

## **Gendered priorities**

### **Differences between men and women in balancing between paid work, unpaid work and leisure**

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### **1 Introduction**

With the feminisation of the labour market, and the changing meaning, structure and rhythms of paid work (Taylor, 2001), the balancing of paid work, non-paid work and leisure seems to have become somewhat of a circus act. Like tightrope walkers people try to get through life without bending over too much to either side, with fear of falling down in either the role of the housewife/husband, or the role of the busy career woman/man. Or maybe this balancing act is even more like a juggling trick, where one not only tries to handle two life spheres at the same time, but also seeks not to lose sight of other meaningful activities, such as a well filled leisure agenda, lots of social activities and taking care of ones health....

In this paper we zoom in to these juggling activities. Starting with the observation that the time use of men and women is very different and surprisingly still much in line with traditional role patterns, we try to interpret these differences in terms of different priorities of both sexes in making choices in time use. These different priorities not only lead to divergent time use patterns, but are also reflected in different employment situations of men and women. These employment situations can either be part of a strategy to combine work and care, but they can also be influenced by other factors such as education, age, personal preference, material restrictions, social values, norms or role patterns. In this paper we mainly focus on the strategies of combining different work and non-work activities by illustrating how people in different employment situations combine paid work, non-paid work and leisure and how this effects their activity patterns. Finding a balance between paid work, non-paid work and leisure is not only a personal matter, but is also affected by the household division of work. Therefore we also take the employment situation of (possible) partners into account in our analyses.

### **2 Traditional role patterns in Flanders**

In 1999, the TOR research group at the Free University of Brussels carried out a time budget study amongst 1,533 Flemish people<sup>1</sup> between the ages of 16 and 75. The respondents were

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1 Flemings are the inhabitants of Flanders, the Flemish speaking part of Belgium

asked to record all their activities in a diary during one week. In this diary there were also questions about secondary activities, place of activities, motivations, possible movements and other people present. To record the activities, respondents used a pre-coded list of 154 detailed categories. In most of our descriptive analyses we obviously did not use the 154 detailed categories of activities. In some cases we use a classification of 37 types of activities, which can then be subdivided into 11 more comprehensive categories referring to areas of action which most people in our society will recognise as cultural units, more or less clearly defined in time and space. The analyses reported here mainly use the division into 11 sections shown in annex 1 (see Glorieux et. al, 2000; Glorieux & Moens 2001).

Table 1 shows how much time Flemish men and women spend on the 11 distinct activities per week. For the interpretation of the data it is important to remember that (for the time being) no distinction is made between different categories of the population. The table concerns all Flemish men and women between the ages of 16 and 75: those with a high and low level of education, employed and not employed, with children and without children. The duration of activities indicated also concerns all the respondents in the study, whether they participate in a particular category of activities or not. For example, the average time spent on work is calculated for all the respondents, both those who are employed and unemployed. The picture acquired in this way is therefore very synthetic.

TABLE 1: THE AVERAGE TIME USE OF MEN AND WOMEN BETWEEN 16-75 YEARS OF AGE IN 11 MAIN CATEGORIES (DURATION PER RESPONDENT PER WEEK)

	Men (N=753)	Women (N=743)
Sleeping and resting**	58:57	60:23
Leisure**	30:03	23:17
Paid work**	24:37	14:07
Personal care	14:29	14:38
Domestic work**	12:57	25:02
Social participation**	9:05	10:23
Travelling**	7:23	6:12
Education and training	3:37	3:57
Child care and educating children**	1:17	3:37
Waiting	0:10	0:11
Other*	5:19	6:07

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

Every week we only have 168 hours to do all the activities we want or have to do. Some of this scarce, available time has to be spent on what we call ‘necessary activities’. Activities as sleeping, resting and personal care provide in essential needs. Flemish men and women spend by far the most of their time “*sleeping and resting*”. Approximately 60 hours per week, viz., approximately 8h30’ per day or 35% of the total available time is spent in bed. Women sleep and rest almost 1h30’ more per week than men. Another necessary activity that takes up a considerable amount of time is “*personal care*”. Personal care does not only include the time spent in the bathroom, it also covers receiving professional care and eating and drinking. Flemings spend approximately 14h30’ per week on these activities. It is striking that the time spent on personal care by men and women does not differ in a statistically significant way.

When we take out the time we have to spend on necessary activities, there's relatively few time left for all the other activities, so we'll have to make some choices. According to Linda Sabbadini & Rina Camporese men and women are lead by other criteria while making those choices (Camporese & Sabbadini, 1998: 4). Men take before all paid work activities and leisure activities into account while planning their day. Women on the other hand also take their paid labour (if any) into consideration but their unpaid labour, such as household tasks and childcare, are of importance too. We call this the axiom of the gendered priorities (Koelet, 2001: 1). Table 1 indeed shows that leisure time is the second most important activity in a men's week (appr. 30 hours versus appr. 23 hours for women), while for women household work comes in second place (appr. 25 hours versus appr. 13 hours for men), even more so when we add childcare to this activity (appr. 3h30' versus appr. 1 hour for men). Women still tend to feel much more responsible for house related tasks than men<sup>2</sup>.

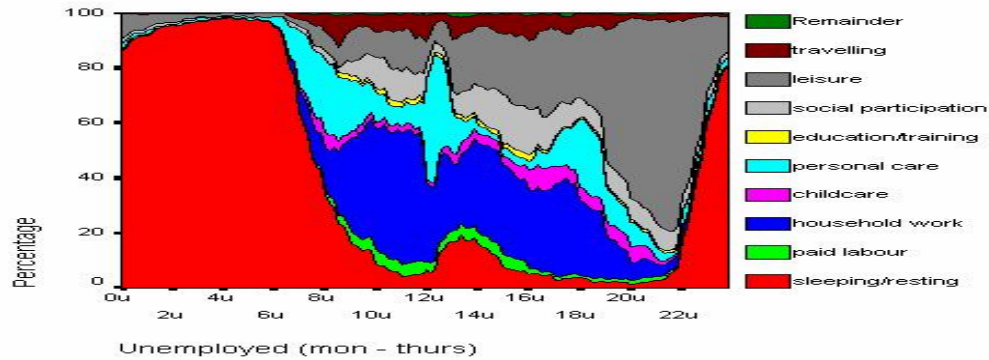
Combining leisure activities with paid work activities is very different from the combination of paid and unpaid labour. Because leisure and work belong to two different life spheres, the first combination tends to be easier than the latter. Leisure time as a free time activity has an intrinsic diversion character and paid labour as a contractual activity has an intrinsic strenuous character. Work and leisure therefor tend to complement each other. Unpaid labour, as a committed activity, on the other hand is also very demanding, drawing on the same kind of energy as paid work does. Tiredness or stress created in one field is transferred to the other, since they are both alternative forms of 'work'. Doing a lot of unpaid labour tends to limit the amount of energy and time you can spend on paid labour.

As for the behavioural norms and patterns valid in these two areas, it is unfortunately the case that these are often mutually contradictory (Narusk, 1998). The combination of paid and unpaid labour relates to conflicting responsibilities for women with a paid job (see Bielby & Bielby, 1988; Gershon 1985, Sticherman 1988; Elchardus & Glorieux 1994; Glorieux 1995:108). The two roles force them to split up their commitments between their job and their family, which leads to role conflicts (Glorieux 1995: 108). Especially the parallel timing of a lot of unpaid and paid labour activities, forces women to make constant choices between both. Figure 1 – representing the rhythm of activities for people without paid work - demonstrates this parallel timing very clearly. The blue surface represents household work and the pink (just above) childcare. It seems very clear that people without a job perform these activities mostly in what would be paid labour hours. Leisure time, represented by the dark grey surface, is an activity that takes place in the evening and therefore does not interact as much with working hours.

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2 When men and women are asked what they value most in life, surveys show that they place almost equal importance on professional work, family and children (Narusk, 1998). Giving much value to something is nevertheless not the same as feeling responsible for it.

FIGURE 1: RHYTHM OF ACTIVITIES FROM MONDAY TO THURSDAY FOR MEN AND WOMEN WITHOUT A PAID JOB (EXCEPT STUDENTS AND RETIRED PEOPLE) N=254



The difficulty to combine paid and unpaid labour is reflected by the time women spend on their paid jobs. On average women between 16 and 75 years old spend approximately 14 hours on paid labour, while men can spend approximately 24h30' on their job.

The time spent on travelling also reflects the traditional role pattern (see table 1). Men spend more than one hour per week more on transport than women do. This confirms the traditional image of the woman spending more time at home, and in addition, the destinations of these travels are very gender-biased. Women spend less time commuting between work and the home, but significantly more time on travelling related with children and the household.

If we add the time spent on paid and unpaid work and the time spent on travelling for these activities, we get a clear picture of the size of the workload of men and women. Since men spend more time on paid work than women do, and women on the contrary spend more time on unpaid work than men do, their total workload doesn't differ that much. If "paid work", "house work" and "child care and educating children" are all considered as work, women spend on average 45h46' on work and men almost 3 hours per week less, viz., 42h33'.

TABLE 2: TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK, DOMESTIC WORK AND LOOKING AFTER AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN PER WEEK (INCLUDING TRAVELLING TIME FOR EACH CATEGORY)

	N	Paid work**	Domestic work**	Child care and educating children**	Total workload**
Men	753	27:25	13:26	1:42	42:33
Women	743	15:40	25:37	4:28	45:46

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

### 3 Balancing in different employment situations

Although women seem to have two responsibilities, for paid work as well as unpaid work, they only have a slightly higher workload than men. For the double responsibility is hard to combine with a demanding full-time job and tends to restrict women in their jobs (Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994). The fact that more women than men have part-time jobs (20% versus

3%)<sup>3</sup> or no paid job (25% vs. 9%) at all indicates the difficult combination of paid and unpaid labour. The balancing between paid and unpaid work is the reason why we don't literally find Hochschild's (1989) second shift in the total workload of employed women.

If the assumption is true that women balance between paid and unpaid labour, then we would expect women with shorter working hours to compensate this by devoting more time to their other priority, namely unpaid labour. Also according to the axiom of gendered priorities, men will foremost fill up these non-working hours with more leisure time. This means that the total workload of women will vary less according to their employment situation than that of men. Table 3 illustrates this mechanism very clearly.

The total workload of women working full-time is (significantly) higher than that of men working full-time. Men working full-time spend almost 5 hours more on paid work than women working full-time, while women working full-time spend more than 8 hours more on domestic work and child care than men working full-time. This means that the difference in the total workload of men working full-time and women working full-time is equal to approximately 3h30' per week.

TABLE 3: TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK, DOMESTIC WORK AND LOOKING AFTER AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN PER WEEK, IN TERMS OF GENDER, AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION (INCLUDING TRAVELLING TIME FOR EACH CATEGORY)

	N	Paid work**	Domestic work**	Child care and educating children**	Total workload**
Men working full-time	451	41:59	12:13	2:06	56:19
Women working full-time	201	37:12	18:49	3:47	59:48
Men working part-time	20	31:25	10:53	1:29	43:47
Women working part-time	150	22:27	27:59	5:23	55:50
Unemployed men*	67	3:54	16:58	1:58	22:50
Unemployed women*	194	1:43	34:14	7:27	43:24

\* Students or retired not included.

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

For men and women working part-time, the difference in workload is larger. A woman working part-time reduces her paid labour time with 14h45' in comparison to a full-time working woman, but the time she spends on unpaid labour rises with 9h10' for household labour and 1h36' for childcare. Especially the time spent on cooking (+1h52'), setting up and clearing the table and doing the dishes (+1h18'), cleaning (+1h03') and ironing (+53') increases strongly. Part-time working women recuperate 73% of the time available through working part-time instead of full-time, for unpaid chores. Part-time working men on the contrary seem<sup>4</sup> even to do less household work and childcare than their full-time working colleagues do. The workload of part-time working women is therefore approximately 12 hours longer than that of part-time working men. Admittedly it is important to be careful with

3 If we consider the proportion of the Flemish working population: 43% of the women with a paid job work part-time and 4% of the men with a paid job.

4 due to the small amount of parttime working men this difference isn't significant (p>0.05)

the comparison of men and women working part-time, since part-time working men really are rare birds in Flanders. We only found 20 men working part-time in our random sample. Nevertheless, this difference between part-time working men and women follows the trend observed for men and women without a job. For unemployed men and women, the difference in total workload increases to more than 20 hours a week!

Table 3 shows very clearly that the workload for men depends almost exclusively on the extent of their participation in the employment market. The time devoted to paid work does not affect - or barely affects - the amount of time spent on domestic work and childcare. On the other hand, for women the different types of work are interrelated: a reduction in the participation in the employment market is accompanied by a substantial increase in the time spent on domestic work and the children, and vice versa.. In other words: time spent on household work is related to time availability (cf. Hiller 1984) for women, but not for men.

If men don't or hardly increase the time spent on unpaid labour when they spend less time on their jobs, there must be other activities that fill up the void. If men's second priority is leisure, we should see an increase in leisure time as working time declines.

TABLE 4: TIME SPENT ON OTHER THAN WORKRELATED ACTIVITIES, IN TERMS OF GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION (INCLUDING TRAVELLING TIME FOR EACH CATEGORY)

	N	Leisure**	Personal care**	Sleeping and resting**	Educa-tion	Social Partici-pation**	Remainder**
Men working full-time	451	25:55	13:56	56:20	0:59	8:49	5:42
Women working full-time	201	19:41	13:54	58:23	1:00	9:20	5:41
Men working part-time	20	25:55	15:43	58:42	1:52	11:24	10:37
Women working part-time	150	20:53	13:33	57:23	0:34	10:42	9:05
Unemployed men*	67	45:57	14:11	65:29	0:58	11:09	7:25
Unemployed women*	194	26:30	15:09	61:08	0:52	12:25	8:31

\* Students or retired not included.

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

Each week full-time working men spend about 6 hours more on leisure activities than full-time working women. For full-time working women have to spend some more time on work related activities (see above) and - maybe because of this - on sleeping and resting. The half an hour that full-time working women spend more on social participation than full-time working men, is not a significant difference.

If the gendered priorities thesis is correct, then part-time working men should spend more time on leisure activities than full-time working men, since working less hours gives them the opportunity to spend more time on their second priority. However part-time working men seem to spend the same amount of time on leisure then full-time working men. Again we must say that drawing conclusions from such a small group of people is not significant.

It is better to look at the unemployed men. As compared to full-time workers, men without a job have 38 extra hours available for other activities than paid work each week. About 20 hours of this time is spent on extra leisure activities. About 7 of these 20 hours of extra leisure time are spent on more television and video. Other leisure activities that get more attention are recreation (+3h28' - especially going for a walk), outdoor activities (+2h25' - especially going to the pub) and hobbies and games (+2h16' - especially playing a musical



instrument). So while unemployed men spend 53% of the extra available time on extra leisure activities and 12% on extra unpaid labour, unemployed women spend 17% of the extra available time on extra leisure activities and 47% on extra unpaid labour. It is striking that women without a paid job spend almost all of their extra leisure time on watching television. Our findings clearly support the thesis of Sabbadini and Camporese (1998). Men divide their time between paid labour and leisure time. If there's some time left they are willing to spend it on household work and childcare. Women give priority to paid and unpaid labour and gather what's left of their time for leisure activities. This results each week in a 19h27' leisuregap between unemployed men and women.

'Sleeping and resting' as well as 'social participation' are other activities that men and women tend to spend more time on if they spend less hours on paid labour. Having to get up from bed early for work restricts the amount of time you can spend on sleep. Men without a paid job 'sleep and rest' 9 hours per week more than men with a full-time job. Where women are concerned we find a bigger difference for these activities between women with or without a job, than between full-time and part-time working women. Women who don't combine their unpaid work with a paid job, clearly take more time for personal care, sleeping and social participation than working women.

Of course differences in time use between full-time, part-time and unemployed men and women are influenced by social and demographic factors (see table 5).

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS IN TERMS OF GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION<sup>5</sup>

	N	Average Age**	Average # of children living at home**	% with higher degree of education**
Men working full-time	451	39	1.14	31%
Women working full-time	201	36	0.97	42%
Women working part-time	150	40	1.43	28%
Unemployed men*	67	46	0.47	13%
Unemployed women*	194	48	0.98	10%

\* Students or retired not included.

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

Men and women without a paid job are on the average somewhat older than other men and women, although retired persons are not included in our analyses. Part-time working women have more children living at home on the average than other women. Full-time working men have more children living at home than men without a paid job and full-time working men and women also have a higher education level. All these factors have their effect on what kind of activities one wants to balance and the strategy one will use to succeed in this.

Another way to illustrate the trade-off between paid and unpaid labour for women and paid labour and leisure time for men is by looking at rhythm graphs of men and women in different employment situations. A rhythm graph visualises the proportion of people doing

5 Without part-time working men: too few observations

different kinds of activities at different moments of the day. Especially when we look at traditional working days (Monday to Thursday), the different balancing for men and women stands out very clearly.

Figure 2 illustrates the trade-off between paid labour on the one side (green surface) and household work and childcare on the other side (dark blue surface and pink surface) for women in different employment situations. When the time spent on paid labour declines the free surface is taken in by household work and childcare. Moreover we see again that the three activities take place in the same timeslot.

FIGURE 2: RHYTHMS OF ACTIVITIES FROM MONDAY TO THURSDAY FOR RESPECTIVELY FULL-TIME WORKING WOMEN (N=201), PART-TIME WORKING WOMEN (N=147) AND WOMEN WITHOUT A PAID JOB (N=188) (EXCEPT STUDENTS AND RETIRED PEOPLE)

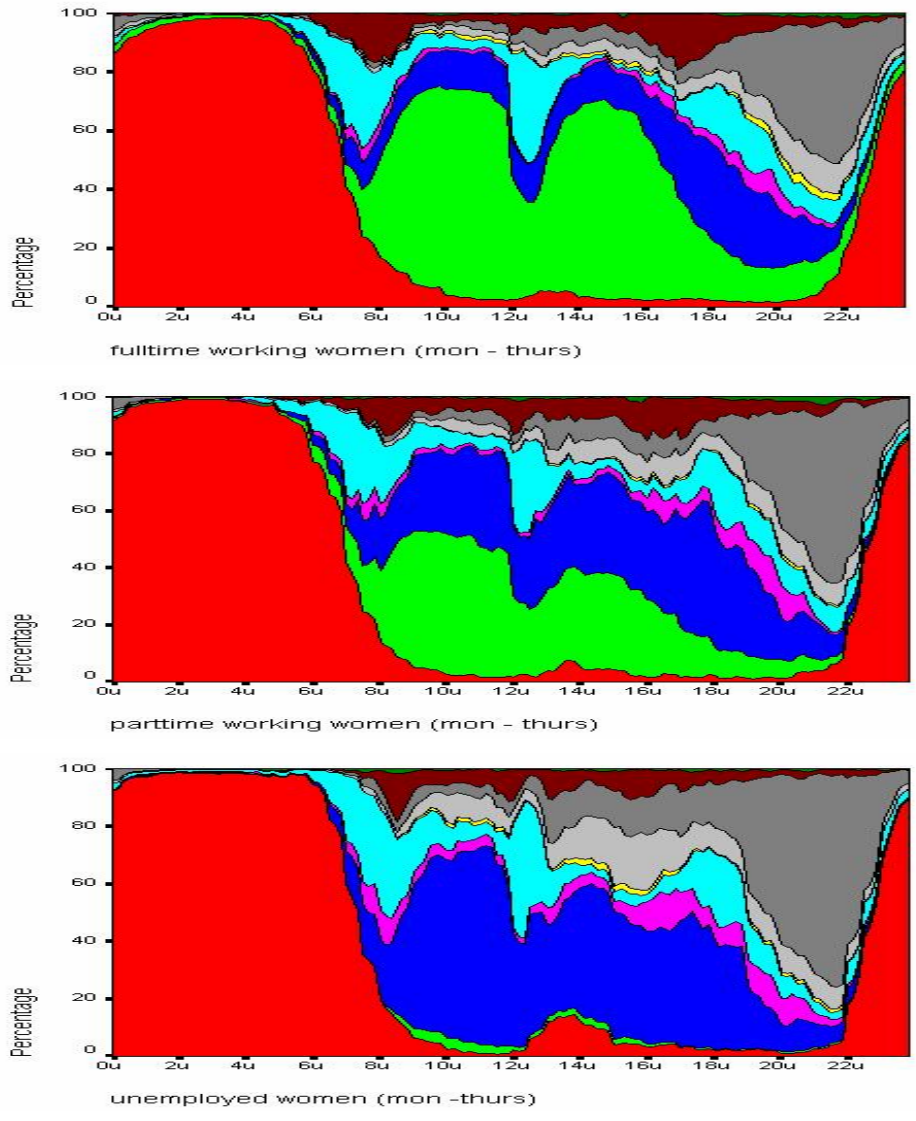
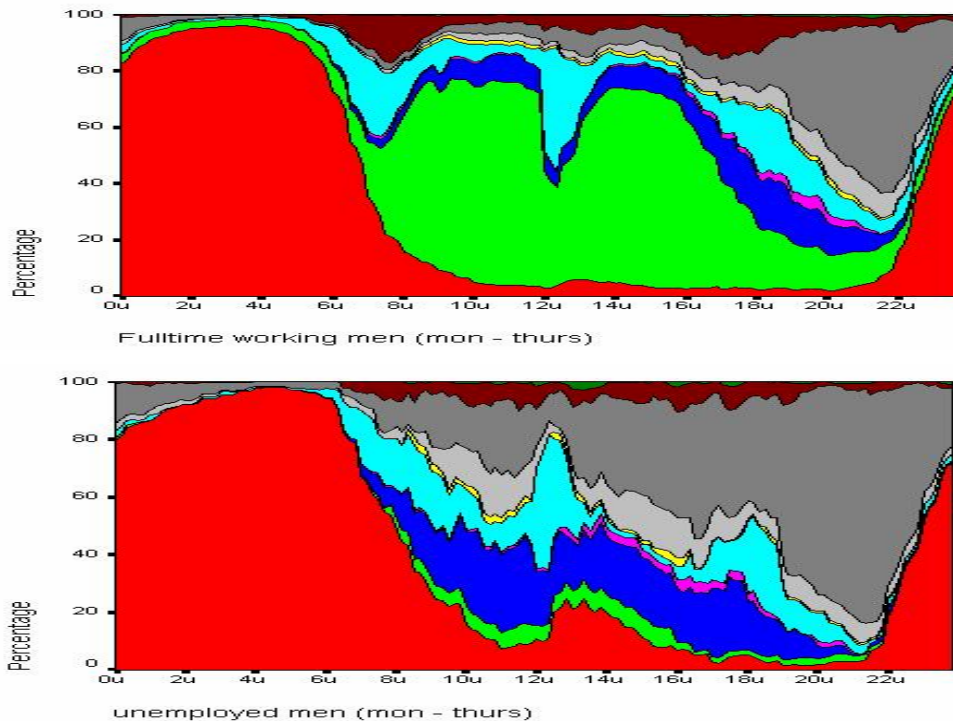




Figure 3 takes away some men's argument that they would contribute more to household work or childcare, if only they wouldn't feel such a big responsibility for providing in the family. In the graph on men without a paid job, paid work (green surface) has been replaced by a vast amount of leisure activities (dark grey surface). Because of the small amount of men working part-time, the rhythm graph for this category of men is omitted. The comparison of the rhythm graph of full-time working men on weekdays and that of men who don't have a paid job is again a clear illustration of the axiom of the gendered priorities. On figure 3 we also see that some men who haven't got a paid job take their time for an afternoon nap during the weekday.

FIGURE 3: RHYTHMS OF ACTIVITIES FROM MONDAY TO THURSDAY FOR RESPECTIVELY FULL-TIME WORKING MEN (N=448), PART-TIME WORKING MEN (N=19) AND MEN WITHOUT A PAID JOB (N=66) (EXCEPT STUDENTS AND RETIRED PEOPLE)





#### 4 Traditional role patterns over time

The findings in table 3 confirm the view that traditional role patterns are still predominant in Flanders, and that, moreover, they can result in a much greater workload for women than for men in the same situation, particularly for women working part-time or unemployed women. If this analysis is repeated, but limited to the age of 21-40, the figures for 1999 can be compared with Flemish time use data from 1988 (Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994). This comparison makes it possible to examine whether there are any signs of the traditional role patterns breaking down in the younger generation of 21-40-year-olds.

Compared with the data for 1988, the difference in workload between men working full-time and women working full-time has increased. The difference of 3h21', found in 1999, between the workload of men and women working full-time can be wholly attributed to the increasing workload of women in the 1990s. The workload of men working full-time has remained constant. Table 6 also clearly shows that the workload of women in Flanders has increased, irrespective of their working situation. The increasing amount of time spent on childcare, i.e., looking after and bringing up children, by both men and women, is also striking. This is consistent with findings on time use data in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom (Van den Broeck, Knulst et al., 1999: 173; Sullivan, 2000:447).

TABLE 6: COMPARISON OF 1988-1999 ON THE TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK, DOMESTIC WORK, AND THE CARE OF AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN PER WEEK FOR 21-40-YEAR-OLDS

		Paid work	Domestic work	Child care & bringing up children	Total
Men working full-time	'88	41:51	11:56	2:19	56:06
	'99	42:07 + 0:16	10:55 - 1:01	3:03 + 0:44	56:06 + 0:00
Women working full-time	'88	33:58	19:42	2:45	56:25
	'99	37:37 + 3:39	17:13 - 2:29	4:55 + 2:10	59:46 + 3:21
Women working part-time	'88	28:37	19:51	5:40	54:08
	'99	22:10 - 6:27	26:24 + 6:33	8:08 + 2:28	56:44 + 2:36
Unemployed women*	'88	4:18	31:39	11:12	47:09
	'99	3:39 - 0:39	29:54 - 1:45	14:56 + 3:44	48:30 + 1:21

\* Students not included.

Because there were too few part-time working men and unemployed men in the 1988 sample, figures are only shown for men with a full-time job. It is striking that, as compared to 1988, women working part-time in 1999 gave up 6h30' of paid work for domestic work, while for women working full-time, the time spent on paid work has increased at the expense of domestic work. It seems as though a differentiation has developed between women in the 1990s: women working full-time concentrate more on their work out of the home and less on domestic work, while the opposite applies for women working part-time. Women working part-time work fewer hours out of the home, but do more domestic work than 10 years ago. This could indicate that in 1999, a full-time job is more difficult to combine with a heavy family workload than in 1988. In any case, for the three categories of women, and particularly for women working full-time, there has been an increase in the workload. Certainly women cannot count on men: the "new" man does not spend less time on his job, and only "slows down" with regard to work in the household. Only the children are given slightly more attention by men, though this trend is even much stronger among women.

Finally, we can also compare the percentage of extra available time women without a paid job spend on unpaid labour in 1988 and in 1999. The percentages haven't changed over time: 69% of the extra available time is spent on unpaid labour in 1988 and 67% in 1999. To compare the percentage of extra available time that goes to leisure activities in 1988 and in 1999, a similar table as table 6 is drawn up, with non-work related activities (see table 7).

TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF 1988-1999 ON THE TIME SPENT ON OTHER THAN WORKRELATED ACTIVITIES PER WEEK FOR 21-40-YEAR-OLDS (INCLUDING TRAVELLING TIME FOR EACH CATEGORY)

		Leisure	Personal care	Sleeping and resting	Education	Social participation	Remainder
Men working full-time	'88	23:04	14:15	57:48	1:04	11:30	4:08
	'99	25:09	13:41	57:14	1:09	9:01	5:33
		+ 2:05	- 0:34	- 0:34	+ 0:05	- 2:29	+ 1:25
Women working full-time	'88	19:53	14:55	59:15	0:58	10:51	5:44
	'99	19:09	13:46	59:11	1:07	9:30	5:26
		- 0:44	- 1:09	- 0:04	+ 0:09	- 1:21	- 0:18
Women working part-time	'88	20:14	15:14	59:41	0:40	11:17	6:50
	'99	18:34	13:10	58:38	0:31	11:37	8:41
		- 1:40	- 2:04	- 1:03	- 0:09	+ 0:20	+ 1:51
Unempl. women *	'88	23:39	14:42	62:46	1:17	12:15	6:05
	'99	24:56	14:28	60:30	0:49	10:47	7:55
		+ 1:17	- 0:14	- 2:16	- 0:28	- 1:28	+ 1:50

\* Students not included.

Although full-time working men have the same workload in 1999 as in 1988, their total amount of time spent on their second priority, namely leisure activities, is 2 hours a week higher now than 10 years ago. 50% of this raise is due to extra recreation activities. Surprisingly the time spent watching television has stayed more or less constant. The extra leisure time of full-time working men goes at the expense of 2h29' of social participation (especially social contacts). Full-time working women also have less time for social participation in '99 than in '88, but they also spend less time on leisure activities and personal care, due to a 3h21' higher workload. Concerning the leisure activities of full-time working women, especially 'hobbies and games' and 'television' lose ground: 1 hour a week less time spent on each of these activities. The decrease in time spent on personal care is totally due to taking less time for eating and drinking.

In contrast to full-time working women, part-time working women seem to sleep less in 1999 as compared to 1988, but the time spent on social participation did not decrease among part-time workers.

Women without a paid job lose almost 2 hours of sleep in comparison to '88. This gives them the opportunity to do more leisure activities, on top of their higher workload. Unemployed women spend 2h17' more time in front of the television than in 1988 and spend about an hour more on recreation activities. They spend less time on hobbies and games, outdoor leisure activities and reading. While in 1988 unemployed women spent 13% of their extra available time on leisure activities, women in the same employment situation in 1999 dedicate 17% of their extra available time on these activities.

Again we can check whether the background variables for these groups of people differ in 1988 and 1999. Since we only consider the 21-40 year- olds, the average age for men and women in different employment situations is more or less the same. The average amount of children living at home is somewhat higher for women in the 1999 data set than for women of 1988. This doesn't explain the rise in time spent on childcare in '99 though: also the time

spent per child is higher in '99 than in '88 for men and women in the different worksituations. Finally, while the educational level of men and women working full-time was more or less the same in 1988, women working full-time are higher educated than full-time working men in 1999.

TABLE 8: COMPARISON OF 1988-1999 ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS FOR 21-40-YEAR-OLDS

		N	Average Age	Average # of children living at home	% with higher degree of education
Men working full-time	'88	233	31	1.15	40%
	'99	241	32	1.01	32%
Women working full-time	'88	121	30	0.69	40%
	'99	130	31	0.90	42%
Women working part-time	'88	45	30	1.38	29%
	'99	86	34	1.53	33%
Unemployed women*	'88	57	30	1.65	12%
	'99	60	32	1.71	8%

\* Students not included.

## 5 Busy families

Up to now we have considered the way individuals balance their activities to get as much done of the things they want in a 168 hours week. Finding a balance between paid work, non-paid work and leisure is however not only a personal matter, but is also affected by the family situation and the household division of work. Living in a family with a partner and children, mostly in a bigger house, generates extra household work, especially when the partner has a paid job. On the other hand, living in a family also creates opportunities to divide household and childcare tasks among the different members of the family. Nonetheless studies generally show that women in dual-earner families are still responsible for the majority of household labor (Berardo et al. 1987, Bergmann 1986 in: Shelton, John, 1996: 304).

The figures of the total workload of men and women in table 3 do not take the type of family into account. In order to gain a better insight into this, in table 9 we classified the respondents according to gender, the presence of a partner and the working situation of this partner (no partner, partner without a paid job, part-time working partner or full-time working partner). We only consider men and women with a full-time job, since this is the largest group and also the only group that allows such a detailed classification without resulting in a very small amount of cases for each category. For full-time working women we do not consider those with a part-time working partner (N=1) and with a non-working partner (N=7) for the same reasons. This results in 4 types of families for full-time working men and 2 types for full-time working women.

TABLE 9: TOTAL WORKLOAD OF FULL-TIME WORKING WOMEN AND FULL-TIME WORKING MEN ACCORDING TO THE PRESENCE OF A PARTNER AND HIS OR HER WORKSITUATION (INCLUDING TRAVELLING TIME FOR EACH CATEGORY)

	N	Paid Work	Domestic Work	Childcare	Total workload
<b>Men working full-time</b>					
No partner	93	41:45	10:18	0:22	52:25
Non working partner	113	39:23	12:13	1:56	53:32
Part-time working partner	94	41:44	13:20	2:44	57:50
Full-time working partner	144	43:56	12:50	3:00	59:47
<i>Δ No partner – full-time working partner</i>		+ 2:11	+ 2:32*	+ 2:38**	+ 7:22**
<b>Women working full-time</b>					
No partner	48	39:45	12:32	1:55	54:13
Full-time working partner	135	36:14	20:52	4:44	61:51
<i>Δ No partner – full-time working partner</i>		-3:31	+ 8:20**	+ 2:49**	+ 7:38**

Statistical significance of the difference \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01.

In table 3 the difference in total workload between full-time working women and full-time working men amounted to 3h29' per week. If we take into consideration the presence of partners and their worksituations, this difference in total workload reduces to 1h48' per week for full-time working women and men without a partner and 2h04' per week for full-time working women and men with a full-time working partner. The latter categories can be seen as each other's complement in a family.

For full-time working women as well as for full-time working men, having a partner leads to a higher total workload than having no partner at all. Among full-time working men the workload raises substantially if the partner has a paid job<sup>6</sup>. The difference in the total workload of full-time working singles and full-time workers with a full-time working partner, is remarkably similar for men and women. For both sexes, this difference amounts to about 7h30' per week, slightly over an hour more a day. So, it seems interesting to have a look at what this difference of 7h30' consist of?

Couples of two full-time workers spend more time on childcare than singles or other couples do (men: +2h38; women: +2h49'). This is easily explained by the fact that more full-time working men (65%) and women (66%) have children than men (10%) and women (25%) living without a partner. When controlling for having children, the difference between both groups disappears. This does not mean however that for all full-time working men the amount of time spent on childcare is only a function of the child burden in their families. Although 90% of the full-time working men with a part-time working partner has children, and although they have on average younger children, these men spend less time on childcare than

6 For the few full-time working women with an unemployed partner, the results don't seem to point in the same direction.



their colleagues with full-time working partners do. It seems clear that their partners (part-time working women with full-time working men) reduce their labour market participation just to be able to take care of the children. Part-time working women are indeed the category of women that spends the highest amount of time on childcare (6h04' a week).

Among full-time working men, the differences in the time spent on childcare related to household situation are most significant. Although we also see differences in the amount of domestic work, these differences seem relatively less important, at least if we compare them with the difference in the amount of household work performed by full-time working women without a partner and their counterparts with a full-time working partner. It seems clear that the extra household work in families with two full-time working partners, goes mainly to the female working partner in the household. Full-time working women with a full-time working partner not only spend 8h20' more on domestic work than full-time working women without a partner, they also spend 8h02' minutes more on domestic work than full-time working men with a full-time working spouse. The total workload of full-time working women in double earning families is nevertheless tempered by reducing the time spent on paid work (cf. Anker, 1997: 3). Although the difference is not statistically significant, there is a clear trend for full-time working women with a full-time working husband to work shorter hours. Among full-time working men the trend seems to be the opposite: those with a full-time working partner have the longest working hours.

Since full-time working women with a full-time working partner and full-time working men with a full-time working partner are each other's complement, we can calculate the division of paid and unpaid labour in a dual earner family. The female partner in such a family performs on the average 62% of the unpaid labour and 45% of the paid labour. Although it is clear that dual earner families are more 'symmetrical' than families in which women do not or only partly participate in the labour market, also in dual earner families women are still responsible for the majority of household labour.

The extra workload in families with two full-time working partners is mainly at the expense of their leisure time. As compared to their single counterparts, full-time working men and women with a full-time working partner have about 6 hours less leisure time.

TABLE 10: TIME SPENT ON OTHER THAN WORK-RELATED ACTIVITIES FOR FULL-TIME WORKING WOMEN AND FULL-TIME WORKING MEN ACCORDING TO THE PRESENCE OF A PARTNER AND HIS OR HER WORKSITUATION (INCLUDING TRAVELLING TIME FOR EACH CATEGORY)

	N	Leisure	Personal care	Sleeping and resting	Educa-tion	Social partici-pation	Remain.
<b>Men working full-time</b>							
No partner	93	29:22	12:34	56:46	0:54	8:50	7:05
Non working partner	113	26:53	15:00	56:35	0:56	8:28	6:30
Part-time working partner	94	25:11	14:23	55:46	0:44	9:12	4:49
Full-time working partner	144	23:19	13:45	56:12	1:15	8:49	4:48
<b>Women working full-time</b>							
No partner	48	23:17	13:51	58:45	1:05	10:18	6:25
Full-time working partner	135	18:13	13:58	58:12	1:10	9:00	5:30

## 6 Conclusions

In this paper we illustrated and tried to interpret certain differences in the time use of men and women. Starting with the observation that the time use of men and women is still very different and in line with traditional role patterns, we tried to explain these differences in terms of the different priorities of men and women in making choices. We found clear evidence that men mainly make choices between paid work and leisure time. As the working time declines, leisure time increases. Most women on the other hand have to combine a double responsibility and therefore constantly make choices between paid and non-paid work. As the labour market participation of women declines, the number of hours devoted to non-paid work increases. Or vice versa, as the burden of the household increases women reduce their labour market participation by either working shorter hours, working part-time or retreat (temporarily) from the labour market. This makes that even women without a job can hardly be labelled as ‘non working’, since they have on average a total weekly workload of more than 43 hours, which is almost the double of the total workload of non working men. Men without a job on the other hand have over 19 hours leisure a week more than ‘non working’ women.

It is interesting to see that the non-paid work of women without a job is mainly performed during ‘office hours’. The trade-off between paid and unpaid work could therefore also be illustrated by looking at the rhythms of activities. Rhythm graphs clearly illustrate that if we add paid and non-paid work, the differences between full-time working, part-time working and unemployed women are relatively small, since the three categories of women seem to ‘work’ to the same extend in the same time slots during the week. On the other hand the rhythm graphs again illustrate that for men ‘non-working’ means leisure.

We not only clearly illustrated the gendered priorities, which are very much in line with the traditional role patterns, but also found evidence in our data that, at least for the last decade, these mechanisms didn’t erode. While the total workload of Flemish men did not change much over the last 10 years, the workload of all categories of women has increased. The

observation that full-time working women do spend more time on paid work and less time on non-paid work than 10 years ago, while for the part-time working women the opposite is true, seems to point to the fact that the mechanism of gendered priorities even became more prevalent during the last decade.

If we take the family situation into consideration, the finding that the extra household work in families with two full-time working partners mainly goes to the female partner is very much in line with the thesis of gendered priorities. Full-time working women with a full-time working partner spend more than 8 hours extra on household work than their partners. On the other hand, full-time working men with a full-time working partner spend almost 8 hours more on paid work than their full-time working spouses. This makes clear that the mechanism of gendered preferences may not be a fair principle, but at least it limits the total workload of both men and women.

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## Annex 1: Activities divided into 11 categories

		Examples (not exhaustive)
1.	Work	working in the workplace, working at home, obligations related to unemployment, applications, breaks at work, etc.
2.	Domestic work	cooking, cleaning, washing, etc. chores, gardening, shopping, etc.
3.	Child care and educating children	feeding, washing, dressing, reading, helping with homework, playing with children, etc.
4.	Personal care	eating and drinking, physical care, dressing and undressing, washing, professional care, etc.
5.	Sleeping & resting	sleeping, resting, relaxing, lazing, having sex
6.	Education and training	education, in-service training, courses, training
7.	Social participation	associations, religious ceremonies, voluntary work, parties, visits, talking, telephone calls, etc.
8.	Leisure	hobbies, sport, games, recreation, culture, outdoors, the media, etc.
9.	Waiting	waiting for certain services, in the shop, waiting for someone, etc.
10.	Travelling	commuting, trips related to household activities, free time, etc.
11.	Remainder	unrecorded time, filling in the diary for time use, etc.