

## The Actual Situations of the Division of Housework between Husbands and Wives: From the Viewpoint of Time Use

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Housework time has been noticed internationally as a measure of equality between men and women. It has long been evident that there exists a gender bias between wives and husbands concerning the division of housework. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the actual situation of couples' participation in housework using data from the time use survey of Tokyo, Setagaya, 1995. We showed average housework time, the percentages of participation in housework, and housework division ratios between husbands and wives on a weekday and a holiday.

Husbands whose wives worked full-time were the most progressive in housework participation. Their housework time on any given weekday was, on average, 50 min. Sixty-six point two percent of them participated in housework on a weekday. Twenty-nine point seven percent of them did "clothing care" which according to previous data had been quite unusual. Besides, on a weekday they shared 19.2% of the housework. This ratio was the highest we had ever seen. The results suggested that couples with full-time working wives were moving towards a more gender-free lifestyle.

On the other hand, couples with part-time working wives showed a tendency towards traditional gender role differentiation.

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### INTRODUCTION

Housework time is noticed internationally as a measure of gender equality. It was adopted in the gender specific statistical databook published by the UN (1991, 1995). The UN Study (UN 1995) shows that women take on over three-fourths of all time spent on meal preparation and cleaning. Recently, however, male cooking time is increasing and female cooking time is decreasing. Likewise, men's participation in child-rearing is also increasing. Male participation in housework is progressing. The type of housework, however, is effected by gender role differentiation. Men rarely engage in "washing cloths, cleaning, bed making, and ironing" and women rarely do "mending and repairing (UN 1995)."

In Japan, an index of women's status recognizing housework time was calculated as a trial (Rodo Mondai Research Center ed. 1995). This index utilizes men's housework time as a key element in the study of gender equality.

In spite of such social trend expecting gender equity, our time-use data researched since 1975 shows no remarkable change in the ratio of husbands' housework participation. Our most current research shows that full-time working wives share 88.6% and their husbands share 11.4% of all housework on an average weekday (Horiuchi *et al.* 1992).

Yano (1995) suggests that the average time of each activity shows a social tendency of use of time as opposed to a personal use of time. His idea advocates the use of time use data as a social measure. We adopt this stance in this analysis.

Over the past several years, social movements concerning women and family have grown, as the UN World Fourth Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995 clearly shows. It is virtually important that gender sensitive research data are collected in order to accomplish substantial equality as we move towards the new decade of the twenty-first century (UN 1996). Therefore, we attempt to clarify through this time use survey the actual situation of housework sharing.

The purpose of this paper is to show the tendency of husbands' and wives' commitments to housework on an average weekday and holiday, to examine the housework division ratios between husbands and wives, and to compare the above with our previous data.

### METHODS AND DATA TO BE USED

Data from "Time Use Study of Working Couples Living in Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 1995" was analyzed from the viewpoint of gender. The outline of this research has already been reported.

Table 1 shows characteristics of the responding couples. They were mainly in the age group of 30 to 39. Seventy-four point four percent of husbands and 32.6% of wives were graduates from college, university or higher. For further details of our research, see Amano *et al.* (1996).

### FINDINGS

#### Housework time of couples

Tables 2-1 and 2-2 show couple's housework time compared with wife's employment type (full-time, part-time, and unemployed).

On a weekday, the average housework time of wives who worked full-time was 3 h and 30 min. As the wives' paid working hours increased, their housework times decreased.

Husbands' housework times were also effected by their wives' paid working hours. The husbands spent 50, 5, and 19 min depending on their wives' employment type (full-time, part-time, or unemployed). The housework time of husbands whose wives worked part-time was the shortest.

On a holiday, full-time and part-time working wives' housework time tended to become longer than on a weekday. In contrast, unemployed wives' housework time became short on a holiday.

Full-time working wives' housework time on a holiday was almost 3 h longer than on a weekday.

#### The percentages of housework participation and average housework time

Tables 3-1 and 3-2 indicate the percentages of housework participation of husbands and wives and their average housework time.

On a weekday, in spite of employment type, all wives did housework of some type. Husbands' housework time, however, was different according to their wives' employment type. Sixty-six point two percent of husbands whose wives worked full-time, 17.9% of husbands whose wives worked part-time, and 22.2% of husbands whose wives were unemployed did housework on a weekday. It was remarkable that almost 70 % of husbands whose wives worked full-time seemed to do housework on a daily basis.

Let us look at the housework time of husbands who participated in housework. The total average housework time of husbands whose wives worked full-time was 1 h and 15 min. Some of the unemployed wives' husbands spent a lot of time to care for children and go shopping.

Interestingly, the percentages of housework participation of the husbands whose wives worked part-time was the least.

On a holiday, husbands' participation in housework increased. The percentages of housework participation was 79.7% (husbands of full-time working wives), 53.6% (husbands of part-time working wives), and 74.1% (husbands of unemployed wives). It was striking that the housework participation by the husbands of unemployed wives was more on a holiday than on a weekday. "Clothing care" uniquely contributed to the housework participation of the husbands whose wives worked full-time. Twenty-nine point seven percent of the husbands of full-time working wives participated in "clothing care" on a weekday, and 37.8% of them participated in it on a holiday.

As the before mentioned UN study (UN 1995) suggested, clothing care related housework was a type which was effected by traditional gender role in our society. But our data concerning the participation

Table 1. Average household size, average age of husband and wife

Wife's employment status	Household numbers	Family size persons	Age (years)	
			Husband	Wife
Employed full-time	74	4.0	39.4	37.8
Employed part-time	28	4.2	43.7	41.7
Unemployed	27	4.1	40.9	38.4

Unincluded N.A. This table is reprinted from Amano *et al.* (1996).

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Table 2-1. Weekdays: average housework time

(unit: h. min)

	Wife-employed full-time ( <i>n</i> =74)		Wife-employed part-time ( <i>n</i> =28)		Wife unemployed ( <i>n</i> =27)	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Food preparation	0.06	1.06	0.01	1.28	0.01	1.37
Meal cleanup/dish washing	0.10	0.30	0.02	0.41	0.01	1.04
House maintenance	0.04	0.09	0.00	0.35	0.00	0.54
Clothing care	0.11	0.25	0.01	0.38	0.00	0.46
Sewing and knitting	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.07
Adult care	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.05	0.01	0.26
Extended family service	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02
Child care and discipline	0.17	1.00	0.01	0.41	0.11	1.57
Shopping and services	0.02	0.15	0.00	0.20	0.06	0.46
Total housework	0.50	3.30	0.05	4.35	0.19	7.38

As we show average time, total housework time is not always the same as the sum of each housework time.

Table 2-2. Holidays: average housework time

(unit: h. min)

	Wife-employed full-time ( <i>n</i> =74)		Wife-employed part-time ( <i>n</i> =28)		Wife unemployed ( <i>n</i> =27)	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Food preparation	0.12	1.19	0.17	1.16	0.05	1.18
Meal cleanup/dish washing	0.12	0.45	0.06	0.48	0.07	0.52
House maintenance	0.27	0.50	0.08	0.41	0.27	0.52
Clothing care	0.25	0.53	0.02	0.51	0.10	0.45
Sewing and knitting	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.06
Adult care	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.06	0.09
Extended family service	0.12	0.16	0.00	0.05	0.21	0.26
Child care and discipline	0.44	1.09	0.06	0.54	0.56	1.16
Shopping and services	0.44	1.02	0.28	1.04	0.39	0.49
Total housework	3.00	6.21	1.07	5.49	2.51	6.32

As we show average time, total housework time is not always the same as the sum of each housework time.

of "clothing care" suggested that the husbands of full-time working wives have begun to do that kind of housework, according to the daily needs of household. This tendency seemed to be a symptom of the gender-free lifestyle of full-time working couples.

#### The housework division ratios between husbands and wives

We calculated husbands' and wives' total housework time, and defined it as the necessary housework time of the household. Then, based on the total housework time of the household, we computed the ratio of

husbands' and wives' share of housework. Tables 4-1 and 4-2 indicate the results.

On a weekday, in full-time working wives' households, husbands shared 19.2 % of the housework and wives 80.8 %. In part-time working wives' and unemployed wives' households, however, the wives did almost 100 % of the housework.

On a holiday, the housework division ratios of unemployed wives' husbands were much bigger than on a weekday.

In comparing our previous research data (Horiuchi

Table 3-1. Housework: percentages of participation by classification type, participant average weekday time spent

	Wife-employed full-time (n=74)				Wife-employed part-time (n=28)				Wife unemployed (n=27)			
	Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife	
	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min
Food preparation	17.6	0.33	98.6	1.07	7.1	0.15	92.9	1.35	3.7	0.15	100.0	1.37
Meal cleanup/dish washing	36.5	0.27	85.1	0.36	7.1	0.30	92.9	0.45	3.7	0.30	96.3	1.06
House maintenance	10.8	0.36	37.8	0.25	0.0	0.00	82.1	0.43	0.0	0.00	81.5	1.07
Clothing care	29.7	0.38	67.6	0.38	3.6	0.30	85.7	0.44	0.0	0.00	96.3	0.47
Sewing and knitting	0.0	0.00	5.4	0.19	0.0	0.00	7.1	1.30	0.0	0.00	22.2	0.33
Adult care	0.0	0.00	8.1	0.36	0.0	0.00	7.1	1.08	3.7	0.22	18.5	2.18
Extended family service	0.0	0.00	2.7	0.12	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	7.4	0.23
Child care and discipline	24.3	1.09	62.2	1.36	7.1	0.15	50.0	1.22	11.1	1.40	63.0	3.06
Shopping and services	10.8	0.21	50.0	0.30	0.0	0.00	53.6	0.38	3.7	2.30	81.5	0.56
Total housework	66.2	1.15	100.0	3.30	17.9	0.30	100.0	4.35	22.2	1.26	100.0	7.38

Table 3-2. Housework: percentages of participation by classification type, participant average holiday time spent

	Wife-employed full-time (n=74)				Wife-employed part-time (n=28)				Wife unemployed (n=27)			
	Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife	
	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min	%	h. min
Food preparation	24.3	0.48	94.6	1.23	21.4	1.18	82.1	1.33	14.8	0.15	92.6	1.25
Meal cleanup/dish washing	31.1	0.38	87.8	0.51	21.4	0.30	85.7	0.56	25.9	0.14	92.6	0.56
House maintenance	36.5	1.13	73.0	1.09	10.7	1.12	60.7	1.07	37.0	0.29	85.2	1.01
Clothing care	37.8	1.07	75.7	1.10	10.7	0.20	78.6	1.05	14.8	0.41	88.9	0.50
Sewing and knitting	0.0	0.00	12.2	0.35	0.0	0.00	10.7	0.55	0.0	0.00	3.7	2.30
Adult care	4.1	1.45	6.8	0.57	0.0	0.00	3.6	2.00	11.1	0.40	14.8	1.04
Extended family service	6.8	3.04	12.2	2.09	0.0	0.00	7.1	1.08	7.4	4.45	11.1	3.50
Child care and discipline	32.4	2.17	47.3	2.26	10.7	0.55	39.3	2.18	37.0	2.08	48.1	2.38
Shopping and services	45.9	1.36	68.9	1.29	32.1	1.28	75.0	1.25	40.7	1.02	66.7	1.13
Total housework	79.7	3.46	100.0	6.21	53.6	2.05	96.4	6.02	74.1	2.43	100.0	6.32

*et al.* 1992), we noted a remarkable change in full-time working couples, specifically progressive in the area of shared housework.

#### Equality ratios regarding housework

Kirijavainen (1984) advocated the idea of equality ratios based on housework time. She defined the word "equality ratios in household production (ER)" as the index that divided women's housework time by men's. The smaller the index number, the less the gap of housework time between husbands and wives.

Utilizing Kirijavainen's perspective, we showed ER

based on our time use data. On a weekday, the ER of full-time working couples was 4.2. As for time use data examined in 1990, the ER of full-time working couples was 7.8. It showed the gender equity of housework in full-time working households.

Furthermore, on a holiday, the ER of full-time working households was 2.1. In households of unemployed wives, it was 2.3. These indexes highlighted this trend towards gender equity as well as agreed with the data of Finland calculated by Kirijavainen (Ito and Horiuchi 1990).

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Table 4-1. Weekday housework division ratios: a comparison of husbands' and wives' participation

	Wife-employed full-time ( <i>n</i> =74)		Wife-employed part-time ( <i>n</i> =28)		Wife unemployed ( <i>n</i> =27)	
	Husband (%)	Wife (%)	Husband (%)	Wife (%)	Husband (%)	Wife (%)
Food preparation	8.3	91.7	1.1	98.9	1.0	99.0
Meal cleanup/dish washing	25.0	75.0	4.7	95.3	1.5	98.5
House maintenance	30.8	69.2	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Clothing care	30.6	69.4	2.6	97.4	0.0	100.0
Sewing and knitting	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Adult care	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	3.7	96.3
Extended family service	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Child care and discipline	22.1	77.9	2.3	97.6	8.6	91.4
Shopping and services	11.8	88.2	0.0	100.0	11.5	88.5
Total housework	19.2	80.8	1.8	98.2	4.0	96.0

Table 4-2. Holiday housework division ratios: a comparison of husbands' and wives' participation

	Wife-employed full-time ( <i>n</i> =74)		Wife-employed part-time ( <i>n</i> =28)		Wife unemployed ( <i>n</i> =27)	
	Husband (%)	Wife (%)	Husband (%)	Wife (%)	Husband (%)	Wife (%)
Food preparation	13.2	86.8	18.3	81.7	6.0	94.0
Meal cleanup/dish washing	21.1	78.9	11.1	88.9	11.9	88.1
House maintenance	35.1	64.9	16.3	83.7	34.2	65.8
Clothing care	32.1	67.9	3.8	96.2	18.2	81.8
Sewing and knitting	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Adult care	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0	40.0	60.0
Extended family service	42.9	57.1	0.0	100.0	44.7	55.3
Child care and discipline	38.9	61.1	10.0	90.0	42.4	57.6
Shopping and services	41.5	58.5	30.4	69.6	44.3	55.7
Total housework	32.1	67.9	16.1	83.9	30.4	69.6

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Husbands' and wives' commitment to housework is influenced by wives' employment type. Husbands whose wives work full-time do many kinds of housework. They spend 50 min on housework on an average weekday.

Husbands' housework time is not yet on a par with their full-time working wives' time, but there is little doubt that husbands have come to participate regularly in housework in those households where both husbands and wives work full-time. This tendency suggests a more gender-free lifestyle.

Equality ratios (ER) of housework show the most equal division of housework that we have ever seen before.

It is clear that there are some husbands who attempt to reduce gender gaps regarding housework. Therefore, we can expect a change in social working systems as Mizunoya *et al.* (1996) predicted.

Housework time is regulated by other time use, particularly paid working hours. It is important that enough time is assured for husbands and wives concerning their home life. In addition to social system working styles, the rising consciousness of gender role differentiations affects the division of

housework. Strict belief in gender roles disturbs husbands' participation in housework. We should seek to clarify this rising consciousness of gender role differentiation in our further study.

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### 生活時間の観点からみた夫妻の家事労働分担の実態

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家事労働時間は、男女平等の指標として国際的に注目されており、これまで長い間、夫妻の家事労働分担には、ジェンダーの偏りがあることが指摘されてきた。本報の目的は、東京都世田谷区において1995年に実施した生活時間調査結果のデータを用いて、夫妻の家事労働への参加の実態を明らかにすることである。本研究の結果から、平日および休日の夫妻の家事労働時間、家事労働行為者率、家事労働分担率を示した。妻が常勤の夫の家事労働への参加は最も進んでおり、平日の平均家事労働時間は、50分であった。妻が常勤の夫の66.2%は、平日に家事労働を行っており、彼らの29.7%は、以前のデータではきわめて一般的ではなかった衣生活管理の家事労働を行っていた。また、妻が常勤の夫は、平日に世帯内で行われる家事労働の19.2%を分担していた。この比率は、かつてない高率であり、妻が常勤の夫妻は、ジェンダーにとらわれない生活様式を形成しつつあるように思われた。一方、最も性別役割分業に応じた傾向を示していたのは、妻がパートの夫妻であった。

キーワード：生活時間、家事労働、ジェンダー、就業形態。