

Sharing of Unpaid Work and Income in Partnerships from the Perspective of Women and Men

Abstract

The paper is focused on the problem of sharing the unpaid work and income between women and men living in partnerships. We want to find out how these problems are perceived by both genders and identify the potential differences. We analyzed the data for couples living in partnerships collected by the International Social Survey Programme. Based on the analysis of the survey several interesting findings are made. Women on average mostly consider their more important role in household work as less fulfilling. Male respondents more often see women in their traditional role of household's keepers than women do. Both genders indicate that women are participating more in household work in all selected activities besides the small repairs. However, the perceived share of women in this work is significantly smaller in the eyes of men than women themselves and vice versa. Turning to income, as expected men have mostly higher income, but women are more often in the role of family budget holders. However, partners mostly pool all their money together and manage it jointly.

1. Introduction

Unpaid work is an important part of everyday life of most people. Despite the fact, that this has several substantial consequences for economy from both microeconomic and macroeconomic point of view, it is still not sufficiently investigated. However, there are several recently published studies that analyzed this problem in more detail. The factors affecting size of unpaid work have been analyzed for example by Hunady, Orviska and Uramová (2014). Moreover, the research done by Kika and Martinkovicova (2014) identified the determinants of unpaid work as well as potential opportunities for entrepreneurships

related to unpaid work in Slovakia. On the other hand, Hunady, Orviska, Grega (2014) analyzed the extent of volunteering and other unpaid work activities in Slovakia and other countries. In this paper we analyze the sharing of unpaid work and income between partners. We expected that several links can be seen between these two problems. The main aim of this paper is to identify the usual shares of men and women on unpaid work and income and compare the perception of this problem by both genders.

2. Literature review

Most of the studies claim, that women do more household work than men, but an explanation is sometimes missing (Marini and Shelton, 1993; Lachance-Grzela, Bouchard, 2010). The current trend in developed countries is increasing emancipation of women, which is related to reducing disparities in the amount of unpaid domestic work, carried out by partners. Several studies show that this trend is significant, and research in the US (Bianchi et al, 2000) shows that the total number of hours spent on unpaid work in the household (excluding child care and shopping) is decreasing since 1965. Bianchi et al (2000) argue that the reason for such a decrease is due to an increase in employment of women, later marriage and fewer children. “In contrast, men’s housework time almost doubled during this period (1960-1990) – to the point, where men were responsible for a third of housework in the 1990s” (Bianchi et al, 2000, p. 193). Hunady, Orviská and Uramova (2014) found, that not only the size of paid work, the share of children, but also the share of the elderly in the population and the education level all significantly affect the size of unpaid work in country. In any case, gender is still significant determinant of unpaid work, for example in Slovakia (Kascakova, Nedelova, Povazanova, 2012).

Some other studies claim, that the increase in employment of woman (and increase in their income outside of home) have not translated directly into the allocation of household work (Fuwa 2004; Lincoln, 2008). According to Sayer et al (2004), it is because paid and unpaid work have been historically divided according to gender - men was considered as breadwinner and woman as homemaker.

In any case, most of the authors prove (Greenstein, 2009; Hook 2006 and other), that women’s share of household work is decreasing, but they are still responsible for two thirds of household work and most of the time is spent for cooking and cleaning. There is a similar situation is in Slovakia as well, where woman’s are spending most of the time for cooking, cleaning and child care (Hronec, Kollar, Kubisová, 2014). Fuwa and Cohen’s (2007) show

that the American woman is doing approximately 13,2 hours of household work per week, compared to 6,6 hours spent by men. The results of Bianchi et al (2000) show, that a woman spent 17,5 hours per week on housework in 1965 and 13,7 hours per week in 1995, what is significant decrease. Interesting findings are in Slovakia (Kascaková, Nedelova, 2014), where women spent 35,58 and men 21,41 hours on average per week on unpaid work, which is a great difference compare to US. While the woman's time spent for housework is falling over the decades, men's household work was falling from 1965 to 1985, but between 1985 and 1995 the amount of hours was stable.

Povazanova and Nedelova (2012) claim, that unpaid work has importance in case of measuring GDP – if GDP is rising and households are reducing their size of unpaid work (i.e. households are not cooking anymore and they are buying this service from market), it does not mean, that total wealth is rising as well.

An important finding is that there is a significant difference between questionnaire estimates and diary-data estimates on the share of unpaid work in households. Kan (2008) was analyzing results from stylized (questionnaire-based) estimates and diary-based estimates of housework time collected from the same respondents. Data were obtained from Home On-line Study between 1999 and 2001 – a British national survey, that contains both type of estimates. Sample size was 632 men and 666 woman. Kan (2008) found that woman generally report their time spent on household work more accurately than men do. “Men holding traditional gender-role attitude tend to report more housework time in surveys than in diaries, but the tendency is reversed when they undertake long hours of housework” (Kan, 2008, p. 4). On top of that, the presence of dependent children inflated the gap between the reporting of housework time spent between men and woman (and between questionnaires and diary-data estimates).

Similar findings as Kan (2008) can be found in the research of Bonke (2005), who found diary data on time use more reliable than questionnaire-based data (the author was analyzing data from 2001 Danis Time Survey, which were gathered at the same time by questionnaires and diaries). The author explains the difference in these two types of survey by “attitudes and norms” which are influencing the results of information provided by respondents. Bonke (2005, p. 18) claims that “information on paid work at the general level does not depend on the measurement technique applied, whereas questionnaire information on unpaid work highly underestimates the time spent on this activity, one explanation being that many short-

term tasks are involved”. Bonke (2005) has a similar conclusion as Kan (2008) – woman underestimate the time spent on unpaid work more than men.

Some studies are focused on the relation between income and housework – who is doing greater portion of housework once wives are earning more than husband. Cooke (2006) analyzed data from Germany and the US between the years 1985 and 2000. The analysis focused on marital stability and the share of paid/unpaid work between husband and wife regarding to income. Cooke (2006) found that West German wives do more domestic tasks than US wives, and according to Bittman et al (2003), a similar situation to West Germany pertains in Australia. Having a child significantly decrease the chance of divorce in West Germany and this effect is linear (so each additional child reduces risk in a similar way), but in the US, a child does not decrease the risk of divorce significantly (Cooke, 2006). If the wife increases her income, it affects the marital status of family: “U.S. female breadwinner couples where the wife performs about half of the domestic tasks have much lower log-odds of divorce than traditional male breadwinning couples in either country“ (Cooke, 2006, p. 2). An important finding of the author is, that in West Germany “any move away from the traditional gender division of labor increases the risk of divorce”.

The division of housework is not a static value but changes over time. Grunow et al (2012) analyze how the division of housework changes over time in Western Germany. They analyzed the first 14 years of marriage between more than 1000 couples/families. The first five years of marriage, couples are doing similar parts of housework, but after the childbirth the division of housework changes rapidly to a more “traditional” division. Grunow et al (2012) in contrast to other researchers (i.e. Cooke, 2006; Brines, 1994 and other) claim that economic bargaining power (level of income) is only a minor factor, which affects the division of housework. For example, Brines (1994) claims that if wife is increasing her income, her proportion of housework decreases, but husband’s are also decreasing their housework hours, because of the “gender-display”. In addition the research of Grunow et al (2012) indicates that higher income in a woman does not need to lead an increase of the husband’s housework, but some part of the housework tends to be covered by market. Grunow et al (2012) also claim that a higher woman’s income does not translate into greater bargaining power.

3. Data and methodology

The data used in the analysis are collected by ISSP Research Group (2014) -International Social Survey Programme: Family and Changing Gender Roles IV. The data has been collected from 16 August 2011 to 10th April 2014. The following countries are covered in the datasets: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, Philippine, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan (Province of China), Turkey, United States, Venezuela. The respondents are at least 18 years old except Finland (at least 15 years old) and Japan (at least 16 years old). We analyse these data using two-way t-tests.

Together 56254 observations has been included in the dataset. In line with the aim of the paper we decided to exclude respondents that indicate they are without partners. Thus only the respondents that are married or living in a partnership are taken into account in our analysis. A two-sample t-test with equal variances has been used to test the differences between the average answers of women and men. We assume that when the respondent is male their partner is female and vice versa in some of our analysis if necessary. We are aware of the fact that there are also several same-sex couples among the respondents, but we abstract from this possibility, believing that this should not change our results significantly.

4. Results

Firstly we analysed the respondent answers on the questions about their attitudes toward the sharing of paid and unpaid work between women and men. The answers of respondents have to be given in 5 scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. We focused our attention mostly on the difference between the men and women. As we can see in the Table 1 the average of answers are significantly lower for man than for the women. Thus men in average significantly more agree with the statement that family life suffers when women has full-time job.

Table 1 The results of two-sample t-test

Family life suffers when woman has full-time job						
(1= Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly disagree)						
	Mean	Std, Error	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Interval		Observations
Male	2.98	0.097	1.21	2.96	3.00	15738
Female	3.04	0.097	1.26	3.02	3.06	16911
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = -4.714		degrees of freedom = 32647		
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 1.000		

Source: Authors calculation based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

Thus we can say that men perceive family in more traditional way than women. This is again supported with the answers on the next two analyzed questions dealing with the problem of satisfaction with the doing of unpaid work and traditional role of women in the family. The results are summarized in the table 2.

Table 2 The results of two-sample t-tests

What women really want is home and kids						
(1= Strongly agree, 5 = Strongly disagree)						
	Mean	Std, Error	Std. Dev.	95% conf. int.		Observations
Male	2.78	0.094	1.17	2.76	2.8	15261
Female	2.90	0.096	1.25	2.89	2.92	16745
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = -8.961		degrees of freedom = 32647		
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 1.000		

Being housewife is as fulfilling as working for pay						
(1= Strongly agree, 5 = Strongly disagree)						
	Mean	Std, Error	Std. Dev.	95% conf. int.		Observations
Male	2.75	0.092	1.12	2.73	2.77	15023
Female	2.87	0.095	1.22	2.85	2.89	16666
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = -8.961		degrees of freedom = 31687		
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 1.000		

Source: Authors calculation based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

As it can be seen both genders slightly agree with the thesis, which indicates that women are mostly satisfied with their traditional role in family, which includes caring for kids and doing household work. However, women are significantly less identified with this view.

Another two questions focus on the respondent's attitudes towards the role of men and women in the paid work and income contribution. As we can see in Table 3 male respondents significantly disagree more with the equal contribution of both partners to the income of their household.

Table 3 The results of two-sample t-tests

Both should contribute to household income						
(1= Strongly agree, 5 = Strongly disagree)						
	Mean	Std, Error	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Int.		Observations
Male	2.08	0.077	0.97	2.07	2.10	15833
Female	1.94	0.070	0.91	1.93	1.95	17012
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = 13.626		degrees of freedom = 32843		
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 1.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.00		

Men's job earn money, women's job look after home						
(1= Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly disagree)						
	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Int.		Observations
Male	3.11	0.010	1.27	3.09	3.13	15802
Female	3.34	0.010	1.30	3.32	3.36	16990
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = -16.647		degrees of freedom = 32790		
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 1.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.00		

Source: Authors calculation based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

Men also tend to more often agree with the notion that their job is to earn money and the women's job is to look after the home. However, most of the respondents believe that both partners have to add some income to the family budget.

The sharing of total household work between the partners is illustrated in Figure 3. Both genders most often indicate that they are contributing to unpaid work about equally or they are doing unpaid households work together. However, there are still significant differences between the genders. More than 58% of women believe that they are doing most or all of the household work. On the other hand, only approximately 40 % of male respondents state that their partners are doing most or all of the unpaid work and more than 44% stated that both partners are managing the unpaid work together or their share is about equal.

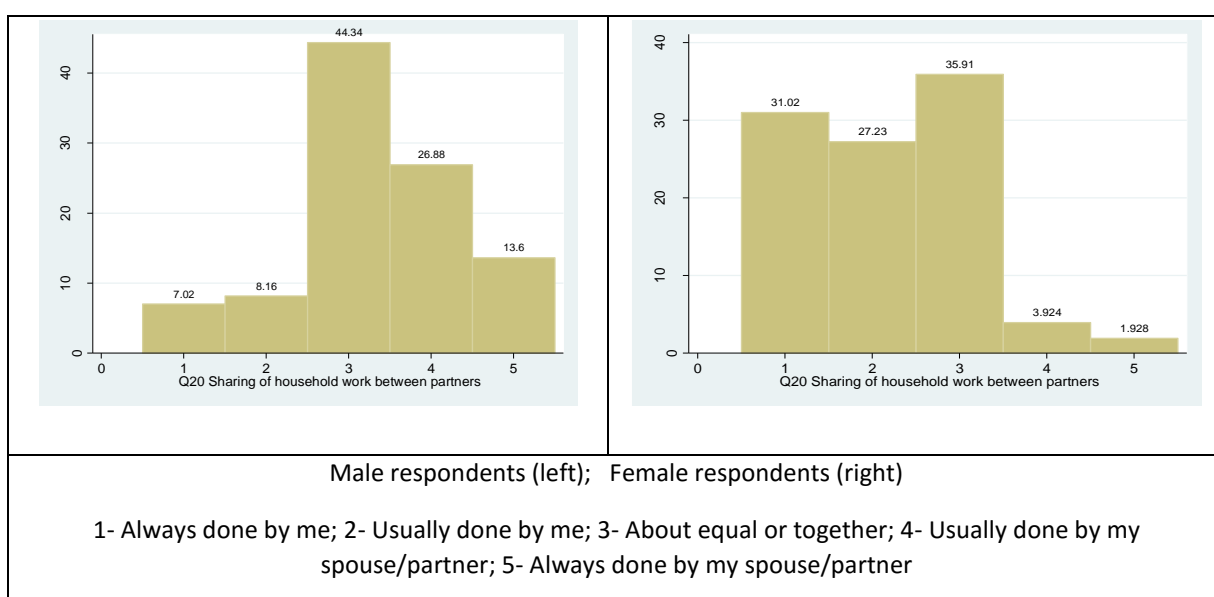


Figure 3 Sharing of household work (total)

Source: Authors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

We further analyse the sharing of unpaid work between partners in more details using the decomposition of unpaid work on separate activities. The total unpaid work has been divided to these 6 activities:

1. Doing the laundry;
2. Small repairs;
3. Caring for sick family members;
4. Shopping for groceries;
5. Household cleaning;
6. Preparing meals

The division of doing the laundry between partners is illustrated in the Figure 4. As expected a significantly greater share of this kind of unpaid work is done by women.

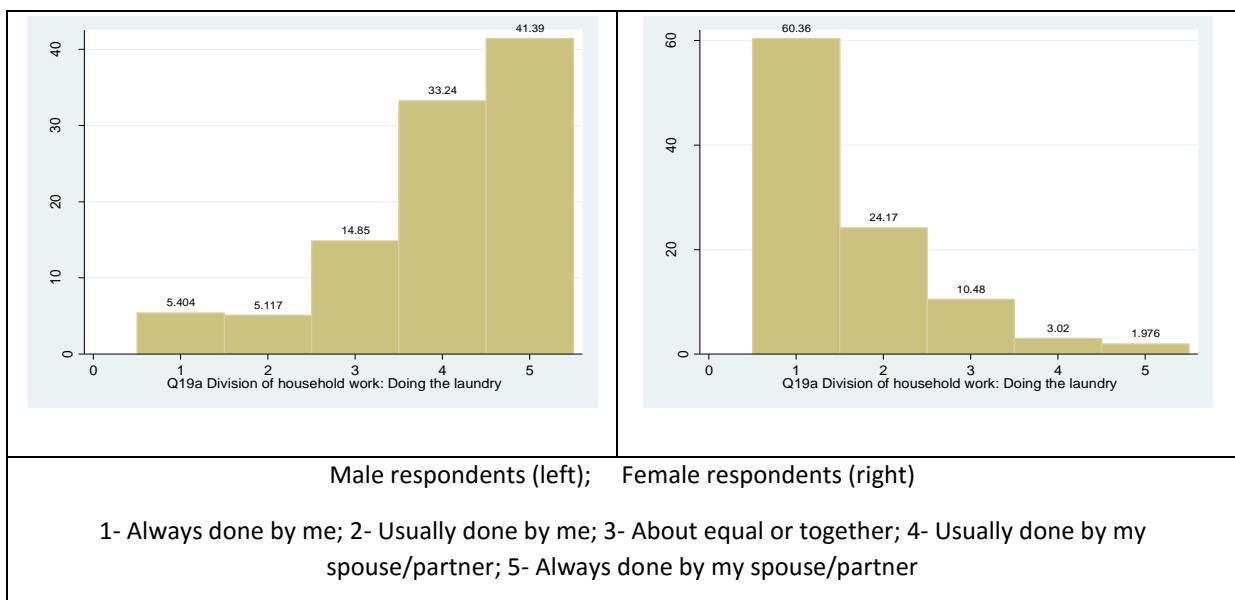


Figure 4 Sharing of household work - **Doing the laundry**

Source: Authors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

It is likely that respondents undervalue the share of partner, or overvalue their share. In order to support this finding we transform the answers of male respondents to the mirror image¹ in order to compare means for men and women. As it can be seen in the table 4 the results of a two-sample t-tests indicate that there is a significant difference between the averages.

Table 4 The results of two-sample t-test

Doing the laundry						
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>95% Conf. Int.</i>		<i>Observations</i>
<i>Male (transformed)</i>	1.99	0.092	1.22	1.98	2.02	14988
<i>Female</i>	1.62	0.074	0.93	1.62	1.64	15892
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = 32.37		degrees of freedom = 30878		
Ha: diff < 0	Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0			
Pr(T < t) = 1.000	Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.00			

Source: Authors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

Thus both genders perceive differently their and partner's amount of time devoted to this activity. As it can be seen further in our paper this effect is evident for all six activities of unpaid work included in analysis, which is in line with our assumptions of subjective evaluation of unpaid work time. Despite this fact, in the case of all activities except one, both genders approve the key role of women in the unpaid work.

As expected, the only one activity of unpaid work where the men is more active is small repairs. This is illustrated in Figure 5.

¹Transformation 5=> 1, 4=>2, 1=>5, 2=>4

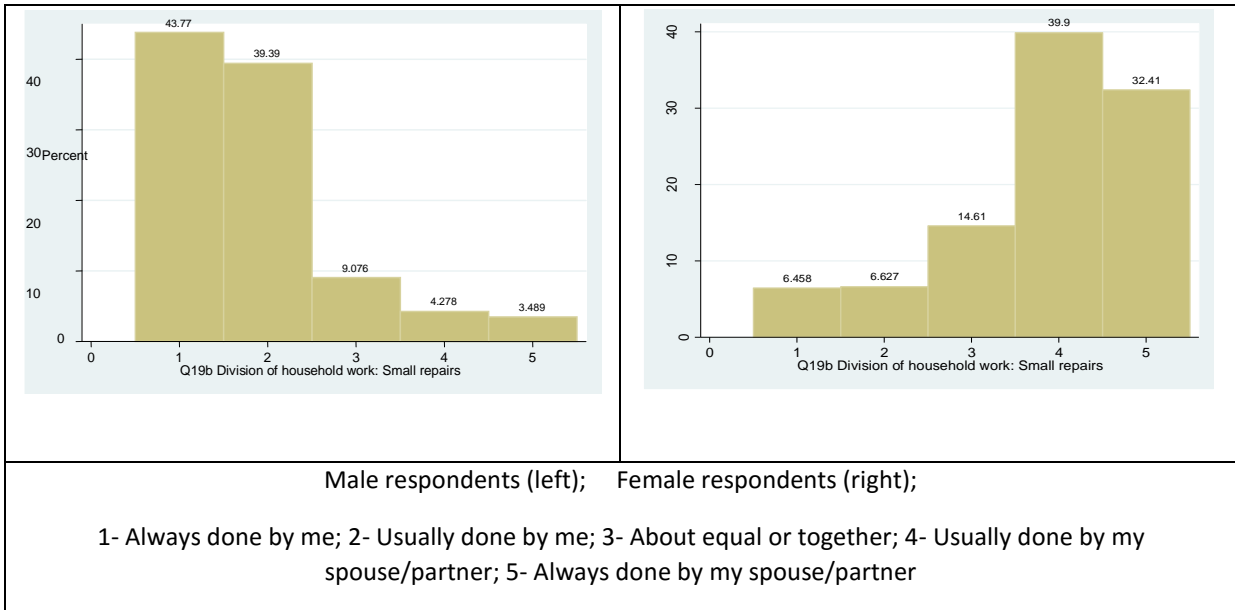


Figure 5 Sharing of household work – **Small repairs**;

Source: Autors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

We again provide the statistical comparison of the means. The difference is again significant. Thus, we can say that, the perception of unpaid work by genders is different even in the case where men are doing the most of this of this work.

Table 5 The results of two-sample t-test

Small repairs						
	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Int.		Observations
Male	1.99	0.092	1.22	1.98	2.02	14988
Female (transformed)	1.62	0.074	0.93	1.62	1.64	15892
diff = mean(Male) - mean(Female)	Ho: diff = 0	t = 32.37		degrees of freedom = 30878		
Ha: diff < 0		Ha: diff != 0		Ha: diff > 0		
Pr(T < t) = 1.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		Pr(T > t) = 0.000		

Source: Autors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

The division of the next two unpaid work activities: care for sick family members and shopping for groceries is illustrated in Figure 6. Again we can see that women are playing very important role in both activities. Only 5.6% of women stated that partner is doing more in the case of caring for sick family members. However, this number is higher when talking

about shopping for groceries, where more than 10% of women answered that their partner is doing more.

Men mostly believe that their share is higher than reported by women. While more than 57% of women believe that they are doing more care work than the partner, only less than 42% of male respondents stated that their partner is doing more of this work than them. Thus the difference is approximately 15 percentage points. The same is true for shopping for groceries, but the difference is not as substantial (approximately 7 percentage points).

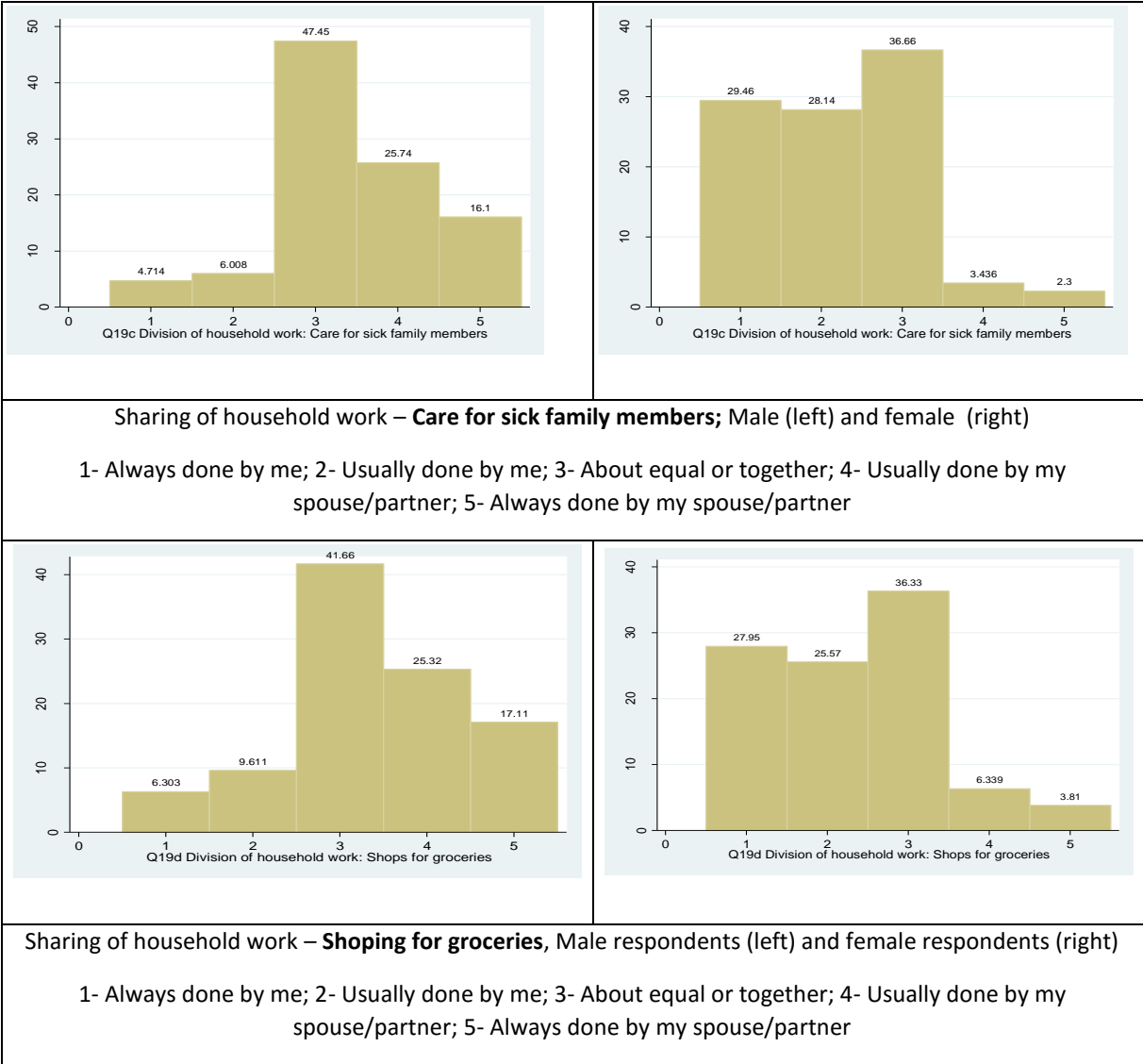


Figure 6 Sharing of household work

Source: Autors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

The last two activities mentioned in the questionnaire are household cleaning and preparing meals. The proportion of this kind of unpaid work done by men and women can be seen in Figure 7. The situation is very similar to the previous two types of unpaid work. The

contribution of men seems to be low in the case of household cleaning and only slightly higher in the case of preparing meals. Only approximately 3.5 % of women stated that their partner is contributing more in cleaning the household than themselves.

Men again usually see this problem slightly different. 75.7 % of female respondents are confident about the fact that they are doing more cleaning than their partner. On the other hand 64 % of men stated that their partner is more active in cleaning in their household. Thus, there is 11.7 percentage point difference which very likely arises from different views of women and men. In the case of preparing meals this difference is 10.8 percentage points. In comparison to most of the other activities, a relatively low number of respondents reported that the time devoted to preparing meals is equal or they are doing this activity together.

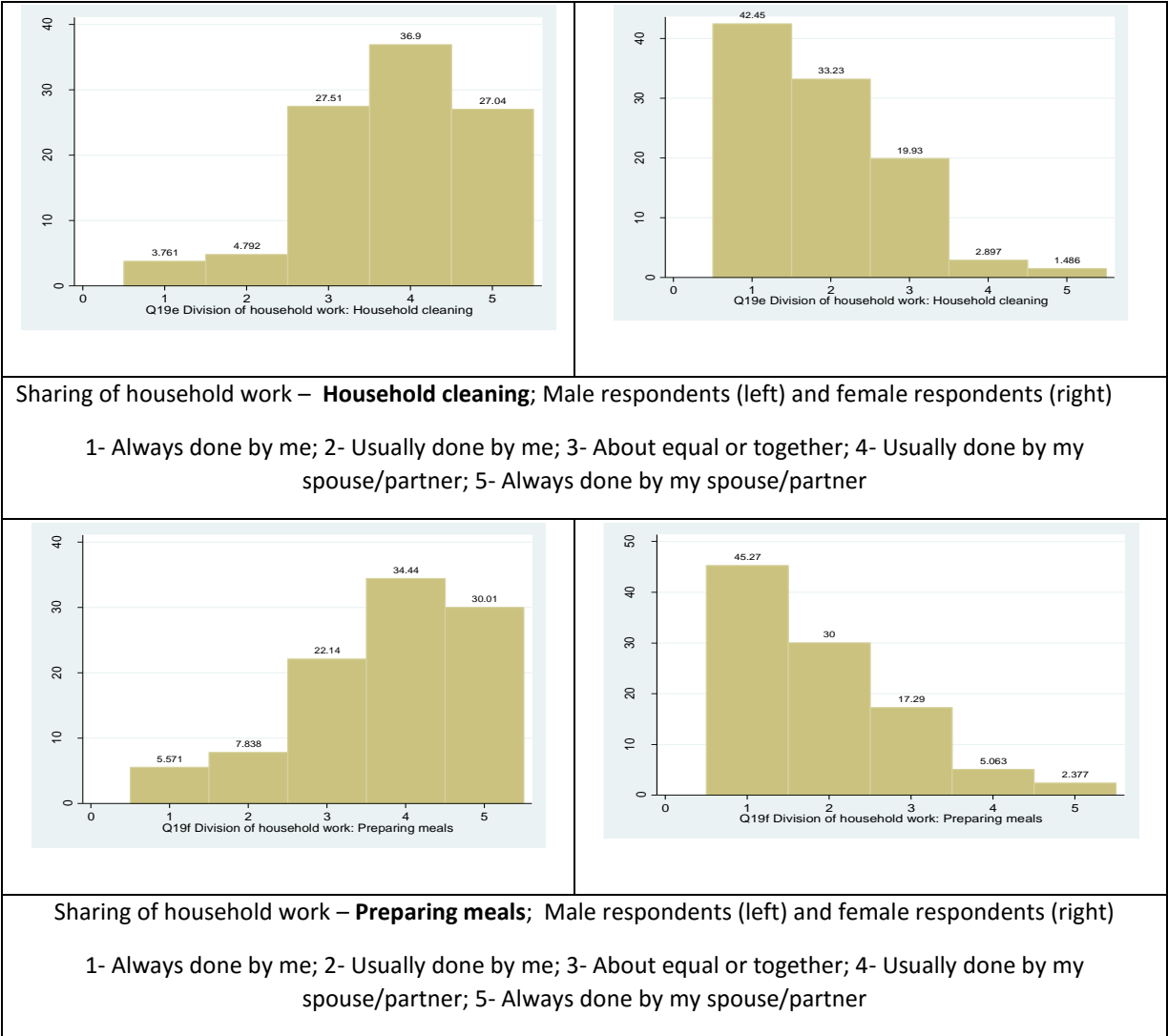


Figure 7 Sharing of household work

Source: Autors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

Turning to the problem of paid work and the sharing of household income, we again compared the difference between the genders. These differences can be seen in Figure 8.

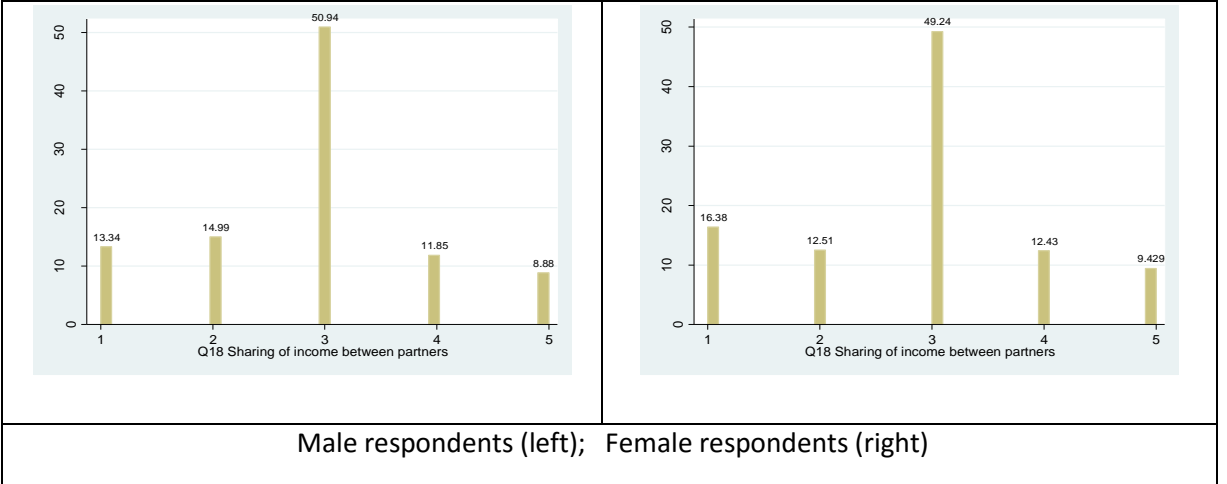


Figure 8 Who has the higher income?

Source: Autors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

As expected the male respondents have mostly a higher income than their partners and the opposite is true for the female respondents. 14.2 % of male respondents stated that their partner has no income and 25.7% of them reported that they have a much higher income than their partner. This is again supported with the answers of female respondents, where only 5.1% of them stated that they have a much higher income than their partner has.

The system of sharing income between the partners, which is illustrated in Figure 9, is even more interesting problem from our point of view.



1- I manage all and give partner his share;	2 - Partner manages all and gives me my share
3 - We pool all money, each take out;	4 - We pool some money, rest separate
5 - We each keep own money separate	

Figure 9 Sharing of income between partners

Source: Autors calculations based on the ISSP Research Group (2014) data.

Approximately half of the respondents in our sample pool all earned money together with their partner. 16.38 % of female respondents reported that they managed the money of the households and 12.51 % of them stated that their partner managed the money. This is supported also by the answers of men even though the difference is smaller. Thus, according to the answers of women as well as men, the second most often response is that the woman is in the role of household “financial manager“. It is likely that this could arise from the much more important role of the women in unpaid work and household keeping. However, this issue needs further analysis, to reach definitive conclusions.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the analysis we can make several conclusions about the sharing of unpaid work and income between partners. There are significant differences in the perception of these issues between men and women. Women on average less often identify themselves with their traditional role in the household than men do. Men also often see women in their traditional role, that is mostly filled with unpaid work activities. Most of the respondents think that being the being a housewife is as fulfilling as paid work. However, women are significantly less identified with this than men. Respondents of both genders mostly do not agree with the hypothesis that “Men's job earn money, women's job look after home“. This means that they are not in favour of a strict assignment of unpaid work to women and paid work to men only. The respondents of both genders mostly stated that women are participating more in overall household work. This is also true for each of the selected activities besides the small repairs, which are dominated by men. The time devoted to caring for sick family members and shopping for groceries by men and women are often reported to be about equal or these activities are often done together by both partners. On the other hand several activities such as doing the laundry or household cleaning are carried out almost exclusively by women in most of the households.

However, there are still significant differences when focusing on the share of unpaid work carried out by the respondents and their partners. According to the comparison of results it seems to be likely that respondents tend to overestimate their share of unpaid work or/and underestimate the share of their partner. This is evident in all analyzed unpaid work activities. These results also have several consequences for questionnaire survey based research done at the level of households. The gender of the respondent answering the question for the whole household could be one of the factors affecting the results. Due to the lower share of men in overall unpaid work, it seems to be likely that the amount of unpaid work for the whole household could be on the one hand slightly underestimated when the respondent is a man and on the other hand slightly overestimated when the respondent is a woman.

Turning to the issue of sharing income, most of the families pool all the money into one family budget and both partners can take out the share needed. The second most often scenario is that the woman is in the role of household “financial manager”. Despite the fact that, women have on average a significantly lower income they are more often responsible for the family budget and decisions about family expenditure. We believe that, this could be likely related to the important role of the women in unpaid work and household duties.

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