

### Domestic Labour: Who Does What?

**Future Foundation** ("Complicated Lives", 2000) Sample of 1,000 UK adults.

- **Housework:**  
Men now average 50 minutes / day.  
Women in paid employment average 90 minutes / day.  
60% of men claimed to do more housework than their father.  
75% women claimed to do less housework than their mother.
- In 1960, women averaged 110 minutes / day and men 10 minutes / day.

- **UK 2000 Time Use Survey** (Office for National Statistics: Interviews with 6,500 households, including 11,700 individuals) Respondents kept detailed diaries of how they spent their time on one day during the week and on one day at the weekend:

#### Average Daily Housework & Main Chores

Men	Women
(2 hrs 20 mins)	(4 hrs)
Cooking	Cooking
Childcare	Childcare
Gardening	Cleaning house
Pet care	Laundry

- **Paid employment:** Men averaged nearly 4 hours/day and women 2 hours/day.
- **Ironing and laundry:** 60% of men and 92% of women.
- **Household repair work:** 50% of women and 94% of men.
- **Decorating and gardening:** Approx 50% of men and 50% of women.
- Man-ye **Kan** ("Gender Asymmetry in the Division of Domestic Labour", 2001) 2,087 couples from British Household Panel Survey, 1997.

- **Housework:**  
Women do three-quarters of all housework.  
Women averaged 18.5 hours / week housework  
Men averaged 6 hours / week.

- **Paid employment:**

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Reductions in women's housework load are marginally reduced by paid employment. However, Kan found that women do less housework the higher her income, the younger she is and the higher the educational qualifications of both partners.

Men and women in full-time employment did less housework, on average if they were both in paid employment. Men, however, still did less housework than their partner. Since this only amounted to 4 mins less for women and 2 minutes less for men, the difference is marginal.

Any redistribution of household tasks is related to female employment patterns, rather than male employment. However, it's not the fact of paid employment for women that seems significant but rather her income level, Every £10,000 increase in the female partner's annual income reduces her weekly housework time by nearly 2 hours.

Housework increases with age in dual-earner households (women in the 50+ age group averaged 4.4 hours more housework than women under 30). Male housework doesn't vary significantly according to age.

- **Unemployment or retirement** increases female housework hours and reduces those of her partner.
- **Npower Home Running Costs Survey (2002)**
  - **Housework:**  
Women average 2 hours / day.  
Men average 1 hour / day.  
1940s, men averaged 15 minutes / day and women 4 hours / day.
- **Ramos** ("Domestic Work Time and Gender Differentials in Great Britain 1992-1998", 2003)
  - **Housework:**  
Men average 5.5 hours a week, women average 19 hours.
  - **Paid employment:**  
Where both partners work, men average 45 hours / week in paid employment and women 30 hours - which means men and women average the same "working work" (roughly 50 hours each).

When working part-time, women's total workload (paid and domestic labour) increases to roughly 63 hours / week.

In families where the man is not in paid work and his partner works full-time, male domestic labour matches that of his partner (19 hours / week).

Where children are present in the household, women do more domestic labour but men do not.

Younger women do less housework than older women but younger men spend a similar amount of time on domestic tasks as their father's generation.

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In the 1990's, time spent on paid and domestic labour for men remained constant whereas for women, total work time decreased; an increase in paid work was reflected by a decrease in domestic work.

- **Gender Ideology:**

Beliefs about gender roles influence how each partner participates (or not as the case may be) in domestic labour. Where couples have "traditional beliefs" about male and female roles, women do more domestic labour than in households where beliefs reflect sexual equality.

In households where partners hold conflicting beliefs, men do less domestic work.

75% of men and women believe the domestic division of labour to either "very fair" or "somewhat fair"

- **Mintel Housework Survey 2004:**

- **Housework:**

6% of men do no housework; 42% did "a little".

81% of women spent "a lot" or "a fair amount" of time cleaning compared to 52% of men.

75% of men and 83% of women said they cared about household cleanliness.

70% of women and 47% of men found housework enjoyable.

- **Paid employment:**

High income earners did less housework than their lower income counterparts (mainly because they paid others to do it - 14% of those earning over £36,000. compared with the average of 6% for all in paid employment).

- **Comparative:**

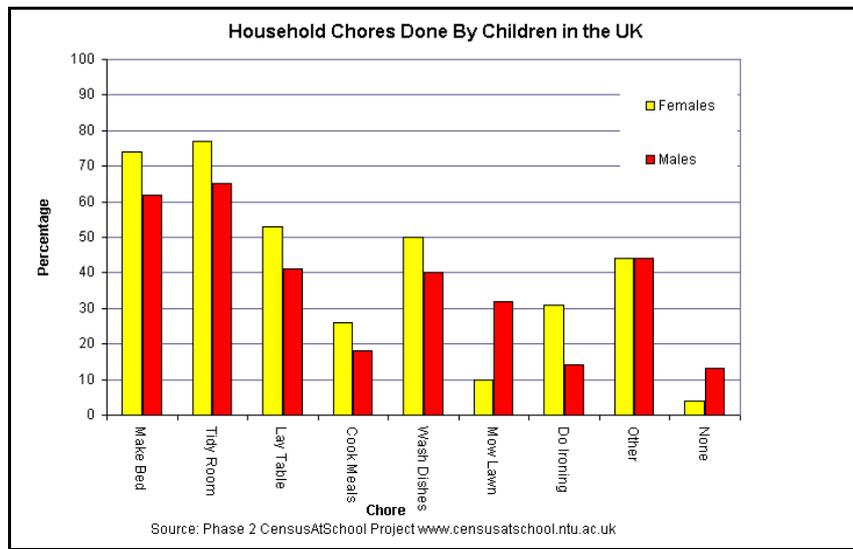
35% of German men do no cleaning and 40% spend "a little time" on this task.

25% of French women and 7% of men do "a lot" of cleaning.

3% of Britons, 20% of Germans and 16% of Spaniards did no domestic labour at all.

- **Children:** One aspect of domestic labour that's often overlooked is the amount performed by children within the family group. As the following chart shows, both male and female children contribute to domestic labour in various ways.

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Jens **Bonke** (“Children’s household work: is there a difference between girls and boys”, 1999) argued that children generally make a fairly small contribution to domestic labour - pre-school children, as you might expect are largely uninvolved in such work - and domestic labour contributions peak at 20 (approximately 2½ hour a week). Boys appear to contribute less towards domestic labour than girls; of lone-children families, girls average 5 times as much housework as boys (2.5 hours / week as against 30 minutes...).

In terms of paid housework, an Abbey National survey of 702 parents with children aged 16 or under in 2004 found that of 9 domestic chores, boys were given more money than girls to do all but general house cleaning. 60% of the survey claimed children did more housework than they did when they were young.

• **Grandparenting:** A final area of domestic labour we should note is the increasing role played by grandparents in the care of children. **Tunaley** et al ("Relatively Speaking: Communication in families", 1999), for example, suggested that almost 50% of working parents in the UK rely on grandparents for child care, mainly because of:

- More working women
- Long and unsociable working hours
- More active grandparents.
- High cost of child care.

### UK Grandparents take strain of childcare

Barbara and Arthur Thomas, from Oldham, look after their grandchildren, Charlotte and Christopher, during the week.

Diane Mundy: Worries about overloading her parents



Their mother Diane Mundy works long hours at a call centre in nearby Bolton.

She has to leave the house at 7 am every day, so Barbara and Arthur arrive at her home about 6.30 am. Diane said: "I do worry about it and I would respect their wishes if they did not want to do it."

Barbara says she classes the child-minding responsibilities as a job, adding: "I hope we get some benefits back." Her husband believes there is no substitute for families looking after each other.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/347894.stm>