change in habits and beliefs due to the pandemic also seems unlikely in our case, making us confident about the general applicability of our findings.

Nevertheless, as the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in structural changes in many areas of life and business (Chopdar et al., 2022; Gordon-Wilson, 2022; Gupta & Dhingra, 2022; Kursan Milaković, 2021; Nayal et al., 2022; Paul & Bhukya, 2021; Purohit et al., 2022; Rayburn et al., 2022; Yap et al., 2021), we need research studies in the post-pandemic era to analyze the new processes, patterns, and problems in this area. In the case of domestic outsourcing, it would be interesting to see if and how the boundaries between the home and the market have changed after the pandemic, that is, whether households will opt for out-of-home services (e.g., laundry services) or prefer insourcing through increased use of new technologies (cleaning robots, smart home devices, etc.). At the same time, the more widespread prevalence of working from home, even after the pandemic, opens a window of opportunity for households to overcome trust issues by being able to control domestic workers when working from home. As even in the most open profiles, respondents were moderately concerned with leaving a domestic worker unattended, further research will have to identify the moderating effect of working from home on trust issues.

Within the last few years, there has been a rise in domestic services mediated via digital platforms (Huws et al., 2019). The

formalization of cleaning services by these agencies is likely to counteract trust and control issues, as the service provider acts as a form of centralized authority, which also makes it easier to enforce compensation for damages. Apart from that, the ease of access to domestic workers might reduce search costs and thus facilitate first access to these services. However, aversions to social inequality might hinder households from booking domestic services via digital platforms, as the employment contract between the service agencies and the individual domestic workers is often unknown to the households. On the other hand, with employment agencies as the primary contractor, households are not in the role of the direct employer and might thus feel less reminded of master-servant relationships when hiring domestic help. As it is likely that these contradictory aspects leave households with a dilemma when deciding for or against paid domestic services via digital platforms, the identification of barriers either reinforced or ameliorated by these platforms is worth exploring in further research. Furthermore, in the future, it is to be expected that housework will be less affected by normative gender beliefs as gender role attitudes continue to become more egalitarian (Knight & Brinton, 2017). Future research will need to establish whether these changes in gender role ascription will lead to a more equal division of domestic tasks among family members or whether the use of paid services will become less stigmatized and more common. Finally, our study only focused on barriers with respect to the demand for domestic services. It was beyond the scope of this study to explore the interactions with features and specificities on the supply side.

6 | CONCLUSION

Outsourcing housework to paid service providers has been increasingly proposed as a method for reducing time pressures in burdened households. However, despite objective needs, there is low demand for paid domestic work, even in households with sufficient finances. By drawing on a German survey of cohabiting couples, this study assessed the multidimensional nature of outsourcing aversion, focusing on its complex sociocultural roots and relating these barriers to socioeconomic and

sociodemographic characteristics and household context. We distinguish five distinct attitude profiles, which vary with regard to the composition and extent of the different sociocultural barriers.

We thus conclude that to fully exploit the potential of domestic services, sociocultural barriers to demand beyond economic determinants need to be taken into account. Potential future developments and targets discussed in public and politics, like the formalization and professionalization of the domestic service sector, the improvement of working conditions for service workers, and ensuring quality standards, should be able to allay the normative and moral concerns of specific population groups. These developments might be accompanied and supported by general social change toward more gender equality and a higher valuation of women's work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was supported by the German Research Foundation (Grant Number 404875417). Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data are made available upon reasonable request.

ORCID

Miriam Trübner  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7270-0717>

Natascha Nisic  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0676-2340>

ENDNOTES

¹ To be precise, households are confronted with a “make, buy or exchange” situation as consumption of services can also, to a certain extent, be obtained by a nonmonetary exchange with others. It is also important to note that, compared with other household activities like childcare, housework offers more flexibility. While its commitment and intensity partially depend on individual needs and preferences, there is also a limit to how much housework can be postponed or minimized, especially in households facing heightened domestic demands, such as those with children.

² These statistics regarding household-related activities include everyday tasks in the home such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, gardening, and caring for children, the sick, the elderly, or animals.

³ Norstat systematically recruits hard-to-reach populations to make their panelist base comparable with the sociodemographic structure of the general population (Norstat Group). Panelists are only able to take part in surveys on invitation.

⁴ Within an item battery about attitudes on domestic help, one of the items did not provide the respondent with a statement to be evaluated, but instead simply a prompt to click “2” as an answer, to ensure that questions are read carefully, and thus a high level of data quality.

REFERENCES

Abraham, M., Nisic, N., Trübner, M., Walch, H., & Wunder, A. (2023). The role of generalized trust and control in the employment of domestic

- help—An experimental case study for Germany and the UK. *Rationality and Society* (online first). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10434631231213721>
- Altintas, E., & Sullivan, O. (2016). Fifty years of change updated: Cross-national gender convergence in housework. *Demographic Research*, 35, 455–470.
- Anger, C., & Ernste, D. (2022). *Haushaltsnahe Dienstleistungen (noch?) überwiegend schwarz [Domestic services (still?) predominantly illegal]*. IW-Kurzbericht.
- Asparouhov, T., & Muthén, B. O. (2014). Auxiliary variables in mixture modeling: Three-step approaches using Mplus. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 21, 329–341.
- Aulanko, M. (1997). Future trends in professional cleaning. *Journal of Consumer Studies & Home Economics*, 21, 371–385.
- Becker, G. S. (1965). A theory of the allocation of time. *The Economic Journal*, 75(299), 493–517.
- Bender, K. E., Badiger, A., Roe, B. E., Shu, Y., & Qi, D. (2022). Consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic: An analysis of food purchasing and management behaviors in U.S. households through the lens of food system resilience. *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, 82, 101107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.seps.2021.101107>
- Berg, L., & Teigen, M. (2009). Gendered consumer competences in households with one vs. two adults. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33(1), 31–41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1470-6431.2008.00720.x>
- Betancourt, R., & Gautschi, D. (1990). Demand complementarities, household production, and retail assortments. *Marketing Science*, 9(2), 141–161.
- Bittman, M., Matheson, G., & Meagher, G. (1999). The changing boundary between home and market: Australian trends in outsourcing domestic labour. *Work, Employment and Society*, 13(2), 249–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500179922117935>
- Bock, G., & Duden, B. (2007). Labor of love—Love as labor: On the genesis of housework in capitalism. In E. H. Altbach (Ed.), *From feminism to liberation*. Transaction.
- Bolck, A., Croon, M., & Hagenaars, J. (2004). Estimating latent structure models with categorical variables: One-step versus three-step estimators. *Political Analysis*, 12(1), 3–27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mph001>
- Bundesministerium der Finanzen. (2020). §35a Steuerermäßigung bei Aufwendungen für haushaltsnahe Beschäftigungsverhältnisse, haushaltsnahe Dienstleistungen und Handwerkerleistungen.
- Bundesministerium der Justiz. (2009). *Einkommenssteuergesetz (EStG). § 35a Steuerermäßigung bei Aufwendungen für haushaltsnahe Beschäftigungsverhältnisse, haushaltsnahe Dienstleistungen und Handwerkerleistungen [Income Tax Act (EStG). § Section 35a Tax Reduction for Expenses for Household-Related Employment, Household-Related Services and Craftsman Services]*.
- Bundesregierung. (2018). *Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD [Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU and SPD]: Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa, eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland, ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land [A new start for Europe, a new dynamic for Germany, a new cohesion for our country]*.
- Bundesregierung. (2021). *Koalitionsvertrag zwischen SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen und FDP [Coalition Agreement between SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP]: Mehr Fortschritt wagen. Bündnis für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit [Daring more Progress. Alliance for freedom, justice and sustainability]*.
- Carter, J. S., & Borch, C. A. (2005). Assessing the effects of urbanism and regionalism on gender-role attitudes, 1974–1998. *Sociological Inquiry*, 75(4), 548–563. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2005.00136.x>
- Cheung, A. K.-L., & Lui, L. (2022). Does live-in domestic help reduce unpaid household labor? The paradox of intensive parenting and domestic outsourcing. *Current Sociology*, 70(6), 921–942. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921211012744>
- Chopdar, P. K., Paul, J., & Prodanova, J. (2022). Mobile shoppers' response to Covid-19 phobia, pessimism and smartphone addiction: Does social

- influence matter? *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 174, 121249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121249>
- Clark, S. L., & Muthén, B. O. (2009). *Relating latent class analysis results to variables not included in the analysis*. <https://www.statmodel.com/download/relatinglca.pdf>
- Cornelisse-Vermaat, J. R., van Ophem, J. A., Antonides, G., & van den Maassen Brink, H. (2013). Outsourcing child care, home cleaning and meal preparation. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37(5), 530–537. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12018>
- Craig, L., Perales, F., Vidal, S., & Baxter, J. (2016). Domestic outsourcing, housework time, and subjective time pressure: New insights from longitudinal data. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 78(5), 1224–1236. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12321>
- de Ruijter, E., Treas, J. K., & Cohen, P. N. (2005). Outsourcing the gender factory: Living arrangements and service expenditures on female and male tasks. *Social Forces*, 84(1), 305–322.
- de Ruijter, E., & van der Lippe, T. (2007). Effects of job features on domestic outsourcing as a strategy for combining paid and domestic work. *Work and Occupations*, 34(2), 205–230. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888406296510>
- de Ruijter, E., & van der Lippe, T. (2009). Getting outside help: How trust problems explain household differences in domestic outsourcing in the Netherlands. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30(1), 3–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X08324579>
- Derlega, V. J., & Chaikin, A. L. (1977). Privacy and self-disclosure in social relationships. *Journal of Social Issues*, 33(3), 102–115.
- Deutscher Bundestag. (2021). *Dritter Gleichstellungsbericht: Digitalisierung geschlechtergerecht gestalten. Dritter Gleichstellungsbericht der Bundesregierung [Third Report on Gender Equality: Making Digitization Gender-Fair. Third Equality Report of the Federal Government]*. Drucksache 19/30750.
- Diener, K., Götz, S., Schreyer, F., Stephan, G., Lenhart, J., Nisic, N., & Stöhr, J. (2015). *Rückkehr ins Berufsleben nach familienbedingter Unterbrechung: Befunde der Evaluation der zweiten Förderperiode des ESF-Programms Perspektive Wiedereinstieg des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend [Return to work after family-related interruption: findings from the evaluation of the second funding period of the ESF program Perspektive Wiedereinstieg of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth]*. IAB-Forschungsbericht.
- Dirksmeier, P. (2015). The intricate geographies of gender ideologies in Germany. *Geoforum*, 64, 12–24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.05.022>
- Duffy, M. (2007). Doing the dirty work. *Gender & Society*, 21(3), 313–336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243207300764>
- Edlund, J., & Öun, I. (2016). Who should work and who should care? Attitudes towards the desirable division of labour between mothers and fathers in five European countries. *Acta Sociologica*, 59(2), 151–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699316631024>
- Engelhardt, C., & Wagener, A. (2018). What do Germans think and know about income inequality? A survey experiment. *Socio-Economic Review*, 16(4), 743–767. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwx036>
- Ennis, L. R. (2014). Intensive mothering: Revisiting the issue today. In L. R. Ennis (Ed.), *Intensive mothering: The cultural contradictions of modern motherhood* (pp. 1–25). Demeter Press.
- Ernste, D. (2019). *Haushaltshilfe: Keine Entlastung in Sicht. [Domestic work: No relief in sight]*. IW-Kurzbericht.
- Eurofund. (2013). *Tax deductions for domestic service work, Sweden*. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/tackling-undeclared-work-in-europe/database/tax-deductions-for-domestic-service-work-sweden>
- European Commission. (2011). *Special Eurobarometer 359: Attitudes on data protection and electronic identity in the European Union*.
- Finch, J. (2007). Displaying families. *Sociology*, 41(1), 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038507072284>
- Gavilan, D., Balderas-Cejudo, A., Fernández-Lores, S., & Martínez-Navarro, G. (2021). Innovation in online food delivery: Learnings from COVID-19. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 24, 100330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2021.100330>
- Gordon-Wilson, S. (2022). Consumption practices during the COVID-19 crisis. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(2), 575–588. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12701>
- Guillaud, E. (2013). Preferences for redistribution: An empirical analysis over 33 countries. *The Journal of Economic Inequality*, 11(1), 57–78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10888-011-9205-0>
- Gupta, S., & Dhingra, S. (2022). Past, present and future of mobile financial services: A critique, review and future agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(6), 2104–2127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12855>
- Hatton, E. (2017). Mechanisms of invisibility: Rethinking the concept of invisible work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 31(2), 336–351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017016674894>
- Huws, U., Spencer, N. H., Coates, M., & Holts, K. (2019). *The Platformisation of Work in Europe: Results from research in 13 European countries*.
- Katz-Gerro, T. (2004). Cultural consumption research: Review of methodology, theory, and consequence. *International Review of Sociology*, 14(1), 11–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0390670042000186743>
- Knight, C. R., & Brinton, M. C. (2017). One egalitarianism or several? Two decades of gender-role attitude change in Europe. *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(5), 1485–1532. <https://doi.org/10.1086/689814>
- Kornrich, S., & Roberts, A. (2018). Household income, Women's earnings, and spending on household services, 1980–2010. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 80(1), 150–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12450>
- Kursan Milaković, I. (2021). Purchase experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and social cognitive theory: The relevance of consumer vulnerability, resilience, and adaptability for purchase satisfaction and repurchase. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(6), 1425–1442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12672>
- La Roex, K., Huijts, T., & Sieben, I. (2019). Attitudes towards income inequality: 'Winners' versus 'losers' of the perceived meritocracy. *Acta Sociologica*, 62(1), 47–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699317748340>
- Leopold, T., Skopek, J., & Schulz, F. (2018). Gender convergence in housework time: A life course and cohort perspective. *Sociological Science*, 5, 281–303. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v5.a13>
- Lo, Y. (2001). Testing the number of components in a normal mixture. *Biometrika*, 88(3), 767–778.
- Mehroliya, S., Alagarsamy, S., & Solaikutty, V. M. (2021). Customers response to online food delivery services during COVID-19 outbreak using binary logistic regression. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(3), 396–408. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12630>
- Michael, R. T., & Becker, G. S. (1973). On the new theory of consumer behavior. *The Swedish Journal of Economics*, 75(4), 378–396.
- Minijobzentrale. (2020). *Aktuelle Entwicklungen im Bereich der Minijobs. 4. Quartalsbericht 2020 [Current developments of Mini-Jobs. 4th Quarterly Report 2020]*. https://www.minijob-zentrale.de/DE/02_fuer_journalisten/02_berichte_trendreporthe/quartalsberichte_archiv/2020/4_2020.pdf?_blob=publicationFile&v=2
- Moras, A. (2017). "This should be my responsibility": Gender, guilt, privilege and paid domestic work. *Gender Issues*, 34(1), 44–66. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-016-9165-6>
- Morel, N. (2015). Servants for the knowledge-based economy? The political economy of domestic Services in Europe. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 22(2), 170–192. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxv006>
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (1998–2011). *Mplus user's guide*. Muthén & Muthén.
- Nayal, P., Pandey, N., & Paul, J. (2022). Covid-19 pandemic and consumer-employee-organization wellbeing: A dynamic capability theory

- approach. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 56(1), 359–390. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12399>
- Nisic, N. (2018). Die Auslagerung familiärer Sorgearbeit als Vertrauensproblem—Eine wirtschaftssoziologische Betrachtung der Nachfrage nach Haushaltshilfen und Kinderbetreuung. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 47(4), 219–239. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zfsoz-2018-0115>
- Nisic, N., & Molitor, F. (2022). *Die Nachfrage nach haushaltsnahen Dienstleistungen im Kontext staatlicher Unterstützungsleistungen. Ein Überblick über Determinanten, Modelle staatlicher Förderung und Konsequenzen für Haushalte und Dienstleister*innen [The demand for household-related services in the context of state support. An Overview of Determinants, Models of State Support and Consequences for Households and Service Providers]*. WSI Studies.
- Nisic, N., Molitor, F., & Trübner, M. (2023). Rethinking paid domestic services in modern societies—Experimental evidence on the effect of quality and professionalisation on service demand. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 43, 106–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-11-2022-0290>
- Nisic, N., & Trübner, M. (2023). Doing housework in context: Dyadic analyses of the division of domestic labor in contemporary couples. *Journal of Family Issues (online first)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X231172285>
- Nylund, K. L., Asparouhov, T., & Muthén, B. O. (2007). Deciding on the number of classes in latent class analysis and growth mixture modeling: A Monte Carlo simulation study. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 14(4), 535–569.
- Otte, G., & Baur, N. (2008). Urbanism as a way of life? Räumliche Variationen der Lebensführung in Deutschland/Urbanism as a way of life? Spatial variations in lifestyles in Germany. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 37(2), 93–116. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zfsoz-2008-0201>
- Parsons, T., & Bales, R. (1955). *Family, socialization and interaction process*. The Free Press.
- Paul, J., & Bhukya, R. (2021). Forty-five years of *International Journal of Consumer Studies*: A bibliometric review and directions for future research. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(5), 937–963. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12727>
- Pfau-Effinger, B. (2010). Cultural and institutional contexts. In J. Treas & S. Drobnič (Eds.), *Dividing the domestic: Men, women, and household work in cross-national perspective* (pp. 125–146). Stanford University Press.
- Pinho, M., & Gaunt, R. (2024). Biological essentialism, gender ideologies, and the division of housework and childcare: Comparing male carer/female breadwinner and traditional families. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 164, 59–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2021.1983508>
- Poortman, A.-R., & van der Lippe, T. (2009). Attitudes toward housework and child care and the gendered division of labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(3), 526–541. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00617.x>
- Purohit, S., Arora, R., & Paul, J. (2022). The bright side of online consumer behavior: Continuance intention for mobile payments. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 21(3), 523–542. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2017>
- Rayburn, S. W., McGeorge, A., Anderson, S., & Sierra, J. J. (2022). Crisis-induced behavior: From fear and frugality to the familiar. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(2), 524–539. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12698>
- Raz-Yurovich, L. (2014). A transaction cost approach to outsourcing by households. *Population and Development Review*, 40(2), 293–309. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2014.00674.x>
- Raz-Yurovich, L., & Marx, I. (2018). What does state-subsidized outsourcing of domestic work do for women's employment? The Belgian service voucher scheme. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 28(2), 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928717709173>
- Raz-Yurovich, L., & Marx, I. (2019). Outsourcing housework and highly skilled women's labour force participation—An analysis of a policy intervention. *European Sociological Review*, 35(2), 205–224. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcz001>
- Sarda, B., Delamaire, C., Serry, A.-J., & Ducrot, P. (2022). Changes in home cooking and culinary practices among the French population during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Appetite*, 168, 105743. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2021.105743>
- Scarborough, W. J., Sin, R., & Risman, B. (2019). Attitudes and the stalled gender revolution: Egalitarianism, traditionalism, and ambivalence from 1977 through 2016. *Gender & Society*, 33(2), 173–200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218809604>
- Schilling, O., & Wahl, H.-W. (2002). Familiäre Netzwerke und Lebenszufriedenheit alter Menschen in ländlichen und urbanen Regionen. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 54(2), 304–317. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-002-0041-x>
- Scott, R. (2022). Does university make you more liberal? Estimating the within-individual effects of higher education on political values. *Electoral Studies*, 77, 102471. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2022.102471>
- Shire, K., Schnell, R., & Noack, M. (2017). *Determinants of outsourcing domestic labour in conservative welfare states* (Duisburger Beiträge zur soziologischen Forschung, 2017-04). Institut für Soziologie Universität Duisburg-Essen.
- Statistisches Bundesamt. (2020). *Jedes dritte Kind unter 6 Jahren wurde 2020 ganztags betreut [One in three children under age 6 in full-day care in 2020]: Ganztagsbetreuungsquote stieg binnen zehn Jahren von 22 % auf 34 % im Jahr 2020 [Full-day care rate increased from 22% to 34% in 2020 within ten years]*. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/Zahl-der-Woche/2021/PD21_35_p002.html
- Statistisches Bundesamt. (2021). *Wirtschaftsrechnungen (Household Budget): Einkommens- und Verbraucherstichprobe. Konsumausgaben privater Haushalte 2018 (Income and Consumption Survey. Consumer spending by private households 2018)*. Fachserie.
- Stubager, R. (2008). Education effects on authoritarian-libertarian values: A question of socialization. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 59(2), 327–350. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2008.00196.x>
- Sullivan, O., & Gershuny, J. (2013). Domestic outsourcing and multitasking: How much do they really contribute? *Social Science Research*, 42(5), 1311–1324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssresearch.2013.05.004>
- Thébaud, S., Kornrich, S., & Ruppner, L. (2021). Good housekeeping, great expectations: Gender and housework norms. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 50(3), 1186–1214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124119852395>
- Toiviainen-Laine, E., Kuisma, R., Kymäläinen, H.-R., & Sjöberg, A.-M. (2009). New challenges in professional cleaning: Hygiene quality and monitoring of surfaces in private domestic homes. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33(4), 396–406. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1470-6431.2009.00785.x>
- Tsiotsou, R. H., & Boukis, A. (2022). In-home service consumption: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 145, 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.02.050>
- van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2020). Are universities left-wing bastions? The political orientation of professors, professionals, and managers in Europe. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 71(1), 47–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12716>
- van der Lippe, T., Tijdens, K., & de Ruijter, E. (2004). Outsourcing of domestic tasks and time-saving effects. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25(2), 216–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X03257425>
- Vermunt, J. K. (2010). Latent class modeling with covariates: Two improved three-step approaches. *Political Analysis*, 18(4), 450–469. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpq025>
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125–151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243287001002002>
- Whillans, A. V., Dunn, E. W., Smeets, P., Bekkers, R., & Norton, M. I. (2017). Buying time promotes happiness. *Proceedings of the National*

- Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 114(32), 8523–8527. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1706541114>
- Wicks, J. H., Reardon, J., & McCorkle, D. E. (2005). An examination of the antecedents of the consumer make-or-buy decision. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 13(1), 26–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2005.11658536>
- Williamson, O. E. (1981). The economics of organization: The transaction cost approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 87(3), 548–577.
- Windebank, J. (2007). Outsourcing women's domestic labour: The Chèque Emploi-Service Universel in France. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 17(3), 257–270. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928707078368>
- Windebank, J. (2010). Barriers to outsourcing domestic chores in dual-earner households. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 30(7/8), 387–398. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443331011060733>
- Yap, S.-F., Xu, Y., & Tan, L. (2021). Coping with crisis: The paradox of technology and consumer vulnerability. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(6), 1239–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12724>
- Zelizer, V. (2010). 15. Culture and consumption. In N. J. Smelser & R. Swedberg (Eds.), *The handbook of economic sociology* (pp. 331–354). Princeton University Press.

How to cite this article: Trübner, M., & Nisic, N. (2024). Sociocultural barriers to outsourcing housework: Unraveling the non-use of domestic services. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 48(3), e13042. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.13042>

APPENDIX A

TABLE A1 Sample description, $N = 1479$.

	M (SD)
Gender (ref. women)	0.52
Age	45 (9)
Children in household (ref.: yes)	0.53
Educational level	
Secondary education diploma ("Hauptschulabschluss")	0.09
Intermediate secondary education diploma ("Mittlere Reife")	0.39
Technical high school diploma ("Fachhochschulreife")	0.10
High school diploma ("Abitur")	0.16
University degree ("Hochschulabschluss")	0.26
Household income level	
Under €1000	0.01
€1000–€1399	0.03
€1400–€1799	0.04
€1800–€2199	0.08
€2200–€2599	0.12
€2600–€3099	0.16
€3100–€3799	0.18
€3800–€4599	0.18
€4600–€5999	0.15
€6000 or more	0.06
Area size	
<5000 inh.	0.24
5000–100,000 inh.	0.46
>100,000 inh.	0.30

Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.

TABLE A2 Descriptives of attitudes toward outsourcing, $N = 1479$.

	Strongly disagree (1)	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree (6)
Uncomfortable if others knew	53.6	18.7	9.9	9.4	3.9	4.7
dh not worth the money	32.2	25.6	23.5	12.0	3.0	3.7
Uncomfortable with dh in my home	29.2	15.2	17.9	17.1	11.2	9.4
Do not like dh to clean my mess	23.5	12.6	14.6	17.0	14.2	18.1
Bothered if dh at home at the same time	31.7	17.1	20.3	13.9	9.0	8.0
Uncomfortable telling dh how to clean	27.3	16.4	13.9	15.8	14.1	12.6
Uncomfortable leaving dh unattended	9.6	8.5	16.6	20.4	17.9	27.1
Prefer to look after my own home	1.2	3.4	9.3	14.7	21.0	50.4
Other household members help	5.7	4.4	9.9	13.8	17.5	48.7

Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.

TABLE A3 LPA model fit summary.

	1 profile	2 profiles	3 profiles	4 profiles	5 profiles	6 profiles	7 profiles	8 profiles
LL	-24656.429	-23191.695	-22804.232	-22539.909	-22320.410	-22194.431	-22057.500	-21921.712
AIC	49358.858	46439.389	45684.463	45175.818	44756.820	44524.862	44270.999	44019.424
BIC	49444.242	46587.764	45885.83	45430.175	45064.169	44885.203	44684.331	44485.746
Adj. BIC	49387.061	46498.817	45765.115	45277.694	44879.920	44669.187	44436.548	44206.196
Entropy	-	0.864	0.858	0.840	0.871	0.832	0.847	0.855
Vuong-Lo-Mendell test	-	***	**	***	**	*	**	**
Lo-Mendell-Rubin test	-	***	**	***	**	*	**	**

Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike information criterion; adj. BIC, adjusted Bayesian information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; LL, log-likelihood; LPA, latent profile analysis.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.

TABLE A4 Descriptives of attitude profiles in percent, $N = 1479$.

	DIY approver	Personal rejectors	Moderate rejectors	Demanding approver	Complete rejectors
Gender					
Men	56.0	37.0	51.7	50.0	34.2
Women	44.0	63.0	48.3	50.0	65.9
Age (mean)					
	46	44	44	43	43
Children in household					
	50.6	53.4	53.9	56.9	54.5
Educational level					
Secondary education diploma	10.0	8.3	8.9	9.4	8.9
Interm. secondary education diploma	42.7	38.3	35.3	28.1	52.0
Technical high school diploma	10.3	10.2	11.2	10.6	5.7
High school diploma	16.2	18.2	16.0	16.3	10.6
University degree	20.7	24.9	28.6	35.8	22.8
Household income level ^a					
Up to €1399	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.3	6.5
€1400-€2199	8.8	10.7	16.7	9.8	21.1
€2200-€3099	30.1	27.6	31.6	17.5	31.7
€3100-€4599	37.2	36.2	31.6	43.5	27.6
€4600-€5999	15.0	16.9	12.3	15.0	11.4
€6000 or more	5.8	5.6	4.8	11.0	1.6
Town size					
<5000 inh.	22.2	23.6	22.3	25.2	29.3
5000-100,000 inh.	47.0	43.2	47.6	41.5	54.5
>100,000 inh.	30.8	33.2	30.1	33.3	16.3
Previously looked for dh					
	15.6	13.1	11.2	43.5	4.9
	31.9%	25.2%	18.2%	16.5%	8.3%

^aHousehold income deciles 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, and 7 and 8 were combined.

Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.

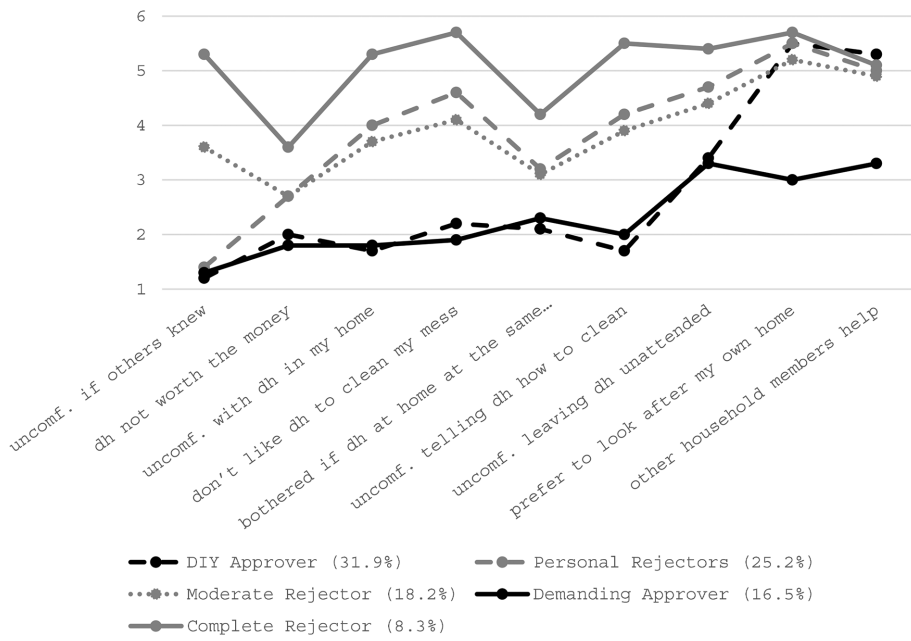


FIGURE A1 Graphical representation of estimated means of agreement of statements, N = 1479. Source: Survey on Outsourcing Domestic Labor 2020, authors' own calculation.