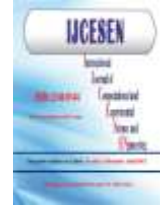




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Research Article

Gender Inequality in Unpaid Domestic Work: A Comparative Analysis of Türkiye and OECD Countries

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Abstract:

In 2024, the international community continues to face significant challenges in achieving gender equality despite the United Nations' "2030 Agenda," which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals to address various global issues. A significant barrier to achieving development goals is widespread gender inequality. This inequality includes unpaid domestic work, such as cleaning, cooking, and childcare. The unequal distribution of household responsibilities perpetuates disparities in everyday life. Additionally, this imbalance in unpaid labor has severe financial and psychological impacts on women, affecting their overall well-being and economic empowerment. This article explores the stress of unpaid domestic work on working women, particularly concerning the challenges of achieving work-life balance while managing household responsibilities. The "third shift" concept is described in terms of these women's various roles. The first shift refers to their professional work, and the second shift includes domestic tasks like cleaning and childcare and may also incorporate elder care responsibilities. The third shift is characterized by the stress arising from the dual expectations of fulfilling professional duties and household chores. While the stress from unpaid domestic work is a global issue, its severity varies across different cultural contexts. Türkiye's cultural setting, for instance, differentiates it from traditional Middle Eastern countries and European welfare regimes in terms of the dynamics of unpaid domestic work. This article focuses on Türkiye's position in the unpaid domestic work domain and researches the contemporary gender inequality problems from working women's perspective.

1. Introduction

In September 2015, the heads of state and government and high representatives in the United Nations (UN) came together in an unprecedented global effort to put forward a plan for human and environmental prosperity. They called it the '2030 Agenda', structured in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The goals and targets represent the scale and ambition of the global action. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that achieving the 17 SDGs is linked to human and planetary prosperity. It aims to strengthen universal peace, promote greater freedom, and eradicate poverty, discrimination, and inequalities [1]. Despite the significant strides made towards gender equality, there are still instances

where inequality persists in different facets of social life. An area where this is particularly noticeable is in unpaid domestic work. This work, including cleaning, cooking, and childcare, should be more valued. Unpaid domestic work has been unfairly mainly assigned to women by society, although it should not be. Women and girls carry an unequal burden of unpaid care and domestic work, often spending, on average, three times more time on these responsibilities compared to men and boys. This substantial amount of unpaid care work poses a significant barrier, preventing women from entering the workforce and pursuing higher-quality job opportunities [2]. Despite the crucial role that unpaid domestic work plays in maintaining households and societies, it remains unacknowledged and

underappreciated, thus perpetuating gender inequality. According to the OECD report, unpaid domestic work creates commodities or services that are not paid for [3]. It hinders the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which focuses on gender equality, and SDG 8, which aims to encourage decent employment and economic growth [4]. Women are still predominantly held accountable for unpaid domestic work in their households, dedicating an average of 3-6 hours per day to such work, while men contribute only 0.5-2 hours [5]. Anticipated is an increased involvement of women in the workforce, which is predicted to alleviate the financial limitations of the home and enhance the economic autonomy of women. Nevertheless, this puts them at risk of more significant time negotiations [6]. Unpaid domestic work refers to the responsibilities and tasks performed to maintain a household and support its family members without receiving any explicit monetary compensation. Although there is no universally recognized term or definition for unpaid domestic work, it is generally understood to encompass all such activities [6,7]. The impact of domestic activities is also contingent upon their type, specifically the frequency and regularity with which tasks must be performed. Housework refers to tasks that cannot be delayed and must be done regularly, usually daily. These tasks, like cooking and cleaning, are commonly seen as responsibilities typically assigned to women [8]. Additionally, they impose significant time limitations. In addition, household chores are frequently regarded as less pleasurable than taking care of children, as reported by both men and women [9]. Despite being an essential component of our daily lives, the value of this work is challenging to quantify in monetary terms. Valuing domestic work can be a complex undertaking. This is because its impact extends beyond economic benefits and has significant social and emotional implications. While there is no universally accepted method for this valuation, ignoring its significance can result in gender-biased economic indicators that discriminate against women and others engaged in domestic labor [10]. Women are often expected to handle most domestic tasks, even when working outside the home. This gendered division of labor leads to an unequal distribution of responsibilities, which can cause women to feel overwhelmed and undervalued in both their personal and professional lives. It is essential to recognize the significance of unpaid domestic work and to promote its fair distribution between genders. Doing so is crucial for achieving gender equality and creating a more just and equitable society. The valuation of domestic work is a multifaceted issue that requires careful

consideration. As Leal Filho et al. pointed out, no universal method can be applied to value this type of work. The value of domestic work is not always reflected in economic indicators, which can result in discrimination against women and other individuals who perform such work. This is particularly concerning as women often perform domestic work and are frequently unpaid, undervalued, or poorly compensated [1]. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the value of domestic work and ensure that it is appropriately compensated and included in economic measures. This can help to promote gender equality and address the gender pay gap, which is often exacerbated by the undervaluation of domestic work. The current body of research has identified three primary mechanisms by which women's engagement in the labor force might impact dietary diversity and home production. These mechanisms include the effects of income, substitution, and empowerment/bargaining power [11]. Current theories regarding the gendered distribution of (un)paid labour in households generally assert that couples' behaviors are influenced by rational decision-making, which includes economic factors like utility maximization and income [12], as well as moral factors that reflect compliance with normative standards [13,14]. When sharing tasks between couples and deciding who will work as an unpaid worker, importance is given to time-income distribution to achieve maximum efficiency. This suggests that resources and time are combined and utilized most economically efficiently. Additionally, the partner with the most minor financial loss from spending time on unpaid tasks, including home chores and childcare, will take on a more significant share of these responsibilities [14,15,16]. Economic bargaining models differ from the unitary perspective by suggesting that partners aim to maximize their individual utility, leading to overlapping and sometimes conflicting interests [16]. The division of unpaid labor within couples is thought to result from negotiations at home, where the partner who derives the most benefit from paid employment holds greater bargaining power [12]. This dynamic allows individuals to avoid domestic chores and child-rearing responsibilities, typically seen as less fulfilling. Additionally, the "relative resources hypothesis" works alongside the "time availability perspective," which asserts that the distribution of unpaid work in a household is influenced more by the amount of time spent on paid work than by potential earnings. Furthermore, gender ideology also significantly determines how unpaid domestic chores are shared [14]. Although there has been a significant decrease in the amount of time women spend on household chores over the years, there is still a substantial disparity between

men and women in terms of unpaid work in this domain. According to Bianchi et al., fathers typically participate in recreational activities like playgrounds or assisting the mother in caregiving tasks. These activities are considered less essential than other parenting responsibilities [17]. The gender role division of unpaid domestic work has entered societies, with inequality much higher for women than for men. Also, employed women continue to have the primary responsibility and contribute more than their male partners in the domestic sphere, resulting in a double burden of paid and unpaid work [18]. While many scholars argue that gender imbalances in unpaid domestic duties have a direct negative impact on mental health, others believe that further research is required to investigate the relationship between domestic labor and well-being. Along these lines, Molarius and Metsini [19] distinguish this case with the help of empirical data, explaining that men and women do not share the burden of domestic work equally. Since birth, people get programmed into gender-specific roles, with girls trying to be mothers and raising the children at home while boys mostly set their goals outside of the house. It becomes a cycle that reinforces the inequality that women suffer from. According to Seedat and Rondon, these inequalities exposed women to a high level of depression and other mental disorders. Multiple dimensions of life, like stress, which has increased, a reduction in leisure time, and limited opportunities for self-care, could cause this disparity. During the pandemic, many studies have demonstrated a more significant rise in both mental and emotional distress in women than in men. In Australia, for instance, a clinical study showed that women who were dependent people and took care of children had a higher propensity to establish anxiety and depression [5]. Molarius and Metsini found no statistically significant evidence to support their claims in their survey. They argue that merely investigating the time spent on unpaid domestic work may not be adequate for assessing the relationship between domestic work and mental health. Instead, they suggest that the strain associated with domestic work may be a more significant factor contributing to the prevalence of poor mental health in the general population. This insight is essential for designing policies to reduce the strain of domestic work, particularly for women [19]. The issue of unpaid domestic work and mental health is a perspective in the literature. As Molarius and Metsini put it, or as Ervin et al. demonstrate, women face double standards because they carry both a more significant amount of housework and experience disproportional mental health harm [20,21]. Molarius and Metsini argue that it is hard to establish a straight connection between quality of

life and coping strategies based on the amount of unpaid domestic work. Other theories suggest that any physically demanding job, not only for women, can undesirably affect mental well-being. Furthermore, recent studies on work-family conflicts represent how conflicts between family and work can cause adverse effects on health among both employed women and men, while few studies have concerned domestic work [19]. Furthermore, three out of four studies found no link between the length of childcare and women's mental health. Conversely, a few studies indicated no relationship between unpaid work and men's mental well-being [20]. The "third shift" concept refers to the additional responsibilities that working women face beyond their professional duties and household tasks, as well as the emotional labor resulting from work demands. The third shift may encompass caregiving for relatives beyond the household, coordinating neighbor visits, or arranging dental appointments for children. The idea of the third shift evolves from Hochschild and Machung's "second shift" theory, which examines the experiences of working women. In this framework, a job outside the home is considered the first shift, while household chores represent the second shift. Working women's priorities differ from those of stay-at-home mothers. They must demonstrate dedication to their employers and colleagues while managing household responsibilities and childcare. This balancing act often increases stress for working women [22]. Working women engage in emotional and relational labor, usually called the "third shift." [23]. The concept of the third shift is related to welfare regime typology, as this typology influences the state's mechanisms for addressing gender inequality. To address the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic work on working women, it is essential to understand the different types of welfare regimes and their impact on current societal structures.

2. The Welfare Regime Classification and the Concept of Third Shift

The classification of welfare regimes and their integration into society can significantly influence the status of working women. The relationship between welfare regime typology and gender valuation is highlighted in the 2024 data on gender inequality from the World Economic Forum, which aligns with Esping-Andersen's three types of welfare regimes [24]. Notably, the highest rankings in the 2024 survey are held by countries categorized as having social democratic welfare regimes. The Global Gender Gap Index evaluates national gender disparities based on economic participation, political

empowerment, education, and health criteria. In 2024, Iceland ranked as the country with the most gender-equal conditions, achieving a score of 0.94. Overall, four of the five most gender-equal countries in the world are Nordic nations, renowned for their high levels of gender equality, which include elevated female employment rates and balanced parental leave policies [25]. According to Esping-Andersen, the welfare state has two key dimensions: decommodification and stratification. Decommodification refers to the extent to which social rights the welfare state provides allow individuals or families to sustain a livelihood without relying on the market. In contrast, stratification pertains to the social structure embedded in and reinforced by the welfare state [24]. Esping-Andersen categorizes welfare state regimes into three types: liberal, conservative, and social democratic. The liberal welfare state regime heavily relies on the market for the provision of social benefits and services, with the state offering support only to those who cannot provide for themselves. The conservative welfare state regime prioritizes the family in providing care and support, with state intervention occurring only when a family's ability to support itself is compromised. In contrast, the social democratic welfare state regime aims to liberate individuals from the family and the market by offering generous, universal state-sponsored social rights. Rooted in social democracy, this regime emphasizes social equality and economic redistribution, striving to secure citizens' welfare throughout their lives [24]. The welfare model variations can help us understand poverty, social policy, and gender inequalities in developing countries in several important ways. First, it looks at the different parts of welfare, including the public sector, private sector, and households, and how they work together to support people's livelihoods. This is a crucial topic in development studies. Second, it examines the institutions involved and their effects on people's well-being, including their struggles. Third, it takes a political economy approach, which connects welfare policies to the broader social structures and power dynamics. This perspective encourages us to think about social policy in terms of power, which provides valuable insights. Finally, it helps identify countries with similar welfare characteristics, making it easier to compare their development paths. Gender inequality and the distribution of unpaid domestic chores are essential components of the development process outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Social policy that prioritizes these gender inequality problems arises from the relationship between society and the state in Western industrialized countries. The processes of

industrialization and post-industrialization have impacted society, prompting states to implement social policy agendas that aim to counterbalance these adverse effects and protect vulnerable populations. In this context, states in Western industrialized countries act as guarantors of social policy and social rights, including gender inequality. Nevertheless, states in the developing world have difficulty carrying out their tasks as intended. Additionally, the government's role in ensuring gender equality is susceptible to being jeopardized. On the other end of the spectrum of the World Economic Forum Report, Sudan is recognized as the least gender-equal country. The situation for civilians in this North African nation has significantly worsened since the outbreak of the civil war in April 2023 [25]. A total of roughly nine million people are projected to be in imminent danger of starvation, and girls and women, in particular, have become victims of sexual abuse. Among the world's regions, the Middle East and North Africa face the most significant gender gap, closely followed by South Asia. It is projected that it will take another 152 years to close the gender gap in the Middle East and North Africa. In contrast, Europe boasts the lowest gender gap globally [25]. Due to the existing inconsistencies, it is unwise to assume that the global classification of welfare regimes established by Esping-Andersen in 1990 remains a reliable framework for gender equality in the developing world, where the fundamental functions of society are not operating effectively. The 2023 OECD report highlights that, despite significant progress in addressing gender inequality between 2014 and 2023, as Figure 1 illustrates, challenges remain in non-OECD countries. The report notes a 12 percentage point decrease in the global number of people who believe it is acceptable for a man to abuse his wife physically—whether sometimes or always—between 2014 and 2021. While discriminatory attitudes toward women in leadership positions in politics and business are diminishing, there has been a concerning increase in traditional gender role expectations in the developing world [3]. These expectations are related to household responsibilities and family dynamics. The failure to meet gender equality targets outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals can be attributed to inadequate legislative measures to address gender inequality issues. This failure is highly associated with the improper functioning of government dynamics in the developing world. Figure 1 illustrates the global issue of unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. This inequity is especially concerning in countries outside the OECD, where the disparities are even more pronounced. Various factors contribute to this

imbalance, including the type of welfare regime implemented in each country and the strength of institutional support. Welfare regimes can dictate access to resources such as childcare, parental leave, and social support, which is crucial in determining how unpaid care responsibilities are divided among family members. Strong institutions can help promote policies that encourage a more equitable distribution of domestic duties, easing the burden placed on certain family members, often women. Addressing these systemic issues is vital for creating a more fair and balanced environment for worldwide unpaid care and domestic work. The main target of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 is to “leave no one behind.” This reflects the strong commitment of all UN Member States to eliminating poverty in all its forms, ending discrimination and exclusion, and reducing the inequalities and vulnerabilities that hinder individuals and humanity from reaching their full potential [26]. To achieve this target, it is essential to eliminate all kinds of social exclusion that hinder progress, especially in gender equality. The inequality in sharing unpaid domestic work is one of the most critical areas, especially when the growing rate of women’s involvement in labor is considered. The industrialization of developing countries is lagging behind that of OECD nations. The increasing participation of women in the workforce requires international and national bodies to take a proactive stance on the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic work and the broader issue of gender inequality in the developing world. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the sustainability of societies worldwide.

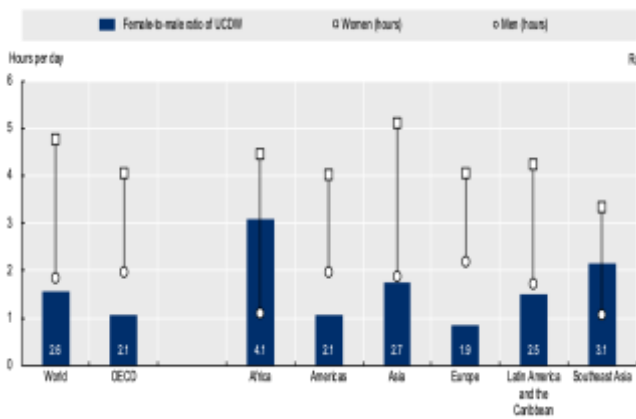


Figure 1. 2023 OECD Global Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) Statistics by Region [27]

3. The Contemporary Debates on Gender Inequality in Türkiye

Gender inequality is a prevalent issue not only in Türkiye but in other countries worldwide with

varying intensity. Although the extent of this gap may vary based on economic, social, and demographic factors, it remains a pressing problem. While there has been progress in reducing the disparity in employment opportunities between males and females among the younger generation, as can be observed from Figures 2 and figure 3, recent data suggests that there is still a significant difference in the distribution of labor between men and women. Contemporary statistics from the European Union Labour Force Survey between 2014 and 2022 show the unemployment rate of females aged 15 to 24. Although the trend has fluctuated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences on society, the unemployment gap between Figure 4 and Figure 5 is apparent. During the pandemic, the unemployment rate for women rose from 25% to 32%, while men also experienced a similar trend,

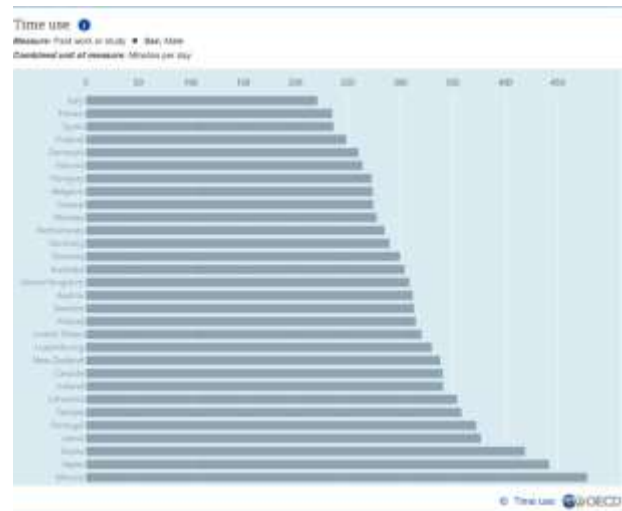


Figure 2. Time use of males for paid daily work or study in minutes in OECD Countries [28].

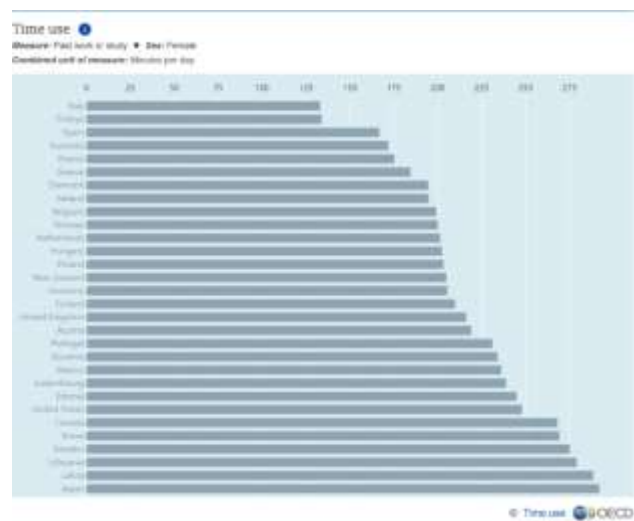


Figure 3. Time use of females for paid daily work or study in minutes in OECD Countries [28].

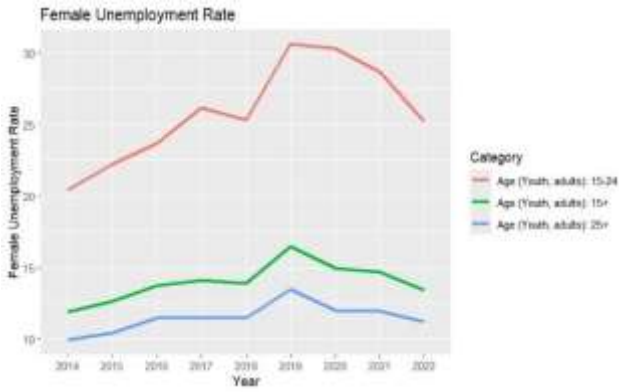


Figure 4. The rate of female unemployment among individuals aged 15 to 24 from 2014 to 2022 [29]

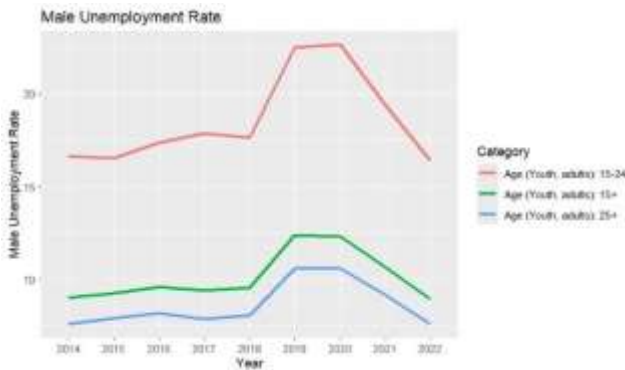


Figure 5. The rate of male unemployment among individuals aged 15 to 24 from 2014 to 2022 [29]

with their unemployment rate increasing from 17% to 22%. However, after the pandemic, men's unemployment rate recovered faster than women's, making women unable to recover in the same timeframe. In 2022, the gender pay gap of 10% between women and men persists. Although there have been some improvements since the pandemic, the unemployment rate for women continues to be 10% higher than that of men in 2022. The European Labour Force Survey dataset also indicates a significant gender gap in the young people aged between 15 and 24 in Türkiye. The population with no involvement in education, employment, or training also has a gender imbalance. This dataset highlights that the percentage of young females not involved in any of these activities is considerably higher than that of males. This disparity is not only due to differences in education levels between males and females but also persists among those not engaged in these activities. Figure 6, derived from this dataset, shows an average gap of 20% between males and females in the 15 to 24 age group. This implies that young females in Türkiye face fewer opportunities in the labor market than their male counterparts. It can also be derived from this dataset that such gender-based discrimination can have

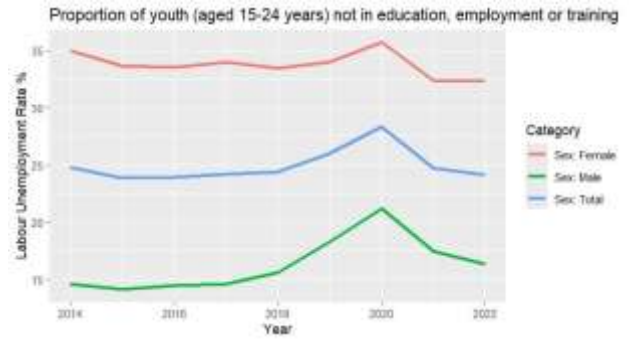


Figure 6. The proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training among individuals aged 15 to 24 from 2014 to 2022 [29]

significant long-term economic and social implications for female youth, including higher rates of poverty, lower lifetime earnings, and limited social protection. Therefore, policymakers and stakeholders must address this issue and ensure equal educational, employment, and training opportunities for both genders. This can be achieved through targeted policies, such as promoting girls' education, providing vocational training opportunities, and encouraging employers to adopt gender-sensitive recruitment practices. Such measures can help to create a more inclusive and equitable workforce in Türkiye. The data also indicates a significant disparity in the distribution of managerial positions between men and women. Figure 7 shows that men hold a more substantial proportion of managerial roles than women. Despite an upward trend in the number of women in managerial positions since 2018, the ratio of women in these roles remains low. According to the EU Labour Force Survey conducted between 2014 and 2022, the highest projected percentage of women in managerial positions is only 20% by 2021. This indicates that despite some progress, there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality regarding career opportunities.

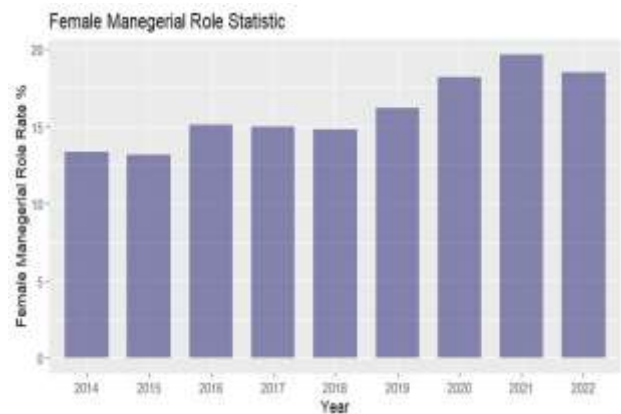


Figure 7. The proportion of women in managerial roles in Türkiye [29]

Global gender disparity in unpaid domestic work continues to persist. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate a noticeable gender gap in this area, even among OECD countries. Türkiye fares worse than other OECD nations in terms of unpaid domestic work. The time use data presented in Figures 8 and 9 highlight how Türkiye lags behind other OECD countries in distributing unpaid domestic work between genders. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data regarding unpaid domestic work sheds light on the differences between men and women. According to the available statistics and Figure 10, women spend an average of 300 minutes daily on unpaid domestic work, including cooking, cleaning, childcare, and other household chores. Men spend only about 60 minutes on average.

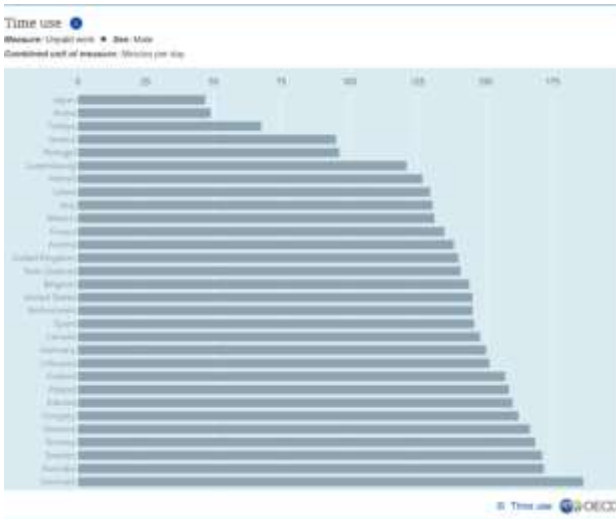


Figure 8. Time use of males for unpaid daily work in minutes in OECD Countries [28]

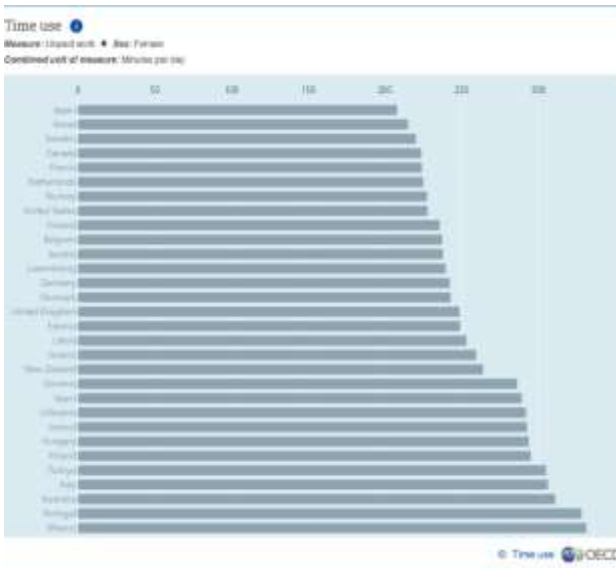


Figure 9. Time use of females for unpaid daily work in minutes in OECD Countries [28]

This means that women spend five times more time on household chores than men. This unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities between genders perpetuates gender inequality and causes significant physical and mental burdens on women. Women are often expected to manage both work and home, leading to exhaustion, burnout, and stress. Moreover, gender gaps in domestic work also affect women's participation in the workforce and limit their career opportunities, resulting in long-term economic disadvantages. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and address the gender-based disparities in domestic work to promote gender equality and ensure that women have equal opportunities to succeed in all aspects of life.

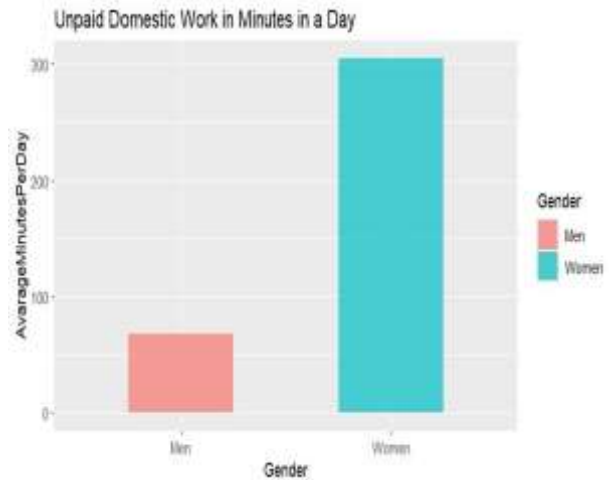


Figure 10. The gender distribution of average minutes of unpaid domestic work in Türkiye between ages 15 to 64 [30]

4. Conclusions

Addressing gender inequality is crucial for achieving sustainable development on a global scale. Despite substantial progress worldwide, many developing countries still need to catch up. In this regard, Türkiye is an insightful case study that connects Europe and the Middle East. A secular system, a traditional society, and a fluctuating economic structure characterize Türkiye. As shown by statistics, a growing number of working women in Türkiye probably have already faced challenges from unequal sharing of responsibilities in unpaid domestic chores and, more generally, gender inequality. Türkiye can take specific measures to promote a more equitable distribution of unpaid domestic work between genders. Public awareness campaigns, including educational initiatives, can be launched to change perceptions about gender roles in household responsibilities. These campaigns should emphasize the importance of sharing domestic duties

and challenge traditional stereotypes. The Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services of Türkiye has launched initiatives to enhance the role of women, including the “Strengthening the Role of Women Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2028.” This strategic document outlines the government’s plan to tackle gender inequality issues over the next five years. According to the plan, the current employment rate of women in Türkiye is lower than the average rates in the OECD, EU, and globally [31]. Figure 11 presents current statistics from Türkiye that illustrate gender inequality and compares them with international standards. This comparison sheds light on Türkiye's current situation regarding labor force participation. Despite progress in gender equality in recent years, a significant gap remains between the involvement of women and men in the workforce, which is still lower than the averages seen in the EU, OECD, and globally.

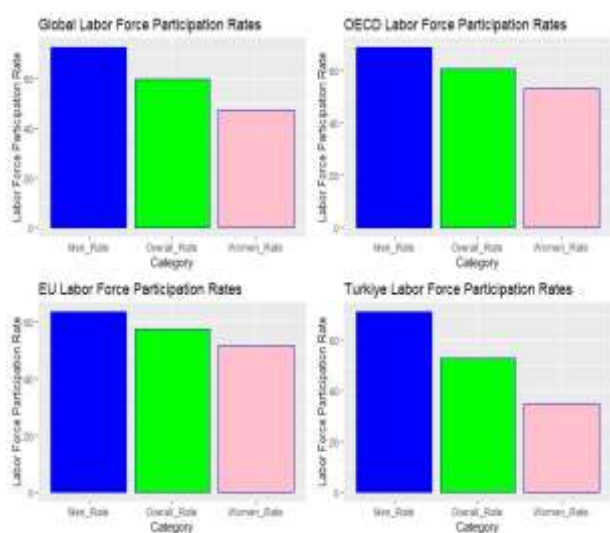


Figure 11. World, OECD, European Union (EU), and Türkiye’s Labor Force Participation Rate Statistics (+15 age) in 2022 [31].

The Strengthening the Role of Women Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2028, developed by the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services of Türkiye, identifies violence against women as the primary area of concern. The strategy document underscores preventive measures and seeks to strengthen the role of women. The strategy document also concentrates on increasing women's participation in the workforce and developing women's working conditions. When we investigate the statistics of the involvement of women in the labor force, these areas should be addressed immediately. The document fails to address working women's challenges and unequal responsibilities within families. Gender equality requires a comprehensive understanding; it cannot progress in one area while lagging in another.

Cultural factors in Türkiye significantly influence women's experiences with unpaid domestic work, often perpetuating traditional gender roles that dictate their responsibilities within the household. In Turkish society, cultural norms frequently assign women primary domestic tasks. Despite their increasing participation in the workforce, many women still feel that managing the home is their duty, which limits opportunities for shared responsibilities. The prevalent extended family structure in Türkiye can amplify this burden on women. Often, they are expected to care for their immediate family and extended relatives, leading to a heavier workload than women in other countries who may have more support systems or less emphasis on familial obligations. Additionally, religious beliefs and social norms can reinforce traditional roles, with some communities emphasizing women's responsibilities as caregivers and homemakers. Economic pressures also influence the division of labor. In lower-income households, women may engage in unpaid work out of necessity, even while juggling paid employment. This situation contrasts with social-democratic welfare regimes, where more extensive support systems, such as childcare services, enable a more equitable distribution of domestic work. Although women's education levels in Türkiye have improved, disparities still exist compared to social-democratic welfare regimes. Lower educational attainment can hinder women's ability to negotiate domestic responsibilities or seek outside support to alleviate their unpaid workload. In countries with more robust government policies aimed at promoting gender equality and providing childcare support, there is often a more balanced distribution of unpaid work. Türkiye's policies, although evolving, may still be less advanced than those of countries with more progressive family policies, influencing the distribution of domestic labor. Overall, these cultural factors create a unique experience for women in Türkiye regarding unpaid domestic work, often leading to significant disparities compared to women in more egalitarian societies. Government policy can play a crucial role in addressing the challenges that working women in Türkiye face, often called the "third shift." Implementing flexible work policies, such as adjustable work hours and remote work options, can help women better balance their professional and domestic responsibilities. These policies that support telecommuting and flexible schedules may alleviate some pressures associated with managing work alongside unpaid domestic duties. Expanding parental leave policies to include mothers and fathers can promote shared childcare and household tasks responsibility. This approach can help distribute the burden of unpaid labor more

equitably and lessen the expectations placed on women. Furthermore, providing access to affordable, high-quality childcare services can significantly relieve the burden on working mothers. Policies aimed at subsidizing childcare costs or increasing the availability of spots in public childcare facilities can enable women to engage more fully in the workforce. Governments can initiate public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of unpaid domestic work, aiming to transform societal attitudes toward household responsibilities. This can encourage shared participation in domestic duties among family members. Offering training and education programs on work-life balance and relationship dynamics geared toward both women and men can foster a greater understanding of shared responsibilities in the household. Implementing and enforcing laws that support gender equality in the workplace can help address systemic inequities. This includes ensuring equal pay for equal work and prohibiting discrimination based on gender, which can empower women to pursue economic independence without being overwhelmed by domestic expectations. Recognizing the psychological impact of unpaid domestic work, government programs could offer mental health resources specifically designed for working women who are trying to balance multiple responsibilities. By implementing these policies, the Turkish government can create an environment that supports working women, mitigates the effects of the "third shift," and fosters greater gender equality in both domestic and professional spheres.

Author Statements:

- **Ethical approval:** The conducted research is not related to either human or animal use.
- **Conflict of interest:** The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper
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- **Funding information:** The authors declare that there is no funding to be acknowledged.
- **Data availability statement:** The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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