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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Domestic Role-sharing in Dual-earner Couples

by

Catherine Madden



**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Education**

IN

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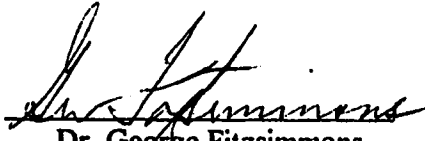
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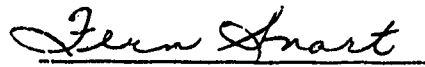
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DEDICATION

**To Doug, for your endless support and encouragement,
and for the many wonderful years we have shared together.**

**Thanks for believing in me
and for showing me how to believe in myself.**

ABSTRACT

Since the early 1950's, the number of women entering the workforce has increased dramatically. As a result, the traditional couple, one with a male breadwinner and female homemaker, has been replaced by the dual-earner couple, a couple in which both the husband and wife are employed in paid labor. The fact that men and women's involvement in the provider/work role has changed dramatically in the last forty years raises questions as to whether this has been accompanied by similar changes in their involvement in the domestic role.

The purpose of this study was to survey a volunteer sample of dual-earner couples to determine: a) the extent to which the domestic role is shared, b) the extent to which they feel it should be shared, c) how satisfied they are with the way responsibilities are distributed, and d) how education, income, time availability, and skill influence the extent to which the domestic role is shared.

In order to do this, a structured questionnaire, developed by the researcher, was administered to 74 dual-earner couples who were asked to provide information on actual behaviors, ideals, degree of satisfaction, ability to do domestic tasks, and time use.

The results of the study showed that the division of labor remains traditional, and that not only do women spend more time in domestic work, they

are also responsible for the most demanding and time-consuming tasks. However, despite the inequalities, the majority of men and women reported high satisfaction with the way responsibilities were distributed, and agreed that responsibilities should not be shared equally. In addition, the findings showed that involvement in domestic work is determined more by gender than by income, education, time availability, or skill.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Background to the problem

Over the last two centuries, North American society has undergone a number of changes. One of the most significant changes has involved a transition in men and women's participation in work and family roles. This transition has been documented by a number of researchers and divided into three stages.

Stage one occurred during the years prior to industrialization. During this time, the family represented a collective unit where men and women worked together both in the home as well as in the field. Work and family roles were highly integrated, and the division of labor was not based on gender.

In the years which marked the industrial revolution and the introduction of the factory system, stage 2, the family no longer represented a collective unit. That is, domestic and productive activities became separate domains, and participation in work and family roles was rigidly defined by gender. Men were assigned the family's economic provider role and so were expected to be the sole breadwinners in the family. They had the responsibility of working outside of the home and providing the necessary income to meet the family's financial needs. Women, on

the other hand, were assigned the homemaker-caretaker role and so their activities centred around the home and the family. They were expected to care for the children and to be ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the home.

This traditional segregation of roles broke down during the third and final stage and was replaced by a greater integration of work and family responsibilities. North American society witnessed changes in roles for men and women as men began to assume greater responsibility for housework and child care while women began to enter the labor force in increasing numbers. Therefore, although men and women retained their primary roles, this stage marked the beginning of movement into nontraditional roles and of the integration of two previously segregated spheres (Degler, 1980; Ericksen, Yancey, & Ericksen, 1979; Lupri & Mills, 1983; Lupri & Symons, 1982; Oakley, 1975).

A number of factors have contributed to stage three and to the desegregation of roles including the advent of World War II and the economic recession which both created a need for women to enter the workforce as well as the 'consciousness raising' of the Women's Movement and the growing acceptance of men and women in nontraditional roles (Degler, 1980; Locker, 1984; Lupri & Mills, 1983).

In today's society, evidence of the integration of work and family roles is still apparent, however, findings indicate that there has been greater movement by

women into the paid workforce than by men into the domestic sphere (Atkinson & Huston, 1984). In fact, census of Canada trends show that the participation of women in the labor force has increased steadily in the last half of this century ranging from 23.7% in 1951 to 59.7% in 1991 (Statistics Canada, 1991). Therefore, although there has been a dramatic increase in women's involvement in the workforce, men's actual domestic behavior has been slow to change (Rexroat & Shehan, 1987).

Studies have shown that while attitudes toward men's sharing of the domestic role have changed - with the majority of men and women believing that husbands of employed wives should share domestic work (Ferber, 1982; Smith & Reid, 1986) - these attitudes have not translated into corresponding role behaviors (Araji, 1977; Lupri & Symons, 1982). In fact, the vast majority of researchers have concluded that employed women retain primary responsibility for the management and execution of household tasks (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Coltrane, 1989; Condran & Bode, 1982; Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Kim & Lee, 1989; Leslie & Anderson, 1988; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Population Research Laboratory, 1989; Ross, 1987; Shelton, 1990; Vanek, 1980).

Researchers have found that women are responsible for and perform a greater share of the domestic responsibilities even if they are working full-time in demanding professional jobs (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Stafford, Backman and

Dibona, 1977).

Although working women retain primary responsibility for the home, research indicates that once women become employed, they decrease the amount of time they spend in household labor (Leslie & Anderson, 1988; Presland & Antill, 1987; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Shelton, 1990). In fact, employed women spend approximately half as many hours in domestic work as women who do not work outside of the home (Bernardo, Shehan, & Leslie, 1987; Presland & Antill, 1987; Ross, 1987). However, when combined hours worked on the job and in the home are considered, employed women work more hours than full-time housewives (Coverman, 1983; Pleck, 1977).

One might expect that as working women decrease their time spent in household labor, there would be a corresponding increase in the amount of time their husbands spend in domestic work. However, the studies which have looked at this relationship have provided conflicting results. Some researchers have concluded that men's participation in domestic work increases when their wives work outside of the home for pay (Coverman, 1985; Ross, 1987), while others have found no difference between husband's of employed wives and nonemployed wives in time spent in domestic labor (Bernardo et al., 1987; Condran & Bode, 1982; Ferber, 1982; Googins & Burden, 1987; Lupri & Mills, 1983; Pleck, 1977; Shelton, 1990).

Those studies which have concluded that men increase the time they spend in domestic activities when their wives are employed have also concluded that the increase is very minimal. Coverman (1985), for example, found that men whose wives are employed spend approximately 26 minutes more a day in housework and child care.

Other researchers have argued that men whose wives are employed appear to do a higher proportion of domestic work than they actually do. They argue that it appears that men have increased their involvement in domestic work, but this is because women are doing less not because men are doing more (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Smith & Reid, 1986).

In sum, what has become apparent is that despite the fact that sex-role attitudes, and, to some extent, behaviors, have changed, the redistribution of roles within the home does not seem to match the sharing of roles outside of the home (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). As a result, one of the major problems employed women face today is the double burden of paid and unpaid work.

Significance of the problem

It has become apparent that the social changes in the last thirty years have created new options for women. That is, many women today have given up the notion that their life must centre around the home and the family, and so, for a lot of women, the traditional role of homemaker-caretaker has been expanded to include a career outside of the home (Locker, 1984).

Locker (1984) has noted that this has become a significant issue for women in that the increased responsibilities resulting from this expanded role can cause conflict and overload. Smith & Reid (1986) add that women with multiple roles often become torn between the competing and sometimes conflicting demands of their various roles. They note that married women who are employed full-time run the risk of being overworked and so may find it difficult to perform both the work and family roles adequately.

Sekaran (1986) has concluded that women with multiple roles often experience physical stress from having so many demands placed on them and so run the risk of various health problems. She adds that they are also subject to the psychological stress of not being able to focus enough time nor energy in any one area. She further notes that women with multiple roles are especially vulnerable to role overload and so often experience physical exhaustion and poorer mental

health.

Wilcox-Matthew & Minor (1989) have noted that women who choose to devote a great deal of time and energy to the pursuit of their careers often feel guilty about neglecting their responsibilities at home, and so experience not only role conflict, but also role strain.

These findings are important because women who are employed full-time and are assuming the majority of the responsibility in the home are at risk for a number of health issues: increased stress, greater chance of having health problems, and shorter lifespan. Therefore, without a greater sharing of the duties within the home, employed women are likely to experience a great deal of strain and overload as they try to meet the various demands placed on them (Hochschild, 1989; Pleck, 1977).

Career

The division of labor within the home is also a significant issue in that it has been shown to have a direct influence on the outcome and quality of a woman's career. Stafford et al. (1977) have noted that as long as women continue to be burdened with the bulk of the responsibility at home while they pursue a career, they will never be able to devote enough time nor energy to occupational demands. In addition, these women will never be able to compete with others who do not

have to assume the majority of the responsibility at home and so are able to devote most of their time and energy to pursuing their careers. Therefore, these researchers have concluded that an unequal division of labor within the home is a major stumbling block to career equality for men and women.

Coverman (1983) adds that the more time women spend in domestic activities, the less time and energy they will have to devote to their careers. As a result, women generally have less time for furthering their education, doing overtime work, participating in training programs, and other job-related activities which might enhance their position within the labor market.

In the same article, Coverman reported that women's association with domestic activities affects employers' hiring practices. She noted that the traditional division of labor within the home is reproduced in the labor market in that women are limited to jobs which are perceived as gender appropriate. Therefore, this sexual segregation in the labor market becomes a major source of wage inequality between the sexes. She further noted that, in some cases, women who have family responsibilities may be discriminated against for fear that their family demands will interfere with their job demands. As a result, these women are perceived as less reliable workers and are not given the same opportunities as other employees.

Therefore, the division of labor within the home can have a direct influence

on the quality and outcome of women's careers. Not only can it affect hiring practices and job opportunities, but also, to some extent, determines the level of commitment women are able to make to their careers. Without a more equal sharing of roles within the home, women will have a very difficult time trying to lessen the occupational inequality which exists between the sexes whether it be in the form of wages or career opportunities (Coverman, 1983; Kiger, 1984).

Changing trends

A final reason why this issue is so significant is because many more couples today than ever are having to balance work and family roles. Census of Canada trends show that the number of dual-earner couples has been increasing steadily while the number of traditional couples, couples which have a female homemaker and a male breadwinner, has been on the decline. In 1967, for example, 32.3% of married couples were dual-earners and 58.6% were traditional. However, in 1989, 62.3% of married couples were dual-earners and only 19.8% were traditional (Statistics Canada, 1991). Therefore, because the dual-earner couple has become the most prevalent couple of the nineties, researchers and other professionals need to learn more about how these couples are dealing with the various work and family demands placed on them, and what impact this new lifestyle is having on them both as individuals and as a couple.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to survey a volunteer sample of dual-earner couples to determine:

- a. the extent to which the domestic role is shared by these couples;
- b. the extent to which these couples feel the domestic role should be shared;
- c. how satisfied they are with the way the responsibilities for various household tasks are distributed; and
- d. how four factors (education, income, time availability, and skill) influence the extent to which the domestic role is shared.

Definition of terms

Dual-earner couple: a couple in which both the husband and wife are employed in some capacity (full-time or part-time) in paid labor.

Domestic role: performing a variety of household tasks including cooking, cleaning, repairs, and external maintenance.

CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review the literature pertaining to domestic role-sharing, and focus specifically on studies which are relevant to the four main purposes of this research.

As there have been numerous studies on domestic role-sharing, this chapter has been divided into five sections so that the findings can be organized in a meaningful way. In the first section, studies which have looked at the extent of men and women's involvement in the domestic role are presented. Section 2 explores how the nature of domestic tasks influences participation in domestic work. In section 3, reasons for men and women's unequal involvement in the domestic role are discussed. Findings from studies which have looked at satisfaction with the domestic role are presented in section four. And the last section outlines how income, education, time availability, and skill influence men and women's involvement in domestic work.

Participation in the domestic role

Research findings indicate that for dual-earner couples, attitudes toward the sharing of the domestic role tend to be favorable (Araji, 1977; Ferber, 1982;

Hiller & Philliber, 1986). In fact, in a study by Smith & Reid (1986), 93% of the women and 86% of the men agreed that when both the husband and wife are employed, household responsibilities should be shared equally. However, being supportive of the idea does not necessarily mean that couples will actually share this role (Araji, 1977; Lupri & Symons, 1982; Smith & Reid, 1986). In fact, in a study by Hiller & Philliber (1986), 58% of the men said they believed that housework should be shared equally, yet less than one-third of them performed household tasks on a regular basis.

Smith & Reid (1986) also found large discrepancies between actual behaviors and ideals noting that even though the majority of men and women expressed egalitarian ideals, very little sharing actually occurred. In fact, they found that women were responsible for and performed the greatest share of the household tasks.

Other researchers have come to similar conclusions about the division of labor within homes noting that despite egalitarian ideals, few couples actually share domestic responsibilities equally (Araji, 1977; Bernardo et al., 1987; Ferber, 1982; Hochschild, 1989). In fact, studies which have looked at men and women's involvement in domestic tasks have found that men, on average, do less than one-third of the total amount of domestic work (Bernardo et al., 1987; Pleck, 1983 in Stein). Even when men take an active role in performing household chores,

women continue to be primarily responsible for initiating action and seeing that the chores get done (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Smith & Reid, 1986).

Findings suggest, therefore, that for the most part, men's involvement in domestic activities has been limited to "helping out" with "women's work" (Coltrane, 1989; Haas, 1982). That is, studies have shown that in the majority of dual-earner couples, women retain primary responsibility for the home (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Condran & Bode, 1982; Greenglass, 1985), and that the workload is greatest for employed women with young children (Lupri & Mills, 1983; Smith & Reid, 1986; Vanek, 1980; Yogeve, 1981).

These inequalities in the division of labor noted by many researchers do not seem to be limited to North American couples only, but rather are typical of dual-earner couples around the world. In fact, in their review of international time-budget studies, Lupri & Symons (1982) found that not only did employed women in all of the eleven participating countries do a disproportionate amount of the domestic work, they also spent considerably more time each day in domestic activities than their employed spouses. That is, on average, employed women spent between two-and-a-half and three hours more per day in domestic work.

Other researchers have also noted substantial inequalities in the amount of time employed men and women spend doing domestic tasks. That is, they have found that because women are doing significantly more work around the house,

they are spending considerably more time than their husbands in domestic activities. In fact, on a weekly basis, women spend between ten (Ferber, 1982; Harvey, Marshall, & Frederick, 1991; Leslie & Anderson, 1988) and 22 hours (Coverman, 1983; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987) more a week in domestic work. Hochschild (1989) notes that this extra time that women spend each week doing domestic tasks is equivalent to one month of 24 hour days each year.

Research findings indicate that not only do women spend more time in domestic activities, but also more women than men actually engage in domestic work on a daily basis. A study by Harvey et al (1991), for example, found that on an average day, 83% of employed women do some domestic work compared with only 51% of employed men. This inequality can be explained, in part, by the fact that men, on average, spend more time in market work than women. In fact, men, on average, spend 8.7 hours per day at work compared with 7.5 hours per day for women (Harvey et al, 1991). However, if the average number of hours per week spent in domestic labor and market work for each sex are added together, women's total weekly workload is substantially greater than that of men's (Coverman, 1983; Googins & Burden, 1987; Lein, 1984; Lupri & Symons, 1982; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987).

In sum, findings indicate that despite the fact that most dual-earner couples express egalitarian ideals, the actual division of labor within homes remains

traditional and places the greatest share of the domestic responsibility on women (Hopkins & White, 1978; Piotrkowski & Repetti, 1984).

Perceptions about involvement in the domestic role

Studies which have looked at men and women's involvement in the domestic role have found that, for the most part, men tend to overestimate the extent to which they participate in domestic activities. In fact, in a study by Googins & Burden (1987), 59.5% of the men reported to be sharing equally in household tasks. However, when the amount of time each partner spent in domestic activities was totalled, it was found that employed women spent over twice as many hours in domestic work.

Other researchers have also found discrepancies in the way men and women perceive their involvement in the domestic role. In fact, several researchers have found that men report that they do significantly more work around the house than their wives say they do (Condran & Bode, 1982; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Ross, 1987). In addition, findings indicate that men are more likely to see tasks as being shared while women see themselves as doing the greatest share of the domestic work (Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Smith & Reid, 1986).

Condran & Bode (1982) have noted that these findings are important

because if men perceive themselves to be contributing more to the domestic role than they actually are, then it appears unlikely that they will voluntarily contribute more. As a result, women will continue to be burdened with a disproportionate share of the domestic work.

The nature of domestic tasks

Although many researchers agree that women dominate the domestic role, findings indicate that of all the different types of tasks which make up this role, some are performed predominantly by women and others predominantly by men. For example, women tend to perform the majority of the internal tasks such as vacuuming, cooking, and laundry, while men assume most of the responsibility for external tasks such as painting, mowing the lawn, and shovelling snow (Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Harvey et al., 1991; Lein & Blehar, 1983; Presland & Antill, 1987; Vanek, 1980).

One reason noted for this is that involvement in tasks is influenced by how these tasks are viewed, that is, whether they are seen as being masculine or feminine in nature. Therefore, the more a task is viewed as being gender related, the less likely it is to be shared, and so the more it will remain the responsibility of one sex or the other (Johnson & Firebaugh, 1985).

Research findings also indicate that the nature of the tasks traditionally assigned to men and women have inherently different properties. That is, the kinds of tasks assigned by tradition to men, external tasks, tend to be seasonal (for example, shovelling snow or mowing the lawn), occur less frequently (for example, painting), and can often wait until time is available (for example, washing the car) (Atkinson & Huston, 1984). In addition, many of these tasks require a high level of skill and so are often contracted out to professionals such as painters, plumbers, mechanics, and electricians. On the other hand, the kinds of tasks assigned by tradition to women, internal tasks, tend to be of a more immediate necessity (for example, cooking) and are often interrelated (for example, laundry and ironing) (Atkinson & Huston, 1984). For this reason, these tasks are generally more time-consuming and often need to be performed on a daily basis (Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Hochschild, 1989; Presland & Antill, 1987).

Findings indicate, therefore, that the nature of the tasks traditionally assigned to men and women may explain, in part, why some researchers have found that women spend more time per day in domestic activities than men. That is, traditionally female dominated tasks demand greater daily involvement (Presland & Antill, 1987). In addition, findings suggest that it is not that men do not contribute to domestic work, but rather that, for the most part, their participation in household activities has been confined to traditionally male

dominated tasks which occur less often and require less daily involvement (Stafford et al., 1977).

Reasons the domestic role is not shared

Although it may seem logical to suggest that since the majority of women are employed outside of the home and so have begun to share the provider role with men (Kim & Lee, 1989; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Ross, 1987), that men would become more actively involved in domestic activities and begin to share the domestic role with women. However, research findings clearly indicate that this is not happening and that in the majority of cases, dual-earner couples do not share the domestic role (Haas, 1980; Sekaran, 1986). In fact, a study by Ross (1987) found that only 21% of dual-earner couples share household responsibilities equally. Therefore, findings indicate that factors other than logic are influencing the division of labor within homes.

This section is devoted to exploring some of these factors and to looking at some of the reasons why the domestic role isn't shared more equally.

1. Motivations

In a study by Gunter & Gunter (1990) which looked at men and women's motivations for performing a variety of domestic tasks, these researchers found distinct differences in men and women's reasons for doing domestic work.

In their study, participants were given the option of selecting one of four reasons for doing or not doing a particular task: a) It's my job, b) It won't get done otherwise, c) I do it to help, or d) It's not my job. They found that women were more likely to perform tasks because they regarded them as their job or because they believed that things wouldn't get done unless they did them. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to regard tasks as "not my job", and so performed them to help out their wives and/or be of assistance.

Oakley (1975) found similar results noting that the women in her study felt a strong sense of obligation and responsibility to do domestic work, whereas the men tended not to view domestic tasks as their personal responsibility. For the most part, their motivation for undertaking household tasks was to help out rather than to assume responsibility for the work.

These findings suggest, therefore, that one of the reasons that the domestic role isn't shared more equally is because men and women have different motivations for performing domestic work.

2. Standards and expectations

A review of the literature suggests that another reason that the domestic role isn't shared more equally is because men and women have different standards and expectations for domestic work. In fact, Haas (1980) found that women had a much higher standard of cleanliness than men, and expected domestic work to be done more often and in the manner they preferred. In addition, Smith & Reid (1986) found that because women's standards were so high, many felt that their husbands did not perform tasks to their satisfaction and so became very frustrated with men's lower standards. Men, on the other hand, said they felt that their wives were much too finicky (Haas, 1980), and had standards for domestic work which were unnecessarily high (Smith & Reid, 1986).

A number of researchers have concluded that one of the reasons that women's standards are so high is because they feel more responsible for the maintenance of the home and so feel that a messy house is a poor reflection on them (Coltrane, 1989; Haas, 1980; Sekaran, 1986). In fact, Coltrane (1989) found that the women in his study feared that they would be judged or criticized for having a messy house, and many reported feeling guilty and embarrassed if the house was not properly maintained.

Researchers have noted that the high standards and expectations women

set for domestic work effects the way men feel about it and ultimately influences the extent to which they get involved in household tasks (Haas, 1980; Sekaran, 1986; Smith & Reid, 1986). In fact, Sekaran (1986) concluded that women's higher standards and expectations create feelings of stress and frustration for men, and so inhibits them from sharing domestic work more fully. In addition, Smith & Reid (1986) found that the men in their sample became very discouraged by their wives higher standards and so restricted their involvement in domestic tasks. That is, because they felt that they could never live up to their wives expectations nor do the work as well as their wives, these men would not share household responsibilities equally. Therefore, these results are significant with respect to the division of labor because they suggest that, to some extent, women's higher standards and expectations create a barrier to a more equitable sharing of domestic work and so only serve to reinforce traditional patterns of behavior (Smith & Reid, 1986).

3. Women's attachment to the domestic role

Some researchers have concluded that one of the major reasons that the domestic role isn't shared more equally is because some women don't want it to be (Vanek, 1980; Yogev, 1981). Yogev (1981), for example, concluded that a

traditional division of labor occurs not only because men are reluctant to do more work around the house, but also because some women don't want or expect their husbands to share the responsibilities equally.

The findings of other researchers have also found support for this claim noting that although women agree with the idea behind role-sharing, many are reluctant to give up their traditional authority over domestic tasks (Coltrane, 1989; Haas, 1980; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Lein, 1984). In fact, in a study by Haas (1980), one-third of the women reported that they expected to do all of the housework, and some even said they enjoyed the challenge of trying to be a great housewife and a successful professional. Haas (1980) further noted that sharing for some women would mean having "to cope with guilt feelings about abandoning their traditional role and the mixed feelings they had about seeing their husbands do nontraditional tasks" (p. 294).

A number of researchers have concluded that part of women's reluctance to share this role with men may have to do with the fact that the home is still a very important part of the identity of most women (Coltrane, 1989; Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Lein & Blehar, 1983), and that many women feel a strong sense of responsibility for this role (Hiller & Philliber, 1986). In addition, Frankin (1984) has concluded that some women may not want to share the domestic role with men because they perceive male competency in the home as a loss of power for

themselves. That is, traditionally the home has been a place where women have had a lot of authority, and so greater male involvement may mean a loss of power and autonomy in a valued role (Bryson, 1983 in Presland & Antill).

Other researchers have noted that socialization has played a part in women's reluctance to share this role with men. In fact, Hester & Dickerson (1982) have noted that many women who today are attempting to combine a family and career were socialized as children to expect to assume the roles of wife and mother. As a result, they have grown up with a rigid definition of what constitutes appropriate female behavior (Locker, 1984), and have learned patterns of behavior which have become so deeply ingrained that they are difficult to change (Ericksen et al., 1979). Therefore, it becomes difficult for some women to relinquish control over this area because it means not only redefining who they are, but also redefining men and women's roles in general (O'Neil, Fishman, & Kinsella-Shaw, 1987).

4. Men's attachment to the provider role

Although most couples generally believe that the domestic role should be shared equally, many find it difficult to put this ideal into practice (Haas, 1980; Smith & Reid, 1986). One reason noted for this is that in our society, work,

career, and achievement are associated with masculinity, whereas family, parenting, and domestic activities are associated with femininity. As a result, men have learned to identify with the provider role, whereas women have learned to identify with the domestic / childcare role (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976).

Studies have shown that it is the extent to which men identify with the provider role which determines their level of involvement in domestic activities. Ross (1987), for example, found that the more a man believes it is his responsibility to be the breadwinner and achiever outside of the family, the less likely he is to contribute to domestic work. In the same vein, Perry-Jenkins & Crouter (1990) found that the stronger men's attachment is to the provider role, the weaker their attachment is to the domestic role. That is, the more responsible men feel to provide for the family's economic needs, the less obligated they feel to take on domestic responsibilities.

Other researchers have found that the more traditional couples are with regards to paid employment, the more traditional they are in the way they divide household responsibilities. That is, the more men dominate the provider role, the greater the likelihood that the division of labor within the home will be traditional and segregated (Atkinson & Huston, 1984). This finding has led some researchers to suggest that it is only when men stop being primarily responsible for the family's economic needs that women will stop being primarily responsible for the home and

the family (Hood, 1986). In fact, studies have shown that men take on a greater share of the household responsibility when they are least involved in the provider role (Model, 1981; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987).

In sum, Presland & Antill (1987) have noted that "in this society, it is still the accepted view that women have choices as to whether they work in paid employment or not, while men have responsibilities to earn a living... It is also still the predominant view that women have responsibilities for housework and child care while men have choices in this area. It seems that the traditional division of labor within the family will not change very much until there is a greater sharing of the choices as well as the responsibilities in both areas" (p. 290).

Satisfaction with the domestic role

Despite the fact that the vast majority of studies have concluded that the domestic role is not shared equally, and, therefore, that women assume most of the responsibility in the home, findings indicate that most couples are satisfied with the way this role is shared (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Presland & Antill, 1987; Yogev, 1981). In fact, in a study by Presland & Antill (1987), in which it was established that the domestic role was not being shared equally, only 2% of men and 18% of women were dissatisfied with this. That is, approximately 80% of both men and women stated that they were satisfied with the way chores were divided up.

Studies have also shown that in spite of the unequal division of labor, most women are satisfied with their husbands' contribution to domestic work (Biernat & Wortman, 1991), and the majority believe that men are doing their share or more than they are supposed to do (Yogev, 1981). In fact, only a small percentage of women, 24%, believe that their husbands aren't doing enough (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Yogev, 1981), and even fewer women, 16%, want their husbands to increase their involvement in domestic work (Presland & Antill, 1987).

These results, although somewhat surprising, can be explained, in part, by the findings of other researchers who have concluded that many women feel

fortunate that their husbands do the little that they do rather than expecting them to do their share of the domestic work (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976; Yogev, 1981).

Other researchers have noted that the fact that couples are generally satisfied with the way this role is shared and that there is little demand placed on men to increase their involvement in domestic work are important factors in explaining why men do not get more involved in domestic activities and why an unequal division of labor persists (Coverman, 1985; Presland & Antill, 1987).

In sum, although satisfaction with the domestic role has not been well documented in the literature, findings indicate that in spite of an unequal division of labor, most couples are satisfied with the way this role is shared.

Influencing factors

1. The Relative Resources theory

The Relative Resources theory suggests that the division of labor within a home is based upon the power relations between spouses. Power is assumed to be derived from external resources such as education and income. Thus, it is hypothesized that the partner who earns the most money and/or has the most formal education will hold the most power within the relationship and so can minimize his or her participation in undesirable activities such as domestic work (Condran & Bode, 1982; Coverman, 1985; Hiller, 1984).

This theory is based on the premise that in traditional marriages, an unequal division of labor occurs because men typically have more education and earn more money than their wives. As a result, they hold more power in the relationship and so have more choice about their involvement in domestic activities. Therefore, this theory predicts that the more resources a woman is able to obtain, the more power she will gain in the marriage, and so the greater the likelihood that she will have a more equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities.

The research studies which have been based within this theoretical framework have been well documented in the literature. However, not all

researchers have found strong support for this theory. That is, the Relative Resources theory has been instrumental in explaining some aspects of the division of labor, however, a review of the literature suggests that this theory has limited generalizability and that other factors also significantly influence men and women's involvement in domestic work (Condran & Bode, 1982; Coverman, 1985).

Education

The studies which have looked at the relationship between the wife's education and the husband's participation in domestic work have provided conflicting results. Ericksen et al. (1979), for example, found that the higher a woman's education is relative to that of her husband, the more domestic work he performs. Coverman (1985), on the other hand, found that men do less domestic work when their wives' education exceeds their own. And Ross (1987) found no significant correlation between the wife's education and the husband's participation in domestic work.

Most studies have concluded, however, that the more education husbands have, the more domestic work they perform (Bernardo et al., 1987; Coverman, 1985; Haas, 1980; Nickols & Metzen, 1978; Ross, 1987).

Researchers have also looked at the impact the wife's education has on her

participation in domestic work and have found that the more education women have, the less time they spend in domestic labor (Bernardo et al., 1987; Erickson et al., 1979; Nickols & Metzen, 1978). In fact, Bernardo et al. (1987) found that each additional degree that a woman attains reduces the amount of time she spends in domestic work by over one hour per week. This finding can be interpreted as evidence of more power in the home, however, may also reflect a values perspective. That is, more educated women tend to have less traditional values (Ross, 1987).

Other researchers have also found a relationship between higher education and participation in domestic work noting that better educated couples not only share domestic responsibilities more equally (Haas, 1982), but also spend less time in domestic work (Geerken & Gove, 1983).

In sum, the studies which have looked at the relationship between education and participation in domestic work have, for the most part, produced contradictory findings and so provide only weak support for this theory.

Income

Research findings from studies which have looked at the relationship between income and participation in domestic work tend to be somewhat more

conclusive and have, for the most part, provided strong support for the Relative Resources theory. That is, the majority of these studies have concluded that higher earnings are associated with more power in the home and so is a strong determining factor in the sharing of domestic responsibilities.

A number of researchers have looked at the relationship between the husband's income and his participation in domestic work and have found that the more a husband earns relative to his wife, the less domestic work he does (Ericksen et al., 1979; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Model, 1981; Ross, 1987). Findings also indicate that men who earn relatively low incomes are more likely to participate in housework (Ericksen et al., 1979) and share domestic responsibilities (Model, 1981) than are men who earn higher incomes. In addition, Model found that although high income men do the least amount of domestic work, their contribution increases substantially if they are married to women who earn an equally high salary.

The relationship between a woman's income and her participation in domestic work has also been documented in the literature. Findings indicate that as women's income increases, the number of hours they spend in domestic work decreases (Nickols & Metzen, 1978; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). Geerken & Gove (1983) have noted, however, that even though women's hours decrease, their overall responsibilities remain unchanged and they are still primarily responsible for

the home.

A number of researchers have also looked at the relationship between the wife's income and her husband's participation in domestic work. Findings indicate that as the wife's income rises, there is a corresponding increase both in the amount of time her husband contributes to domestic work (Nickols & Metzen, 1978) as well as in his overall level of participation (Bird, Bird, & Scruggs, 1984; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987; Ross, 1987). In addition, researchers have found that women who earn as much (Model, 1981) or more (Ericksen et al., 1979; Haas, 1980) than their husbands have the greatest sharing of domestic responsibilities.

Studies have shown that it is not only the amount that a woman earns, but also the significance attached to her income which determines her husband's participation in domestic work. That is, researchers have found that in families where the wife's income was not considered to be essential to the overall family income, men rarely shared domestic work. However, in families where the wife's contribution was considered to be important and of benefit to the family, men were more likely to "help out" or share in household responsibilities (Komarovsky, 1983; Lein, 1984).

The significance the wife attaches to her income has also been shown to influence participation in domestic work. Lein et al. (in Vanek, 1980), for example, found that because the women in their study generally earned less money than their

husbands, they tended to view their contribution to the family income as being less significant, and so were able to justify the unequal division of labor within the home. That is, assuming a greater share of the household responsibility was a way of compensating for their lower wages and equalizing the balance of power within the family (Hochschild, 1989; Model, 1981).

In sum, studies which have looked at the relationship between income and participation in domestic work have produced consistent results and so have found support for this theory.

2. Time Availability

The Time Availability hypothesis suggests that the amount of time each partner spends in domestic activities is determined by the amount of time they have available to do so. Therefore, it is hypothesized that the partner with the least amount of time available will spend the fewest number of hours in domestic work (Coverman, 1985; Hiller, 1984; Stafford et al., 1977). Three factors have been identified in the literature as having an influence on time availability and, therefore, on one's involvement in domestic work. These include: time spent in paid work, time spent in leisure activities, and presence of children.

Paid work

Several researchers have found strong support for the Time Availability hypothesis noting that for men, the number of hours spent in paid work is the strongest predictor of time spent in domestic activities (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Coverman, 1985; Coverman & Sheley, 1986). In fact, the vast majority of researchers have concluded that the more time men spend in market work, the less time they spend in domestic labor (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Leslie & Anderson, 1988; Nickols & Metzen, 1978; Presland & Antill, 1987; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). Researchers have also found that there are life-cycle changes in men's involvement in domestic work which are mediated by time spent in paid labor. That is, the amount of time men spend in domestic work remains low over the years that they are employed, and only increases once they reach their retirement years (Harvey et al., 1991; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). Rexroat & Shehan (1987) have concluded that the increase is likely due to the fact that retired men spend very little time if any in the paid workforce and so have more time available to spend in domestic work.

The amount of time women spend in market work also significantly influences time spent in domestic labor. That is, studies have shown that the more time women spend in paid work, the less time they spend in domestic activities

(Johnson & Firebaugh, 1985; Nickols & Metzen, 1978; Presland & Antill, 1987).

In fact, Nickols & Metzen (1978) have found that women who are employed full-time reduce the amount of time they spend in domestic work by 15 hours per week.

The amount of time women spend in paid labor has also been found to influence the extent to which their husbands participate in domestic work. That is, findings indicate that the more time women spend in paid labor, the more domestic work men do (Piotrkowski & Repetti, 1984; Presland & Antill, 1987). In fact, studies have shown that men perform a greater share of the domestic work when their wives are employed full-time than when their wives are employed part-time or do not work at all (Erickson et al, 1979; Hochschild, 1989; Leslie & Anderson, 1988; Presland & Antill, 1987; Ross, 1987; Smith & Reid, 1986). Ross (1987) concluded that this is likely due to the fact that the more time a woman spends at work, the less time she has available to spend in domestic activities, and so the greater the demand that is placed on her husband to increase his involvement in domestic work.

The findings of a study by Presland & Antill (1987) indicate that although men do more work around the house when their wives are employed, the amount of time they spend doing it does not change. That is, the actual number of hours men spend doing domestic chores does not increase despite the fact that they are

doing a greater share. Therefore, findings suggest that wives' employment status only influences the amount of work men do and not the amount of time they spend doing it (Rexroat & Shehan, 1987).

Leisure

The relationship between time spent in leisure activities and involvement in domestic work has not been well documented in the literature. However, findings indicate that the more time men spend in leisure activities, the less time they spend in domestic work (Coverman & Sheley, 1986). No findings have been reported for women.

Presence of children

Studies have shown that the presence of children in the home significantly increases the amount of time women spend in domestic work (Coverman, 1985; Geerken & Gove, 1983; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). In fact, researchers have found that having children at home increases the amount of time women spend in domestic labor by over 11 hours per week (Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). One reason noted for the increase is that women with children are more likely than those

without to spend less time in paid labor and so will have more time available to spend in domestic work (Lupri & Mills, 1983).

The presence of children has also been shown to increase the amount of time men spend in domestic labor, however, findings indicate that the increase is much smaller for men than it is for women (Coverman, 1985; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). One reason noted for this is that in order to offset the expenses incurred by having children, men typically increase the number of hours they spend in market work which leaves them less time available to spend in domestic activities (Lupri & Mills, 1983).

In sum, the studies which have looked at the relationship between time availability and involvement in domestic work have produced consistent results and have found strong support for this hypothesis.

3. Skill

Skill can be defined as the level of ability one has to perform a variety of household tasks (Atkinson & Huston, 1984). The relationship between this variable and one's involvement in domestic work has not been well documented in the literature. However, the research findings from a study by Atkinson & Huston (1984) indicate that skill is strongly related to household division of labor. In fact,

these researchers found that the more skill individuals had to perform a variety of household tasks, the greater their involvement in domestic work.

Skill has also been shown to be a determining factor in couples' ability to share the domestic role. In fact, in a study by Haas (1980), over one-third of the couples reported that one of the main reasons they weren't able to share domestic work was because they lacked the necessary skills to do nontraditional tasks. Therefore, this lack of ability inhibited them from sharing household responsibilities equally and created a very segregated and traditional division of labor.

Atkinson & Huston (1984) also found that skill was related to involvement in nontraditional tasks. That is, they found that men who felt skilled at performing tasks traditionally assigned to women had the highest level of participation in "feminine" chores. By the same token, the more skill women had and the less skill men had to perform tasks traditionally assigned to men, the more likely women were to carry out such tasks.

In sum, although not many researchers have looked at the relationship between one's ability to do domestic work and the sharing of household responsibilities, findings indicate that skill is strongly related to household division of labor and is a determining factor in couples' ability to share the domestic role.

CHAPTER III - RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Sampling

A convenient sample of 74 volunteer couples was used in this study. In an effort to draw from as wide a segment of the population as possible, a number of different procedures were used to elicit participation.

First of all, notices describing the purpose of the study and the criteria necessary for participation were posted in various locations around the city including apartment buildings, supermarkets, laundromats, and the university campus.

Secondly, announcements appealing for volunteer couples were made at a variety of community events and church meetings.

Thirdly, "word of mouth" proved to be an effective way of eliciting participation. That is, a number of participants contacted this researcher asking for additional copies of the survey to be given out to others who had expressed an interest in this study.

Finally, notices describing the nature of the study and the criteria necessary for participation were distributed to various radio stations around the city and were broadcast as a public service announcement (see Appendix A).

Selection criteria

In order to be eligible to participate in this study, all participants had to meet four criteria.

First of all, all of the couples who participated in this study had to be legally married. The reason that this criterion was included is because research findings suggest that there are significant differences in the way married and cohabitating couples share domestic responsibilities (Stafford et al., 1977).

Secondly, both the husband and the wife had to be employed in paid labor. This criterion was included to ensure that only dual-earner couples were sampled.

Thirdly, the couples who participated in this study could not employ domestic help on a full-time basis. This was to ensure that the couples sampled performed the majority of the tasks themselves and, therefore, that this researcher would be able to measure how the responsibilities were distributed between the couple.

Finally, both the husband and the wife had to be willing to participate in the study. Previous researchers have noted that including only one of the partners in this type of study can result in subject bias and, therefore, weaken the overall credibility of the findings (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Hiller & Philliber, 1986).

Research instrument

1. Development

The research instrument which was used to collect the data for this study was developed by this investigator. The instrument was based on information provided by other researchers who have conducted similar studies on domestic role-sharing (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Coltrane, 1989; Findlay & Lawrence, 1991; Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Smith & Reid, 1986; Stafford et al., 1977). The information provided by these researchers was compiled, and carefully evaluated using a criterion approach. Specifically, this investigator was looking for commonalities and differences in their design as well as recurring themes in the content. Items or factors identified to be essential to measuring domestic role-sharing were considered to be important criteria for inclusion. The rationale these researchers gave for including or not including items as well as the extent to which their measures were valid and reliable were also important determining factors in designing this instrument.

From the information provided, a pool of questions was formulated and reformulated until this investigator felt confident of the content of the items included. Once a final draft was made, the instrument was reviewed by a team of

research and measurement experts as well as individuals considered to be proficient in the area of Family Studies. Items identified to be vague and ambiguous were deleted or modified and other items were added. Recommendations for changes in the phrasing and sequencing of questions were made to ensure that the instrument was both legible and coherent.

A reliability analysis was also conducted to ensure that sections of the instrument were internally consistent. The data from this analysis are presented in Appendix B.

An essential secondary check was made by members of the U of A Ethics and Review Committee who determined that this instrument and the procedure being used met ethical standards. Once this was determined, the instrument was pilot tested by individuals who were representative of the target sample to ensure that the reading level was appropriate and that the use of technical jargon had been avoided.

2. Content

The instrument which was used in this study is in the form of a survey and is divided into three main sections (see Appendix C).

The purpose of section 1 was to gather demographic information. The

questions pertain to the respondents sex, age, level of education, occupational status, and income.

The purpose of section 2 was to gather specific information about the division of labor within households. To do this, twenty household tasks were included in this section and were divided into two main areas: internal tasks which included general housekeeping and meal preparation, and external tasks which included repairs and general upkeep.

In filling out this section, participants were asked to estimate what percentage they believed they did and what percentage they believed their spouse did for each of the twenty tasks. They were also asked to indicate what an ideal distribution would be for each of the tasks. That is, what percentage they believed they should do and what percentage they believed their spouse should do. This information was used to measure the extent to which couples actually shared the domestic role as well as the extent to which they believed it should be shared.

The tasks which were included in this section were carefully selected by this researcher with the intent of choosing only those domestic activities which have been found to be the most common and frequently performed (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Coltrane, 1989; Smith & Reid, 1986; Stafford et al., 1977). The overall aim was to choose tasks which couples perform on a regular basis so that the results would be representative of their daily activities. The purpose of dividing

this section into two main areas was to be able to see how subgroups of this role were shared.

Section 2 was also designed to measure satisfaction with the way responsibilities for internal and external tasks were distributed. In filling out this section, participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction by circling a number between one and five. One equated to being very satisfied and five to being very dissatisfied with the way responsibilities were distributed.

Finally, section 2 was designed to gather information on participants ability to do a variety of household tasks. In filling out this section, participants were asked to read over the twenty tasks and to indicate which tasks they felt they had the ability to do regardless of whether or not they actually did them. This information was used to see if there was a relationship between skill and the extent to which the domestic role was shared.

The purpose of section 3 was to gather specific information about the way respondents used their time. Seven items were included in this section and were carefully selected with the purpose of choosing those activities which best represent the major ways in which people spend their time (Harvey et al., 1991). An other column was included, however, so that other ways in which people spend their time such as eating and transportation could be included.

In filling out this section, participants were asked to estimate how many

hours per week they spent in each of the eight activities listed. This information was used to see how time availability influenced the extent to which the domestic role was shared.

Data collection

Couples who stated an interest in participating in this study and who met all of the selection criteria were provided with a study package (see Appendix C). This package contained two copies of the survey, one to be filled out by each spouse, along with a cover letter which explained the purpose of the study, gave an assurance of confidentiality, provided instructions to the participants, and indicated the date by which the surveys were to be returned.

A consent form was also included in the study package. Respondents were asked to read and sign this form and return it along with their completed survey to the researcher. The consent form explained that in signing this form, respondents were giving consent to participate in the study and to have their responses included as part of the research. It also informed them of their right to leave questions blank, ask questions about the study, and withdraw from the study at any time. Respondents were informed that once the completed study package was returned to the researcher, the consent form would be removed and retained in a separate

file so as to assure the anonymity of their responses.

The study package was either mailed to the respondents by the researcher or given directly to them by other contacts. All couples were asked to fill out their surveys independently of their spouse and then to return both copies directly to the researcher using the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. The reason that they were to mail the surveys directly to the researcher was to ensure that the researcher would be the only one who had access to the data and, therefore, that confidentiality was maintained.

A file of respondents names and addresses was kept so that the researcher could keep track of who had and had not responded. However, once they had returned their surveys, any record of their names and addresses was destroyed. Follow-ups were made for those respondents who did not return their surveys by the deadline indicated. However, this effort produced only a minor response.

In all, 106 couples expressed an interest in participating in this study and so were provided with a study package. Of the 106 sets of questionnaires sent out, 74 completed and 4 uncompleted sets were eventually returned. All of the 74 completed sets were included in this study.

Data analysis

A number of different statistical procedures were used to analyze the data. For the demographic information and in cases where the data needed to be summarized, percentages and sample means were calculated, and the information was presented in tables.

In order to test for patterns and relationships in the data, other statistical procedures were used. These included determining and comparing sample means, producing cross-classification tables, and calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Where patterns and relationships were found, significance was tested by using one-way analysis of variance. For the purpose of this study, differences which met or exceeded a probability level of .05 were considered to be significant.

Anticipated Results

Actual behaviors:

1. Overall, the domestic role will be shared equally. However, there will be differences in the type of work men and women do. That is, women will do the majority of the internal work, while men will do the majority of the external work.

2. Some tasks will be shared more than others. However, the majority will remain the responsibility of one sex or the other.

3. In general, individuals will see themselves as doing more than their partners say they do.

Ideals:

4. For internal tasks, couples will agree that responsibilities should be shared. However, women's ideals are likely to be more egalitarian than men's.

5. For external tasks, couples will agree that men should assume most of the responsibility.

Satisfaction:

6. Overall, individuals will be satisfied with the way responsibilities are distributed. However, satisfaction is likely to be higher for men than for women.

7. Satisfaction will be higher for external than internal tasks.

Influencing factors:

8. Education will not be a strong influencing factor in the sharing of domestic responsibilities.

9. Couples in which the wife earns more than or the same as her husband

will share domestic work to a greater extent. By the same token, couples in which the wife earns less than her husband will share domestic work to a lesser extent.

10. Women will spend more time in domestic work and child care, while men will spend more time in paid work and leisure activities. Time spent in the other four activities will be more or less the same.

11. Overall, the more time individuals spend in activities such as paid work and leisure, the less time they will spend in domestic work.

12. Presence of children in the home will increase the amount of domestic work women do as well as the amount of time they spend doing it. On the other hand, presence of children will decrease the amount of domestic work men do as well as the amount of time they spend doing it.

13. Women will report having more ability to do internal tasks, while men will report having more ability to do external tasks.

14. Skill will not influence involvement in tasks traditionally assigned to men and women. However, the more ability they have to do nontraditional tasks, the more internal work men will do and the more external work women will do.

CHAPTER IV - RESULTS

Sample characteristics

1. Age

The ages of the participants in this study ranged from 21 to 61 years. The mean age for the total sample (males and females) was 35.9 years, while the mean ages for males and females were 36.7 years and 35.2 years respectively.

2. Education

Data on the educational levels of participants is presented in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, a wide range of educational levels were represented in this sample. The data show that although there were a greater number of women who obtained graduate degrees, overall, the males in this sample had more education than the females. That is, almost half of the males as compared with one-third of the females have obtained a university degree. By the same token, only one-fifth of the males as compared with one-third of the females had a high school diploma or less.

Table 1**Level of education by gender**

Level of Education	Male %	Female %
Some elementary/high school	5.4	6.8
High school graduate	16.2	24.3
Some post-secondary	9.5	13.5
Tech. inst/Comm. college	21.6	20.3
Undergraduate degree	33.8	16.2
Graduate degree	13.5	18.9

3. Employment status

There were distinct differences in the employment status of the males and females in this sample. That is, although the majority of males, 95.9%, were employed on a full-time basis (35 hours/week or more), only two-thirds of the females were. By the same token, only 4.1% of the males as compared with one-third of the females were employed on a part-time basis (less than 35 hours/week). Although somewhat surprising, these findings would appear to reflect current societal trends.

4. Income

As shown in Table 2, a wage differential existed in over 85% of the couples sampled. It is interesting to note that in the majority of these couples, it is the male who earned the higher salary. The fact that over 70% of the women earned less than their spouse may be due to the fact that one-third of the women were employed on a part-time basis, and that, for the most part, the men in this sample had more education.

Table 2

Income ratio by gender

Income Ratio	Male %	Female %
Earn more than spouse	71.6	13.5
Earn less than spouse	13.5	71.6
Earn same as spouse	14.9	14.9

Participation in the domestic role

1. Actual behaviors

As can be seen from Table 3, couples appear to be sharing the domestic role. That is, by their own self-estimates, men and women reported that they each did about 50% of the total amount of domestic work.

A closer look at the data, however, revealed that there were significant differences in the type of work each group performed. That is, men clearly did the majority of the external work, while women did the majority of the internal work. In fact, by their own self-estimates, men reported that they did 70% of the external work and only one-third of the internal work. By contrast, women reported that they did 70% of the internal work and only about one-third of the external work. These differences were significant at the .01 level.

Table 3 also provides information about men and women's contributions to individual household tasks. As can be seen, there was some variation in the extent to which tasks were shared. However, findings indicate that, overall, there was relatively little sharing of individual tasks and that the majority were clearly the responsibility of one sex or the other.

A comparison of self and partner estimates showed that individuals saw themselves as contributing more to domestic tasks than their partners said they did.

However, the difference between their estimates was relatively minor indicating that there was fairly close agreement about the relative contributions made by each sex.

2. Ideals

Data on men and women's ideals for the domestic role is presented in Table 4.

Findings indicate that although men and women believed that, overall, the domestic role should be shared, there was also agreement that internal tasks should be shared to a greater extent than external tasks. In fact, both men and women reported that men should do about 40% of the internal work, while women should do about 60%, and that men should do between 60 and 70% of the external work, while women should do about one-third. In addition, although men and women's ideals were closely matched for internal tasks, men's ideals for external tasks were slightly more traditional.

Overall, there was agreement that some tasks such as cooking and washing windows should be shared, while others such as laundry and maintaining the car should be the responsibility of one sex or the other.

Table 3**Actual contributions to domestic work**

Task	Male		Female	
	self estimate %	partner estimate %	self estimate %	partner estimate %
Laundry	22	18	82	78
Ironing	18	18	81	79
Dusting	26	22	77	73
Vacuuming	49	43	55	49
Wash floors	30	28	71	69
Tidy up	42	32	68	58
Clean bathroom	30	21	79	70
Make beds	33	29	71	67
Cook	38	35	65	62
Wash dishes	46	43	57	54
Total	33	29	70	66
Clean garage	83	78	19	12
Mow lawn	78	75	24	17
Wash car	73	65	31	25
Repair car	87	80	11	8
Shovel snow	80	74	25	20
Yardwork	66	55	45	34
Gardening	42	41	58	57
Painting	70	64	30	27
Wash windows	38	33	60	57
House repairs	84	77	20	16
Total	70	61	31	27
Total (internal and external)	51	46	52	48

Table 4**Ideal contributions to domestic work**

Task	Male		Female	
	self estimate %	partner estimate %	self estimate %	partner estimate %
Laundry	33	66	73	27
Ironing	26	72	67	32
Dusting	34	65	60	39
Vacuuming	51	48	47	51
Wash floors	43	56	55	44
Tidy up	45	55	53	47
Clean bathroom	41	59	59	41
Make beds	37	63	59	41
Cook	44	56	57	43
Wash dishes	48	52	48	52
Total	40	59	58	42
Clean garage	85	14	22	76
Mow lawn	75	22	31	68
Wash car	65	34	36	60
Repair car	83	12	18	75
Shovel snow	77	23	31	68
Yardwork	61	39	44	56
Gardening	44	56	57	41
Painting	64	35	32	64
Wash windows	48	49	52	43
House repairs	81	19	21	76
Total	69	30	34	63
Total (internal and external)	54	45	47	52

3. A comparison of actual behaviors and ideals

Table 5 provides information on how men and women's behaviors and ideals compare. The data show that both men and women agreed that men should be doing more of the internal work than they are currently doing, but that their contribution should still be less than 50%. By the same token, they also agreed that women should be doing less of the internal work than they are presently doing, but that their contribution should still be more than 50%.

Findings also indicate that both sexes agreed that men and women's contributions to external work are more or less what they should be.

Table 5

A comparison of actual and ideal contributions

Estimates	Male contribution %		Female contribution %	
	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal
Internal tasks:				
self	33	40	70	58
partner	29	42	66	59
External tasks:				
self	70	69	31	34
partner	65	63	27	30

Satisfaction with the domestic role

Data on satisfaction with the domestic role is presented in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Findings indicate that overall, satisfaction with the domestic role was high. That is, over 70% of the males and almost two-thirds of the females reported that they were somewhat to very satisfied with the way responsibilities for domestic tasks were distributed.

The data showed, however, that there were gender differences in satisfaction. That is, for both internal and external tasks, men reported higher levels of satisfaction than women, and women reported higher levels of dissatisfaction than men. Indifference to satisfaction was relatively matched in the two sexes.

The data also showed that for both males and females, there was greater satisfaction with the way responsibilities were distributed for external than internal tasks.

Table 6**Satisfaction: internal and external tasks**

Gender	Somewhat to very satisfied %	Indifferent %	Somewhat to very dissatisfied %
Males	73.0	24.3	2.8
Females	64.2	22.3	13.6

Table 7**Satisfaction: internal tasks**

Gender	Somewhat to very satisfied %	Indifferent %	Somewhat to very dissatisfied %
Males	68.9	27.0	4.1
Females	59.5	25.7	14.9

Table 8**Satisfaction: external tasks**

Gender	Somewhat to very satisfied %	Indifferent %	Somewhat to very dissatisfied %
Males	77.0	21.6	1.4
Females	68.9	18.9	12.2

Influencing factors

1. Education

The relationship between the amount of education partners had and the amount of domestic work they performed is presented in Figures 1 and 2.

For internal tasks, there was a weak trend in the data which showed that men and women who had more education than their partner did less internal work, and those who had less education than their partner did more internal work. Couples who had the same amount of education fell somewhere in the middle. It should be noted, however, that these differences were not statistically significant and that regardless of whether they had more, less, or the same amount of education, women did the majority of the internal work.

For external tasks, there was very little difference in the amount of work men and women did if either partner had more or less education than the other. However, in couples where their educational level was the same, men did less of the external work and women did more. Although couples who had the same amount of education appeared to share external work more, it should be noted that the extent of sharing was minor and that overall, men did the majority of the external work.

It should also be noted that regardless of the amount of education they had, the division of labor was very traditional and segregated and there was very little sharing of domestic responsibilities.

2. Income

The relationship between relative earnings and involvement in domestic work is shown in Figures 3 and 4.

For both internal and external tasks, income had no influence on men and women's involvement in domestic work. Findings indicate that there were relatively minor differences between those who earned more, less, or the same as their partner in terms of their involvement in domestic work. However, there was a weak trend in the data which showed that couples who earned the same amount of money tended to share domestic work more. The extent of their sharing, however, was very minimal and not statistically significant. Findings indicate, therefore, that regardless of whether they earned more, less, or the same as their partner, the division of labor was traditional and segregated and there was very little sharing of domestic responsibilities.

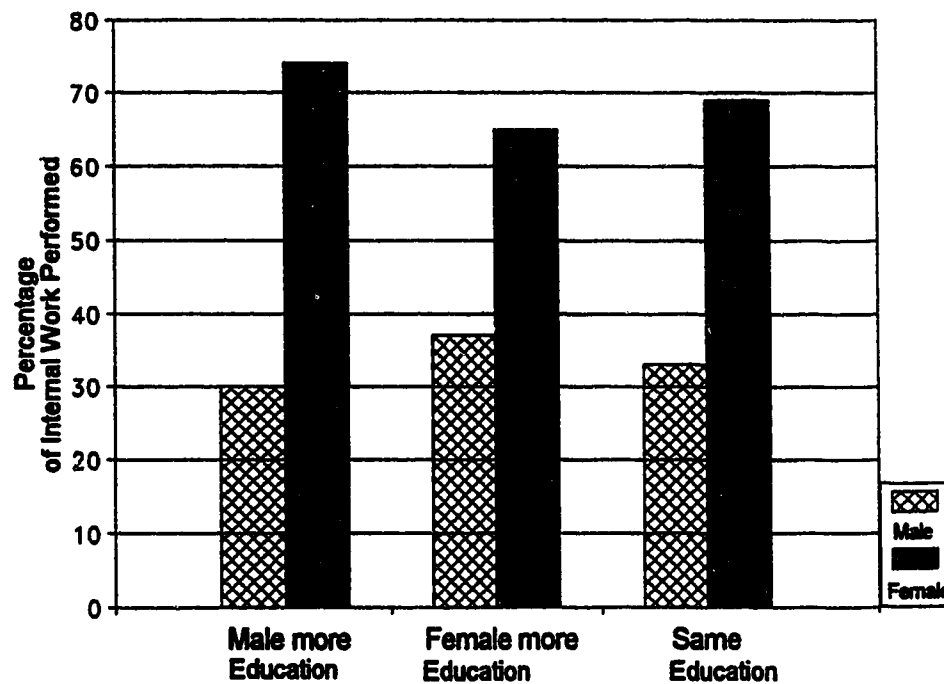
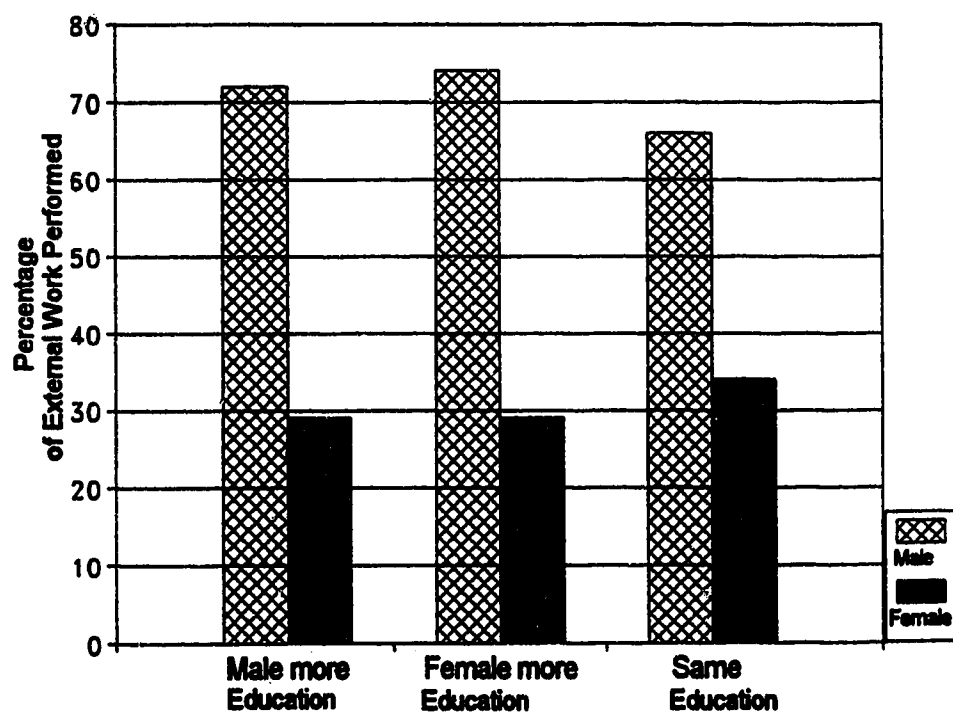
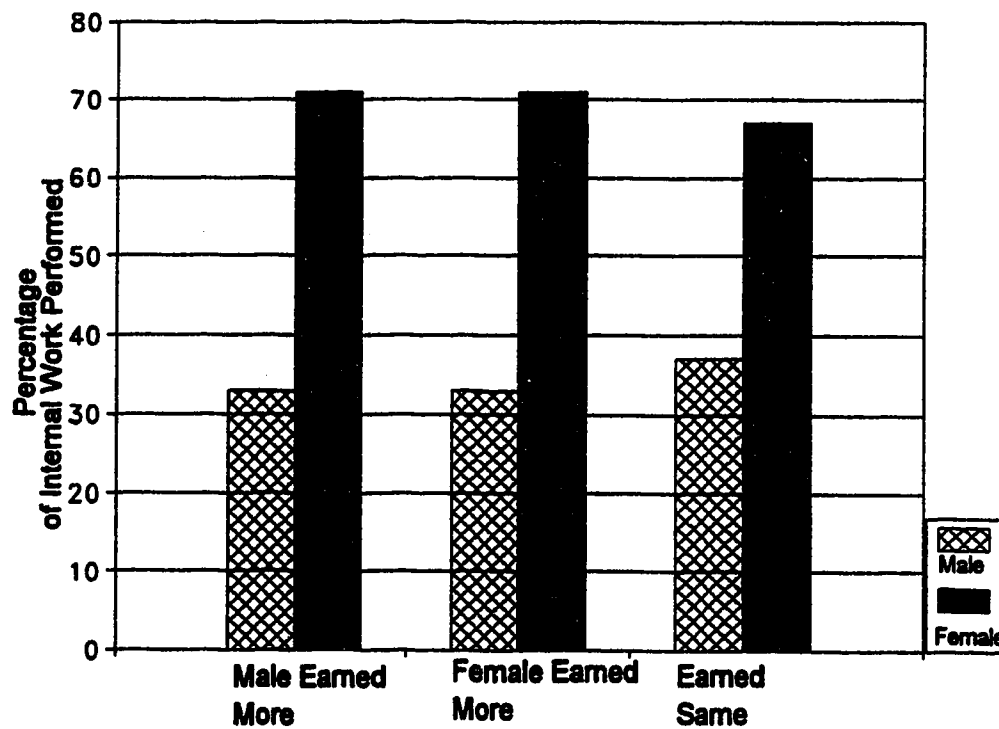
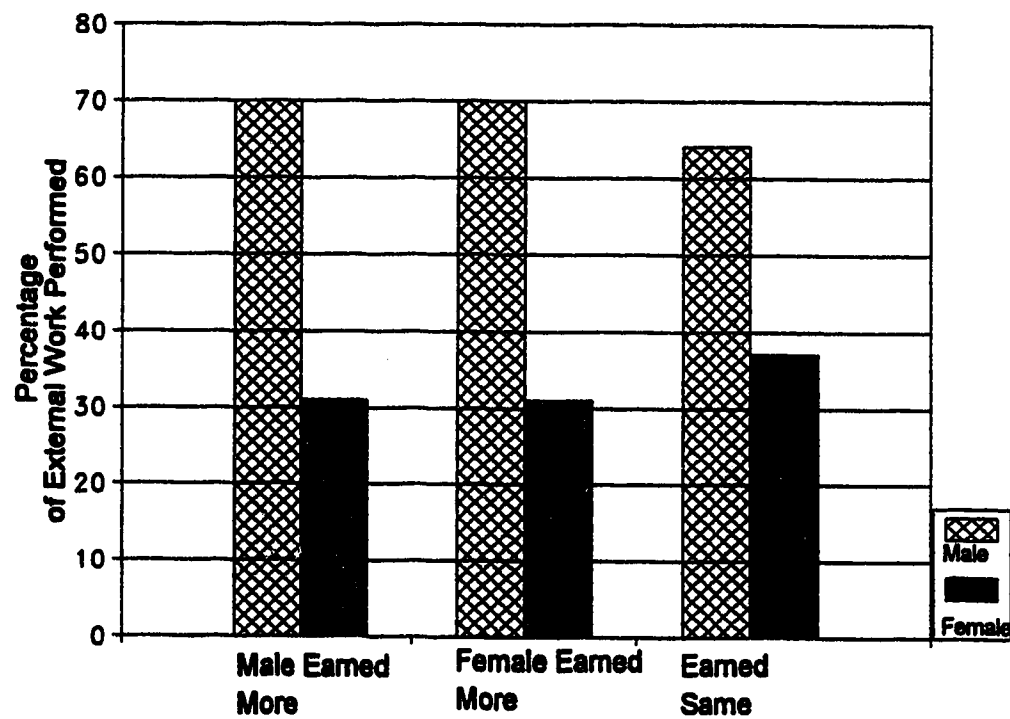
Figure 1**Distribution of internal work based on education****Figure 2****Distribution of external work based on education**

Figure 3**Distribution of internal work based on income****Figure 4****Distribution of external work based on income**

3. Time availability

Table 9 provides information on the way in which the men and women in this study used their time. As can be seen, men spent more time than women in paid work, 11 hours more per week, and women spent more time than men in domestic work and child care. In fact, they spent over 7 hours more per week in domestic work and 10.5 hours more per week in child care. In totalling time spent in market work and domestic activities (housework and child care), women spent about 7 hours more per week than men.

In terms of time spent in leisure, fitness, and social activities, the time difference was 3.4 hours per week in favor of men.

As expected, time spent in the other four activities, school, community service/volunteer work, sleeping, and other, was relatively matched in the two sexes.

Paid work and leisure activities

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between time spent in paid work and time spent in domestic work. For males, a correlation coefficient of -.2 was obtained, and for females, the correlation

coefficient was $-.3$. Therefore, findings indicate that for both men and women, there was no relationship between these two variables.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was also used to analyze the relationship between time spent in leisure activities and time spent in domestic work. For males, a correlation coefficient of $-.1$ was obtained, indicating that there was no relationship between these two variables. For females, however, the correlation coefficient was $-.5$. Although this indicates only a moderate relationship between these two variables, there is some evidence to suggest that the more time women spent in leisure activities, the less time they spent in domestic work.

Presence of children

As shown in Table 10, presence of children had little effect on the amount and type of domestic work men and women did. That is regardless of the presence or absence of children in the home, women did the majority of the internal work and men did the majority of the external work. However, presence of children did significantly influence the amount of time they spent doing domestic work. That is, the amount of time women spent increased by 4.5 hours per week (from 19.7 to 24.2), while the amount of time men spent decreased by 2 hours per week (from 15.4 to 13.4). These differences were significant at the .01 level.

Table 9**Time use by gender**

Activity	Female (hours / week)	Male (hours / week)
Paid work	35.4	46.4
School	8.6	7.1
Housework	21.6	14.4
Child care	26.2	15.7
Community service/ volunteer work	4.3	3.6
Leisure/fitness/social	19.6	23.0
Sleeping	53.4	52.0
Other	23.2	23.3

Table 10**Contributions to domestic work based on children**

	Internal		External	
	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %
With children	33	71	71	31
Without children	34	71	71	32

4. Skill

The average number of internal tasks men and women reported being able to do was 8.4 and 9.3 respectively. For external tasks, men reported being able to do an average of 9.1 tasks, while women reported being able to do an average of 7.4 tasks. Therefore, as expected, women reported that they had more ability to do internal work and men reported that they had more ability to do external work.

The relationship between skill and involvement in domestic work is presented in Figures 5 and 6.

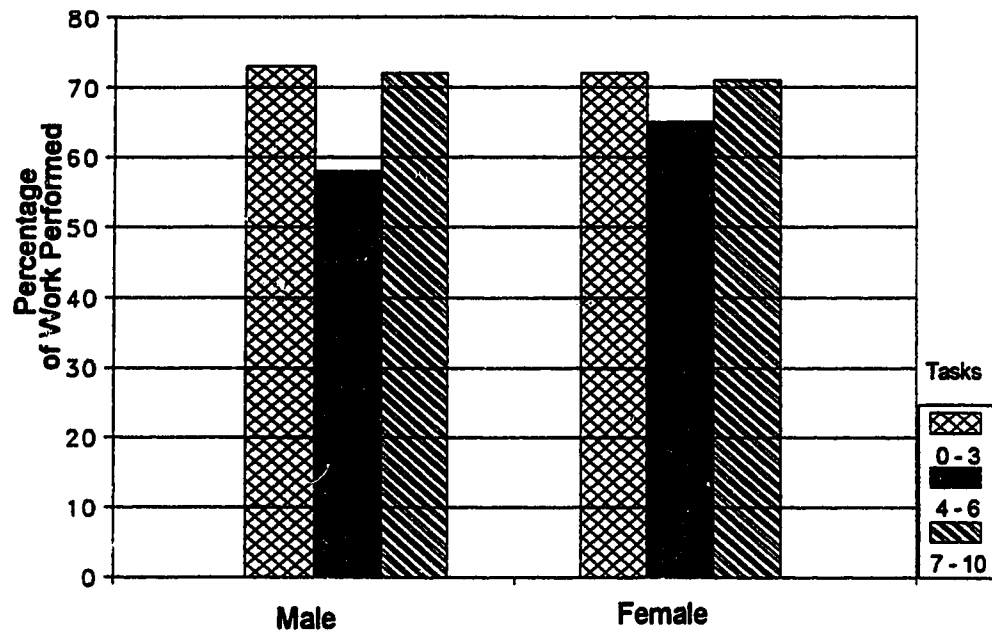
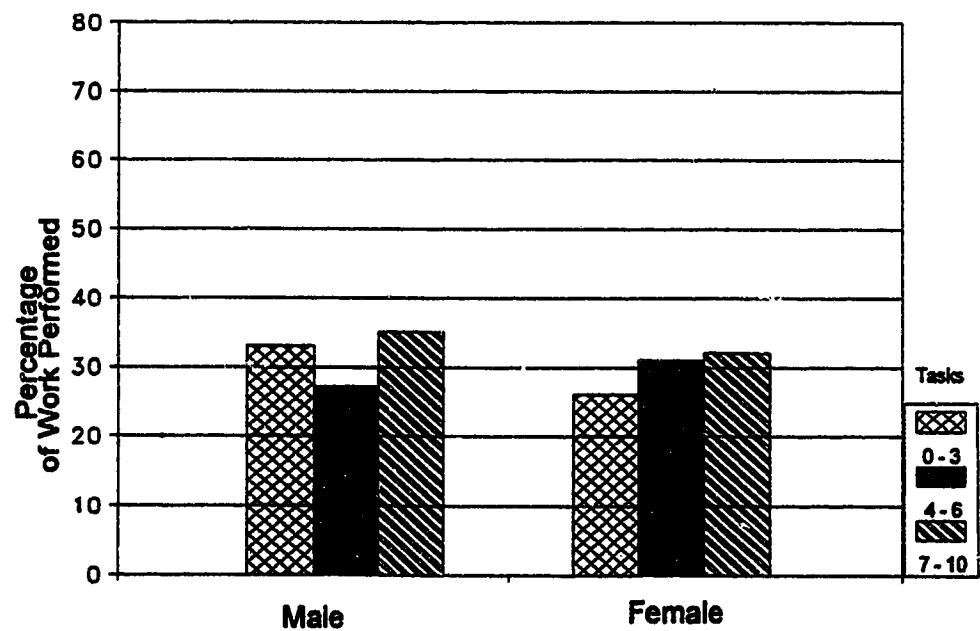
As can be seen in Figure 5, skill appeared to have some influence on men and women's ability to do tasks traditionally assigned to them. That is, although there was little difference in the amount of work performed between those who had the ability to do between 0-3 tasks and 7-10 tasks, men and women who reported that they had the ability to do between 4 and 6 tasks tended to do less domestic work.

As can be seen in Figure 6, skill also appeared to have some influence on men and women's ability to do nontraditional tasks. That is, for men, those who had the ability to do between 4 and 6 tasks tended to do less internal work than those who reported having more or less ability. For women, there was a weak trend in the data showing that the more ability they had, the more external work

they did. The differences, however, were minor and not statistically significant.

Although skill appeared to have some influence on men and women's involvement in domestic work, a Pearson correlation coefficient of .1 indicates no relationship between these two variables.

It should also be noted that even though men and women had relatively equal ability to do domestic work, and that the majority of men and women reported being able to do at least 70% of nontraditional tasks, men still did most of the external work and women still did most of the internal work.

Figure 5**Involvement in traditional tasks based on ability****Figure 6****Involvement in nontraditional tasks based on ability**

CHAPTER V - DISCUSSION

Participation in the domestic role

1. Actual behaviors

Some researchers have suggested that, over time, the responsibilities for domestic work have become more equally shared (Araji, 1977; Coverman, 1985). Others disagree suggesting that despite women's increased involvement in paid labor, there has been very little change in the way men and women share domestic responsibilities (Coverman & Sheley, 1986; Hiller & Philliber, 1986). Still others have argued that these apparent changes are due to a decrease in the amount of time and effort women have put into domestic work and not due to increased involvement on the part of men (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). Although this study cannot address the issue of whether men and women's involvement has changed over the years, it does provide information about men and women's actual contributions to the domestic role and gives us a better understanding of the extent to which domestic responsibilities are shared.

The results of this study showed that men and women tended to share the domestic role. That is, overall, men and women each did about 50% of the total

amount of domestic work. This finding is contrary to the findings of a number of researchers who have concluded that women dominate the domestic role (Bernardo et al., 1987; Condran & Bode, 1982; Coverman, 1985; Ross, 1987; Shelton, 1990). This discrepancy can be explained, however, by methodological differences. That is, the majority of these studies have defined the domestic role on the basis of "feminine" tasks only and in doing so tend to underestimate men's involvement in domestic work (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Nickols & Metzen, 1978). On the other hand, my study included both "feminine" and "masculine" tasks, and so likely provided a more realistic assessment of their involvement.

Although it was found that the domestic role was shared overall, it was also found that there were significant differences in the type of work men and women did. In fact, 70% of the internal tasks were done primarily by women and 70% of the external tasks were done primarily by men. This finding supports the findings of a number of researchers who have concluded that household chores tend to be gender-specific (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Coltrane, 1989; Findlay & Lawrence, 1991; Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Presland & Antill, 1987). Although no firm conclusions can be made as to why the majority of tasks were dominated by one sex or the other, speculation leads me to suggest that personal preferences (likes and dislikes); socialization experiences, and societal norms and expectations may be some of the reasons.

As predicted, individuals generally saw themselves as contributing more to domestic work than their partner said they did. This finding supports the findings of other researchers (Findlay & Lawrence, 1991; Hiller & Philliber, 1986) and can be interpreted in one of two ways. One, individuals tended to overestimate their contribution to domestic work, or two, they tended to underestimate their partner's contribution.

Finally, the fact that couples generally agreed about the relative contributions made by each partner lends credibility to their estimates and suggests ~~that~~ greater confidence can be placed in the findings.

2. Ideals

Several researchers have noted that when it comes to the division of labor within the home, a discrepancy exists between what people do and what they believe they should do, that is, between their actual behaviors and their ideals (Araji, 1977; Bernardo et al., 1987; Findlay & Lawrence, 1991; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Hochschild, 1989; Smith & Reid, 1986). In fact, these researchers have noted that people's ideals tend to be more egalitarian and their behaviors more traditional. The results of my study have supported this finding.

Studies have also shown that there are gender differences in ideals. That is, men tend to be more traditional in their beliefs, whereas women tend to be more

egalitarian (Ferber, 1982; Hochschild, 1989; Kim & Lee, 1989). Although the data in my study showed only slight differences between men and women's ideals, the differences do support the findings of these researchers.

Although a certain amount of agreement between men and women's ideals was expected, it was surprising to find that their ideals matched so closely as it was expected that women's ideals would be much more egalitarian than men's. One possible explanation for this is that, with time, men's attitudes and beliefs are changing. However, it's also possible that their responses reflected a social desirability bias. That is, the ideals they expressed may have been an attempt at responding in a way which would be considered socially acceptable.

Although men and women reported that domestic work should be shared to a greater extent, it was interesting to note that their ideals were not completely egalitarian. In fact, both agreed that there should be differences in the type of work each sex does. That is, women should do more of the internal work and men should do more of the external work. It may be, as suggested by a number of researchers, (Coltrane, 1989; Gunter & Gunter, 1990; Lein & Blehar, 1983) that domestic work is an important part of women's identity and, therefore, that some don't want to relinquish control over tasks which have been traditionally their responsibility. However, the fact that women were more willing to share internal work with men than men were to share external work with women may suggest

that external work is more a part of men's identities than previously thought.

Finally, the fact that both men and women thought that internal tasks should be shared more than external tasks may have to do with the inherent nature of these tasks. That is, because internal tasks are generally more time-consuming and have to be performed on a daily basis, it may seem more fair to share the work. On the other hand, external tasks tend to occur less often and don't have the same sense of immediacy and so there is likely less conscious awareness of the work involved. In addition, because some external tasks such as maintaining the car or making household repairs tend to require a certain level of ability, it may seem more logical and more efficient to leave them to the person who can do them with the greatest ease.

Satisfaction with the domestic role

A number of researchers have found that in spite of inequalities in the division of labor, most couples are satisfied with the way the domestic role is shared (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Presland & Antill, 1987; Yogev, 1981). The results of my study have supported this finding. In fact, the majority of men and women reported that they were somewhat to very satisfied with the way responsibilities for domestic tasks were distributed.

Researchers have also found that men are generally more satisfied than women with the way responsibilities are distributed (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Presland & Antill, 1987). The results of my study have also supported this finding.

Although it was anticipated that, for the most part, men and women would be satisfied with the domestic role, and that men would report higher levels of satisfaction, the fact that the majority of women reported being somewhat to very satisfied with the way responsibilities were distributed was a little puzzling. That is, my findings clearly indicated that not only did women spend more time in domestic work, but they also assumed greater responsibility for tasks which are generally more time-consuming and, for the most part, require greater daily involvement. Therefore, although I can understand why men were generally satisfied, it's not clear to me why women were.

One possible explanation is that their satisfaction reflected good coping strategies. That is, the fact that women spent less time in paid labor may not have been a coincidence. Perhaps they purposely reduced their hours to compensate for spending more time in domestic work. This would accomplish two things. It would ensure that the work got done and would make role-overload less likely.

It's also possible, however, that their satisfaction reflected a passive acceptance of societal norms and expectations. That is, it's not inconceivable that a number of these women grew up in very traditional homes where their fathers went

out to work and their mothers stayed at home and became full-time homemakers. As a result, these women may have learned that internal work is their responsibility and so have adopted an attitude of "that's just the way it is".

A third possibility is that expressing satisfaction with the domestic role may be a way of denying the reality of their situation and of avoiding conflict with their spouse. That is, if they can convince themselves that they really like things the way that they are, then they don't have to deal with a potentially volatile issue.

Finally, it's also very possible that women were genuinely satisfied with the way responsibilities were distributed, and, therefore, that their responses reflected their true feelings.

Since one of the purposes of this study was to determine how satisfied men and women were with the domestic role and not to find out their reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction, we won't ever really know their reasons and so can only speculate. However, this may be an area of interest for future researchers and so can be explored at a later date.

Not surprisingly, the results of my study showed that a greater number of women than men were dissatisfied with the way responsibilities were distributed for internal work. One possible explanation is that because women were assuming a greater share of the responsibility for internal tasks and because these tasks are generally more demanding and time-consuming, their dissatisfaction may reflect a

desire for greater involvement by men in internal work. This explanation makes sense considering the fact that women reported that their spouses were doing less than one-third of the internal work and that they would ideally like to see them doing about 40%.

Women also reported greater dissatisfaction with the way responsibilities were distributed for external tasks. This can be interpreted in one of two ways. One, women may be dissatisfied with their own contribution to external work. However, this is unlikely considering that there was close agreement between their behaviors and ideals for external tasks. Secondly, women may be dissatisfied with their partners contribution to external work. That is, because men assumed most of the responsibility for external tasks, they likely had less time and energy to relieve women of the on-going responsibility for internal work.

Finally, the fact that men and women reported greater satisfaction for the way responsibilities were distributed for external than internal work can be explained by the fact that there was closer agreement between their behaviors and ideals for external work. On the other hand, both men and women reported that men should be doing more of the internal work and women should be doing less. Consequently, because their behaviors didn't match their ideals, there was understandably greater dissatisfaction.

Influencing factors

1. Education and income

The Relative Resources theory is based on the premise that the more resources one is able to obtain, the more power he/she will hold in the relationship, and so the greater his/her input will be with regards to the division of labor. Education and income have generally been considered as the two major variables in resource theory (Condran & Bode, 1982; Coverman, 1985; Hiller, 1984).

The studies which have looked the relationship between these variables and involvement in domestic work have not produced consistent findings. Some researchers have concluded that they are strong predictors in determining men and women's involvement in domestic work (Ericksen et al., 1979; Model, 1981), while others have found that these variables have limited impact, and, therefore, limited generalizability (Condran & Bode, 1982; Coverman, 1985). Most researchers have concluded, however, that income is a better predictor of involvement in domestic work and produces more consistent findings.

In my study, neither education nor income had much influence on men and women's involvement in domestic work. That is, regardless of the amount of education they had or the amount of money they earned, the division of labor was

very traditional and segregated and there was very little sharing of domestic responsibilities. Therefore, the results of my study did not find strong support for the Relative Resources theory.

One reason that my data did not find strong support for this theory may have to do with the time in which this theory originated. That is, this theory was first proposed by Blood & Wolfe in the early 1960's. This was a time when work and family roles were much more clearly differentiated than they are today. In fact, in 1960, less than one in three women held paying jobs. However, today only one out of every three women stays at home (Statistics Canada, 1991). Therefore, at that time, the majority of couples had a very traditional relationship in which the husband went out to work and the wife stayed at home. As a result, the man usually had more education and most likely an income and so power differentials within these couples were much more evident.

However, in today's society, considering the fact that the majority of couples are dual-earners and that more women today than ever before are obtaining higher education, the power differential evident in the 1960's isn't as prevalent today. That is, even though women, on average, still earn less than men, and, for the most part, have less education, it seems to me that the couples today are starting off with a much more equal power base than the couples in the 1960's.

Secondly, it seems logical to suggest that when a woman in the 1960's

entered the labor force, there were likely major changes to the family system. That is, because the wife's role changed from homemaker to co-provider, her husband had to assume a greater share of the domestic work to compensate for the changes. However, in today's society, it may be that a type of status quo has set in where not only are women expected to hold paying jobs, but their involvement in the workforce is no longer perceived as a disruption to the family system. As a result, it has become "normal" for women to hold two jobs, one paid and one unpaid, and so would explain why higher income and more education did not influence involvement in domestic work. That is, the novelty has worn off and become a status quo.

In sum, since men and women's roles have changed so much since the time this theory was first proposed, it may be that the Relative Resources theory is not as applicable today as it once was in explaining the division of labor.

2. Time availability

The results of my study showed that men, on average, spent more time in paid work, while women, on average, spent more time in domestic activities and child care. These findings support the findings of a number of other researchers (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Coverman, 1983; Ferber, 1982; Googins & Burden,

1987; Harvey et al., 1991; Lupri, 1988; Presland & Antill, 1987; Yogev, 1981), and can be explained in a number of ways.

First of all, the difference in the number of hours men and women spent in paid work can be explained by the fact that more women than men held part-time jobs. However, the difference may also be due to economic factors. That is, Pleck (1985) has noted that it makes sense economically for men to spend more time in paid work because of the wage differential that exists between men and women. That is, because women, on average, earn only two-thirds of what men earn, it makes sense for women to cut back on their hours at work and assume a greater share of the responsibility in the home.

Secondly, the fact that women spent more time in domestic activities is likely due to the fact that they did the majority of the internal work. As previously noted, this type of work tends to be more time-consuming and requires greater daily involvement.

Thirdly, the fact that women spent more time in child care can be interpreted in a number of ways. First of all, even in today's society, it's more socially acceptable for women to stay home or cut back on their hours at work to care for the children. Secondly, socialization may have been a factor. That is, motherhood is often equated with parenthood (Coltrane, 1989), and so likely many of these women were brought up believing that child care is primarily their

responsibility. And finally, the difference in time spent in child care may be due to the fact that women have easier access to maternity leave than men to paternity leave. In fact, although the majority of companies offer maternity leave, only 9% of North American companies offer paternity leave (Hochschild, 1989).

Although some possible explanations for my findings have been provided, it seems as though my results are plagued by a Catch-22 situation. That is, it really is difficult to know what factors played the biggest role in influencing the way men and women spent their time. For example, do women, as a rule, just spend less time in paid work and so have more time available to spend in domestic activities? Or is it that women feel more responsible for domestic work and child care and so cut back on the amount of time they spend in paid labor to compensate for spending more time in these areas?

By the same token, this logic can also be applied to men. That is, do men spend more time in paid work because they don't have to spend as much time in domestic activities? Or is it that men feel a greater sense of responsibility to provide for the family's economic needs and so make this their priority by cutting back on the amount of time they spend in other areas?

Although my study cannot provide the answers to these questions, this may be an area of interest for future researchers and so can be explored at a later date.

The results of my study showed that when children were present in the

home, there was no difference in the amount of domestic work men and women did, but that there was a difference in the amount of time they spent doing it. That is, the amount of time men spent decreased, while the amount of time women spent increased.

What's interesting about this finding is that there appears to be a relationship between the amount of time they spent in domestic work and the amount of time they spent in paid work. That is, although men with children spent two hours less in domestic work, they also spent two hours more in paid work. In addition, even though women with children spent an additional 4.5 hours in domestic work, they also spent four hours less in paid labor.

Although these findings can be interpreted in a number of ways, it seems likely that men and women compensated for the differences in time spent in domestic work by changing the amount of time they spend in paid labor.

It also seems evident from the findings that the presence of children in the home created a slightly more traditional and segregated division of labor, and contributed to greater occupational inequality between the sexes.

3. Skill

The results of my study showed that men reported having more ability to do external work and women reported having more ability to do internal work. This finding was expected and supports the findings of other researchers (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Haas, 1980).

The results of my study also showed that, for the most part, men and women who had the ability to do between 4 and 6 tasks did less domestic work than those who reported having more or less ability.

Although this finding was surprising and a little confusing, it can be interpreted in a number of ways. First of all, it seems likely that these individuals were different in some way from the others. That is, they may have had less time to spend in domestic work because they were spending more time in other areas and so consequently did a smaller share. Their value system may have also been different. Perhaps these people valued their leisure time more and so only did the minimum amount of work they had to do to maintain their house. It's also possible that they earned more money and so could afford to hire outside help. If this were the case, then their greater income combined with their limited ability would explain why they did less domestic work.

Secondly, it's also possible that those who had the ability to do between 4

and 6 tasks were married to someone who had more ability and who did the greatest share of the work. As a result, there likely wouldn't be any incentive or reason for them to learn how to do other tasks, and so their involvement in domestic work would remain limited to what they know.

Finally, it also seems plausible that those who reported having the ability to do between 4 and 6 tasks lived in apartments and so didn't have the opportunity to do some of the tasks listed. As a result, because they weren't doing them at that time and may have never done them, they may have felt that they didn't have the ability to do such tasks. This would explain why they reported having less ability as well as why they did less domestic work.

The fact that those who reported being able to do between 0 and 3 tasks did more domestic work than those who reported being able to do between 4 and 6 tasks was a little puzzling. However, it's possible that those who reported having less ability may have overestimated their contribution, while those in the other group underestimated theirs. However, it's also possible that those with less ability compensated for their lack of ability by doing a greater share of the tasks they felt skilled in, and, therefore, did more work.

Finally, the results of my study showed that despite the fact that men and women had relatively equal ability to do domestic work, and that the majority reported being able to do at least 70% of nontraditional tasks, the division of labor

remained traditional and segregated.

One possible explanation for this finding is that, as suggested by Johnson & Firebaugh (1985), involvement in tasks may be influenced by whether they are perceived as being masculine or feminine in nature. If this were the case, then it's possible that individuals chose not to do nontraditional tasks because they wouldn't be considered gender-appropriate. Therefore, they may have restricted their involvement primarily to tasks which complimented their gender-identity and avoided tasks which threatened it. This would explain why skill did not seem to really influence involvement in domestic work and why the division of labor was so traditional and segregated.

Conclusions and implications

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study.

First of all, the results of this study showed that the division of labor remains traditional, and that not only do women spend more time in domestic work, they are also responsible for the most demanding and time-consuming tasks. However, the fact that neither men nor women wanted domestic work to be shared equally, and that couples were generally satisfied with the way responsibilities were distributed suggests that most likely the division of labor will continue to be traditional and segregated.

Second, the fact that, on average, the women in this sample had less education and earned less money than their spouse suggests that inequalities between the sexes persist into the '90's. It seems likely that until women's wages become more in line with men's, that women will be unable to contribute equally to the provider role, thus leaving them at a disadvantage in the domestic role.

Third, in this study, involvement in domestic work was determined more by gender than by income, education, time availability, or skill. This suggests that in order to have a more equal sharing of domestic responsibilities, we, as a society, need to look at the way in which males and females are socialized as well as the influence of the role models they are exposed to.

Fourth, the results of this study illustrate the importance of gathering information about the division of labor from both partners. The findings have reinforced the notion that there are both similarities and differences in men and women's perceptions about the domestic role, and that one cannot have a true understanding of men and women's involvement in domestic work unless both partners are sampled.

Fifth, the results of this study may be of value to those working in the field of marital and family therapy. That is, studies have shown that dissatisfaction with the way family work is distributed is one of the most frequently encountered issues in couple therapy. Therefore, the results of this study may be of use to therapists in providing some information on current norms and practices of dual-earner couples. In addition, the information provided may offer some guidance to both the client and therapist in exploring the way couples share domestic responsibilities as well as the individual circumstances and factors which may be influencing the division of labor.

Finally, considering the fact that the number of dual-earner couples has increased dramatically in the last 25 years and that every indication suggests that this trend is likely to continue, more research in this area is needed so that researchers and other professionals can learn more about how these couples are dealing with the various work and family demands placed on them, and what impact this new lifestyle is having on them both as individuals and as a couple.

Limitations of the study

1. A volunteer sample of convenience was used in this study and so limits the generalizability of the findings. That is, because this sample was not selected randomly, the findings may only apply to those included in this sample or to couples who closely resemble this population.

2. Since the data were collected on dual-earner couples as a whole and not broken down by particular sub-groups, the findings cannot be generalized to specific groups of the population.

3. A self-report method was used and so the data may be subject to bias.

4. The instrument which was developed for this study was designed to measure a number of different areas. As such, calculating a coefficient of internal consistency only provided limited information on the instrument's reliability. Therefore, calculating test-retest reliability would have been the most beneficial way of assessing this instrument's reliability. However, as this method was a little beyond the scope and purpose of my study, it was not done.

Contributions of the study

This study makes several contributions to the existing body of research:

- 1. The instrument designed for this study may be of value to future researchers who are interested in conducting a study on domestic role-sharing.**
- 2. This study provides information about the practice of domestic role-sharing in Canadian couples.**
- 3. The data were gathered from both partners and so will contribute to our knowledge of how both men and women perceive the sharing of the domestic role.**
- 4. This study includes "masculine" tasks and so may provide a more well-rounded perspective of men and women's involvement in the domestic role.**
- 5. This study includes two variables, skill and ideals, which are rarely found in the literature. In this sense, it builds on existing research and adds to our knowledge of how these variables play a part in the sharing of domestic work.**

Suggestions for future research

1. It would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study with dual-earner couples to see whether men and women's involvement in domestic work changes with time, and if so, to determine what factors influence these changes.

2. Replicating this study, but using other variables such as age, length of the relationship, sex-role attitudes, and influences of the family of origin would be useful.

3. It would be interesting to take this study one step further and explore some of the reasons for my findings. For example, why was the division of labor so traditional and segregated? Why don't the majority of men and women express egalitarian ideals? What causes some individuals to be satisfied and others dissatisfied with the way the domestic role is shared? And finally, why do women spend more time in child care and domestic activities and men more time in paid work?

4. It would be beneficial to administer this instrument in another study and to calculate its test-retest reliability.

5. Since the data for this study were collected on dual-earner couples as a whole, it would be interesting to replicate this study using sub-groups of the population. That is, it would be interesting to find out whether involvement in domestic work differs depending on, for example, type of occupation, religion, socio-economic status, and cultural background.

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APPENDIX A

A University of Alberta researcher is looking for married couples to participate in a study which looks at how men and women share responsibilities around the house such as cooking, cleaning, repairs, and general maintenance. If you and your spouse:

-both work

-do not employ domestic help on a full-time basis, and

-are both willing to fill out a confidential survey,

please contact Cathy at 435-5970.

APPENDIX B

Reliability Analysis

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Cronbach Alpha</u>	
Internal tasks	Males	Females
Actual - self estimate	.6576	.6263
Actual - spouse estimate	.6562	.6168
Ideal - self estimate	.7023	.7134
Ideal - spouse estimate	.7050	.7109
External tasks	Males	Females
Actual - self estimate	.7215	.6526
Actual - spouse estimate	.7127	.5793
Ideal - self-estimate	.6060	.6706
Ideal - spouse estimate	.5922	.5862

APPENDIX C

Dear participant:

Thank you for responding to the appeal for research participants. My interest is in sampling couples who are willing to voluntarily participate in this study and who:

- are legally married**
- are both working in some capacity (part-time or full-time) in paid labor**
- do not employ domestic help on a full-time basis**
- are both willing to complete a confidential survey**

If both you and your spouse meet ALL of the above criteria, please proceed with this study. If not, please mail the uncompleted surveys back to the researcher in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

The purpose of my research is to explore the way married couples share domestic responsibilities. The enclosed survey is designed to gather information on how these responsibilities are viewed, the way in which these responsibilities are distributed, and what factors influence the extent to which these responsibilities are shared. The results of this study will contribute to the understanding of the nature of domestic role-sharing in married couples.

Please find enclosed two identical surveys and one stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please use the envelope provided to mail back both copies of the completed surveys to the researcher. It is vital to this study that you and your spouse complete your surveys independently of one another. Therefore, please do not consult with your spouse while you are completing the survey. Once you have completed and mailed the surveys, you are free to discuss your responses with one another.

Before you begin, please read and sign the consent form which is attached to each survey. The consent form must be signed and returned with your survey in order that your responses may be included in this study. Please note that once the completed package is returned to the researcher, the consent form will be removed from the survey and retained in a separate file so that no link can be made between you and your responses. Please do not write your name on this survey so that your responses will remain anonymous.

I would appreciate having the completed surveys returned by March 20, 1992. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Your input to this research is invaluable.

**Sincerely,
Cathy Madden**

Consent Form

Please read this consent form carefully. In signing this form, you are giving your consent to participate in this study and to have your responses included as part of this research.

Through participation in this study, you are being asked to provide information which pertains to the way you and your spouse share domestic responsibilities. The information that you provide will be used for research purposes only. Please be assured that your responses will remain anonymous and confidential, and that there are no known risks to participating in this study.

In filling out the survey, you are free to choose not to answer some or all of the questions if you so desire. You are also free to ask questions of the researcher and receive answers to them at any point. Although your participation in this study is very important, you may withdraw from this study at any time without any repercussions.

I, _____, hereby agree to voluntarily participate in this study on domestic role-sharing and to have my responses included as part of this research.

(your signature)

Note: Should you have any questions or comments to make about this study, please feel free to contact this researcher at (403) 435-5970.

SECTION 1

For each of the following questions, please place a checkmark next to the answer which is most applicable to you.

1. Sex: Male ____ Female ____

2. Age: ____ years

3. Level of education:

____ some elementary/high school

____ high school graduate

____ some post-secondary education

____ technical institute/community college graduate

____ undergraduate degree

____ graduate degree

4. What is your employment status?

____ employed part-time (less than 35 hours/week)

____ employed full-time (35 hours/week or more)

5. Which of the following would best describe the ratio between your earnings and that of your spouse (before taxes are taken out):

____ I earn more money than my spouse

____ I earn less money than my spouse

____ I earn about the same amount of money as my spouse

SECTION 2

For each of the following tasks, please indicate what percentage you estimate you do and what percentage you estimate your spouse does. For example, if you feel that a task is shared equally between you and your spouse, then you would write 50 under "myself" and 50 under "my spouse". However, if you feel that you perform this task more often than your spouse, then the ratio might be, for example, 75 - 25% or 80% - 20%. If someone other than you or your spouse does this task on a regular basis, then the ratio might be, for example, 0% - 0% or 10% - 30%.

Actual = the way these responsibilities **ARE** distributed in your household.

Ideal = the way you think they **SHOULD BE** distributed in your household.

	<u>ACTUAL</u>		<u>IDEAL</u>	
	Myself	My spouse	Myself	My spouse
<u>Internal tasks</u>				
a) laundry	____%	____%	____%	____%
b) ironing	____%	____%	____%	____%
c) dusting	____%	____%	____%	____%
d) vacuuming	____%	____%	____%	____%
e) washing floors	____%	____%	____%	____%
f) tidying up	____%	____%	____%	____%
g) cleaning bathroom	____%	____%	____%	____%
h) making beds	____%	____%	____%	____%
i) cooking	____%	____%	____%	____%
j) washing dishes	____%	____%	____%	____%

	<u>ACTUAL</u>		<u>IDEAL</u>	
	Myself	My spouse	Myself	My spouse
<u>External tasks</u>				
k) cleaning the garage	____%	____%	____%	____%
l) mowing lawn	____%	____%	____%	____%
m) washing car	____%	____%	____%	____%
n) maintaining/ repairing car	____%	____%	____%	____%
o) shovelling snow	____%	____%	____%	____%
p) yardwork (raking...)	____%	____%	____%	____%
q) gardening	____%	____%	____%	____%
r) painting	____%	____%	____%	____%
s) washing windows	____%	____%	____%	____%
t) household repairs	____%	____%	____%	____%

1. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the way the responsibilities for these tasks are distributed:

Internal tasks:

Very satisfied Very dissatisfied
 1 2 3 4 5

External tasks:

Very satisfied Very dissatisfied
 1 2 3 4 5

2. Please read over tasks a-t and circle the letter(s) which correspond(s) to tasks you feel you have the ability to do regardless of whether or not you do them. For example, if you feel you have the ability to vacuum, cook, and paint, then you would circle letters d, i, and r. Please do not limit yourself to any number of tasks. Circle as many letters as are appropriate.

SECTION 3

For each of the following areas, please indicate how many hours you spend in each area in an average week. For example, if you spend an average of 8 hours/day sleeping, then you would write 56 hours next to the word sleeping (8 hours x 7 days).

Paid work (job-related duties)	_____ hours
School (pursuing own education)	_____ hours
Housework (cooking, cleaning, external tasks)	_____ hours
Child care (own children only)	_____ hours
Community service / volunteer work	_____ hours
Leisure / fitness / social activities	_____ hours
Sleeping	_____ hours
Other (self-care, transportation, eating..)	_____ hours

168 hours