



Reproductive labour and division of household chores in coal regions

Insights from CINTRAN regions

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Unravelling the Challenges
of Structural Change

Women as victims of energy transitions but also potential for emancipation

- Coal regions: traditionally rigid gender roles (breadwinners-homemakers)
- **What happens with gendered division of labour with the decline in mining?**
- Women joining the workforce – double burden or redistribution of chores?
- **To ensure a just energy transition, we have to examine the current division of household labour and how future job losses in carbon-intensive industries might affect the division of labour, also at home**

Model 1: traditional gendered division of labour

Wife (either working or a homemaker deals with children and their logistics, cooking, often pays the bills from husband's paycheck

Husband works in the garden, garage, does repairs/builds a house

And that's how it has been working for 14-15 years and it's good. That I deal with childcare, paying bills, cooking for the family and extended family, such things, but when something happens to the car, he does it. But in general, financial matters [that's my duty]. But he earns money, he has to earn it, but the payments are made by me.

Homemaker in 40s, Poland

I: What is your rent? How much do you pay?

R: Well, to tell you the truth, I kind of don't even know. I just...

I: Who pays for it? Does it pay for itself?

R: Well, I give money, but how much it's worth, I haven't even thought about it.

I: So you give the money to your wife, and she kind of...?

R: And she already pays, yes

I: Yeah, how much... do you even know what your utility bills are?

R: Actually, no, honestly, I don't know. I don't know, I gave money and that's it.

I: Well, can you guess?

R: No, I give, you know, as much as I need, that's all.

I give 500 euros for the apartment, if that's enough, I don't even know, honestly.

Estonia, Experienced miner, 46

Model 2: There is no clear division of labour but wife does more

I: No, you know what, we don't have that strictly divided. It is known that there are works in the garden that Daniel mainly does. But when it comes to home, it is not that Daniel cannot take care of something that I do, because he can do well in the kitchen, and with girls there is no problem at all. **Well, it is known that when I am present, I do it, but this is it.**

Poland, female mine employee in 40s

There's no such thing that I'm the husband, I bring in the money, and you're the wife, you work and you have to look after the house. There is an internal concept of who is a man and who is a woman, but we don't have anything like that where one person does something and the other one just sits and rests. This is unethical, first of all, to a human.

I: So do you do everything together?

M: Of course. Well, she cooks, I wouldn't meddle with it. I trust her. I like her food, it tastes good.

Estonia, miner, 34, wife and one child

Model 3: Other household structures

- ▶ Female mine worker who is the main breadwinner
- ▶ Father and adult daughter living together
- ▶ Young single men with ideals how a gendered division of labour should look like
- ▶ Single retirees

Justifications for gendered division of labour

1. The work underground is hard

There are certain underground areas, that are hot and low and the conditions are terrible. And I, sometimes when I go there to do measurements, I am just exhausted. And people who have to work physically there, I am not surprised that this guy will come home and he simply cannot do anything.

Poland, female mine worker 40s

Well, yes. So... the kitchen, cleaning, somehow that's what it was, they mostly spared me, pitied me. Well, really, the work is hard, no one will pay money for nothing.

Estonian miner, retired 54, two children

Justifications for gendered division of labour: 2: Traditional values

R: For an apartment, I pay mortgage 400 euros a month. Plus 250 for all sorts of bills. It leaves me 700 euros a month. That is why I would not want to have a family, because I understand that a man is not a man to support a family on 700 euros.

I: Well, you would have a wife...

R: I'm not one of those people who are for equal rights. I don't feel good about equality, I don't feel good about all these minorities.

I: The wife is not a minority.

R: Well, the wife, yes... All these European values, I have a bit of a bad attitude towards everything. I have a normal attitude towards people, but it's how it's all propagandized, how it's all imposed. I myself always say I'd like to have a homemaker (*hoziaika*) in the house.

There is no more family institution, too much freedom

(Former mine worker, 34, Estonia – leaving the mining job did not change his values)

Future: has the division of labour changed after retirement/ lay-offs?

Roles change depending on who is working/health

I mean, it's been 8 years since I retired. So the wife goes to work, I get up, do the shopping, come home, 2 hours of my walking training, come, make dinner and in the afternoon we have free time, rest. And such cleaning or something here, we divide it according to strength and form, because I can do it and I rather let my wife rest at the moment.

(retired miner in 50s, Poland)

The spared me from the kitchen when I worked, but not anymore

(Retired miner, Estonia)

Would the division of labour change if spouse lost their job?

I: I would certainly take over some of the duties at home, because as an unemployed person I cannot imagine sitting on my butt and waiting for my fiancée to come and cook for me.

Young miner, Poland

I: If you imagined that your husband would lose his job, would anything change in the division of labour in the household?

P: I would demand and expect that. Yes.

Miner's wife, Germany

I would still lay tiles and she would still cook

Miner in 40s, Germany

Shift work matters

German engineer who works from 6am to 2.30 Pm does most of the household chores while wife works until 5

Polish miner whose wife worked shifts said he took over household chores, one started cooking and the other one finished when they were both working

Do you feel that working as a miner is affecting your health?

EM1: No, luckily I'm well. But well, ... I worked the night shift for a while. I had to do it because it didn't work otherwise with kindergarten pick-up times. I had to pick up the kids. Then for a year, I went to work at three in the morning. It was kind of pretty tough. It affected my mental health it tired me out.

Estonian miner, 40, 3 children

Conclusions

Traditional division of labour is widespread and women seem to do more housework even when

- they are working
- the men think that the division of labour is equal
- other household models should be considered but in this sample, reproduce traditional roles

Justifications for the division of labour

- Underground work is hard
- Cultural values/petromasculinity

Prospects for the future

- roles change when men retire
- but some domains are still be considered feminine



Thank You

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