

# Analysis of time use data – time allocation between women and men in Poland

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## Abstract

People spend time on paid work in the market, unpaid work for the household or community, as well as on leisure. In this regard, there is a clear differentiation between the sexes, because women do most of the unpaid work, while men are more involved in paid work. Economic theories explain this distinction in different ways – neoclassical theories point to the rational choice associated with the varying efficiency of women and men both in the labour market and in the household, while heterodox theories point to the influence of norms, social values and traditions, according to which the man is the breadwinner and the woman the caregiver. The following paper presents the allocation of time for men and women between paid and unpaid work. The time use data presented in the paper show that if you treat work extensively as paid work performed in the labour market or unpaid in the household, women work much longer than men. Women's workload, both unpaid and paid, requires some skill in order to combine these duties, which may translate into innovative solutions in this field.

**Key words:** time budgets, paid work, unpaid work, gender, Poland

## Introduction

Time is an important factor affecting people's quality of life. People spend time on paid work in the market, unpaid work for the household or community, as well as on leisure. A crucial element in time allocation is unpaid work. Spending time on household duties does not give the worker monetary income, and it cannot be regarded as rest. In this regard, there is a clear differentiation between the sexes when it comes to the amount of time spent on unpaid work, which translates into the women's and men's opportunities.

This paper presents the allocation of time for men and women between paid and unpaid work, and free time. The paper presents a theoretical approach to the allocation of time between women and men in economic theories, both mainstream and heterodox. Analysis of actual time allocation in Poland is based on data obtained during the survey on time use conducted by the Central Statistical

Office in 2003–2004. This hypothesis tested in the chapter is that women spend more time on unpaid work and total work (paid and unpaid). This burden has negative consequences associated with the possibility to engage in paid work. At the same time it is a stimulus that makes women look for innovative solutions to combine the roles they exercise in the labour market and in the family.

## 7.1. Theoretical view of time allocation by women and men

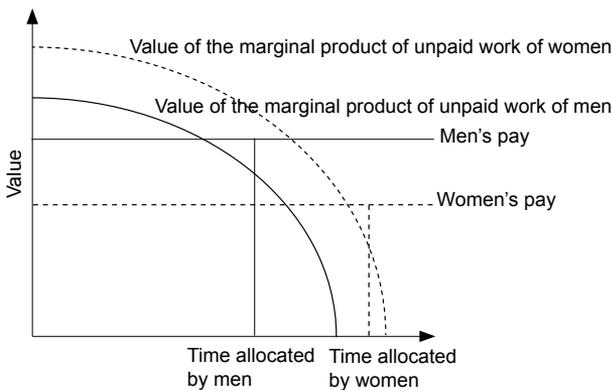
### 7.1.1. The neo-classical approach to the problem of time allocation

In the 1960s within neoclassical economics a new school developed called New Home Economics. Representatives of the new home economics tried to analyse the gender division of labour in the home. This division is largely explained by the comparative advantage model, which argues that marriage provides economic gains to both partners. Households maximize their total bundle of goods and services – those produced in market as well as those produced at home (Becker, 1973). In this way this approach offers an explanation as to why women specialize in home-based goods and services. Family members specialize in the paid labour market or in domestic labour in accordance with their relative productivities in those sectors. In a household of identical individuals no more than one person will contribute time to both paid labour in the market and household work, the dual contributor being equally productive in the two sectors. To maximize household output those who are more productive than the dual contributor in the market sector will specialize there, while those who are more productive in the home will become specialized domestic workers. Constant or increasing returns to scale in the production of household commodities raise the payoff to specialization and each member will specialize in one sector only. To identify who will specialize in the paid labour market, and hence who will be an altruistic head of the household, biological sex must be introduced. Women are defined as having a comparative advantage in household work because of their role in the reproductive process (Hewitson, 2003, p. 269).

Originally in neoclassical theory the time available to an individual of working age is divided into work and leisure time. Jacob Mincer in his paper in 1962 devoted to married women in the labour market subjects this simple division to question. He writes that such a simple dichotomy – work and leisure – is not even true in relation to men, and especially in the case of women. A logical part of the free time in this sense is in fact work, for which no remuneration is received. For actions defined, *inter alia*, by Becker as leisure we can include investment in oneself, or production for our own household. Mincer writes that as educational activity is an important

part of the lives of children in society, like work for the family is an important component of women's lives, and sometimes their only job. Therefore, we cannot analyse the lives of women (married in Mincer's case) only by their demand for leisure time. Projected changes in women's leisure time may be due to changes in working time in the market, which in turn are the result of changes in the burden of housework (Mincer, 1962, p. 213). In the same article Mincer shows that the distribution of free time, work in the labour market and housework take place not only under the influence of tastes and preferences, but are also determined by biological and cultural functions, as well as the relative values of the work of each member of the family (Mincer, 1962, p. 214).<sup>1</sup> Gary S. Becker, in his paper of 1965, also made changes to the model household making a distinction between paid work and other types of work performed at home. In the context of further enlargement of the neoclassical models made in 1980 Gronau distinguished three types of work time allocation: paid work, household work and free time (Wunderink-van Veen, 2003).

Thus, the economic agent on the market has to decide on the amount of time spent on paid work and unpaid work. Remuneration for work is determined by the forces of supply and demand in the labour market, and its amount remains the same regardless of the amount of time spent on the market. However, the marginal product of work for the household due to the operation of the law of diminishing returns, assuming the constancy of capital in the household, will decline. The rational economic agent will allocate time between work in the market and for the household, until the decreasing value of the marginal product of homework is equal to the market rate. In analysing these relationships it is worth remembering that the market wage for men is higher than women, which is illustrated in Graph 7.1.



**Graph 7.1.** The allocation of time between paid and unpaid work by gender

Source: N. Folbre (2004), "The theory of the misallocation of time," [in:] N. Folbre, M. Bittman (eds.), *Family Time. The Social Organization of Care*, London, New York: Routledge, s. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, in a commentary to Mincer's work, Clarence D. Long writes that "... two to three wives are at home, at school, in institutions, or play bingo with the other wives, and therefore do not want to or cannot work" (Mincer, 1962, p. 246), presenting, however, the typical approach in which performing tasks at home is not a job.

As is clear from the above-described model, women are more effective in performing housework than men, and the latter's market wages are in turn higher. Women on the open market can compensate for their lack of productivity by lowering the prices of their work. In other words, women have to accept lower wages, if they want to find a job (Baxter, 2000, p. 60). Thus, rational decision-makers make decisions regarding the traditional division of labour between the sexes, in which women are more involved in the work of the household, and men in employment in the labour market.

Specialization in market work or work for the household is the result of an efficient allocation of time by individual family members, leading to an increase in the total family product. Gary S. Becker (1985) draws attention to the importance of human capital for the division of labour and time allocation between the sexes.<sup>2</sup> Due to the fact that the care of children and doing housework require much more effort than rest, or other activities, married women put less effort into the work carried out on the market. For this reason, women receive lower hourly rates for human capital similar to men and on the labour market they seek jobs requiring less commitment. Thus, according to Becker, women's responsibility for carrying out the work for the household has important implications for the level of remuneration for men and women, as well as explaining the feminization of certain professions or positions. The earnings of women are inversely affected by their household duties, even if they want to participate in the labour market for the same number of hours as men. This is because they are tired, have to stay at home when the children get sick or in the case of other emergencies, and are less likely to work unsocial hours or to take a job that requires travel.

Becker argues that married women invest less in their human capital than men, due to their lower earnings and the occupational segregation they experience. However, this is not the result of lesser involvement in the labour market (which is the traditional assumption), but of the workload at home and childcare. Thus, women earn less due to their lesser involvement in work and lower investment in human capital. Market equilibrium would occur if women started to fully specialize in work for the household, or other non-market activities (Becker, 1985, p. S53).

The models discussed above are based on traditional economic assumptions. However, in neoclassical economics more realistic models were developed to represent intra-household decision making (Humphries, 1998), examples of which could be bargaining models. In these models, such as the one developed by Lundberg and Pollack (1993), the concept of gender replaces biological sex. In this model the bargaining power of each spouse is determined by their wellbeing in their 'separate spheres'. This equilibrium is characterized by spouses undertaking the activities assigned to their socially sanctioned and exogenously determined genders – husbands specialize in earning income and wives specialize in domestic labour (Hewitson, 2003, p. 270–271). Another bargaining model using gender is the one developed by Akerlof and Kranton (2000), in which socially sanctioned gender roles are incorporated into the bargaining framework by inserting 'gender

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2 More specifically between husbands and wives, see Becker, 1985, p. S33.

identity' into the utility functions of the spouses. The relative hours spent by husbands and wives in the performance of paid and unpaid labour is the result of their utility-maximizing strategies to maintain membership of their gender categories. More specifically, both partners suffer loss of utility when the wife works more than half the couple's total labour market hours or when the husband contributes more than a half the unpaid domestic labour since these situations cause a loss of coherence with the content of their respective gender identities (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000). An interesting observation arises from this model. When wives increase their relative hours in the labour market, causing both partners a utility loss due to the incompatibility of this change with their gender identities, husbands reduce their relative domestic labour contribution, creating an offsetting utility gain for each spouse (Hewitson, 2003, p. 271).

Neoclassical economics uses the rational choice theory in order to clarify choices about engaging in unpaid work by women and men. It assumes that women have a natural inclination to engage in activities for the household, and the division of labour between the sexes, in which the woman specializes in unpaid work, and the man in paid, is considered to be beneficial. Inequalities in the distribution of work in the household and the asymmetry in the division of labour is explained as a consequence of individual choices that maximize utility (Beneria, 1995 after: Barker, 1999, p. 574). However, the inequality occurring in time allocation can also be interpreted differently, which is what heterodox theories do.

### 7.1.2. Heterodox theories and the question of time allocation between the sexes

In addition to the neoclassical theory of time allocation between paid and unpaid work, there is economics which takes gender relations into account. Papers written from this perspective relate to the impact of reproductive life on economic decisions, through the study of the impact of social norms and legal and political institutions. An important point of discussion is how people (women and men) spend their time. Men and women make choices about how to allocate their time, but their choices are considerably constrained by the various restrictions and social conditions they encounter. Studies of time allocation in married households show that regardless of the methodology applied the wife definitely performs most of the work, even if she formally works full-time (Sirianni and Negrey, 2000, p. 61).<sup>3</sup> It can therefore be assumed that modern women are expected to engage in the work in the formal market, but also to perform duties in the household (see McDowell, 2001). However, this means a huge burden of formal and informal work on women.

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3 It should also be noted that Robinson and Godbey's study (1997) showed that respondents tend to report more than the actual time spent to perform work for the household. Despite these deviations, Robinson and Godbey's study showed that the ratio of women's work time to men's time, in the case of work for the household, is constant.

According to Sirianni and Negrey (2000, p. 59) time allocation is shaped by social relations and social inequality. Gender relations shape the diverse experiences of women in the context of paid and unpaid work time. Women are more likely than men to do unpaid work for the household, which can take many forms: cleaning, laundry, cooking, gardening, or care for children or adults in need of assistance. Men, in turn, spend more time engaged in paid employment in the labour market. The labour market is not an example of a level playing field where all participants have an equal chance, because women participate in it loaded with the baggage of housework. The unequal distribution of domestic work has long been recognized as a cause of the unfavourable position of women in the labour market (Humphries, 1998, p. 223).

From a historical point of view, household duties meant that women had less time for a series of steps that could strengthen their position in the labour market – training, trade union activities, and full-time work. At the same time housework imposes a negative impact on the earnings of women (see Sirianni and Negrey 2000, p. 64). Sirianni and Negrey (2000) show that the formal working hours of women are shorter than men's, mainly due to the higher share of women in less than full-time or on temporary employment. The involvement of women in work in a manner other than full-time work, and breaks in employment due to maternity and parental leaves influence their careers. The career model adopted requires continuity and full commitment, which is often not possible for women to meet. Many of the most vigorous pressures and key promotion stages occur during childbearing years, thus disadvantaging those who interrupt their careers.

According to Maria Floro (1995), any attempt to assess welfare should take into account the length and intensity of the work done by the person concerned. The unpaid work performed by women affects the level of production in the national economy through the reproduction of labour power which takes place every day in households. This type of work is predominantly done by women, which is reflected in their vulnerable economic position within the system of production for the market, and in particular on the labour market (Beneria, 1979, after: Esquivel, 2011, p. 223). The way in which the division of labour is carried out for paid and unpaid work between men and women within the household and within society has strong implications for gender relations. The unequal division of labour between the sexes explains the limited opportunities that are available to women, and their long hours of work when they decide to be active in the formal labour market (Esquivel, 2011, p. 226).

Decisions relating to women's allocation of time between paid work in the labour market and unpaid in the household have more in common with the beliefs of the society than with rational economic choice. The entrance and participation of women in the labour market and other areas of the economy is dependent on the amount of time spent on unpaid work in the household, including care. Most men do not make such a division of their time. This inequality limits the ability of women to take up paid employment, reduces labour productivity and reduces the future global output of the economy. The constraints experienced by women

in terms of taking on full-time, rewarding work arising from the unequal division of labour in the household are due to the norms and values in the labour market (World Bank, 1995, p. 4).

## 7.2. Analysis of time allocation between women and men based on the time use survey in Poland in 2003–2004

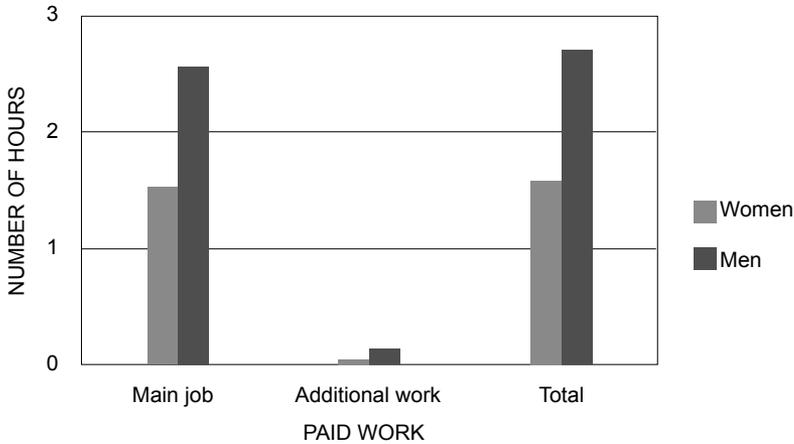
### 7.2.1. Time use survey

Time allocation can be studied using time use data. Time-use data make it possible to show how work performed outside the marketplace represents an essential and distinctive part of national economies and to highlight how this work is unevenly distributed among women and men (Gálvez-Muñoz et al., 2011, p. 125). Time use surveys are a theoretical construct used to measure the distribution of time between different types of activities. In Poland, the first attempt to study the time use was made by the Institute of Social Economy in 1927. A post-war nationwide analysis of the distribution of the time, by the Central Statistical Office, took place in 1969. However, the sample did not represent the entire Polish population as it mainly covered the urban population. Subsequent studies were conducted periodically by the CSO in 1976, 1984, 1996 and 2003/2004 (Hozer-Koćmiel, 2010, p. 72). In the case of the Polish study conducted every 12 years by the Central Statistical Office, information about activities performed during the day is collected by means of a diary, i.e. an official form for the registration activities performed during the day.

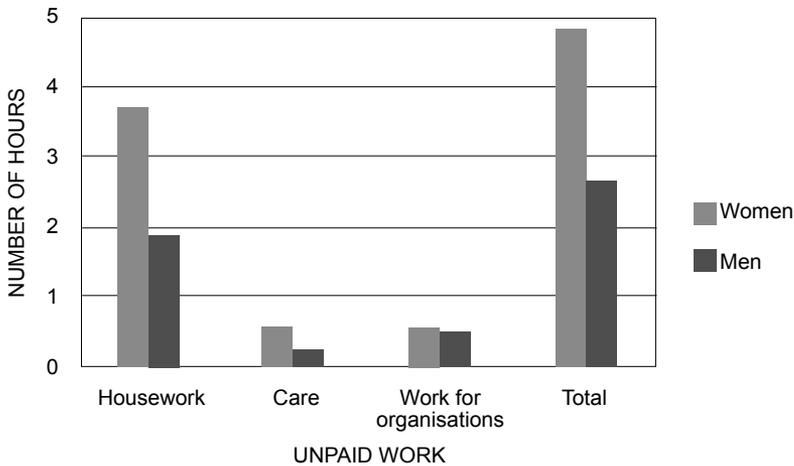
In the analysis of time allocation, the data obtained in the study of time use surveys in Poland in the years 2003–2004, which is based on a representative sample of 10 256 households, was studied. The survey covered people aged 15 years and older. In this study information was provided on the time devoted to various activities. In this analysis, a division was conducted into activities related to performance of paid and unpaid work, and the time spent on these two types of work was disaggregated by sex. In the context of paid work there was a division between main and additional work which qualified – paid employment, self-employed, and work on a farm. In the case of the main job additional activities related to employment were also isolated. In the case of unpaid work there was a division into work for the household, care, and unpaid work for the community. Housework included a number of activities in the home, such as, for example, cooking, cleaning, laundry, construction, and renovation. Care refers to care to both children and dependent adults. Further, in the context of work carried out for the benefit of the local community work for an organization, informal help, or mere participation in organizations and informal groups can be distinguished. A detailed breakdown is available in Appendix 7.1.

### 7.2.2. The division of time between the sexes

Time allocation between paid and unpaid work for men and women was analysed with a division into working days (Monday–Friday), Saturdays, and Sundays and holidays. Detailed information on hours of work can be found in Appendix 7.2. Both the table and graphs display the average size for all respondents. The study included people over 15 years of age. Thus some people were economically inactive, which affects the average workload of the study group. The detailed structure of the age of the respondents is given in Appendix 7.3. Figure 7.1 and 7.2 represent the length of time the men and women worked on weekdays.



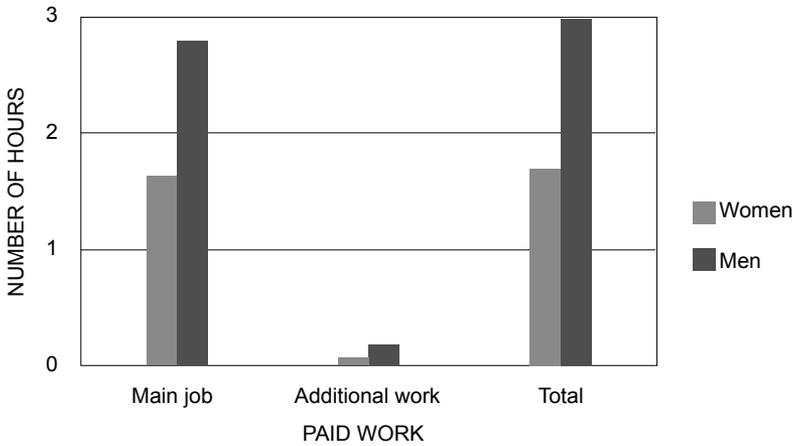
**Figure 7.1.** Paid work for men and women on weekdays (Monday–Friday)  
Source: own calculations.



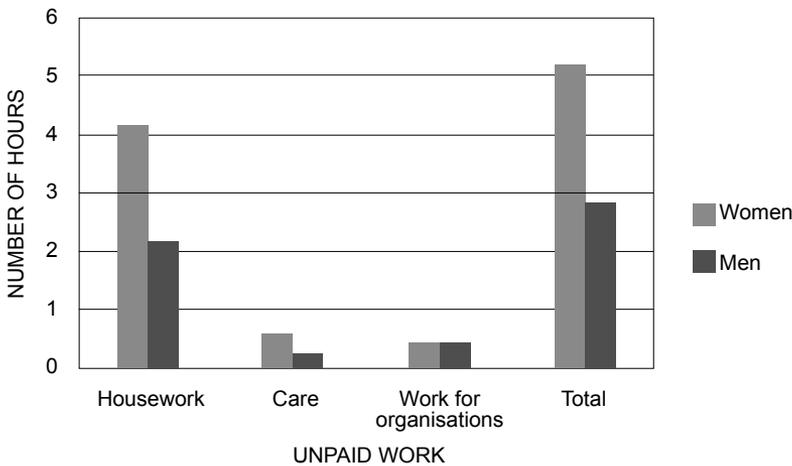
**Figure 7.2.** Unpaid work for men and women on weekdays (Monday–Friday)  
Source: own calculations.

During the weekdays men spend much more time than women on formal work – both the main job, and additional work. A man works an average of 2 hours 43 minutes, while the woman spends on average 1 hour 35 minutes at work. Men spend 11.3% of the day doing paid work, while women spend 6.6%. The proportions are different in the case of unpaid work, as presented in the chart below.

On weekdays, women spend 4 hours 50 minutes on unpaid work, while men almost half – 2 hours and 38 minutes. It is similar with time spent on work in organizations, but significant differences occur in the case of work for the household and care work. Unpaid work occupies more than 20% of a woman’s day and 11% of a man’s day. For Saturdays, it is extremely interesting that the average time spent on work, both paid and unpaid, increases (Figures 7.3 and 7.4).

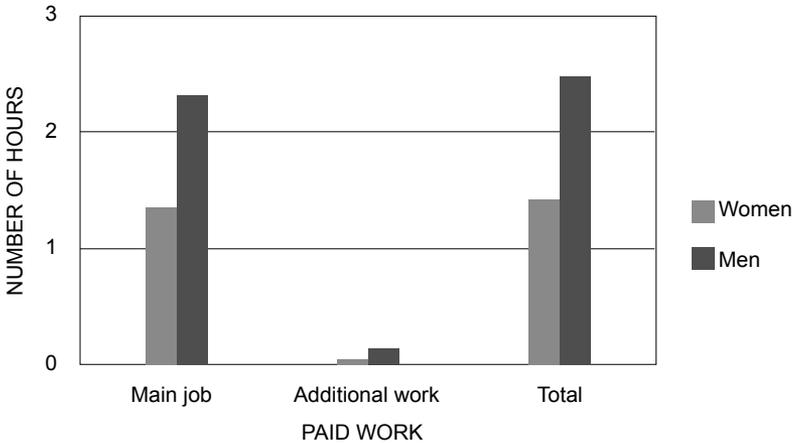


**Figure 7.3.** Paid work for men and women on Saturdays  
Source: own calculations.

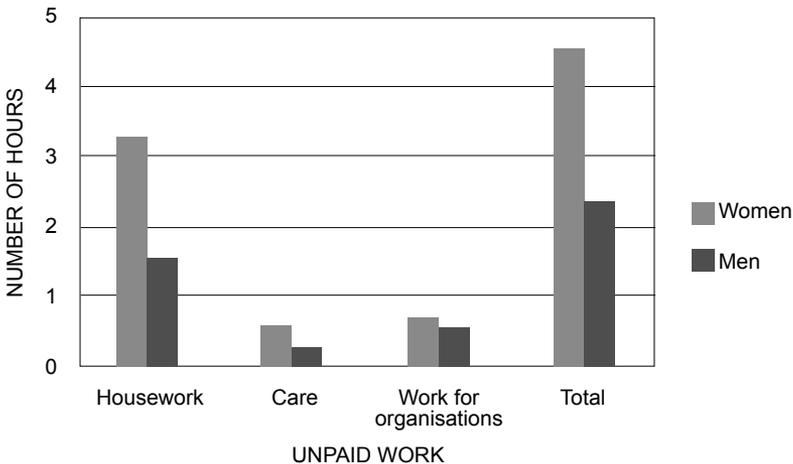


**Figure 7.4.** Unpaid work for men and women on Saturdays  
Source: own calculations.

And so on Saturdays women increase the time spent on paid work by 7 minutes, while on unpaid work as much as 22 minutes, in other words they work an average of almost half an hour longer than on weekdays. For men, paid work is extended by 17 minutes, and unpaid by 12, for a total and almost half an hour, although the structure of this additional work time is different for the different sexes. The workload is reduced only on holidays (Sundays and holidays), which is shown in Figures 7.5 and 7.6.



**Figure 7.5.** Paid work for men and women on Sundays and holidays  
Source: own calculations.



**Figure 7.6.** Unpaid work for men and women on Sundays and holidays  
Source: own calculations.

For women, paid work on Sundays and public holidays is reduced to 1 hour 25 minutes and unpaid to 4 hours and 34 minutes, which in total accounts for nearly 25% of the day. Men spend 2 hours 29 minutes on paid work and 2 hours and 21 minutes on unpaid work, which together accounts for over 20% of the day. Summarizing and totalling the time spent on paid and unpaid work over 7 days a week (5 working days, Saturday and Sunday) men work 37 hours and 25 minutes weekly, of which nearly 51% is paid work. Women spend 44 hours and 58 minutes weekly on working, and paid work is less than 25% of that time.

## Conclusions

As in other countries, in Poland the traditional division of labour has been maintained in which men are active in the labour market and women work in the household. Economic theories explain this distinction in different ways – neoclassical theories point to the rational choice associated with the varying efficiency of women and men both in the labour market and in the household, while heterodox theories point to the influence of norms, social values and traditions, according to which the man is the breadwinner and the woman the caregiver. This simple division is a simplification, but also in the context of developments in the labour market after the Second World War and the mass mobilization of women, it does not present a true picture of the division of labour in society. Much more than in the past women engage in formal job market;<sup>4</sup> this has not translated, however, into a more balanced division of labour within the household.

The time use data for men and women presented in the paper show that if you treat work extensively as paid work performed in the labour market or unpaid in the household, women work much longer than men. Women's workload, both unpaid and paid, requires some skill in order to combine these duties, which may translate into innovative solutions in this field. Creativity and innovation in combining paid work and family responsibilities is an area that is worth examining in further studies.

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## Appendix 7.1. Time allocation – summary of activities

		Activity
<b>PAID WORK</b>	<b>Main job</b>	Unspecified activities related to employment
		Time spent on main job
		Paid main job as an employee
		Paid main job as an employee using a computer
		Paid main job as an employee using the Internet
		Paid main job self-employed
		Paid main job self-employed using a computer
		Paid main job self-employed using the Internet
		Paid main job on a farm
		Paid main job on a farm using a computer
		Paid main job on a farm using the Internet
		<b>Additional work</b>
	Additional work as an employee	
	Additional work as an employee using a computer	
	Additional work as an employee using the Internet	
	Additional work self employed	
	Additional work self-employed using a computer	
	Additional work self-employed using the Internet	
	Additional work on a farm	
	Additional work on a farm using a computer	
	Additional work on a farm using the Internet	
	Help children learning on their parents' (guardians') farm	
	Help children learning in a self-employed business run by parents (guardians)	
Other work activities unspecified precisely		
Other specified activities related to work		
<b>UNPAID WORK</b>	<b>Working in organizations</b>	Unlisted types of work in organizations and informal groups
		Other work for an organization unspecified precisely
		Work for the organization itself
		Work for people through the organization
		Other specified work for the organization
		Other informal help unspecified exactly
		Food processing
		Janitorial
		Plant growing and caring for pets
		Construction, repair, maintenance of housing and household equipment
		Shopping and use of services
		Help on the farm and non-farm work
		Childcare
		Care for adults
		Other unspecified informal assistance
		Other types of participation in organizations and informal groups unspecified precisely
		Meetings
Religious practice and activities		
Other specified types of participation in organizations and informal groups		

<b>UNPAID WORK</b>	<b>Working for the household</b>	Unspecified activities and housework
		Other unspecified precisely activities related to food processing
		Preparing meals, snacks and drinks
		Cooking (all activities associated)
		Washing up
		Making conserves
		Other specified activities related to food processing
		Other activities related to maintaining tidiness unspecified precisely
		Cleaning
		Cleaning the yard, pavement near the house, snow removal
		Activities related to the supply of heating and household water
		Cleaning and tidying activities related to the household
		Other specified activities related to the maintenance of order
		Other activities related to preparing and maintaining clothing unspecified precisely
		Laundry
		Ironing, pressing
		Crafts and clothing production
		Other specified work related to the preparation and maintenance of clothing
		Other activities related to gardening and caring for pets unspecified precisely
		Gardening
		Breeding of domestic animals – livestock intended for consumption in own household or for pleasure
		Other specified precisely activities related to gardening and caring for pets
		Other unspecified precisely activities related to building, renovation, and repair
		Home construction, reconstruction, major repairs
		Repairs, minor repairs to the home
		Producing, repairing, and maintaining home appliances
		Repairs, maintenance of vehicles
		Other specified activities related to construction, renovation and repairs
		Other shopping and services unspecified precisely
		Shopping
		Commercial and administrative services
		Paid personal or insured services
		Other specified activities related to the purchase and use of services
		Household management
		Using the Internet to manage the household
		Other activities unspecified precisely
		<b>Care</b>
	Study with children	
	Reading, playing, and talking with children	
	Going out with children	
	Other specified activities related to childcare	
	Care of adult members of the household	

Appendix 7.2. Time allocation between women and men

	Monday–Friday		Saturday		Sunday and holidays		
	M	W	M	W	M	W	
PAID WORK	Main job	10,7%	6,4%	11,7%	6,8%	9,7%	5,7%
	Additional Work	0,6%	0,2%	0,8%	0,3%	0,6%	0,2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	11,3%	6,6%	12,5%	7,1%	10,3%	5,9%
UNPAID WORK	Working for the household	7,8%	15,4%	9,0%	17,4%	6,4%	13,7%
	Care	1,1%	2,4%	1,0%	2,4%	1,1%	2,4%
	Working in organizations	2,1%	2,3%	1,8%	1,8%	2,3%	2,9%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	11,0%	20,1%	11,8%	21,6%	9,8%	19,0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	22,3%	26,7%	24,3%	28,7%	20,1%	24,9%
PAID WORK	Main job	154	92	168	98	140	82
	Additional Work	9	3	12	4	9	3
	<b>TOTAL</b>	163	95	180	102	149	85
UNPAID WORK	Working for the household	112	222	130	251	92	197
	Care	16	35	14	35	16	35
	Working in organizations	30	33	26	26	33	42
	<b>TOTAL</b>	158	290	170	312	141	274
	<b>TOTAL</b>	321	385	350	414	290	359
PAID WORK	Main job	2 h 34 min	1 h 32 min	2 h 48 min	1 h 38 min	2 h 20 min	1 h 22 min
	Additional Work	9 min	3 min	12 min	4 min	9 min	3 min
	<b>TOTAL</b>	2 h 43 min	1 h 35 min	3 h 0 min	1 h 42 min	2 h 29 min	1 h 25 min
UNPAID WORK	Working for the household	1 h 52 min	3 h 42 min	2 h 10 min	4 h 11 min	1 h 32 min	3 h 17 min
	Care	16 min	35 min	14 min	35 min	16 min	35 min
	Working in organizations	30 min	33 min	26 min	26 min	33 min	42 min
	<b>TOTAL</b>	2 h 38 min	4 h 50 min	2 h 50 min	5 h 12 min	2 h 21 min	4 h 34 min
	<b>TOTAL</b>	5 h 21 min	6 h 25 min	5 h 50 min	6 h 54 min	4 h 50 min	5 h 59 min

## Appendix 7.3. Percentage of people in each age group

	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Man	15–25	20.3	20.3
	26–45	34.2	54.5
	46–55	20.3	74.8
	56–65	12.3	87.1
	65+	12.9	100.0
	Total	100.0	
Woman	15–25	19.1	19.1
	26–45	33.8	52.9
	46–55	20.5	73.4
	56–65	12.5	85.9
	65+	14.1	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Source: own report.