

**GENDER DIFFERENCES IN
DOMESTIC UNPAID WORK
WITHIN THE HOME**

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the gender differences in unpaid work within the home. It is hypothesised that female participants will carry out more unpaid work in the form of domestic chores than their male partners. This was a quasi-experimental design, in which 107 couples took part in this study, 107 males and 107 females. The sex of the participants was the dependent variable, with individual household tasks being the independent variables on which they were measured. Snowball sampling was used to gather the participants for this research project, with the only condition being that they lived in the same dwelling so they were able to answer the questionnaire correctly. A questionnaire pertaining to their participation in unpaid domestic chores was distributed to each couple and the results of which have been analysed for this study. Descriptive statistics with frequencies and t-tests were used to analyse the results submitted. It was found that the hypothesis was supported in that females did carry out more domestic chores than their male partners in most of the individual household tasks they were asked about. Therefore, there is a gender difference in domestic unpaid work within the home.

INTRODUCTION

This project is investigating the gender differences in who undertakes the daily tasks that are considered to be 'unpaid work' within the home. This 'unpaid work' takes the form of domestic household chores like keeping the house clean, cooking the family meals, caring for the children etc., would be considered 'unpaid work' within the home. Much of the research that has already been carried out on gender inequality

focuses on paid work vs unpaid work, and the measures of how many hours men vs women do in the market place and the effects this paid working time has on the gender roles taken on within the home.

In this study, we will be measuring the amount of unpaid work carried out by couples (male and female) who are currently living in the same dwelling and may be married or unmarried. The study will show if more women than men carry out the majority of unpaid household tasks within the home.

In recent decades here in Ireland, the economic climate has changed dramatically with the paid labour market upto 3 years growing steadily and the traditional family unit of male breadwinner and female homemaker changed dramatically, with more and more women entering the paid labour market. As this market has begun to decline, it will be interesting to see if this study captures more male involvement in domestic unpaid work either because both them and their partners are working full-time, or maybe the male partner is no longer the breadwinner but is the 'stay at home dad'.

In a previous Irish study by McGinnity. & Russell, (2008) carried out for 'The Equality Authority', it looked at 'Gender Inequalities in Time Use' – 'The Distribution of Caring, Housework and Employment Among Women and Men in Ireland'. This report used data from the 'Irish National Time-Use Survey' which was conducted in 2005. This was a nationally representative survey, utilising time-use diaries of nearly 600 households to gather information on paid and unpaid employment.

Gender Roles in the Labour Market

McGinnity et al (2008), tell us in their study of ‘Gender Inequalities in Time Use’ of the dramatic changes that have been seen in the involvement of women in workplace in Ireland between the years 1993 and 2004. Womens involvement in the workforce increased from 38% to 56% in this time with their age ranges between 15 and 64 years. This figure represented 352,000 women who were now in paid employment by 2004. The number of women in paid employment was much more significant than that of men, however, there was still a significant rise in the number of men in paid employment during this period. In 1993, 64% of men were involved in the workforce and this rose to 76% in 2004.

However, with significant changes in Ireland’s economy over the past number of years, the participation of males and females in the workplace has declined as can be shown as follows:

Employment Growth by Gender	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Irish Males	4	7.4	5.4	3.9	2.6	0.5	1.4	3.2	4.3	4.2	2.8	-2.5
Total Irish Females	8.2	10.2	8.1	5.3	3.9	3.1	2.5	3.6	5.8	4.5	4.9	0.7

(Eurostat, 2009 - Employment Growth by Gender)

Within the European Union, there are significant differences in the number of hours worked by women in comparison to that of men. In 2005, the average hours worked by men across the EU was 41.1 hours, while for women it was 32.5 hours. In Ireland,

it is 40.9 hours for men and 31.6 hours for women which is quite close to the EU standard.

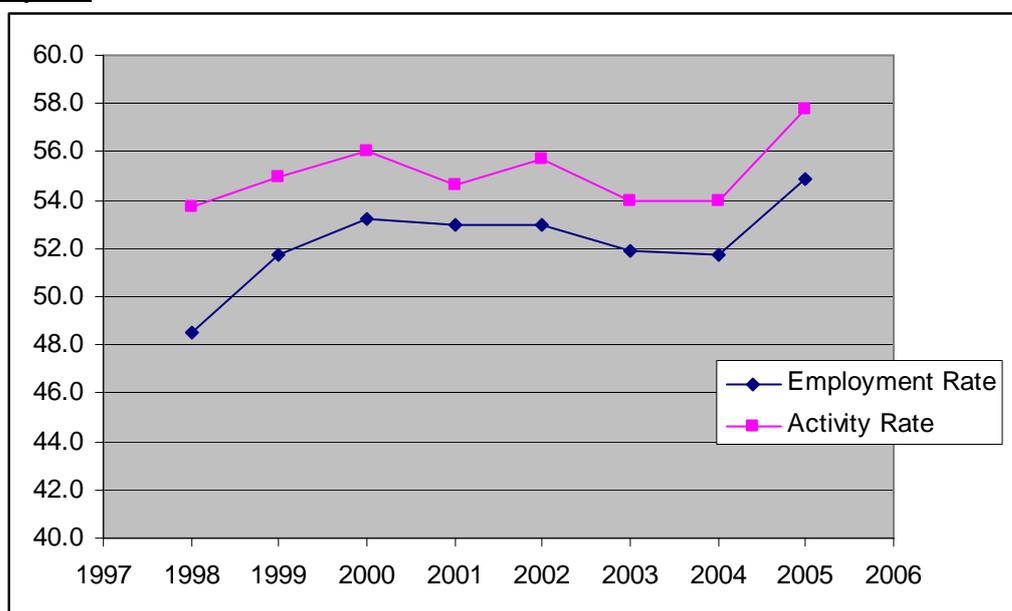
According to McGinnity et al (2008), womens participation in the workforce varies significantly on whether they have childcare responsibilities or not. In this study, women who ranged in age from 20 – 44 years who had no children represented the group that was most likely to be in paid employment with a figure of 85%. Those who had children in pre-school also showed a significant participation in the workforce with a figure of 55%. However, McGinnity et al (2008) also found through their research that the majority of women with children now work outside the home. This shows a significant change to the pattern of 15 years ago. In the table below we can see that the employment rates amongst mothers of children under the age of 5 increased by 6% in just 7 years from 49% in 1998.

Breen & Cooke (2005), in their study on ‘The Persistence of the Gendered Division of Domestic Labour’ tells us that when women increased their role in the paid labour market, there was an expected “revolution in the gendered division of labour” (Breen et al, 2005 p.43), with men taking on some responsibility within the home for the completion of domestic tasks, however, they found that this did not happen and that it still remained to be about one third of the amount of time that women spent on the same tasks.

In 2008 in Italy, a study called ‘Time Use in Daily Life – A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Time Use’s Analysis’ was carried out by the ‘National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)’. They also found that women succeeded in spending more time in work only when they had no family to consider i.e. they were either single or lived

with their parents. It was shown that women who have children spend less time in paid employment than those who lived with their partners and had no children. It was also strongly evident in Italy that the amount of time that women dedicated to domestic work highlighted the gender difference in the use of daily time. It was found that women dedicated on average 1 hr 30 mins per day to unpaid domestic work, while men only 1 hour 28 mins per day. (ISTAT, 2008)

Irish Employment & Labour Market Activity Rates Among Mothers with Children < 5 years



Source: CSO Quarterly National Household Surveys, Figures taken from quarter 2 of each year. (McGinnity et al, 2008, p13)

In 2004, the OECD found that in comparison to most other European countries, the provision of childcare facilities for pre-school children in Ireland was nowhere near European average and in very short supply. It also showed that as a proportion of average earnings in the EU, Ireland had the highest costs associated to childcare provision. According to a study on ‘Expert Working Group on Childcare, 1999’ the

average childcare costs in Ireland were 20% of the average earnings, while the average in other EU countries was 8%. (Combat Poverty Agency, 2000)

Comparisons between Ireland and the rest of the EU on social policies in relation to material and parental leave also shows that Ireland trails behind our EU neighbours. However, it should be noted that the legislation in this area has changed recently, partly in response to an EU Directive, but this has improved the provision in this area. As it currently stands, the amount of paid maternity leave allowed in Ireland is 18 weeks, with a further 8 weeks which can be availed of, but is unpaid. In 1998, the Parental Leave Act brought in statutory entitlements for both parents, this allowed them to avail of 14 weeks unpaid leave. As this leave is unpaid, it makes it very hard for parents to be able to avail of this entitlement, as they are unable to afford it, and men are also less likely to avail of it than women.

The ‘Second Shift’

Sayer, England, Bittman, & Bianchi (2009) in their study on ‘Gender Differences in Paid, Unpaid, and Total Work Time in Australia and the United States’ tell us about the theory that when feminism came into being, it brought with it more work for women. They talk about the term ‘Second Shift’, which is when women began to go into paid employment, and how men did not take on any of their responsibilities within the home when they took on this extra workload. This they tell us is where women took on a ‘second shift’, the paid one, along with the unpaid one, which they had already been doing when they worked within the home full-time. However, the findings in Sayer et al (2009), showed that when a calculation was carried out by adding the first shift which would be paid employment to that of the second shift,

which was unpaid work, on average across all family types, the total time worked by women and men was very close in parity, in fact, it was shown that men actually worked slightly more. However, it was also shown that difference in the gender gap in relation to hours worked varied significantly by family type. Women with children generally tended to work more hours than men, as they were combining motherhood with full-time employment, this was due to the fact that children increased the amount of unpaid work that women had to do, more so than what the men had to do. Women also work much more than men in the unconventional situation where men are not employed or work only part-time.

In families where there is the traditional male breadwinner and the woman is not in full-time employment, the number of hours worked by men was generally higher, sometimes quite significantly. These patterns were evident in both nations, the US and Australia. Where the nations differed significantly was in the amount of paid work done by mothers, which is much higher in the US than in Australia. This is explained by the fact that part-time employment is standard for married mothers in Australia. The study also found that even when their wives spend more hours in employment, the men do no more unpaid work. This would suggest that men do not adjust to their wives' employment in either nation. Therefore, women's employment increases the gender gap in total work time in the direction of excess work for women. (Sayer et al, 2009).

Can economic policies help improve the issue of gender inequality in the home?

In 2009, Thomas & Hildingsson (2009) carried out a study in Sweden called 'Who's bathing the baby? The division of domestic labour in Sweden'. An investigation into

gender inequality in the division of labour in the home was carried out. Data was used from a national survey of Swedish women who had given birth one year ago. They looked into whether the division of labour varied depending on women's parental leave status, education or number of children. In Sweden, the government has enacted specific policies, such as generous parental leave, to encourage couples to share in both economic and domestic labour.

Their findings indicated there was an equal division of domestic unpaid labour in men, only if their partner had returned to full-time employment. Regardless of the women's level of education or number of children, this pattern seemed to remain the same. This suggested that while the parental leave policies are necessary, they are not always sufficient enough to encourage gender equality in the home. (Thomas et al, 2009). The conclusion reached in this study found that while it was a key function of Sweden's parental leave policy to foster gender equity at home, the research showed that parental leave increased the involvement of fathers in the care of their children, but it did not show the same thing happened with their involvement in the domestic chores.

It was also found that women who return to work part-time continue to do about the same amount of the domestic work as they did when on full-time leave. The fact that general domestic duties like washing and ironing clothes and cleaning the house continues to remain predominately the work of women, even after decades of parental leave and gender equity policies, supports the notion of embedded gender ideologies that are resistant to change. Also in this study it was noted that while gender inequality in the completion of domestic chores and the care of children was evident, Sweden was also shown to be much more equal than other countries in the division of

this labour and that parental leave policies within this country were likely to have played an important part in this fact.

Voicu, M., Boicu, B. & Strapcova, K. (2009), tell us in their journal article 'Housework and Gender Inequality in European Countries', that while in recent decades, the involvement of women in the paid workforce has increased significantly, the same cannot be said for the involvement in men with domestic work. Even where the woman has gone from the role of homemaker with duties only within the home to that of both a wage earner in paid employment and that of homemaker, men's involvement in the domestic chores has remained lower than theirs.

However, it has been reported that the division of household chores between the sexes differs considerably between EU countries. Northern countries are seen to be egalitarian than those countries in the Mediterranean, or those with a more conservative welfare regime. It is also noted that former communist countries have developed different gender policies than that of their Western neighbours, highlighting the role of women in both the care of children and contributing to the household earnings through employment, but the same cannot be said of trying to involve the men in the household and childcare duties within the home.

Also highlighted was the significance of religion within the family unit and legitimising the gender roles within this unit. There was an emphasis also on the existence of a complex relationship between structure of social policies, the cultural norms of where you come from in explaining the difference in gender roles. Societal norms and expectations play a significant role in the gender division of tasks within the family. Several studies have emphasised the role of both cultural and institutional

norms on the equal sharing of domestic chores within the household. Therefore, institutional factors like the welfare regime, cohabitation rate, the gender equality, and womens involvement in the labour market have been used to try and explain the gender differences in the division of labour in different countries.

There have been other studies which have emphasised the effect of cultural norms such as the egalitarian gender ideology. Importance has also been placed on the role played by the social cultural norms, which operate as a mediator for the relative resources of partners. In cultural contexts, resources have no effect, while in societies that are in-between traditionalism and modernity, resources are seen as being very significant in determining how the division of domestic labour is executed.

Therefore, gender ideology shapes the influence of the individual factors, people living in countries with more equal gender ideology being more inclined to support gender equality in domestic work. (Voicu et al, 2009).

Cultural Values and their role in Gender Inequality in the Division of Unpaid Labour.

Housekeeping, childcare, home economics - these are areas in which women have traditionally been recognised as the experts according to a study carried out by Jennifer Courtney “Real Men Do Housework: Ethos and Masculinity in Contemporary Domestic Advice” in 2009. Courtney explains that throughout the years, publications like housekeeping guides, how-to books and general domestic advice books have always been aimed at women and therefore it was considered the norm for women to be solely involved in the maintenance of the home and the duties there-in. Courtney tells us that this began in the 19th Century with manuals such as

'Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management' and the Beecher sisters 'The American Woman's Home'. In present day's society, little has changed, there are still numerous magazines and books on how to achieve the most from your household duties, whether it be cooking, cleaning or decorating your home, on most shelves in any newsagents and bookstores. An example given by Courtney is an all inclusive manual such as Cheryl Mendelson's nine hundred-plus page 'Home Comforts', grows more and more encyclopedic. (Courtney, 2009, p66)

In Vietnam, a study by Teerawichitchainan et al (2008), called 'The Gender Division of Household Labor in Vietnam: Cohort Trends and Regional Variation' looks at Vietnams transformation from a centrally planned to a market economy in the late 1980's which has led to impressive economic growth, rapid poverty reduction, and improved living standards. One of the most significant questions about these changes in economic success and social change have affected the gender division of labour in this post socialist society, where many gender equalisation programs were put in place for decades prior to the market reform.

Previous research has been carried out and this focussed on the changing status of Vietnamese women in the public sphere, including educational attainment, earnings, occupation status, job mobility, and political representation. Much less is known about how women fare in the domestic spheres, particularly the division of labour which is one of the most persistent forms of gender inequality. This study of Vietnam gave an insight into how the changes from being a country with deeply held cultural values such as the gender division of roles within the family to one that was changing its value system and how this affected the gender division within the family roles. Over the last four decades there have been many changes to the structures that had

been in place for many of years in Vietnam. Traditional values and attitudes were changing in relation to gender roles which included policy changes, which were aimed at emancipating women from the patriarchal system they were so used to and the responsibilities they dominated in the area of domestic work and childcare. Increased exposure to influences from Western societies was also seen as contributory to these changes and also the campaigning by development agencies for gender equality has also been recognised as significant.

The study looked at the patterns of gender division of household labour in Vietnam over the past 40 years, using innovative data that allowed cohort and regional comparisons. The results of the analysis showed that Vietnamese wives still continued to bear the most responsibility for household and childcare tasks than their husbands in the early years of their marriage. Across three marriage cohorts in this investigation, wives were much more important than their husbands in completing the routine domestic and childcare tasks for preschool children.

It was also noted that there was a resurgence of male-centred families in post-socialist Vietnam and this is thought to have contributed to the greater division of labour between genders. It was shown that instead of a decrease in the participation of men in household chores, Vietnamese husbands from the reunification and renovation cohorts were more involved in domestic chores than the wartime cohorts. Areas where the husbands increased involvement was particularly noted within domestic chores were in the areas of household budget management and the care of pre-school children. However, it was also interesting to note that men's increased contribution to the completion of domestic chores does not seem to have affected women's continuing domination of the majority of household tasks. (Teerawichitchainan et al, 2008).

In April 1991, a letter written by Ms. Subbi Mathur and titled 'Couch Potatoes and Super-Women' appeared in 'India Abroad', the first newspaper of the expatriate Indian community in the United States. The letter was about the division of labour within household of immigrant Indian families in the US, and in particular it noted the significant increase in the workload that Indian immigrant wives had to complete due to their migration. The letter portrayed Indian women's transformation into 'super-women' who were seen to be continuously juggling and increased workload at home as well as completing other forms of paid employment.

Also in the letter, there was a comparison made to the husbands of these 'Super Women' and they were labelled as 'couch potatoes' or indolent men, who seemed oblivious to their wives increasing household responsibilities, remained glued to their couches and did not participate in any of the household chores. The labelling of these men as 'couch potatoes' was seen as surprising because it was a general characteristic of Indian men, regardless of where they lived, that they did not participate in the completion of household chores. This had always traditionally been seen as an area within which only women worked. This tradition had been passed down throughout the years as a cultural norm within Indian society. Gender division had been that women worked within the home and men were seen as the breadwinners and had sole responsibility for the economic welfare of his family. Indian women's complaints that their household burden had increased as a consequence of migration and their attempts at transforming traditional male-female identities in the domestic division of labour are not unique. (Bhalla, 2008, p71-72)

Hypothesis

It is hypothesised that the results of this research project will show that of the male and female partners asked to answer questions about the domestic unpaid work they carry out within the home, that it will show that the females will complete significantly more unpaid domestic work than their male partners, and this will prove that there is a gender difference in unpaid domestic work within the home.

METHOD

Design

This was a quasi-experimental design, in which the independent variables were the sex of the participants i.e. male and female, and the dependent variables were the types of domestic unpaid work that they carried out within the home e.g. tidying/cleaning the home.

Participants

Two hundred copies of the questionnaire entitled 'Gender Differences in Domestic Unpaid Work within the home' were distributed to friends and family to be completed. Of this immediate group of friends and family, they all took a number of blank copies of the questionnaires and distributed them to people they knew and worked with, this is known as the 'snowball sampling' method. The participants had to be male and female partners who were living together in the same family home.

There were 107 completed questionnaires returned, with information completed by 107 females and 107 males.

Measures

The 'Gender Difference in Unpaid Domestic Work' questionnaire was developed to measure the division of unpaid domestic work that is carried out in the home by males and females. The first section is based on 'Family Details' and this pertains to a) the marital status of the couple; b) the period of time they have lived together; and c) the number of children in the family unit.

The second section is to be completed by either the male or the female in the relationship and it contains eight subscales; 1) sex of the respondent; 2) age category of the respondent; 3) work status of the respondent; 4) how the respondent apportions their time; 5) how the respondent apportions their partners time; 6) how the respondent rates their activities in tasks within the home; 7) how the respondent feels about the spilt of chores; and 8) whether the respondent employs domestic help.

The third section is identical to the second section above, however, it is completed by the other partner in the relationship and it also contains the eight subscales as above; 1) sex of the respondent; 2) age category of the respondent; 3) work status of the respondent; 4) how the respondent apportions their time; 5) how the respondent apportions their partners time; 6) how the respondent rates their activities in tasks within the home; 7) how the respondent feels about the spilt of chores; and 8) whether the respondent employs domestic help.

Section 1 – Family Details

This section has three categories which needs to be answered jointly by the participants as it is viewed as information about their joint family unit and therefore it is assumed that the information will be the same for both sexes in the relationship.

Section ‘A’ is about the martial status of the couple and the choices were (1) Married and (2) Co-Habiting. Section ‘B’ is about the period of time that the couple have been living together and the choices were (1) Less than 1 Year; (2) 1 – 5 Years; (3) 5 – 10 Years; and (4) Greater than 10 Years. Section ‘C’ is about the number of children living in the family unit and the choices were (1) None; (2) One; (3) Two; (4) Three; (5) Four; (6) Greater than Four.

Section 2 – Respondent ‘One’

This section has 8 areas which needs to be answered by either the male or female within the relationship. Section ‘1’ was in relation to the sex of the respondant, ‘Male’ or ‘Female’. Section ‘2’ was in relation to the age category of the respondant with a three point scale ranging from (1) less than 25 years old; (2) between 25 and 40 years old; and (3) over 40 years old. Section ‘3’ was in relation to the current work status of the respondant with a choice of three categories; (1) full-time employment; (2) part-time employment; and (3) not employed. Section ‘4’ was based on how the respondant would apportion their time within a 24 hour period e.g. Number of Hours in Paid Employment, and had a 6 point scale ranging from (1) 0 hours; (2) 1 – 3 hours; (3) 4 – 6 hours; (4) 7 – 9 hours; (5) 10 – 12 hours; (6) greater than 12 hours. Section ‘5’ was based on how the respondant would apportion their partners time within a 24 hour period,e.g. Number of hours spent on Domestic Chores, and had a 6

point scale ranging from (1) 0 hours; (2) 1 – 3 hours; (3) 4 – 6 hours; (4) 7 – 9 hours; (5) 10 – 12 hours; (6) greater than 12 hours. Section ‘6’ was based on how the respondent would rate their activities on various household chores, e.g. Cooking, and had a 4 point scale ranging from (1) Never; (2) Sometime; (3) Often; (4) Always. Section ‘7’ was based on how the participant felt about the split in chores between them and their partner and had a 4 point scale ranging from (1) Satisfactory for Both; (2) Satisfactory for You Only; (3) Satisfactory for Partner Only; (4) Satisfactory for Neither. Section ‘8’ was based on whether the respondent employed outside help with domestic chores and they had a choice of answering (1) Yes; (2) No.

Section 3 – Respondent Two

This section is identical to ‘Section 2 - Respondant One’ but was to be answered by the other person in the relationship i.e. if the male answered as ‘respondant one’, then the female answered as ‘repondant two’ and vice versa. All questions and measures were the same as ‘Section 2’ above.

Procedure

The ‘Gender Differences in Domestic Unpaid Work within the home’ questionnaire (see Appendix I) was distributed by the author of this project, and is based on how domestic unpaid work is divided between genders in the family home. The questionnaire was completed by 107 couples, 107 males and 107 females who were currently living together. Both respondents were required to complete the first section which contained three questions about their family. Respondent One and Respondent Two then had a page each containing eight sections, each section had questions about

their own individual thoughts and behaviours in relation to both themselves and their duties within the home and their perceptions about their partners duties within the home. There were no names on the questionnaire, so this kept the anonymity of the couples completing the questionnaire which one would hope encouraged the participants to answer the questions honestly. When the questionnaires were returned to the author of this study, the results were entered in SPSS software and the data was used for analysis for the results of this research project.

RESULTS

Time Spent in Paid Employment in 24 Hours

Descriptive statistics indicated that males (mean = 4.21, SD = 1.32) spent longer in paid employment than females (mean = 3.22, SD = 1.4). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = 5.264$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that males spent significantly longer hours in paid employment in a 24 hour period than females.

Results from a frequency analysis also showed in a breakdown of the time spent in paid employment in 24 hours:

8% of males and 19% of females were not in any paid employment.

0% of men worked between 1-3 hours, while 11% of females did.

14% of males and 22% of females worked between 4 – 6 hours.

47% of males and 46% of females worked between 7 – 9 hours.

22% of males and 9% of females worked longer than 12 hours in paid employment.

Time Spent on Domestic Chores in 24 Hours

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 2.40, SD = 0.92) spent longer on domestic chores than males (mean = 1.90, SD = 0.42). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -5.182, p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer hours on domestic chores in a 24 hour period than males.

Results from a frequency analysis also showed in a breakdown of the time spent on domestic chores in 24 hours:

15% of males and 6% of females did not carry out any domestic chores.

88% of males and 71% of females spent between 1-3 hours on domestic chores.

4% of males and 18% of females spent between 4 – 6 hours on domestic chores.

0% of males and 5% of females spent between 7 – 9 hours on domestic chores.

0% of males and 7% of females spent longer than 12 hours on domestic chores.

Time Spent on Leisure Activities in 24 Hours

Descriptive statistics indicated that males (mean = 2.06, SD = 0.59) spent longer on leisure activities than females (mean = 1.96, SD = 0.63). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was not significant $t(212) = 1.237, p > .05$. Thus showing that males spent longer hours on leisure activities than females in a 24 hour period but that the difference was not significant.

Time Spent Sleeping in 24 Hours

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 3.90, SD = 0.43) spent longer sleeping than males (mean = 3.62, SD = 0.53). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -4.259$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer hours sleeping than males in a 24 hour period.

Carrying Out Domestic Chores within the Home

Cooking within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 2.85, SD = 0.84) spent more time cooking than males (mean = 2.35, SD = 0.85). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -4.306$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer cooking than males.

Childcare Duties within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 2.45, SD = 1.28) spent longer on childcare duties within the home than males (mean = 1.90, SD = 0.94). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -3.887$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer on childcare duties than males.

Shopping Duties for the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 3.08, SD = 0.92) spent longer on shopping duties for the home than males (mean = 2.43, SD = 0.85). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -5.321$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer on shopping duties for the home than males.

Laundry/Ironing Duties within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 3.26, SD = 0.87) spent longer on laundry/ironing duties within the home than males (mean = 2.10, SD = 0.88).

Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -9.681$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer on laundry/ironing duties than males.

Vacuuming Duties within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 2.90, SD = 0.95) spent longer on vacuuming duties within the home than males (mean = 2.06, SD = 0.86).

Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -6.708$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer hours on vacuuming duties than males.

Washing Dishes within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 2.80, SD = 0.99) spent longer on washing dishes within the home than males (mean = 2.13, SD = 0.75). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -5.578$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer hours on washing dishes than males.

Loading/Emptying the Dishwasher within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 2.38, SD = 0.95) spent longer loading/emptying the dishwasher within the home than males (mean = 2.23, SD = 0.97). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was not significant $t(212) = -1.142$, $p > .05$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer hours on loading/emptying the dishwasher than males, but the difference was not significant.

Tidying/Cleaning Duties within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that females (mean = 3.14, SD = 1.01) spent longer on tidying/cleaning duties within the home than males (mean = 2.20, SD = 0.72). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = -7.855$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that females spent significantly longer hours on tidying/cleaning duties than males.

Household Repairs within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that males (mean = 2.67, SD = 1.11) spent longer on household repair duties within the home than females (mean = 1.73, SD = 0.87).

Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = 6.893$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that males spent significantly longer hours on household repairs than females.

Garden Maintenance Duties within the Home

Descriptive statistics indicated that males (mean = 2.51, SD = 1.32) spent longer on garden maintenance duties within the home than females (mean = 1.78, SD = 1.06).

Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = 4.447$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that males spent significantly longer hours on garden maintenance duties than females.

Putting out the Bins

Descriptive statistics indicated that males (mean = 2.89, SD = 0.82) spent longer on putting out the bins than females (mean = 1.90, SD = 0.86). Independent-samples t-test analysis indicated that this difference was significant $t(212) = 8.657$, $p < .01$. Thus showing that males spent significantly longer hours on putting out the bins than females.

Marital Status of Couples

Out of 214 responses from 107 males and 107 females, statistics showed that 146 were married couples and 68 lived together as partners.

Number of Years Spent Living Together

Out of 214 responses from 107 males and 107 females, statistics showed that 74 couples had been together for 1 – 5 years, 32 couples had been together between 5 – 10 years and 108 couples had been together for 10 years or more.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the level of gender difference in domestic unpaid work within the home. It was hypothesised that females would contribute significantly more of their time to domestic unpaid work than their male partners. In breaking down the types of domestic chores carried out within the home, the hypotheses that females carried out more domestic chores than their male partners was supported in nearly all individual areas.

There were significant differences in the results for females versus males in areas like cooking, childcare, shopping, laundry/ironing, vacuuming, washing the dishes and tidying/cleaning duties. Females spent significantly more time at these chores than their males partners. However, in areas like household maintenance, garden maintenance and putting out the bins, males spent significantly more time than their

female partners at these chores. In the domestic chores that the men spent significantly more time than the females, the type of chores could be categorised as typically 'male' orientated household tasks. Maintenance within the home would historically have been 'mans work', whereas all the chores for which the females spent significantly more time than males, would have been seen as 'woman's work'. McGinnitty et al, 2008, also found that when looking at the types of housework being carried out by males and females, the core domestic tasks of cleaning, cooking and shopping were carried out mainly by females, while men's contribution to household tasks took the form of household repairs and gardening. Do societal and cultural norms play a part in the gender division of labour when certain types of domestic work is seen as 'mans' and 'womans' work? Does this prevent males and females from doing certain tasks? This could be a very interesting area to be studied further in relation to the division of unpaid work in future studies. Teerawichitchainan et al, 2008, carried out a study in Vietnam that gave an insight into how the changes from being a country with deeply held cultural values such as the gender division of roles within the family to one that was changing its value system and how this affected the gender division within the family roles. This study found that while men's contribution increased in the area of domestic chores, it did not seem to have affected women's continuing domination of the majority of household tasks.

(Teerawichitchainan et al, 2008)

The only insignificant result was for the loading/emptying of the dishwasher, however, while the result was insignificant, it still found that females scored higher than males in this task. This result may have been insignificant due to the fact that not all households contained a dishwasher, and therefore it was not a chore that was carried out at all within their home.

While this study concentrated mainly on the division of unpaid labour within the home, the results showed that male partners did spend more time in paid employment than females, however, there was little difference between males and females working what would be considered as a full working day (7 – 9 hours) in paid employment, with figures of 47% for males and 46% for females. If this is compared to the finding by McGinnity et al, 2008, where in 2005, the average hours worked by men across the EU was 41.1 hours, while for women it was 32.5 hours, and in Ireland, it is 40.9 hours for men and 31.6 hours for women, it could now be shown that the women working full-time jobs in Ireland has increased in the last 5 years. Also, in the study by ISTAT, 2008, which looked into the amount of time women in Italy dedicate to domestic work, it also found in favour of the woman, where they found that on average women complete 4 hrs 30 mins of unpaid domestic work per day, while men only 1 hour 28 mins. This again proved that there was strong evidence to support the gender gap in completing unpaid domestic tasks.

Previous research in this area, in Ireland, has mainly concentrated on the division of time in paid and unpaid work, and whether being in paid employment had an effect on the number of hours being completed on unpaid tasks within the home. In the study carried out by McGinnity et al, 2008, one aspect was to determine the distribution of paid and unpaid work, the results found that, even when women were in full-time employment along with their male partners, they still spent more time on unpaid household duties. Also, when both partners were not working at weekends, gender patterns also emerged that females spent upto twice as much time than their male partners on household cores and childcare activities. Hildingsson et al, 2009, also found in their study that even when women returned to full-time employment, the

core household tasks being undertaken within the home still fell primarily with women, however, they also found that the chores that couples did share equally were within the areas of cooking and shopping for food. This was not supported by this study as results showed that females spent considerably more time on these chores than their male partners, as mentioned previously.

While the research for this project showed that female participation in the execution of household chores outweighed that of their male partners in most areas, time analysis was not carried out on the amount of time spent on each individual task on a daily basis. A further study could be done to determine just how much time difference there actually is between the sexes in carrying out these tasks. It would also be interesting to note if in more recent times here in Ireland with the current economic climate and the continuing escalation of job losses throughout the country, would men who have lost their jobs, or are working reduced hours and are now spending more time within the home with maybe their partner working, would they contribute more to the household chores, or would it still be left to women to ensure they were completed. Sayer et al, 2009, called this the 'second shift' in their study and they found that in households in Australia and the United States, that women continue to work more than men, even when men are not in paid employment or only work part-time. However, they also noted that being a mother contributed to these findings as children had increased the number of unpaid hours carried out by the females. They also found that women's employment increases the gender gap in total work time in the direction of excess work for women.

Another analysis that would be interesting to undertake would be within the area of childcare when talking about the unpaid division of labour within the home. If males do participate in this area which our research has shown that they do, even if females spend significantly more time on this area than males, what kind of duties are being undertaken by each sex in relation to the child. McGinnity et al, 2008, found in their study that women tended to spend most of their time in this area on supervision and physical care of the child, while men tended to spend their time with the child in a social environment like playing with them. Currently, as our research has shown that 8% of males and 19% of females are currently not in full-time employment, if more men are beginning to spend more time at home due to economic circumstances, would these roles change, and the males also get more involved in the physical care of the child?

One could also look into the area of social policy in future studies to investigate if social policies in relation to parental leave contribute to the gender division of labour within the home. A study carried out in Sweden by Thomas et al, 2009, looked at the effects of having generous parental leave policies for both mothers and fathers and whether this changed the dynamic of who carried out the unpaid domestic chores within the home. The research found that while the fathers increased their level of involvement with the child, they did not increase their level of involvement in the sharing of domestic chores. The fact that general domestic duties like washing and ironing clothes and cleaning the house continues to remain predominately the work of women, even after decades of parental leave and gender equity policies, supports the notion of embedded gender ideologies that are resistant to change. Also in this study it was noted that while gender inequality in the completion of domestic chores and the care of children was evident, Sweden was also shown to be much more equal than

other countries in the division of this labour and that parental leave policies within this country were likely to have played an important part in this fact. A difference however, that would be noted by carrying out this study within Ireland, is that while we have increased the parental leave allowance in recent years, this increase is unpaid and taken at the expense of person wishing to avail of it.

The main findings of this study have supported the hypothesis made that women do spend more time than men on unpaid domestic chores within the home. In the early 20th Century, Ireland had a traditional family whereby the men went to work and looked after the family financially, and the women were homemakers and looked after the home and the well-being of her family. As times have changed coming towards the end of the 20th century and with the economic boom that Ireland experienced, the family dynamic changed dramatically with more and more women taking on paid employment outside of the home. It is interesting to note that even today, in 2010, that there are still gender differences in the amount of unpaid work carried out within the home, and that these tasks are still executed on a daily basis by women more than men.

CONCLUSION

Gender differences do exist in relation to who carries out the most domestic unpaid work within the home. Out of the eleven individualised categories around specific duties carried out within the home, women spent significantly longer than men on seven of these tasks, with men only scoring higher in three categories. One category,

that of loading and unloading the dishwasher, was the only category recorded as not significant, but even in this category women had a stronger result than men.

As results have shown, nearly as many women work full-time jobs as men, with 46% of women vs 47% of men indicating that they work in paid employment from 7 – 9 hours per day. Even with women's increased participation in paid employment over the past few decades, the participation of men in unpaid domestic work has not mirrored that of women working within the home and taking on what we have already discussed as a 'second shift' (Sayer et al, 2009).

So overall, this study has found what many other studies beforehand have found, that women continue to dominate the amount of work been completed within the home. Whether it is cleaning and cooking, or caring for their children, women will spend considerably more time than men looking after their family and their home. Even as times have changed in relation to working outside the home, the tasks undertaken within the home have not changed significantly.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited in relation to sample size. While 200 questionnaires were distributed to a wide selection of coupled participants, only 107 completed questionnaires were returned. It would benefit future research to use a greater sample size which would improve the results being analysed and discussed.

Another limitation was that of actual time spent on individual tasks. For future studies it would be interesting to get exact hours and minutes spent on individual tasks so we could ascertain the actual amount of time spent by males and females on particular tasks. It would also be interesting to get their views as to why they do not participate in certain tasks and leave it to their partners to carry out. Is there still a notion of 'womens' vs 'mens' work when it comes to carrying out specific duties within the home.

Furthermore, the results that were submitted were completed in an uncontrolled environment, and therefore the validity of the results could be questionable. One cannot be 100% sure that all the males filled out their sections, and also vice versa for the females. It should also be taken into consideration any pressure that may have been felt by either partner to answering what they think their partner would like them to answer, as both partners had access to each others responses as they were all within the one document to be completed.

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APPENDIX I – QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE GENDER DIFFERENCE IN UNPAID DOMESTIC WORK

The intention of this questionnaire is to examine the division of unpaid domestic work that is carried out in the home. The results will be used for analysis in my research project based on this topic. This research project will be submitted in April 2009 to Dublin Business School, as part of my B.A. (Hons) in Social Science.

All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be viewed by any person other than myself. As the details gathered will be collated to produce statistics for the project, no individual couple or person can/will be identifiable and all forms will be destroyed once the project has been submitted and graded.

This questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section consists of three basic questions concerning the family unit, which will be used for ‘grouping’ returned questionnaires.

The main section consists of two parts, with eight identical questions on each – one set to be completed by one partner/respondent in the couple and the second set to be completed by the second partner/respondent. The majority of the questions are answered by inserting a \surd in a box.

I would like to thank you very much for your time in completing this.

Anita Lowndes

FAMILY DETAILS:

A. MARITAL STATUS OF COUPLE:

Married

Co-Habiting

B. TIME PERIOD LIVING TOGETHER:

Less than 1 Year

1 – 5 Years

5-10 Years

Greater than 10 Years

C. NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING IN FAMILY UNIT:

None

1

2

3

4

4+ (Indicate No.)

RESPONDENT 'ONE'

1. SEX
Male *Female*
2. AGE CATEGORY
Less than 25 *25-40* *40+*
3. WORK STATUS
Full-time *Part-Time* *Not Employed*

IF DOMESTIC CHORES ARE ALL UNPAID TASKS RELATED TO RUNNING A HOUSEHOLD & TAKING CARE OF DEPENDANTS, (IN A 24 HOUR PERIOD):

4. HOW WOULD YOU APPORTION YOUR TIME BETWEEN:
- | <i>Between:</i> | <i>0Hrs</i> | <i>1-3Hrs</i> | <i>4-6Hrs</i> | <i>7-9Hrs</i> | <i>10-12Hrs</i> | <i>>12Hrs</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paid Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Domestic Chores | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure Time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. HOW WOULD YOU APPORTION YOUR PARTNER'S TIME BETWEEN:
- | <i>Between:</i> | <i>0Hrs</i> | <i>1-3Hrs</i> | <i>4-6Hrs</i> | <i>7-9Hrs</i> | <i>10-12Hrs</i> | <i>>12Hrs</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paid Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Domestic Chores | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure Time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR ACTIVITY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS WITHIN THE HOME -
- | <i>ACTIVITY</i> | <i>NEVER</i> | <i>SOMETIMES</i> | <i>OFTEN</i> | <i>ALWAYS</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food/Household Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Laundry/Ironing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacuuming | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Washing Dishes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Loading / Emptying Dishwasher | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidying / Cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Household Repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Garden Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Putting out the Bins | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. DO YOU THINK THE SPLIT OF CHORES IS :
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Satisfactory for Both</i> | <i>Satisfactory for You Only</i> | <i>Satisfactory for Partner Only</i> | <i>Satisfactory for Neither</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. DO YOU EMPLOY DOMESTIC HELP
- Yes* *No*

RESPONDENT 'TWO'

1. SEX
Male *Female*
2. AGE CATEGORY
Less than 25 *25-40* *40 +*
3. WORK STATUS
Full-time *Part-Time* *Not Employed*

IF DOMESTIC CHORES ARE ALL UNPAID TASKS RELATED TO RUNNING A HOUSEHOLD & TAKING CARE OF DEPENDANTS, (IN A 24 HOUR PERIOD):

4. HOW WOULD YOU APPORTION **YOUR** TIME BETWEEN:
- | <i>Between:</i> | <i>0Hrs</i> | <i>1-3Hrs</i> | <i>4-6Hrs</i> | <i>7-9Hrs</i> | <i>10-12Hrs</i> | <i>>12Hrs</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paid Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Domestic Chores | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure Time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. HOW WOULD YOU APPORTION **YOUR PARTNER'S** TIME BETWEEN:
- | <i>Between:</i> | <i>0Hrs</i> | <i>1-3Hrs</i> | <i>4-6Hrs</i> | <i>7-9Hrs</i> | <i>10-12Hrs</i> | <i>>12Hrs</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paid Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Domestic Chores | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leisure Time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR ACTIVITY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS WITHIN THE HOME -
- | <i>ACTIVITY</i> | <i>NEVER</i> | <i>SOMETIMES</i> | <i>OFTEN</i> | <i>ALWAYS</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food/Household Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Laundry/Ironing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vacuuming | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Washing Dishes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Loading / Emptying Dishwasher | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidying / Cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Household Repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Garden Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Putting out the Bins | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. DO YOU THINK THE SPLIT OF CHORES IS :
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Satisfactory for Both</i> | <i>Satisfactory for You Only</i> | <i>Satisfactory for Partner Only</i> | <i>Satisfactory for Neither</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. DO YOU EMPLOY DOMESTIC HELP
- Yes No