

Extra Credit Week 7-3

WORK FOR PAY AND WORK IN THE HOME: WHO DOES THE HOUSEWORK?

Purpose: This exercise is an assessment of the division of household labor between a married couple or cohabiting couple.

Instructions: Using the data sheets at the end of this exercise, interview two people who live together in a domestic partnership. Both should be employed at least part-time. First, have each of your respondents describe themselves and their employment situations by answering the questions on the Couple Description Form. Then interview each of them individually about how they share household chores and child care using the Household Responsibilities Survey.

Summarize your interview by reviewing the text's material on the division of labor, family responsibilities, and paid employment, and then answer the questions below.

1. Arlie Hochschild (1989) coined the term "the second shift" to characterize the fact that women put in almost another 40 hours per week on housework after working on the job. Compare and contrast your findings. How equitable is the division of labor in this instance?

2. If the couple has children, how did their presence affect the division of labor?

3. How did your respondents divide up chores? For example, was it along the lines of perceived competence? Traditional gender lines?

4. Did the type of job (that is, paid employment) held by each partner affect the division of labor? If so, how?

5. Can you comment on any factors that seemed to lead to problems in the division of labor? At the same time, were there any factors that seemed to contribute to satisfaction with the division of labor?

Couple Description Form

Partner A

Age _____

Sex _____

Occupation _____

On average, how many hours per week do you work? _____

On average, how many hours per week do you commute? _____

Other comments _____

Partner B

Age _____

Sex _____

Occupation _____

On average, how many hours per week do you work? _____

On average, how many hours per week do you commute? _____

Other comments _____

Household Responsibilities Survey

1. How have you and your partner divided up the housework (e.g., making beds, cleaning, dusting, etc.)?

Partner A:

Partner B:

2. How have you and your partner divided up the yard work (e.g., mowing the lawn, weeding, etc.)?

Partner A:

Partner B:

3. What arrangements have you and your partner made for household repairs (e.g., fixing plumbing, painting, etc)?

Partner A:

Partner B:

4. (Ask only if the couple has children) What arrangements have you and your partner made for child care (e.g., feeding, basic care, supervision, transportation, etc.)?

Partner A:

Partner B:

5. Who is responsible for keeping track of social responsibilities (e.g., remembering to buy and send birthday cards and gifts, planning anniversary parties, etc.)?

Partner A:

Partner B:

6. Do you rely upon hired help (e.g., housekeepers, gardeners, etc.)? For which chores or tasks?

Partner A:

Partner B:

7. How did the two of you work out your arrangement? How did you divide up the work that needed to be done?

Partner A:

Partner B:

8. (Ask only if the couple has children.) What adjustments, if any, did becoming parents require you to make?

Partner A:

Partner B:

9. What seems to work best about your arrangement? What doesn't seem to work?

Partner A:

Partner B: