

PREFACE

I feel that it is the result of socialization to feel responsible for domestic labor. As women, we were considered more suitable for household chores than men. We use the name of Superwoman to refer to a "perfect mother/worker/housewife", but the name Superman is only a character from a fantasy novel. And he does not do any domestic labor, he is nevertheless still Superman. This is the way we have been raised from society.

My mom is a Super Woman. She has accomplished success professionally, supports her three children to graduate school, and has been taking care of her family for 35 years.

This is a problem to me. Like many other girls in my age group, I grew up without being offered domestically equal relationship models. So I often felt awkward or irresponsible about pursuing equal relationships.

I got married recently, and I realized that marriage is not simply 'happily ever after' as in the last chapter of fairy tales. I know. Dish cleaning Snow White and Belle who does the laundry for the prince do not seem to be romantic. Nevertheless, those are fairy tails which should be told. The works we never talked about should be clearly visible, and recognized.

The beginning point and the goal of this project are to make invisible domestic affairs visible. The reason why housework was invisible is because the value of the labor has been degraded. Or it could be slighted because the labor was invisible. Thus, if household affairs are paid justly, I expect that labor will gradually become visible. In the short term, it will bring equality within the home and in the relationship. In the long run, I also expect to create equality of social and institutional works.

- Around the world, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men.
- This unequal distribution of caring responsibilities is linked to discriminatory social institutions and stereotypes on gender roles.
- Gender inequality in unpaid care work is the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labor outcomes, such as labor force participation, wages and job quality
- Tackling entrenched gender norms and stereotypes is a first step in redistributing responsibilities for care and housework between women and men.

In a 2014 study from the OECD development center, the authors noted that

The day-to-day lives of women around the world share one important characteristic: unpaid care work is seen as a female responsibility. Across all regions of the world, women spend on average between three and six hours per day on unpaid care activities while men spend between half an hour to two hours. Hence gender inequalities in unpaid care work are observed all around the world, even if there are regional variations. Overall, women spend more time on unpaid care activities than men representing on average two to ten times that of men's.¹

Domestic affairs, domestic work, housekeeping work, household work, ... etc. are all forms of unpaid responsible work which mainly rely on women's labor. Therefore, in self-perpetuating cycle, domestic affairs reinforce gender stereotypes as well as influence and worsen the gender gap in labor outcomes.

¹ Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labor outcomes, OECD Development Centre, December 2014

Unpaid means invisible, invisible means sacrifice in this issue. So this work experiments about the opportunities to make this invisible labor more visible, not only from the scale of an individual family or partnership but also to a broader societal perspective.

In arranging the cost of each labor duty, the partners will be able to find their fair-labor cost and ratio between them, their responsibility, and define the other partner's labor and efforts clearly. In turn, this can influence healthy conversations for building a more equal relationship.

This experiment is not without limitations. First, it is fundamentally reliant on capitalism. I acknowledge that capitalism is not an ideal social structure, however the project has borrowed concepts from capitalism and currency in order to most effectively and intuitively translate the value of revenue in the setting of domestic affairs.

Second, broader gender issues have not been included in the project. I explored many possible forms of partnerships and also tried to break down gender disparity by suggestion but this does not fully disassemble the underlying premise of gender equality. In a similar sense as the other limitation, purchasing external services for domestic affairs is not a perfect alternative. It is because that, most of the workers in house keeping work fields are women. It reinforces the concept of domestic labors as 'women's work', as it simply re-frames labor as being 'other women's labor'. This seemingly plausible capital transition is hard to see as a positive alternative. In relation to this, the project does not address fully the issues of gender labor and wage gaps in the labor market, nor about the situations in which women were more identified as household workers. This would be better addressed in future works.

Finally, this project does not explore the issue of pregnancy or parenting issues in households. The subjects of childbirth and pregnancy are not solely a matter of domestic economics but are also related to social environment including social welfare problems.

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