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## **Gender divisions of domestic labour and paid domestic services**

### **Abstract**

This article investigates the relationship between sharing domestic tasks in dual-earner mixed-sex couples and using of paid domestic services. Results from a small-scale survey of the domestic outsourcing practices of employees of a large service-sector organisation in the UK show that in households: full-time working by women and presence of younger children is positively associated with using of domestic services; there is no association between the gender division of traditionally female domestic tasks carried out within the couple and paid services; in contrast, men's greater involvement in traditionally male and traditionally gender-neutral tasks is positively associating with using paid domestic services. These findings tentatively suggest a new arrangement may be emerging whereby some couples address a heavy workload and desire for a less traditional division of domestic labour by men participating more in close-ended domestic tasks and outsourcing more time-consuming tasks traditionally undertaken by women to paid service providers.

### **Key words**

Domestic labour; domestic services; dual-earner couple; gender; divisions of labour

Domestic labour can be conceived of as a service which is of fundamental importance to the welfare of individuals, the routine functioning of society and social reproduction across generations (Gregson & Lowe, 1994). It can be carried out within a range of social relations, although the family has been and remains the key unit where housework has to be negotiated. In the mid-twentieth century, domestic labour was undertaken mainly by economically-inactive wives for family members on an unpaid basis in exchange for the male family wage. Since the end of the twentieth century, however, the normalisation of women's employment across the lifecycle, the result of their increased levels of education and human capital which has translated into the aspiration for long and stable professional careers (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006), has meant that fewer and fewer households can rely on the labour power of a healthy economically-inactive adult to undertake domestic labour. Since this increase in the time devoted to employment by women living in mixed-sex couples has not been mirrored by a similarly increased

engagement of their male partners in domestic labour (as evidenced by numerous academic studies - see for example Assave et al, 2014; Breen & Cooke, 2005; Crompton et al, 2005; Geist, 2005; Kan & Laurie, 2018; Kitterod & Pettersen, 2006; Sullivan, 2000), many women face a 'double day' of employment and domestic duties. Overall work time (domestic labour and employment taken together) has increased over the past 30 years for women (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006) and dual-earner couples may encounter problems of work-life conflict in trying to reconcile domestic and employment responsibilities, particularly when they have dependent children.

One strategy to cope with issues of work-life conflict used by a significant and growing minority of dual-earner households is to outsource some of this unpaid domestic labour – most frequently, cleaning, ironing and gardening - to paid domestic service providers (Bittman et al, 1999; Cancedda, 2001; Devetter & Rousseau, 2005; Favaque, 2013; Hochschild, 2003; Kilkey, 2010; Lefevre, 2000; Lutz, 2007; Marbot, 2008; Ruijter and Van der Lippe, 2007; Scott, 2001; Warren, 2003). However, the vast majority of households which purchase domestic services are only relieved of a small proportion of their overall unpaid domestic-labour burden. For example, in Europe, households have been found to purchase on average three to four hours of domestic help a week (Aderjad, 2003; 2005; Favaque, 2013) whereas the average UK woman aged 20-74 spends 29 hours and 45 minutes per week on unpaid domestic labour in total with the average amount of time spent cleaning and ironing – two activities which are amongst the most frequently outsourced to paid services – being 7 hours and 7 minutes per week (European Commission, 2004). It is clear then that even in households which do purchase domestic services, much work remains for the members of the household to undertake themselves (Windebank, 2007).

The question begs therefore of what the nature of the relationship between the use of paid domestic services and the gender division of unpaid domestic labour is. However, until recently, the gender division of unpaid domestic labour on the one hand and the consumption of paid domestic services on the other have remained relatively separate research areas (Van der Lippe et al, 2004). There have been few studies which investigate the relationship between particular configurations of the gender division of domestic labour and the use of paid domestic services. Some studies investigate whether it is couples with traditional or egalitarian divisions of unpaid domestic labour which are most likely to decide to pay for domestic services (Cheung & Lui, 2017; Gonalons-Pons, 2015; Groves & Lui, 2012) whilst others attempt to assess the impact of using paid domestic services on the overall shares of unpaid domestic labour between spouses in the household (Craig & Baxter, 2016; Van der Lippe et al, 2004).

In this article, we will compare the gender division of unpaid domestic labour in dual-earner mixed-sex couples who pay for at least one regular domestic service with that of couples who do not, using the results of a small-scale survey of the domestic outsourcing practices of employees of a large service-sector organisation in Sheffield in the UK. Mixed-sex couples have been selected for our analysis due to our interest in the gender division of unpaid labour and dual-earner couples have been selected as it is they who most frequently report problems of work-life conflict (Gregory et al, 2013) and have the greatest recourse amongst the working-age population to paid domestic services (Devetter, 2016; Favaque, 2013). The small-scale nature of the survey means that the conclusions drawn from it will be necessarily tentative, but nonetheless will make an interesting contribution to this underdeveloped field particularly since the way in which we construct Domestic Labour Indices for this sample of dual-earner couples allows us to look closely at the pervasive

nature of the gendered division of labour in the face of women's employment and domestic outsourcing. The study will also serve as a foundation for further work on larger-scale data sets.

The article will first discuss theoretical approaches to gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour and results from previous studies that have investigated the relationship between gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour and paid domestic services in order to formulate hypotheses for the present study. Second, the methodology used in the analyses will be discussed. Third, the results of the study will be reported. And finally the implications and limitations of these results for understanding the relationship between the use of paid domestic services and gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour will be examined.

### **Understandings of the relationship between the gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour and the use of paid domestic services**

There are two broad theoretical approaches to explain gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour within the mixed-sex couple which can also be used to inform explanations as to why couples decide to use paid domestic services or not and how paid domestic services might impact the gendered organisation of domestic labour. On the one hand, economic resource-based models posit that decisions concerning who in the household undertakes unpaid domestic labour and whether or not some of this work will be outsourced to a paid-service provider result from a rational allocation of tasks based on the resources of household members (Coverman, 1985; Hiller, 1984). A first resources perspective focuses on time. This time availability perspective argues that unpaid domestic labour is allocated according to the availability of household members to undertake it in relation to the amount of work to be done (Stafford et al., 1977). Time constraints, as represented by employment status, marital status and parental status, are said to explain in

large part variations in contributions to unpaid domestic work. In addition, Coverman (1985) conceptualises this situation as the 'demand/response capability' of the household: in other words, the demands on household members to fulfil domestic responsibilities in relation to their capacities for doing so. Demand is in the main a function of the number of children in the family whilst indicators of response capability include the number of hours spent in paid work by each member of the couple and the level of combined earnings of household members as an indicator of ability to purchase substitutes to unpaid domestic labour, including paid domestic services. Therefore, the more couples have equal employment commitments, for example, when both partners work full-time, the more the gender division of domestic labour is expected to be equal. Similarly, if households have limited free time, such as when both partners are employed and when their domestic burden is heavy, for example when they have younger children, they will be more likely to use paid domestic services (Bittman et al, 1999).

A second resources perspective draws on Becker's (1981) microeconomic theory which stresses the common interests of the members of the couple in taking economically rational decisions about the division of their combined labour between domestic production and employment. This perspective argues that households divide labour in ways which maximise efficiency and output for the family through the specialization of partners who are differentially skilled in either market labour (most usually employment) or nonmarket labour (domestic labour and caring). It is suggested, therefore, that women may have a comparative advantage in domestic labour deriving from their role as mothers and the accompanying tendency for their human capital to be less valuable in the employment place than that of men, despite the progress made in women's education. Men's comparative advantage in wage earning therefore results in their concentration on paid work: the

greater the husband's comparative advantage in market work, as indicated by higher levels of education or income, the less time he will invest in nonmarket labour (Lemmenicier, 1988). Furthermore within this perspective, given sufficient resources, the most efficient strategy to get domestic work done, particularly for high-earning couples in which it is not economically rational for either partner to overly invest in unpaid domestic labour, may be to pay a third party to undertake domestic work to release more time for earning money from employment for both partners (Halldén & Stenberg, 2018).

The final resources perspective centres on the concept of bargaining and argues that the allocation of domestic labour reflects power relations between the partners in the couple: the level of relative resources partners bring to a relationship determines how much unpaid domestic labour is completed by each (Blood & Wolf, 1960; Brine, 1994; Sofer, 1999). Higher levels of education and income relative to one's spouse, for example, are expected to translate into more power, which is used to avoid doing domestic tasks. Within this perspective, it is expected that women with higher relative resources will both be in a position to bargain for a more equal division of unpaid domestic labour in their household and make use of paid domestic services should they wish to do so (Cheung & Lui, 2017; Van der Lippe et al, 2004).

From the position of the resources perspectives, therefore, women's employment within the mixed-sex couple is expected to increase the likelihood both of a more equal gender division of unpaid labour in the home and of the use of paid domestic services: when women are in employment, they have more limited time for unpaid domestic work and greater bargaining power within the couple, both of which open up the possibility of a greater sharing of unpaid domestic work with their spouse as well as the need and resources to pay for domestic services. Furthermore, given that paid domestic services

replace the time spent on tasks that more often fall to women, women should benefit proportionally more from outsourcing than men and their share of the housework should be reduced (Gonalons-Pons, 2015). There is some limited evidence in support of this assertion: Van der Lippe et al (2004), for example, conclude on the basis of time-use data for the Netherlands that paying for domestic services for cleaning and/or laundry represents a time-saving of approximately one-and-a-half hours per week for married women in relation to their domestic labour and little or no time-saving effect for married men, suggesting that paid domestic services do contribute to improving gender equality as regards shares of unpaid domestic work. These understandings give rise to our first hypothesis:

H1: There will be a more equal gender division of labour in households which do purchase at least one regular domestic service than those which do not.

On the other hand, a range of gender perspectives contest the gender-neutrality of the economic models which are criticised for their assumption that individuals do or do not carry out domestic labour largely due to factors which in principle can affect men or women equally. As Bianchi et al (2000: 194-5) assert, gender perspectives argue that 'housework is a symbolic enactment of gender relations' and 'wives and husbands display their "proper" gender roles through the amount and type of housework they perform'. In other words, heterosexual partnerships not only service the functions of production and consumption, but also constitute a stage for the enactment of gender roles and identities (Brine, 1994; Craig & Baxter, 2016; De Vault, 1990; Ferree, 1990; South & Spitze, 1994). The division of unpaid domestic labour between heterosexual partners as well as the choice to perform domestic labour within the couple or to outsource it to paid-service providers can thus be viewed as performances of gender roles rather than as determined by material circumstances. Indeed, traditional gender roles for women as wives and mothers are



strongly related to expectations for doing domestic labour and displayed through outcomes such as a clean house (Robinson, 1999). Some view these gendered acts as being the result of gender socialisation (Greenstein, 1996) whilst others argue that gender identities themselves are constructed on a continuous basis through the performance or non-performance of particular activities, in this case, domestic labour. This is often referred to as the 'doing gender' perspective (West & Zimmerman, 1987). There exists therefore the possibility for the disruption of traditional gender roles, or the 'undoing' of gender (Deutsch, 2007).

The gender perspectives allow an explanation for the fact that unequal divisions of unpaid domestic work persist in mixed-sex dual-earner couples with high-earning and/or full-time working women partners. Previous studies have found that one of the drivers for full-time employed women living in mixed-sex couples to purchase at-home domestic services is the reluctance of their partners to share unpaid domestic work (Gregson & Lowe, 1994; Devetter et al, 2011). Furthermore, a number of studies report that purchasing domestic services is cited by women as a means of reducing their overall workload which avoids the conflict that would arise if they attempted to bargain with their partners to force change in their participation in domestic work (Devetter et al, 2011; Gregson & Lowe, 1994; Gupta, 2006; Hochschild, 1989; Ruppner, 2010; Seierstad & Kirton, 2015). It is not only women, however, who have been found to initiate the purchase of domestic services in order to maintain a traditionally-constructed gender division of unpaid domestic work: Groves and Lui (2012) find that hiring help is sometimes a strategy used by men to release their wives from housework without having to participate in it themselves. Given that domestic services usually only replace a fraction of the unpaid domestic labour required to run a household, particularly when children are present, if their use is a response to a

traditional gender division of unpaid labour designed to avoid an increase in the domestic-labour participation of the man in the couple, then we might expect to find a less equal gender division of the remaining unpaid domestic labour in households which use paid domestic services. These understandings give rise to our second hypothesis:

H2: There will be a less equal gender division of labour in households which purchase at least one regular domestic service than those which do not.

However, studies in Australia (Craig & Baxter, 2016), the US (Killewald, 2011), the UK (Sullivan & Gershuny, 2013) and Spain (Gonalons-Pons, 2015) have all shown weak associations between recourse to domestic services and a more equal sharing of the unpaid domestic-labour burden within the mixed-sex couple. Craig & Baxter (2016) using data from the Australian Time Use Survey 2006 found no evidence that any form of domestic outsourcing is associated with more equal gender shares of domestic labour whilst the use of gardening / maintenance services was associated with women doing 4 per cent more of the household total domestic labour since men replacing their domestic labour time with paid services led to women doing a slightly higher proportion of a reduced total household labour time. In contrast, however, in a qualitative study of UK men and domestic services, Kilkey (2011) found that some men who purchase domestic services for traditionally masculine tasks use the time saved to undertake more traditionally-feminine domestic tasks, particularly those relating to children (Kilkey, 2011). Killewald (2011), in a sample of dual-earner married couples in the US Consumption and Activities Mail Survey of the Health and Retirement Study, found that the use of market substitutes for women's housework was only weakly associated with the time spent by wives cooking and cleaning whilst Sullivan & Gershuny (2013), using UK 2000/2001 time-use data, found that domestic outsourcing had little impact on the total domestic/caring workload of either partner. Lastly,

Gonalons-Pons (2015) found that women who use paid domestic services do about thirty minutes less housework per day than those women who do not but in relation to their partners these women continue to do the same share of housework. One reason for these findings is perhaps that it should not be assumed that there is a given or stable amount of domestic labour to be divided between unpaid and paid work and between men and women: individuals and/or couples with high standards of household cleanliness and domestic order which may be informed by their gender identities are more likely than their counterparts with lower standards both to employ domestic help and spend time doing housework, for example (Rezeanu, 2015). Furthermore, research has shown that paying someone to do domestic labour may pose a challenge to their gender identity for some women, leading them to engage in gender-deviance neutralisation activities by continuing to spend time on domestic tasks despite having paid help (Seierstad & Kirton, 2015).

Therefore, also within the terms of the gender perspectives, it may be argued that we cannot expect to find any particular relationship between paying for domestic services and sharing domestic labour since this relationship will depend on the degree to which each partner in the couple is attempting to construct a more or less traditional gender identity for him or herself through the performance or non-performance of domestic labour, willingness to pay a third party for domestic services and overall demand for domestic labour, paid and unpaid, within the home. These understandings give rise to our third hypothesis:

H3: Given the complexity and interplay of factors involved in gender performance related to domestic labour in combination with the material circumstances of the household, it is expected that no relationship will be found between the gender division of unpaid domestic labour and the use of paid domestic services.

## **Methodology**

The present analysis is based on a small-scale web questionnaire survey of 5,500 employees of a large service-sector employer in Sheffield concerning domestic outsourcing practices which was undertaken to ascertain the barriers to the expansion of the paid domestic-services sector in the city funded by Sheffield City Council<sup>1</sup>. The original study was interested in why people undertake a series of domestic tasks themselves and why they might outsource them to a paid third party. Gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour within the couple were investigated as potential factors influencing decisions regarding the outsourcing of domestic tasks. The study was carried out in September 2007. The sample of 287 out of a total of 418 respondents to be used here is that of individuals living in dual-earner mixed-sex couples. The data set is therefore limited and conclusions drawn from it must be read in this light. The fact that the survey was administered to the employees of an organisation rather than to households means that only one respondent reported on the organisation of domestic labour for their household, some respondents identifying as male and some as female. The fact that the questionnaire relies on both male and female informants as to the gender division of domestic labour is addressed (see 'Results) taking into account that previous studies have found that men may overestimate and women underestimate their relative contribution to domestic labour in the household (Windebank, 2001).

The questionnaire first sought basic socio-demographic data on the gender, age and occupations of the members of the households. Secondly, respondents were asked whether they currently pay anyone on a regular basis to undertake cleaning, laundry, ironing or

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Acknowledgements' for further details

gardening in their home.<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked how many employees they had, how many hours these employees worked and what they were paid. Third, respondents were given a list of everyday tasks. They were asked who in their household does which tasks, being able to choose from the following options (numbered 1-5) which best described their household arrangement: '1' 'always me'; '2' mostly me but sometimes my partner; '3' my partner and I share more or less equally; '4' mostly my partner but sometimes me; and '5' 'always my partner'. Respondents could also indicate that a task was carried out by three categories of third parties: another household member; someone paid to do the job; or an unpaid friend or family member from outside the household. This is a widely used technique with which to study the domestic division of labour both in large-scale surveys and in smaller-scale case studies (e.g. Bauer, 2007; International Social Survey Programme 2002; Windebank, 2001). For those tasks carried out by the respondent and/or their partner (answers 1-5) an average 'division of domestic labour' (DDL) score was produced across all or some of the tasks, the lower the score representing a higher degree of participation of the respondent in domestic labour.<sup>3</sup> These tasks span those defined by previous research (Zarca, 1990) as: (i) Gender specific and performed more often by women (GST-Ws)

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<sup>2</sup> Overall, 30% of the respondents answered that they outsourced at least one of these tasks: cleaning (24%), ironing (13%), and gardening (9%).

<sup>3</sup> As an additional robustness analysis we have re-run our multivariate analysis including as an additional category in the three indices (6) for those few cases (15% or less for each task) where the respondents report that each of the tasks making up the indices are being done by someone else (neither the respondent nor the spouse) such as another unpaid household member, friend or family unpaid or someone who is paid. The results with regards to how the couple share the tasks and its impact on the likelihood of outsourcing for the three indices confirm the main results found with the specification of the indices used in the article. Furthermore respondents are asked only for whether they are outsourcing a limited number of domestic chores: cleaning, laundry, ironing, and gardening, and an additional other category. Out of the four three (cleaning, laundry and ironing) are part of the DDL Index of activities done mainly by women while gardening is part of the DDL Index of activities done mainly by men. This means that for the gender neutral DDL Index the analysis is only a rough approximation for the likelihood of outsourcing those activities (everyday tidying, shopping, and washing up) assuming that these are classified in the default other category in the question we use as our dependent variable: "What type of work is undertaken by this person/these people you employ?". The response options are: cleaning, laundry, ironing, gardening, and other.

(cleaning, dusting and polishing; laundry; ironing; and cooking). Two of these four activities were in some cases outsourced to a paid service provider (cleaning, dusting and polishing and ironing). (ii) Gender specific and performed more often by men (GST-Ms) (gardening; putting out rubbish). Gardening was in some cases outsourced to paid services providers. Or (iii) gender-neutral tasks (G-NTs) (everyday tidying, shopping, washing up), none of which were outsourced to a paid third party.

The analysis presented below will investigate whether there is a relationship between the purchase of at-home domestic services and a more or less equal gender division of labour as measured by the three DDL indices explained above (GST-Ws; GST-Ms; and G-NTs). Our analysis will first discuss the consistency of the three DDL indices by looking at both male and female responses regarding who in the couple undertakes each of the tasks making up the three indices. Then our analysis will show descriptive evidence through mean comparison tests on the relationship between the gendered nature of the DDL in the couple within the three indices and the outsourcing of domestic tasks. The analysis will distinguish again between men's and women's responses for the DDL indices and the use of paid domestic services. Finally, the multivariate analysis, also distinguishing between male and female respondents, will investigate further the relationship between the DDL in the couple and the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks. For this analysis we employ logistic regression as our dependent variable is binary with value 1 for those cases where at least one of the three domestic tasks identified as regularly provided on a paid basis (cleaning; ironing; gardening) is outsourced and 0 for those cases where no domestic task is outsourced.

Then our analysis will show descriptive evidence through mean comparison tests on the relationship between the gendered nature of the DDL in the couple within the three

indices and the outsourcing of domestic tasks.<sup>4</sup> The analysis will distinguish again between male and female responses for the DDL indices and the use of paid domestic services. Finally, the multivariate analysis, also distinguishing between male and female respondents, will investigate further the relationship between the DDL in the couple and the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks. For this analysis we employ logistic regression as our dependent variable is binary with value 1 for those cases where at least one of the three domestic tasks analysed (cleaning; ironing; gardening) is outsourced and 0 for those cases where no domestic task is outsourced.

Our key explanatory variables are the three indices of the DDL developed as explained above: the DDL Indices of GST-Ws, GST-M and G-NTs. In order to properly isolate the impact of the DDL in the couple on the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks we include in our regression analysis the following well-known factors associated with the division of housework in couples:

*Age of the respondent:* a categorical variable with four categories. The first one groups respondents aged 18 to 29 years old, the second one groups respondents aged 30 to 44 years old, the third category groups those aged 45 to 60 years old and the fourth those aged over 60 years old.

*Work status of the respondent:* A dummy variable with value 0 when the respondent works full-time and value 1 when s/he works part time.

*Children in the household:* A dummy variable with value 1 when there are children in the household and 0 otherwise.

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<sup>4</sup> The three indices used in the analysis consider only cases where the two spouses report a certain level of sharing the tasks between them (categories 1 to 5 above). The robustness analysis outlined in footnote 3 includes an additional category (6) where the spouses report the tasks being done by someone else outside the couple, either paid or unpaid. This category 6 collapses options that are very different in nature but there are very few cases.

*Childcare arrangements:* A dummy variable with value 1 for those couples who report the use of at least one of the following childcare arrangements – childminders, nanny, nursery, after school club, or holiday club after school and 0 otherwise.

Unfortunately, due to the small sample size we could not include any further controls in our analysis. However, we believe these are the essential ones to be able to properly investigate the impact of the DDL in the couple and the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks.

Finally, based on the results from the multivariate analysis we use postestimation techniques in order to show the key significant results in a directly interpretable way. For this postestimation analysis we report the impact of the two significant DDL indices (GST-Ms and G-NTs) for female respondents on the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks setting the control variables in their sample means.

## **Results**

### ***Descriptive Analysis***

The first descriptive analysis reported in Tables 1 to 3 below aims to provide evidence of the consistency of the three DDL indices used in the original analysis for this article by looking at the self-reported responses of male and female respondents in our sample of dual-earner couples regarding who in the couple is the main person responsible for undertaking each of the domestic tasks where these are undertaken by members of the couple that are classified in each of the DDL indices. Table 1 focuses on the domestic tasks that are reported to be carried out mainly by women according to the responses of both men and women (GST-Ws). Thus, according to the majority of male respondents (the modal percentage is 30%) cleaning and dusting are mostly carried out by their partner and only sometimes by themselves whereas a majority of female respondents report that they are exclusively in charge of these tasks (the modal percentage is 37%) when this activity is carried out and



when it is not outsourced. These results suggest that there is a certain gender divergence in the self-reporting of men and women concerning who is the person responsible for this (and other tasks) but overall a clear gendered pattern emerges from the careful observation of male and female responses in dual-earner couples which allow us to justify that our DDL indices have internal consistency based on the self-reports of the partners. With regards to laundry, a majority of men again report that this task is mostly carried out by their partners with some contribution from themselves whereas the gendered pattern that allows us to classify this activity as performed mainly by women emerges more clearly in the female responses with around 53% of the respondents reporting that they are the ones in charge of doing the laundry. For ironing the results in Table 1 shows that the modal percentage for male respondents where the couple carry out the activity themselves to this corresponds to this activity being always performed by the partner (26%) and the modal value for female respondents (46%) corresponds to ironing being done by them. Again we see some gender divergences in reporting but a gender pattern emerges that suggests that when ironing is not outsourced, it is mostly done by women in dual-earner couples. Finally, for cooking, an activity never carried out by a paid service provider, our results indicate that this task is predominantly done by women. A majority of men (30%) acknowledge that their partners do the cooking with some contribution from their side which closely matches what women predominantly say. Thus nearly 38% of women report that they are mainly responsible for cooking with some contribution from their male partners.<sup>5</sup>

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

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<sup>5</sup> Some of the variance in men's and women's responses may also be due to self-selection of respondents.

In Table 2 we show the respondents' self-reports of who is the main person in their household responsible for the GST-Ms. According to the level of agreement between the partners we can safely classify these activities as being more often performed by the male partners. Thus, for those respondents in which one of the partners undertakes this task, a majority of men report that they are mostly responsible for gardening with some contribution from their female partners (29%). With regards to female respondents even though the modal percentage (30%) corresponds to 'my partner and I share equally', adding the categories that imply male partners assume the bulk of the task ('mostly my partner but sometimes me' and 'always me') clearly outnumbers (35%) the equal share as the preferred response of women. Again, we see that there is divergence in the self-reports of the men and women regarding who is mostly responsible for these domestic tasks but looking closely at the data a clear gendered pattern emerges for gardening. With regards to "putting out the rubbish" a majority of men either report that they always do it (19%) or they mostly do it with some contribution from their partners (29%). Overall, the two categories that signify that this is a task done mostly by men add up to 48%. Again in this case there is a gender discrepancy looking at responses by women since they mostly report to share this task equally with their partners. However, we have decided again to include this task in the GST-M DDL Index based on existing research and due to the fact that neither for the male or female responses this task would be easily classified in the two alternative indices.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In Table 3 we report the spouses' responses regarding the tasks that are deemed 'Gender Neutral' – none of which are regularly outsourced to paid service providers. Thus, both a majority (that is, the modal frequency for all tasks analysed) of male and female respondents report equally sharing responsibility with regards to everyday tidying (44% and 40%, respectively), shopping (41% and 35%, respectively), and washing up (49% and 36%, respectively).

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In Table 4 we show the first descriptive evidence of the relationship between the DDL and whether domestic tasks are outsourced. For the mean comparison tests carried out we used the three DDL indices and whether any domestic tasks of the nine analysed in the article are outsourced, which is the dependent variable used also in the multivariate analysis shown in Table 5. Finally, for the analysis we again distinguish between whether the DDL indices are the result of male or female responses. We find two instances where the gendered nature of the DDL is related to the outsourcing of domestic tasks. The first is for the GST-M DDL Index. The average difference in the Index for when any tasks are outsourced and when they are not indicates that when a male respondent is more responsible for male-related domestic tasks, outsourcing is more likely to take place. A lower average in this index indicates that the respondent (in this case the male partner) is more responsible for the task. The second instance where we find a significant relationship between the DDL and whether domestic tasks are outsourced is for female respondents in the GNT DDL Index. Interestingly, in this case the average score difference in the index is negative which suggests that when the male partner is more responsible for gender-neutral domestic tasks outsourcing is more likely to occur. In sum, therefore, the results suggest that outsourcing in these dual-earner couples takes place when the male partner has a higher level of responsibility in GST-M and GNTs.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

In Table 5 we present the results of our multivariate analysis to investigate in more detail the relationship between the extent of the gendered division of domestic labour and the likelihood of the outsourcing domestic tasks. We present two model specifications for male and female respondents for each index. The first one does not include the two children-related variables: number of children and childcare arrangements while the second one includes these two variables. The purpose is to properly isolate the contribution of these two variables to the outsourcing decision as the literature shows that these are key factors in outsourcing housework. Results show a positive and significant relationship for the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks for two indices as reported by female respondents: the GST-M index and the G-NT index. In both cases a greater involvement in the domestic tasks that make up both indices from the male partners increase the odds of domestic outsourcing. These results fit with the mean comparison test shown above where we also found that a greater involvement of the male respondents (in this case, either reported by themselves or by their female partners) was associated with using paid domestic services. Results for the GST-W DDL Index are not significant either for male or female respondents.

With regards to the control variables, bearing in mind the reduced sample size that we are working with which may affect significance levels, we find that the presence of children in the household is positively associated with domestic outsourcing for the GST-W DDL Index as reported by female respondents themselves. For all other models the presence of children does not have a significant impact on the likelihood of outsourcing domestic tasks. This is most likely due to the positive and significant relationship found for the childcare-arrangements variable in most models. Using any childcare arrangements increases the odds of domestic outsourcing of household tasks as well. Both the presence of

children in the household and childcare arrangements suggest that it is work-life balance reconciliation needs which drive the decision of dual-earner couples to outsource domestic tasks<sup>6</sup>. Not surprisingly working part-time is significantly and negatively associated, but only for female respondents, with the likelihood of domestic outsourcing. This could be indeed the result of an endogenous relationship whereby the decision of women to work part-time could be the result of the impossibility for some dual earner-couples to outsource domestic tasks (due possibly to not having enough household income). Finally, we find some relationship between age and the likelihood of domestic outsourcing: male respondents are less likely to outsource male gender-specific domestic tasks and gender neutral ones when they are 30 to 44 years old as compared to their younger counterparts (18 to 29 years old). For female respondents we instead find a positive relationship with outsourcing as they age for male gender-specific tasks and gender neutral ones.

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

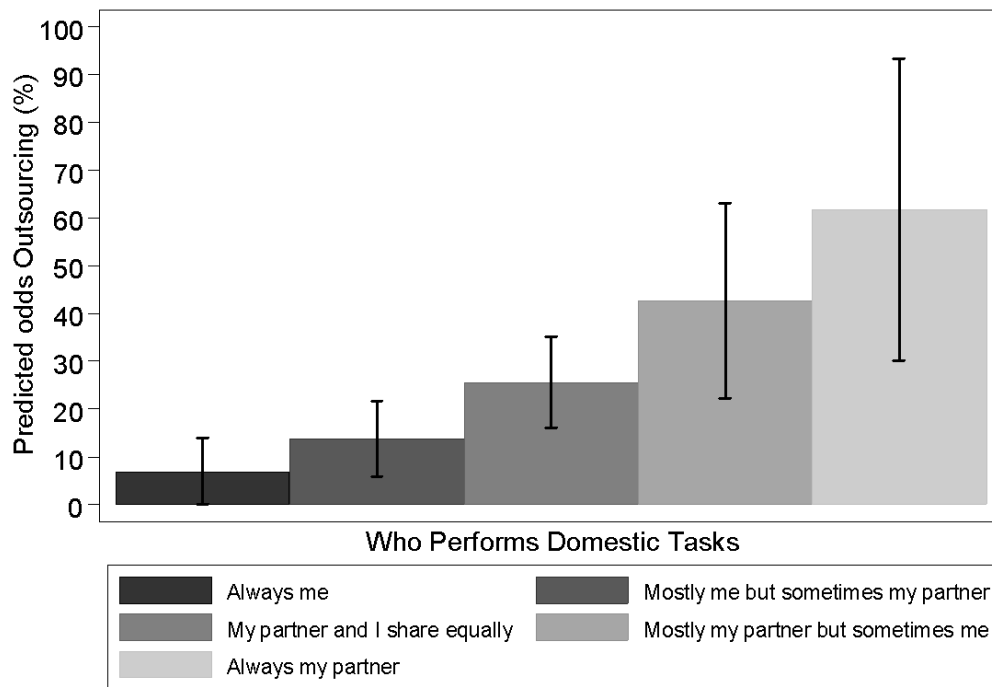
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<sup>6</sup> Further exploration of the relationship between the presence of children in the household and the use of childcare arrangements is reported in table A.1 in the appendix where both variables are added sequentially. This indicates that for the outsourcing of activities mainly done by women there may be an issue of simultaneous causation (which translates in high multicollinearity). However, for the other two indices results are consistent with our substantive interpretation as the presence of children increases the odds of outsourcing but once childcare arrangements are introduced in the final model for each index the positive effect of children in the odds of outsourcing vanishes. The issue of multicollinearity for the index of activities mainly done by women does not affect the key results of the paper as in this case no significant results for the odds of outsourcing were found.

As explained in the methodology section, based on the significance results for the DDL indices in the multivariate analysis above we present two figures showing the predicted probabilities of domestic outsourcing for the two DDL indices reporting significant results for female respondents. We do this for the relevant categories of the indices while setting all control variables in their sample means. Although indices are continuous as they add up responses for a number of domestic tasks, postestimation is done for those meaningful categories indicating a varying degree of responsibility for each of the spouses in performing the domestic tasks that make up the indices.

Figure 1 shows the results for the GST-M DDL Index (as reported by women). When the tasks are either or mostly done by the woman or shared equally with the partner, the predicted odds of domestic outsourcing are below 50 %. However, when the male partner does the bulk of the remaining tasks, the predicted odds of outsourcing increase considerably to 43% and 62%, respectively.

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of outsourcing domestic tasks for the GST-M DDL Index (female respondents)

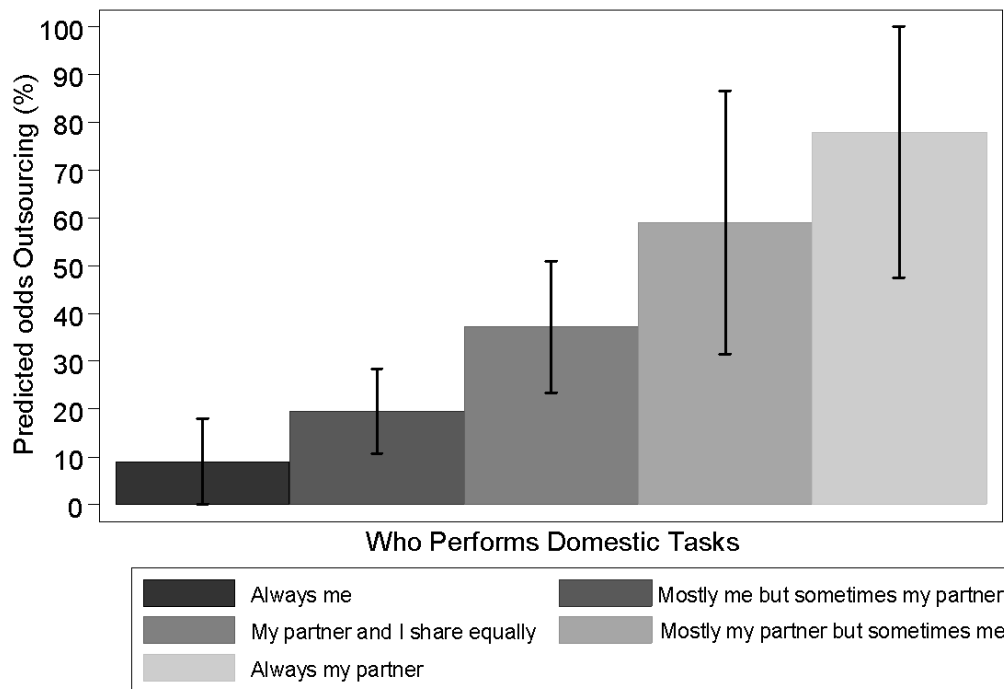


Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors' own calculations

Finally, figure 2 shows the predicted odds for the GNT DDL Index as reported by women again which turned out to be significant in our multivariate analysis in Table 5. In this case, as above, again, a greater involvement of the male partner in the GNTs increase the odds of outsourcing domestic tasks. Results are even more clear-cut than in figure 1. Thus, when the husband is mostly responsible for those GNTs with some collaboration from their partner the odds of outsourcing are 59% and when it is only the husband who does them the odds go up to a sizable 78%. This result could be interpreted as the result of the increasing resources of the women who may buy themselves out of some tasks and bargain their way of out of others. However, as we do not have good information of the spouses' share of income in the present data this explanation may not be properly tested.



Figure 2. Predicted probabilities of outsourcing domestic tasks for the DDL Gender Neutral Index (female respondents)



Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors' own calculations

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this analysis, we have investigated how particular configurations of the sharing of tasks in the DDL indices for GST-Ws, GST-Ms and for G-NTs as reported by male or female respondents are related to the likelihood of the use of paid domestic services for any of the task(s) surveyed. From the theoretical discussion and literature review, a number of possible relationships between the division of domestic labour and use of paid domestic services emerged: within an economic model based on time availability and relative resources, it was concluded that it might be expected to find a congruence of more equal gender divisions of unpaid domestic labour and use of paid domestic services particularly in dual-earner couples with children. Within a gender perspective and particularly within the theory of 'doing gender', two possibilities emerged. Based on studies that found a primary motivating factor for full-time employed women living in mixed-sex couples to pay for

domestic services was the non-participation and/or refusal of their partners to share domestic labour more equally, it was concluded that we might expect to find a congruence of a less equal division of unpaid domestic labour and use of paid domestic services. However, given that the majority of previous studies have found only a weak relationship between paying for domestic services and particular configurations of the gender division of unpaid domestic labour, it was suggested that there may not be any specific relationship between gender divisions of domestic labour and use of paid domestic services given the complexity of the ways in which men and women may use the performance or non-performance of domestic labour in constructing their gender identities.

First, our findings concerning the control variables in our multivariate analysis that presence of children in the household and the use of childcare services is positively associated with the use of paid domestic services and the part-time employment of female respondents is negatively associated with their use may suggest, in line with the presumption of the economic model, that those households with higher resources (resulting from the full-time working of the female respondent) and higher domestic burdens (the presence of children, particularly those requiring childcare) will be the most likely to use paid domestic services. Furthermore, although these data do not provide sufficient evidence to make a bold claim here, the findings are not out of line with those of previous research that a key reason for both mothers and fathers to use paid domestic services is in order to devote more time to child-centred activities (Brousse, 2015; Burikova, 2016).

Second, we found that the likelihood of the couple using paid domestic services has no significant association with the DDL for GST-Ws (cleaning and dusting; laundry; ironing; and cooking). This finding is interesting in two ways: first it echoes previous research based

on time-use surveys that show that the reduction of time spent on domestic labour by the use of paid domestic services in households has little influence on the relative amount of time spent on domestic labour by men and women even though it is traditionally female domestic tasks that are most often outsourced. Second, it lends some credence to the view that the complexity of the ways in which men and women may use the performance or non-performance of domestic labour in constructing their gender identities means that we cannot expect to find a hard and fast relationship between more or less equal gender divisions of domestic labour and use of paid domestic services. In this regard, we might take into consideration Beck's (1992: 89) suggestion that since families are now 'the scene of continuous juggling of diverging multiple ambitions' and that 'there is a degree of fluidity of gender roles and the associated agency of the partners in the heterosexual couple', a wide range of different configurations of the sharing of domestic labour between the members of the couple and third parties is to be expected. These configurations might depend on a combination of material circumstances, preferences and gender ideologies of the partners involved. This contemporary situation is in flux and the sharing of tasks between male and female household members and paid others can be seen as a facet of a new 'gender-equality equilibrium' based on 'professional self-realization as well as parenthood' for men and women (Esping-Anderson, 2009: 14) which is developing but has not yet fully crystallised.

All that said, however, our third finding is that there are some positive associations between particular gender divisions of domestic labour and use of paid domestic services, but these were for GST-Ms (gardening; putting out rubbish) and G-NTs (everyday tidying; washing up; shopping): in both cases, higher levels of male responsibility for the tasks concerned were associated with an increased likelihood of using paid domestic services.

Why, then, do we see a clear relationship between men's greater role in undertaking tasks in the GST-M and G-NT indices and use of paid domestic services but no such relationship when it comes to GST-Ws? These findings tentatively suggest an emerging configuration of domestic labour within the 'new gender equilibrium' (Esping-Anderson, 2009): in an attempt to manage a heavy employment and family workload, spend time with children and avoid an overly unequal division of labour within the couple, men retain responsibility for their traditionally male tasks and take more responsibility for G-NTs (which on the whole tend to be regular but close-ended and less time-consuming activities) whilst avoiding the more equal sharing of the more time-consuming and open-ended tasks particularly of cleaning and dusting, but also ironing and gardening, by using paid domestic services. As Craig & Baxter (2016:281) suggest, the expectation arising from gender theories is that men are willing to allow domestic outsourcing to substitute for their domestic time because not doing housework is gender appropriate behaviour for them. This chimes with the findings of Lyonette and Crompton (2014:34) that men believe more often than women that difficulties over who does the housework can be solved by throwing money at the problem, in other words, by outsourcing. In this scenario, therefore, paying for domestic services may be a means for couples to 'do gender differently' without men having to do gender 'too' differently.

In sum, therefore, the present study has found no support for the position that the use of paid domestic services is more likely in couples where women take on the greater share of remaining unpaid domestic labour. Indeed, the findings tentatively suggest that we need to look more in-depth at the various expressions of a 'new gender equilibrium' in terms of how domestic labour is shared between household members and others and the extent to which these configurations can be viewed as ways of 'doing gender' differently. As

we suggested in the introduction, sharing domestic labour and outsourcing it are not either / or choices. It is the interplay of these two strategies for getting different types of domestic labour done which is of significance. This albeit limited study has therefore produced some interesting results of its own, but as importantly it has confirmed signposts towards further research that needs to be done to investigate how this 'new gender equilibrium' between configurations of unpaid domestic labour and the use of paid domestic services, and indeed outsourcing of domestic labour more generally in terms of use of consumer products or out-of-home services, is coming about based on larger and more representative data sets.

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APPENDIX  
INSERT TABLE A1 HERE

Table 1. Domestic tasks making up the DDL Index “Gender specific tasks performed mainly by women” – GST-W

	Cleaning and dusting (n=218)		Laundry (n=278)		Ironing (n=220)		Cooking (n=276)	
	Respondent		Respondent		Respondent		Respondent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Always me	15.97	37.37	16.45	53.17	25.22	45.71	7.95	14.40
Mostly me but sometimes my partner	18.49	34.34	16.45	23.02	18.26	20.95	29.80	37.60
My partner and I share equally	27.73	20.2	26.32	16.67	13.91	16.19	24.50	27.20
Mostly my partner but sometimes me	30.25	7.07	26.97	4.76	16.52	9.52	30.46	17.60
Always my partner	7.56	1.01	13.82	2.38	26.09	7.62	7.28	3.20
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors’ own calculations

Table 2. Domestic tasks making up the DDL Index “Gender-specific tasks performed mainly by men” – GST-M

	Gardening (n=250)		Putting out rubbish (n=276)	
	Respondent		Respondent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Always me	16.30	17.39	18.79	10.24
Mostly me but sometimes my partner	28.89	18.26	29.53	18.11
My partner and I share equally	27.41	29.57	36.91	37.01
Mostly my partner but sometimes me	22.96	20	10.07	30.71
Always my partner	4.44	14.78	4.70	3.94
Total %	100	100	100	100

Source: Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors’ own calculations

Table 3. Domestic tasks making up the DDL Index Gender Neutral

	Everyday tidying (n=277)		Shopping (n=280)		Washing up (n =270)	
	Respondent		Respondent		Respondent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Always me	11.41	35.16	7.24	14.84	6.08	10.66
Mostly me but sometimes my partner	23.49	21.09	23.68	35.94	25.68	31.15
My partner and I share equally	44.30	39.84	40.79	35.16	49.32	36.07
Mostly my partner but sometimes me	16.78	3.13	25	14.06	16.22	20.49
Always my partner	4.03	0.78	3.29	0	2.70	1.64
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors' own calculations

Table 4. Mean comparison test of the DDL Indices by whether domestic tasks are outsourced

DDL Index GST-W			Average score	Differences
Male respondents	Outsourced	No (n=82)	2.98	-0.14
		Yes (n=15)	3.12	
Female respondents	Outsourced	No (n=79)	2.11	-0.51
		Yes (n=4)	2.62	
DDL Index GST-M				
Male respondents	Outsourced	No (n=89)	2.75	0.41***
		Yes (n=44)	2.34	
Female respondents	Outsourced	No (n=84)	2.93	-0.15
		Yes (n=30)	3.08	
DDL Index GNT				
Male respondents	Outsourced	No (n=92)	2.89	0.14
		Yes (n=53)	2.75	
Female respondents	Outsourced	No (n=82)	2.34	-0.36***

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Yes (n=37) 2.70

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\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors' own calculations

Table 5. Logistic models for the determinants of outsourcing domestic tasks according to various specifications of the DDL Index

	DDL Index: Mainly by women				DDL Index: More often by men				DDL Index: Gender neutral			
	Male (1)	(2)	Female (3)	(4)	Male (5)	(6)	Female (7)	(8)	Male (9)	(10)	Female (11)	(12)
DDL Index	0.098 (0.265)	0.067 (0.296)	0.787 (0.700)	0.882 (0.674)	-0.246 (0.234)	-0.293 (0.242)	0.610*** (0.251)	0.785*** (0.247)	-0.312 (0.262)	-0.295 (0.269)	0.910*** (0.350)	0.890*** (0.342)
Age (RC: 18 29)												
30-44	-0.359 (1.196)	-0.780 (1.294)	0.184 (1.226)	-0.044 (1.360)	-1.074 (0.683)	-1.579** (0.733)	1.258 (0.809)	1.048 (0.844)	-1.076 (0.725)	-1.438* (0.762)	1.263 (0.812)	1.127 (0.875)
45-60	-0.151 (1.211)	-0.303 (1.253)			-0.916 (0.679)	-1.062 (0.697)	1.936** (0.825)	2.027** (0.883)	-0.685 (0.722)	-0.807 (0.736)	1.989** (0.839)	2.258** (0.948)
>60												
Work part- time	-0.146 (1.123)	-0.342 (0.984)			-0.240 (0.885)	-0.126 (0.883)	-1.241* (0.670)	-1.621** (0.656)	-0.105 (0.704)	0.015 (0.758)	-0.695 (0.564)	-1.135* (0.607)
Children in the household		0.086 (0.753)		-15.627*** (1.025)		0.057 (0.462)		0.229 (0.662)		0.142 (0.451)		-0.038 (0.702)
Childcare arrangements		1.180 (0.882)		16.9431*** (1.451)		1.230** (0.581)		1.210 (0.806)		0.939* (0.538)		1.539* (0.842)
Constant	-1.215 (3.577)	-0.574 (3.343)	-4.458** (2.141)	-4.587* (2.774)	2.405 (2.774)	1.887 (2.782)	0.622 (2.202)	1.623 (2.129)	1.579 (2.371)	1.103 (2.545)	-2.261 (2.117)	-1.199 (2.093)
N	89	89	50	50	126	126	110	110	135	135	115	115
$\chi^2$	0.437	3.695	1.375	287.717	7.632	13.585	9.246	12.850	3.608	8.782	14.329	16.704



Prob> $\chi^2$	0.979	0.718	0.503	0.000	0.106	0.034	0.055	0.045	0.462	0.186	0.006	0.010
Pseudo R2	0.004	0.043	0.049	0.12	0.048	0.089	0.077	0.12	0.022	0.052	0.12	0.176

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Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors' own calculations

Table A.1. Logistic models for the determinants of outsourcing domestic tasks according to various specifications of the DDL Index: robustness check for the relationship between presence of children in the household and childcare arrangements

	DDL Index: Mainly by women				DDL Index: More often by men				DDL Index: Gender neutral			
	Male		Female		Male		Male		Female		Male	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
DDL Index	0.126 (0.281)	0.067 (0.296)	0.800 (0.618)	0.882 (0.674)	-0.202 (0.239)	-0.293 (0.242)	0.614*** (0.250)	0.785*** (0.247)	-0.260 (0.259)	-0.295 (0.269)	0.904** (0.367)	0.890*** (0.342)
Age (RC: 18 29)												
30-44	-0.408 (1.280)	-0.780 (1.294)	0.194 (1.377)	-0.044 (1.360)	-1.076 (0.691)	-1.579** (0.733)	1.046 (0.821)	1.048 (0.844)	-1.108 (0.745)	-1.438* (0.762)	1.090 (0.828)	1.127 (0.875)
45-60	-0.177 (1.293)	-0.303 (1.253)			-0.830 (0.693)	-1.062 (0.697)	1.786** (0.832)	2.027** (0.883)	-0.639 (0.746)	-0.807 (0.736)	1.901** (0.864)	2.258** (0.948)
Work part- time	-0.126 (1.085)	-0.342 (0.984)			-0.123 (0.896)	-0.126 (0.883)	-1.639** (0.674)	-1.621** (0.656)	0.013 (0.749)	0.015 (0.758)	-1.087* (0.586)	-1.135* (0.607)
Children in the household	0.666 (0.589)	0.086 (0.753)	0.208 (1.285)	-15.627*** (1.025)	0.582 (0.393)	0.057 (0.462)	0.936* (0.492)	0.229 (0.662)	0.573 (0.373)	0.142 (0.451)	0.894* (0.499)	-0.038 (0.702)
Childcare arrangements		1.180 (0.882)		16.941*** (1.451)		1.230** (0.581)		1.210 (0.806)		0.939* (0.538)		1.539* (0.842)
Constant	-1.628 (3.612)	-0.574 (3.343)	-4.548* (2.688)	-4.587* (2.774)	1.614 (2.817)	1.887 (2.782)	1.692 (2.141)	1.623 (2.129)	0.802 (2.502)	1.103 (2.545)	-1.219 (2.104)	-1.199 (2.093)
Observations	89	89	50	50	126	126	110	110	135	135	115	115

Robust standard errors in parentheses

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\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Source: Sheffield outsourcing survey 2007. Authors' own calculations