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Labor market segregation and part-time work as strategies for gearing paid work to family life

EVIDENCE FROM THE FLEMISH TIME USE STUDIES 1988-1999.

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1 Paid work in busy families

In the winter of 1958-59 a time-budget study was carried out in Flanders, among married employees and manual workers under 45. The average working time per week (including transfers and extra income activities) of manual workers was 58h27', clerks worked 54 hours on average per week (Deleeck & Van De Gracht, 1960). Thirty years later, in 1988, the researchgroup TOR at the Free University Brussels carried out a time use research among an aselect sample of Flemings between the ages of 21 and 40 (TOR'88)¹. It was found that full-time working men spent, on average, 42h16' on professional activities (including travelling from and to work, overtime, extra earnings, applying for work, ...) ². The full-time working men between 21 and 40 of the TOR time budget study of 1999 (TOR'99) spent approximately an equal amount of time on paid work than 11 years earlier, i.e. 41h59' a week.

These data clearly show a drastic reduction of work times over the course of the second half of the previous century. In comparison with the fifties, men work between 12h and 16h30' less per week in the eighties and nineties. Furthermore, this decrease is an underestimation, since the samples of 1988 and 1999 include the self-employed, who on average have the highest work hours.

The drastic reduction of the working time in the sixties, seventies and eighties is a well-documented fact. Working days not only were gradually shortened, for the majority of the population Saturdays became work free days over the course of that time. Yet, ironically, today people seem to complain more about lack of time than in the past. The increasing complaints concerning stress and time pressure appear as a paradox, since

1 TOR'88 was a time use study amongst an aselect sample of 466 Flemish men and women between 21 and 40 years old. All respondents recorded all their activities during three consecutive days and were interviewed twice. In 1999, TOR carried out a similar time use survey amongst 1.533 Flemish people between 16 and 75 years old (TOR'99). For this study the respondents were asked to record all their activities for a full week. Both time use studies used the same method of data collection, so comparisons between 1988 en 1999 are well possible, at least for the age group between 21 and 40. (Glorieux, Koelet & Moens, 2000).

2 The data for TOR'88 presented in this text might vary slightly from earlier publications referring to TOR'88. This is because we did reweigh the data of 1988 for the educational level of the respondents in order to optimize the comparison with the TOR'99 data. The very slight deviations vis à vis earlier publications do not go against the conclusions and trends we found in earlier analyses.

we see a significant increase in work free time per worker. However, the reduction of paid work per individual offers a somewhat distorted view of the time pressure on families. One important evolution in this respect concerns the drastic increase of the labor market participation of women during the last decades. Approximately 1/3 of Belgian women in the active age categories (15-64 years) worked in the beginning of the sixties, this proportion had risen to about half the women in the nineties. The labor market participation is even more striking during the so-called 'busy-age-period' between 25 and 40. In this age group around 1/3 of women was active on the labor market in 1961, that number had risen to more than 75% in 1989, to reach a temporary peak at 80% in 1999. The increased labor market participation of women evidently has an enormous impact on time pressure at the level of the family. While 30 years ago, most families only had one breadwinner who spent more time on paid work than nowadays, today two-earner households became the norm. For a better understanding of the increasing time pressure in present-day families, it might be useful to study working times at the level of the household.

Both the time budget studies of 1988 and 1999 were collected on a individual level and contain no information about the mutual time use of couples. We can nevertheless simulate the total work time of a two-parent family by adding the average work time of men living together with a partner to the average work time of women living together with a partner. Cohabiting men between the ages of 21 and 40 on average spent 40h51' on paid work (including travelling from and to work, extra earnings, overtime, job interviews, ...) in 1988, whereas women performed 24h06' paid work at that time. Nothing much has changed in 1999. Men between 21 and 40 with a partner on average spent 41h18' on activities related to work; women in the same age group with a partner worked 23h10'. Young two parent families produced a total of 64h28' paid work in 1999. Obviously not all families in the fifties were one-breadwinner families and the data do not entail the category of self-employed workers. On the other hand, the 1959 sample only holds people that actually work. The average time spent on paid work by families in 1959 might have been slightly higher than 55 to 60 hours a week, however it is not realistic to assume that the volume of paid work on the family level – at least in young families - has been drastically reduced over the past 40 years. However, we clearly find a significant evolution in the division of paid work between men and women within families.

2 Women adapt themselves

Time pressure in contemporary families is evidently not only related to the volume of paid work, household activities also need to be taken into account. Because of the increasing participation of women in the labor market, the traditional division of labor between men and women has come under attack. Where it used to be housewives that took care of household responsibilities, thereby creating a buffer that attunes the different temporal orders coming together within the family unit (cfr. Elchardus 1996), women today are faced more than ever with the problem of combining professional activities with ifamily obligations.

The fact that it is mostly women that carry this burden of combining work and family life, is shown in the widespread participation of women in part-time work. Consistent with official Flemish statistics, we find in our data a growing number of women working part-time. In 1988 31.5% of working women between 21 and 64 worked part-time. This number rose to 43.3% in 1999. For men, the participation in part-time work only showed a very modest increase from 2.3% to 4%. So despite their increased labor market participation, women are still the ones adapting their paid work to family obligations (cfr. Glorieux, Koelet & Moens, 2001; Glorieux & Vandeweyer, 2002). A comparison of the time full-time and part-time working men and women spend on paid work and domestic work (see table 1), offers further evidence for the remaining of a traditional division of labor between men and women.

TABLE 1: TIME SPENT ON PAID LABOR, HOUSEHOLD WORK, CHILD REARING AND CARING ACTIVITIES PER WEEK, BY SEX AND LABOR MARKET SITUATION (TOR'99)

	N	Paid labor	Household work	Child rearing and care	Total workload
Full-time working women	201	37:12	18:49	3:47	59:48
Part-time working women	150	22:27	27:59	5:23	55:50
Full-time working men	451	41:59	12:13	2:06	56:19
Part-time working men	20	31:25	10:53	1:29	43:47

Table 1 clearly shows that the total workload of men (paid work, household work, childcare, including the relevant traveling time for each category) is almost completely dependent on their level of labor market participation. A significant decrease of paid work is coupled with an equally significant decrease in total workload. Women on the other hand have a more balanced distribution of different labor forms and tasks: a decrease in labor market participation is usually countered by an increased amount of time spent on

domestic work activities – and vice versa. For women the discrepancy between the total workload of a full-time job and a part-time job is therefore relatively small. When comparing full-time and part-time working men we have to take extreme caution, since our sample only holds 20 part-time working men. But, as previously stated, the lower proportion of part-time working men offers ample indication that part-time work among men is not a common strategy to ease the pressure of combining work and family life. The findings in table 1 confirm that traditional role patterns are still prevalent in Flanders. If we limit our sample to the age group between 21 and 40 (barring students and work disabled), we can compare the findings of 1988 with the time use data of 1999. This comparison offers a glimpse of the evolution of young women's adaptation strategies of combining work with a family.

TABLE 2: COMPARISON 1988-1999 OF THE TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK, HOUSEHOLD WORK, CHILD REARING AND CARING ACTIVITIES PER WEEK (21 TO 40 YEAR OLDS)(TOR'88 – TOR'99)

		Paid Labor		Household work		Child rearing and care		Total workload	
Full-time working men	'88	42:16		12:18		1:58		56:32	
	'99	41:59	- 0:17	10:54	- 1:24	3:01	+ 1:03	55:56	- 0:36
Full-time working women	'88	34:58		20:02		2:22		57:22	
	'99	37:35	+ 2:37	17:20	- 2:42	4:58	+ 2:36	59:54	+ 2:32
Part-time working women	'88	27:55		19:51		5:15		53:01	
	'99	22:10	- 5:45	26:24	+ 6:33	8:08	+ 2:53	56:44	+ 3:43

When compared to data from 1988, the already existent discrepancy in workload between full-time working men and full-time working women has further expanded. In 1999, the difference of about 4 hours in the workload of men and women working full-time, is mostly due to the growing workload of women in the nineties. Full-time working men's workloads have slightly diminished, whereas the workload of women, whether they work full-time or part-time, has increased. It is remarkable that part-time working women have traded in 5h45' of time spent on paid work in favour of household work, while for full-time working women the amount of time spent on paid labor has grown, at the expense of household work. It would appear that during the nineties a differentiation has occurred among working women: full-time working women are more oriented towards their professional

activities and spend less time on household work, while their part-time working counterparts show exactly the opposite evolution. Women working part-time spent less time on paid work, but perform more household activities than 11 years ago. This might indicate that holding a full-time job and a heavy family burden is harder to combine in 1999 than it was in 1988. Another interesting fact from these data lies in the significant reduction of the difference in labor time between full-time working men and women between 1988 and 1999. Whereas 11 years ago a full-time position meant for men over 7 hours a week more work than women (including overtime, extra earnings, traveling to and from work, ...), that gap has been reduced to 4h30' over the course of a decade.

3 The 'invisible 8 hours' revisited³

The large difference in working time between full-time working young men and women in 1988 was already thoroughly studied (Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994a; 1994b). We then distinguished between two kinds of causes for the difference between full-time employed men and women in time spent on paid work. On the one hand, we stated that the difference could be based on the fact that women - and those with children in particular - perform fewer hours in the same jobs than men. This could be because they are absent more often, take sick leave more often, do not put in the same amount of overtime work men do, do not frequently perform extra work related tasks at home,... . On the other hand, it is well possible that women are predominantly employed in those sectors where working hours are, even for men, limited. The former explanation deals with individual strategies, while the latter focuses on labor market segregation as the underlying reason for shorter work times for women.

Based on the analyses in the time use study of 1988 we concluded that "Of the 8 hours that mothers in full-time employment work less than fathers in full-time employment, about 6 can be ascribed to labor market segmentation, and the remaining 2 to different behavior in the same jobs" (Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994a: p. 21). Moreover, the remaining discrepancy

3 In "The Search for the Invisible 8 Hours" (Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994a) we searched for an explanation for the 8-hour gap in working time between full-time working men and women. After additional weighting for educational level we found this discrepancy to be reduced to 7h18'.

of 2 hours between full-time working fathers and mothers was not statistically significant.

The labor market segregation between men and women that explained, to a large extent, the smaller amount of time spent on paid work by full-time working mothers, was in part due to the fact that working mothers between 21 and 40 tend to work more in the public sector, in jobs with predictable working hours, in jobs with a relatively small amount of time sovereignty and in professional categories with generally lower working times.

- In the TOR'88 sample, 47% of working mothers between 21 and 40 worked in the public sector, while the general average for the remaining categories of workers is only about 30%. Work times of full-time employees were approximately 7 hours shorter when compared with the private sector.
- We also found that young working mothers were underrepresented in jobs where employees cannot clearly predict the end of the working day. Only 16% of mothers worked in a job, in which at the beginning of a workday, they could not predict the end of it with an accuracy of 15 minutes or less. This number is significantly higher for working women without children (29%), men without children (34%) and men with children (38%). The full-time employed that can predict the end of the workday with an accuracy of 15 minutes, have working weeks that are 7h10' shorter than their counterparts with less predictable working times.
- Jobs with a high level of time sovereignty are characterized by longer work hours. In 1988 people who have a say in when they work, put in an extra 5h21' per week compared to people with set work times. Full-time workers with a high number of atypical working hours (work in the evening and/or at night and/or on weekends) performed 12h31' less paid work per week compared to those with a high level of time sovereignty. In our sample, we found not one mother with a high level of time sovereignty. Women with children however seem to have the tendency to work more in jobs with atypical work times: 31% of the full-time employed mothers worked at atypical times, whereas only 17% of the fathers did. 16% of the women without children and 24% of the men without children were employed in jobs with irregular work schedules. Workers in atypical time systems work 6 hours less than the other categories of working people.

- Finally, we found important differences between the actual working times of the different professional categories. Manual workers, managers and executives in trade (responsible for planning and coordination without direct contact with customers) worked the longest hours. Compared to them, full-time clerks on average worked about 6 hours less, people in the service sector and in retail (with direct customer contact) worked approximately 9h30' less and people in the social sector (nursing, education, judicial support ...) worked almost 11 hours less. In 1988 women were found disproportionately more in social professions as well as performing clerk jobs. Approximately two out of every three women were employed in those professional categories, while only one out of every three men was employed in these sectors. Men were predominantly employed in the manual worker category (43%), whereas only 13% of the women worked as manual workers.

So for 1988 it was clearly established that female employment, and in particular that of mothers, was concentrated in sectors, professional categories and jobs, that, both for men and women are characterized by relatively short working times. This labor market segregation between men and women, fathers and mothers then explained largely why full-time working mothers worked less than full-time working men.

For 1999, we still find a substantial cleavage in working hours between full-time working men and women in the age group between 21 and 40, though the difference has been reduced (on average 4h24' in 1999 against 7h18' in 1988). Just as in 1988 the difference is most striking for full-time working men and women with children.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE WORK TIMES OF FULL-TIME WORKING MEN AND WOMEN WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN (21 TO 40 YEAR OLDS) (TOR'99)

	N	Average work time
Men, without children	106	42:53
Men with children	132	41:16
Women, without children	61	39:18
Women with children	68	36:01
	367	40:26
R ² =2.4%; eta=.156 ; sign.=.029		

Table 3 shows that both full-time working men and women perform fewer hours at work when they have children. Fathers with a full-time job, work

over 1½ hours less than their childless counterparts, mothers work 3 hours less than women without children do. Mothers in full-time occupations spend 5¼ hours less on paid work than fathers. Just as for the TOR'88 data, we studied to what extent these differences in working times are related to labor market segregation. Is it possible to explain the lower labor market participation of mothers with full-time careers in terms of their job characteristics, i.e. do they generally work in jobs that tend to be less time intensive both for men and women? In order to be able to compare over time, we are forced to limit the analysis to 21 to 40 years olds.

We present a number of labor market characteristics of full-time working men and women, with and without children in table 4.

TABLE 4: FULL-TIME WORKING MEN AND WOMEN, WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN, BETWEEN 21 AND 40, BY LABOR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS (ROW %) (TOR'99)

	Men		Women	
	No children	Children	No children	Children
Manual workers	45.8	51.5	20.0	13.0
Clerks	26.2	14.2	30.0	23.2
Managers and commercial services	17.8	19.4	15.0	26.1
Service sector	5.6	6.7	6.7	7.2
Social sector	4.7	8.2	28.3	30.4
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Public sector	16.7	19.3	25.0	30.4
Private sector	70.4	69.6	66.7	46.4
Self employed	13.0	11.1	8.3	23.2
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Typical work times	34.2	38.2	35.5	32.9
Slightly varying and atypical work times	27.9	31.6	21.0	37.1
Strongly varying and atypical work times	37.8	30.1	43.5	30.0
	100%	100%	100%	100%
< 15 min	50.9	54.4	54.1	59.7
15 to 60 min	20.0	20.6	31.1	29.9
More than 60 min	29.1	25.0	14.8	10.4
	100%	100%	100%	100%
No amount of time sovereignty	45.9	53.0	52.5	45.6
Limited amount of time sovereignty	28.8	23.9	29.5	29.4
Unlimited amount of time sovereignty	25.2	23.1	18.0	25.0
	100%	100%	100%	100%

- Corresponding to the findings of 1988 less women work as manual laborers than men. Women tend to be active mostly in the social professions. Notable, and much unlike the data of 1988, for 1999 we find a higher proportion of mothers than proportions of men with or without children in positions of managers and in trade business. This is even more striking because this professional category on average has the longest working weeks (approximately 50 hours a week). Furthermore, in

1999, about a quarter of women with children is self-employed, or double the number of men and triple the number of women without children. On the other hand – and this corresponds to our earlier findings – women disproportionately work more in the public sector. The category of self-employed on average has the longest working hours (almost 54 hours a week), full-time public servants work the smallest number of hours (35 hours a week).

- Apparently mostly women without children hold jobs that entail working at atypical hours during the day⁴, while full-time working fathers and mothers are confronted – to a greatly lesser extent – with extremely flexible working hours. Usually those people working at atypical and irregular working hours perform the highest number of hours per week (44 hours)⁵. Those who are not or only to a small degree confronted with irregular working schedules, do not have differentiated working times: a full-time job normally means they work 39 hours a week.
- Women, and particularly mothers, more often work in jobs with a predictable end of the working day. They work considerably less in positions where the end of the working day cannot be predicted with an

4 Based on survey questions on the prevalence of daytime work (never/occasionally vs. always/regular basis), work during evening hours (never/occasionally vs. always/regular basis), night work (never/occasionally vs. always/regular basis), work on Saturdays (never; less than 1 in 2; more than 1 in 2), work on Sundays (never; less than 1 in 2; more than 1 in 2), working schedule (set working hours; shift work; on-call contract; no set working hours) we created a composite measure for atypical work times by means of a PRINCALS-analysis. This analysis resulted in one clearly defined dimension and – following from that – one continuous scale on which every respondent could be scored. The more negative the score, the more the respondent is likely to experience atypical working hours, the higher the score, the more likely respondents have regular working hours. For the sake of analysis we divided this measure in three categories: the first category (mostly regular working hours) holds those respondents with a positive score. This category comprises of 38.7% of working respondents between 16 and 75. The remaining group was divided into two categories, each holding 30.6% of our respondents.

5 In the 1988 analyses it was found that employees that worked at atypical work hours on average spent less time per week on their jobs. The opposite holds true for 1999. This is partly due to the fact that we had to restrict ourselves to weekdays in 1988 because of technical reasons. That way the working time of people in atypical work situations is underestimated, since the time they work during the weekends was excluded from analyses. The deviation from the tendencies found in 1988 is to a smaller extent due to the fact that the category of self employed was withheld during the previous time use analyses in 1988. Under the same circumstances as in 1988 – i.e. without the self employed and not taking weekend work into consideration – we find similar results for 1999: employees in atypical work schemes have the shortest workweeks of all respondents.

accuracy of one hour. Full-time jobs with predictable work times on average are those with the shortest working weeks. People in this situation work an average of 37h30' per week; in jobs with unpredictable hours – i.e. accuracy less than an hour – the average workweek is 10 hours longer.

- Divergent from our findings in 1988 we must conclude that the level of time sovereignty does not differ greatly between men and women, mothers and fathers. Women without children tend to have slightly less temporal freedom regarding their working hours, but the discrepancy is not very big. Temporal freedom at the job usually comes at the cost of working longer hours. This can be substantiated further by the data: full-time employees with rigid working hours work 38 hours per week on average, while their counterparts with a great amount of temporal freedom spend 45h30' at their jobs.

Summarizing, it may be stated that young full-time working mothers between 21 and 40 work disproportionately more in the public sector, in jobs where the end of the working day is predictable and (just as fathers do) work less at atypical working hours and irregular job schedules. Those types of jobs usually go together with shorter working hours. On the other hand, and this is new as compared to 1988, we find a considerable proportion of full-time working women with children in the professional categories of the self employed and in management and commercial professions; typically jobs with long working hours.

These opposing tendencies lead to the conclusion that labor market segregation does not sufficiently explain the differences in working hours between men and women, with or without children. Table 5 clearly shows that the original variations in working times for the 4 categories remain constant after controlling for the above mentioned labor market characteristics. The difference between full-time working mothers and fathers has diminished between 1988 and 1999, but labor market segregation no longer seems to offer an explanation for the relatively longer working hours of full-time working fathers, at least not for those job characteristics that explicated a large part of the difference in 1988⁶

6 The analyses of 1988 that were summarised above and reported in Elchardus & Glorieux (1994a, 1994b) only referred to weekdays, excluded the self employed and did not have the extra weighing for educational level referred to earlier. So, the analyses of 1999 differ from those of 1988 since they do entail the 7-day

TABLE 5: MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATION ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY WORKING TIMES OF FULL-TIME WORKING MEN AND WOMEN, BY PRESENCE OF CHILDREN AND A NUMBER OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS (21 TO 40 YEAR OLDS) (TOR'99)

	N	Uncontrolled	Eta	Controlled	Beta	Sign
Men, without children	96	42:39	0.15	41:41	0.14	0.09
Men with children	127	41:42		42:17		
Women, without children	57	39:24		39:56		
Women with children	61	36:25		36:15		
Manual workers	127	38:57	0.34	38:46	0.22	0.01
Clerks	73	42:09		43:28		
Managers and commercial services	69	49:22		45:25		
Service sector	23	34:58		37:22		
Social sector	49	33:07		36:07		
Public sector	72	35:13	0.34	37:43	0.25	0.00
Private sector	227	39:57		39:45		
Self employed	42	53:56		50:40		
Typical work times	122	38:51	0.16	40:23	0.12	0.08
Slightly varying and atypical work times	103	38:57		38:23		
Strongly varying and atypical work times	116	44:01		42:54		
< 15 min	188	37:29	0.26	39:44	0.09	0.31
15 to 60 min	78	41:42		40:28		
More than 60 min	75	47:26		43:06		
No amount of time sovereignty	167	38:06	0.19	39:51	0.06	0.52
Limited amount of time sovereignty	95	41:07		42:07		
Unlimited amount of time sovereignty	80	45:24		40:34		
R ² =21.7%						

4 Part-time and full-time work: a new form of segregation?

We already reported the significant rise in part-time work with women between 1988 and 1999 (from 31.5% to 43.4% in our samples). We also

week, including the self employed and were also weighed for the educational level. Several new analyses were carried out on the data of 1988 (with or without the self employed) and attempted to carry out the same variations on the 1999-data (with or without the self employed and for both the work week and the 7-day week). Despite deviations in magnitude between the different research categories, the major trends and conclusions hold true in the varying analyses. Rather than redo the analyses for 1988 and limit the analyses for 1999 to the 5-day workweek, we presented a summary of the original TOR'88 analyses and the most extensive version of the TOR'99 analyses.

found that full-time working women between 21 and 40, performed considerably more hours, and part-time working women performed considerably less hours of work in 1999 than in 1988 (see table 2). In 1999 a full-time job for women entails 2h37' more work per week than 11 years earlier, whereas a part-time job means one works 5h45' less. It appears that the choice women in general – and mothers in particular – are confronted with nowadays, is one between full-time and part-time work. The category of women choosing to work less, gets part-time jobs. And a part-time job, now more than before, means a half time job. Women who remain active in full-time positions on the other hand, make longer hours than before. The differentiation between full-time and part-time is clearer than before, the gray zone between a large part-time job and a small full-time job has disappeared.

We attempted to quantify this analysis by dissecting the differences in working hours between young men and women in several factors that induce shorter work hours.

Men between 21 and 40 on average work 39h34' a week (including transfers, extra earnings, ...) in 1999. That is the work time of all men in that age group excluding students, yet including the unemployed. Women in the same age group perform 25h21' of paid work per week. Simple calculus teaches us that men work on average 14h13' more than women. Part of that discrepancy is because relatively fewer women are active on the labor market. While 90% of men in our sample is professionally active, 'only' 78% of women currently performs paid work. If all men and women were professionally active, the difference in working hours would be reduced to 10h18'. So 28% or 3h55' of the difference in work times between men and women can be attributed to the fact that fewer women are active on the labor market between the ages of 21 and 40. The difference between full-time working men and women in this age group amounts to 4h24'; i.e. 43% of the gap in labor hours between working men and women or 31% of the total difference in work times between all men and women in the age group from 21 to 40 years old. The remainder of the latter difference – 5h24', i.e. 57% of the difference in working time between men and women or 42% of the total difference between both sexes – can be attributed to the fact that more women than men work in part-time jobs.

Table 6 holds a summary of the relative differences and their comparison with the similar data of 1988.

TABLE 6: RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE THREE MECHANISMS THAT EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE IN WORKING TIME BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN (21 TO 40 YEAR OLDS) (TOR'88 – TOR'99)

1988	1999	
14u55' (100%)	14u13' (100%)	Total difference in average hours of paid work per week between men and women
5u29' (37%)	3u54' (28%)	Due to lower employment rate among women
7u18' (49%)	4u24' (31%)	Due to shorter working hours of women in full-time employment
2u08' (14%)	5u24' (42%)	Due to a greater proportion of women in part-time employment

The number of working hours young men and women – employed and not employed – perform, has slightly diminished between 1988 and 1999 although the difference between both years is not very big. The underlying mechanisms that explain the general difference in the working time of men and women however have drastically changed over the intervening 11 years. The labor market participation of women has further increased and at the same time the gap between average work times of working men and women has widened further between 1988 and 1999. Through those evolutions, the proportion of the general difference in work hours that can be explained by a more restricted labor market participation of women has been reduced from 37% to 28%. Earlier we found that the working hours of men and women in a full-time employment converge, and so we find a decline in the difference attributable to the shorter working hours of women in full-time jobs (from 49% to 31%). In 1988, the difference in average working hours of men and women was only to a limited degree attributable to a higher proportion of part-time work among women. The difference in labor time between part-time and full-time jobs was relatively small in 1988 (see table 2). Between 1988 and 1999 the proportion of women that work part-time has increased significantly, and the average work time of a part-time job has strongly decreased. Both effects together have as a result that for the year 1999 we can explain the difference in working hours between the sexes to a much larger degree by the prevalence of part-time work among women.

5 Conclusion

On basis of the comparisons of Flemish time budget studies from 1959, 1988 and 1999, it is unlikely to assume that the time young families spent on paid work has drastically declined over the past forty years. There is a decrease in the average hours individuals spend on paid work over the second half of the twentieth century, yet at the same time the labor market participation of women has spectacularly increased in that period. Therefore, the traditional division of labor on the family level has come under serious pressure. Where it used to be women who were responsible for household work, and in doing so creating a buffer function in coordinating the different time orders that come together in the family; nowadays women are left with the burden of combining and attuning their labor market participation with their family responsibilities. From our data it once again became clear that it is mainly women who combine the various forms of work. Their level of labor market participation is directly related to the time they spent on family work and child care activities. Because of this balancing between paid and unpaid work, the total workload of women in full-time and part-time employment does not differ very much. The same mechanism does not hold for men; their total workload is a direct result of their level of labor market participation. This can be further elaborated by the widespread diffusion of part-time work with women. Men in part-time functions are a rarity, especially during the so-called 'busy age period'.

Women constantly balance their responsibilities between the labor market and their families in order to keep the workload in check. A number of strategies can be found to keep this pressure under control. The traditional strategy would entail a clean role division in the family; men provide a living through paid labor while women take care of the household and child rearing activities. A second way of dealing with the problem is to work in part-time positions. A third and lesser-known mechanism to contain the total workload is to work a full-time job with relatively short working hours. This last strategy came to the fore prominently in the TOR'88 analyses. There are generally two ways of carrying out this mechanism. A first way is the individual way, for example through less overtime, take up more sick leave, ... A second way, through labor market segregation, entails that women are over represented in jobs with shorter working hours.

As compared to the time use data of TOR'88 and TOR'99 it becomes evident that the work times of full-time working women have drastically increased and, contrary to that evolution, the work times of part-time working women have decreased in a significant way. It would seem that the strategy of labor

market segregation is less of a factor in 1999 compared to 1988. Though full-time employed women still spent fewer hours on the job than full-time working men, the discrepancy has diminished greatly between 1988 and 1999. The differences between full-time working men and women are, contrary to 1988, no longer explicable by means of labor market segregation, at least not for the job characteristics that were found to hold a significant effect in 1988.

Anno 1999 part-time work appears to be the main mechanism for women in Flanders to balance their activities between work and family. During the last decade of the twentieth century, the labor market participation of women has further increased. The proportion of full-time working women has however diminished. Women in full-time employment work longer in 1999 than in 1988. On the other hand, part-time work became more prevalent among women. Furthermore, working hours in a part-time job have drastically declined in the course of a decade to the point where it has mainly become half time employment. Most indicators point to the choices women nowadays have to make between a full-time job with relatively little time or space for family commitments or a half time position that leaves the necessary time for commitments in the family. Whether this concerns a real choice remains doubtful. For women who want to build a career, full-time employment mostly is the only option. The time left for child care and household work will be very limited in that case. Young women with a certain family workload usually also have only one option. Part-time work is the only alternative to contain the total workload. And what about men? They too do not have a choice, or better: they all choose the same. That way, the traditional strategy of the family division of labor continues to be a part of daily life, be it under a new look. The work of men and women remains neatly divided and traditional role patterns persist.

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