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# **Perceptions of Equity and Fairness in the Division of Household Labor: Evidence from a Rural County**

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The division of household labor among dual-earner couples has been the focus of much research, and the finding that the women in these relationships perform more domestic tasks than their male counterparts is well documented. Hochschild (1989) found this occurrence to be true among the dual-earners in her study, and she even confirmed this finding fourteen years later in a revised edition of her book. Additionally, in a review of literature on the division of household labor, Beth Anne Shelton and Daphne John (1996) concluded that even when women work outside of the home, they still complete more housework than men.

Not only has research shown that women maintain more responsibility for household labor, but studies have also revealed that the unequal division of labor can detrimentally affect women. A study by Bielby and Bielby (1989) showed that if women remain responsible for the bulk of domestic work, they may not be able to form strong identities with their careers. Therefore, the family role could potentially jeopardize the importance women give to their work. Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) and Chloe E. Bird (1999) revealed that women who view the distribution of household labor as unfair are more likely to experience depression. Furthermore, marital satisfaction decreases for women and men when the division of housework is viewed as unfair, yet the likelihood of divorce for women, but not men, increases when the division is seen as unfair (Frisco and Williams 2003).

These studies are helpful in establishing that women in dual-earner homes typically complete more domestic tasks than the men in these relationships and that this arrangement can negatively impact women's lives. However, these studies do not investigate the division of household labor and its effects among rural county citizens, as these studies are based on findings from nationally representative samples or samples from metropolitan areas. This paper examines how dual-earner homes in Baker County, Florida, experience the division of household labor. Specifically, this paper explores whether or not the performance of household and childcare tasks is equitable between the partners of these homes, and whether or not there are perceptions of equity and fairness among these couples. This paper also explores whether or not the individuals in these relationships are pleased with how domestic tasks are divided in their homes and the degree to which they feel compelled to perform, or enjoy completing, their tasks. Finally, this paper seeks to determine if these couples have tried to create more desirable divisions of labor in their homes and the techniques they have employed to do so.

Baker County encompasses 585 square miles of nonmetropolitan land in Northeast Florida and consists of approximately 22,259 people (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000a). Although recently there have been efforts within the community to stimulate industrial growth, Baker County can be described as a rural community because of its small and dispersed population. Much of the literature on the division of domestic labor among rural citizens is based on areas that can be considered as much more rural than Baker County (see, e.g. Kusujarti and Tickamyer 2000; Lupton 2000). This research is primarily based on areas that rely heavily upon agriculture as a way of life. Although agriculture is an economical asset for the county, particularly in forestry and ornamental horticulture, Baker County is by no means a farming or agricultural community, but rather it is simply a small,

nonmetropolitan county (Baker County Chamber of Commerce 2005).

Literature examining the division of household labor among nonmetropolitan citizens is not extensive, and the research that does exist is difficult to obtain. Hardesty and Bokemeier (1989) have examined the division among this segment of the population, focusing on how time, income, and women's occupations influence the division of household labor among couples from nonmetropolitan counties in Kentucky. Their most striking finding was that women's sex-role attitudes in terms of employment determine whether the division is more or less equitable. Thus, women who feel that they have a right to pursue careers and to be fulfilled by these careers are more able to secure help from their husbands in completing housework. The current study does not investigate the sex-role attitudes of participants, but it does uncover participants' feelings about the division of labor in place in their homes and their feelings about the tasks that they engage in. This study contributes to the literature on the division of household labor in nonmetropolitan homes because it reveals the level of satisfaction that these dual-earners experience as a result of their divisions and the satisfaction they receive from engaging in their tasks.

## **METHODS**

Data is based on responses from a questionnaire that was completed by ten, heterosexual dual-earner couples living in Baker County, Florida. Study participants were garnered by utilizing a combined volunteer and snowball method. First, sign-up sheets were posted at two Baker County, Florida, hospitals. The sheets specified that interested couples both had to be residents of Baker County, be employed full-time, be a part of a two-income home, be between the ages of 25 and 45, and have children who are fifteen-years-old or younger.

The rationale for restricting participants to this age range is that this range allows for the inclusion of a number of

individuals, yet, also confines participants to individuals who have grown up in comparable time periods. Therefore, they have likely experienced similar cultural messages regarding marital roles. Furthermore, these individuals are within the boundaries of the life course when people are typically maintaining families that include children.

The rationale for including dual-earner couples with children who are fifteen-years-old and younger is that parents with children within this age range maintain a great deal of responsibility for childcare duties. Certainly preschool-aged children require a lot of attention and assistance from parents, but preadolescents also consume a significant portion of parents' time. This is because preadolescents' social lives can be much more active than that of preschoolers, and they have not yet reached the age in which they can drive alone. This requires parents to take them to school, sporting events, extracurricular activities, and other locations of interest. Additionally, parents can also spend time assisting older children and preadolescents with their homework.

After contacting couples on the sign-up sheets, it was discovered that many who wanted to take part in the study did not fit all of the criteria established for study participants. These individuals were slightly older than the set age range, or they had children who were slightly older than fifteen. Therefore, the qualifications were altered to include individuals up to forty-seven-years-of-age and individuals with children of any age who still live at home and for whom their parents still maintain a good deal of care for them. These revisions are rather inconsequential, and they do not appear to have compromised the study because they still allow for the inclusion of study participants who have most likely experienced similar cultural messages about marital roles and individuals who are responsible for caring for their children.

From these revised qualifications, five couples agreed to become study participants and were individually interviewed in their homes. At the end of each interview, study

participants were asked if they were aware of other qualified individuals who would be interested in participating in the study. Several individuals were able to offer potential participants, and the final five couples were gained through employing this snowball approach.

Each of the couples readily welcomed me into their homes, and during my visit, they were very hospitable. Some of the couples were busy preparing meals for their children when I arrived for the interviews, while others were completing other tasks, like mowing the lawn and folding towels. As the interviews began, one partner went into another room of the house, typically taking their children along with them, while the other partner and I sat in the kitchen or the den and talked. Although some of the study participants were reserved at first, most of them became very communicative over the course of the interview. Many of the respondents also seemed to enjoy talking with me about their domestic lives, as our discussions continued well after the interviews had ended, and several did not want to accept the ten dollars that was given to each participant as compensation for their time.

### **Instrument**

The questionnaire completed by study participants appears in Appendix A and was constructed by the author with approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of North Florida. The first portion of the questionnaire was self-administered, and it prompts respondents to indicate descriptive demographic information about themselves. The second portion of the questionnaire was also self-administered, and it addresses the amount of time participants spend completing tasks. Due to time constraints, time diaries were not utilized and instead this portion of the questionnaire directly asks participants to indicate the amount of time they spend each week on a number of household and childcare tasks. The third portion of the questionnaire was administered by the author, and it addresses participants' conceptions about the equity and

fairness of domestic tasks and whether or not participants feel compelled, or want, to complete their tasks. This portion also requires participants to discuss strategies they employ to overcome any dissatisfaction with the division of household labor. During this part of the interview, notes were recorded by hand, and these notes were immediately typed up as field notes after the conversations with each couple. Once all ten couples were interviewed, the data from the first and second portions of the questionnaire were compiled into frequency tables, and the means and standard deviations were calculated for quantifiable data.

### **Sample<sup>1</sup>**

The number of years of marriage for the couples in the study range from 3 years to 21 years, with a mean of 10.9 years. Most of the couples have two children, and none of the couples have more than three children. Five couples have at least one preschool-aged child, or a child that is four-years-old or younger, and the other five couples have a child who is, or children who are, old enough to attend school.<sup>2</sup> The mean and modal age of participants is 36.65 and 37 respectively. Ninety-five percent of the participants are White/Not Hispanic, and 5 percent, or one person, indicated their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino. This representation of Caucasians is slightly higher than the percentage of this group living in Baker County, as 82.6 percent of the population is White/Not Hispanic, but it is not known why an overrepresentation of this group exists (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000a).

The highest level of education attained by most study participants is some college, followed by a high school education or an equivalent degree. Only two participants hold bachelor's degrees, and only one individual holds a professional degree. Thus, 15% of the

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<sup>1</sup> The number of years of marriage, age, race, education, occupation, individual annual employment income, religious affiliation, and age of the children of the twenty study participants are presented in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> The mean age of child/ren living in these homes is approximately 9.8 years.

sample holds a bachelor's degree or higher, while only 8.2% of Baker County residents hold such degrees (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000b).

The Census 2000 Special EEO Tabulation was utilized to classify participants' job titles, and they were categorized based on the author's understanding of the occupational duties performed by participants. Most of the jobs held by study participants are nonprofessional, and indeed the occupations held by participants include blue-collar positions such as welder, secretary, and tractor driver (see Appendix B). There is also a gendered division of labor among the study participants. For example, only males comprise the business, craft, production, and labor segments, whereas females are primarily involved in healthcare, namely in nursing, and administrative support roles (see Appendix C).

The mean individual annual employment income for study participants is \$41,841.61. Most individuals indicated that their annual employment income falls within the \$30,000-\$39,999 range, and only three respondents indicated that their income is as high as \$70,000-\$79,999 or above (see Appendix C). Since the questionnaire only provides income ranges as possible responses for participants to choose from, rather than requiring participants to indicate a definite income amount, computing the combined annual employment income for couples is problematic and at best an estimation. However, the estimated mean combined annual employment income for couples is \$79,999, which is significantly higher than the \$43,503 median family income for Baker County residents (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000b).

The religious affiliations were taken from the U.S. Census Bureau, but in practice, they were problematic. Many respondents expressed confusion over exactly where they fit in among the categories; they did not seem to categorize their religious lives in such generic terms. For instance, several participants' homes displayed Christian

figures and images, but they indicated their religious affiliation as "Other," rather than "Protestant." Therefore, although most of the participants identified their religious affiliation as "Other," this figure could potentially be lower, with more individuals falling into the "Protestant" category.

The study sample is whiter, more affluent, and more educated than the county as a whole, and this is likely a result of recruiting subjects through the county hospitals, as more educated and affluent individuals are employed at these facilities. Snowballing reproduces this bias because people tend to know and associate with individuals who are like themselves. Yet, although this sample is overall more affluent and educated than the county, I characterize this sample as working class because most participants do not hold college degrees, and most are employed in blue-collar positions.

## **FINDINGS**

This section first presents a comparison of the time male and female participants spend completing tasks and a description of the division of labor among the participants. I focus briefly on how the couples divide the work of supervising children, which, despite some concerns regarding its measure, is an area of pronounced inequality for most couples. The data reveal two distinct types of couples, those who share work equally and those who do not, and I will discuss the characteristics of each group. Finally, I discuss the level of happiness with the division of household labor and the enjoyment of tasks among participants, along with techniques employed to create more desirable divisions of labor.

Overall, each week females spend a mean of 33.178 more hours completing domestic work than do males. On average, women also spend more time each week than men completing both household and childcare tasks. For example, Table 1 shows that females spend about 5.5 more hours a week completing household tasks than men, and

they spend almost 28 more hours a week completing childcare tasks.<sup>3</sup>

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

These data also reveal that there is a traditional division of labor between the household tasks among the study participants. For instance, the only household tasks in which men's mean completion times surpass that of women's is for Item 5, Outdoor maintenance, and Item 8, Car maintenance. On average, men do 7.042 more hours of outdoor maintenance a week than do women, and they do 3.005 more hours of car maintenance. The finding that men engage in gender-specific household tasks has been confirmed by Hochschild (1989), as she too found that there was an indoor/outdoor division of labor among the dual-earners she interviewed. Additionally, in their study of the division of household labor among individuals of different marital statuses, South and Spitze (1994:343) noted that married men devote more of their time to male-typed tasks, rather than to female-typed tasks.

As for childcare tasks, excluding supervising child/ren, men actually spend more time each week completing certain tasks than women, although the differences are rather small. For Items 1 and 2, Bathing and Feeding child/ren, men on average spend about 30 more minutes a week than women bathing their children, and they spend 3 more minutes feeding their children. For Items 4 and 5, Helping child/ren with school work and Transporting child/ren to school or extracurricular activities, women spend an average of almost 2.5 more hours than men helping their kids with school work, and they spend a little over 4.5 more hours transporting their children.

Table 1 presents the completion times with Item 3 of the childcare tasks, or

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<sup>3</sup> Table 1 presents each participant's completion times with Item 9 of the household tasks, or Driving, included in, and omitted from, the combined totals. However, discussions about the findings only refer to data with this item omitted from each participant's times. For explanation of this omission, see bottom of Table 1.

Supervising child/ren, included in, and omitted from, the combined times for each participant because this item presented a measurement problem. Several participants explained that they supervised their children all of the time, and they did not know exactly what constituted actively supervising a child. For example, if a parent is simply inside of the house with their child, can this be considered active supervision, or must a parent be in the same room with the child? Moreover, must a parent be constantly hovering over a child for active supervision to take place? Opinions varied among participants as to which of these scenarios could be considered active supervision. Consequently, I initially considered eliminating this item from the combined totals for each participant. Yet, close examination revealed that the supervision of children takes up a significant portion of female participants' labor hours, and therefore, it should not be disregarded entirely.

With supervising child/ren included in the combined household and childcare times for females and males, the mean hours spent for females and males differ by about 30 hours, with women spending more hours supervising. When this item is omitted from all of the participants' combined times, the mean hours for females and males differ by only about 12 hours, with women still spending more hours on domestic tasks. Although couples with preschool-aged children spend more time supervising each week than do couples with school-aged children, with the women in these homes spending almost 30 hours more than their partners supervising children, even in homes with school-aged children, women still engage in more supervision than men. Furthermore, these women spend almost as much time supervising children as do the men in homes with preschool-aged children, with these men spending only 3.64 more hours a week supervising than women with school-aged children. Thus, discussions about the findings will refer to data that has included supervising child/ren in each participant's

completion times, but readers must bear in mind the limitations of this item.

By comparing participants' domestic labor hours and their responses to the questionnaire, a typology has been constructed based on whether or not each couple's combined hours are equal. Each couple's arrangement is deemed equal if there is no more than a 10 percent difference between partners in terms of the total number of hours spent on household and childcare tasks. For five couples, the female in the relationship spends more time completing domestic tasks each week, and for the other five couples, there is an equal amount of time spent completing domestic tasks between the males and females. An overview of the two groups' completion times is presented below, along with descriptions of the couples.

Table 2 presents the mean amount of time females and males in these two categories spend engaging in household and

childcare tasks. As the table shows, the mean total number of hours females in Category 1 spend engaging in tasks is 115.52 hours, while the mean total time for males is 49.01 hours. This translates into women in these couples spending an average of 66.51 more hours a week completing domestic tasks than do the men in these relationships. The females in these relationships spend an average of a little over 18 more hours completing household tasks and a little over 48 more hours completing childcare tasks than their male counterparts. The mean total number of hours females in Category 2 spend engaging in tasks is 53.96 hours, and the mean for males in this group is 54 hours. Thus, exact parity has almost been achieved by these couples, with men spending only an average of about 3 more minutes a week completing tasks.

**Table 2. Mean Completion Times for Couples Who Do Not Share and Couples Who Do**

Tasks	Category 1: Couples Who Do Not Share			Category 2: Couples Who Do Share		
	Mean Times			Mean Times		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Household tasks	40.38	22.10	62.48	21.56	29	50.56
Childcare tasks	75.14	26.91	102.05	32.4	25	57.4
Total	115.52	49.01	164.53	53.96	54	107.96

**Category 1: Couples Who Do Not Share: She Does More**

Five couples, numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8, do not share household labor evenly. During my interviews with these couples, both partners agreed that indeed the female in the relationship does spend more hours on domestic tasks than the male partner. Yet, when the issue of the fairness of the division of household labor was broached, there was mostly disagreement between males and

females over whether or not the division was fair to the other partner.

All of the women in these relationships expressed that the division of household labor in place in their homes is unfair to them. Yet, all of the men in these couples, except for Male 1, expressed that although their wives do spend more time on household labor, they feel that the division is fair because their jobs are more difficult than their wives' jobs. Hence, these men feel that, because their jobs are more demanding, any

inequality that exists in the division of household labor is acceptable. While it is both unrealistic and inappropriate to try to gauge which partner has a more difficult job, it seems as though, at least for some couples, the argument presented by these males is not valid. For example, Female 2 oversees all of the financial services provided by a local hospital, and her husband, Male 2, is a welder. Moreover, Female 5 is a correctional officer at a minimum security correctional facility, and her husband is a manager at an auto-repair company. The jobs held by all of these individuals seem demanding, and though the jobs held by the men may be more physically difficult, the jobs held by the females are perhaps more stressful.

By integrating discussions about their occupations into conversations about the fairness of the division of household labor, perhaps some of these men were also reasoning that because their incomes are higher than their wives' incomes, they feel that their particular household arrangement is fair even though their wives carry out more tasks than they do. As Male 2 did not indicate his individual income, mean individual annual employment income could only be calculated for Couples 4, 5, and 8. On average, the men in these relationships earn \$43,333.33 more than the women in these relationships. Therefore, although these men never commented on their personal incomes, it is possible that the money they contribute to their relationships allows them to feel that their domestic arrangements are fair.

### **Category 2: Couples Who Share**

Couples 3, 6, 7, 9, and 10 are a part of the second category. Unlike the couples discussed above, the couples in this grouping do not follow a clear pattern in terms of feelings of equity and fairness between the partners. Only Couple 6 feels that the division of domestic labor in place in their home is equal and fair for both partners in the relationship. Couple 9 is the only other couple who feels that their division of labor is fair to both partners, but they disagree about who completes more work. Female 9 expressed

that her husband completes more tasks each week than she does, and Male 9 expressed that his wife completes more tasks each week than he does. In reality, the combined total number of hours spent completing tasks each week for both partners is 54. Therefore, it seems that the partners in this relationship are aware that they both contribute to the maintenance of their household, and they may have expressed that the division is unequal for the other partner because they are grateful for the other spouse's contribution.

Couples 7 and 10 feel that the division of labor in place in their households is equal, and indeed equality has been achieved by these couples. Yet, these couples feel that the division is unfair to the female partner, as the females in these households spend more time than the males completing either household or childcare tasks. For example, Female 7 spends 17 more hours than her husband completing childcare tasks each week, and Female 10 spends nine more hours than her husband completing household tasks each week. In their interviews, these couples explained that the areas of responsibility maintained by the females are more laborious than those maintained by the males. Therefore, although overall the combined total hours for these participants are equal, these couples believe that the division of household labor is unfair to the female because she maintains a more difficult set of responsibilities.

Unlike the other couples in Category 2, both of the partners in Couple 3 feel that the female completes more domestic tasks, but Male 3 feels that this arrangement is unfair to his wife, and Female 3 feels that the division of labor is fair. While both partners feel that Female 3 completes more work, Table 1 shows that Male 3 actually completes 3.5 more hours of tasks a week than his female counterpart. Since both partners feel that the female completes more work, it is possible that the difference between each partner's combined times is due to different understandings of what their household responsibilities require. In terms of fairness, although Female 3 feels that she completes

more work, she explained that the division is fair because her husband carries out undesirable tasks, like tediously re-landscaping the rock beds in their front yard. Like Female 3, most of the females acknowledged that their husbands complete chores that they would not like to complete, like landscaping or mowing the lawn. Yet, three women among the non-sharing couples indicated that they would like to switch roles and carry out their husbands' chores.

### **Happiness with the Division of Household Labor and Enjoyment of Tasks**

All of the males in the study, except for one, indicated that they are happy with how tasks are divided in their homes, and half of the females indicated the same. Only Male 7 expressed that he is not happy with the division of household labor in his home, and like her husband, Female 7 also indicated that she is not happy with the division. Yet, both of these individuals did not express that they are unhappy because the division of labor is unfair to the female partner. Instead, they are unhappy because they do not have enough time to relax with each other, as working full-time and caring for their two small children is time consuming. Thus, issues of equity and fairness are not factoring into this couple's discussions about their happiness, but rather the stressful nature of maintaining a dual-earner family is weighing heavily on both partners' minds.

The women in four of the non-sharing households expressed that they are not happy with the division of household labor in place in their homes because they complete more tasks than their husbands, and interestingly, these are the same women whose husbands feel that the division of labor is fair to both partners. However, although these women did express unhappiness, they did not do so directly. Rather, they were hesitant about indicating that they are discontent about their domestic labor arrangements. For instance, Female 2 expressed that she is not happy with how domestic tasks are divided between her and her spouse, but she would not describe herself as unhappy. She only insisted that her

household arrangement is "just a way of life." Similarly, Female 4 would not definitively say that she was unhappy, but instead only expressed that the division of household labor is a sore spot in her marriage. Females 5 and 8 also appeared uncomfortable with the term "unhappy," and instead of either identifying with, or denying, this characterization of their feelings, both emphasized that they would like to have more help from their families in maintaining their homes.

As for gaining enjoyment from the completion of tasks, all of the men in the study expressed that they enjoy engaging in the duties that they engage in, and seven females indicated that they enjoy their tasks. In particular, several men explained that they enjoy working outdoors because this activity allows them to have some "quiet time" to be by themselves. Some men expressed that they enjoy the feeling of accomplishment they get after they have completed their tasks. Many of the women explained that they like to cook and keep a clean home for their families. Some women expressed that they take pride in their homes and like to maintain it, and others enjoy caring for their children. Female 6 explained that she enjoys *having completed* her tasks, but she does not inherently enjoy the tasks. Only Females 2 and 4 indicated that they do not get enjoyment from completing their household tasks, as they are overwhelming and stressful.

### **The Creation of a More Desirable Division of Labor**

Although some participants are unhappy with the division of household labor in their homes, and Females 2 and 4 seem to be experiencing a great deal of stress as a result of maintaining their households, only two couples, Couples 1 and 6, have earnestly tried to change their arrangements. Specifically, in the past, these couples tried handing the responsibility of paying the bills over to the men in these relationships. However, the women eventually resumed this responsibility, as both partners felt that the males did not efficiently maintain this task. It is likely that this technique did not produce a

lasting effect because it did not strike at the underlying cause of the problem. Rather than addressing the fact that it is unfair for these women to have to maintain sole responsibility for family finances, the technique only addressed the need to abate these women's complaints. Therefore, perhaps in order for real change to occur, discussions about the fairness of the division of domestic tasks must take place among couples.

## **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

This study examined how dual-earner couples in a rural county experience the division of household labor. The objectives of the study were to determine if the division of domestic tasks is equal among these couples and to see if the partners in these relationships feel that the division is equal and fair, and if they are happy with the arrangement. This paper also sought to determine whether or not these participants enjoy their tasks and if they have ever tried to create more desirable divisions of labor in their homes.

Based on data from a questionnaire that required participants to indicate the amount of time they spend completing different domestic tasks, it was found that overall women spend more time each week doing domestic work. At the relationship-level, two categories of couples emerged from a comparison of the completion times and questionnaire responses: couples in which the females spend more time than the males on domestic tasks and couples who enjoy an equal division of labor.

In terms of equality and fairness of the division of labor, all of the couples who did not share work equally agreed that the female completes more tasks, but almost all of the males expressed that the arrangement is fair because their jobs are more difficult than their wives' jobs. Among those who share, only one couple described the division of labor in their home as equal and fair for both partners. The other couples in this category did not follow a uniform pattern in terms of feelings of equity and fairness.

Nine males indicated that they are happy with the division of labor in place in

their homes, and all ten of them agreed that they enjoy engaging in their domestic tasks. Half of the females indicated that they are happy with the division of labor in their homes, and seven females explained that they enjoy their tasks. While unhappiness and discontent exists in some of these homes, only two couples have tried unsuccessfully to create a more desirable division of labor.

An important finding is that four of the five females who are unhappy with the division of labor in their homes are in non-sharing couples. These women devote more time to domestic work than their husbands and view the division of labor as unfair. These women are also married to the men who believe that their arrangements are fair, even though their wives complete more work than they do. Moreover, two of these females are the women who describe their tasks as overwhelming and stressful. Even more importantly, these couples are not among the two that have attempted to change the division of labor in place in their homes. Although mental health and marital satisfaction were not assessed in this study, the studies by Lennon and Rosenfield (1994), Chloe E. Bird (1999), and Frisco and Williams (2003) can be used to suggest that these women are at increased risk of experiencing depression and decreased marital satisfaction. Fortunately, Ross, Mirowsky, and Huber (1983) found that when household work is shared, women are less depressed, and husbands' depression levels do not increase as a result of helping with household tasks. Thus, there is hope that if these couples attempt to create a more equitable division of labor, then the risk of depression for these women would be diminished and their husbands' emotional well-beings would not be compromised in the process.

To create better domestic arrangements, the key may be for these women to begin to definitively express their feelings of unhappiness. In her study of working-class families, Lillian Rubin (1976) found that, like the women in this study, the women in these homes did not openly express

their discontentment about the unfair division of household labor. These working-class women were reticent about expressing their feelings because, unlike members of the upper-classes, they were not accustomed to openly discussing their emotions. It is likely that because the women in this study can be characterized as working-class, they are also not used to disclosing their feelings. It is also possible that these women do not feel that significant and lasting change in the division of labor would occur if they did express their unhappiness to their husbands. Future research is needed to assess whether or not these women feel that open communication would be advantageous and whether or not this communication would indeed be helpful in creating more desirable divisions of labor. It can be surmised that, as the only technique employed by the two couples who tried to change the division of labor in their homes was the shifting of a task to men, perhaps not only communication, but meaningful and sustained communication is needed to create change. Thus, the type and frequency of communication that is useful in establishing change should also be the focus of future research.

Another finding that is notable is that all of the men and seven women admit that they enjoy completing their tasks. Even though some individuals are unhappy about the division of tasks in their homes, most of them like completing the tasks that they

engage in. For example, among the six individuals who expressed that they are not happy with how tasks are divided, only two people indicated that they do not enjoy their tasks. Thus although domestic tasks may be described as drudgery by some individuals, most of the participants in this study find their tasks to be enjoyable and fulfilling. Future research is needed to examine why all of the men and only a little over half of the women enjoy their tasks. It may be that because men engage in more solitary acts, like mowing the lawn and maintaining the family car, their tasks are less stressful, and therefore more enjoyable than women's tasks of cooking meals for the entire family and cleaning the whole house. Two of the three women who would like to take on their husbands' tasks indicated their agreement with this supposition during their interviews.

The implications are bleak for the women in this study who are unhappy about the unequal and unfair division of labor in their homes, as depression, decreased marital satisfaction, and even divorce are possible outcomes that they face. These outcomes are perhaps compounded by the limited existence of diversions and outlets of social release in the county. Still, many of these women do experience fulfillment in their lives from their children, their careers, and their friendships. These factors may need to be drawn upon to combat the detrimental affects of their unhappiness.

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Appendix A  
Instrument

**Part I.**

The purpose of this portion of the questionnaire is to acquire descriptive information about you. Your answers will be kept confidential and used only to generate a general description of participants in this study.

1. Please indicate your age on the space below.

2. Please select the box that best describes your race or ethnicity.

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White/Not Hispanic

3. Please indicate the highest level of education that you have reached by checking the corresponding box.

- Some high school
- High school diploma or G.E.D.
- Some college
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Professional, Master's or Doctoral Degree
- Other; please specify on the space below.

4. Please indicate your job title on the space below.

5. Please select the box that best describes your individual annual employment income.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$55,000-\$59,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000- \$14,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-\$64,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000-\$19,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$65,000-\$69,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$24,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000-\$74,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000-\$29,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-\$79,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$34,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000-\$84,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35,000-\$39,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85,000-\$89,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$44,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000-\$94,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$45,000-\$49,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$95,000-\$99,999   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$54,999  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 and above |

6. Please select the box of the religious affiliation you most identify with.

- Catholic
- Jewish
- Protestant
- Other
- No religious affiliation

7. On the spaces below, please indicate the number of children that are living in your home, along with their ages.

**Part II.**

The purpose of this portion of the questionnaire is to learn how much of your time you believe you spend completing certain domestic tasks. Your estimations will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of the study outlined in the consent form.

Please estimate the amount of time you spend completing the following household and childcare tasks each week.

<b>Household task</b>	<b>Time Spent Completing the Task Each Week</b>
1. Preparing meals	
2. Washing dishes	
3. Cleaning house	
4. Washing/ironing	
5. Outdoor maintenance	
6. Shopping	
7. Paying bills	
8. Car maintenance	
9. Driving	
<b>Childcare task</b>	<b>Time Spent Completing the Task Each Week</b>
1. Bathing child/ren	
2. Feeding child/ren	
3. Supervising child/ren	
4. Helping child/ren with school work	
5. Transporting child/ren to school or extracurricular activities	

### **Part III.**

The purpose of this portion of the questionnaire is to learn about your feelings about the division of domestic responsibilities in your home. This portion of the questionnaire will be administered in an interview format, and I will be taking notes during our conversation. Again, your responses will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of the study outlined in the consent form.

1. How is housework divided between you and your partner? Do you feel that your partner does more, or less, household and childcare tasks than you?
2. Are you happy with the division of household and childcare tasks between you and your partner? Do you feel that it is fair?
3. Do you get enjoyment from completing the household and childcare tasks that are allotted to you, or do you feel as though they simply must be completed?
4. If you are not happy with the division of household and childcare tasks between you and your partner, do you and your partner try to create a more desirable division of these tasks? If so, how?

Portions of this questionnaire were taken from information from Arlie Russell Hochschild's *The Second Shift* (2003), work by South and Spitze (1994), and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell with Anne Machung. [1989] 2003. *The Second Shift*. New York: Penguin Books.

South, Scott J. and Glenna Spitze. 1994. "Housework in Marital and Nonmarital Households." *American Sociological Review* 59(3):327-347.

Appendix B

Characteristics of Study Participants

	F1	M1	F2	M2	F3	M3	F4	M4	F5	M5
<b>Number of years married</b>	18 years		11 years		21 years		13 years		4 years	
<b>Age</b>	36	37	36	37	43	47	37	45	30	29
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	Hispanic or Latino
<b>Level of Education</b>	Some college	H.S. or G.E.D.	H.S. or G.E.D.	H.S. or G.E.D.	Associate's Degree	Some college	Some college	Some college	Some college	Some college
<b>Job Title</b>	Patient Accounting Clerk	Pest Control Tech.	Patient Financial Services Supervisor	Welder	Medical Tech.	Correctional Officer	Senior Clerk	City Manager	Correctional Officer	Retread Plant Manager at Goodyear
<b>Individual Income</b>	\$30,000-\$34,999	\$20,000-24,999	\$40,000-\$44,999	*	\$40,000-\$44,999	\$40,000-\$44,999	\$20,000-\$24,999	\$70,000-\$74,999	\$30,000-\$34,999	\$40,000-\$44,999
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	Other	Other	Other	None	Protestant	Protestant	Protestant	None	Protestant	Catholic
<b>Children's Ages</b>	14, 17	14, 17	3 mo., 2, 7	3 mo., 2, 7	15, 20	15, 20	12	12	3, 10	3, 10

\*Indicates that no response was provided.

-For children's ages, single numbers denote years, whereas "mo." denotes month.

Characteristics of Study Participants, Continued

<b>Couple</b>	<b>F6</b>	<b>M6</b>	<b>F7</b>	<b>M7</b>	<b>F8</b>	<b>M8</b>	<b>F9</b>	<b>M9</b>	<b>F10</b>	<b>M10</b>
<b>Number of years married</b>	10 years		8 years		11 years		3 years		10 years	
<b>Age</b>	31	35	28	31	33	44	41	33	41	39
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
<b>Level of Education</b>	Some college	H.S. or G.E.D.	Bachelor's Degree	Associate's Degree	Some college	Bachelor's Degree	Associate's Degree	Some college	Associate's Degree and Diploma in Nursing	H.S. or G.E.D.
<b>Job Title</b>	Town Clerk, Team Leader in Mary Kay	Loss Prevention at Wal-Mart Dist. Center	Government Operations Consultant	Electric Meter Technician	H.U.C. (unit secretary in E.R.)	Pres. of Construction Co.	Registered Nurse	Tractor Driver Supervisor	Registered Nurse—Asst. Manager	Parts Clerk
<b>Individual Income</b>	\$10,000-\$14,999	\$30,000-\$34,999	\$35,000-\$39,999	\$75,000-\$79,999	\$20,000-\$24,999	\$90,000-\$94,999	\$35,000-\$39,999	\$20,000-\$24,999	\$40,000-\$44,999	\$30,000-\$34,999
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other	Protestant	Other	Other	Other	Protestant
<b>Children's Ages</b>	4, 8	4, 8	8 mo., 5	8 mo., 5	4, 11, 16	4, 11, 16	13, 15	13, 15	8, 14, 17	8, 14, 17

## Appendix C

### Occupation Categorizations by Sex

Occupational Group*	Frequency	
	Male	Female
Management, Business and Financial Workers	2	0
Science, Engineering and Computer Professionals	0	0
Healthcare Practitioner Professionals	0	2
Other Professional Workers	0	0
Technicians	0	1
Sales Workers	1	1
Administrative Support Workers	2	5
Construction and Extractive Craft Workers	0	0
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Craft Workers	1	0
Production Operative Workers	1	0
Transportation and Material Moving Operative Workers	0	0
Laborers and Helpers	1	0
Protective Service Workers	1	1
Service Workers, except Protective	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Combined Total**</b>	<b>21</b>	

\*The Occupational Groups were reproduced from the Census 2000 Special EEO Tabulation.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/eeoindex/jobgroups.pdf>.

\*\*One female held two jobs.

### Individual Annual Employment Income by Sex

Income	Frequency		Class	Midpoint (x)	Frequency x Midpoint
	Male	Female			
\$10,000-\$19,999	0	1	29999	14999.5	14999.5
\$20,000-\$29,999	2	2	49999	24999.5	99998
\$30,000-\$39,999	2	4	69999	34999.5	209997
\$40,000-\$49,999	2	3	89999	44999.5	224997.5
\$50,000-\$59,999	0	0	109999	54999.5	0
\$60,000-\$69,999	0	0	129999	64999.5	0
\$70,000-\$79,999	2	0	149999	74999.5	149999
\$80,000-\$89,999	0	0	169999	84999.5	0
\$90,000-\$99,999	1	0	189999	94999.5	94999.5
<b>Total*</b>	<b>19</b>				<b>794990.5</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>\$41,841.61</b>				

\*One person did not respond.