

## 6 What do professors do all day?

*Ignace Glorieux, Julie Verbeylen\**

### I. INTRODUCTION

In his book *Metabletica*, first published in 1956, the year of Marc Jegers' birth, Jan Hendrik van den Berg points out that the practice of professions has become invisible to children. In the past, when the children were on the street, they saw and heard what adults were doing. The rope maker, blacksmith, coppersmith, cooper, carpenter and cigar-maker practiced their profession in the living room, the workshop or in the open air, accessible to every child (van den Berg, 1972: 48). Today most of the professions are practiced in closed offices, workshops, factory spaces where children are not allowed. How can children know what's going on there? Children don't even know what their fathers are doing at work. The latter was portrayed in a funny but striking way in the Belgian film 'Toto le héros' by Jaco Van Dormael. The main character in that movie, Thomas, as a little boy sees his father leaving through the front door every morning and coming back in the evening through the same door. He wonders why his father is behind the front door all day and what he's doing there all the time?

Many adults also do not know exactly what others are doing at work. Due to the strict separation between paid work and other spheres of life, people come into direct contact with only a limited number of professions, and usually only with limited aspects of these professions. Every day we consume countless products and enjoy services, but usually have no idea how they are made and brought to us. It seems as if work has been cut off from everyday life. Social scientists even introduced the concept of work-life balance, just as if life stops when people are at work.

What applies to many professions also applies to university professors. Many aspects of their profession are invisible to outsiders. People don't have a realistic idea of how professors spend their days. There are even students at the university who think that professors have a three-month vacation in the summer because they don't teach in those months. Others may know professors from comic books. It is

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indeed striking that many comic strips have a professor among their main characters: professor Gobelijn in Jeremy (Jommeke), professor Barabas in Spike and Suzy (Suske and Wiske), professor Cuthbert Calculus (Zonnebloem) in Tintin (Kuifje) and of course the son of Nero, Adhemar. Strangely enough, these professors don't teach at all, they all are rather unworldly, absent-minded characters who spend their days in a laboratory. These archetypes, of course, do not give a good picture of the profession of university professors either.

Marc Jegers has a long career as a university professor and is now retiring. Although the latter should not be taken too literally. We have heard that Marc will remain associated with his department and will continue to do research and maybe do some teaching as well. While he won't stop working, the end of his official career could still be an opportunity to paint a picture of how professors spend their days. We are not intended to provide an overview of Marc's career, but rather to provide a general picture of how university professors spend their time. In this way, we hope to give people outside of academia a better idea of the profession of university professor, and for Marc's friends and family, it can help them finally understand why Marc left Antwerp every morning and what he was doing all the time far away in Brussels.

In 2015, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) commissioned a study to map the time use and workload of its professors. This research was carried out by the research group TOR of the Sociology department. All 666 professors (full-time and part-time) at the VUB were invited to participate in this study. Academics holding the title of professor in Belgium include four academic degrees, the equivalent of which in other countries does not always bear the title of professor. We have the ranks of assistant professor (docent), associate professor (hoofddocent), professor (hoogleraar) and full professor (gewoon hoogleraar). In this contribution we call them all professors, if we refer to 'professor', we mean the rank of professor (hoogleraar).

The respondents of this study were first asked to fill in a questionnaire on work conditions and wellbeing and then took part in a diary registration. For the diary registration, respondents kept track of all their (work and non-work related) activities in an online diary for seven consecutive days. The diary was developed with MOTUS software and could be kept on a smartphone, a tablet or a computer. MOTUS ensures that the data is continuously synchronised on the different devices (for more information about MOTUS, see [hbits.io](http://hbits.io)). A total of 345 professors completed the questionnaire, 170 of them finished the diary registration. The fieldwork took place between 9 March and 15 July 2015. In order to get a realistic picture of the time use and the workload of professors, the registration weeks were representatively distributed across teaching weeks, exam weeks and holiday weeks. (more details on this study can be found in Verbeylen *et al.* (2016)).

In this contribution, we first provide a general overview of the time spent by VUB professors. We give an outline of the time spent on professional work, differences in the composition of the working time by gender and age and job-related characteristics, and we analyse the timing of the work. In a second section, we take a closer look at gender differences in the composition of working time, working on atypical working hours and the balance between work and private life.

## II. WHAT DO VUB PROFESSORS DO ALL DAY?

### 1. Time spent on professional work

Table 6.1 gives a general overview of the weekly time spent on professional work of the Vrije VUB professors. Professors at the VUB have an average workweek of 53h26'. Most of their worktime (20h19'), goes to research-related activities. Research-related activities include setting up and developing research, writing publications and supervising own researchers. In addition, approximately 12h30' a week goes to teaching-related activities. This includes tasks such as teaching, reviewing and grading paper and exams, consulting with students, as well as the preparation and administration involved. Finally, another 8 hours are spent on service (internal and external) and meetings. Two additional categories fall under the heading 'work': 'Other VUB-related activities' and 'Professional activities outside the VUB'. The first category includes activities that are difficult to assign to one of the three core tasks (education, research, service) or fall outside of it, such as receptions, working lunches, training and answering or processing e-mail. This category accounts for an additional 10h14' on top of the time already spent on the three core tasks. A small group (14.9%) combines his or her university duties with other professional activities outside the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. They spend an average of 15 hours a week on this, for the entire sample the average is 2h14'.

**Table 6.1: Average time per week spent on professional work (n = 170)**

	Time per respondent
Teaching-related activities	12:29
Research-related activities	20:19
Services, meetings	8:07
Other VUB-related activities	10:14
Professional activities outside the VUB	2:14
Total work	53:26

Men work on average 55h32' per week, women 48h29' (see Table 6.2). In paragraph III, we elaborate deeper on this difference. For age, we find that as professors get older, they work more and more hours. This may be explained by the changing family situation. Especially, taking care for young children is quite time consuming, time that cannot be spent on paid work. As people get older and the children grow up, this time becomes available again. It seems that the time that thus becomes available is (partly) filled with work-related activities. On the other hand, we cannot rule out the possibility that there is also a 'generation effect' in which the older generations work longer hours than the younger. Only a follow-up study can reveal to what extent this is indeed the case.

**Table 6.2: Average time per week spent on professional work by gender and age (time per respondent), n = 170**

	%	Professional work VUB	Professional work non-VUB	Professional work Total
<b>Gender</b>				
Man	70 %	52:41	2:51	55:32
Woman	30 %	47:39	0:50	48:29
<b>Age</b>				
< 40 years	32 %	48:53	2:07	51:00
40 – 50 years	28 %	51:34	1:28	53:02
> 50 years	40 %	53:05	2:55	56:00

In Table 6.3 we make a division based on background characteristics related to the employment situation.

Full-time professors work an average of 55 hours a week, this is 2h30 more than those who combine their part-time VUB appointment with another appointment or other paid work outside the VUB, and 10 hours more than those who do not combine their part-time VUB appointment with an appointment or other paid work elsewhere.

The time spent on professional work increases steadily with the academic rank. Full professors spend an average of 7 hours a week more time on work-related activities. We see that assistant professors spend the most time on activities related to an appointment elsewhere, on average 3 hours a week. This is of course because a larger proportion of them only have a part-time appointment at the VUB.

We distinguish three categories for academic discipline: (1) human and social sciences (philosophy and moral sciences, history, art sciences, archeology, language and literature, social sciences, business administration, communication sciences, criminological sciences, commercial engineering, political sciences, psychology,

law, sociology), (2) (bio) medical sciences (biomedical sciences, medicine, pharmaceutical sciences, health sciences) and (3) applied and exact sciences (biology, chemistry, physics and astronomy, geography, mathematics, computer sciences, engineering sciences, architecture).

The average working week is the longest for the applied and exact sciences, which takes over 55 hours. The working week in (bio)medical sciences lasts on average 54h15', that in human and social sciences lasts 51h28'. These differences can possibly be explained by the composition of these groups. Differences in the academic rank and appointment percentage within these groups can cause fluctuations (see below).

**Table 6.3: Average time per week spent on professional work by job related characteristics (time per respondent), n = 170**

	%	Professional work VUB	Professional work non-VUB	Professional work Total
Appointment percentage				
100 % VUB professor	65 %	54:26	0:34	55:00
Part-time VUB, full-time working	29 %	46:31	5:55	52:26
Part-time VUB, part-time working	6 %	44:49	0:00	44:49
Academic rank (missing = 3)				
Full professor	13 %	58:10	0:56	59:06
Professor	19 %	53:48	0:27	54:15
Associate professor	21 %	50:11	1:48	51:59
Assistant professor	47 %	49:06	3:05	52:11
Academic discipline				
Human and social sciences	37 %	48:27	3:01	51:28
(Bio) medical sciences	28 %	51:21	2:54	54:15
Applied and exact sciences	35 %	54:29	0:38	55:07

## 2. Atypical working hours

### a. The self-reported timing of work

Based on the answers in the questionnaire, we can determine to what extent working in the evening or in the weekend work is a common phenomenon among professors.

According to their self-report in the questionnaire, approximately one in three of the VUB professors work every day in the evening; one in two does this 'only'

a few times a week. Only 6 % does not work in the evening. If we solely look at full-time working professors, the percentage that works every day in the evening rises by 8 percentage points. Men, with the rank of ‘professor’ and the ‘professors’ from the human and social sciences most often work in the evening. However, differences by gender, discipline and rank do disappear when statistically controlled for the percentage of appointment.

**Table 6.4: Percentage (%) working in the evening in the context of his/her appointment at the VUB, n = 345**

	Every day	> 1 per week
Average professors	35,6	53,2
100 % VUB professor	43,6	47,9
Gender		
Man	39,2	51,6
Woman	27,2	56,9
Academic rank		
Full professor	59,4	29,0
Professor	47,1	43,7
Associate professor	33,9	53,2
Assistant professor	28,5	60,1
Academic discipline		
Human and social sciences	39,4	48,7
(Bio) medical sciences	28,2	52,4
Applied and exact sciences	37,1	60,5

The vast majority of the professors also work every weekend in the context of their appointment at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Male professors and professors from the applied and exact sciences most often work on weekends. The high proportion in the rank of ‘professor’ doing weekend work is striking: four out of five work every weekend. That is half more than the average VUB professors in all ranks. Controlled for the percentage of appointment, the differences by discipline and rank disappear. The differences between men and women also disappear when only looking at full-time professors (100 %). The differences remain among part-time professors: female part-time professors work less on weekends than male part-time professors.

**Table 6.5: Percentage (%) working during the weekend in the context of his/her appointment at the VUB, n = 345**

	Every week	1 < per month	1x per month	Almost never
Average professors	56,1	34,7	7,3	1,9
100 % VUB professor	68,1	25,3	5,9	0,7
<b>Gender</b>				
Man	61,5	31,8	6,1	0,6
Woman	43,5	41,6	10,0	4,9
<b>Academic rank</b>				
Full professor	64,3	28,0	3,9	3,9
Professor	82,3	14,0	3,7	0
Associate professor	62,0	30,5	6,4	1,2
Assistant professor	45,0	43,3	9,3	2,2
<b>Academic discipline</b>				
Human and social sciences	50,3	40,8	6,2	2,7
(Bio) medical sciences	53,5	32,6	11,3	2,6
Applied and exact sciences	66,8	28,2	5,0	0

**b. The timing of work according to the diaries**

We can further refine the findings from the questionnaire on working hours using the diary data and analyse more precisely when professors work.

Table 6.6 provides an overview of the time spent on work at typical and atypical working hours for both the VUB professors and the Flemish highly educated working population (college or university degree) (Glorieux *et al.* 2015). As a reference, the first column provides an overview of the available hours per period. A week has 168 hours, 65 of which we consider normal working hours, i.e. between 6 am and 7 pm on weekdays. We consider working between 7 pm and 10 pm as evening work, between 10 pm and 6 am as night work and working between 6 am and 7 pm on Saturday and Sunday as weekend work.

As we saw earlier, the average working week of a VUB professor exceeds 53 hours per week. Most of the work is performed during normal working hours (weekday from 6 am to 7 pm) on average 38h12' hours per week. For the average working Fleming with a college or university degree this average is 33h53' hours. The differences are even greater with regard to working outside the normal workday hours. Professors work four times the amount of hours on atypical (i.e. 15h13') than the average Flemish employee (3h48'). The most popular time to work outside normal hours is in the evening between 7 pm and 10 pm, followed by working on weekends. Expressed in percentages, about 11 % of the professional work of

professors is done in the evening, 6 % of it at night and almost 10 % during the weekend.

**Table 6.6: Percentage of the VUB professors and the working highly educated Flemish population (at least 8 hours worked during the registration week) that performs professional work by typical and atypical working hours, n = 170 (VUB professors), n = 754 (TOR13)**

	Available hours		Amount and proportion of the total working time – VUB professors		Amount and proportion of the total working time – Highly educated Flemings 2013	
	#	% of total week	#	% of total working time	#	% of total working time
Total in a week	168h	100 %	53:26	100 %	37:41	100 %
Normal working times (Mo to Fr: 6 am–7 pm)	65h	39 %	38:12	73 %	33:53	90 %
Atypical working times	103h	61 %	15:13	27 %	3:48	10 %
• Evening (7 pm–10 pm)	21h	13 %	6:03	11 %	1:40	4 %
• Night (10 pm–6 am)	56h	33 %	3:40	6 %	0:48	2 %
• Weekend daytime	26h	16 %	5:30	10 %	1:20	4 %
Saturday	13h	8 %	2:49	5 %	0:52	2 %
Sunday	13h	8 %	2:41	5 %	0:28	1 %

### c. The weekly rhythm

To gain more insight into the timing of the working hours of the VUB professors, figure 6.1 shows the distribution of paid work during week and weekend days for both the VUB professors and the highly educated (college or university degree) working Flemish population (TOR13 – Glorieux *et al.* 2015). The horizontal axis shows the times of the day every 10 minutes from midnight till midnight the day after. The vertical axis shows the percentage of respondents who are performing paid work at the different times in the day.

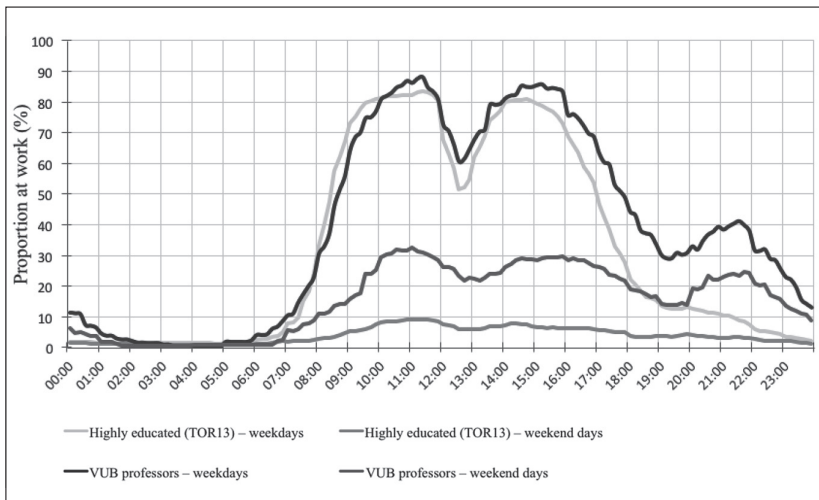
The black curves show the daily course of the VUB professors, the grey curves show the daily course of the working Flemish population. We first look at the higher situated curves, which show the daily course for average week days. If we compare both, then the Flemish employee starts working about the same time as the university professors. At around 8 am, 33 % of the highly educated Flemish and 30 % of the professors will be at work. In the morning, the Flemish employee works longer until the lunch break; the curve for Flemish working people starts to



drop almost exactly at noon time, while for professors this is half an hour earlier. The peak in the morning and the peak in the afternoon are times when collective work is most often done. The timing of this peak among professors largely corresponds with that of the Flemish employees, namely around 11 am and 2:30 pm. The peak in the afternoon is slightly lower for both curves than the peak in the morning (about 4 percentage points).

Professors have a longer working day than the highly educated Flemish employees; they also return home at a later time and continue to work longer in the evening. Between 8:40 am and 5:40 pm, more than 50 % of the professors is at work and in the evening the percentage only dips below 30 % after 10:30 pm. The latter is striking, because the phenomenon of evening work is only present to a limited extent among the Flemish population. In the evening there is a downward trend among the Flemish high-educated workers, around 8 pm 12 % are busy with work. Among the professors, a new peak can be observed from 8 pm onwards. It seems that part of the professors go back to work after a moment of rest, housework or the break for supper. At 9 pm, 38 % of the professors is still busy with work in one way or another. After the evening peak of 8:30 pm a decline sets in, which also extends past midnight. At midnight, 10 % of the professors are still at work.

**Figure 6.1: Timing of professional work of VUB professors and highly educated full-time working Flemings (30+ years and min. 8h of work during registration week) during week and weekend days, n = 170 (VUB professors), n = 754 (TOR13)**



At the bottom of figure 6.1 two curves are showing the daily course during the weekend (average of Saturday and Sunday). Again, a distinction has been made here between the VUB professors (black curve) and the Flemish population (grey curve). It is immediately noticeable that the average high-educated working Fleming works less during the weekend than the professors. Around 11 am is the busiest time of the weekend, both for the professors and for the highly educated working Fleming. At that time almost 10 % of the Flemish population is at work, among the professors this proportion is three times higher. Second, both curves clearly differ in shape. For the working Fleming, an almost linear decline sets in from 11 am onwards. This is not the case for professors. The shape of the curve over the weekend is very similar to that of an average working day, with a peak in the morning, afternoon and evening. Remarkably, evening work also remains common during the weekend. Almost one in five of the professors is busy with his or her work on a Saturday evening or Sunday evening around 9:30 pm.

### III. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FEMALE AND MALE PROFESSORS

The work of academics is often very intensive and is characterised by high demands, a high investment of time and is often performed at child-unfriendly hours. On the other hand, these types of jobs generally offer a lot of autonomy and flexibility in terms of working hours and the income is high enough to pay for childcare and to outsource household tasks (Bernhardt, 1993). Because of the evolution towards a dual-income society more and more people are combining multiple spheres and thus multiple responsibilities (paid work, household tasks and family tasks) (Glorieux *et al.*, 2006). A good work-life balance refers to a situation where expectations can be met both at home and at work, with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2000). Today this is quite a challenge for both men and women. Since one's own tasks are also influenced by their partner, his or her work situation and the division of tasks, the family type also plays a role in the experienced work-life balance.

Women tend to have more difficulty balancing work demands and family responsibilities. The evolution from the breadwinner model to the dual-income model, which has mainly occurred over the past 50 years, has therefore influenced the role demands of women more than those of men. While for most men the work role is still the central role, many women are faced with two demanding and difficult to combine roles for quite a long time in their lives: the work role and the family role (as mother and as wife). Our culture still has not developed clear guidelines regarding the priority of these roles, with the result that many women experience role tension (Coser, 1991). The demands of the family role can slow

down dedication at work and vice versa. In this sense, the high workload and the unequal distribution of family responsibilities and obligations between women and men can be a major handicap for women in the labour market (RoSa, 2000).

The university is not necessarily a woman-unfriendly environment. Nevertheless, it appears at Flemish universities that women are less likely to transfer to tenure positions and that among professors the proportion of women is smaller in the higher academic ranks. In recent years, these findings have led to a greater focus on gender policies at the university. In this section, we present a number of analyses that focus on the differences between male and female professors: how they spend their time on the different core tasks, how their non-working time is filled in, how activities in the private sphere and work are combined and how their work rhythm differs.

## 1. Time spent on professional work

On average, a male professor works more hours than a female professor. This concerns duration per respondent, i.e. calculated over the entire group of respondents. If we state that women work an average of 48 hours a week and men 55 hours, these figures include both full-time and part-time employed professors.

**Table 6.7: Average time per week spent on professional work for female and male VUB professors, by age and age of the youngest child (time per respondent), n = 170**

	n		Professional work VUB		Professional Work Total	
	W	M	W	M	W	M
Total population	64	106	47:39	52:41	48:29	55:32
Age						
< 40 years	42 %	26 %	43:36	52:02	43:44	55:21
40–50 years	31 %	25 %	49:14	52:52	51:25	53:46
> 50 years	27 %	48 %	53:11	53:04	53:35	56:33
Age youngest child (missing = 6)						
5 year or younger	31 %	21 %	37:57	51:58	39:30	55:14
Between 6 and 17 year	29 %	32 %	51:58	51:18	52:45	53:36
No children or older than 18 year	40 %	47 %	52:51	53:19	53:12	56:34

In Table 6.7 the working hours are divided according to background characteristics. We can determine that the differences between male and female professors are greatest among those younger than 40 years and those who have young children

(five years or younger). The age of the youngest child has a strong impact on the time use of women. Female professors without children or children older than 18 work an average of 15 hours a week more than women with young children. Among male professors this is a difference of only half an hour.

For professors older than 50 years and for those without children or with children older than 5 years, the differences between men and women in the time spent on professional work (VUB) are very small. It is also striking that men more often combine their VUB assignment with work outside the VUB than women.

## **2. Atypical working hours**

We noted in a previous section that the work of professors also continues to a large extent outside normal working hours. This is often mentioned as one of the main difficulties for professors in general and female professors in particular to reconcile work and family life. In this sense, it may also be the factor that hinders the advancement of women to higher academic ranks. In this section we examine the extent to which the working time patterns of male and female professors differ.

### **a. The timing of work according to the diaries**

Table 6.8 shows the percentage of female and male professors who work during typical and atypical working hours. Men more often work at atypical hours than women (+3 percentage points). Of their total work time, 27 % or 14h56' takes place in the evening, at night or on weekends. Women are slightly less likely to work outside normal working hours, on average 24 % of their total working time happens in the evening, at night or weekends. The most popular time for male and female professors to work outside normal hours is in the evening and the least common time is at night. In percentages, women spend more of their working time on evening work than men. Night work (10 pm–6 am) and weekend work is more common among male professors than female professors. For women, working on atypical times is mostly limited to evening work, while for men there is more variation as they work more often at night or on weekends. For example, men spend almost as much time on evening work as on weekend work. This may indicate that men are less restricted by family responsibilities than women and have more autonomy over their work time schedule.

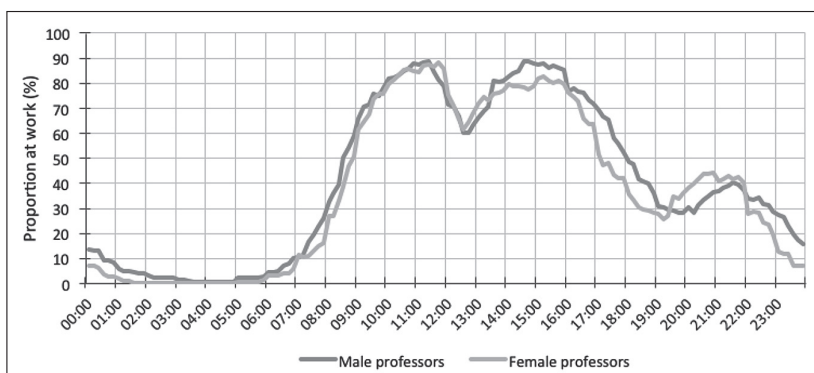
### **b. The rhythm of the working day**

Figure 6.2 shows the course of paid work over a weekday for male and female VUB professors. Both curves show similarities, but also striking differences. Men and women have a fairly similar work cycle in the morning and before noon,

**Table 6.8: Percentage of the VUB female and male professors that performs professional work by typical and atypical working hours, n=170**

	Available hours		Amount and proportion of the total working time Female professors		Amount and proportion of the total working time Male professors	
	#	% of total week	#	% of total working time	#	% of total working time
Total in a week	168h	100 %	48:29	100 %	55:32	100 %
Normal working times (Mo to Fr: 6 am–7 pm)	65h	39 %	36:44	76 %	40:35	73 %
Atypical working times	103h	61 %	11:44	24 %	14:56	27 %
• Evening (7 pm–10 pm)	21h	13 %	5:48	12 %	6:04	11 %
• Night (10 pm–6 am)	56h	33 %	2:02	4 %	3:43	7 %
• Weekend daytime	26h	16 %	3:53	8 %	5:08	10 %
Saturday	13h	8 %	2:07	4 %	2:36	5 %
Sunday	13h	8 %	1:46	4 %	2:31	5 %

although it is striking that on average women start a little later than men. 50 % of the men are at work around 8:30 am, for women half are at work around 8:50 am. It is also striking that women take a shorter lunch break and therefore resume their work activities more quickly in the afternoon. In the afternoon, women also stop working earlier than their male colleagues. In the evening we see a resumption of work for both women and men. However, women are at work in the evening

**Figure 6.2: Timing of professional work of female and male VUB professors during weekdays, n=170**

greater numbers than men. Between 7:30 pm and 9:50 pm more than 30 % of the female professors is at work on weekdays, for men the same proportion is at work between 8:00 pm and 10:40 pm. Between 8:10 pm and 9:50 pm more than 40 % of women are still working, for men this kind of level is never reached in the evening.

It seems very likely that women start work a little later, keep the lunch break as short as possible and go home on time, thus trying to adapt their working hours to family obligations. In the evening they make up part of their working time by resuming work (at home) to a slightly greater (and collective) extent than men.

### 3. The work-life balance

#### a. The non-working time

Table 6.9 shows how female and male professors spend their time during a full week, divided into 10 main activities. The table refers to all VUB professors in the sample: full-time and part-time working, with or without children, both for class week and class-free weeks. The picture we get as a result is a very synthetic picture.

On average, male professors spend more time on paid work (+6h) and travel (+2h30') than female professors. Women spend more time on household tasks (+4h32'), childcare (+1h40'), personal care (+20') and social participation (+20'). The total workload – the sum of professional work, household work and care – of both men and women is around 67 hours per week. The total workload of men is composed differently than that of women. Male professors spend an average of 6 hours more per week on professional work, female professors spend an average of 6 hours per week more on household tasks and childcare.

**Table 6.9: The weekly time-use of female and male VUB professors, divided into 10 main activities (time per respondent), n =134**

	Female professors	Male professors
Professional work and education	48:58	55:13
Household work	12:34	8:02
Child care	5:20	3:40
Personal care, eating and drinking	15:32	15:09
Sleep and rest	55:34	53:38
Social participation	3:50	3:30
Leisure	12:37	12:01
Waiting	0:08	0:12
Travel, transport	12:42	15:16
Other	0:39	1:13

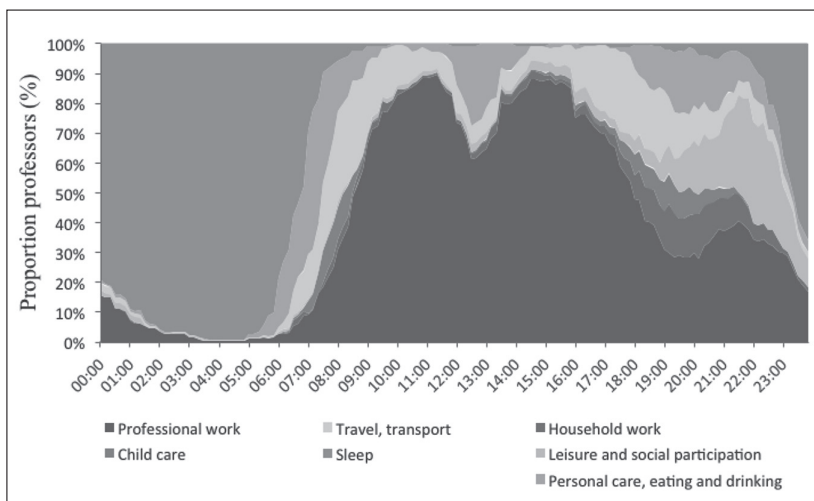
### b. The daily rhythm on weekdays

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show the course of the various main activities during the working day. A general observation is that women's time use during the day is more fragmented than men's. During the day, 'paid work' dominates the time commitment of male professors, this is less the case for women where we see a greater variety of activities.

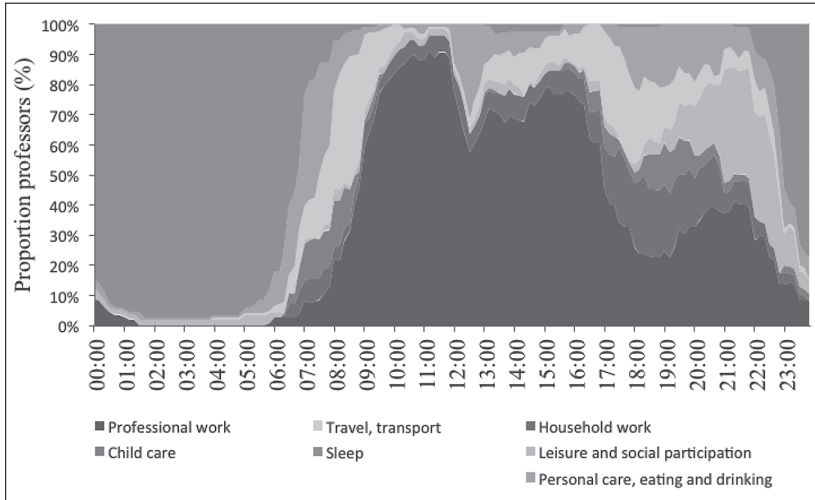
Both male and female professors provide childcare in the morning as well as in the evening, but for women we see a higher participation rate at both times. At 8 a.m., 11 % of men and 15 % of women are engaged in childcare-related activities. Between 6:30 pm and 7:40 pm, at least 10 % of women are engaged in childcare, for men this is only the case between 7:00 pm and 7:20 pm.

The difference between male and female professors in time spent on household work is greater than that on childcare. Women spend more time in the evening on household tasks (cooking, shopping, administration, ...). Between 6:00 pm and 7:30 pm, more than 20 % of women are busy with the household. Among men there is never a time when such a percentage is engaged in housework. The maximum percentage is 17 %, around 7:10 pm. During the day we also see some household activity among women here and there, from 9.30 am on, at least 5 % of the women are always involved in this. There is also an increase in the afternoon (between 12:00 and 2:00 pm) and a substantial increase after 5:00 pm. Household activities during the day are much less common among men than women.

**Figure 6.3: The course of the various main activities during the working day of male VUB professors**



**Figure 6.4: The course of the various main activities during the working day of female VUB professors**



Male and female professors have more or less the same pattern in leisure activities, personal care, eating and drinking. The activities take place at collective moments, for example, most of them have dinner around 7:00 pm and afterwards often engage in leisure activities (watching TV, reading, ...). Women go to sleep a little earlier but get up at the same time in the morning as men.

#### IV. CLOSING REMARKS

We do not know whether Marc Jegers really fits the general picture outlined in this contribution. We know him as a dedicated, hardworking researcher, a respected teacher, and he has a reputation for always being well prepared and to the point at meetings. As far as we know him, he followed fairly strict regular working hours at the office. He even kept coming to his office every day after most of the VUB staff worked from home during the first lockdown due to the COVID-19 crisis. Since he is one of the few professors we know without a smartphone, we are not sure how he handles other new media, online meetings and online education that were common during the COVID-19 crisis. And how will his transition to official retirement affect his work habits and time-use? Will he still respect office hours? What tasks will he continue to do after retirement and what would he rather leave to others? Whatever Marc is going to do in the future, we wish him a long, healthy



and happy life. We hope he can continue to do the work he enjoyed during his professional career, but we also hope there will be more time for the joys outside of work. Forty years ago, Marc wrote a book about the Belgian pipe organ industry, he was an organist himself. Wouldn't it be great if Marc could spend more time practicing the organ again? We would like to meet again in a church listening to his organ music. In a church, on the campus where we have worked for several decades, or anywhere else ... we hope our paths continue to cross.

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