

Contributors

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Carlien Hillebrink worked as a PhD student at the Utrecht School of Economics, part of Utrecht University. The topic of her PhD thesis concerned the occurrence of flexible benefit plans in Dutch organisations, and employee choices within such plans. This project was part of a larger research project on time competition and the combination of work and care, funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

Suzan Lewis is Professor of Organisational Psychology at Middlesex University Business School, London. Her research focuses on work-personal life issues and workplace practice, culture and change in different workplace and social policy contexts. She has directed many national and international research projects on these topics, including coordination of a recently completed EU eight-country study on work, family and well-being in changing European workplaces. She is a founding editor of the international journal *Community, Work and Family*. Her numerous publications include co-authoring *The Work Family Challenge: Rethinking Employment* (1996) with Jeremy Lewis; *Work-Life Integration. Case Studies of Organisational Change* (2005) with Cary Cooper; and *The Myth of Work-Life Balance. The Challenge of our Time for Men, Women and Societies* (2006) with Richenda Gambles and Rhona Rapoport, as well as articles in publications such as the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Gender, Work and Organization* and *Work, Employment and Society*.

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Tanja van der Lippe is Professor of Sociology of Households and Employment Relations at the Department of Sociology and Research School (ICS) of Utrecht University. Her research interests are in the area of work-family linkages in Dutch and other societies. Together with Arie Glebbeek she directed the integrated research program 'Time Competition: disturbed balances and new options in work and care', financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research. In 2004 she received a grant (together with Esther Kluwer) from Utrecht University for the comprehensive interdisciplinary research program 'Interdependencies between work and family life'. She is coordinating the large-scale international comparative project 'Quality of life in a changing Europe', financed by the European Commission. She has published extensively on the division of labour between spouses, time use and time pressure in a comparative way, and labour market positions of men and women in Western and Eastern European countries. Her publications include *Women's Employment in a Comparative Perspective* (with Liset van Dijk and Aldine de Gruyter, 2001) and articles in the *Annual Review of Sociology*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Acta Sociologica*, *Rationality and Society*, and *Journal of European Social Policy*.

Maarten Moens is a PhD in sociology at the research group *Tempus Omnia Revelat* of the Vrije Universiteit in Brussels. His main field of research is time pressure. In 1998 Dr. Moens conducted the first large-scale Time Budget survey in Flanders (Belgium), together with Ignace Glorieux. Since then he has been active in and published on time budget research, time use, the sociology of time and the study of leisure participation. Dr. Moens has co-supervised several research projects on cultural participation in local cultural facilities. In 2006 he obtained his doctorate with a thesis on the sociological study of time pressure. During his training he closely explored current sociological theories, the sociology of equality and inequality, and the sociology of time. Between 1998 and 2003 he was Secretary of the Sociological Association of Flanders.

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Philip Wotschack is researcher at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB). Research areas are flexible working hours, household time allocation, work-life balance and life-course policies. His main interest lies in the impact and interaction of firm policies and governance practices of households. From 2000 to 2005 he was researcher at the University of Groningen and worked in the integrated research program 'Time Competition: Disturbed balances and new options in work and care', financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. His project focused on the impact of household rules and intra-household conflict handling on the household's time use. Currently he is working on a project on lifetime working accounts at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB). The project investigates effects of lifetime working accounts with regard to firms' human resource management and employees' working time transitions over the life course.

Preface

Competing claims in work and family life have become essential features of our Western world. Many people feel torn between work and family not just because their households increasingly juggle competing responsibilities, but also because job expectations and parenting standards have stepped up. The focus of this book lies both on the causes of disturbed balances in people's professional and private lives and on solutions households and organisations have chosen in order to harmonise work and family demands.

Competing claims have not only been topical in private conversations and in the media, but have also received increasing attention from scholars in the social sciences. Since 2000, the editors of this book participated in a research team from the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS), in a comprehensive research program entitled 'Time Competition: disturbed balances and new options in work and care'. Because of the importance of the topic and the

innovative approach, the research program was funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). Program leaders were Tanja van der Lippe from the Department of Sociology of Utrecht University and Arie Glebbeek from the Department of Sociology of the University of Groningen. The new perspective in this research program was to study the impact of governance structures within firms and households on time allocation decisions. With this perspective we aim to establish an integration of the flourishing research into the distribution of paid work and caring tasks and the long-standing field of organisational research.

In order to discuss the outcomes of the research program, an international workshop was organised at Utrecht University in 2004. For two days, experts from European countries as well as the United States and Australia presented their research. Competing claims were discussed intensely and studied from different angles, providing us with new views and insights which we believe are also valuable to a broader group of social scientists, students, and others interested in the subject.

In this preface we would like to thank all the authors of the single chapters in this book for their valuable contribution. We also thank the Research School ICS, which facilitated the Time Competition Research Program and provided us with a stimulating work environment. We are extremely grateful to the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) for its financial support. Furthermore, we wish to thank Felicity Plester from Edward Elgar for providing continuous support during the endeavour of this book. With respect to the Time Competition data collection that forms the basis of many of the contributions in this book, we would like to thank all 30 participating organisations, their managers and their employees and families for cooperating in such a wonderful fashion. We would like to thank Rien Rabbers from GeoMedia for the great lay-out of this book. Finally, we are indebted to Ruth Rose for the excellent job she made of correcting the contributions of the non-native-English authors.

Tanja van der Lippe and Pascale Peters

1 Finding time

Tanja van der Lippe and Pascale Peters

In the face of an ongoing globalisation and the associated growing international competition, organisational efficiency and speed of getting things done has become increasingly important to remain economically successful. In a great number of professional organisations, a new culture has been created in which time spent at work is viewed as a yardstick of organisational commitment and devotion to a career. New management principles have been introduced, such as up-or-out career systems, life-long learning, and performance-related pay systems, which are expected to stimulate workers to work longer hours and enhance mutual competition among co-workers. In combination with the new incentives for achievement, the increased sense of control and responsible autonomy over the organisation of work seems to have made some jobs more encumbering than before. Employees need to deal with these growing demands from the workplace, and as a consequence for some people work has become home and home has become work (Hochschild 1997; Peters 2000).

Employees not only have to deal with changing workplaces, at the household level changes have been taking place as well. The increase in women's labour force participation is among the most visible. Over the last three decades, labour force participation among women in Western societies has increased and in some countries has even doubled (European Commission 2005; Van der Lippe and Van Dijk 2001). In 2004, activity rates of women in the 15-64 age range exceeded 60% for the enlarged European Union (Employment and Social Affairs 2005). For the USA, Canada and Australia these rates have already surpassed 70% (International Labour Office 2005). This has led to an increasing number of dual-earner and dual-career couples who are in a continuing process of balancing work and family life. Actually, the increase of women on the labour market has made 'time' a new issue of negotiation at the kitchen table. Although the number of children per family has decreased in recent decades, more time and money is invested in the care and education of children than ever before (Bianchi 2000). Next to the increasing time demands in the spheres of work and care, leisure has become a time that has to be spent in an active and encompassing way and which is used to

shape one's identity.

We have witnessed an increase of time demands in the private sphere as well as the workplace (Epstein 2004). Many people feel torn between work and family not just because their households increasingly juggle competing responsibilities, but also because job expectations and parenting standards have become more demanding (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). These new developments in work and family life create increased feelings of time pressure and time competition (Daly 1996). Until recently, the 'stress society' was considered an exclusively American phenomenon (Schor 1992; Hochschild 1997; Presser 2003), but at present Europeans too are experiencing an ever-greater time pressure (Peters 2000; Garhammer 2002; Van der Lippe et al. 2006). Although Gershuny (2000) argues that over the past fifty years the Western world has seen an increase in leisure time over the life cycle, it feels as if we are constantly running out of time. Time pressure has become a serious problem in our society, and it is only likely to increase in scope and impact (Van der Lippe and Glebbeek 1999). This is a serious problem, and it is necessary to gain understanding not only of its causes, but also its consequences and possible solutions. In order to have adequate insight into families' problems and successes, it is necessary to treat the two life spheres of work and family together (Moen 2003; Berg et al. 2003). Relationships with spouses and children have an impact on workers' experiences and relationships at work and vice versa (Fox and Dwyer 1999; Marshall and Barnett 1993; Roehling et al. 2003).

The central aim of this book is to deepen our understanding of the conditions that influence the successes and difficulties people experience when making accommodations of their work and private lives. Such conditions may derive from the organisation, the household, or both – in other words, this calls for a multi-level and multi-actor approach. Our focus will be not only on causes of disturbed balances between work and care, but also on solutions households and organisations (can) choose in response to competing claims arising from the work and family domains. This may provide us with leads to policymakers and implementers in the sense that certain elements of the organisation and the household can be seen as parameters that are susceptible to directed interventions.

Although the phenomenon of time poverty to which our title *Competing claims* refers seems to be an irreversible trend in all Western societies, its magnitude and the underlying causes and solutions may vary across countries due to differences in welfare state regimes and versions of capitalism. Moreover, organisational structures and cultures may also affect the relation between work and family life differently, just like differences in rules and relationships within households. The studies presented in this book will help to disentangle the time competition mechanisms in various national, organisational and household contexts.

In this introductory chapter we will continue presenting a picture of state-of-the-art time use studies, work-life balance and feelings of time

pressure. Next, we will turn to causes of competing claims at both the organisational and household levels. Well-known strategies and solutions to cope with such claims will be subsequently discussed. This will be followed by an overview of the book.

TIME AND TIME PRESSURE

Like money, time is a valuable resource that triggers questions about how it should be allocated and spent. Unlike money though, the overall supply of time cannot be expanded. As there are only so many hours in a day, days in a week and weeks in a year, time use can only be intensified through multiple tasking, capital-intensive consumption or more intense experiences (cf. Linder 1970). It is therefore not surprising that time appears to be central in work-family issues (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Working Europeans currently spend an average of 59 hours a week on paid work and care (Social and Cultural Planning Office 2005). Americans have a heavier workload because they allocate more time to paid work, so they have less leisure time available. For example, Americans spend 37% more time on paid work than Dutch people (Social and Cultural Planning Office 2005).

Of course, there are clear differences in time allocation patterns between men and women. The traditional male breadwinner role is continuously emphasised in Western societies, and employed women are mainly responsible for domestic duties. Both in the USA and Europe, working men spend on average 8 to 15 hours more on paid work a week than working women. At the same time, compared with women, men spend nine fewer hours on domestic work and care. These differences are more pronounced in Mediterranean than in Nordic countries and the USA (Social and Cultural Planning Office 2005; Batalova and Cohen 2002). It is not surprising that women's time use is much more dependent on the family situation than men's. Especially in countries like the Netherlands and Germany, mothers of young children work part-time or quit working altogether. This holds less true for countries like the USA, Finland and Eastern European nations (Breedveld and Groot 2004).

Studying time use over a longer period reveals that time spent by men on paid work has decreased over the last century in Western countries (Gershuny 2000; Ecorys 2005), whereas the average amount of time that women spend doing paid labour has increased, especially over the last few decades. This latter trend can be mainly attributed to the fact that the number of women with paid jobs has increased dramatically, and not to working women having increased their time spent on the job (Ecorys 2005). Interestingly, women spend less time on domestic duties but allocate more time to child care activities (Gershuny 2000). Since the 1960s, men have slightly increased their contribution to domestic duties, but not as much as women have decreased their time spent on household

chores (Bianchi et al. 2000). With women entering the labour market, the housewife's 'traditional' time reservoir no longer functions as a 'time buffer' between the different life spheres: the coordination of work and home activities has become much more difficult. Especially at rush hours, combining work and family has become a heavy burden (Moen 2003).

Although objective and subjective time pressure are correlated (Peters and Raaijmakers 1998), being busy does not necessarily mean that people feel pressed for time (cf. Garhammer 2006). Next to the paid and unpaid workload, the intensity of paid and unpaid work is as important as the amount of time it takes. Subtle changes in the amount of time spent at work may obscure more basic changes in the effort, energy and concentration that is expected from workers. Consequences of work overload that are studied range from feelings of stress, work-home interference, time pressure, and burn-out and other health problems (MacDermid 2005). In the USA, for example, 60% of men and women report at least some conflict balancing work, personal and family life; about 30% do not have enough time to fulfil obligations and about 25% feel burned out or stressed by work (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). In Europe, 28% of employees report stress and 22% general fatigue. These percentages are higher for those working irregular times or doing shift work (Boisard 2003). Research generally reports higher stress levels in society over time, but results are not conclusive as to whether this is the case for everyone. Although people are busy doing paid work and domestic tasks and participating in social events, it is not true that everyone experiences severe violations of their paid work obligations by family responsibilities, or vice versa. Moreover, work appears to interfere more with home than the other way around (Van der Lippe et al. 2006), as the home situation is not always adjusted to unexpected but important professional deadlines (Moen 2003). People experience more interference of work with home in terms of domestic tasks than childcare responsibilities. It seems as if people do not want their work to intrude with the care for their children. Strikingly, the highest percentage of workers facing pressures related to combining work and care in Europe is found in Sweden. Since combining work and family life is an important and well-discussed issue, feeling stressed and hurried may have become part of the culture (Van der Lippe et al. 2006).

This does not necessarily imply that people with more time pressure feel less happy in life. Garhammer (2002) speaks about the 'time-pressure happiness paradox' in modern Western European societies. The feeling of being rushed through multiple tasking and role overload, as well as people's novelty-seeking behaviour, has become a central part of modern life. According to Garhammer, the Danish, the Dutch and the Swedish are the happiest people in the world. Personal growth and achievement generate flow. Mobilising one's resources to develop skills and participating intensely in modern society bring about happiness. Time pressure is the other side of this coin.

CLAIMS FROM THE ORGANISATION

Time allocation, time pressure and time competition are related to competing claims arising from the work and household domains. To clarify the influence of the organisation, it is helpful to assume that organisational structures and culture constitute the setting in which workers weigh alternatives and make decisions concerning the time spent on work and the timing of their efforts for the organisation (Williamson 1985). Workers have to adjust their work and family commitments in the context of specific job demands and the larger workplace structures and cultures in which these jobs are embedded (Schor 1998). Organisations try to direct the efforts of their employees to meet their demands through financial as well as non-financial incentives (Sorensen 1994). Of course, it is difficult to untangle the extent to which a choice to put in long hours on the job reflects workers' individual preferences for work over other activities in life, and to what extent it can be viewed as a response to these incentives (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Several incentives are stressed as important in the literature (e.g. Cappelli et al. 1997; Sennett 1998), and they are often linked to the change from the traditional bureaucratic-Tayloristic workplace to the modern post-Fordist firm, which presents workers with a different context for making decisions. Post-Fordist firms are characterised by performance-related pay systems that pose a financial incentive for workers to devote long working hours to the organisation (cf. Van Echtelt et al. 2007), and by non-financial incentives like decreased job security, manifest for example in the idea that predictable career paths have been giving way to more uncertain and competitive promotion systems. All these incentives are expected to increase the time employees spend on their jobs, as well as feelings of time pressure.

Moreover, the extent to which employees are being held responsible for meeting profit or production targets and managing their own workloads is expected to be important for time allocation purposes. The degree of regulation and control possibilities does differ between workers, although it is generally believed that the number of employees with some autonomy has increased (Perlow 2001). New organisational forms with more autonomy for employees are very different from the Taylorist systems of work organisation in which workers had little say over how the work was done. At the same time, the question arises of whether autonomy increases time competition. On the one hand, Hochschild (1997) argues that in these new, more autonomously-oriented organisational forms workers are pressed to spend more time at work than with their family, such that 'work becomes home and home becomes work'. The greediness of the new employment relationship is even said to manifest itself in the loss of 'boundary control' between employees' work and private lives (Perlow 2001). On the other hand, Berg et al. (2003) stress

that new organisational forms, the so-called high-performance work organisations, facilitate the combination of work and care. High-performance organisations are characterised by high levels of autonomy for employees and by more family-friendly practices, which are expected to result in a better work-life balance and fewer time conflicts. Job autonomy and time sovereignty are important thereby, as they enable employees to determine the timing and location of their work. This may explain why individuals with extensive autonomy experience relatively little work-family conflict and time pressure (Peters and Van der Lippe 2007b). It enhances feelings of work satisfaction, which can spill over and affect family satisfaction (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1999).

The way in which organisations provide a supportive work environment such as a family-friendly workplace is likely to be a helpful resource in balancing work and family life for employees and proves to enhance feelings of satisfaction (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1999). Moreover, when colleagues support each other, this will form another helpful resource for them as employees (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). In the Cornell Couples and Careers Study, Valcour and Batt (2003) show that organisational family responsiveness, involving formal and informal policies and practices, supports work-life integration for family employees. It influences Swedish men to make use of parental leave facilities as well (Haas and Hwang 1995).

CLAIMS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD

Employees' private household situations are also likely to affect time pressure. Some employees will be more willing to and capable of responding to incentives to work longer hours, whereas others may face household circumstances that limit their possibility to work unrestrainedly.

In studying family life and household behaviour, it may be helpful to view employees basically as acting rationally. In a way, this may seem counterintuitive, as the behaviour of household members is imbued with symbolic meanings, social bonds and affection, and therefore usually considered to be devoid of any rationality (De Ruijter 2005). However, the assumption that household behaviour is goal-directed provides us with a constructive framework when it is viewed as a method of analysis rather than a claim that individuals are motivated by selfishness or material gain (Becker 1993). This viewpoint is often taken in economic household production models (e.g. Becker 1965, 1981), but has not been developed into much of a coherent set of organisational principles that are comparable to those used in research firms and bureaucracies. In a sense, Hochschild's (1997) concept of the 'Taylorisation of the household' bridges the gap between organisational studies and work-and-family research, although her account is still rather impressionistic. According to Orrange et al. (2003), the family resource management literature helps to

understand how families combine work and private life. Instead of having a passive orientation towards family members, this literature assumes an active and proactive role for household members. This idea in family resource management studies resembles in a way the body of thoughts that is so central to New Home Economics. Just like organisations direct their employees to meet their demands, so do partners regulate each others' activities in order to meet household demands.

Demands are expected to vary with the life stage. Time pressure is most likely to occur among people who are between their late twenties and early forties. These age brackets are most likely to marry, become parents and consequently shoulder the responsibilities of caring for young children (Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Moen and Roehling 2005). Especially women's time pressure is affected by the presence of young children (Peters and Van der Lippe 2007b). While both men and women are likely to feel torn between family and work, they probably respond to parenthood in different ways, despite any convergence between men's and women's work commitments (Jacobs and Gerson 2004).

Household resources are able to reduce time pressure. They constitute a whole system of social and financial assistance that can be mobilised by the household to lift its burden. Those with more resources tend to see themselves as more successful in their professional and private lives (Moen et al. 2003). A higher income, for example, enables households to outsource certain domestic duties. Help from other family members, friends and neighbours can also form an important resource in facilitating the combination of work and care. Flexibility can help thereby, and refers to how the household is prepared to and can cope with unforeseen events (e.g. overtime, a sick child, a day off from school). Of course, the possibility to respond swiftly to unexpected events is not only of strategic importance for firms, but also for households. According to Gill (1998), competing claims from the workplace and household are better dealt with when households are characterised by flexible rules, that is, when there are no rules regarding weekend working, or when household chores should get done and by whom. Another type of household rules that seems to be important in this process is the quality requirements with respect to all household and caring tasks. Just like the products of firms, household products and services have to meet certain quality requirements as determined by the household members. These rules define the minimally acceptable level that has to be met regarding the performance of household tasks, like the quality of a home-cooked meal or the effort that has to be put into cleaning activities (cf. Wotschack et al. 2007). This all assumes that partners have common interests and share the same ideals and goals in life. However, diverse interests among spouses are possible and the way partners deal with conflicts is likely to influence the outcome of these coordination processes (ibid.).

NEW STRATEGIES: CAUSE OR SOLUTION?

Depending on their individual job traits and household situation, some employees will obviously be more subject to time competition than others (Peters and Van der Lippe 2007b). However, as resourceful actors, both employers and employees will look for strategies to cope with competing work and household demands. Solutions can vary in scope, from rather informal accommodations for individual workers to strategies involving policies, structures and cultures in organisations or households (Naegele 2003). In answer to the more highly educated and diverse workforce, more and more organisations have introduced new policies that allow workers increased time-spatial sovereignty and job autonomy as a solution to time pressure. We do not aim to give an overview of all these strategies but stress significant ones, such as home-based telework, flexible schedules at the workplace level, and outsourcing of domestic and caring tasks at the household level. Note that such strategies not only form a solution to the competing claims of work and family life, but may also intensify work and affect the boundaries between work and private life.

Home-based telework policies, for instance, allow workers to perform (part of their) work from their private homes. One of the reported benefits of this new type of work is that it will save (commuting) time that can be spent on other activities like family obligations. For some though, working from home may engender new problems as it allows work to intrude into the home (Peters and Van der Lippe 2007a). Moreover, not all employees are given access to home-based telework, so new 'benefits' can also reproduce traditional labour market inequalities (cf. Peters and Van der Lippe 2007a). Another solution refers to the use of flexible benefit schemes that allow employees to trade time for money and money for time (cf. Hillebrink et al. 2007). Employers may also offer their employees time sovereignty by allowing flexible work schedules. Results show that the degree of working time flexibility varies greatly between EU countries. For example, working-time arrangements allowing employees to accommodate their working hours to personal needs are used by 50% of employees in Finland and Sweden, but in only about 10 to 15% in Greece or Portugal (Reidmann et al. 2006). Other well-known policies are directed at facilitating the combination of employees' work and caring responsibilities by providing childcare and parental leave facilities and offering part-time jobs.

Households too can develop strategies to cope with competing demands. Household outsourcing appears to be an important strategy to deal with competing claims at work and at home (De Ruijter 2005). The use of childcare facilities is often a necessary condition to be able to participate on the labour market, but households also use frequently the option of outsourcing cooking and cleaning tasks. Outsourcing domestic tasks has increased in recent years. Having domestic help and

consuming ready-made meals have become inextricable parts of our daily lives. Households can also choose to balance work and home using their own rules regarding division of labour and resorting to negotiation processes (Kluwer 1998; Wotschack et al. 2007). In this way, spouses regulate or 'govern' their input in the household.

We conclude this section by stressing that certain strategies discussed are likely to reproduce gender inequality within organisations and in the labour market in general (Haas et al. 2000). This holds true even for more progressive countries in this field, like Sweden and Norway. For men it is still more difficult to get a part-time job; women on the other hand are less likely to have access to home-based teleworking facilities (Peters and Van der Lippe 2007a). Generally speaking, work organisations are more likely to offer all kinds of arrangements to higher educated employees and professionals (Den Dulk et al. 2006).

Explaining difficulties and successes that men and women experience with the combination of work and care is a complex yet challenging task. In the foregoing we have sketched the contours of a 'model' that can be used to deepen our understanding. Our premise is that we are studying resourceful actors that balance costs and benefits to meet the often-conflicting demands arising from the work and home domains. Organisational conditions that are expected to influence time competition include work demands and incentives for longer hours such as the reward system, the career system and the employment contract, as well as the degree of control in terms of autonomy and time sovereignty and amount of support offered by organisations and colleagues. Household conditions include home demands such as the presence and age of children, and social and economic resources as well as flexibility and quality rules as determined by the household members. In answer to the increased competition between claims arising from the household and organisational contexts, contemporary employers and employees can develop different strategies that may involve various work-family arrangements. Balancing costs and benefits of employees will also depend on the institutional context with its own policies, culture and economy (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk 2002). The challenge of the authors in this book is to provide more insight into parts of this model by presenting the latest research in the field of time use, time pressure and work/life policies and strategies. A broad range of research problems has resulted. Some authors decided to focus more on making the relation between objective and subjective time pressure explicit, others on the culture of the organisation as a decisive factor in feelings of time pressure of employees. Some of us study telework as one of the strategies to meet the dual demands.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

In line with the foregoing, we have divided the book in three parts.

Together they are meant to help elucidate the increasingly problematic feelings of 'competing claims' on time. We will start with time and time pressure itself – how is time divided between spouses, trends towards increasing time pressure, and how can time pressure be explained. We will then shift our attention to causes of time pressure. These will be studied at both the household and the organisational level. Within the organisation, causes are related to demands of the organisation and its culture, but also to the autonomy given to employees. At the household level, family demands are likely to be important as well as how the household is managed. The third part of the book is devoted to strategies and solutions to the problem of time competition. These solutions can lie at the household level as well as the organisational level. In this way, comprehensive insight into mechanisms and strategies to cope with time pressure is provided. Many of the contributions in this book concern one specific country. Although we are fully aware that country and organisational contexts matter, we believe that many of the theoretical mechanisms studied, for instance in a particular country or organisational context, are applicable in others as well. Empirical outcomes too may provide us with interesting knowledge that is useful in other contexts.

Part One will provide us with an up-to-date picture of time use trends and the time pressure phenomenon itself. What is time competition; how is time pressure experienced across countries; what are the underlying causes; and what are the implications for individuals' and households' well-being? In Chapter 2, *Manfred Garhammer* describes major trends in time pressure in the societies of the European Union, the United States and Japan, and their relationships with quality of life. His main assumption is that along with global competition of national economies, overwork and time pressure are proliferating. Some evidence is provided that – in contrast to the thesis of an emerging leisure society – people spend more of their daily time on paid and unpaid work, including work-related activities. When drawing conclusions about quality of life, a broad concept is used combining both subjective and objective indicators, i.e. well-being and economic and time resources. Accordingly, a concept of time pressure is elaborated that includes the feeling of being calm and relaxed. People's quality of life is a function of both time and money – they can suffer from time poverty and money poverty, and Garhammer provides arguments and evidence that Europeans increasingly do.

In Chapter 3, *Liana Sayer* presents time-use trends in the USA. She specifically focuses on trends in multiple tasking and gender differences herein. Through multitasking, i.e. combining activities in one time slot, parents try to cope with competing work and family time demands. It is likely that multitasking is a gendered strategy. To investigate whether changes in gender specialisation in paid and unpaid work are associated with longer work days and more multitasking among parents, U.S. time diary data from 1975 and 1998-2000 are used. Work time and multitasking have indeed increased for mothers and fathers during this

period, and accounting for multitasking increases gender differences in total work time. Nonetheless, because mothers in male breadwinner couples spend more time multitasking than those in dual breadwinner couples, Sayer concludes that multitasking may not be a strategy adopted by time-pressed mothers to cope with duelling work and family time demands.

Koen Breedveld focuses in Chapter 4 on the specific relation between atypical working hours and time pressure in the Netherlands, a country where measures were introduced to make working hours more flexible and extend trading hours. This was done partly in response to the weakness of the economy (at that time). To what degree has paid work actually moved into the evenings, nights and weekends, and what are its effects on the pace of life and on social life in Dutch society? Results using time-use surveys from 1975 to 2000 indicate that roughly half of employees work evenings, nights and weekends. However, the share of odd working hours is only 10% and this figure has not increased over time. Most people, especially the higher educated, work odd hours as an extension of their regular working day. The results in no way suggest that working odd hours is associated with feeling time-pressured.

In Chapter 5, *Maarten Moens* studies time pressure within the Belgian context, asking how objective time pressure is related to feelings of time pressure. Using data of Flemish time-use surveys, he shows that objective time pressure amplifies feelings of time pressure. Time spent on obligations is still experienced as a curtailing of individual freedom. Especially for dual-earner families and people in the busy age bracket, severe workloads are the most important mechanism in explaining their feelings of time pressure. Within organisations, a high degree of time sovereignty – with its possibilities to attune professional life with family life – seems insufficient towards compensating for negative effects of higher professional responsibilities.

Part Two focuses on causes related to the organisation and household sphere. These chapters do not intend to explain time pressure as in the first part of the book, but focus their attention on mechanisms which are likely to influence the finding of time. *Judith Treas* and *Christin Hilgeman* start in Chapter 6 with workers' preferences for work and family time in the USA. Using American data from the International Social Survey Program, Treas and Hilgeman conclude that longer work hours do not automatically translate into a desire for more family time. First, although the constraints of a 24-hour day imply a trade-off between work and family time, not everyone thinks about work and family in this zero-sum way. While men sometimes voice a desire for more family time, only women who want more family time desire less time on the job. Second, all things considered, longer work hours do not translate into a desire for more family time. Changes in the length of the workweek do not leave individuals feeling more pressed for family time. Third, there is no evidence that the workplace has become a refuge from the family. Hardly

any Americans admit to wanting less time with family, and the desire to work longer hours is not associated with family time preferences. Providing shorter working hours or offering part-time work thus does not appear to be the only solution.

Kea Tijdens continues in Chapter 7, studying the desire to work shorter hours on the job as a logical response to a potential solution to time pressure. To what extent can governance structures within the household as well as organisational characteristics of the workplace explain the varying desire for shorter working hours? Results show that working hours preferences are predominately influenced by working hours characteristics; hourly wages have a large impact on working hours preferences, as the low-earnings category prefers longer hours far more often. Employees in a challenging job prefer shorter hours less often, and vice versa: employees who perceive their job as a burden want to reduce hours. Contrary to public opinion, female employees apparently show a better fit between preferred and usual hours compared to male employees.

Patricia van Echtelt, Arie Glebbeek, Rudi Wielers and Siegwart Lindenberg concentrate in Chapter 8 on why Dutch employees want to work overtime. Work pressure, work pleasure and time-dependent career advancement as characteristics of post-Fordist organisations are expected to increase the scope of overtime work. Using Dutch Time Competition data gathered in 2003 with both organisations and their employees, results show that post-Fordist organisations – the more modern organisations – appear to be indeed more time-claiming. Interesting to note is that the authors find that working unpaid overtime is not due to the fact that employees enjoy their work so much nor to increasing workloads within these organisations. They thus end with a puzzle: if working overtime is not created by these factors, what makes employees in modern organisations work overtime?

In Chapter 9, *Suzan Lewis* discusses time in the accountancy profession in the UK. Lewis argues that it is important to move towards an exploration of personal meanings of time allocated to work and family life, and the contexts in which these are constructed and reproduced. She especially concentrates on the normative assumptions about long working hours. The dominant culture of time in accountancy appears to be based on a model of the ideal professional as one who has the support of a full-time homemaker. There is evidence though that meanings of time in accountancy are beginning to be reconstructed. The study shows that promoting flexible working practices alone will not create fundamental changes in the culture and practice of working time.

Inspired by the ongoing discussion on the time greediness of firms and its impact on working hours, *Philip Wotschack, Jacques Siegers, Babette Pouwels and Rafael Wittek* investigate in Chapter 10 to what degree variations in individual labour supply can be explained by variations in employer demands, and how household governance practices moderate

this relationship. They extend the baseline labour supply model as used in mainstream economics, and give a first attempt towards analysing how employer demands and household governance practices affect labour supply. Using time competition data collected in 2003 in the Netherlands, results show that household rules that govern daily time allocation do not seem to have an impact on labour supply – probably due to their twofold (facilitative *and* restrictive) character – but quality standards do. The effect of employer demands on labour supply varies widely, depending on these standards.

The focus of *Part Three* is constituted by solutions provided by the workplace and the household to overcome managing family and work pressure. In Chapter 11, *Carlien Hillebrink, Joop Schippers, Pascale Peters* and *Anneke van Doorne* present the Dutch version of a flexible benefit scheme allowing workers to trade in time for money and vice versa (the flexible benefits plan). By introducing flexible benefits, employees get to have a greater say over the composition of their pay and the balance between its various components. In this way they can trade time and money. Using data from a public services agency, results indicate that almost half of the employees changed their benefits. Strikingly, participation is higher among men than women, and household characteristics such as having children do not influence the decision. Motivation seems to be more important. Buying time is far less popular than selling time. Looking at the fact that the most popular choice is trading time off for a new computer, it can be concluded that the benefits plan does not act as a work-family arrangement.

Esther de Ruijter and *Tanja van der Lippe* focus in Chapter 12 on domestic outsourcing as a strategy to combine work with private life. They move beyond existing research by including trust in their explanation of household outsourcing. Using Time Competition data from 2003, they conclude that trust matters in household outsourcing. The possibility of directly observing the efforts of the outsourcing supplier decreases the likelihood of undesirable behaviour. As a result, the probability increases of outsourcing tasks such as housecleaning and home maintenance, both of which allow for direct monitoring. Interestingly enough, the general belief of households in the trustworthiness of other people has proved to be an important factor in explaining outsourcing tasks that involve risk. Households with a high level of general trust are more likely to outsource childcare, cleaning and home maintenance. These tasks all entail the actual involvement of suppliers in the privacy of the home or a 'labour of love', which highlights the importance of trustworthiness.

In Chapter 13, *Peter Standen* shows that home-based telework offers a different and important perspective on time pressure, highlighting work-role conflicts and new forms of role conflict and ambiguity that arise when work and family or leisure are co-located. Changes in flexibility and permeability of work-role and work-family boundaries are also expected to affect the social support enjoyed by teleworkers. The experience of time

in telework appears as a paradoxical mix of benefits and problems, partly because for many people it has both outcomes, and partly because teleworkers' circumstances are as diverse as the institutions of work and home. Both public and academic discussions continue nonetheless to portray telework as either a win-win solution to time competition or too problematic to be widely adopted. Standen develops a theoretical framework to explain the relation between home-based telework and time pressure that takes into account feelings as well as role conflicts.

Pascale Peters and *Tanja van der Lippe* analyse in Chapter 14 the influence of coordination, control and trust problems on employees' access to weekly home-based telework from a combined perspective of transaction cost theory and New Economic Sociology. Access is more likely when additional coordination and control problems are smaller. Indicators of the so-called 'telework risk' are time sovereignty, job autonomy, need for accessibility and output management, measured at both the job category and the individual levels. Trust-enhancing effects are also studied by looking into the social embeddedness of the current employment relation, i.e. its past and future duration. Multi-actor data are used that were collected in the 2003 Time Competition data set among employees in Dutch organisations. The chapter shows that coordination, control and trust problems do indeed affect employees' access to telework. Whereas coordination problems are a significant job-level trait, trust problems play a role at both levels. A longer work history with the current employer increases the odds of trust in teleworkers and hence of access to home-based telework.

In Chapter 15, *David Ory* and *Patricia Mokhtarian* study the effect of telecommuting as an organisational strategy to save commuting time in the USA. They find that telecommuters consistently live farther from work (in terms of time and distance) compared to former and future telecommuters. These longer one-way distances are ameliorated by telecommuters travelling at higher speeds and commuting less frequently than their counterparts. Those who telecommute at some point in the ten-year period average only slightly fewer commute person-minutes travelled over the decade than those who do not telecommute at all. This finding suggests either that telecommuting is at best an ineffective travel reduction policy (i.e. those who engage in it do not travel much less), or that telecommuting disproportionately attracts those who would otherwise commute even more (making it an effective tool).

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part i

Trends in time use and time pressure

2 Time pressure and quality of life

Manfred Garhammer

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC AND TIME PROSPERITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE: SOME PARADOXES

At first glance, the relationship between economic and time prosperity and people's quality of life – which is the issue of this contribution and crucial to the time-competition problem – is very simple: human beings need both

economic and time resources to enjoy their lives. If they lack one of these resources, their well-being will be constrained. Hence, the more productive work becomes, the more opportunities people gain to enjoy their lives: the time required to produce goods is reduced and this creates more 'disposable time' to enjoy these goods. Using Marx's terminology (1970), the benchmark for the wealth of societies is not the percentage of labour force mobilised in a society but the amount of "disposable time" beyond "necessary time". Whenever the individual has the possibility and autonomy to decide himself how he works, he sticks to this principle: using a microwave and a dishwasher for one's kitchen work helps towards enjoying the meal.

This simple principle has developed into some paradoxical relationships when one examines the changes in work, leisure time and time pressure in advanced capitalist economies. It is a fact that in recent decades the productivity of work has multiplied, but:

- the less time necessary to produce goods and services and the more the wealth of rich areas accumulates – such as the United States, the European Union and Japan, which are the focus of this comparative perspective – the more the complaints about overwork and time pressure proliferate.
- the less human working time is required for the same amount of business, the greater the number of unemployed who lack the economic resources to enjoy their work-free time.
- the richer nations are, the more citizens perceive that their time prosperity does not expand to the same extent (Rinderspacher 2002).

This contribution cannot explain, let alone resolve these paradoxes. However, formulating and describing these paradoxes clearly and precisely may be a step forward. This chapter attempts to describe major trends in time pressure in the societies of the European Union, the USA and Japan, and the deriving relationships with quality of life. The main assumption is that along with global competition of national economies, overwork and time pressure are proliferating. Some evidence is provided that – in contrast to the thesis of an emerging leisure society – people spend more of their daily time on paid and unpaid work as well as work-related activities (such as commuting and continued education). This results in a growing concern about the pace of everyday life and about having insufficient personal and family time.

When drawing conclusions about quality of life, a broad concept is used combining both subjective and objective indicators, i.e. well-being and economic and time resources. Accordingly, a concept of time pressure (or time poverty and vice versa time prosperity) will be elaborated that includes the feeling of being relaxed and calm. People's quality of life is a function of both time and money, and they can suffer from time poverty as well as from money poverty (Goodin et al. 2005) – this chapter provides

arguments and evidence that Europeans increasingly do.

In this context, it is necessary to differentiate the following: first, the national and the individual level. While at the aggregate level the wealth of nations – measured by GDP – may have increased, money wealth and time poverty of individuals may have proliferated simultaneously. Second, not all groups in society are affected both by money wealth and time poverty: (long-term) unemployment creates a huge amount of work-free time, but it cannot be used for the sake of leisure for precisely that reason. Most of these people lack economic resources and social networks necessary for leisure activities. This also applies in principle to the trend towards mini-jobs and multiple-job holders. On the other extreme, amongst executives one finds a discrepancy between a greater degree of economic prosperity and less time prosperity.

This contribution will focus on the core of modern work societies, i.e. those employed full-time. Maintaining employment status is necessary to enable cross-national comparisons of working times and time pressure. A second step of the analysis attempts to reveal the social groups which are most affected by time stress, with a focus on gender, family situation and life cycle.

DATA

Data sources are my own representative diary data from West Germany for 1991/92 compared to representative data from 1999 to 2005; recent time-budget surveys from selected EU neighbours, the USA and Japan; the last waves of the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP); and information from the 2002 and 2004 European Social Survey (ESSD) (see Appendix). Of course, the reference to these manifold data sets and operationalisations creates some methodological problems when comparing surveys and years. Work has therefore been invested to seek out comparable items and harmonise the reference group, i.e. those employed full-time. Although in the ESSD surveys the samples are extended to Eastern Europe, this analysis focuses on comparing Western European, i.e. EU 15 societies with the USA and Japan. In some cases data have only been available for Germany when going into the details of social changes of time pressure. This makes sense, as Germany has always regarded itself as a model of a 'social Europe' and counterpart to the liberal model.

WEALTH OF NATIONS AND CITIZENS' QUALITY OF LIFE

The empirical section starts with a cross-national comparison to illustrate the paradoxes presented in the introduction. In the EU 14, the USA and Japan, which are ranked in Table 2.1 according to GDP per capita, the

perception of time pressure is widely proliferated. Still, most people are not unhappy. The two measures, how happily people live and how satisfied they are, are closely interrelated (Veenhoven 2000).

The annual Eurobarometer surveys give evidence of a continuous north-south gap in Europe from 1965 up to today, which is more or less a gap in the wealth of these nations, as the table indicates in the first two columns. Country differences in wealth (measured here through the GDP index in PPP¹ of US\$ per capita) explain much of the variation in the level of life satisfaction ($r = .6$ in our sample; cf. Delhey 2004:35). Hence, quality of life is associated with the economic growth of nations – or is it?

SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE EQUATION

The assessment of satisfaction deviates when focusing on specific life domains rather than on overall life satisfaction (Table 2.1; also Delhey 2004:25). With regard to the latter, the surveyed evaluate their living conditions critically more often. The overall-life-satisfaction question encourages them to recall their self-image as 'very satisfied'. The 2002/03 ESSD survey indicates that the scores of workplace satisfaction differ from those of happiness (both measured on a scale from 0-10) by 1-2 points (columns 3 and 4). Americans, who top the ranking of wealth on average in Table 2.1, feel very satisfied with their lives (89% in 1996). Only 48% assessed themselves as 'completely' or 'very' satisfied with their jobs (General Social Survey 1996). At the same time, 40% of those employed full-time perceived a large amount of time pressure and 46% – more than in any other country of the sample in 1998 – would like much more family time.

Hence, the overall-life-satisfaction assessment is less a systematic balance covering the ensemble of living conditions than a subjective effort to find one's own life positive and feel as 'one's own life master'. Happiness is a socio-cultural construction, as Hegel explained at the beginning of modernity. To regard oneself as happy is the result of a psychological lifestyle, which is common in all modern societies. Satisfaction is desired in a culture where citizens are responsible for their 'pursuit of happiness'. The more individuals pursue this value, the more they interpret their living conditions as a result of their individual efforts towards attaining a good life. For most people, evaluating their life as 'not satisfying' would violate their feelings of self-esteem. Hence the self-assessment of being happy is not a direct reflection of living conditions.

In contrast to the liberal model of the USA and the UK, in France and in southern Europe it is more normal to blame institutions when things go wrong. Hence, the French only reach a score of 6.6 in life satisfaction compared to 7.1 by the British, despite the same GDP index of .94. There is no simple correlation between economic standard and perception of satisfaction. Individuals as well as nations derive their evaluation from a

comparison between de facto conditions and ideal standards. These standards vary from culture to culture.

To close the list of objections on the linear relationship between GDP growth and quality of life: when one compares the third and the first worlds, economic growth has a tremendous pay-off in terms of happiness. There is a weaker relationship amongst advanced societies. One explanation for this decreasing marginal utility of economic growth with regard to life satisfaction (see Inglehart 2000) is the growing sensitivity to time poverty: people are becoming aware that a higher level of wealth does not correlate with more individual quality of life, as this process may diminish their disposable time.

INDICATORS OF AND EVIDENCE FOR GROWING TIME PRESSURE

These results back up the scarcity hypothesis of Inglehart (2000:220). Individuals as well as societies place the greatest value on those things which are relatively scarce: as disposable time is running short in wealthy nations, time becomes upgraded in the value system. When more people feel that they are rushed, the value of time becomes more important. They begin to consider time prosperity as a dimension of their well-being beyond their wealth as consumers (Rinderspacher 2002).

This greater sensitivity towards time pressure may contribute to the manifestation of the problem of time scarcity, which has always been existent, as Gershuny (2000) argues. However, the basic argument in this contribution is that the *feeling* of the majority is grounded here in an objective workload. Contrary to the image of an emerging leisure society, people employed full-time spend more time working, as the data in the following sections prove.

In 1999, the GfK-FOCUS survey on time pressure in Germany used ten items to measure the perception of time scarcity (Table 2.3). The list is combined with similar items used in the ESSD 2004/5, which allows for international comparisons. Hence, the social indicators to measure quality of life should include this type of indicator. A description of constant time pressure and stress-related health problems could improve social-indicators research.

Presenting selected indicators, Tables 2.2 and 2.3 provide evidence for the proliferation of time pressure along with the expansion of working hours: in the late 1990s, every other German employed full-time complained of this frequently, compared to one in four Germans in the early 1990s. According to the GSOEP 2002, the percentage who 'always (7%) or often (36%) felt rushed in the last four weeks' amounted to 43%, which is very close to the 46% in the GfK-1999 survey. The most recent data for 2005 have been only available for Germans, including non-working respondents. Hence the figure of 38% does not indicate a reverse

trend over the past few years. This item demonstrates how a slight modification of the question leads to a variation in the percentage of those who regard themselves as hurried. The 2005 questionnaire asked people if they suffer from stress, and the expectation of social desirability may have led to negative answers: self-assessing oneself as 'suffering' is difficult for anyone who regards himself as successful and happy in life (see the preceding section).

There is ample evidence from international studies that time pressure has emerged as a major problem in all Western societies (Zuzanek and Veal 1998). According to SCP/CBS surveys (cited by Breedveld and Van den Broek 2004), in the Netherlands the percentage of those who often or sometimes feel hurried increased from 32% in 1977 to 48% in 2000 amongst 25- to 49-year-olds (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2004:39). According to the General Social Survey for the USA, the percentage of those who always felt rushed increased from 21% in 1982 to 30% in 1996 (for the case of the UK, see Oswald 2002:7).

Germany thus serves as an example for all OECD nations, which are ahead both in terms of wealth and time pressure. Chronic time pressure also affects mental and physical health: every sixth German is 'under so much time pressure that their health suffers' (Zuzanek and Veal 1998; Gunthorpe 2002). When experienced in everyday life, this contributes to a deteriorated health status. Every second German in 1999 'could not get proper sleep' (see Table 2.3). A similar question in 2004/05 (Table 2.4) confirms this finding: 38% have 'woken up feeling fresh and rested less than half of the time in the last two weeks'. These data support the assumption that time scarcity has severe consequences for people's health and their need for relaxation and recreation: when German workers were asked in 1999 for which activity they would like to have more time, every other person stated 'for sleep' and 'for a rest during the day'. These findings contradict the image of the steady search for outdoor activities in an 'events society'. My own time-budget data also show that time pressure significantly decreases when people have more time for sleep and rest recorded in their diaries.

CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF TIME PRESSURE

As the ten items of the time pressure index used in the 1999 survey for Germany are not available for European comparison, the objective and subjective indicators constructed in the 2004/05 ESSD survey have been consulted to compare these 11 EU nations (see Table 2.4). Topping the ranking of 'stressed nations' is Greece, with an extraordinarily high proportion of overwork (44%), followed by the UK and Spain (33%).

British workers also exceed the EU average in all subjective stress indicators, whereas this does not apply for southern European countries like Greece. At the bottom-end of Table 2.4 are three Scandinavian

countries with extraordinarily low shares of overwork; however in Finland and Sweden distinct stress symptoms such as lack of sufficient sleep and family time also exceed the EU average. At the top of the European ranking, according to the index of time pressure, which summarises these four indicators of Table 2.4, is the UK, at the bottom Denmark; Sweden and Finland share mid-ranking with Germany and most EU countries.

Whereas the data presented in the last sections are based on interviews, producing problematic results due to social desirability, time budgets based on self-reported diaries may represent a better approach to measure time use. The advantages of this method have been broadly discussed, from Szalai et al. (1972) to Gershuny (2005). Most current studies on time use are based upon this relatively objective method, but it is difficult to find cross-cultural comparisons of daily time budgets that focus on comparable samples. For this reason, Table 2.5, which focuses on people working full-time and ranks countries according to their total amount of work-free-time – based on the introduction of time prosperity – has required compiling and harmonisation of the data (see in detail Garhammer 1999).

Looking first at the three comparable German studies (1991/92 and 2001/02) and the American surveys (1998 and 2004), Table 2.5 clearly demonstrates that the demands of paid and unpaid work have not lost their significance for everyday life: that part of the day which is bound by paid work, commuting and vocational training (5.8 hours in Germany vs. 6.1 in the USA) still sets the framework for people's daily time budgets – together with the 2.6 hours in Germany and 3.8 hours in the USA devoted to unpaid work for household and family. Most longitudinal data sources indicate a trend towards longer working hours even if the diaries collected by the German Statistical Office state a reduction from 6.5 to 5.8 daily working hours between 1992 and 2002 (work-free days are included here).

Table 2.5 ranks countries according to their total work-free time, i.e. the time disposable for personal needs and leisure. Compared to the average of 15.1 hours of five EU nations, Germans, Spaniards and Frenchmen enjoy more work-free time, followed by the British and Flemish. The Japanese and Portuguese display the same amount of work-free-time (14.5). At the bottom of the table are American workers². The last column adds some information, based on diaries, on the time disposable for a rest during the day: whoever finds more time to relax feels less stressed. Summarising these time-budget indicators, American society is ahead in 'pace of life' (see Simmel 1992), followed by Japan, Portugal and the UK. Remarkably, the 2001 survey indicates one hour relaxation time for Japan, a society in which overwork is still proliferating and not a rare cause of death.

Spain and France as Mediterranean countries may represent a time culture in which life presumably includes more leisure compared to the

core and the north of Europe: in 1996, Spaniards enjoyed about 40 daily minutes for a siesta compared to about 20 minutes for Germans and about 6 minutes for the British in 1995. This ranking along the north-south European axis confirms what Georg Simmel assumed in 1900 on the acceleration of the 'pace of social life' (Rosa 2005). This trend is also noticeable in the decreasing time devoted to meals: not only has it run short, so has the time for breaks during the day.

THE NEED FOR MORE TIME FOR FAMILIES

As listed in Table 2.1, amongst the employed surveyed in 1998 a range between 8% in Spain and 41% in France (with 27% in Germany) wished for much more time to devote to their families. The detrimental effect of time pressure on family life is evident particularly during the phase in which young children need their fathers most. GSOEP 2000 data indicate that fathers have less time for their children the longer they work ($r = .4$). The conclusion is that Europeans are under increasing pressure to fulfil family responsibilities because of the amount of time they spend at work. According to a European survey, 19% of workers state being affected in their family life by their work situation (European Foundation 2003b). In the ESSD 2004/05, 41% of Europeans employed full-time say that their partner or family is at least sometimes fed up with the respondent's job pressure. Twenty-four percent of those in dual-earner couples say they would like more childcare in their present situation.

One reason may be a delayed start of the work-free day: for 55% of women and 46% of men it began after 7 p.m. or even later, so time-consuming leisure rituals with families sometimes had to be given up (B.A.T. survey 2004).

There is growing evidence that the narrow span between ages 30 and 35 is a kind of 'rush-hour' of life (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Sachverständigenkommission 2005) in which the pressure to meet the challenges of finding a stable relationship, starting a family and establishing oneself in professional life is extremely high. Whereas the present generation of 50-year-olds entered the labour market in the 1970s without major problems, the younger generation, now around age 30, needs on average five efforts including job placements and fixed-term jobs.

The first stable phase in one's professional career thus occurs at a later age, especially for women, whose participation in higher education has increased considerably all over Europe. Time pressure from job and family demands has led many women in the ages between 25 and 35 to refrain from having children: 40% of women with university degrees and 80% of female managers have decided against becoming a mother. The average number of children in 2003 is lowest in Germany, Japan and southern Europe (Italy 1.3), compared to higher rates in France (1.9),

Ireland (1.9) and the USA (2.1).

The public in Germany and other European societies is gradually becoming aware of the fact that time pressure is one of the important reasons for employed women to refrain from having children. This awareness however has not led to a reduction of working hours and work stress, which is the main reason for this 'rush hour'. Indeed, the social origins of the role overload of employed mothers goes further:

- the patriarchal gender division in childcare: women in the EU 15 spend almost three times more time than men caring for their children and the elderly (European Foundation 2003b).
- traditional gender regimes: initially southern Europe, Germany and the Netherlands started with the male breadwinner model (Pfau-Effinger 2000; Veil 2003). In the last two decades considerably more women, particularly mothers, pursued their life goals by combining work and family. In these countries, particularly those in southern Europe, women have walked into a 'modernisation trap': pressure due to their double workload is increasing, as family duties are not made easier for two reasons:
- time-budget surveys show that although in recent decades fathers spend more time with their children compared to the 1960s (Gershuny 2000), they do not help out with strenuous chores such as washing clothes. In Portugal the contribution of men to household and family duties still amounts to only 23%, in Spain to 30% and in Germany to 53%, compared to 63% for Finland and 71% for Sweden and Denmark (even if both parents are employed).
- In southern Europe and Germany the state defines child care as a private responsibility of families. This leads to a lack of full-time day care institutions. In many German families, mothers employed full-time cannot cope with balancing the needs of their children and their jobs, as elementary school and kindergarten finish at noon.

THE PREFERENCE FOR SHORTER WORKING HOURS, PARTICULARLY IN THE FAMILY PHASE

Apart from the availability of public childcare, the decisive factor to ameliorate time pressure on parents is reducing working hours:

- 57% of Europeans would like to work shorter hours in 1998 (Bielenski et al. 2001), 59% in 2004/05 (ESSD 2005).
- The preferred weekly working hours lie within a 30-40 range (two-thirds of all respondents in the ESSD 2004/05), between the traditional full- and part-time model (Bosch 2001). Marginal part-time work as well as the extreme above 40 hours do not suit the preferences of the majority. The few 'workaholics' are not representative.

- Men and women wish for a better distribution of their working time over their working life according to the changing needs in their life course (Bielenski et al. 2001).
- Parents show a preference towards the model of combined part-time work (16% in 1998), but this is only achieved by 3% of dual-earner-couples. Twelve percent of those employed full-time would like to work part-time for a certain period. In poorer southern Europe the percentage is lower than in Scandinavia, with its tradition of gender-sensitive policies.

In 2004 the average of preferred working hours amongst those employed full-time in Europe was 37 hours in contrast to the average actual 44 hours (see next section). On average, people would like to work 6.8 fewer hours. British, German and Spanish workers top the table of nations who would urgently like to work shorter hours. When having an employed partner, this wish to reduce one's working hours is even stronger. The more balanced the actual and preferred working hours are, the more respondents feel satisfied with their leisure time ($r = .2$) and health status ($.05$; all sig. $<.01$ in GSOEP analysis).

The younger the child, the more the mother demands shorter working hours: when children are younger than 6, the preferred working hours are on average 27 (actual 30); when the child is older than 15, the preference is for about 31 hours (actual 34) (Bielenski et al. 2001). Hence, adjusting working hours according to the needs of the family cycle is pressing.

PARADOXES REVISITED

After presenting data on time pressure and working hours and analysing their relationship to quality of life and to preferences, this final section comes back to the paradoxes stated in the introduction as the research problem: Table 2.1 has shown that happiness and life satisfaction in cross-national analyses correspond closely with economic growth. Increasing time pressure in work and private life (the latter was not focussed on) may go hand in hand with subjective well-being – at a country as well as at an individual level. The same people who are affected by insufficient time both at work and in their everyday life feel happy and satisfied.

The data analyses were presented to clarify some contradictory findings on reverse effects of economic and time prosperity. To show the synthesis of economic and time prosperity, a multivariate ESSD model based on data for 2004/05 for all employed Europeans was developed (statistic procedure: unianova).

For cross-national comparison, the same relationship can be observed when using cross-sectional data for the selected EU nations: people feel more satisfied with their lives when they have more income. This higher

income is associated with more working hours and hence less leisure time to enjoy culture and consumption. However, more income does not uniformly lead to more time pressure: economic classes beyond a certain threshold can afford more personal services in the market and are thus able to buy more time. To a certain degree, time and money are convertible: whoever experiences a scarcity in time and disposes of sufficient money can buy personal services (eating out, cleaning services) and win time. This strategy represents one way to reconcile work stress and enjoyment of life.

Based on the evidence for the relationship between time pressure, work stress and health problems and their effect on life satisfaction, the linear multivariate model in Table 2.7 summarises the arguments:

- People feel more satisfied with their lives when they feel more comfortable about their household income ($r = .37$ in partial correlation). The influence of money is the most important factor in the multivariate analysis as indicated by partial eta-square of .098, the measure for the strength of this effect while examining the other variables simultaneously.
- Time prosperity operationalised by frequency of feeling calm and relaxed and of waking up rested and fresh follows the economic factor regarding the strength of this effect (.031 and .013; $r = .30$ and .24 in partial correlation).
- Life satisfaction does not simply arise from the evaluation of the present: the extent of worries about one's economic future explains much of the variation in life satisfaction (eta-square.06; partial: $r = .15$). Insecurities about the future affect the perception of present life (Bulmahn 1996:93). It follows that quality of life includes a feeling of security for guiding one's life. Any long-term planning of one's life career would require welfare state interventions in the labour market.
- Living with a partner and not being alone in life is – not surprisingly – an important source of happiness, albeit less so compared to economic and time prosperity (eta-square.009).
- One last significant indicator is the amount of actual working hours (reaching from 0 to 84): the fewer hours, the greater the life satisfaction in the multivariate model (.004).

A COMPREHENSIVE TIME POLICY INCLUDING SHORTER WORKING HOURS

The data on workload, time pressure, stress phenomena and health have supported the conclusion that chronic time stress has emerged as a major social problem in Europe and the United States. Admittedly, part of the feeling of time-crunch is homemade, as people pursue the offers of the event society in order not to miss out on any leisure activity. This does not

apply to the majority of the work force though. Many stressors in professional life do not evolve from free decisions by actors, but from the pressure of globalisation on companies. The demand not to waste time at work has its roots in market competition and has become deeply ingrained in the culture of restlessness of modern societies. This section develops some principles for a comprehensive policy on time that includes the reduction of working hours necessary to improve quality of life.

Even when the majority still report high levels of happiness, the need to ease the time burden of disadvantaged groups is urgent. A large number of people in specific socio-economic statuses and life phases cannot cope well with time pressure and they are affected by it. One task has been to identify these most-affected groups. For the sake of time policy it is necessary to study the problems of those who feel chronically time-pressured: many single mothers with a low-income cannot cope with juggling work and family demands. One reaction to the acceleration of social life that has created the feeling of being hurried and rushed is the academic and public discourse on downspeeding social life in general (Reheis 2003; Rosa 2005; GEO 2005).

Based on growing sensitivity to the consequences of time pressure on employed women in their family phase, a public debate and political initiative – particularly in Germany, but also among other EU nations – has begun to support opportunities to combine work and family, especially for the more highly-educated women (European Foundation 2003a). The political aim is to increase the labour force participation of women as well as the number of births in order to exploit the maximum national labour force now and in future. This is part of the EU Lisbon initiative to overtake the USA in global competitiveness. In 2003, labour force participation in Germany and the EU 25 amounted to 57%, compared to 66% in the USA (Statistisches Bundesamt 2005).

This need of the political elites of European nations to assert themselves in global competition – and not the everyday needs of individuals – is the political context in which the problems of families trying to juggle demands of occupational and family life have been detected in a new way. It is surprising at what speed the former Conservatives, e.g. the CDU/CSU, who are now leading the German government since 2005, have revised their traditional model of family life of the male breadwinner and the housewife responsible for childcare. There are new subsidies and enhancements for employed mothers, such as tax reductions for the cost of childcare along with programs for all-day schools and crèches. Since the 1950s, the entire infrastructure of West German family life has been based on the male breadwinner model, from the tax model and the early closing times of schools (1 p.m.) to the average height of German kitchen sinks, which are 20 cm too low for the average man. Now German policies aim at a work-life balance and an integration of work and family, and attempt to adapt features from the French and Scandinavian models

(Veil 2003:13). It does not follow however that there is a political re-orientation towards quality of life.

In France, women's participation in the labour force decreases when mothers expect their third child, not after the first child as in Germany. This is an indicator of the 'republican model', where the state provides institutions for professional inclusion of mothers through the crèche and the *école maternelle* in early childhood years. The social cost for mothers to cope with the demands of work and family life is high though. Nowadays, when problems and needs of families are detected by policy – particularly in Germany – this tends not to reflect a political will to ease parental time poverty. Policies that support a higher labour force participation and full-time jobs of mothers, propagating and introducing longer weekly and life-long workloads for both parents, become counterproductive for supporting a quality family life. The main instruments for these policies aiming at reconciling full-time employment of German mothers and family are tax reductions for dual-earner couples as well as the promotion of low-wage mini-jobs in private households.

My conclusion is that long-term improvements in quality of life derive increasingly from a time policy, which must reduce the major social causes of stress. Any other 'homemade' stress due to the variety of leisure expectations would not be a social problem. Such a policy would have to down-speed social life. It would have to erect barriers against acceleration and re-regulate time in terms of flexibilised working hours, collective working-hour reductions and individual entitlements to part-time work (Reheis 2003; Garhammer 2005). At the European level, the debate on work-life balance proposes that policymakers create new time and income options to help redistribute working time over the life course, thus solving the problem (European Foundation 2003a).

An increase in both consumer goods and disposable time to enjoy one's life would be necessary. According to Marx's analysis, this principle can hardly be implemented in the globalised economy, as the wealth of capitalist economies is based on the increased use of ever-growing labour (women, seniors, foreigners) and extended working hours. In market societies the permanent increase of productivity does not serve to increase work-free hours or years for employees, but to save paid labour. Hence the permanent increase in productivity has not led to time yields for workers but to a social division: lacking income, millions of unemployed have forced leisure time. Those whose labour is still in demand fear being unemployed and have to be willing to accept overtime. Hence the time yields which would be possible towards enhancing quality of life of all are replaced by a division between income-poor and time-poor.

In European societies the prevailing model to strengthen the economy in competition with the USA and Japan is extending weekly, annual and life-long working hours. Beginning in 2029, employees in Germany will work until age 67. This was decided by the German government in January 2006, following the Danish step.

When extending people's lifelong work trajectory, the duration of education becomes criticised as well as the early entry of employees into retirement. University diplomas are currently being replaced by Bachelor's degrees, which on average take 3 years for the majority and no longer 4-6. Children should start school earlier (at the age of five or even four), students begin their studies 2-3 years earlier and finish within a shorter time. Every phase in life that merely serves leisure or time prosperity purposes of the concerned should be cut. To cope with global competition, European nations can no longer afford such unproductive times.

In contrast to this agenda which is under way, the analysis presented here would support another approach, i.e. that of a comprehensive policy on time to give individuals – children and youth – time for their development and to improve their quality of life through time prosperity.

NOTE

- 1 The GDP per capita (PPP US\$) data used in calculating the HDI are based on purchasing power parity (PPP) rates of exchange. The data are provided by the World Bank, based on the latest International Comparison Programme (ICP) surveys. Base year for the PPP data is 1996; data for the reference year were extrapolated using relative price movements over time between each country and the United States, the base country (Human Development Indicators, edited by the UN).
- 2 This sample does not include Dutch and Danes: Based on the Multinational-Time-Use-Study (MTUS) and the HETUS project, the European Foundation comparative report (2003b, p. 82) views Danes (with long paid but few unpaid working hours) and the Dutch (with less paid and more unpaid working hours) at the top of those nations with relatively higher levels of free time.

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APPENDIX

Database

Germany:

- Own time-diary study 1991/92: interview and seven-day diary (N = 1,545 West Germans employed full-time, Garhammer 1994).
- Time budget survey of Statistisches Bundesamt 1991/92 and 2001/02 (tables).
- GfK-FOCUS 1999: interviews on time pressure (N = 1,237, among those 427 employed full-time).
- ALLENSBACH-GEO-Wissen 2005: interviews on time pressure (N = 2,048).
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- GSOEP 2003: Socio economic panel (N = 9,466 employed full-time), Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Berlin.
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Europe:

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- European Social Survey (ESS) 2002/03 (N = 37,497), 5th edition, 13 EU countries selected.
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U.S.A.

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3 More work for mothers? Trends and gender differences in multitasking

Liana C. Sayer

INTRODUCTION

Have mothers exchanged the “problem with no name,” identified by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) for the problem of no time? The daily lives of the housewives Friedan depicted focused on single-minded devotion to the production of gleaming homes and cosseted children and husbands. A surplus of time was a problem for many housewives, however, because technological advances had reduced time necessary to produce well-kempt families and houses, and children and husbands were often away from home in school and at work. Over the past 40 years, sweeping economic and demographic changes have transformed the problem of excess time into a deficit of time. Mothers have entered the labor force in large numbers because of improvements in labor market opportunities, greater control over fertility, and deterioration in husbands’ earnings prospects (Casper and Bianchi 2002). Cultural attitudes also shifted to the point that most women and men desire and expect shared breadwinning and caregiving (Sayer et al. 2004b). Today, both spouses are employed in 60% of U.S. families in contrast to the 36% in 1970

(Jacobs and Gerson 2004).

Consequently, the time demands on parents have ratcheted upward. The growth of dual earner families means that the majority of mothers and fathers are spending time engaged in both paid work and unpaid work. Further, time pressures have expanded in both domains. Job schedules continue to be predicated on outdated separate spheres assumptions that workers have someone at home to tend to family responsibilities, and most employers expect workers to prioritize the demands of employment ahead of family demands (Williams 2000). Global competition and corporate downsizing have increased the pace and insecurity of employment, raising work hours and work intensity (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). The growing prevalence of nonstandard employment hours creates coordination problems in syncing family and job schedules and individual needs for sleep and relaxation (Presser 2003). Expectations that parents should devote copious amounts of time to “cultivating” their children’s mental and psychological development have also expanded (Hays 1996; Coltrane 2000). Because of the constraints of the 24-hour day, work and family responsibilities compete for parents’ time and attention and more parents today may be at risk of too little time in which to accomplish necessary obligations.

Although changes in families and workplaces are similar across Western industrialized countries, the U.S. is distinct in requiring individuals to handle work and family time pressures without significant social and institutional support (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Individual strategies include cutting back on employment demands, through part-time or no employment, and/or reducing family demands, by having fewer (or no) children, leaving some household tasks undone, and outsourcing housework and childcare (Glass 2000). These strategies are not optimal, however, because they cost money in foregone wages and payment for goods and services and identifying adequate service providers requires time. Some research suggests that American women and men may be leaving some household chores undone because of time shortages, but they perceive this situation as regrettable (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Many parents do not wish to forego or outsource housework and child care to the market because their home production is one way family relationships are created and reinforced (DeVault 1991).

Another individual strategy, touted in a glut of self-help books on the market, is to manage time more efficiently, thus reducing time competition by simply doing more in the same amount of time (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Hence, multitasking, or doing multiple activities at the same time, may be one way in which individuals attempt to maximize time efficiency. Qualitative studies suggest that mothers do multitask in response to limited time in which to meet all responsibilities, for example doing laundry while watching television or socializing with friends while also minding children (Hochschild 1989; Hessing 1994).

Little is known about the extent to which fathers multitask because

previous work has tended to focus on mothers' strategies for minimizing time competition. It is likely, though, that multitasking is a gendered strategy. Although everyone has 24 hours in a day, gender scholars argue that time is not distributed equally between men and women because women's domestic responsibilities define women's time as a "collective" household resource subject to the demands of husbands and children whereas men's time is more of an individual resource (Davies 1990; Berk 1985; Hochschild 1989). Despite their increased involvement in paid work, mothers remain responsible for doing an "acceptable" amount of domestic work, because its performance is integral to being a "good" wife and mother (Riggs 1997; Thompson and Walker 1995). Indeed, some mothers report feeling as though they are "on-call" for their families 24 hours a day (Deem 1996; Henderson 1996). Hence, although time competition has increased for mothers and fathers, gendered aspects of families suggest that time pressures may translate into higher levels of "efficient" time use through multitasking among mothers compared with fathers.

Most prior research has conceptualized the 24-hour day as the "ultimate constraint" on human activity (Juster 1999) and have not examined time spent in simultaneous activities. However, time diary activity records provide an accounting of all "primary" activities (i.e. activities that are the major focus of attention) and all "secondary" activities (i.e. activities performed simultaneously with primary activities). Recent data collections in Australia and in the U.S. indicate that secondary activities add about one hour per day of unpaid work and about two hours of social or personal activities (Ironmonger 1996; Bittman and Wajcman 2000; Stinson 1999). Research has not examined the extent to which parents combine unpaid work with other activities, whether multitasking has increased over time in response to expanding time demands, and whether mothers multitask more than fathers.

This chapter addresses these gaps by using U.S. time diary studies conducted in 1975 and 1998-2000 to investigate trends and gender differences in married mothers' and fathers' multitasking time. The chapter is organized as follows. Section 1 discusses gendered aspects of time competition; section 2 describes how the chronological activity records from U.S. time diary studies are used to create four new measures of the extent to which unpaid work activities are combined with other activities (multitasking); section 3 presents results and section 4 discusses them.

GENDERED ASPECTS OF TIME COMPETITION

The gendered division of labor, with men doing more paid work and women more unpaid work, is extensively documented. Two theoretical explanations of gender differences in time use predominate in the literature: the economic perspective and the gender perspective (Coltrane

2000). The economic perspective posits that women specialize in unpaid work and men specialize in paid work because specialization is more efficient and thus maximizes household utility. Women specialize in unpaid work because socialization practices and physiological differences in reproductive systems give them a comparative advantage in childrearing and housework. In contrast, the gender perspective contends that unpaid work is not comprised of a gender-neutral bundle of chores that women perform out of comparative advantage but instead is a key aspect of the social production and reproduction of unequal power relations between women and men (Brines 1994; West and Zimmerman 1987). The equation of time and money that emerged with industrialization also means that men's time is perceived as having more value because more of it focuses on "productive" labor (Adam 1990; Davies 1990). Hence, men are entitled both to "free time" and to the provision of household goods and services by women. In essence, men have more control over the use of their time but also some of women's time. Hence, despite women's increased investment in paid work, attending to necessary household labor continues to be women's responsibility and the boundaries between paid work, unpaid work and free time are more permeable for women than for men.

The gender gap in household work is larger in married couple households compared with other household types; research suggests this is due to some combination of maximization of household utility and gender production (Coltrane 2000). Nonetheless, gender specialization has declined even in married couple households (Sayer 2005). There is also some evidence that fathers in dual earner households do more housework compared to other fathers (Gershuny et al. 2005).

A gender specialized division of labor reduces demands on time because each partner concentrates on only one domain. This means that less gender specialization in paid and unpaid work has expanded the degree to which parents face time competition between employment and family spheres. Further, the emergence of dual earner couples as the modal family arrangement has occurred at the same time that economic changes have altered workplaces to make them less "family-friendly." Global economic pressures and corporate downsizing have amplified the pace and volume of work and are associated with an increase in both long and short paid work weeks. The proportion of workers with nonstandard employment hours has grown and may heighten time competition because nonstandard hours decrease the ability to mesh job schedules with family schedules (Presser 2003). Cell phones and email also allow paid work responsibilities to encroach into family life and heighten expectations that employees be available around the clock (Hochschild 1997). In 2000, in 15% of dual earner couples both spouses worked 50 or more hours on the job each week and 50% of these worked some hours on the weekends (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Being in a dual earner couple increases women's and men's time pressures: for example, the

odds of sometimes or always feeling rushed are 76% lower for women in couples where only the husband is employed compared with dual-earner full-time couples (Mattingly and Sayer 2006).

Because time is a finite resource, employment hours, in particular long hours on the job, compete with parenting responsibilities. Unlike many chores that can be put off or foregone entirely, effective parenting requires some parental input. Further, normative shifts in parenting standards have altered such that being a good parent today requires greater amounts of time, particularly among fathers. Expectations that mothers and fathers “cultivate” children’s intellectual and socioemotional development with abundant time have mushroomed (Hays 1996; Lareau 2002; Daly 2001). Although the average child care time of American mothers has remained stable and fathers’ time has increased over the past 40 years (Sayer et al. 2004a), one-half of parents report that they do not spend enough time with their children (Milkie et al. 2004).

Multitasking may be one way parents cope with competing work and family time demands by bundling family activities to pack as many activities as possible into the day. If this is the case, then the data should reveal that parents with the greatest time demands – dual earners with young children – should spend more time multitasking. Because time pressures have increased in recent decades, the extent of multitasking should be greater today compared with the 1970s and the length of the workday in combined paid and unpaid work may also be longer. Mothers also may multitask more than fathers, because of the gendered nature of parenthood and time use (Mattingly and Sayer 2006; Moen and Yu 1999).

It is possible, however, that multitasking is not a new time management technique adopted by time pressured parents. Instead, multitasking may reflect the inherent compatibility of housework and child care (Becker 1965). If this is the case, the extent of multitasking may not have changed but gender differences will still be found, because mothers continue to do more unpaid work than fathers.

DATA AND METHODS

This analysis uses data from three U.S. time diary studies, one conducted in 1975 and the latter two conducted in 1998-99 and 2000. The 1975 data are from the Time Use in Economic and Social Accounts Study, collected by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan (Juster et al. 1979). In the study, 24-hour time diaries were collected from a representative sample of 1,519 American adults aged 18 and older. The response rate was 72 percent. The 1998-99 and 2000 data are from two time diary surveys conducted by the University of Maryland’s Survey Research Center with funding by the National Science Foundation and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (Bianchi et al. 2001). In the 1998-1999 study, 24-hour time diaries were collected throughout the calendar year

from a nationally representative sample of 1,151 American adults aged 18 and older. In the 2000 study, 24-hour time diaries were collected throughout the calendar year from a nationally representative sample of 2,000 American parents living with children under age 18. Diaries were collected through computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) procedures and cover the day prior to the telephone interview. The response rate in the 1998-1999 survey was 56 percent; in the 2000 survey, the response rate was 64 percent. The two surveys were done by the same organization with similar procedures and I combine the two studies to increase sample sizes of parents. Distributions across time use categories are comparable for parents in each survey.

In each of the surveys, respondents provided information on individual and household characteristics, in addition to the detailed time diary. The time diary collects information on each activity episode, referred to as primary activities, and any other activity that is occurring at the same time, referred to as secondary activities. Time diary methods have been shown to provide valid and reliable estimates of time in paid work and household activities (Juster 1999).

The analysis focuses on married mothers and married fathers because parents have greater time demands from employment and family compared with single nonparents. Time pressures may be as great among single parents but the small sample size of the U.S. time diary studies does not include a large enough sub-sample of single parents for analysis. Additionally, although the 1975 survey interviewed spouses, the 2000 collection has information from only one individual in the household and thus the analysis is not of married couples. Selected spouse characteristics such as employment status and educational attainment were ascertained in all surveys, however. The 1975 sample includes 278 married mothers and 239 married fathers and the 2000 sample includes 700 married mothers and 553 married fathers.

Measures

The analysis begins by describing trends in married mothers' and married fathers' hours per day of primary paid work and primary and secondary unpaid work. The measure of primary paid work is the sum of the time respondents report in paid work activities including time seeking work if unemployed and commuting to a job. Measures of unpaid work include summed hours per day in primary housework, child care, and shopping activities and unpaid work "multitasking," or the total hours per day spent doing secondary housework, child care, or shopping activities with any other primary activity. Examining time in primary and secondary unpaid work provides a more accurate assessment of changes and gender differences in the length of parents' work days, compared to focusing only on primary activity time. It also provides information on whether multitasking expands mothers' and fathers' work hours.

Examining only the total amount of time in secondary work activities is limited, though, because it provides no information on which activities are combined. Hence, I investigate multitasking with four new measures of the extent to which unpaid work activities are performed alone or in combination with specific activities. These variables tap the intensity and permeability of time allocated to unpaid work activities. The measures are constructed as follows:

- Primary unpaid work only measure is the sum of the hours per day in primary housework, child care, and shopping activities when no secondary activity is reported.
- Unpaid work and unpaid work measure is the sum of the hours per day in primary housework, shopping, and child care activities when they are combined with secondary housework, shopping, and child care activities.
- Primary unpaid work and secondary other measure is the sum of the hours per day in primary housework, shopping, and child care activities when they are combined with secondary paid work, self care (eating and grooming), or leisure activities.
- Secondary unpaid work and primary other measure is the sum of the hours per day when a secondary housework, shopping, or child care activity is combined with a primary paid work, self care, or leisure activities.

Distinguishing between combining two unpaid work activities, combining an unpaid work activity that is the primary focus with a free time or self care activity, and combining a free time or self care activity that is the primary focus of attention with a secondary unpaid work activity taps salient dimensions of the nature of time. Combining multiple unpaid work activities likely makes the experience of time more harried. Cooking dinner while supervising children is more demanding than focusing on only one of these activities. Additionally, combining a primary free time or self care activity, such as watching television while doing laundry, or eating dinner with friends while minding children, may reduce enjoyment and relaxation. These types of multitasking may reflect the essence of what the feminist qualitative time use literature means by multitasking, because they capture attempts to reduce time competition by maximizing time use. In contrast, cleaning the kitchen and listening to the radio (i.e. combining a primary unpaid work activity with a secondary free time activity) may be more enjoyable, not less, and thus motivated more by concerns about maximizing pleasure than by time efficiency considerations.

RESULTS

I focus on three questions in the results section. First, how has parents' paid and unpaid work time changed between 1975 and 2000? That is, has gender specialization declined and increased the length of parents' total work time and is the increase larger when secondary work time is accounted for? Second, are there significant gender differences in the amount of and types of multitasking and, if so, have these differences altered since 1975? Third, how are couple employment status and the presence of young children, both of which increase obligatory time demands, associated with multitasking?

Has gender specialization in work declined and subsequently pushed up the length of parents' work day, as changes in families and workplaces suggest? Table 3.1 shows the daily hours of mothers' and fathers' primary paid and unpaid work and secondary unpaid work in 1975 and 2000. The table also shows the ratio of mothers' to fathers' time in each of the measures.

Three findings are evident from Table 3.1. First, gender specialization in time use has diminished, but married mothers continue to spend less time in paid work and more time in unpaid work than fathers. In 2000, mothers did 2 times more housework and child care than fathers, compared with 1975, when married mothers did 4.5 times more housework and 3.3 times more child care. Mothers are also doing slightly more unpaid work in 2000 than in 1975 (although the difference is not significant) because the 48 minute decline in housework did not offset the 1 hour increase in child care and shopping. Increased child care time, coupled with declines in housework, suggests that mothers may have reallocated time away from cooking and cleaning to child care, perhaps as one way to compensate for higher employment. Married fathers substantially increased their unpaid work time from 1.7 hours in 1975 to 3.1 hours in 2000. Results not shown indicate that 70% of fathers in 2000 report doing housework on the diary day compared with only 43% in 1975.

Second, the erosion of gender specialization has expanded the total amount of time parents spend in work activities. In 1975, with lower paid work time and slightly lower unpaid work time (*vis-à-vis* 2000), mothers' primary work time was 7.9 hours per day, less than the 8.5 hour work day of fathers (although the difference is not significant). By 2000, mothers' work day was 9.3 hours, an increase of 1 hour and 24 minutes, about the same as fathers' 9.2 hour work day, which increased 40 minutes over the period.

Third, accounting for multitasking time in secondary work activities increases the amount of parents' work time and widens gender differences in total work. Mothers' time in secondary unpaid work activities has increased, more so in housework than other types of unpaid work, indicating that some of the decline in primary housework time is being compensated for with multitasking. Although overall secondary unpaid

work did not change significantly for fathers, the increase from zero to about 20 minutes a day in secondary housework is significant. Mothers still multitask more than fathers, although the ratio has declined from 3.3 to 2.6. Further, when multitasking is added to total work time, mothers' work day clocks in at 11.5 hours versus 10.2 hours of fathers.

Average amounts of time in paid work and unpaid work of mothers and fathers may be misleading, however, because of heterogeneity in mothers' employment situations. To explore this, Figure 3.1 shows hours per day in paid work and primary and secondary unpaid work for mothers in dual breadwinner couples, which is defined as both spouses working 35 or more hours per week (24% of mothers and 25% of fathers were in dual breadwinner couples in 1975; and 37% of mothers and 43% of fathers in 2000) and male breadwinner couples, which is defined as husband employed full-time, wife not employed (52% of mothers and 46% of fathers were in male breadwinner couples in 1975; and 27% of mothers and fathers in 2000). Mothers and fathers in other employment types are not shown separately because the sample size is too small for reliable estimates, but these mothers and fathers are included when estimates for all mothers and fathers are shown.

The figure indicates that mothers in dual breadwinner couples have the longest work days at both time points, relative to mothers in male breadwinner couples and relative to all fathers. Fathers' total work time does not vary by wife's employment status, but fathers in dual breadwinner couples do more unpaid work and less paid work compared with those in male breadwinner couples. With secondary unpaid activities included, work time increased significantly for mothers and fathers in both couple employment types. Among mothers, however, accounting for multitasking time shrinks the couple employment type gap in total work in 2000 to only 9 hours, compared to 2.5 hours without multitasking. Mothers in male breadwinner couples spend more time multitasking and the increase in their multitasking time was also sharper compared with mothers in dual breadwinner couples. Hence, the bivariate results indicate that the time demands of mothers and fathers have increased and mothers, particularly in dual breadwinner couples, face a time squeeze. Nonetheless, because mothers in male breadwinner couples spend more time multitasking than those in dual breadwinner couples, multitasking may not be a strategy adopted by time-pressed mothers to cope with dueling work and family time demands.

What the results shown thus far do not indicate is the types of activities that are being combined. Are two unpaid work activities being done at the same time, perhaps maximizing time efficiency but increasing stress? Is unpaid work being added to free time activities, thus reducing time competition but perhaps also reducing enjoyment and relaxation?

Table 3.2 shows adjusted hours per day in four different measures of unpaid work: hours per day in primary unpaid work when no secondary activity is reported (primary unpaid work only); hours per day in primary

unpaid work combined with another unpaid work activity (unpaid work and unpaid work); hours per day in primary unpaid work combined with a secondary free time, self care or paid work activity (primary unpaid work, secondary other); and hours per day in secondary unpaid work combined with a primary free time, self care, or paid work activity (secondary unpaid work, primary other). Estimates were adjusted using OLS coefficients from regression models estimated separately for mothers and fathers that included covariates for survey year, children 6 and younger present, number of children, couple employment status, educational attainment, age, and weekend diary day. Models indicate that change between 1975 and 2000 is significant for all measures of mothers' multitasking and fathers' primary unpaid work and other and secondary unpaid work and other. Young children significantly increase mothers' and fathers' time in two combined unpaid work activities, and fathers' primary unpaid work and other time. Couple employment status affects all types of mothers' multitasking but has no effect on fathers' multitasking. Panel A shows estimates for mothers and fathers with young children present; Panel B shows estimates for mothers and fathers with young children in dual breadwinner couples; and Panel C shows estimates for mothers and fathers with young children in male breadwinner couples. Because the amount of time in each measure is a function of the total amount of time in primary and secondary unpaid work, the table also shows the proportion of all unpaid work hours accounted for by each of the multitasking measures.

Table 3.2 has two major findings. First, multitasking has increased for mothers in each employment type, as indicated by the declines in the amount of primary unpaid work that occurs as the only activity and the increase in unpaid work done with other activities. Second, although the most intense type of multitasking – doing two unpaid work activities at the same time – increased, a sharper increase occurred for the type of multitasking in which a primary unpaid work activity is combined with a free time or self care activity. For example, looking at dual breadwinner mothers with young children, the group with the greatest time competition, time combining two unpaid work activities, increased about 24 minutes a day in comparison with the 1.6 hour per day increase in primary unpaid work and secondary other activity. Additionally, fathers' time combining two unpaid work activities did not change significantly but time combining unpaid work with free time or self care did rise 1.4 hours.

Nonetheless, in 2000, married mothers in dual breadwinner couples spend 80% of their unpaid work time doing multiple activities and married mothers in male breadwinner couples spend 70% of their unpaid work time multitasking. Although only 18% of all unpaid work time is spent doing two unpaid work activities at the same time, this accounts for one hour of employed married mothers in time and 1.6 hours for nonemployed mothers. The larger amounts of time combining unpaid work with a secondary free time or self care activity could be interpreted as a way for

parents to maximize their enjoyment of unpaid work. An alternative interpretation, however, is suggested by trends in child care multitasking (results not shown). Parents are spending significantly more child care time combining child care with another unpaid activity, with free time, or with self care (70% for mothers and 64% for fathers). It is likely that combining child care with another activity makes a qualitative difference in the nature of the time. In other words, while one can stop folding laundry if something interesting appears on the television, one can't as easily ignore cranky children during an excursion or while socializing with friends. Ethnographic studies suggest that parents' free time is increasingly focused on attending and facilitating children's activities to the exclusion of adult-oriented leisure (Arendell 2001; Lareau 2002).

DISCUSSION

In sum, the substantial erosion of gender differences in parents' paid and unpaid work time has increased mothers' and fathers' total work time and amount of time spent multitasking. Married mothers are doing more paid work, more child care, and less housework and married fathers are doing less paid work and more unpaid work. When only primary work time is considered, total work time in 2000 is equivalent for mothers and fathers. However, because of multitasking, married mothers put in 11.2 hours of work each day compared with 9.9 hours of married fathers. Not all married mothers and married fathers put in these long work hours, though. Considering only primary paid work, dual breadwinner mothers work 10.4 hours per day, compared with a 7.9 hour day of mothers in male breadwinner couples. Nonemployment thus appears to be one way mothers reduce their total work load, although this strategy may carry future financial penalties.

Mothers also multitask more than fathers, but multitasking is higher among mothers in male breadwinner couples compared with those in dual breadwinner couples. Additionally, more of mothers' multitasking time is spent combining unpaid work with free time or self care than with another unpaid work activity. Employed mothers with the greatest competing time demands might be conjectured to engage in more multitasking to fit all necessary household labor into a shorter amount of time. The results suggest, however, that multitasking time may reflect time at home, and thus the ability to multitask, more than attempts to maximize use of time. Future work should examine when multitasking occurs to explore differences in the timing of employed and nonemployed mothers' multitasking. Although employed mothers do less multitasking, it is possible that multitasking time is done at the end of a paid work shift, which would suggest that it is a way of reducing time competition. It is also possible that reporting of time in secondary activities may be artificially low in the U.S. time diary studies. Australian time diary data

show a much higher amount of overall secondary unpaid work time than American time diary data.

In the United States, parents have to rely on individual strategies or the market to reduce time competition. These include doing less paid work or unpaid work, outsourcing, and perhaps multitasking. These individual strategies appear to be ineffective in reducing total work loads, however, because the length of parents' work day and the amount of time spent multitasking has increased. The time-impoverishment of parents has implications for individual and family well-being in that it increases stress and family conflict. A "culture of time," that values speed and efficiency combined with intensifying work ethic that places higher priority on paid work demands than family demands means parents' time budgets are stretched to the maximum, which individual solutions alone are unable to remedy.

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4 Odd working hours and time pressure

Koen Breedveld

INTRODUCTION: A CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT

A process of political, economic and cultural flexibilisation took place in the Netherlands in the 1990s. Political measures were introduced to make working hours more flexible and to extend trading hours. In 1995 a new Working Hours Act was introduced; it allowed for a more flexible deployment of labour by turning Saturday into a regular working day, by removing all references to a 'standard' time of the day for performing paid work – like the 8am-6pm time window – and by easing up on Sunday work regulations. A year later, in 1996, the introduction of a new Trading Hours Act permitted an extension of opening hours into the evening (until 10pm rather than 6.30pm, as was stated in the previous Act) and on Sundays (though still limited to a maximum of 12 per year except for cities that consider themselves tourist destinations). The Netherlands were no exception, as similar processes of flexibilisation took place in other Western countries (Hinrichs et al. 1991; Elchardus 1994; Garhammer 1995, 1999; Tijdens 1998; Callister and Dixon 2001).

The forces behind this process of flexibilisation are complicated and involve arguments on many different levels. Factors speeding up the flexibilisation process in the early 1990s in the Netherlands were high unemployment rates and a change in government (for the first time in ages, there was no Christian Democratic party in the government). On a more structural level, the need for time flexibilisation relates to issues of individualisation and time pressure. As more and more women entered the labour market in the 1980s and 1990s, Dutch society became increasingly time-pressured (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2001; Van den Broek et al. 2002). In turn, time pressure, as well as individualisation, fuelled the demand for individual time sovereignty and flexible time arrangements (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2003).

The process of flexibilisation was not a smooth one. Considerable social and political tumult was brought about (see Breedveld 1999 for an

overview). Opponents, especially religious organisations and trade unions, feared the advent of a non-stop 24-hour economy. In line with what might be termed a socio-cultural theory of time (Sorokin 1943; Zerubavel 1981,1985; Young 1988; Elchardus et al. 1988; Elchardus 1994; Moens 2006), they placed a particular stress on the importance of having a clear and identifiable time structure, allowing for collective rhythms and individual routines. Flexibilisation of time would only hinder the possibility to divide up, plan and organise time, thereby adding to rather than resolving feelings of restlessness, hurriedness and stress. In short, whereas one part of society considered time pressure as a legitimate cause to flexibilise time, the other part feared that flexibilisation of time would result in even more time pressure.

Most of this debate was not fuelled by empirical research. Together with great chunks of the 'scientific literature' on the organisation of time, it relied largely (and continues to rely) upon assumptions and hypotheses. In this chapter we will try to add to the debate by bringing in analyses from the SCP series of Time Use Surveys (TUS). Typical for time use surveys in general, respondents in the survey keep a diary for a day or a number of days (or, as in our case, for a full week in the first part of October). Having respondents fill out diaries allows for in-depth analyses of the way time is structured, therefore providing more detailed information on the timing of work than can be obtained from sources such as Labour Force Surveys. The SCP Time Use Surveys have been held every five years since 1975. Respondents in the latest study (2000) covered 1813 people aged 12 and older (see www.tijdsbesteding.nl for more details on the study).

Although flexibilisation covers many different aspects and dimensions of time and work (see Breedveld 1998), here we limit this concept to the behavioural dimension of an increase in working evenings, nights and weekends (so-called 'odd working hours'). In doing so, we will focus on three related questions:

- To what degree has paid work actually moved into the evenings, nights and weekends;
- What different ways of working evenings, nights and weekends exist;
- What are its effects, on the pace of life and on social life.

In a sense then, we want to determine how odd it still is to work in the evenings, nights and weekends, both in terms of the degree of workers involved and in the possibly negative consequences it has on free time and social life.

DEVELOPMENTS OVER TIME

Despite what is often believed, it does not seem to be the case that work

is progressing into the evenings, nights and weekends (Figure 4.1). Line 1 – taken for the SCP Time Use Survey – shows no major increase in the percentage of work that is being performed at these ‘odd hours’. Lines 3 to 6, taken from three different surveys, show little to no increase in the percentage of workers engaged at such hours. This holds true as much for the period after the new Working Hours Act, between 1996 and 2002, as before (the increase in line 3 between 1998 and 2000 is due to a change in wording of the question).

In fact, consistently pointing upwards is only line 2, also taken from the SCP Time Use Survey, indicating the percentage of unpaid work (household work, looking after children) that is performed on evenings, nights and weekends. As more women enter the labour market, less time is left over during the daytime to perform household duties. These are then left over for the weekends and evenings. The 24-hour economy is therefore much more the story of unpaid work than of paid work (Knulst 2005), of increased labour participation and busyness rather than of a reorganisation of paid work over the day and the week.

Two comments need to be made nonetheless. First, the percentage of workers working evenings, nights and weekends has not increased in recent decades, and no greater percentage of work has shifted from office hours to odd working hours. This neglects the fact that the percentage of workers in society as well as the total amount of work being performed have increased over the past decades. As a consequence, the rhythms of paid work are being brought into family and social life more often than before.

Second, smaller changes at the edges of the day, with more work being performed between 5 pm and 7 pm, can be observed (Breedveld 1999). One can also detect that fewer workers end their workday every day at exactly the same time, and that more work is being done at home (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2003). In addition, more people work part-time.

There appears then to be an increase in diversification of working time, without this leading to a full-blown 24-hour economy. This becomes even clearer if we expand our views to the 1950s. In the mid 1990s less work was being performed on evenings and weekends than back in the 1950s and 1960s (Figure 4.2). In 1955, on average 3.8 hours per week were spent on paid work evenings and weekends; this dropped to 1.5 hours per week in 1975, to climb back again to 2.2 hours per week (the last rise between 1975 and 1995 due to a general increase in labour participation and not to a greater share of work being performed at odd hours).

To better understand why odd working hours have not increased in recent decades, one must take a closer look at how the labour market developed over this period. From the start of the 20th century, Western societies have progressed into service economies (Figure 4.3), which take three forms: first, that of direct services to customers, like shops and restaurants; second, that of an increase in business services (accounting,

marketing, tax and legal advice, printing, temp agencies, intercompany services), usually in direct contact and cooperation with co-workers, suppliers and business clients; and third, that of a growth of the public sector (administration, welfare programs, schools, hospitals). Types of work that are traditionally associated with evening, night and weekend work, like agriculture, fishery and industrial shiftwork, have diminished in importance. Today, when cities open new venues for businesses, they launch business parks where shiny steel-and-glass buildings packed with internet-wired offices have replaced plants and factories with conveyor belts moving around raw materials. Even within industry and agriculture, office work increasingly dominates the business, at least in the affluent West. The heyday of industrial shiftwork in the Netherlands was not the 1990s but rather the 1950s.

ORGANISATION OF AND CONTROL OVER WORKING TIME

Looking more closely at Figure 4.1, one can see that the percentages involved differ to quite a large extent. For instance, line 3 (taken from the Dutch Labour Force Survey) suggests that close to half of the workers are involved in evening, night and weekend work. Looking at line 1, one can see that even though roughly half of the workers are involved in evening, night and weekend work, only 12-14% of all the work is actually being performed at such times (as against around 40% of all unpaid work, see line 2). It would therefore seem that many workers perform bits of their work on evenings, nights and weekends, while still working during the daytime to a large extent.

It is suggested that many employees labelled 'odd workers' in general assessments like the Labour Force Survey actually work quite regular working hours, and that their evening, night and weekend work has very little to do with shiftwork or working rosters. A way of testing this assumption comes from some of the questions that were included in the 2000 SCP Time Use Survey. These questions were administered to the 970 respondents that were engaged in paid work in the survey, 846 of whom were between 20 and 64 years of age. Roughly 65% of them stated that they worked evenings (as of 7 pm), nights (midnight to 6 am), Saturdays or Sundays sometimes or regularly. This was more common among men than among women (69%/60%) and among the self-employed than among salaried employees (97%/62%). When controlled for the two other factors, differences according to age and education were not significant.

From the 65% of the workers that did work evenings, nights and weekends, 61% did so as a form of overtime, i.e. in addition to their regular office hours (Table 1); 8% worked such hours as a form of time sovereignty, meaning that they shifted their office hours because it suited them better; and 31% worked some kind of roster or shift pattern. This

roster-like type of work becomes more common as workers are involved in 'odder' time slots (we distinguished four different odd time slots: evenings, nights, Saturdays, Sundays), and is less common among the higher educated and the self-employed (see Presser 2003). For the latter group, evening, night and weekend work is predominantly an extension of their regular daytime working hours.

The differences in these three types of odd working hours – overtime, change of hours and shiftwork – are significant in terms of issues of control over time (Table 4.2). Employees working rosters and/or shifts enjoy significantly lower levels of control over their working time than those who merely extend or move their hours into the evenings, nights and weekends (even after controlling for levels of education, employment status, age and gender). Shiftworkers work nights, Sundays and Saturdays more often. Extending or moving work outside office hours mainly means more work in the evenings, sometimes on Saturdays and less often on Sundays, but seldom nights.

The issue of control is an important one (Elchardus 1994; Garhammer 1995; Tijdens 1998; Moens 2006). From the large body of literature on time as well as on shiftwork, one can learn that control over working time (or time sovereignty) is one of the most influential factors determining satisfaction with or 'usability' of time. This holds especially true in our current time-pressured and individualised times.

Control over working time is not distributed evenly over the working population (Table 4.3). It is positively related to levels of education, and is greater among men than women, and among market employees than civil servants. As for working odd hours, this was found to be negatively associated with control over working time when looking at a four-item scale for control over working time (right column), but not if only one item out of that scale ('to what degree can you control the starting and end times of your working day') was taken into consideration (left column).

CONSEQUENCES: FREE TIME, SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, PERCEIVED STRESS

Ever since the first programs to stimulate shiftwork (in the Netherlands in the 1950s), changes in working hours, particularly nights and Sundays, have met with considerable resistance, especially from unions and churches (see Breedveld 1999 for an overview). At the same time, the large body of research on this subject seems to consistently point to the same conclusions, not all of which can justify the negative viewpoints that some parties seem to hold:

- Night work: almost all studies indicate that night work has a detrimental effect on health, well-being and social life (Klein Hesselink et al. 1995; Jansen 2003; Presser 2003; although see Moens 2006).

- Evening work: working solely in the evenings does not seem to have a negative effect on either health or social life (Klein Hesselink et al. 1995; Breedveld 1999; Presser 2003).
- Working on weekends can have a detrimental effect, especially on social life. This depends largely on the way work is organised. Factors that prevent work at odd hours from becoming a burden are control over scheduling, a certain degree of predictability and regularity, rosters that rotate quickly/forward (Klein Hesselink et al. 1995; Van Limborgh 1996; Breedveld 1999; Jansen 2003).
- Working conditions in the services sector are not unfavourable. Employees mostly work two or three evenings per week, and two Saturdays and one or two Sundays per month. Employees generally have a say in their roster, and know it at least a month in advance. Some work different days and hours, but have a fixed schedule that remains the same over time. Night work is limited (Breedveld 1999, outcomes of a small-scale study among 39 workers in the services sector).

The SCP Time Use Study does not lend itself easily to test some of these hypotheses. Using the questions of the previously described 2000 survey as independent variables, analyses were performed on the amount of free time of people who do and do not work odd hours, on the effects of working odd hours on three distinctly social activities (voluntary work, social visits and going out), and on feelings of hurriedness or perceived stress.

Amount of free time

In a first model, differences between male and female workers with respect to their amount of free time were not found significant (Table 4.4). Neither was the amount of free time significantly related to working or not working odd hours. Including the number of hours worked in a second model, and whether workers combined paid and unpaid work in a third model, meant that the differences between men and women now became significant (with men enjoying more free time than women). Again, no differences in amount of free time between those who work or do not work odd hours were detected. Additional analyses, performed only on those working odd hours, did show a decrease in free time once workers work two or more of the four predefined time slots (evening, nights, Saturdays, Sundays). This is largely in line with the literature that says that merely working evenings has little effect on social life (Presser 2003; see also Roberts 2002).

Participation in social life

In a second analysis, we related time spent on three distinct social

activities (voluntary work; visiting family/friends or having family/friends over for visits; and going out to restaurants, pubs, movies or theatres) to working odd hours as well as to a number of other personal characteristics. One of those was the total time that workers are tied up with obligations (time spent on paid work, education, and household and caring tasks). The last variable proved to be related to all three activities: the busier people are with obligations, the less time they spend on all three types of social activities (Table 4.5; see also Moens 2006). Working odd hours was not related to time spent on any of the three social activities examined.

Perceived stress

Finally, we related different personal characteristics as well as different aspects of work (including a variable indicating pace of work) to two measures of perceived stress: one was a general question in the survey asking whether people felt 'hurried' in their free time; the other was constructed using seven identical questions, each asked after one of the seven days for which respondents kept a diary, on whether people had felt stressed that specific day (for more information on the variables, see Knulst 2005; www.tijdsbesteding.nl).

Gender, educational levels, household situation and pace of work are all (significantly) related to both measures of stress (Table 4.6; see Knulst 2005). Total amounts of obligations were not (significantly) related to either measure of perceived stress (*ibid.*, but see Moens 2006). Working odd hours was not related to feeling hurried in free time, though negatively related to the chance of experiencing at least one stressed day during the week of the survey. Apparently working evenings, nights and weekends does not make people feel more stressed, rather the other way round. Additional analyses suggests that especially people that work two or more odd time slots experience significantly less time pressure (when controlled for total load of obligations and pace of work). What exactly causes this decreased perception of time pressure – more time to visit shops and services during the daytime or to pick up kids from school, general lowering of interests and ambitions – remains a matter for further investigation (see Moens 2006).

CONCLUSION: LACKS OF THE 24-HOUR ECONOMY, CONTINUOUS TIME PRESSURE

In the 1990s, labour relations and the political climate in the Netherlands provided the right conditions for a significant acceleration in the process of flexibilisation. As part of this process, legal restraints for shift work during evenings and weekends and for shops to remain open at such times were lowered, providing more opportunity for work at odd hours and for the rise

of a 24-hour economy. Whereas part of society regarded the process of flexibilisation as an inevitable outcome of and possible solution to growing time pressures, others feared that flexibilisation of time would further increase the speed of life and result in even more time pressure.

From our analyses of the Dutch SCP Time Use Studies (as well as of the Dutch Labour Force Surveys and two related surveys), we can conclude that work on evenings, nights and weekends is not as odd as is sometimes suggested. Roughly half of employees work evenings, nights and weekends. This has been the case for quite some time now. We also found that the share of odd working hours is much smaller – generally 12-14% – and that this figure is not increasing over time. The main reason for this is that more and more work is performed at offices, in contact and communication with others. Working evenings, nights and weekends remains 'odd' (Baaijens 2005). It is far more common, and over time to an increasing degree, for unpaid work to occupy people during evenings and weekends (Knulst 2005). The main effect of increased labour force participation is that more work is being performed, at all times. And since most work is being performed during office hours, unpaid work is being pushed into evenings and weekends, thereby adding to the time pressure.

Most people that do work odd hours do so as an extension of their regular working day. This holds especially true for the higher educated. They generally have more control over their working time, and work less often nights and weekends than does the smaller fraction of the labour force that works shifts.

In our analyses we found working odd hours not to be related to less time spent on social activities or to higher feelings of hurriedness or perceived stress (Roberts 2002; Moens 2006). Working more than just the evening or the Saturday at odd hours does have a negative effect on amounts of free time (Presser 2003), though the effect does not increase with larger time slots worked at odd hours.

As for the future of working times, it would seem that working time will remain largely fixed during traditional office hours and weekdays (with perhaps some increases in work taken home, and more domestic tasks intruding on traditional leisure settings, like evenings and weekends). The good thing about this is that life will keep its rhythms and routines, allowing for the planning of social life and for respecting biological rhythms. The downside is that one should not expect traffic jams to disappear or peak times for Christmas shopping, vacation periods or other leisure events to level off.

Globalisation will pressure countries into harmonising their organisation of time. As such, local bank holidays may gradually disappear over time, and Southern-type siestas will become subjects of debate – in fact, elimination of the siesta to maximise productivity is a current issue in Spain these days. Globalisation will also imply increasing pressure on national governments to deregulate their legislation. This could turn out negatively for workers who depend on such legislation, e.g. employees

with less favourable positions on the labour market (the lower educated, women, ethnic minorities).

It is as yet unclear what the advent of new ICT technologies might mean for the temporal organisation of work. As more and more work involves the analysis and production of information, technology might facilitate individuals' time sovereignty. People can take work home more easily. Whether this does in fact mean that they will work at different hours, and on different (weekend) days, remains to be seen. The outcomes of the SCP Time Use Survey suggest that the core of shop floor (office) working time will remain weekdays and office hours. To the extent that websites and internet services replace actual physical outlets (pretty much like automatic bank tellers taking over much of the function of customers' desks in banks), ICT might mean that fewer people will work odd hours in order to deliver round-the-clock services to consumers.

As for the future of time pressure, it appears that those people who argued that flexibilisation would speed up life and further increase time pressure have little to fear. The evidence provided here in no way suggests that in the future a greater share of work will be performed on evenings, nights and weekends, nor that working odd hours is associated with feeling time-pressured.

If we label this as good news, then the bad news is that time pressure is here to stay. All efforts undertaken to counter time pressures, like flexibilisation, teleworking, ICT solutions and extended shop opening hours, can be deemed irrelevant as long as citizens do not lower their ambitions. In the end, the experience of time pressure stems from the perception of not being able to realise certain ambitions (Knulst 2005; Moens 2006). In turn, our views on ambitions are deeply intertwined with our views on success (in terms of a linear process of increasing goal realisation) and our perception of time (as a limited entity). In order to truly decrease time pressure, we need to change our perception of time. As Sebastian de Grazia (1962:310) already postulated over forty years ago: 'As long as our basic time concepts remain unchanged, it is useless to look for relief to timesaving gadgets'.

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5 Under pressure: time and time pressure in Flanders

Maarten Moens

INTRODUCTION

The members of modern western societies seem to suffer from severe time famine. Robinson and Godbey (1997) report for the US increasing feelings of time pressure among all social strata. Many spectators have described this situation as paradoxical, since the increasing time pressure is accompanied by an increase of free time (Gershuny 1992; Godbey and Robinson 1997; Robinson and Godbey 1997; Bittman 1998; Letho 1998). The relevance of topics such as time pressure, time competition, time famine and stress in today's society is illustrated by the multitude of (pseudo-) social scientific publications. Some of these studies explain contemporary time problems on the basis of certain aspects of the cultural or structural evolution of modern societies (Schor 1991; Elchardus 1996; Goudsblom 1997; Gleick 1999; Geldof 2001; Achterhuis 2003). Cultural explanations refer to the modern, strongly standardized, and rationalized conception of time (Elias 1993; Adam 1995; Achterhuis 2003) or to the way individualization and flexibilization undermine collective rhythms and strengthens temporal uncertainty (Garhammer 1995; Geldof 2001; Breedveld and Van den Broek 2002). More structural explanations search the evolution from a breadwinner society towards the dual earner family as standard family model (Hochschild 1989; Elchardus and Glorieux

1994; Van der Lippe 1998), the rise of material prosperity (Linder 1970) or the rise of the educational level (Knulst and Kalmijn 1988; Robinson and Godbey 1998).

In most studies we find two conceptions of time pressure. The first conception defines time pressure as time use, e.g. as time spent on obliged activities, such as paid labor, domestic tasks and/or childcare (Vickery 1977; Hochschild 1989; Schor 1991; Gershuny 1992; Bittman 1998; Sullivan and Gershuny 2001). We would like to call this approach the objective conception of time pressure. The second approach conceives time pressure not as time use, but as a specific subjective experience of time (Robinson and Godbey 1996; Letho 1998; Sullivan and Gershuny 2001; Takala 2002). From this point of view the experience of time, and time use, is not necessarily the same for everyone, but dependent on cultural and structural circumstances and the experience of those circumstances (Marks 1977; Van der Poel 1988; Elchardus and Glorieux 1991; Glorieux 1995; Flaherty and Fine 2001; Loy 2001). From this point of view the relation between time use and the feeling of time pressure is not equal for everyone. Some authors suggest even that time pressure is especially a discourse, independent of any actual behavior (Letho 1998; Hamermesh and Jungmin 2003).

This research goes into two research questions. First we investigate how objective time pressure, in terms of time use, is related to feelings of time pressure. Secondly, we go into the question of how time use patterns explain the feelings of time pressure of sociological groups. In section 2 we describe the origins and theoretical backgrounds of objective and subjective time pressure. Both research questions are documented empirically using Flemish time budget data. A description of data, methods and variables is given in section 3. The 4th section reports the empirical answers to both research questions. The chapter ends with conclusions and discussions (section 5).

OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE TIME PRESSURE

Objective time pressure

When time pressure is discussed, it is most often seen as an obvious consequence of the nature of time (Moore 1963; Linder 1970; Devisch 1997; Achterhuis 2003). Time is seen as an arithmetical and irreversible thing, just like in Newtonian physics (Van der Poel 1988). As a consequence of this premise, every use of time diminishes the available amount of time for other activities. This western time culture got its theoretical representation in neo classical time use theories (Moore 1963; Becker 1965; Linder 1970; Vickery 1977). The most popular variant considers time pressure as time spent on obliged activities, such as paid work, household chores or childcare (Bittman 1998; Robinson and

Godbey 1998; Zuzanek et al. 1998; Sullivan and Gershuny 2001). The time used for these activities is from an individual point of view considered as restrictive for other activities, since it curtails the remaining time budget. Another application of this objective conception of time pressure shifts the focus to meso and macro levels of social action. From this point of view time scarcity results from socio-cultural arrangements, such as differentiated social roles (Marks 1977; Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Coser 1991; Van der Lippe 2003). Often it is impossible to fulfill several roles at the same time. This conception of time pressure focuses on problems of time allocation and time coordination, rather than simple time use (see Southerton and Tomlinson 2005). A number of recent social evolutions imply that these problems are more expressly present today than before (Bell 1976; Sirianni 1991; Elchardus 1996). The increased female labor market participation, deregulation of labor times and growing leisure possibilities, are often related to time allocation and coordination problems.

Subjective time pressure

Several observers have questioned the objective grounds of raising time pressure in western societies. Michael Bittman (1998:366) puts it as follows: "Despite the weight of popular opinion about increased time pressure, it appears that, at worse, average hours available for free time activities have not decreased and that at best, and certainly for women, they have most likely increased."

According to Godbey and Robinson (1997), the rising time pressure is only partly a consequence of objective time squeeze, but to a great extent a consequence of expectations and perception. According to Southerton and Tomlinson (2005) experiencing time pressure suggests the sentiment of time shortage, being rushed, "the feeling or anxiety not to be able to perform self-defined important tasks and activities within the available timeframes". It is the fear of being inundated by different tasks coming at you all at the same time, according to the authors. In other words, time pressure is the sense of not disposing of enough time to do what we want or have to. This is the problem of objective approaches of time pressure: they do not take the experience of time into consideration. According to Elchardus (1991) time is not only consumed but also continuously socially produced through individual experience. Action is not necessarily based on the situation as such, but on norms, values and moral discourses. As such the use of time is subjected to different perceptions and experiences and is differentiated among individuals and social groups (Jahoda 1988; Glorieux 1993; Flaherty 2002). That's why a high workload is not necessarily the same as the feeling of time pressure.

Hypothesis: relations between objective and subjective time pressure

How do objective and subjective time pressure relate to each other? In this paragraph we discuss a number of objective time use variables which are often seen as indicators of time pressure, both in popular discourse and in scientific literature. Apart from the most prevalent indicator of objective time pressure, i.e. workload, we consider a number of different factors of problematic time allocation and coordination. Within the category of factors of time allocation and coordination, we further distinguish between general indicators, work related indicators, and factors related to leisure time. These indicators of objective time pressure will be related to the subjective feeling of time pressure.

Workload

Workload – the sum of paid and unpaid labor – is by far the most widely used indicator of objective time pressure (Bittman 1998; Robinson and Godbey 1998; Zuzanek et al. 1998; Sullivan and Gershuny 2001). The reason therefore is closely related to a dualistic perception of time, whereby instrumental and goal-attaining perceptions of time are considered to be opposite time categories (Marx 1919; Elchardus 1983; Glorieux 1995). Work related activities are experienced in terms of obligation, efficiency and rationality. Time uses related to leisure time are, to the contrary, considered to be related to self-development, individual freedom and personal preferences. Both concepts have a problematic, tense connection, because it is impossible to optimally pursue both at the same time. Time spent on obligations is often experienced as a curtailing of individual freedom. Due to the perception of restricted individual freedom, workload leads to the feeling of time pressure.

Problems of allocation and coordination

Apart from the workload other time uses are associated with time pressure. In particular indicators referring to multiple roles and activities in different life spheres are associated with time pressure (Marks 1977; Knulst and Van Beek 1990; Tremblay and Villeneuve 1997; Van der Lippe 2003; Southerton and Tomlinson 2005). Today we live in a differentiated and complex society, in which individuals dispose of multiple life trajectories. Numerous societal developments result in more options and possibilities open to individuals, or conversely more life spheres lay claim on the individual (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2003). Each of these time orders has its own rhythm and its own temporal structure (Mongardini 1987). The time structuring for the individual, the family or the group has as such become more complex and problematic than before (Elchardus 1996).

There are also a number of evolutions specific to the sphere of leisure that lead to potential problems of allocation and coordination (Linder 1970; Knulst 1989). Wim Knulst (1989:138) refers to "...a differentiated

program of leisure activities” as “a restriction in the choice from alternative possibilities in recreational usage and media consumption” as a form of time pressure. Like Linder, he states that in a society, that is characterized by increasing welfare, consumption will become shallower and hasty, and as such become a source of time pressure. When we have a broad repertoire at our disposal, a further elaboration of that repertoire would imply that we were to invest less time in the already available activities and goods. Southerton and Tomlinson (2005) attribute time pressure with leisure omnivores – consumers whose leisure behavior is characterized by a broad and varied repertoire of activities – mainly to problems of coordination. In an omnivorous leisure time pattern individuals are required to keep many appointments, or respect numerous opening and starting times of certain institutions, e.g. the curtain time of performance arts.

Work schedules

For the working part of the population there are a number of additional work related mechanisms that can potentially explain their feelings of time pressure. We distinguish between atypical work times and time sovereignty in the work place.

According to several authors we are faced with increasing time pressure as a consequence of the deregularization of work times (Sirianni 1991; Garhammer 1995). Although we are not faced with a massive widespread flexibilization in Flanders and the Netherlands, certain groups are confronted with unpredictable and divergent work times (Breedveld 1998; Glorieux et al. 2004). Atypical work times can be a source of time pressure because of desynchronization towards society. Desynchronization can lead to a lack of temporal grip and a problematic time coordination (Garhammer 1995). Employees with divergent schedules often face the impossibility of participating in leisure or family activities, because of their working times (Roberts 1998).

Aside from divergent work times, the level of task autonomy or time sovereignty of the employee is also relevant in the discussion on time pressure. A labor situation characterized by a high level of time sovereignty allows workers to adapt – within certain margins – their work schedules to individual (time)needs. As such the time sovereign worker can better attune his work times to other life spheres such as the family, children and leisure time, and it can diminish his sense of time pressure from problems of time coordination. That seems like a positive thing and some authors highly appreciate this form of labor organization because of the enhanced effect on life quality (Elchardus and Heyvaert 1990; Humblet et al. 1991; Sirianni 1991; Beckers 1996). Others point out the perverse consequences of this category of jobs (Letho 1998; Peters 2001). The increased autonomy of employees with high time sovereignty is often translated into greater individual responsibilities and strong commitment to their professional lives. The increased responsibilities for

the produced output gives a less predictable schedule of work times, which then leads to more pressure and fewer possibilities for balancing work with other life spheres (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2002).

DATA, VARIABLES AND METHODS

Data and methods

This study will test the relationships between objective and subjective indicators of time pressure empirically for Flanders by using quantitative data collected in the Flemish time use survey TOR'99 (Glorieux et al. 2000). For this study 1535 Flemish citizens between 16 and 75 kept a diary of their time use during a full week, complemented by two face-to-face interviews of the same sample. The registration of the diaries followed a precoded list of 154 activities. The data was corrected for the population, weighing for sex, age and level of education.

In the following paragraphs we will discuss the relations between the dependent and independent variables both in a bivariate and a multivariate way. With regards to the multivariate testing, we will use the structural modeling technique AMOS, which builds on multiple linear regression (Arbuckle 2003).

Both for the bivariate connections and the structural models, we will always use two populations: (1) the total sample of 1535 respondents and (2) the working population within that sample (N=847). This is necessary due to the fact that several independent variables are related to the working population specifically, and by default will be missing for the inactive part of the population.

The dependent variable: feelings of time pressure

We measure the actor's subjective time pressure using a scale of factor scores, consisting of 14 statements, that respondents have to assess for personal suitability on a five-point scale (ranging from completely agree to completely disagree) (Table 5.1). The items intrinsically measure, both in general and with regards to leisure time, the feeling of time shortage, of temporal overload, of dissatisfaction with the available time and of hard to redeem obligations, ambitions and expectations as a result of temporal constraints.

The items constitute a unidimensional scale. A principal component analysis delineates one factor with a total eigenvalue of 6,39 and explained variance of 45,67%. The statements construe an internally consistent scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0,91. For the following analysis we use the respondent's factor scores as dependent variable.

Explaining characteristics: levels of objective time pressure

In the empirical part of this paper the feeling of time pressure will be explained by time use variables. Secondly we will examine to what extent high feelings of time pressure among particular social groups can be explained by their time use characteristics. In this section the operationalization of the explaining (independent) variables will be discussed.

Time use variables

Table 5.2 gives an overview of the objective indicators of time use that will be used as explaining variables for the feeling of time pressure. They were constructed based on the diary information and the accompanying survey data of the time use research TOR'99. Table 5.2 presents an overview of the used variables and the data source (diary (D) or survey (E)) from which they were produced.

Sociological groups

The second research question goes into the relationship between social groups, time use, and the feeling of time pressure. Social groups can be distinguished by their experience of time pressure. The experience of time as well as the mechanisms at the basis of feelings of time pressure, will therefore not be the same for every social group in a society. It is important to investigate which time uses cause the sense of busyness in different social groups. We will concentrate on a number of social characteristics, as discussed in international literature as key variables. Table 5.3 gives an overview of the background characteristics that will be used in the analysis in the following sections.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In this section we will analyse the relationships between time uses (objective measures of time pressure) and the subjective feeling of time pressure using time budget data. First we discuss the relations between time uses and the feeling of time pressure. Afterwards we discuss the experience of time pressure for the distinct social groups. Finally we try to explain the feelings of time pressure of the distinct social groups by their time use.

Relations between objective and subjective time pressure

How do time uses or objective measures of time pressure relate to the subjective feeling of time pressure? A bivariate analysis shows that the sense of busyness is closely related to a high workload (Table 5.4). But

this is far from the only factor that contributes to a heightened sense of time pressure. Problems of coordination provoke time pressure as well. A daily activity in multiple life spheres, numerous transfers between life spheres, interrupted leisure activities as well as an omnivorous leisure time pattern all lead to more time pressure. Within the Flemish working population we find similar patterns, regarding work load and general problems of time allocation and coordination. The working population however does not show a differing sense of busyness according to their leisure time behavior. Working at atypical times and especially the level of time sovereignty do play a decisive role in the experience of time pressure. Divergent work schedules and a work situation with a high level of time and task sovereignty cause more feelings of time pressure. It is important to note that time sovereignty in the work place does not temper the sense of time pressure as some authors have suggested (Table 5.4). A high level of time sovereignty in the work place concurs with greater feelings of time pressure. The individual degrees of freedom with regards to work time and content do not compensate (enough) for the high involvement with the work situation. Responsibilities placed with time sovereign workers are likely too great to compensate for the unpredictability of the workday and to attain a better attunement of the different life spheres.

In order to discern which of the discussed action patterns has the greatest impact on the sense of time pressure, we built a multivariate model where the variables were entered as explaining characteristics. The workload is the most important explanation for the experience of time pressure with the Flemish population (Table 5.4 – model 1). The more time spent on obligations, the higher the sense of time pressure. The strong connection between work time and the feeling of time pressure seems to indicate that – in our society – work time is experienced as unfree time and a limitation of our own time. Workload is however not the only time use pattern that leads to a feeling of time pressure. As time use becomes more diverse, in terms of more (transfers between) life spheres, leisure time often interrupted or an omnivorous leisure time pattern, feelings of busyness increase. The explanatory power of general problems of coordination decreases strongly when workload is entered into the model. Problems of coordination therefore should be seen mainly as part of a time use pattern with a high workload. Nevertheless an autonomous effect remains.

The pattern for the working population differs significantly from the above mentioned dynamics for the total Flemish population (Table 5.4 – model 2). After controlling for other characteristics only the level of time sovereignty and the workload in general have a decisive influence on the sense of time pressure of the working population. The weak relation between problems of coordination disappears after controlling for the level of time sovereignty in the work place. The other dimension of atypical work – i.e. divergent work times – does not contribute to the sense of time

pressure after controlling for the other variables. This is likely due to the fact that divergent work times are often found with employees that have a high level of time sovereignty.

Time pressure of sociological groups

Now that we know how objective time use patterns relate to a sense of time pressure, the question remains which subgroups of the Flemish population experience the highest sense of busyness and through which time use patterns that time pressure arises. Table 5.5 presents a summary of the bivariate relations between the discerned sociological groups and the feelings of time pressure. Agreeing with international research on the topic it is predominantly two-wage earners, people in the busy age and the highly educated that experience a great sense of time pressure. Women score higher than men do, yet that effect is only barely statistically significant. These same tendencies can be found in the working part of the Flemish population, albeit women no longer score significantly higher than working men. Furthermore the differences between working Flemings inside and outside the busy age are less pronounced than with the total Flemish population as a whole.

Flemish men and women do not differ in the level of time pressure, when controlling for the other variables. Being part of a two-wage family, however, as well as having a high level of education and being between 24 and 42 years old remain – after mutual control – the most definitive sociographic characteristics for the experience of time pressure (Table 5.5 – model 3). For Flemish workers a high level of education and a working partner are the most important characteristics for their sense of busyness (Table 5.5 – model 4). The busy age no longer remains as a conclusive trait for the level of time pressure among the working population, after controlling for the other variables. The differences we found regarding time pressure between the various age groups seem to relate mostly to educational distinctions within the working population.

The time pressure of sociological groups explained

The final question we try to answer is which time use patterns lead to feelings of time pressure in the different sociological groups. Two graphical AMOS models can answer this question. Below we present the final models. They include only the significant variables. The first model applies to the total population (Figure 5.1). The coefficients beside the arrows should be read as standardized regression coefficients, such as betas. More technical details are reported in Table 5.6.

The workload is the most important explanation for the sense of time pressure with two-wage earners and those in the busy age (Figure 5.1). They appear to cross a “critical boundary” with regards to workload. That

can also be seen in other numbers generated based on the TOR'99 time use study. Thus it would seem that the Flemish two-wage earning family, compared to the breadwinner family, spends 18 hours per week more on obligatory tasks (Glorieux et al. 2001). In the busy age 10 hours per week are added to the individual workload when compared to people aged 43 to 65. After the age of 65 the average workload is no less than 20 hours lighter. Beside their high workloads the life pattern of two-wage earners and people in the busy age is defined by their daily presence in multiple life spheres, several transfers between life spheres and an interrupted leisure time pattern as a result of domestic obligations and child care. Such problems of coordination are a secondary cause of a heightened sense of busyness.

The pattern of time pressure differences related to educational attainment of the Flemish population looks slightly different though. The greater sense of time pressure with the highly educated is not a result of their higher workload. Their busyness materializes through time allocation and coordination problems. As educational level increases, people are active in multiple life spheres on a daily basis, are confronted with more transfers between life spheres, and their chances of an interrupted leisure activity increase. That means the highly educated "(s)hop" from one life sphere to another. This will likely be related to the broader interest spheres and higher ambitions the highly educated have, according to a number of authors (Robinson and Godbey 1998; Takala 2002). As education level rises, the alternative choices increase and the ambition to be involved in multiple societal spheres increases as well.

Figure 5.2 holds a summary of the corresponding model for working Flemings. As indicated earlier, the only meaningful differences in time pressure arise from two-wage family membership and educational attainment. The tendencies for these groups of people are in accordance with the mechanisms for the population as a whole. The time use mechanisms found in professional situations, namely the level of time sovereignty, appear to only add to the explanation of the feelings of time pressure of the working highly educated. This subgroup often works in jobs with a high level of time sovereignty. This professional situation is the most important explanation for the sense of time pressure of this target group. Their time sovereign work situation may allow for temporal adjustments according to private and other needs, however it clearly does not compensate for the apparent high level of commitment required by their work situation.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In western societies time is often seen as measurable and extra-human. From this conception a utilitarian time culture has grown, in common sense culture and in social sciences. Time pressure is often seen as the

accumulation of time uses. The most popular variant considers time pressure as time spent on obliged activities, such as paid work, household chores or childcare. Other variants refer to time pressure as problems of coordination. This contribution prefers to see time pressure as an experience of time. It is the feeling of having too little time to do what one has to or wants to do. The variability of time experiences implicates the question of how time use is related to the feeling of time pressure.

The workload one has, amplifies unmistakably the feelings of time pressure. As time spent on obligations rises, feelings of time pressure follow. This strong relationship can be interpreted as the persistence of the dualistic conception of time (Elchardus 1983). The differentiation between working time and leisure time, has led to two incompatible norm and value systems. The time spent on obligations is today still experienced as a curtailing of individual freedom. Since work is experienced as time pressure, we assume that the utopian ideal is to be freed from work, in a still dominant time experience pattern.

Especially for two-wage families and people in the busy age severe workloads are the most important mechanism in explaining their feelings of time pressure. The knowledge that one third of Flemings are living in a two-wage family (60% of the working population), and half of the population is between 24 and 42 years old, indicates the importance of this phenomenon.

Closely related to workload problems are problems of coordination. Modern life, with its plurality of life paths, raises feelings of time pressure. A time use pattern with many transitions between life spheres and a big diversity of life spheres supports feelings of time pressure. This is not that strange, as many life spheres implicates many temporal orders. Combining temporal orders of family and professional life is distinguishing for higher educated, two-wage earners and people in the busy age.

Beside these general mechanisms, different sources of time pressure feelings seem to be located in the labor organization. A high degree of time sovereignty especially gives cause for higher feelings of time pressure. This mechanism is particularly important for the higher educated. Probably a greater possibility to gear professional life to family life, is not sufficient to compensate negative effects of higher professional responsibilities. As research illustrates, time sovereignty is often combined with high levels of individual responsibility at work, which expresses itself in blurring borders between work time and private time and long hours (Glorieux et al. 2004).

Concluding, we can confirm important relationships between time use behaviors and feelings of time pressure. Nevertheless, there remains a lot of room for other explanations. This urgent societal problem needs a lot of further research. Alternative operationalizations of time use patterns may lead to new insights, as well as the exploration of cultural patterns. Robinson and Godbey (1996) suggest for example the relationship of high

ambition and expectation levels, and feelings of time pressure. Also the differences in men's and women's feelings of time pressure needs further exploration.

NOTE

1 This battery combines two series of items. Items 1 to 8 were developed by the Ministry of the Flemish Community, Planning and Statistics department (Ackaert and Swyngedouw 1995). Items 9 to 14 were developed by the Dutch Nederlandse Social and Cultural Planning Office (Peters and Raaijmakers 1998).

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Part II

Workplace and household related causes

6 Trading off or having it all? Workers' preferences for work and family time¹

Judith Treas and Christin Hilgeman

INTRODUCTION

Time no longer marches on, imposing the discipline of its martial rhythm on our days. Rather than offering the industrial efficiency of Taylorism, time, we are told, is now making a muddle of our lives. Like poorly fitted undergarments, time now “binds” (Hochschild 1997), “squeezes” (Clarkberg and Moen 2001; Leete-Guy and Schor 1991), and “crunches” (Coltrane 1996). Like socks that have made too many trips through the washing machine, hours are said to be “mismatched” (Reynolds 2003). In short, how we spend our time does not correspond comfortably with our preferences.

Concerns with a time bind are particularly acute in the U.S. According to Schor's (1993) startling estimate, Americans in 1987 worked a month more than they had in 1969. Studies have re-examined this “overworked American” thesis using alternative data and measures to track trends in work hours (Robinson and Godbey 1997; Rones et al. 1997; Jacobs 1998; Jacobs and Gerson 2001). Although there is some skepticism as to whether work hours have actually increased, at the very least, the U.S. stands out for maintaining its average workweek even as it has declined in other Western countries (Gershuny 2000). While the average workweek is the same, the percent of Americans who are working a very high number of hours (e.g., over 48 hours weekly) has grown, particularly among those with high earnings (Rones et al. 1997).

Rising female labor force participation has driven the increase in labor supply. For married people, there is a shift toward dual-career couples and away from the breadwinner-homemaker couples in which the wife had time to specialize in the household. The increase in women's labor force participation contributes more to the married couple's joint time-squeeze than does the increase in average working hours, although there

is an emerging subset of American couples where both spouses work very long hours – together clocking over 100 hours of paid work weekly (Jacobs and Gerson 2001). As these developments suggest, women – with their heavier household responsibilities – may feel more conflict about time than do men.

Contemporary concern with time focuses on the poor fit between the temporal demands of home and work. The complaint is that there is not enough time, or not enough of the right kind of time, to meet the competing demands of our lives. On the one hand, sociologists and the media describe paid work as leaving workers with insufficient time to meet the social, emotional, and domestic needs of their families. On the other hand, employers suspect that the demands of family life (e.g., office phone calls to latchkey children at home) compromise work effort, causing workers – especially women – to be distracted from their jobs. Concerns about time competition have given rise to calls for a “mommy track” offering part-time work to women professionals. These concerns have also sparked an incipient social movement touting a lifestyle that emphasizes simple living and leisure over lavish consumption and long workweeks.

These concerns assume not only that time is scarce, but also that time devoted to one activity must be traded off against time devoted to another activity. There are reasonable objections to viewing time usage as a zero-sum game. Framing work time as stealing from family time ignores the possibility of multi-tasking. Work and family activities may be carried out simultaneously (e.g., doing work brought home from the office while supervising children) (Mattingly and Bianchi 2003). Trade-offs also assume that productivity in a particular activity (and only that activity) increases with the time spent doing it. Whatever the human capital gains from activity-specific investments, working too long results not only in declining marginal productivity, but even in negative productivity. This is why airline pilots are limited as to how many hours they can fly as well as why family caregivers of the disabled seek out respite services. Furthermore, while workplace demands sometimes spill over into the home and undermine the household production of domestic bliss, spillover may have a beneficial effect on family life. Energized by a stimulating job, a worker may approach the demands of family and household with greater enthusiasm and forbearance.

In short, there are logical objections to the notion that work and family (and the time devoted to each) are inevitably in opposition. Rather than assume a world driven by trade-offs, this study considers explicitly how people prefer to use their time. We emphasize time use preferences, rather than time use behavior, because external constraints (e.g., labor laws regulating work hours) may prevent workers from achieving a preferred balance of family time and work time. Preferences are also of interest, because long hours do not necessarily translate into a bothersome time-bind or work-family conflict if long work hours and limited

family time are preferred. Therefore, we ask: Do the desires of workers correspond to a zero-sum logic? In the calculus of working people, are preferences for work and family framed as trade-offs? Do those who want to spend more time with family want to spend less time at work? Not only has research on the time-bind failed to question the presumed trade-offs between work and family, but it has also assumed that a long workday equates with unmet family needs and the desire for more family time. Thus, this paper offers an empirical check on the relationship between workers' desires for work and family time.

WORK HOURS

One prominent approach to the time bind focuses on how much people actually work. Rather than being measured directly, the deleterious effects of work hours on family life are inferred from the time demands of employment. Economists usually construe hours worked (that is, labor supply) as a choice variable (Schor 1993; Becker 1981). So do some sociologists, such as Hochschild (1997), who argues that Americans now prefer their long work hours to escape the pressures and conflicts of the home. Workers, however, do not describe themselves as having much choice over the number of hours that they work (Daly 1996). Some part-time workers would rather work full-time jobs (that typically come with benefits like health insurance). Some full-time workers prefer to work overtime. In 1997, almost 6 in 10 American workers wanted to modify their hours of work – 22% wanting to work more hours and 37% seeking to work fewer hours (Reynolds 2003). Involuntary part-time employment leaves many people with less work than they want, but even among full-timers, 18% of men and 10% of women wanted more hours. Others work more than they wish. In the U.S. in 1997, 22% of men and 15% of women who worked full-time preferred fewer hours (Reynolds 2003).

Despite the intrinsic rewards of work, many people work because they need money. According to the backward bending labor supply curve of economic theory, labor supply increases with increasing wage rates, but persons with high wages eventually cut back their work hours to enjoy more leisure. Unfortunately for this theory, American workers clocking the longest workweeks are professionals and managers – people who have the highest incomes and who are usually not even eligible for overtime pay (Rones et al. 1997). Perceptions of family economic needs have subjective and normative components, but they also have some basis in objective reality. Financial pressures do influence work behavior. Credit card debt leads wives to work more than they would prefer while having a home mortgage encourages husbands to take on more work than otherwise (Clarkberg and Moen 2001). Few say they want to work fewer hours if it entails less income (Sousa-Poza and Hennenberger 2002).

Institutional constraints and customary practices lead people to work

more (or less) hours than they prefer. U.S. laws define a standard workweek for certain workers and mandate time-and-a-half pay for work beyond this limit. To contain fringe benefit costs, employers sometimes create jobs that require employees to work part-time (without employer-paid benefits) or over-time, rather than full-time. Other constraints derive from employer preferences or cultural conventions. There are substantial differences between countries in the hours that women normally work and in definitions of what constitutes "part-time" employment (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk 2002). A cross-national study demonstrates that the very long hours of U.S. software engineers derive from country-specific workplace practices and are not the inevitable consequence of the work that must be done (Perlow 2001).

Because the amount of time spent on the job is taken as a measure of commitment in corporate America, working fewer hours is perceived to have significant career costs (Hochschild 1997). Those who see themselves having better advancement opportunities want to work more hours (Reynolds 2003). Working longer than desired is not confined to managerial and professional ranks, however. In Britain, male manual laborers work more hours than they prefer, in part, because their job insecurity allows employers to impose longer hours (Stewart and Swaffield 1997). Given the disparity between preferred and actual work hours, the number of hours an individual works is hardly a reliable indicator of preferences for work, much less preferences for time with family.

WORK HOURS AND FAMILY LIFE

There are various definitions of work-family balance, including stress-free management of one's work and family roles (Lobel 1991). About 15% of working Americans define themselves as unsuccessful in balancing work and family (Milkie and Peltola 1999). The number of work hours is negatively associated with the individual's perception of success (Milkie and Peltola 1999). Family-work adjustments are the norm and often take the form of wives working part-time. Tellingly, partners in employed couples where the wife works only part-time are not as likely to desire reduced hours as are dual-career couples where the wife works full-time (Moen and Dempster-McClain 1987). Fully 32% of workers report cutting back on work due to family responsibilities, but an even larger percent report taking on additional work to meet family needs (Milkie and Peltola 1999).

Wanting to work fewer hours need not signal a desire to devote reclaimed hours to family life. Friends, hobbies, and household chores also beckon. In 1977, about one-half of mothers and two-thirds of fathers claimed that they were willing to work fewer hours and make less money in order to spend more time with their spouse and children (Moen and

Dempster-McClain 1987), but recent research finds only 10% of Americans would trade income for fewer work hours (Sousa-Poza and Hennenberger 2002). How willing people are to trade family time for more work remains to be seen. Survey evidence does not seem to support Hochschild's (1997) thesis that people who are dissatisfied with family life work more hours to avoid their vexing kin (Brown and Booth 2002).

Hours of work figure prominently in accounts of time binds. Work obligates time that might otherwise be used for family activities. Of course, even a relatively short workday presents synchronizing problems when work is scheduled at the particular times when kin need assistance or are themselves available for joint activities. Nonstandard hours – evenings, weekends, rotating, or split shifts – are known to disrupt family life for this reason (Presser 2003). That work schedules contribute to perceptions of time bind is only one reason why the number of hours worked is an imperfect measure of work's impact on the adequacy of family time.

Work may generate "negative spillover," the transmission of fatigue, bad moods, and inappropriate behavior from workplace to home (Roehling et al. 2003). Exhausting work leaves little energy for family life at the end of the day. Long hours contribute to exhaustion, but other factors, such as the pace and volume of work, shape perceptions that workplace demands are onerous (Voydanoff 1988). Survivors of corporate downsizing complain about being worn out, because they are expected to accomplish more work in the same amount of time. However, just as few Americans report work-family imbalance (Milkie and Peltola 1999), few are seriously troubled by spillover. Only 10% of middle class, married Americans reported high negative spillover; unfortunately, men with high work-to-family spillover were likely to have wives who were similarly stressed (Roehling et al. 2003). Interestingly, workers are as likely to report positive spillover between work and home. A high level of activities, especially activities to which one is strongly committed, may even be energizing (Marks 1977; Thompson and Bunderson 2001).

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH WORK-FAMILY IMBALANCE

Favorable work conditions can help workers meet family needs. Shorter work hours are negatively associated with perceptions of work-to-family conflict (Voydanoff 2004). Perceived control over work schedules and employment demands buffers perceived work-family conflict (Voydanoff 1988). Women who have flexible work times are more successful in balancing work and family (Moen et al. 2003), but control does not change work hour preferences (Reynolds 2003). Neither shift work nor flexible employment is significantly related to wanting to work fewer hours (Moen and Dempster-McClain 1987). Whatever the workplace climate, job insecurity heightens work-family conflict (Voydanoff 2004), perhaps

because those who fear for their jobs are afraid to miss work to meet family obligations.

Personal values condition the perception of work as a burden, conflict or distraction in family life (Marks 1977; Thompson and Bunderson 2001). American men who view work as "life's most important activity" are less likely to desire fewer work hours than are those who rate work less highly (Reynolds 2003). Valuing a job for high income is positively related to wanting more work hours. Those who value advancement opportunities are less likely to want to cut back.

Besides workplace demands, household demands affect work-family balance. Having children in the home increases perceptions of work-family conflict (Voydanoff 1988). Although the number and ages of children do not affect willingness to reduce work hours, perceptions of work-family interference do predict work preferences (Moen and Dempster-McClain 1987). Compared to single, childless men, husbands who had children and homemaker wives wanted more work hours, perhaps because they needed more money (Reynolds 2003). There is evidence that recent cohorts of fathers, particularly those who do not regard childcare as only the mother's responsibility, favor shorter work weeks (Kaufman and Uhlenberg 2000).

Because women take on more domestic responsibilities, their time allocation preferences are more sensitive than men's to family influences (Clarkberg and Moen 2001; Moen and Dempster-McClain 1987). Women's free time is compromised by multi-tasking and frequent interruptions by household demands (Mattingly and Bianchi 2003). Given men's traditional commitment to breadwinning, they are more likely to invoke work demands as an excuse for not participating in domestic routines (Marks 1977; Daly 1996). Agreeing that it is important to spend time with their children, American fathers see this as requiring costly trade-offs against work (Daly 1996).

HYPOTHESES

Workers often say that they would prefer to work longer or shorter hours. The question is whether workers who are interested in reducing their work hours are also interested in spending more time with family. Do people recognize work time and family time as necessitating trade-offs? Are "overworked" Americans willing to embrace a lifestyle involving less work but more time with family?

Being married and having children should be positively associated with the desire for more family time, because spouse and children raise both the value of "time with family" and kin demands for face time. We expect the effect of family composition to differ by gender. Because women perform most domestic roles, we expect their desire for family time to increase with marriage and children. Although men sometimes express a

desire for more time with children, they can also fulfill their family obligations by maximizing work, not family, hours.

Work conditions are likely to affect preferences for more time with kin. If work time and family time compete, longer workweeks will characterize those who want more family time. Being exhausted from work compromises the quality of family time and, we hypothesize, requires more family time to accomplish family ends. Workers with control over scheduling may find it easier to meet family "production targets" even without having more time with family members. Thus, flexible work will be negatively associated with the preference for more family time. Assuming higher income offers the luxury of pursuing higher order needs (Inglehart 1977), income will be positively associated with the desire for family time. If income permits the substitution of quality time (e.g., family ski trips) for quantity time, it will be negatively associated.

Next, we ask whether wanting more family time is associated with wanting less time at work. Consistent with trade-offs between home and workplace, we hypothesize a negative relation between these two time preferences. We anticipate a negative association of preferred work time with being married and having children. Desired work hours, however, are known to relate to other characteristics of the worker and the workplace. Being able to set one's work hours should reduce the need to work less, just as exhausting work should prompt preferences for fewer work hours. Respondents who endorse the importance of work activity will be less likely to want to work fewer hours. Because income constrains work preferences, higher income will be associated with a preference for less work. Because proximity to retirement increases the salience of working less, age will be negatively associated with preferred work hours.

DATA AND METHODS

This analysis uses U.S. data collected in 1998 for the Work Orientations II survey. In cooperation with the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), this survey was fielded by NORC as a supplement to the General Social Survey. Our sample is limited to working adults, ages 18-65. Given listwise deletion of missing values, the effective sample size is 626 cases for family time preferences.

The independent variables are respondent's desires for family time and work time. As virtually nobody voices a desire for less time with kin, we recode this as a dummy variable (wanting more time with family=1, else=0) for multivariate analyses. Work time preference is treated as a trichotomous dependent variable (less time=1, same time=2, more time=3). We analyze the dichotomous family time variable using logit analysis and the trichotomous work time variable using multinomial logit. Separate analyses are conducted for men and women.

Independent variables include two measures of family composition:

marital status (married=1, else=0) and the presence of children, 18 or younger, in the household (present=1, else=0). We distinguish between work that is part-time (less than 35 hours weekly), full-time (35-48 hours), and excessive-time (49+). Five categories gauge how often the respondent returns from work exhausted. How much freedom the respondent has to choose the starting and finishing times for work is measured by a dummy variable (respondent sets hours=1, employer sets hours=0). A five-category Likert item measures agreement with the statement "work is a person's most important activity." Control variables include respondent's income measured by 23 income categories and age (treated as a linear variable as preliminary analyses found no significant non-linear effects).

FINDINGS

Table 6.1 presents the cross-tabulation of preferences for work time and family time by gender. A majority of male and female workers prefer different work hours. More respondents favor less work than want more. The story for family time is very different. The overwhelming majority says that they would like more time with family. Although 13% of men and 14% of women are satisfied with their current situations, almost nobody (1%) states a preference for less time with family. If there are Americans longing to escape the stress of family life, they are too circumspect to report this desire. In analyses below, we distinguish between those who want more time with family and those who do not.

There is no statistically significant relationship between men's family and work time preferences. The relationship for women, however, is negative and statistically significant ($p < .05$). Women's responses are consistent with a trade-off between work and family time. Men's are not. These gender differences in the logic of time preferences may be a realistic reflection of the fact that women have responsibility for family life without the expectation of full-time employment (Treas and Widmer 2000).

Time with Family

Table 6.2 shows the factors associated with the desire for more family time. We hypothesized that having co-resident family members leads to wanting more time for family. Being married is positively associated with wanting more family time for women ($p < .05$, one-tailed test) but falls just short of statistical significance at the .05 level for men. Children are associated with preferring more time with family for men ($p < .05$) and women ($p < .001$). Women living with children are 3.7 times more likely to prefer additional time with family than are women in childless households. Age has no effect controlling for family life course variables. Income increases the preference for family time for men ($p < .05$) but not women.

Contrary to expectations, very long workweeks do not increase the demand for family time nor does part-time employment reduce this desire. This finding of statistical insignificance for men and women also held in other analyses (not shown) that treated work hours as an interval-level variable. If hours do not matter, then it is not surprising that being able to set one's own work hours is not statistically significant either. Having an exhausting job is not significant although it approaches the .05 level for women. Wanting less work is significant only for women ($p < .05$); wanting more work is not associated with desire for family time for men or women.

Time for Work

The multinomial logit analyses focus on two preferences for altered work hours – wanting less time at work and wanting more time at work – as contrasted with preferring to work the same amount of time. Table 6.3 presents the results separately for working men and women.

Men who are married are 1.8 times more likely ($p < .05$) to prefer less work, but having children and desiring more family time are not significantly related to men's wanting to work fewer hours. Despite speculation that fatherhood prompts heroic breadwinning efforts, there is no evidence that men with families prefer to work more than they are doing either. Men's preference for more family time does not equate with a reluctance to take on more work.

Men's preference for work hours is not significantly associated with their actual work hours. All things considered, long work hours are not associated with a desire for less work, and part-time work is not linked to a desire for more work. Being able to set one's own working hours, however, is negatively associated with men's preference to work less ($p < .05$), but flexible hours do not relate to their willingness to take on additional work. Men with exhausting jobs are more likely to say that they would like to work less ($p < .01$). Exhaustion is also positively related to wanting to work more ($p < .05$), possibly reflecting insufficient time to get work done. Men who value work highly are not as likely as other men to report that they want to work less ($p < .01$). Income is not significantly linked to a preference for more work, but higher income increases the likelihood that men will want to work less ($p < .05$). Age is not statistically significant.

For women, wanting more time with family increases the likelihood of women preferring to work less ($p < .05$), but family time preferences are not related to preferences for more work. Being married increases the desire for shorter working hours ($p < .05$) and decreases their desire for longer ones ($p < .01$). Children are not significantly associated with women's work preferences, however. All things being equal, work hours, whether long or short, are not significantly associated with work preferences. Neither being able to set one's working hours nor having an exhausting job is significantly related to women's desire for less (or more) work. Women

who believe work is an important activity are less inclined to yearn for less work ($p < .01$) (even if valuing work does not prompt a desire to work more). Age is not statistically significant, but income predictably increases women's desire for less work ($p < .001$) and decreases their desire for more ($p < .05$).

CONCLUSION

Studies on work hour trends and perceptions of work-family imbalance assume a zero-sum competition between work time and family time. By examining stated preferences for work and family time, this paper offers an empirical check on this assumption. Are Americans' time-use preferences grounded in the pragmatic logic of trade-offs between time with family and time at work? Or, are time preferences wishful thinking expressing a desire to have it all, particularly to have more family time without cutting back at work? We first asked whether workers who long for more time with family are those with onerous workplace demands – a relationship suggestive of time competition and work-family trade-offs. We then inquired whether those who want more time with family translate their desire into a preference for fewer work hours.

Contrary to the time competition thesis, work hours do not drive the demand for more family time. Furthermore, while women's preferences conform to the logic of time competition (i.e., desiring more family time and less work time), men's preferences do not. Women's work preferences are consistent with balancing family needs against the time demands of employment. Despite suggestions that American men are giving more thought to this balance, their preferred work hours reflect their work values and work conditions (i.e., scheduling flexibility and exhausting jobs), rather than the constraints of family time. Apparently, women think in terms of trade-offs while men think about having it all. The implication is that women will continue to be the ones who calibrate their time to meet family demands. At least for now, men's work preferences seem driven largely by work conditions and the breadwinner role, rather than by a quest to invest more fully in partnering and parenting.

To be sure, Americans value time with family. While some workers are satisfied with their current family arrangements and most would prefer more time with kin, hardly anyone admits to wanting to see less of family members. Family circumstances distinguish workers' family time preferences. Men and women want more family time if they have children, and at least women also want more family time if they are married. Despite the time competition argument, longer working hours are not what differentiate those who want more time with family from those who are satisfied with family time.

Furthermore, the logic of time competition does not hold for working men. Men's desire for more (or less) work is not related to having

children. Nor is it related to their preference for more family time. Men's work hour preferences are not related to their actual work hours – objective measures of time competition. Instead, job conditions and financial considerations dominate work preferences. Flexibility in working hours is negatively associated with men's desire to work less. Having an exhausting job is associated with preferring different work times. Men who value work highly are less likely to want to work less. Men with higher incomes want to work less, presumably because they can afford to do so. In sum, although several variables predict preferred work hours for men, these factors are not the stuff of work-family competition. Longer work hours do not predict men's desire for less work. Nor does a voiced preference for more family time translate into a desire for less work.

Time competition is a female predicament. Women who want to work fewer hours are those who say they want more family time. Their voiced preference recognizes a trade-off between work and family that men's do not. This gendered time bind cannot be inferred from general trends in the length of Americans' workweek. At the same time, women's responses leave little doubt that the era of separate spheres for men and women is passing. Women who value work highly have little desire to work fewer hours. Family time preferences show that women who want to work longer hours are not in retreat from the stresses of family life, as Hochschild (1997) has posited. Their desire to work more hours is motivated by income considerations. Men may give lip service to family time, but preferences for family time and work time confirm that American working women give more serious thought to balancing their commitment to both spheres.

Thus, this study arrives at three findings that inform contemporary debates on the time bind. First, although the constraints of a 24 hour day imply a trade-off between work and family time, not everyone thinks about work and family in this zero-sum way. Men often voice a desire for more family time, but only women who want more family time think in terms of less time on the job. Second, all things considered, longer work hours do not translate into a desire for more family time. We cannot assume that individuals feel more pressed for family time as the average work week grows longer. Third, there is no evidence that the workplace has become a refuge from the family. Hardly any Americans admit to wanting less time with family, and the desire to work longer hours is not determined by family time preferences.

NOTE

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7 Employees' preferences for longer or shorter working hours

Kea G. Tijdens

INTRODUCTION

The desire to work shorter hours on the job is a logical response to a potential solution to time pressure. To what extent can governance structures within the household as well as organisational characteristics of the workplace explain the varying desire for shorter working hours? Will revised working time regimes facilitate better solutions for the household's time allocation problems? This chapter analyses working time preferences from household as well as workplace characteristics.

Working time preferences have been investigated recently. In the United States, such research was stimulated by Juliet Schor's (1991)

study on the overworked American. Jacobs and Gerson (1998) ask what overworked Americans want, using 1992 CPS data. Nearly half of American workers indicated that their usual working week was longer than their ideal hours. Approximately one-third was satisfied with their hours and the remaining group preferred longer hours. The overworked European has not been addressed to the extent the overworked American has. Nevertheless, the percentages of workers in the European Union preferring other hours are almost identical to those in the USA, according to the 1998 Employment Options of the Future Survey, covering 15 EU member states plus Norway (Bielenski et al. 2002:43). Exactly half of the workforce surveyed preferred shorter hours, slightly over one-third was satisfied with their current hours, and the remaining group preferred longer hours.

Regardless of the high percentages of workers whose ideal working hours do not match their usual hours, few studies have addressed the factors that may determine individual working time preferences. The present contribution aims to expand this knowledge by modelling individual working time preferences from current working hours, household and family characteristics, and job characteristics, using Dutch employee survey data. A review of the literature is followed by the model, methodology and data. Next, the hypotheses for three clusters of variables explaining preferences for longer or shorter working hours are tested.

EXPLANATIONS OF WORKING TIME PREFERENCES

Working time preferences may address the standard working week at the workplace, the usual working hours or the contractual working hours. It is important to distinguish between these three categories. Preferences for a reduction of the standard working week are realised in collective bargaining or in legal settings, and may lead to an increase in hourly wages. Preferences for a reduction of the usual working hours primarily refer to overtime and may or may not affect wages, depending whether the overtime is paid or unpaid. Preferences for a reduction of the contractual working hours may be difficult to realise in countries where it is very common to work full-time and where the full-time working week is equal to the standard working week. In countries such as the Netherlands, which is characterised by high rates of part-time employment and variation in the contractual full-time working week, a preference for individual reduction of the contractual hours is a realistic option. In such cases, this reduction will affect weekly or monthly wages but not the hourly wages.

In times when the reduction of the standard working week is high on the political agenda, surveys measuring the preferences for a collective working time reduction are very sensitive to the precise wording of a

question regarding reduced hours with or without full wage compensation (Nätti 1995). Similarly sensitive are survey questions that refer to individual working hours. Kahn and Lang (1995) describe how Statistics Canada in a supplement of its 1985 Labour Force Survey used a long introduction to the questions on desired hours, to ensure that respondents understood that hypothetical hour reductions would imply prorated salary changes. In the 1994 labour market surveys of the European Commission the survey question also addressed the prorated salary changes, showing that 29% of the workforce preferred shorter hours (Contensou and Vranceanu 2000). However, in surveys where the prorated salary changes are not explicitly addressed, the percentages of employees preferring shorter hours are higher – as shown for 50% of the workforce in the EU plus Norway in the Employment Options of the Future Survey (Bielenski et al. 2002). The reason is that apart from the hourly-paid workers, the group of employees with unpaid overtime hours can express their preference for shorter working hours.

For quite some time, Statistics Netherlands in their Labour Force Survey has investigated working time preferences, using a very strict survey question: 'Do you prefer to work longer or shorter hours within the next six months, taking into account that your earnings will change accordingly?' In 2003, 84% of the dependent labour force were satisfied with their working hours, whereas 6% (4% of the men and 8% of the women) expressed a desire to work longer hours and 10% of the employees (9% of the men and 12% of the women) indicated a preference to work shorter hours (Statistics Netherlands 2006). Asked in a far more general way, 'Would you like to work longer or shorter hours than you currently do?', the WageIndicator survey revealed far lower percentages of working time satisfaction for Dutch employees. In 2001 and 2002, only 56% were satisfied, whereas 7% preferred to work longer hours and 37% preferred to work shorter hours. These figures are in accordance with findings in another large Dutch survey using a similar question (Otten and Smulders 2002).

Explaining working time preferences from standard, usual and contractual hours

Differences in working hours across countries must be understood in the context of country-specific institutional arrangements (OECD 1998; Bielenski et al. 2002). According to the OECD (1998), countries with a more developed collective bargaining system have shown a faster decline in working hours. Moreover, countries with relatively low average annual hours tend to be those in which the average preference for reduced hours is relatively strong and for higher earnings relatively weak, indicating that these countries have succeeded in realising the average preferences. The impact of the standard working week – albeit for one single country – is taken into account in analysing predictors of the preferences for individual

working hours.

At the individual level, according to the Employment Options of the Future Survey, the current working time exerts the greatest influence on the working hours preference, although the general preference of employees is less widely dispersed than the actual working times (Bielenski et al. 2002). Other studies also reveal a similar large impact of usual hours on preferred hours (Otten and Smulders 2002; Euwals and Van Soest 1999). The longer the individual working week, the higher the preference for shorter working hours, and vice-versa. Bivariate data from Statistics Netherlands reveals higher preferences for longer hours for employees in short part-time jobs compared to long part-time jobs and full-time jobs, and the reverse holds for the preferences for shorter hours. Multivariate analysis of data of 28 organisations in the Netherlands and 1319 employees within these organisations reveals that the relationship between current working hours and working time preferences is different for the two genders. Male full-timers are significantly more likely to have a preference for shorter hours and their preference for longer hours is insignificant, whereas female full-timers have an insignificant preference for shorter hours but they are significantly less likely to have a preference for longer hours (Baaijens et al. 2005). Overtime hours also exert a gendered pattern. Women regularly working overtime express a preference for both shorter and longer hours, whereas their male counterparts express a preference only for longer hours.

Some employees are paid on a salaried basis, thus per month or other period, rather than on an hourly basis. According to Ehrenberg and Smith (1997), the term is used this way merely for convenience and is of no consequence for most purposes. The distinction between salaried and hourly-paid employees is not meaningless when it comes to analysing working hours preferences though. Salaried employees may express preferences for shorter working hours more often and the reverse may hold for hourly-paid employees, although salaried employees would invest in their career and thus in future higher earnings by working longer hours.

In conclusion, for the current study it has to be assumed that the standard working week, the contractual working hours and the overtime hours will influence the individual working hours' preferences. It is also important to identify salaried workers and hourly-paid workers, assuming that their preferences differ. For salaried employees it may be important to take into account the employee's career orientation. Employees' educational levels and job insecurity must also be considered.

Explaining working time preferences from household characteristics

Weekly working hours reveal highly gendered patterns. In nearly all industrialised countries, women work on average shorter hours than men do, and this is mostly attributed to the domestic tasks women perform in addition to paid work. Using data of the Employment Options of the Future

Survey, Bielenki et al. (2002:40-42) show that men would like to reduce their working time by about twice as much as women, but their preferred times are on average still around 6.5 hours longer than those of women. By realising these preferences, the working time differences between the genders would remain, but at a significantly lower level. Men's preferences are clustered within the 30-40 hour range, women's around the 20-, 25-, 30-, 35- and 40-hour marks.

The presence of children has a significant influence on women's usual or preferred working times – or on both – except for Belgium (Bielenki et al. 2002). For the Netherlands, children of any age have a significantly negative influence on the usual working hours, but not on the preferred hours. Presumably, this is caused by the availability of part-time jobs and the possibility of reducing hours in the job, as legally regulated. By contrast, in seven of the sixteen countries children positively influence the usual working hours of men, and in two countries children positively influence their preferred hours. An exception is Norway, where men with children up to age 5 prefer shorter hours. The authors conclude that, for women, household-related factors have the largest influence on working time preferences. According to analyses of the same dataset by Väisänen and Nätti (2002), children under the age of 10 positively influence the likelihood of women in dual-earning households preferring shorter working hours for the household in total, whereas men are more likely to prefer longer hours for the household. The effect of the life cycle may be intertwined with the effect of age. In their study of the Canadian Survey of Work Reduction, Kahn and Lang (1996) find that the desire for overtime hours declines with seniority.

The Netherlands is known for its high part-time rates. Studying desired and usual working hours for unmarried individuals based on the Dutch Socio-Economic Panel, Euwals and Van Soest (1999) reveal that women easily adapt their working time to their preferences, in contrast to men. Compared to other EU member states, in the Netherlands the gender roles regime is the best predictor of a woman's likelihood of holding a part-time job (Tijdens 2002). Moreover, her wage rate is the best predictor that she considers outsourcing her domestic tasks as a means to increase her working hours while holding leisure time constant (Tijdens et al. 2001). This chapter takes into account the impact of the life cycle and the wage rate in determining working time preferences.

Explaining working time preferences from job-related factors

Job-related factors may influence employee preferences. According to Otten and Smulders (2002), job commitment increases the preference for longer hours significantly, while a high workload and an orientation towards leisure time increase the preference for shorter hours. Bielenki et al. (2002) also included job-related characteristics in their analyses, but these variables turned out to be significant only in a limited number of

countries. (Note that their study aimed at predicting preferred hours and not the preference for shorter or longer hours.) In eight of the sixteen countries, higher job satisfaction increases the number of preferred working hours. In three countries, (perceived) good job prospects influence preferred hours, which is reflected in a preference to work fewer hours. Surprisingly, the attitude 'working to earn money' influences preferred hours only in two countries: in France, employees showing this attitude prefer longer hours, and their Danish peers prefer shorter hours. Job-related characteristics as perceived by the employee are thus assumed to have an impact on the preferences for working hours. These characteristics relate to factors such as job satisfaction, commitment, prospects and workload.

MODEL AND DATASET

Hypotheses and methodology

The overview in the previous section, where current working time is assumed to be influential, leads to hypothesis 1:

Preferences for shorter working hours are expected for employees with long working hours, long overtime hours and a long standard working week as well as for salaried employees, whereas preferences for longer working hours are expected for employees with short working hours, no overtime hours and a short standard working week as well as for hourly-paid employees. These analyses need to be controlled for education and job security.

A second cluster of explanatory variables relates to household and family characteristics, leading to hypothesis 2:

Preferences for shorter working hours are expected for female employees with children at home, employees whose partners have long working hours and employees with high wage rates. Preferences for longer working hours are expected for male employees with children at home, employees whose children have left home, employees whose partners have short working hours and employees with low wage rates.

A third cluster of explanatory variables relates to job characteristics, leading to hypothesis 3:

Preferences for shorter working hours are expected for employees who aim at minimising working hours because they perceive their job as a burden, and preferences for longer working hours are expected for employees who aim at maximising working hours because they perceive

their job as a challenge.

Employee preferences for longer or shorter working hours will be modelled according to the hypotheses, using multinomial logit analyses. This analysis tests the likelihood of being in either category of working time preferences. Its odds ratios tell us for a particular characteristic how many times greater or smaller chances are that the employee will fall into the preference category 'longer hours' as against 'shorter hours', holding all other variables constant.

Survey and data

The data for this paper stem from the WageIndicator project, which was initiated in 1999 and still continues today (www.WageIndicator.org). This project consists of a website; a crowd-pulling salary check on the website, where visitors specify their age, tenure and other relevant factors and then receive instantly calculated information on the hourly and monthly wages in their occupation, using coefficients of wage equations for almost 350 occupations; and a web-based survey about wages and working conditions which visitors are asked to complete. The data from this questionnaire are used for the salary check as well as for academic research. This is the largest website in the Netherlands providing information about wages, with two million visitors a month and about 1,000 of them completing the questionnaire. The website is a joint effort of the main Dutch trade union federation FNV, a large publishing and Internet company, and the University of Amsterdam/AIAS.

The questionnaire asks about profession, industry, job, employment record, working hours, earnings and household characteristics. The dataset used in this study was collected between May 2001 and October 2002 (see for a detailed methodological exploration Tijdens 2004). To ascertain representativeness of the WageIndicator 2001/02 data, distributions by age and gender for individuals in waged employment for at least 12 hours per week have been matched against the comparable group in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) conducted by Statistics Netherlands. The comparison reveals that the 25-34 age group and females are over-represented. The latter is due to the fact that before 2001 the survey addressed women only. The data set is weighted by age and gender to approach the LFS distributions. The weighted dataset counts 21,265 observations (Table 7.1).

The WageIndicator survey has seven questions that address employee working times. These questions include the standard weekly working hours at the firm, the working weekly hours agreed in the labour contract, the usual working hours per week, whether overtime hours are paid, a self-classification as full-timer or part-timer, and yes/no questions on preferences for longer and shorter working hours. The last question has no explanation about prorated wage changes, as reduction of the

standard working week with full wage compensation has not been discussed in recent years in the Netherlands and because it is well known from the high part-time rates that working shorter hours implies a prorated decrease in income. Overtime hours are defined as the difference between usual and contractual hours, under the condition that the usual hours exceed the contractual hours. The dependent variable in the analysis is the preference for shorter or longer hours. Respondents with no preference are classified as satisfied with their working hours.

Some employees will have unmet preferences for a longer period of time than others, hence the unsatisfied group will be biased. In the current study the duration of the unmet preferences is not known, so the analysis cannot be controlled for this bias. A second bias may be due to recent changes in family life, leading to new working hours preferences, or to recent changes in employment status, leading to a better job match, including working hours. Initial analysis showed that employees with less than one year of experience in the labour market are indeed satisfied more often. Recent changes in family life did not influence working-hours satisfaction; recent labour market entrants have therefore been excluded from this analysis, and now the dataset counts 17,116 observations (Table 7.2).

Descriptive findings

Table 7.1 shows the distribution of the explanatory variables over the preference categories as well as their frequencies. It shows that 56% of the respondents are satisfied with their current working hours, 37% prefer to work shorter hours and only 7% prefer to work longer hours. The highest satisfaction with working hours is found among employees working 20-29 hours, followed by females whose children have left home. Lowest satisfaction is found for employees with conflicts in their department, followed by males whose children have left home, employees working overtime and employees whose job will become redundant in the foreseeable future.

Before turning to the analysis, a few features of average working hours not included in the table will be described. On average, male employees work 3.9 hours a week more than contractually agreed; the figure for female employees is 2.8 hours. In contrast to female employees, for male employees the usual working hours rise with contractual hours. On average, male employees with 37 contractual hours report 6 or more extra hours, while those with labour contracts for 36.2 hours a week report 0 extra hours. It matters whether the extra hours are paid, be it directly or by time-compensated overtime. Employees whose extra hours are paid work on average fewer extra hours (3.1 extra hours and 33.9 contractual hours) compared to employees whose extra hours are unpaid (4.9 extra hours and 36.1 contractual hours). It is thus obvious that overtime payment reduces working time.

Statistical analysis

In the next section, the focus of the analysis will be on the preference for shorter or longer working hours. From analyses not presented here, it can be concluded that having a routine job does not influence working-hours satisfaction, so this will be excluded. Regarding family phase, analyses have shown large gender differences. This leads to the conclusion that one analysis will do, provided that the variable of family phase is split into male and female dummies. There is no need to continue with separate analyses for females and males.

To analyse the preference for longer or shorter working hours in greater detail, a multinomial logit analysis was performed to predict the likelihood of an employee having a preference for either longer or shorter hours, when taking satisfaction with working hours as reference category. Three clusters of explanatory variables are used, as proposed in hypotheses 1-3. The family phase variable has been split into male and female dummies. The results are shown in Table 7.2, presenting the odds ratios and the T-values.

PREDICTING A PREFERENCE FOR LONGER OR SHORTER WORKING HOURS

The impact of working time characteristics

Working time characteristics affect working time satisfaction, as has been shown in the previous section. In hypothesis 1 it is assumed that working time characteristics will also influence the likelihood of an employee's preference for shorter or longer working hours. The bivariate results in Table 7.1 reveal that employees with short usual working hours are more frequently found in the category that prefers longer hours, while the reverse holds for employees with long usual hours. A similar pattern occurs for employees in workplaces with short versus long standard working weeks. Table 7.1 also shows that employees with long overtime hours more frequently prefer shorter working hours, as do salaried employees.

Table 7.2 reveals that the bivariate findings from Table 7.1 are confirmed in the multinomial logit analysis. The longer the standard working week at the firm, the more likely the employee will prefer shorter hours and the less likely the preference for longer hours. For example, an employee in a firm with a 36-37 hour standard week is 0.7 times less likely to prefer shorter hours compared to an employee in a firm with a standard working week of 40 hours or more. A similar pattern can be seen for the usual working hours per week. The longer the usual working week, the more likely the employee will prefer shorter hours, and the less likely

longer hours will be preferred. For example, an employee with a usual 20-29 hour working week is 4.2 times more likely to prefer longer hours compared to an employee who usually works 40 hours per week or more.

For purposes of the analysis, overtime and overtime payment have been put together, as the two jointly may affect the preference for fewer or longer hours. Table 7.2 shows that, in comparison to the salaried employee, the hourly-paid employee, whether currently working overtime or not, is 0.8 times less likely to prefer shorter hours. When it comes to the preference for longer hours, the findings are not so clear. Compared to employees not working overtime, employees working overtime are more likely to prefer longer hours. Particularly the hourly-paid employee working overtime is more likely to prefer longer hours, as is the salaried employee working overtime. At first glance this is a puzzling finding. An explanation may be that these employees already work overtime as an expression of their preference to work longer hours, for example because they work short hours according to their contract. Indeed, compared to other employees the average contractual working week in this particular group is lowest, notably 27.5 hours compared to 36.0 hours in the group that also has overtime but expressed a preference for shorter working hours.

The impact of gender, life cycle, household and wages

With regard to household and family characteristics, hypothesis 2 assumes that working hours preferences will depend on gender, family phase, partner's working hours, and a wage rate above or below € 10. Table 7.1 reveals that female employees with children who have left home are the most satisfied (62.4%), whereas their male counterparts are the least satisfied (only 47.5%). These men overwhelmingly prefer shorter hours. In contrast to the hypothesis, female employees with children under age 12 prefer shorter working hours the least, whereas their male counterparts prefer shorter hours nearly as much as male employees whose children have left home. It is quite likely that female employees with children at home have made their decision on working hours dependent upon the fulfilment of their preferences. In all family phases, male employees are less satisfied with their working hours than females, except for the first phase of family formation, before having children. When it comes to the partner's working hours, Table 7.1 reveals that satisfaction with working hours hardly varies across the three categories. A breakdown by gender (not in the table) reveals that male employees without a partner often prefer to work longer hours, whereas male employees with a partner who works less than 25 hours often prefer shorter working hours. The female employees reveal the same pattern, though less outspoken. When it comes to hourly wages, Table 7.1 reveals a high likelihood that the hypotheses will be supported. Employees in the low-earnings category prefer shorter hours less often and longer hours

more often.

Table 7.2, including results of the multinomial logit analysis, seems to confirm the interpretation of Table 7.1. Family phase appears to have a significant influence on the likelihood of both shorter and longer hours, but the effects are contrary to those expected. Compared to the category of employees whose children have left home, women who have no children are far more likely to prefer shorter hours, while men who have no children are far less likely to prefer shorter hours. Women with children at home are not significantly more likely to prefer shorter hours. This is in contrast to the hypothesis, where it was expected that female employees with children at home would be the ones eager to work shorter hours. For female employees, adaptation to working time preferences probably is a major constraint to their professional availability. Men with children at home are less likely to prefer shorter working hours. Compared to employees whose children have left home, women with no children or with children at home are more likely to prefer longer hours. The latter group probably has part-time jobs and expresses a desire for longer hours. The reference group 'employees whose children have left home' is most likely to prefer shorter working hours. In conclusion, the hypothesis is only confirmed for male employees without children.

With regard to the partner's working hours, this condition has no significant influence on working time preferences, except for employees without a partner. They are 1.7 times more likely to prefer longer hours compared to the reference group, consisting of employees with a partner working 25 hours or more. This part of the hypothesis is thus partly confirmed.

When it comes to the impact of hourly wages on working time preferences, Table 7.2 reveals that employees with a gross hourly wage of more than € 10 are 1.5 times more likely to prefer shorter working hours than employees earning less than € 10. Employees with a gross hourly wage over € 10 are 0.5 times less likely to prefer longer working hours than employees earning less than € 10. This part of the hypothesis is thus fully confirmed.

The impact of job characteristics

In hypothesis 3, perceiving the job as a challenge or as a burden was assumed to affect working time preferences. Table 7.1 reveals that employees who have an interesting job and who are eager to have a career are satisfied with their working hours more often and prefer shorter working hours less often, as expected for employees perceiving their job as a challenge. Employees who report recurrent conflicts at the workplace are satisfied with their working hours far less often; some of them prefer shorter hours and others prefer longer hours, more than employees who do not report conflicts. Finally, those employees reporting insufficient staffing are satisfied with their working hours far less often, and

overwhelmingly prefer shorter hours.

The results of the multinomial logit analysis in Table 7.2 fully confirm the descriptive findings. The two indicators for a challenging job indeed show that these employees are less likely to prefer shorter working hours. Both employees who indicated that their job became more interesting last year and employees who are eager for careering are 0.6 less likely to prefer shorter hours. The latter group is also 1.7 times more likely to prefer longer hours. With regard to the job being a challenge, the hypothesis is thus confirmed. The results are not so decisive when it comes to the preferences of employees perceiving their job as a burden. Employees reporting conflicts at the workplace and insufficient staffing are more likely to prefer shorter hours, respectively 1.4 and 1.3 times. The findings for a preference for longer working hours are insignificant. Thus, with regard to the job being a burden, the hypothesis is mostly confirmed.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, the desire to work shorter hours on the job may be a logical response to time allocation problems in the household. To this end, explanations were studied for working time preferences for both shorter and longer working hours, using cross-sectional multinomial logits for the 2001/2002 WageIndicator dataset (N=17,116). Three hypotheses have been investigated. The first hypothesis assumes that working hours characteristics determine working time preferences. It turns out that the longer the working hours – both the standard working week at the workplace and the employee's usual working hours – the more likely the employee will express a preference for shorter hours and the less likely a preference for longer hours. This confirms earlier findings by Bielenski et al. (2002) and Baaijens et al. (2005). The analyses also show that hourly-paid employees are less likely to express a preference for shorter hours when compared to salaried employees. This applies equally to hourly-paid employees who currently have overtime and those who do not. With respect to the preference for longer hours, the hourly-paid employee working overtime is particularly likely to express a preference for longer hours. Hence, current overtime hours may very well be regarded as an expression of interest to work even longer hours. This category of employees has indeed a relatively low average working week. Almost all findings are as expected.

The second hypothesis assumes that family and household characteristics influence working hours preferences, notably household income, wage rate and family phase, whereby the effects for the latter were assumed to differ by gender. This hypothesis however is not supported. As expected, male employees who have no children or who have children at home are less likely to prefer shorter hours than employees whose children have left home. Female employees do not

show a significant effect in terms of a preference for shorter hours. It may therefore be assumed that they easily have adapted their working time to their preferences, or otherwise have withdrawn from the labour market. Contrary to expectations, no significant impact of the partner's working hours on the employee's preferences was found. The hourly wage does have a large impact on the working time preferences: employees with an hourly gross wage of more than € 10 prefer shorter hours far more often and longer hours far less often than employees whose earnings fall below € 10. In conclusion, the effects of the life cycle are opposite to those expected, probably due to the fact that women adapt working hours more easily to their preferences than males do. This confirms previous findings by Euwals and Van Soest (1999). In addition, preferences for working hours seem to be an individual and not a joint household preference.

For the third hypothesis the impact of job characteristics is studied, assuming that employees who perceive their job as a burden will prefer to work fewer hours and employees perceiving their job a challenge will prefer longer hours. As for the preference for shorter hours, the hypothesis is confirmed. Employees perceiving their job as a burden, i.e. facing insufficient staffing levels or conflicts at work, indeed tend to prefer shorter hours. The latter is in contrast to the findings by Baaijens et al. (2005), indicating that insufficient staffing leads to a preference for more hours. As for the preference for longer hours, the hypothesis is only partly confirmed. Employees perceiving their job a challenge prefer longer hours when they are eager to do careering, but other indicators are insignificant.

In conclusion, working hours preferences are predominately influenced by working hours characteristics. This tendency was also found in previous studies. New is the finding that salaried employees want to reduce hours whereas hourly-paid employees prefer to work longer hours, even when controlled for overtime. The study further shows that hourly wages have a large impact on working hours preferences, as the low-earnings category prefers longer hours far more often. New too is that employees in a challenging job prefer shorter hours less often, and vice versa, employees who perceive their job as a burden want to reduce hours. Contrary to public opinion, female employees apparently show a better fit between preferred and usual hours compared to male employees. Thus, although the desire to work shorter hours may be a logical response to time allocation problems in the household, these cases will not be found in the dataset because the survey questions ask for unmet preferences only and not for met preferences. In the Netherlands, female employees are obviously able to match their working time preferences with the job, which should not be surprising given the high rates of part-time employment, the regulations in collective labour agreements and the legislation facilitating individual requests of employees to reduce their contractual working hours.

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8 The puzzle of unpaid overtime: Can the time greediness of post- Fordist work be explained?

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INTRODUCTION

In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, a substantial number of employees work overtime for no pay (Bell and Hart 1999; Wielers and Van der Meer 2003; Eurostat 2004). A recent survey (OSA 2003) reports that 27% of the Dutch labour force put in unpaid hours (against 25% who work paid overtime). Unpaid overtime is a largely neglected phenomenon in the economic literature (cf. Anger 2006). Most studies on overtime concentrate exclusively on paid working hours. This situation is changing, now that mounting evidence suggests that changes in the way employers direct the efforts of employees have important implications for the time claims of work. Recent case studies consistently show that employees in contemporary work structures (often referred to as post-Fordist work designs) spend longer hours at work than in more traditional workplaces (Perlow 1999; Barker 1993; Hochschild 1997; Hyman et al. 2003; Ross 2004). While most impressions about the time claims of post-Fordist work are based on such case studies, the present study seeks to examine the impact of this work design on the basis of a multi-firm survey in the Netherlands.

Why employees would become involved in unpaid overtime is undertheorised and hardly tested empirically (for an extensive overview, see Anger 2006). In most cases, unpaid overtime is not mandatory. The employer has no legal right to demand extra hours. Assuming that people are not completely passive victims of circumstance, they must have some hand in their working overtime, some reasons for doing it. This article

seeks to discern these reasons in relation to post-Fordist work. The aim of the article is threefold. First, we will examine whether unpaid overtime indeed is related to post-Fordist work, as is suggested in the case studies. Second, we investigate more in detail why employees would agree to work overtime hours for no extra pay. The final question is whether these mechanisms can account for the time greediness of post-Fordist work. For example, the relation between post-Fordist work and overtime might be the result of an increased workload. But then, it might also be due to people enjoying their work so much that they get drawn into working unpaid overtime to prolong their enjoyment.

To test the hypotheses, we use data from the 2003 Time Competition Survey (Glebbeek and Van der Lippe 2004), which contains information on a large sample of employees in 30 organisations in the Netherlands. The data are particularly useful for this purpose because they stem from a multi-actor design with information from management on work structures, and from workers on overtime work, work pressure and intrinsic motivation. Through this design we have reduced the problems of common-method variance that arise when determinants and outcomes are obtained from the same source. In the following, we introduce the concept of post-Fordist work, followed by four explanations for why workers would agree to work unpaid non-contract hours.

POST-FORDIST WORK

An increasing body of literature points to the 'greedy' (Coser 1974) nature of what is often called post-Fordist (Amin 1994; DiPrete et al. 2002), post-industrial (Lewis 2003), post-modern (Kumar 1995) or high-performance (Appelbaum et al. 2000; Osterman 2000; Godard 2001) work. These concepts share the assertion that there have been profound changes in the way firms direct the efforts of their employees. Characteristic of this development would be a shift from bureaucratic work designs to more flexible production technologies. This enables organisations to quickly adjust to changing circumstances, due to less predictable markets, intensified global competition and the microelectronic revolution.

Because of the many disagreements about the true nature of the change (cf. Smith 1997), it is not easy to define precisely what should be understood by post-Fordist work. Generally, the concept includes some form of team-based work, enhanced training and career development, and performance-related pay (Ramsay et al. 2000; White et al. 2003; DiPrete et al. 2002; Appelbaum et al. 2000; Perlow 1999). These measures entail management ceding a degree of control to employees and introducing a range of methods which are aimed to increase employee welfare and commitment (Ramsay et al. 2000). At the same time, the responsibility for attaining production goals is shifted further to the worker, and employees bear more responsibility for the quality of their

work and output (Cappelli et al. 1997; Sennett 1998; Buitendam 2001; Ross 2004).

The consequences for the worker of this job design are heralded with phrases like 'employability' and 'empowerment'. By enabling employees to share and apply their knowledge and skills more fully, a more efficient way of working is accomplished (Ramsay et al. 2000; Baron and Kreps 1999). In the most positive accounts this comes down to freeing employees from centuries of suppressive work routines and installing them with challenging tasks, autonomy and fulfilment. The more sceptical appraisals underline the many shadowy sides of this new, flexible way of working (e.g. Sennett 1998; Vallas 1999; Godard 2001). Empirical studies on the time squeeze show that these job characteristics lead to time-greedy workplaces (Godard 2001; White et al. 2003). As Leslie Perlow writes in an in-depth study of this phenomenon (1998:331), 'The gruelling schedules that used to be typical only for top corporate management and self-employed people are becoming more common in one occupation after another'.

It is no coincidence that these longer working hours take the form of unpaid overtime. Paid overtime is mainly restricted to those jobs where the employer can control the pace of work, and this is less the case in the autonomous and flexible post-Fordist settings. In autonomous jobs the salaried worker has always been more common than the hourly-wage worker, and the former is now on the march. Besides, employers only have a real interest in total working time when employees take up expensive space or machinery, and this was more so in the Fordist era of manufacturing bureaucracies than in the post-Fordist era of flexible workplaces. Together, these circumstances result in workers being confronted with unpaid overtime whenever the work takes more time than expected and/or agreed. In their seminal article on unpaid overtime, Bell and Hart (1999:273) state: 'Significant mis-matches between paid-for and actual worked hours are most likely to occur in job specifications that involve complex and broad ranging tasks that incorporate considerable degrees of independent decision-making'. This amounts to saying that unpaid work is the hallmark of the post-Fordist organisation.

To have a better understanding of the influence of post-Fordist work on unpaid overtime, we need not only to test its direct effect, but also to examine the actual mechanisms that constitute this relationship. Why do employees become involved in unpaid overtime? Does empowerment give them good reasons to spend additional time at work, or is it merely work pressure that makes them put in the extra effort? In the next section we review four possible reasons for employees to spend non-contract hours at work for no pay.

WHY EMPLOYEES WORK OVERTIME

In the literature we find a variety of reasons employees spend additional time at work. The greedy nature of post-Fordist work may be explained by these workplaces embodying a combination of these reasons and therefore leading to high levels of unpaid overtime. Work involvement can generally be explained by two main factors: work content and (material) incentives to put in the extra hours. Incentives might be short-term (performance-based pay) or long-term (career advancement). Work content might motivate the employee in a positive way (work pleasure) or in a negative way (work pressure). We will now review these possible reasons for employees to work unpaid overtime, based on the existing literature, and examine whether these mechanisms could explain the time-greedy nature of post-Fordist work. Figure 8.1 depicts the structure of our argument.

Performance-based pay

In economic theory, money is assumed to be the main motivator that leads people to spend time working. It is assumed that the preferred working hours of employees are determined by their optimal combination of income and leisure time. When an individual values extra income more than the marginal value of leisure time, he will put in extra working hours (Smith 1994). Money is a reward, which is why it is probably used often as an incentive to make employees work extra hours, even when overtime is unpaid. In post-Fordist organisations, performance-based pay might be a particular example of this mechanism.

Spending long hours at work mainly for the money might be denoted as the 'time is money' mechanism. In her widely cited book *The Overworked American*, Schor (1992) argues that the urge for money is the main explanation for the current time-squeeze in contemporary society. The work-and-spend cycle pushes employees into working long hours (Schor 1992; Peters 2000). Materialistic values and status competition drive people to seek more income. The social pressure to proverbially keep up with the Joneses, tends to turn luxuries into necessities and drive people into working long hours (Kasser and Ryan 1993; Kasser 2002; Schor 1992).

Performance-based pay might bring about the time-is-money mechanism, but is to be clearly distinguished from paid overtime and the traditional piece-rate work. Piece-rate work is only effective in very specific circumstances, and employers will limit unpaid overtime because it is normally remunerated with a higher wage per hour – employees who get paid for overtime work significantly fewer extra hours than those who do not get paid for it (Cherry 2004). Performance-based pay is a less rigid instrument and more applicable to work processes that are characterised by autonomy and intelligent effort. It comprises a wide range of measures, such as individual and group bonuses for meeting targets and deadlines, and extra rewards for outstanding performances. When the chances of

receiving a reward or bonus increase with putting in more working hours, performance-based pay can be an incentive to work non-contract hours. In conformity with the economic model, employees will put in the extra time when marginal profits surpass marginal costs. Some employees and most economists (e.g. Bell and Hart 1999) will argue that the extra working time is implicitly compensated for, but even then it is commonly classified as unpaid overtime.

Time-dependent career advancement

Workers often put their present work effort into a perspective of skills or career development. The main goal of their present effort is, then, to increase their lifetime-earnings prospects by developing valuable skills and work experience. From this perspective, a job is also a stepping-stone that is used to develop one's human capital and social network. It has been asserted that in the post-Fordist organisation predictable career-paths have given way to more uncertain and competitive promotion systems (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; Sennett 1998; Buitendam 2001). The implications for working hours and overtime may be profound.

The career system can serve as an exemplary case for the near-impossibility of making rational time-allocation decisions over the life course. Suppose a father would like to spend more time with his kids and is considering working part-time. He can weigh the immediate loss of income against the pleasure of being around as his children grow up. But what does this mean for his career and future income? Will he be able to catch up when he decides to pick up the trail in a few years? These uncertainties are weighty, and may be aggravated by the career system of the organisation. Especially when careers are structured by the concept of a tournament (Sørensen 1994), the risks of holding one's pace are severe. 'Time is a crucial dimension of careers', James Rosenbaum wrote in his pioneering study of mobility processes in a large corporation (1984:10). Once you have missed the boat, another may not arrive.

The time-dependent career thus seems to be illustrative of what may be more generally described as a form of time competition. Just like Thurow's (1975) famous job competition model, which states that competition shifts to quality aspects when wages are inflexible or above market-clearing level, the same mechanism may invoke another kind of competition based on a willingness to devote much time to work. Especially when achievements are difficult to compare, employers will seek for other indicators or signals, to have an idea of the quality and motivation of an employee. Constant availability and working long hours are often used as indicators of commitment and capability (Landers et al. 1996; Perlow 1998; Wharton and Blair-Loy 2002; Clarkberg and Moen 2001). Evidence based on large samples suggests that employees who work fewer hours indeed have fewer career opportunities (Román et al. 2004). Recent research also makes clear that those fathers (and mothers)

who positively decide to have a break in their career will pay the price of lower incomes and less career development (Judiesch and Lyness 1999; Glass 2004; Spivey 2005; Román and Schippers 2005).

Work pressure

Work pressure appears to be an important predictor for working overtime (Van Echtelt and Smulders 2003). Fluctuations in market demand are often matched by working extra hours. When workloads are high, employers have good reason to let employees work overtime rather than hiring new staff: overtime is less costly than hiring new workers, especially when it is unpaid.

Efficiency is one of the key concepts in post-Fordist organisations. Companies must be able to react quickly to changes in the market and customer demands. The traditional buffers in work processes have been taken away with the introduction of concepts like lean production and just-in-time management. As a result, unexpected events or setbacks are often difficult to solve within contractual working hours. Nevertheless, employees have been given the responsibility for doing so. Perlow (1999) vividly describes this situation in a case study on engineers. She shows how scheduled tasks are frequently postponed to make room for unexpected events and helping colleagues out of problematic situations. Only when the scheduled tasks have become urgent themselves are they taken care of. In this way, keeping deadlines is always a race against the clock, and in practice tends to lead to long working hours.

Critics of models of empowerment point to the possible harmful consequences for employees, due to increased discretionary effort and workload. Godard (2001) found evidence of the increased workloads and spillover in his study on new organisational practices in Canadian workplaces. In the Netherlands, a study on work in the post-industrial society showed that the pace of work is the single aggravating working condition that increased considerably in the last decades (De Beer 2001).

Work pleasure

Motivation is intrinsic if effort is generated by the work itself or the social environment in which it is being done. The worker is motivated to do a good job simply because he likes to do a good job. Intrinsic motivation theory assumes work to be not a disutility but an engaging involvement appreciated by the worker.

In the literature we find many arguments that working under a post-Fordist regime is more intrinsically rewarding than in more traditional organisations, because work is interesting and stimulating. In her influential book *The Time Bind* (1997), Hochschild argues that in contemporary society households have become more stressful and difficult to organise, while work has become more rewarding and

stimulating. She stresses the positive influence of participatory work structures, teamwork and challenging work environments on employees' commitment and willingness to spend long hours at work.

In their study 'Working 61 plus hours a week: Why do managers do it?' Brett and Stroh (2003) examine a number of possible explanations for working extremely long hours, including the psychological rewards of work. 'Of the theories we tested...the rewards of work hypotheses provided the best explanation of male managers' hours. (...) The jobs these male managers worked were not just well compensated, they were also rewarding in terms of accomplishment and self-esteem' (Brett and Stroh 2003:75). In this context, Bakker and Geurts (2004) refer to the concept of flow, which is experienced by workers who are totally absorbed in their work. Other authors associate the intrinsic rewards from work with the sometimes exorbitant hours employees put in. In his best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida (2002) states that creative work is both challenging and rewarding, as well as time-consuming and stressful. Characteristic of this kind of work is that the lines between work and non-work are blurred or even indistinguishable. When work becomes pleasure, this sometimes leads to unhealthy efforts. As Ross (2004) puts it in his case study on employees in the Internet industry, 'Not by any boss's coercive bidding, but through the seductive channel of "work you just couldn't help doing", had the twelve-hour day made its furtive return' (Ross 2004:255).

METHODS

Data

The Time Competition Survey 2003 is used for testing the hypotheses. These data were collected using a multi-stage sample of 1114 Dutch employees and, if applicable, their partners, from 30 employing organisations in the Netherlands (Glebbeek and Van der Lippe 2004). The information on job characteristics and incentive structures (at the occupational level), undoubtedly crucial to our analysis, was obtained mainly from the management of these organisations. To this end, in every organisation two to four 'occupational groups' were selected. Within these groups, employees were homogeneous in terms of their level of autonomy, the extent to which the work has to be done in fixed hours and locations, and employment conditions. In total, 89 different occupational groups were selected. The management completed written questionnaires on both the general organisation and the specific occupational groups. Employees were questioned through face-to-face interviews and written questionnaires. The hierarchical structure of the data makes it possible to disentangle subjective feelings of time pressure as expressed by the employee and objective characteristics of the workplace as described by

the employer. In order to have sufficient information to test the hypotheses on the time greediness of workplaces, we over-sampled knowledge-based organisations because we expected these dynamics to occur especially in such firms. Large organisations are also over-sampled. Five organisations had 100 employees (FTE) or less, two of which were smaller than 50 FTE. In this respect, the dataset is not meant to be completely representative of the Dutch population.

Measures

The dependent variable: unpaid overtime

Employees were asked their number of contractual hours per week and the average number of actual weekly working hours (travel time excluded). We asked employees whether it is possible to work paid overtime. The number of unpaid overtime hours was defined as the number of working hours in addition to the contractual hours. In our sample, 38.9% of employees work unpaid overtime, ranging from one to forty hours a week on average and a mean of 6.9 unpaid overtime hours a week. There are no models available to deal with both the hierarchical structure of the data and a skewed dependent variable as in this study. To correct for the skewness of the dependent variable we applied the square root, resulting in a variable with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6.3.

Explanatory Variables

- *Work pressure*
Measurement of work pressure is based on the questionnaire regarding work experience and judgment (Van Veldhoven and Meijman 1994), and contains the following three items: 'Do you have to work fast?', 'Do you have a lot of work?', 'How often does it happen that you have to work extra hard to be able to finish something?' (1 = never, 5 = always). Internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) is .73.
- *Performance-based pay*
We asked employees whether they receive performance-based pay at an individual, group or company level (0 = no, 1 = yes). Almost 30% of respondents receive some form of performance-based pay.
- *Time-dependent career*
We developed a scale of five items that measures to what extent time spent working enhances career opportunities and increases the possibility of developing greater skills. The items are: 'Part-time workers have fewer chances to get a promotion', 'In my job there is strong competition between employees', 'Reducing my working hours would harm my career' and 'Colleagues who put in more hours stand a better chance of getting a promotion'. Internal consistency reliability of this scale (Cronbach's alpha) is .67.
- *Work pleasure*

To measure the amount of enjoyment from work, we used an existing scale of 14 items for flow (Scheeres and Bakker 2003). The scale consists of three subscales for absorption, intrinsic motivation and happiness, and we used these three concepts together in one flow scale. The respondent was asked to what degree he agrees with statements like: 'My work makes me feel good', 'My work entrances me' and 'When I'm working I forget everything else' (1 = never, 7 = always). This scale has an internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .88.

- *Post-Fordist workplace*

Our approach to developing a measure of post-Fordist work was to identify the core elements that distinguish it from more traditional work situations. Even though we do not find a clear definition of post-Fordist work in the literature, we believe that four constituent parts are essential: work in project teams, professional autonomy, intelligent effort (learning, creativity), and strict targets and deadlines. These essentials were measured at the second level, i.e. as a feature of a specific group of employees within an organisation. The information was provided by their management, on the basis of items that were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = almost none, 5 = very strongly). These items have a high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha of .84), which allowed us to represent the post-Fordist workplace by one single scale in the analysis.

Control variables

We controlled for whether an employee has a *supervisory position* (0 = no, 1 = yes), because regardless of the way in which work is organised, such a position may increase the responsibilities that are imposed on the employee and therefore increase the number of overtime hours. Forty percent of the employees in our sample hold a supervisory position. We also controlled for *educational level* (11 categories, varying from no preliminary education to PhD, MD). Higher-educated employees will work more often in a knowledge-based organisation. We are mainly interested in the effects of the way knowledge-based work is organised, regardless of the educational level of the employee. By keeping constant for education we are able to distinguish between the effect of this individual characteristic and the influence of the circumstances in which the employee works. In our data, more than one-third of employees hold a university degree and almost one-quarter is educated at the higher vocational level. The large number of higher educated employees reflects our over-sampling of knowledge-based organisations. Additionally, we kept constant for *sector* (0 = nonprofit sector, 1 = profit sector). We also expect that the household situation of the respondent could influence overtime, and therefore controlled for the *percentage of household tasks* an employee takes care of and for having *children* under the age of 12 (0 = no, 1 = yes). We controlled for *age* (continuous variable) and *sex* (0 =

male, 1 = female) because we do not want these demographic characteristics producing artificial results. Finally, we controlled for *wage rate* (net monthly income divided by actual working hours). Note that in the Netherlands the loan of 'salaried' workers is usually related to a defined number of contractual weekly working hours, so we can indeed distinguish unpaid overtime from (paid) contractual hours.

Analysis

Because of the hierarchical structure of the data, a normal regression design would lead to estimation errors; therefore we employed multi-level techniques (e.g. Snijders and Bosker 1999). To this end, the software MLwin was used (Goldstein et al. 1998). In these analyses employees form the level-1 unit, occupational groups within organisations the level-2 unit, and organisations the level-3 unit. We first estimated an empty model (1), which reflects variation in the intercept. We then entered the predictor variables as fixed effects. In model (2) we entered work pressure, performance-based pay, time-dependent career, work pleasure and the control variables. In model (3) we entered separately the post-Fordist workplace and the controls. In model (4) all variables were included. The predictor variables were all standardised. The resulting estimated parameters in the fixed part can be tested by dividing the regression coefficient by its standard error. When the estimation is based on a large number of cases, this ratio approximates a standard normal distribution (Snijders and Bosker 1999). Because our hypotheses are one-sided, we used one-tailed tests and p-values. To estimate explained proportion of variation (R^2), we used the measure recommended by Snijders and Bosker (1999:104).

RESULTS

In addition to providing basic descriptive information about the sample, Table 8.2 presents zero-order correlations between the variables. Table 8.3 presents the results of the multi-level regression analysis.

The first set of hypotheses concerns the influence of work pressure, performance-based pay, time-dependent career and intrinsic rewards on unpaid overtime. These were tested by regressing unpaid overtime on these possible motivators (model 2 of Table 8.3). Work pleasure ($\beta = .12$, $p < .01$) and work pressure ($\beta = .11$, $p < .01$) appear to be strong predictors of spending additional hours at work. We also found a significant though weak effect of time-dependent career opportunities on unpaid overtime ($\beta = .05$, $p < .05$). No effect was found of performance-based pay on unpaid overtime ($\beta = .02$, n.s.). In sum, employees appear to work more unpaid overtime when work pressure is high, when they enjoy their work and when the input of time advances the career. Contrary to our expectations,

performance-based pay does not stimulate workers to put in the extra hours.

The second set of hypotheses concerns the association between post-Fordist work organisation and overtime. This was examined by regressing unpaid overtime on the post-Fordist workplace (model 3 of Table 8.3). The hypothesis was clearly supported: working under a post-Fordist work regime is positively associated with unpaid overtime ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$). Important to note is that this influence is quite substantial, and manifests itself even after controlling for relevant work and household characteristics, such as supervisory position and educational level.

Lastly, it was predicted that the effect of the post-Fordist workplace would be taken over by the four mechanisms when they were put together in a single model (model 4). This would demonstrate that work content and incentives are the underlying explanatory factors for the relation between post-Fordist work and unpaid overtime. To our surprise, the results show that the effect of post-Fordist work remains when adding these variables to the model, i.e. the motivators do not mediate the effect of post-Fordist job design on unpaid overtime. On the contrary, the post-Fordist work organisation represents the largest influence in the model, even larger than work pressure, work pleasure and time-dependent career.

A closer look at the correlations of Table 8.2 may provide a clue to this unexpected result. Work pressure and time-dependent career appear to be positively associated with the post-Fordist workplace ($r = .14$; $p < .001$ and $r = .16$; $p < .001$), although the correlations are certainly not high. We did not find a significant relation between the post-Fordist workplace and intrinsic rewards ($r = -.03$) though, and even found a negative association ($r = -.09$) between the post-Fordist workplace and performance-based pay.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This research has examined the reasons for employees working unpaid overtime in relation to the post-Fordist work structure, using a large dataset from the Netherlands. The results provide strong empirical support for the 'time-greedy' nature of the post-Fordist workplace and are consistent with what has been described in recent case studies (Perlow 1999; Lewis 2003). In addition, we tried to establish the specific mechanisms that incite employees to work these unpaid non-contract hours.

The literature provides a polarised conception of the mechanisms that account for the time claims of post-Fordist work. Some researchers underline that autonomy and challenging tasks in the post-Fordist workplace lead to more enjoyment in work. We found no evidence for this view. The large amount of overtime in post-Fordist workplaces could not

be attributed to employees enjoying their work so much that they get drawn into working long hours. As many authors already suggested, post-Fordist work is clearly not the 'new leisure' (Lewis 2003).

The counterargument that the time greediness of post-Fordist work is the consequence of increased work pressure also appeared to be questionable. Several studies, as does ours, point to the potentially harmful consequences of employee empowerment and the increased discretionary effort and workload in post-Fordist workplaces. Work pressure appeared to increase with post-Fordist work design. However, the hypothesis that unpaid overtime in post-Fordist workplaces flows via these increased workloads has not been confirmed.

And so we end up with a new puzzle. We found strong evidence for the association between post-Fordist work and unpaid overtime, but to our surprise none of the tested motivators appear to play a significant role in this relation. In other words, even after controlling for several plausible explanatory mechanisms, the genuine effect of post-Fordist work on overtime remains substantial. Further research on the mechanisms that could account for this relation is needed to answer more thoroughly why employees work overtime in post-Fordist workplaces. Apparently the work structure of post-Fordist work is essential for the decisions employees make concerning their time and efforts for the organisation. How and why these decisions are made remain unclear and need further elaboration (see also Van Echtelt et al. 2006, for some new hypotheses).

More indirectly, but interesting in terms of the theme of this volume, we found significant evidence for the argument of time competition. Career advancement is often related to time input. From a management perspective this is not difficult to understand. Particularly in an information-based era, employees need to spend time at work to keep up with knowledge and developments. Employees compete with each other by devoting more time at work to advance career opportunities. Until now, research has referred mainly to this explanation when considering the differences in career advancement between part-time and full-time employees (e.g. Román et al. 2004). Now it seems that the same mechanism may involve working beyond contractual hours.

This finding may also throw new light on the productivity claims of the new, post-Fordist workplace. As far as such work practices are accompanied by real increases in productivity, these are mainly attributed to more efficient and 'smarter' uses of time, talent and technology. However, a simple increase in unpaid overtime may also contribute to improved organisational results. We therefore urge future research on high-performance organisations to include the incidence of unpaid overtime in its data collection and explanatory models.

Notwithstanding the remaining puzzle regarding specific mechanisms, this study provides firm evidence on the time-greedy nature of post-Fordist work. The study also advances the debate on the increasing time pressure in contemporary societies. New trends in work design are likely

to make employees work more non-contract hours for no pay. From this perspective, it is not surprising that despite an increased quality of work, enhanced autonomy and challenging tasks, more and more employees feel the burden of the demanding workplace.

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9 Working time, client time and family time: accounting for time in the accountancy profession

Suzan Lewis

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In studies of the work-family interface or work-personal life integration, time is a pivotal issue whether the focus is on time for family, working hours, life cycle issues or the accelerated pace of life in general (Brannen et al. 2002; Drago 2001; Daly 1996; Hochschild 1997; Lewis 1997, 2001; Maume and Bellas 2001; Thompson and Bunderson 2001; Wharton and Blair-Loy 2002). The allocation of time to different spheres has long been considered crucial to understanding how people feel about their work and non work lives. Much research has focused on time based work-family conflicts (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1999; Lewis and Cooper 1987; Frone et al. 1997; Frone 2000). Solutions to time dilemmas have largely been sought through workplace policies, variously known as family friendly, flexible working, work-family or work-life policies (Harker 1996; Lewis 1997; Lewis and Cooper 2005; Schreibl and Dex 1998). However,

the evidence of the impact of such policies on time based dilemmas is mixed (Kossek and Oseki 1999), and varies across occupations. On the one hand it seems that policies are most effective when they provide employees with control and autonomy over their hours (Thomas and Ganster 1995; Tausig and Fenwick 2001). Conversely there appears to be a perverse trend amongst white collar and professional workers who have the most flexibility and autonomy, to work longer hours (Hochschild 1997; Sullivan and Lewis 2001; Perlow 1998).

Increasingly, recent research suggests that formal policies for flexible or alternative working patterns are of limited value in professional and managerial work, unless accompanied by efforts to change deeply embedded workplace cultures and structures which reproduce gendered patterns of working time (Sirianni and Negrey 2000; Lewis et al. 2002; Rapoport et al. 2002). Explanations for the limited impact of formal work-life policies on the integration of work and non work time, particularly among professional and managerial workers, include gendered notions of commitment among "ideal" workers (e.g. Bailyn 1993; Lewis 1997; Rapoport et al. 2002; Drago 2001), the intensification of work and workloads (Burchall et al. 1999), and the blurring of temporal and spatial boundaries as more work is performed at home (Lewis and Cooper 1999). Central to all these explanations, explicitly or implicitly, are debates about models of and approaches to time in the workplace and beyond.

Research in the work-family conflict tradition is characterised by a zero sum model of time within an individualistic framework. Quantity of time spent by individuals in paid work and other activities is assumed to compete, creating inevitable tensions for those with multiple commitments. Time is viewed as scarce and linear. The optimum to be aimed for in this perspective is assumed to be a "work-life balance", which implies relatively similar, or at least optimum, quantities of time, allocated to both spheres. However, the contribution of this approach to an understanding, of why autonomous workers find it difficult to work in ways which may be compatible with family life, is limited.

More recently there has been a shift from this quantitative approach to a qualitative and interpretist perspective on time allocated to work and other activities (Thompson and Bunderson 2001; Daly 1996; Kallenberg and Epstein 2001; Yakura 2001). Within this paradigm it is argued that, although time is finite, experiences and meanings of time are more fluid. A quantitative approach to the allocation of time neglects the meanings assigned to work in specific spheres and activities, and the complex cognitive and social processes by which these meanings are constructed (Thompson and Bunderson 2001). To understand the experiences of long working hours therefore it is necessary to move beyond the language of conflict and balance towards an understanding of the significance of time allocated to work and personal life.

The quantitative approach and to some extent the qualitative approach, insofar as it focuses on individual phenomenology and identity, tend to be

individualistic in their focus. That is, they focus on individual conflict or balance, or on individual consequences of processes of assigning meaning to time. For example, research has examined the ways in which the meanings that people attach to time influence individual processes such as the relationship between time allocation and individual work-family conflict (Thompson and Bunderson 2001). However, research is only just beginning to explore the ways in which these meanings are influenced and sustained within workplaces, and how they perpetuate wider organisational structures and cultures, for example by their impact on employer work-family policies and the promotion or by undermining of more fundamental organisational change to support work personal life integration (Rapoport et al. 2002).

There are many types of time and many meanings, each socially constructed within specific social contexts (Nowotny 1994). To understand the meanings of time in relation to a norm of long working hours and the impact of employer policies designed to address work and personal life time tensions, it is necessary to look beyond generic approaches. It is important to understand the specific occupational, professional and/or organisational contexts in which meanings of time are constructed and the processes whereby normative meanings of time are reproduced or challenged (Drago 2001; Perlow 1998; Yakura 2001). In particular it is necessary to make visible the deeply embedded organisational and/or occupational assumptions which underpin particular meanings of time in specific circumstances. This study therefore focuses on meanings of time within one professional group, namely chartered accountants in Britain, and implications for the integration of work and personal time.

Two approaches to theorising time in the workplace underpin the study. One draws on time and money exchanges inherent in the commodification of time and its underlying processes. The other examines identity (including collective identities), its formation within specific social and occupational contexts and its relationship to commodified and socially constructed time.

Studies of the meaning of time in professional service occupations have focused on the time-money exchange and the social construction of time as money. This includes the processes of commodification (Zerubavel 1981) or valorisation (Stark 1990; Yakura 2001) of units of time. Although the assignment of monetary value to time usually tends to be quite arbitrary (Yakura 2001), once this becomes an accepted part of the culture, the view that employees who "donate" more time to greedy institutions (Coser 1974) are intrinsically more valuable, is reinforced. Those who are less "generous" with their time at work, whether because of family obligations or other commitments, are thus undervalued. Hence, for example, there is much evidence that in many contexts part time workers are undervalued or even stigmatised (Epstein et al. 1999; Lewis et al. 2002). However, this does not explain the process whereby these values are transmitted and reproduced across generations despite

significant shifts in families and the nature of work. Nor does it explain differences or suggest where change is likely to come from.

One promising avenue of enquiry is the study of identity in relation to time in the workplace. Identity dilemmas associated with work and family domains have traditionally focused on family roles, especially, though not exclusively, the experiences of mothers (Lewis 1991; Garey 1995; M. Cooper 2000), to a greater extent than specific occupational identity. Career salience and identity are generally assumed to be potentially more problematic for women than men (Hallet and Gilbert 1997). Social constructions of the ideal mother (which vary across time and place) can create identity tensions in contexts where the ideal worker is constructed as one who works in ways which preclude time for family obligations (Lewis 1991). This gendered notion of the ideal worker is very prevalent in organisations, despite the often taken for granted assumption that workplaces are gender neutral (Acker 1990; Rapoport et al. 2002). The issues appear to be different for fathers insofar as their identity is derived primarily from their occupational and provider roles. Indeed, Daly (1996) has suggested that fathers may construct time spent with the family as a cost in terms of working time. However, research focusing on parental identity often neglects the other side of the coin; that is, the impact of occupational identity on time allocated to work and personal life and the possibility that something akin to the guilt often associated with employed mothers (Lewis 1991) may be experienced by those who feel unable or reluctant to allocate "enough" time to paid work in some circumstances.

Recent studies have focused on the relationship between identity and the meaning of time and the ways in which the social constructions of each are intertwined (Thompson and Bunderson 2001; Daly 1996). Daly (1996) argues that identity is continually shaped through the assignment of meaning to time in different situations. Thus the practices and processes used to manipulate and sustain meanings of time in different organisational or professional contexts are significant. As identity develops, activities which are experienced as identity affirming are experienced more positively than those which are identity discrepant, and Thompson and Bunderson (2001) suggest this can account for different experiences of work-family conflict. The relationship between professional identity and the commodification of time, in relation to the perpetuation or challenging of workplace cultures which preclude time for personal life, has received less attention.

This study extends previous research on work-life policies and the long hours worked by those who have apparent autonomy over their working time by examining ways in which working time is constructed and given meaning in a specific professional context, namely accountancy, and the ways in which meanings of time can undermine flexible or work-life policies. Drawing on both of the above perspectives the chapter examines the impact of professional identity formation and the commodification of time in a context where, like other personal service professions, such as

the growing consultancy sector (Yakura 2001), time is the major capital. The analysis builds on research using a qualitative approach to time and its meanings with particular reference to work life integration. It focuses on the ways in which constructions of time reproduce the hegemonic gendered culture, but can also be used to challenge this.

THE STUDY AND ITS BACKGROUND

This chapter draws on a study of flexible working arrangements and work-personal life integration among chartered accountants in Britain.¹ The study included in depth interviews with 50 chartered accountants with a range of working patterns, exploring experiences of work and non work time. A major objective was to examine some of the factors contributing to prevailing long working hours identified in a survey carried out in an earlier stage of the research (C. Cooper et al. 2001). The goal was to look beyond number of hours worked to examine the ways in which time is "interpreted, manipulated and perceived" (Epstein and Kallenberg 2001:14) by those working (or resisting) long hours in the accountancy profession in contemporary Britain. Since it is assumed that these subjective meanings of working time are dynamic, context sensitive and therefore have the potential for change, the interviews explored forces which appear to challenge as well as sustain the long hours trend.

FINDINGS

Thematic analysis of accounts of the reasons for a norm of working long hours revealed two major themes: a dominant discourse of inevitability of long working hours in the profession and an emerging new culture which is beginning to challenge this view. The dominant long hours culture, which has been identified in many other studies (e.g. Bailyn 1993; Lewis 1997, 2001; Perlow 1998; Rapoport et al. 2002), is sustained among this professional group by notions of client service and professionalism that imply constant availability, which becomes an integral part of professional identity. It is also sustained by the formal systems used to commodify and account for working time, which operate in conjunction with a framework of informal norms about how time is actually accounted for.

The dominant culture: long hours as just an inevitable part of the job

As in many other occupations, long working hours, either regularly or at certain times are often accepted as inevitable, just part of the job, which cannot be changed. This is articulated particularly in terms of striving to provide high quality service to clients, usually within time constraints and is viewed as an integral aspect of providing a professional service.

"The job itself is pressured, in that you are under pressure to sort of, deliver a high quality product or a high quality service within various time constraints..... So the pressures really are just down to the normal pressures of the job, just making sure you deliver a good service."
(38-year-old woman, portfolio manager, part time, small firm.)

".....it's part and parcel of doing a professional job."
(35-year-old woman, partner in small firm)

This stems from notions of client service and professionalism, combined with mechanisms for accounting for time.

Client service, professionalism and identity

Assumptions of inevitability and normality rest particularly on the assumed nature of service to clients. Privileging the client can lead to unrealistic expectations of what this service means. For example, it is assumed that clients must always be responded to immediately.

"A client can ring up, when I come in and I have planned what I have got to do for the day and I have a fairly systemised approach to things, and a client can ring up and that's it. I have to devote my time to that particular issue."
(50-year-old man partner in small firm)

Time, whether at work or beyond, is imbued with personal meanings (Thompson and Bunderson 2001). The construction of clients, client service and professional identity underpins the meanings of long hours in the discourse of inevitability. As other researchers have noted, accountancy is characterised by a strong service ethic, organised through a particular conceptualisation of client service. For example, Anderson-Gough et al. (2000) in a study of the occupational socialisation of trainee accountants in two large firms in Britain argue that the client is a central concept in the socialisation process and in the emergence of professional identity. That is, the prevailing discourse of the priority of the client, which is both part of a service ethic and also based in commercialism (the client "pays the bills"), shapes notions of professionalism in terms of displaying appropriate behaviours, especially constant availability. Long working hours thus become professional identity affirming. Identity affirming behaviours can and do become absorbing, challenging and exciting (Thompson and Bunderson 2001; Kofodimos 1993). This discourse of the client serves as a tool of normative organisational control (Perlow 1998), legitimising demanding practices such as long and intense working hours, and is internalised so that many accountants say they feel guilty when they do not provide what is constructed as high standards of client

services.

This discourse of client service as a central plank of accountants' professional identity is highly gendered in that it promotes work patterns based on assumptions of traditional male provider families and excludes substantial involvement in family care or other activities. The imperative to be client-friendly (Anderson-Gough et al. 2000) as constructed in the dominant discourse within accountancy is thus incompatible with notions such as the "family friendly" workplace. As Anderson-Gough et al. (2000) argue "this focus on the client can also be regarded as constitutive of a framework of regulation that not only focuses on one set of 'others' (client, the firm) but, in so doing, downgrades the claims which other groups of people may have on the individual" (2000:1163). The discourse of inevitability associated with this ethos thus also masks gender inequity and, according to Anderson-Gough et al. (2000), even discrimination.

Accounting for time

Long hours are also sustained by the different ways in which time is socially constructed. There are at least three dimensions of working time with which accountants have to grapple, each encompassing formal and informal elements. These can be described as contracted versus elastic hours, chargeable versus non chargeable time and visible and invisible time.

Contract hours versus elastic time

Contracted hours for employees in accountancy firms, usually between 37 and 40 hours per week, are perceived as largely irrelevant. A common view, however, is that it is "unprofessional" to stick to contracted or standard hours, represented as not giving "enough" time to thinking about or contributing to client service. One interviewee, for example, struggled to articulate what she meant by professionalism, but had no difficulty in identifying the implication for working hours.

Interviewer "*What does professionalism mean?*"

"Erm, it's the way you conduct yourself isn't it? Erm, make sure the way you come across as an accountant as opposed to somebody down the pub on a Saturday afternoon or something... It's not... it's just not... I dunno, I can't put my finger on it."

Interviewer "*What kind of hours do professionals do?*"

"Long ones."

(30 year old woman, audit)

The informal norm is that working hours are elastic, extending to meet peak demands, or contracting, though rarely below contract hours.

Typically professionals define working time in terms of how long it takes to get a job done (Zerubavel 1981) and this is the case for most of those interviewed in this study. As in much professional and managerial work (Bailyn 1993), the open ended nature and lack of clear boundaries associated with much of the work in accountancy makes it difficult to contain within specific working hours.

Chargeable hours and non-chargeable hours

Accountancy firms have sophisticated techniques for accounting for working time. Usually this involves completing complicated time sheets in which every working hour is accounted for (in theory). The irrelevance of formal contracted hours in most cases can be understood in relation to these mechanisms for accounting for time and the explicit formal categories of chargeable and non chargeable time. A focus on chargeable hours can promote flexible ways of working.

"In this company it's very much at everybody's discretion. As long as you bill seven hours a day at least, nobody minds what you do."

(Man, trainee, large firm)

However, it can also produce time pressures. Typically, targets for chargeable time are set at 7 hours a day, which, assuming a contract of 40 hours a week, leaves one hour per day for non chargeable work including administration, training, and dealing with emails. Furthermore, if time is taken for training, for example, chargeable hours must be made up. This accounting for time can in itself be time consuming, since it cannot be logged on a time sheet. It can also result in a form of Neo Taylorism as staff struggle to work out strategies for fitting in phone calls, chatting to clients or colleagues or even going to the toilet. While there is the potential to attribute these "extra" activities to chargeable client time, the strong ethos of professionalism often results in an extension of the working day.

"In the seven hour day you're only kind of head down completely there for I would say six hours because you've got an hour space throughout the day of going to the loo or seeing someone in the lift and chatting to them but you still need to fill up that extra hour somehow which is why I think I'll end up staying a bit later to try to get that chargeable time on the timecard."

(Woman, audit, medium sized firm)

Visible and invisible time

In theory time sheets should make it easy to schedule and account for working hours, but there are a number of informal, cultural processes

whereby a norm of longer hours is sustained, which often contradict the explicit rules about how to complete time sheets. The explicit rhetoric is that all work on a particular account must be charged to that client, to ensure that this is reflected in billing. The informal norm, however, is that any hours in excess of what has been charged in the budget are not recorded.

"You charge some of it, but the higher the costs get the more pressure you get from above to why these costs are so high... the official line is that if you work overtime you charge it... but at the same time... you know that charging two hours overtime... is a lot more hassle than not charging it because you then have the pressure from above."

(Woman, audit, medium sized firm)

Internalisation of the high standards of professionalism can also result in extra hours of work being regarded as a "choice". Thus much of the work that accountants do is not formally accounted for. In a system where working time is, in theory, accounted for down to the smallest details, this renders this work invisible. While invisible work is implicitly accepted as the norm, it is visible work which is often most highly valued. Certain working hours in the office are valued more than others, as signs of commitment; for example, those towards the end of the standard working day are valued more than those in the early morning.

"Well, it's as easy for me to get in at 7 instead of 8 o'clock and just work 'till half 5-6, again, it's (...) it's really strange. If I was to work 8-5 they wouldn't see you as working hard, but if you work 9-6 then it's seen that way."

(31-year-old man about to become a partner, small firm)

"I am the first at work every day, also I usually work through lunch. The fact that I leave work on time quite often (even though I might have a case full of work at peak periods) means that I get comments like 'I know that it's difficult for you to put in the hours, with the children.'"

(Woman, audit large firm)

Thus some non-work activities are precluded and others legitimised. For example, it appears that it is legitimate to take children to school, but not to collect them from school, even if putting in the same hours. This is not gender neutral. If fathers are involved in family care they are more likely to take children to school than interrupt the working day, while the latter is more likely to fall to mothers. This relative valuing of time again reproduces gender inequities.

The formal and informal systems for accounting for time together with the client service ethic of constant availability thus result in working practices which include elastic time which eats into personal time. This

involves both highly visible face time and also invisible time.

Practices for manipulating time

The focus on visible and invisible time at work highlights some of the practices or strategies through which working time is stretched and manipulated. These include peer pressure, management pressure and the transferring of risk to employees in order to maximise competitiveness. All rely on normative control through the construction of professionalism.

Peer pressure. Although the need to expend visible time in the office is perpetuated by management practices and values it is also communicated by peer pressure. This is particularly evident in the case of those who are labelled “just part timers” because they may come to work early and leave the office while others are still there, the implication being that they are being unprofessional by prioritising family demands over clients.

Management pressure is manifested directly in the contradictory messages conveyed about the recording of time, and particularly the questioning of high non chargeable hours or chargeable hours over the budget.

Transferring risk and costs of competitiveness to staff. Accountancy is a highly competitive market and most interviewees are acutely aware of the need for their firm to compete with other firms to gain or retain clients. One practice is for unrealistic fees to be set in order to compete with other firms, resulting in an intensification of work (Burchall et al. 1999). For example, charge-out rates may have risen but fees are retained at the same level so that the staff must work harder to complete a job in less time, or do more invisible work to keep to the budget.

“There was a chance we were going to lose the client and it was part of a very big group and a lot of national partners were involved in trying to save it and as a result we cut fees so we’d do it in less time... fees are so competitive that we end up having fees which it’s just not realistic to meet.”

(25-year-old woman, supervisor, large firm)

This not only increases invisible hours, but can also create conflict between the need to meet targets for chargeable hours and to reduce fees to clients.

“We also have a chargeable hours target, as part of our assessment at the end of the year so whilst I’m trying to put as much time as I can on my

time sheet my budgets are saying you've got to put as little as possible down so you have a constant pull."

(25-year-old woman, supervisor, large firm)

When the work cannot be completed in the time quoted, staff put in extra hours, but are reluctant to claim for these so the number of invisible hours grow. Thus employers transfer the costs of being competitive to individual accountants, who do the extra work in their own personal time.

Consequences of the dominant culture

The long hours culture squeezes time for family and personal life. Because the role of the chartered accountant is socially constructed in terms of a service ethic with long hours of work as a necessary element of providing this service, the "good" accountant is defined as one who is willing to prioritise work at all times. This can create feelings of being out of control.

"I think if you have a large client portfolio, it is inevitable that you just can't control events, um events will overtake you."

(50-year-old man, partner in small firm)

THE EMERGING NEW CULTURE OR COUNTERCULTURE

This dominant culture resembles that which has been found in many other contexts. (Bailyn 1993; Lewis 1997, 2001; Rapoport et al. 2002). However, our findings also produced evidence of an emergent new culture or counterculture, based on a different set of beliefs and characterised by the valuing of time for family or just to "have a (personal) life"; by the belief that long hours are not efficient and that the current system rewards inefficiency; and by a more realistic social construction of quality client service.

Younger accountants were the most likely to emphasise the importance of having a life beyond work. For example, there was a theme among younger men as well as women that getting ahead in the current context involves withdrawing from family life and that this is unacceptable. Women of all ages were more likely than men to see this explicitly as a work-family problem and to respond by seeking or planning to seek alternative work arrangements or planning to leave the profession in the future. Those who challenged the traditional culture argued that having a life beyond work should be congruent with firms' objectives, as working shorter more focused hours is more efficient. There was a theme that it is possible to "string out" or "stretch" work for the sake of it.

"If you do insist on working nine to five, and at least you work efficiently,

or you can string it out and work eight to seven inefficiently, but it's the work that needs to be done rather than the hours that's important."

(23-year-old man, trainee, large firm)

"Just because they work long hours, and work hard doesn't mean to say that they are working effectively and are suitable to become partners. In fact I can think within the last few years of two examples where people have been working ridiculous hours but were ineffective in what they did. If I saw people working long hours, I would question whether they were actually doing their job during the day effectively. I am more impressed by people who can manage their time properly and (...) deliver the job that they are charged with."

(50-year-old man, partner, small firm)

These values do not threaten professional identity based on service to the client because client service is redefined with a focus on quality not quantity of service, thereby challenging the myth of constant availability.

"The client needs, yes, but I think it's part of training your client isn't it? But at the end of the day, to some extent, everybody is unavailable for part of the time, you know if people are working out on jobs or something or other, or they are away, they are not available all day, every day for every client."

(Woman, age 38, senior manager, small firm)

Some partners and senior managers are recognising the different approach in many of the upcoming generation and also seeing advantages of adapting to more focused ways of working, although their analysis tends to be gender blind.

"The generation that is coming through now have a very different attitude to work than my generation did. My generation went in and worked bloody hard, they worked whatever hours were sought and as a firm we would routinely work long hours... These guys that we've got that are coming in from University now they want to come in at 9 and go home at 5.30 and they want a bit of notice if they've got to work any overtime and that's the way it is and you've got to be mindful of that."

Interviewer *"Do you think that those people do as much work as you did?"*
"I think we can ensure that they do a lot more work if we are focussed in what we give them. I think they are prepared to work hard, they are prepared to use their intellect... and I'd much rather they did first rate work in 7 ½ hours than string it out to 10. That's suits me better, it suits most of our clients better, it's much healthier and it's a much better way of working"

(42-year-old man, senior audit manager, large firm)

The emerging new culture can change working practices. There is an attempt to focus on the work that has to be done rather than time taken to do it and to respect the boundaries between work and non work time. However, while the dominant culture of the inevitability of long working hours remains part of the taken for granted shared knowledge, the emergent culture currently tends to be regarded in terms of individual and idiosyncratic insights.

Shared knowledge versus individual insights

There remains a fundamental gap in the status of beliefs embedded in the traditional and counterculture discourses. The perception, interpretation and manipulation of time as symbolic of commitment in the dominant culture is widely shared, taken for granted "knowledge". Occasionally this is made explicit.

"I remember one day when my manager spoke to me he goes 'I know you get all your work done you get everything within budget, but can you just hang around to show everyone you're here till about 8?'"

(Woman, age 33, working in industry)

More often, however, this association between long hours and commitment is discussed as well established, taken for granted, shared knowledge, deeply embedded in the firms' cultures, the source of which is not made explicit.

"I remember hearing someone say, if you want to get on in the firm you should never leave the office before 6 because you should be seen to be somebody who stays late, and if you are always gone at 5.30 on the dot, people think oh well, she's here for her 9 – 5 but won't give anything more. And if people are seen to be here at 7 o'clock then it must mean that they're really committed and really trying hard and stuff like that."

Interviewer *"Who would be saying that?"*

"It's just general feeling. It's not something that someone said, as in partners said, you know if you want to get on you must do x, it's just a general feeling that people have and I heard just comments made about the, you know, if you want to make yourself a good name then that's the sort of thing you should be doing."

(Man working reduced hours in tax, large firm)

The taken for granted nature of this "knowledge" means that the primacy of a traditional culture, with its gendered definition of commitment as inevitable, and the subsequent counterproductive practices usually remains unchallenged.

The new culture with its emphasis on output rather than hours worked appears to be a force which might challenge the supremacy of the long hours culture in the future, but it remains a minority view. In contrast to the dominant view which tends to be “shared knowledge”, the counterculture argument that shorter, more focused hours may be more effective tends to be presented as an individual belief or insight and not yet as part of the culture in most cases.

“I’ve got this philosophy that if you restrict the hours that you work then you work better in the hours that you’ve got rather than the hours that you work.”

(31-year-old man, partner, small firm)

Individual insights tend to lead to individual strategies, such as deliberately segregating work and family time or to more effective individual management practices, but do not create fundamental organisational or profession wide change. Those who reject the hegemonic gendered model of organisations rarely have sufficient power to challenge it (Sirianni and Negrey 2000) and it is significant that it was mainly younger accountants that voiced this challenge. More systemic change is likely to require attention to workplace structures and practices which sustain dominant beliefs (Rapoport et al. 2002). Particularly significant in the accountancy and other client service professions (Yakura 2001) are the systems used to commodify and account for working time and the subsequent processes and working practices based on traditional male values which underscore definitions of professionalism and professional identity, obscure inefficient uses of time and preclude time for family and personal life.

CONCLUSIONS

To understand experiences of long working hours it is important to move beyond the language of conflict and balance towards an exploration of personal meanings of time allocated to work and personal life and the contexts in which these are socially constructed (Nowotny 1994). Normative meanings of time are constructed, reproduced or challenged in specific occupational and/or organisational contexts (Drago 2001; Perlow 1998; Yakura 2001). The findings reported in this chapter highlight the ways in which time is experienced in the accountancy profession in the UK. In particular the discussion has focused on processes whereby normative assumptions about long working hours are constructed and reproduced: by the commodification of time through the complex norms of chargeable and non chargeable hours; and by socialisation into professional identity in terms of elastic time for availability to clients. Underpinning these processes are deeply embedded assumptions and

values about what makes a “good accountant”, which contribute to an understanding of why these professionals, with a high level of autonomy, continue to put in long working hours.

These assumptions are however incompatible with normative assumptions about other roles, for example that of a “good mother” which often requires elastic time to be spent with family (Lewis 1991). The dominant culture of time in accountancy, discussed above, is based on a model of the ideal professional as one who has the support of a full time homemaker. This is out of touch with the needs of members of the contemporary workforce who are increasingly likely to be, or to anticipate becoming, members of dual earner couples, and/or to value participation in other roles beyond the workplace. It may be that changing workforce needs will ultimately challenge the dominant culture in this profession (and others). Evidence that meanings of time in accountancy work is beginning to be reconstructed, emerging in this study, suggests that this may be beginning to happen.

The emergent new culture identified in this study focuses on the quality of time spent on client work, redefining quality client service and exploring effective working practices. This suggests a “business case” for change in the ways that working time and flexibility are conceptualised in organisations and reflects a wider social discourse in the UK, promoted by government, of the business benefits of work-life “balance” or flexible working arrangements (DfEE 2000; Smithson and Lewis 2005). A limitation of the business case as promoted by British Government publications, however, is the failure to address in detail the processes whereby more systemic changes may be brought about. In the case of the accountancy profession and related client service professions it seems that this will involve challenging the systems by which time at work is commodified, accounted for, given meaning and valued. This study adds to the growing literature that shows that flexible working practices alone will not create fundamental changes in culture and practice in relation to working time. Rather, more proactive approaches may be needed, to take account of and challenge socially constructed meanings of time in specific workplace or occupational contexts.

NOTE

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10 Labour supply: the effects of employer demands and household governance

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INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In the Netherlands, considerable debate has arisen as to what extent employees are working long hours and why. For example, in 2000, 25% of Dutch employees worked paid overtime and 27% worked unpaid overtime (OSA 2003). According to the TNO Labour Situation Survey, working overtime has increased substantially between 2000 and 2002 (TNO-Arbeid 2003). This trend is in line with a general increase in working long hours in the Western world (Campbell 2002). In this contribution we argue that the standard theory that is usually invoked to answer this question – the economic baseline model of labour supply – cannot provide a satisfactory explanation of this trend unless it is extended to incorporate the influence of employer demands, i.e. firms' time greediness, and household governance, i.e. the way households regulate or 'govern' household time allocation. In particular, the questions addressed are: To what degree can variations in individual labour supply be explained by variations in employer demands, and how do household governance practices moderate this relationship?

In the following we start by providing a brief overview of the literature on labour supply and introduce the concept of household governance. An extended model of labour supply follows, that takes into account both employer demands and household rules as well as their interaction. Next, we present data, measurement and method, followed by sections on the results of the empirical analysis and the conclusions.

HOUSEHOLD GOVERNANCE – A GAP IN EXISTING ACCOUNTS ON LABOUR SUPPLY

Microeconomic theory of labour supply is part of the economic theory of consumer behaviour (see e.g. Cahuc and Zylberberg 2004). By treating leisure as a consumer good, one can derive a demand function for it (strictly speaking, a demand function for unpaid time). Because time spent on paid labour is the complement of leisure, the demand function for leisure can be rewritten as a labour-supply function. This function shows how labour supply depends on the relevant price, i.e. the wage rate, and unearned income. Furthermore, when the household context is taken into account, the individual's labour supply will also depend on the wage rate of the partner.

Sociological household research focuses on the influence of norms and values in and outside the household. It emphasises the impact of gender norms and role expectations that commit women to a higher extent than men to care and household tasks. Due to these norms, women spend fewer hours on paid work and more hours on unpaid work than men (Bittman et al. 2003). These gender norms are learned during childhood socialisation and maintained by expectations of traditional social environments (see for an overview Coltrane 2000; Van der Lippe and Siegers 1994).

Organisational research demonstrates the impact of organisational arrangements and financial as well as non-financial incentives to work long hours by employees (for a concise overview of this research, see Anger 2005:7-14). The following organisational conditions were found to have a positive effect on employee motivation to supply unpaid long hours: high-performance or high-commitment human resource management practices (Applebaum and Batt 1994), which require considerable time commitments from employees (Hochschild 1997; Moen and Sweet 2003:22; Campbell 2004:6); Post-Fordist organisational arrangements, in which a mixture of elements like high work autonomy, deadlines and the opportunity to build a personal reputation (Van Echtelt et al. 2005) create social incentives for working long hours; performance-related promotion and compensation systems (e.g. 'up or out' rules), in which working long days is considered a requirement to increase promotion chances (Clarkberg and Moen 2001:1119; Bell and Freeman 2000; Hochschild 1997); long hours cultures, consisting of 'workload pressure, company expectations, peer-group pressure and ambition' (Rutherford 2001); and competitive firm cultures (Perlow 1998), in which working long hours is institutionalised to a degree that not doing so is seen as a severe offence. A positive relationship has been found between high-prestige jobs and long working hours (Moen and Sweet 2003).

But it is not only the organisation within the firm that matters: the way the household is organised also plays a role. So far, household governance practices like informal rules for the distribution of unpaid work

and strategies to handle work-household conflict have not received much attention in labour supply research. Such governance practices are of increasing importance for time allocation in modern households. The huge growth in female labour market participation, more egalitarian relationships and a more flexible organisation of labour have all complicated the division of work in the household (Frederiksen-Goldsen and Scharlach 2001:254; Kluwer 1998). Contrary to the rather simple division of work in traditional breadwinner households, modern households have become places where two working spouses have to divide various domestic tasks among each other and integrate them with demands from two jobs (Gill 1998:5). Traditional roles, norms and rules fail to guide the behaviour of spouses in modern households, forcing them to find their own solutions, strategies and rules for the division of work (Kluwer 1998:129). Variations in these solutions will affect the outcomes of time-allocation decisions.¹ We focus on one important dimension of household governance, differences in the degree of regulation of household time allocation.² For example, some qualitative studies show that differences in daily household decision-making affect household time allocation (see e.g. Gill 1998; Perlow 1998), independently from work or (other) household characteristics. They also show a large variation in the ways spouses regulate or govern household time allocation in terms of typical 'interaction orders' (Gill 1998), 'allocation rules' (Van der Vinne 1998), 'conduct of everyday life' (Jürgens 2000), typical 'time arrangements' (Eberling et al. 2004) and characteristic conflict-handling patterns (Kluwer 1998).

Inspired by previous household studies (see Gill 1998; Jürgens 2000; Eberling et al. 2004), we consider three types of rules which can be used in the household to govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis: *time claims* govern the time investment for domestic activities; *time routines* set fixed moments for the performance of domestic activities; and a *fixed task distribution* allocates fixed responsibilities for domestic tasks between the spouses. When households are using one or more of these rules to a large extent, they are labelled 'rule households' (high degree of regulation). Households that refrain from such agreements are labelled 'flexible households' (low degree of regulation). These households govern household time allocation by short-term planning and day-to-day interventions. These rules are relevant in terms of the input side of the production processes within the household. We also distinguish a fourth type of household rule that is relevant in terms of the output of these processes: *quality standards*, governing the quality of domestic activities. These rules define the minimally acceptable level that has to be met regarding the performance of household tasks like the quality of a home-cooked meal or the effort that has to be put into cleaning activities. Quality standards differ from other household rules like task distribution and time claims in that they specify a desired output rather than focus on the required input (for an elaboration on the distinction of input and output

control, see Ouchi and Maguire 1975; Ouchi 1979). The incorporation of quality standards significantly enriches the operationalisation of the household governance construct. In the following, we will present an extended model of labour supply that takes into account both employer demands and the household-rules aspect of the outlined governance practices (including quality standards), as well as their interaction.

AN EXTENDED MODEL OF LABOUR SUPPLY – IMPACT OF EMPLOYER DEMANDS AND HOUSEHOLD RULES

We will start by discussing the effects of key personal and household characteristics on the labour supply of male and female employees: own wage rate, partner's wage rate, the presence of children in the household, and – as a control variable – own age. This is the baseline model as is usually applied in mainstream economics. We will then extend the model by introducing employer demands, household rules and quality standards.

Microeconomic theories of labour supply suggest that a change in the net *own wage rate* has two effects: a substitution effect and an income effect (see e.g. Cahuc and Zylberberg 2004:9-11). The substitution effect is also called the relative-price effect. It results from the fact that a change in the wage rate implies a change in the price of leisure compared to the prices of other goods. In case the wage rate increases, leisure becomes relatively more expensive, which induces one to buy less leisure, i.e. to increase one's supply of labour. The substitution effect on labour supply of a change in the wage rate will always be positive. The income effect of a change in the wage rate results from the fact that as such it changes one's income. Therefore, one will buy more of any normal good. If leisure is a normal good as is generally assumed, one will buy more leisure and therefore will decrease one's labour supply. The net effect of the positive substitution effect and the presumed negative income effect cannot be predicted but is a matter of empirical research.

A change in *unearned income* has only an income effect, so we hypothesise that an increase in unearned income will generally reduce one's labour supply.³ The same holds for the *wage rate of the partner*.⁴

The presence of children in the household increases the need for time (particularly when they are young) and money (higher expenses). From economic theory we know that there will be a tendency for partners to specialise in the tasks in which they have a comparative advantage. Therefore, given the fact that within households the female's wage rate is generally lower than the male's, we expect females will predominantly take account of the time costs of children and males of the money costs. This division of labour will be reinforced by gender differences in social norms. Because the time costs decrease and the money costs increase when children grow older, we expect the negative effect of the presence of children in the household on females' labour supply to decrease and

the positive effect on males' labour supply to increase. Incorporating *age* as a control variable completes the economic baseline model of labour supply.

Organisational research has pointed out that strong *employer demands* make it more rewarding for employees to work longer hours. When employers claim a high work engagement, employees can achieve social approval and better career chances, reducing disapproval and the risk of being dismissed by conforming to these demands. One way to conform to high work demands and to show a high work commitment is to work longer hours. Therefore, we expect that the stronger the employer demands, the more hours employees will spend on paid work.

Our approach emphasises the idea that spouses do not simply adapt to structural household and workplace influences, but also attempt to influence and govern household time allocation through informal household rules and strategies to cope with conflicting time demands from work and family. In this article we will concentrate on the informal *household rules* that govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis. These rules have two conflicting effects on labour supply. On the one hand, for couples to work longer hours they need to plan things and use rules in order to combine paid and unpaid work; hence, establishing rules that govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis enables them to work longer hours and will have a positive effect on labour supply. On the other hand, when employees want to work more hours they either have to deviate from given household rules or renegotiate existing ones. In the first case, employees risk causing open conflict and harming the relationship with their partner. In the second case, employees have to invest time and effort into negotiation processes. The outcomes of these processes are uncertain: it depends on the conflict-handling strategies of both spouses (as well as the given opportunities and restrictions) to what extent an employee will be able to realise a desired amount of working hours and avoid open conflict. To sum up, employees in households with a high degree of regulation face additional restrictions in terms of costs and risks when they want to work more hours. The net result of the positive and negative effects of rules that govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis on the labour supply cannot be predicted but is matter of empirics.⁵ This also holds for the interaction effect of employer demands and household rules that govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis: the stronger the employer demands, the larger each of the two partial effects of household rules is expected to be.

The higher the *quality standards* with respect to household chores as adhered to by one's partner, the stronger the demands for time spent on household chores. We expect that this will influence males and females differently. Given the standard division of labour within the household, we expect that high-quality standards of both males and females will be met predominantly by the female. Therefore, these standards are expected to have a negative effect on female labour supply. To the degree that this

prediction holds, due to the income motive the negative effect on the female's labour supply has to be compensated by a positive effect on the male's labour supply. Quality standards are also expected to play a moderating role in the effect of employer demand on labour supply. For females, the positive effect of employer demand on labour supply will be smaller the higher the quality standards, for males it will be the opposite.

DATA, MEASUREMENT AND METHOD

The analysis is based on the Time Competition Survey 2003 (Van der Lippe and Glebbeek 2003; Glebbeek and Van der Lippe 2004). This survey is a multi-stage sample of 1114 Dutch employees from 30 Dutch organisations. It is a multi-actor data set because questions were also put to the employees' partners and to the management of their organisations. Data were collected in 2003. Employees and their spouses were interviewed separately at home. The interviews were based on a standardised questionnaire. We use the data of 237 female employees and 318 male employees for whom all relevant information is available. All employees are married or cohabiting and between 18 and 65 years of age. Spouses who were involuntary unemployed, retired, studying full-time or self-employed were excluded from the analysis.

Labour supply was measured as actual weekly working hours: 'How many hours are you actually working on average per week? Please take into account overtime, but not your travelling time'. The variable also contains the hours that are worked in a second job (if any). If the employee received yearly time compensation for overtime on a regular basis (ADV hours in the Netherlands), these hours were subtracted from the total number of weekly working hours.

Calculation of the employee's and the partner's *net wage rates* is based on several income measures (considering additional income sources) and average actual weekly working hours, including overtime and its compensation. For individuals with missing relevant variables, including partners who do not work for pay, a wage rate had to be imputed on the basis of a wage equation for individuals with all relevant variables available. For consistency reasons, an imputed wage rate has been used for all individuals (Hall 1973:110-111). The wage equations have been estimated separately for male respondents, female respondents, male partners and female partners.

The *presence of children in the household* was measured by three dummy variables: one for children younger than four, one for children in the four through twelve age range, and one for children aged thirteen and older. These dummy variables were set equal to one if one or more children in the relevant category were present, and zero otherwise. *Age* was measured as 2002 minus year of birth.

The cumulative amount of *employer demands* was measured using five

items: (1) whether the firm is a for-profit or a non-profit organisation (as answered by the management); (2) whether the function group is characterised by a high-performance culture (as answered by the management); (3) whether the function group is frequently confronted with targets and deadlines (as answered by the management); (4) understaffing for the employee's function group (as answered by the management); (5) whether the employee has a supervisory position (as answered by the employee). The items were first dichotomised and then summed. The minimum value is zero (hardly any employer demands), the maximum value five (strong employer demands).

Household rules were measured using nine items: four on time claims (as answered by the employee), four on routines (as answered by the employee), and one on fixed tasks (as answered by the employee's partner). The four items on time claims were: 'If you think about the situation of your household, do you have agreements with your partner...' (a) not to work in the evenings, (b) not to work on weekends, (c) to be on time for dinner, (d) not to be away all evenings. For each item the respondents could answer with 'yes', 'not really', or 'no'. The four items on routines were: 'Are you doing the following activities on fixed moments – for example, a particular day and time for going to the supermarket?' (a) shopping, (b) cleaning, (c) having dinner together, (d) spending time together or with the family. The answer categories were 'never', 'sometimes', 'regularly', 'often', 'always'. A fixed task distribution with regard to domestic tasks was measured by the following question: 'Some households have a fixed division of household tasks, other households alternate. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement: Our division of tasks is totally fixed.' The answer categories (five-point scale) ranged from 'totally agree' to 'totally disagree'. The score on 'household rules' is the mean of the standardised scores on the nine items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.66).

Quality standards with respect to the household chores were measured using three items asked to the partner: 'We are interested in the quality of household tasks. 10 means that something is done perfectly. Please indicate by a mark in the range of 1 through 10 the minimum level of acceptable quality to you'. We asked for the activities (a) tidying up the house, (b) cleaning, (c) cooking. The score on 'quality standards' is the mean of these three marks.⁶

The labour supply equations were estimated by regression analysis, with correction of standard errors for the clustering of the respondents by organisation (StataCorp 2003:336-341). Separate estimations were carried out for male and female employees.

RESULTS

Table 10.1 shows the estimates of the regression analysis for female

employees. Column 1 represents the baseline model. It explains 27% of the variance of females' weekly working hours.

The *own wage rate* has a significantly positive effect on hours worked, which indicates that the substitution effect dominates the income effect. An increase in the wage rate of one euro will induce an increase in the working week of 1.9 hours. The other columns show that by taking into account employer demands, this increase drops to about 1.3-1.4 hours. It can be concluded that the baseline model overestimates the effect of the own wage rate by about 40%.

The coefficient belonging to the *wage rate of the partner* has the expected negative sign but is not significant. This suggests that the effect of unearned income ("unearned" from the perspective of the female) is not significant (see note 7). This corresponds with the empirical results of an earlier study that showed that for married women in the Netherlands in the 1989-1998 period, the effect of income on weekly working hours was reduced by 85% (Henkens et al. 2002). Married women became more economically independent inasmuch as their labour supply became less dependent on their partner income. This process will not have stopped after 1998. Moreover, cohabiting women are a growing part of the total of married and cohabiting women, and the labour supply of cohabiting women proved to be not dependent on their partners' income whatsoever.

The *presence of children* under the age of thirteen in the household reduces female labour supply significantly. The results suggest that it is even harder to combine long hours and children when they attend elementary school than when they are pre-schoolers. Having one or more pre-schoolers reduces the working week on average by about 4.5 hours. The reduction when one has one or more children in the four-through-twelve age range is seven hours. As expected, the presence of children older than twelve has a much smaller effect on labour supply: the reduction in the working week is only about 2.5 hours and is not even significant.

Predictably, the weekly working hours decrease with *age*. From column 1 it can be read that every ten years the working week is reduced by about 3.5 hours. The other columns show that by taking into account employer demands this reduction diminishes to somewhat less than three hours. It can be concluded that the baseline model overestimates the effect of age by about 25%.

In column 2 *employer demands* is added to the baseline model. The percentage explained of the variance of females' weekly working hours increases from 27% to 36%. As expected, the stronger the employer demands, the more hours employees spend on paid work. This effect is persistent through the columns (taking the respective interaction effects into account). An increase in employer demands of one standard deviation increases the working week by somewhat less than three hours. From Table 10.1 it can be read that the introduction of household

governance variables at best only marginally improves the percentage explained of the variance of females' weekly working hours.

As mentioned, *household rules* have two conflicting effects on labour supply. On the one hand they enable people to combine paid and unpaid work. On the other, employees from households with a high degree of regulation face additional restrictions in terms of costs and risks when they want to work more hours. Columns 3 through 6 show that the net result of the positive and the negative effects of rules that govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis on labour supply is not significantly different from zero. This also holds for the interaction effect of these rules and employer demands.

In the case of females we expected a negative effect on labour supply of the *quality standards* with respect to household chores as adhered to by their partners. In column 5 this effect does not show up. Column 6 seems to present a different result, but when one takes into account both the main effect and the interaction effect of quality standards and employer demands, at the mean values the net effect of quality standards proves to be approximately zero here too. Quality standards are also expected to play a moderating role in the effect of employer demands on labour supply. Column 6 confirms the prediction that for females the positive effect of employer demands on labour supply is smaller the higher the quality standards.

Table 10.2 shows the estimates of the regression analysis for male employees. Column 1 represents the baseline model. It explains only 8% of the variance of males' weekly working hours. This low level of explanation of male labour supply is no exception in the literature, and is due at least partly to the small variance in their working hours. The *own wage rate* has a significantly positive effect on hours worked, which indicates that the substitution effect dominates the income effect. An increase in the wage rate of one euro will induce an increase in the working week of one hour. The other columns show that by taking into account employer demands, this increase drops to somewhat more than 0.8 hour. It can be concluded that the baseline model overestimates the effect of the own wage rate by about 10%. Overall, males' weekly working hours prove to be less sensitive to changes in the own wage rates than females' weekly working hours. The coefficient that belongs to the *wage rate of the partner* has the expected negative sign and is significant, except in the full model in column 6. This latter result suggests that in the case of males too, unearned income ('unearned' from the perspective of the male) does not affect weekly working hours.

The *presence of children* under the age of thirteen does not have the expected positive effect on male labour supply. This may reflect that males too take up part of the additional household chores that go along with the presence of young children. The results do confirm the expected tendency that the effect of the presence of children on labour supply is more positive as children grow older. Having one or more children older

than twelve increases the working week on average by about 2.4 hours. The other columns show that by taking into account quality standards, including the interaction with employer demands, this effect is reduced to about 2.0 hours. It can be concluded that the baseline model overestimates the effect of having children older than twelve on weekly working hours by about 20%.

As expected, the weekly working hours decrease with *age*. From column 1 it can be read that every ten years the working week is reduced by about 2.5 hours. In the case of the full model in column 6, this reduction drops to 1.9 hours. It can be concluded that the baseline model overestimates the effect of age by about 25%.

In column 2 *employer demands* is added to the baseline model. The percentage explained of the variance of males' weekly working hours increases from 8 to 14. As expected, the stronger the employer's demands, the more hours employees spend on paid work. This effect is persistent through the columns (taking the respective interaction effects into account). An increase in employer demands of one standard deviation increases the working week by 1.7 hours (compared to somewhat less than three in the case of females). From Table 10.2 it can be read that, with the exception of the full model in column 6, the introduction of household governance variables at best only marginally improves the percentage explained of the variance in males' weekly working hours.

As mentioned, *household rules* have two conflicting effects on labour supply. On the one hand they enable people to combine paid and unpaid work. On the other, employees in households with a high degree of regulation face additional restrictions in terms of costs and risks when they want to work more hours. Columns 3 through 6 of Table 10.2 show that the net result of the positive and negative effects of rules that govern time allocation on a day-to-day basis on labour supply is not significantly different from zero. This also holds for the interaction effect of these rules and employer demands.

In the case of males we expected a positive effect on labour supply of the *quality standards* with respect to household chores as adhered to by their partners. Column 5 confirms this prediction. An increase in quality standards of one standard deviation increases the working week by about 1.2 to 2.2 hours (columns 5 and 6, respectively; at the mean value of employer demands).

Quality standards are also expected to play a moderating role in the effect of employer demands on labour supply. Column 6 confirms this moderating role of quality standards, but it lacks the expected positive sign. Contrary to our expectations, for males the positive effect of employer demands on labour supply is smaller the higher the quality standards.

CONCLUSIONS

Inspired by the ongoing discussion on the time greediness of firms and its impact on working hours, in this contribution we investigated to what degree variations in individual labour supply can be explained by variations in employer demands, and how household governance practices moderate this relationship. To this end, we extended the baseline labour supply model as used in mainstream economics. Although the baseline model proved to be a useful starting point, adding employment demands and household governance practices shows that it overestimates the effect on weekly working hours of the own net wage rate, having children older than twelve (in the case of males), and age. The extended model shows that the more demanding the job, the longer the working week of females and males. Our prediction that this effect is moderated by household governance practices is partially confirmed. Household rules that govern daily time allocation do not seem to have an impact – probably due to their twofold (facilitating *and* restricting) character – but quality standards do. The effect of employer demands on labour supply varies widely, depending on these standards. Moreover, quality standards show the positive effect on weekly working hours that we predicted for males.

Our results demonstrate that the economic baseline model can be productively extended by incorporating measures for employer demands and household governance. With regard to the latter, our analyses demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between quality standards on the one hand and household rules in the form of time claims and routines on the other. Since our measurement did not allow us to further disentangle the facilitating versus the restricting aspects of household rules, it would be premature to draw solid conclusions regarding their impact on labour supply. The development of more fine-grained measures of restricting versus facilitating household rules would be a fertile avenue for future research.

To our knowledge, this study contains the first attempt to analyse how employer demands *and* household governance practices affect labour supply, and to what degree household governance moderates the effect of employer demands. Our next step will be to incorporate how households differ in the way partners handle interpersonal work-home conflicts. In doing so, we hope to further open the black box of household decision-making with respect to labour supply.

NOTES

- 1 Causality may however also run from time allocation to household governance practices: working hours may depend largely on contract hours, which in turn may depend on household governance practices. We leave the analysis of this possible simultaneity to further research.
- 2 For effects of differences in intrahousehold negotiation on the labour supply of male and female employees, see Wotschack (2004).
- 3 Because the data set used does not contain information on unearned income, we are not able to test this hypothesis.
- 4 In the 'individual utility – family budget constraint' model, changes in the wage rate only influence the partner's labour supply by an income effect running through the income budget restriction (Killingsworth 1981:24).
- 5 Further theoretical research may enable us to specify in what circumstances which of the two effects is expected to dominate.
- 6 Tables with descriptives of all variables are available from the authors upon request.

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part iii

Organizational and household solutions to
time pressure

11 Trading time and money: Explaining employee participation and leave choices in a flexible benefit plan

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, organisations have been giving their employees increasing control over peripheral elements of their working arrangements. To illustrate, at the beginning of the 21st century some form of teleworking is an option for 24% of Dutch employees (Peters et al. 2004), and 44% can decide for themselves when they start and finish their working day (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2003). In this chapter, however, the focus is on flexible benefit plans (FBPs). This form of internal flexibility in the composition of pay increases flexibility *for* the employee as opposed to flexibility *of* the employee, of which short-term contracts are an example (Elchardus and Heyvaert 1990). By giving employees a choice in the composition of their benefits, FBPs enhance flexibility. Employees can add or remove elements, or change the volume of a particular element, like number of holidays. FBPs often allow employees the opportunity to adjust the balance between time and money in their pay. This makes FBPs a useful tool to improve the balance between employees' work and family lives. Flexible benefits also enable employees to change the composition of their compensation as their situation changes, allowing for useful adaptation of their reward over the life course (Schippers 2001).

Flexible benefits originated in North America, where in the early 1970s employers started to look for ways to control the rising costs of their benefit plans. In the 1980s, Dow Chemicals was the first organisation in the Netherlands to give its employees the option of choice in their

benefits. The concept took a few years to gain momentum, but by the early 1990s more and more organisations were offering their employees flexible benefits (Barringer and Milkovich 1998), and from 1995 onwards flexible benefit schemes started to take off. A survey amongst employers in 2001 revealed that about 40% of organisations offered their employees a choice in their benefits (Hay Group 2002). A survey conducted in 2003 showed that by then about 60% of organisations offered their employees some choice in their benefits, and 30% offered extensive choices in terms of time and money (Hillebrink 2006). Most of these plans were introduced around the turn of the millennium.

Recent estimations of the percentage of employees that participate in FBPs vary. In most Dutch studies, participation rates lie around a quarter of employees. A cross-section of Dutch employees revealed that 19% of employees with access to an FBP had participated in this system (Van Sloten et al. 2005). In one Dutch university, 32% of respondents had used the plan (Hillebrink et al. 2004b), while in another participation was around 20% (Delsen et al. 2006). In the FBP of a particular Dutch insurance company, Langedijk (2001) reported an average participation rate of around one-third, taken over a four-year period during which the majority of respondents had changed their benefits at least once.

Unlike the American situation, cost control is not among the main reasons Dutch organisations consider flexible benefits. In a recent survey among Dutch organisations it appeared that the reasons to implement flexible benefits are not so much cost-related, but much more employee-related. Among the organisations that were about to introduce flexible benefits, only 9% did so to reduce costs, and in fact, 17% of the organisations not offering flexible benefits said it would be too expensive. Organisations rather indicated their aim was to improve their attractiveness to employees (Hillebrink 2006). Indeed, in her thorough investigation of the influence of the introduction of flexible benefits, Langedijk (2001) found that employees' appreciation of their benefits went up after such a system was introduced. Remarkably, this effect was similar for people who used the system and for non-users. Another reason for the implementation of an FBP brought forward by organisations is to give their employees more freedom (Hillebrink 2006). The introduction of flexibilisation in the composition in pay can therefore be viewed as one of the answers to the growing wish of the increasingly diverse workforce in our contemporary 'multiple choice' society (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2003) to have more of a say over their benefits in general and their working times in particular. With the growing number of women participating in the labour market, more (male and female) employees combine their professional lives with substantive caring tasks. Depending on their specific household situation or life-course phase (Schipper 2001), employees may prefer a different composition of benefits. FBPs are believed to accommodate the growing variation in employee preferences.

However, as Langedijk's study (2001) showed, having the 'opportunity to choose' is at least as important for improving employees' perceived value of pay as actually changing one's benefits. The perceived value of benefits goes up just by adding the option of choice. Moreover, the wish and opportunity to make an active choice does not necessarily imply that people actually do so (Breedveld and Van den Broek 2003; Duyvendak and Hurenkamp 2004). The time and effort it takes for employees to study the possibilities in the plans and their consequences may be higher than the perceived gains. In this chapter we therefore examine what choices employees of a department of a Dutch civil-service organisation made in their FBPs. We research two elements of their choice behaviour. As little is known about who finds the opportunities of an FBP interesting enough to participate in it, we firstly analyse who chooses to change their benefits. Which employees use the opportunities an FBP offers to adjust their benefits to their personal situation and preferences, as organisations expect them to do? In a statistical analysis we will examine the effects of work and household characteristics on employee participation. We will also look into the particular time choices employees make: do they buy or sell time? These choices are of particular interest in the context of the debate on time competition. In the choices regarding working time and non-working time that employees make in these plans, we can see whether an FBP enables them to better deal with the various demands upon their time. Do these demands arise from the working domain or from the household domain? To examine whether flexible benefits are facilitating the combination of work and family, and to see which factors in their work and home situations particularly influence the choice of time or money, we analyse the effects of the work and household characteristics of employees on their time choices.

In the following, we discuss our theoretical model for approaching employees' participation in the plan, and their choices between time and money. We conclude with a presentation and discussion of the results.

THEORY

In this paper we assume people to act rationally and in a goal-oriented fashion. This means that they are expected to make a choice concerning their benefits only if this will help them achieve (one of) their goals, given their preferences and restraints. There are some limits to this rational behaviour, as has been extensively documented by various authors (e.g. Conlisk 1996; Simon 1976). Following these authors, we include the concept of bounded rationality as a result of incomplete information and satisficing behaviour into our model. Employees will only participate in an FBP if the costs of making the change are (perceived to be) smaller than the increase in value that can be established by it. How and whether participating in an FBP may increase the value of their pay depends on

the goals it enables them to achieve.

Lindenberg and Frey (1993) have set out the general goals that people work towards: physical well-being, consisting of comfort and stimulation, and social approval, which they subdivide into status, behavioural confirmation and affect. Choices in benefits may help people realise both sub-categories of physical well-being: comfort may be achieved by increasing one's income, or by increasing the amount of time off. Depending on the quality of the work, stimulation may be enhanced by working more, but for other people by working less, if this allows them to go skydiving. Choices in benefits may also help people realise each of the three sub-categories of social approval. Choosing for more working time may improve one's status at work, for instance. Behavioural approval may be achieved by choosing for more leave to look after a terminally ill partner, but on the other hand choosing for more working time when times are busy at work may invoke behavioural approval from one's colleagues. Affect may make people choose for more time off, so that they can take a world trip with their partner, or to work more and trade in the extra hours for a computer for their teenage children.

By changing the composition of their reward and adjusting the balance between working and non-working time, employees may improve the value of their pay, since it allows them to achieve more of their goals. This is called the perceived value of pay (Langedijk 2001; Lazear 1998), since it relates to the value in the eyes of the employee, not the actual costs for the organisation. This value is influenced by the monetary component of the compensation as well as by the amount of leave and other benefits, and the expectations employees have of the future development of their pay (as a result of promotion or pay rises).

The choices that people make will depend on the value they attach to the elements involved in that trade. Employees will choose for trading in a day off for money if they value that free day less than the value of the cash they receive (and what it allows them to buy) if they work that day. Conversely, an employee may choose for more leave if the value of those extra days off is greater to him than the foregone income. Other elements of flexible benefit packages, such as the option to save for a sabbatical leave or compensation for a computer at home, may have different value to different employees, depending on their goals.

It is important to note that the costs and benefits of changing one's pay extend beyond the benefits themselves. Changing one's benefits requires time and effort. The employee has to study the arrangement, examine which option is most interesting, and then make the change. The amount of work this involves varies greatly between organisations, but also between choices. In the case of trades with little volume, these transaction costs may outweigh the gains of the trade, making participation uninteresting.

Time and money

The benefits offered in flexible benefit plans can be grouped into time and money. Time usually consists of short-term leave and various leave-days saving arrangements. Money can be cash, or come in the shape of a (tax-free) compensation, for example for travelling expenses or a computer. The choices employees can make in an FBP can be classified into four groups (Table 11.1).

All choices have an effect on either the balance between working time and non-working time, or income level, or both. We focus here on the choices that involve time off *and* income: trading in time for money or money for time.

Household

The household situation can affect participation in an FBP, and the choices people make within it. People in certain situations may be able to realise an improvement in the value their compensation has for them, while for others such an improvement may not be achieved because the standard pay is optimal for them.

For parents, particularly of young children, flexible benefits may be useful in improving their combination of work and care. Adjusting the balance between working and non-working time in their compensation may make it easier to relieve the strains of what has been dubbed the 'rush hour of life'. They may be able to reduce their time pressures at home. While there are other arrangements they can use to this end, such as working part-time, flexible benefits will allow a fine-tuning of the situation. We expect parents with (young) children living in the household to participate in the FBP more often.

When it comes to the choice between time-selling or time-buying, we also expect the presence of (young) children to cause an effect. For employees who are caring for children, particularly young ones, the value of an extra leave day may be much greater than for employees without such a responsibility. They will therefore choose more often for buying time off than an alternative option. Given that Dutch women generally make the greater adjustment to their working hours when children arrive (CBS 2004), we expect household effects to be more pronounced for women than for men.

Living with a partner may also make flexible benefits more interesting. Employees living with a partner will prefer greater flexibility, because this will enhance the coordination of various lives and lead to the attainment of more goals, making non-standard benefits more attractive.

The contribution an employee makes to the household income may be particularly relevant. In dual-income households, where there are also two sets of benefits, changing the composition of benefits to make them more complementary may be very useful. Employees who are responsible for

most or all of the household income will tend to prefer trading in money for time, to increase the household income. Achieving the goal of physical well-being for oneself and one's dependents will become more important if this depends on one single income, so enhancement of this income will be more likely to outstrip other goals that might be achieved through different choices.

Work

Depending on specific job situations, employees are expected to make different choices regarding their benefits, since their job construct will also affect their ability to improve their perceived value of pay through participation in an FBP. The working situation will also contribute to the specific goals employees may wish to achieve.

Participation in the FBP is expected to increase with the number of contractual hours. Employees with a full-time position receive more benefits (in absolute terms) than employees who only work two days a week. For the full-time employees an end-of-year payment, for instance, is larger, so trading it in for something else becomes more interesting. This effect applies to a number of possible choices, and thereby employees can achieve more with the plan as the contractual hours increase.

The wages people earn will also affect their participation, since in this system, as in most FBPs, the value of leave is dependent on the hourly wage. A higher hourly wage encourages more participation, because trades can become more substantial. If a receptionist and a manager both wish to acquire a computer through the flexible benefit plan, for instance, and trade in leave for it, the receptionist has to trade in more time than the manager. In terms of time, the computer is more expensive for the secretary. This will not only make the plan as a whole more interesting for people with a higher wage, it will also make them prefer trading in time for money. The higher value of an extra day worked (in monetary terms) will make selling time off more attractive, and buying extra time off a relatively expensive undertaking.

The choices in benefits will not merely be influenced by the monetary compensation employees receive for their labour. It may sometimes appear that money is the only thing employees will work for, though it is safe to say that this is something of a simplification. Intrinsic motivation and other job valuation aspects will also influence the preferences employees have towards their benefits and the goals they can achieve, particularly those concerning their balance between working time and time off. Doing one's work well will be more important depending on the degree of satisfaction the job brings, for instance.

Frey (1997) approaches the relation between intrinsic motivation and compensation with the help of principal-agent theory and crowding-out theory. He posits that people need either an intrinsic or an extrinsic

reason for working. Employers give their employees the opportunity to improve extrinsic motivation for their labour, which should be more attractive to people with a low intrinsic motivation. People with a high intrinsic motivation will be less interested in improving their pay because they receive more of a reward from work itself.

The effects of intrinsic motivation and the pleasure of work on the choice between more or less leave can also be approached from another angle, namely that of 'flow'. Flow is a concept developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1999), and refers to a situation where one is totally engrossed by what one is doing, to such an extent that one loses all sense of time and place. Since this is a pleasurable experience, people will strive towards a situation that recreates this experience.

Bakker applied this concept to work. To this end, he defines it as 'a short-term peak experience which is characterised by absorption, enjoyment of the job and intrinsic motivation' (2005:27). Enjoyment of the activity of work is experienced by employees who have a very positive judgement on their work. Absorption refers to the state of being so wrapped up in a task that a person no longer notices what is going on around her. Intrinsic motivation leads to work itself becoming a motivation and a goal to be achieved. Because it brings them more rewards, people who experience more flow at work should have a greater preference for extending their working time, and therefore will sell their leave more often.

Another element influencing job valuation is workload, and this may affect the choices employees make towards benefits – their leave in particular. People who experience a high workload may feel unable to take all the leave they have each year, choosing more often to trade it in for another benefit. The value of this leave they are unable to take is relatively low for them, making it a cheap source benefit. It should therefore be easy to find something on the goal-side of the plan that is of greater value, and employees with a high workload will also participate in the plan more often.

Commitment to the organisation may be interesting in this context too. Ellemers et al. (1998) developed a three-way distinction of commitment, separating organisational commitment from career-oriented and team-oriented commitment. They showed that these are separate types of commitment, related to different constituencies within the organisation, the goals and advancements of which they support and promote: the organisation as a whole, the team within which one works, and the individual level, the career. For purposes of the current study we examine the effect of organisational commitment on the choices regarding flexible benefits. When one is highly committed to the organisation, its goals become closely tied to one's own. A high level of commitment to the organisation may thus lead to a decision to not buy extra time off, and even sell days off, to promote the goals of the organisation.

Figures 11.1 and 11.2 depict the theoretical models.

METHOD AND DATA

The data for this research was gathered amongst employees of a large department of the Dutch civil service, in early 2003. An aselect, representative sample of 1030 employees received a questionnaire at their home address. There was a response of 40%, with 409 questionnaires returned. As a result of missing values we used 383 questionnaires for the analyses.

The questionnaire

Respondents were asked their personal characteristics: gender, year of birth (which we recoded into age), and their highest completed level of education. On the topic of their household situation we asked them whether they lived with a partner, whether this partner had paid employment and whether there were children in their household (as well as their ages). These variables were recoded into five dichotomous variables: partner, working partner, youngest child in the household younger than 4, youngest child in the household between 4 and 12, youngest child aged 12 or older. We chose these ages because Dutch children go to primary school at age 4 and secondary school at 12, which affects the time demands in the household. If the partner had paid employment, we asked the percentage of the household income that this partner contributed (less than 25%, around 25%, around 50% or more than 50%). In order to include single employees in our analyses we recoded this variable into the percentage of the household income contributed by the employee (more than 75%, around 75%, around 50% or less than 50%).

Respondents were asked in detail about their work situation. The number of contractual hours was asked as an open question. Respondents were asked to indicate their income on a 20-category answer. To measure workload we used the JCQ scale (Karasek et al. 1998). This scale contains questions such as 'Do you frequently have to work very fast?' Respondents could answer on a four-point scale, ranging from '(almost) never' to 'always' (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$). To measure organisational commitment we used the scale developed by Ellemers et al. (1998). This scale contains statements such as 'I feel like I belong with this organisation', which respondents could agree or disagree with on a five-point scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$). To measure flow at work we used the scale as developed by Bakker (2005). Examples of statements are: 'My work makes me feel good', 'When I work I forget everything around me' and 'I do my job without wondering what it brings me'. The same five-point scale was used for these statements as for commitment. Cronbach's α was 0.82 for the enjoyment scale, 0.79 for absorption and 0.77 for

intrinsic motivation.

Respondents

Respondents were 45 years old on average, and mostly male (70.2%). Both in terms of age and gender, the dataset is representative for the organisation as a whole. The average educational level was intermediate vocational (MBO). Most respondents lived with a partner (85.4%); 80.4% had paid employment. Almost two-thirds of the employees lived in a household with children (61%). In one out of five of these households the youngest child was under age 4, in 40.5% the children were 12 or older.

Practically all respondents had a permanent contract; only a very tiny minority had a contract for a limited period (1.6%). The average respondent had been working at this department for 22 years (56% for 21 years or longer), putting in 36.3 hours per week, 1.9 hours of which are overtime.

The FBP in this organisation had been in place for two years when we approached our respondents. The plan in this organisation offered two basic options. One was to choose for a tax-free compensation, for instance for a PC or additional childcare expenses. For these compensations, employees could trade in a part of their income and could choose from various sources: holiday money, compensation for travelling costs, or leave. Additionally, the plan offered employees the choice of working more or fewer hours, on a yearly basis. Extra hours were paid out in the hourly wage, hours that are reduced were taken out of the monthly wage. The option of extending the various leave arrangements offered outside of the FBP were not (yet) integrated into the flexible benefit plan.

People could change their benefits once a month. There were clear restrictions on the changes that could be made. Working time could not be reduced by more than 10 days, and extensions were limited to 100 hours per year and 40 hours per week. The number of leave days that could be traded in for another goal was also restricted, although the exact number depends on the age of the employee (since this influences the amount of leave). The youngest employees (on a full-time contract) could trade in about three days. There were also legal restrictions applying to this flexible benefit plan, as they do to all: income before taxes could not sink below the official minimum wage, and only days in surplus to the legal minimum of annual leave could be traded.

RESULTS

Descriptive

Participation in this organisation's flexible benefits model is high: 47% of respondents to the questionnaire had made a change in their benefits in

2002. An internal review showed that 34% of employees participated in 2001. On the basis of this review, changes were made in the presentation of the plan to employees, and the number of choice moments was raised from 2 to 12 per year; the higher participation level we found may be a result of these changes. There is no reason to believe that there is an over-representation of participants in the dataset. Data was collected as part of a wider research project into work-family arrangements, and participation in the flexible benefit plan was only one of several topics addressed in the questionnaire.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the respondents who had participated in the flexible benefit plan had made a choice that involved time, mostly trading in leave for another benefit. Two-thirds (66.1%) of the respondents who had participated in the plan used time off as a source benefit, either by trading in leave or by working more hours per week. More than half of the respondents (51.7%) chose for a financial source, 33 people chose for both kinds of sources. In terms of the goals that people chose there was far less variety. Almost all participants chose a financial goal (95.6%), usually a PC: 56.7% of participants made this choice, and 21.1% opted for a bicycle. There were very few people who chose extra time off (7.2%), and there were far fewer who chose for both kinds of goals. Only five people chose a time and a financial goal. Table 11.2 shows the combinations between the sources and goals that people chose in terms of time and money.

Explanatory

In a binary logistic regression we tested our model to see which variables affected participation in the flexible benefit plan (Table 11.3). Because the effects of young children were expected to be more pronounced for women, we decided to estimate the model separately for men and for women. Gender correlated with several other independent variables, not just with the presence of children. The analyses were controlled for age, educational level and job level.

While men participated in the FBP far more often (54.3% compared to 29.8% of women), participation in an FBP is affected by more variables of our model for women than for men. It is not uncommon for such results to appear. A similar difference between the sexes frequently turns up in labour supply research, where men behave more or less identically, and women react more clearly to their circumstances (and preferences) by changing their labour market participation (Killingsworth 1983; Grift and Siegers 1992).

The findings support some of our hypotheses: on the household side, the presence of children made changing benefits more attractive, as we expected. The age of these children had different effects for both sexes. Women participated more often when their children were young, and only if wider margins of statistical significance are applied (an N of 114 is very

small for logistic regression) did other mothers also change their benefits more often. For men this was only more appealing when they had older children. Men with a working partner also changed their benefits more often, for women this had no effect. Almost all women in this group have a working partner.

Female employees participated in the FBP according to their job situation, men did not. The increase in participation as the number of contractual hours goes up fits in with our hypothesis, although income did not have the expected effect. Workload had no effect. Intrinsic motivation has a negative effect on female participation in the model, as hypothesised based on the theory of Frey. The more intrinsically motivated women exhibit a dimmer enthusiasm for increasing their extrinsic reward. Women in higher job levels also changed their benefits more often.

Due to the fact that very few people in this organisation chose to trade in a financial benefit for more time off, this group could not be analysed separately. For the analysis of the decision to trade in time for money, we also performed a logistic regression analysis (see Table 11.4). Time sellers here are people who chose to trade in leave or work more hours for a financial benefit. Because the different age categories for the youngest child had no effect, they were replaced by a single variable for children in the household to improve model parsimony.

Work factors have a stronger effect on the decision to trade in leave for another benefit, and thus extend working time; there were no household factors that had a statistically significant effect. First of all, the number of contractual hours play a role, which we did not expect. The more hours people work, the more often they chose to extend their working time. This may be evidence of a pulling effect of work. This does not take place in emotional terms though. Employees with a higher organisational commitment chose to extend their working time less often. The same goes for employees who enjoy their work. Both these effects are contrary to our expectations. Employees who are intrinsically motivated chose more often for trading in time for money, as expected.

One may wonder about the causal relationship between these job valuation measures and benefit choices: job valuation could be affected by increasing the value of pay via an FBP. Benefit satisfaction has been shown to increase after the introduction of an FBP, but this was equally so for those who had and those who hadn't changed their benefits (Langedijk 2001), suggesting that participation itself does not affect satisfaction. These relationships could be better understood in a longitudinal study.

Because there were only 24 women in this data sub-set, separate analyses for men and women were not possible. When we attempted another method it turned out that two interaction effects were at play, between gender and workload and between gender and intrinsic motivation. The lack of women in the dataset still made the analyses less than perfect, to such an extent that we will refrain from publishing the

results here. Still, the suggestion from the data is that here, too, women react more strongly to their circumstances than men, particularly to their workload and intrinsic motivation. For men, the effect of workload on the decision to trade in leave was close to zero; women chose this option more often when their workload was high. Regarding intrinsic motivation, the effect points in the same direction for both sexes, namely that when intrinsic motivation increases, people chose more often to trade time for money, though the effect is much stronger for women than for men. Further research will hopefully allow us to shed more light on this matter.

CONCLUSIONS

Flexible benefits provide employees with the opportunity to adapt the composition of their pay to their preferences. In the present study we analysed who had changed their benefits and who had traded in time off for a financial benefit. In this final section we will reflect on our findings.

In the department of civil service researched in this study, almost half of the respondents changed their benefits. Strikingly, participation was higher among men than women. This means that for a reasonably large group of employees, especially men, perceived gains exceed the transaction costs associated with participation in the FBP. The model we developed went nonetheless further in explaining female participation than male participation. It appeared that women responded to their individual situation much more than men. Participation of women in the plan depended on both their household (motherhood) and work situations (contractual hours, job level). Men only participated more often when they had older children at home and less often when they lived alone. None of the work characteristics included in the present study were significant. It is likely that men's choices of time or money are affected by other issues, like institutional factors that were not included in this study. As only 13 employees traded in money for time, the data only allowed us to analyse who had traded in time for money. As most time sellers were men, analyses for men and women separately were not possible. When including gender interactions, however, it appeared that women reacted to more and different things than men; workload and intrinsic motivation were particularly significant factors.

Strikingly, household characteristics did not affect employees' choice to trade in time for money. Employees with children (regardless of their ages) did not make this choice less often than employees without children. Obviously, childless employees do not want to augment their working hours per se either. Work characteristics did affect employees' choice to sell time. Factors indicating how employees value their job (organisational commitment, enjoyment, intrinsic motivation) were shown to play an especially significant role, although not always in the way we expected. People who really enjoy their work actually traded in time for

money less often. It is the people who enjoy work less who were extending their working time, which is somewhat counterintuitive. However, we must be careful not to assume automatically that people who trade in time for money necessarily work more hours. It may be that the people who really like their work are also extending their working time, but simply do not feel the need to be compensated for it. The effect of intrinsic motivation undermines this assumption though, as people who are intrinsically motivated chose to trade in time for money more often.

What do our results say about how employees use FBPs as a means to better combine work and family life? Looking at participation rates, it appears that parents find it more useful to change their benefits than non-parents. In that sense, the plan acts as a work-family arrangement. However, the fact that the most popular choice made by employees was trading in time off for a new computer to work at home suggests that the majority of participants did not use the FBP to relieve time pressures, but rather consider it as an attractive tax arrangement. Of course, whether a computer in the home increases employees' time-spatial flexibility by enabling telecommuting and thus has the potential to reduce time pressure is not clear beforehand, as it may also increase negative work-home interference (cf. Peters and Van der Lippe 2005). As the option to trade time for a PC has been abolished, participation rates within FBPs may diminish in the future.

Buying time was far less popular than selling time. As it wasn't possible to test a 'time-buying model', we are not sure whether we can conclude from our study what household characteristics influence men and women to prefer more time off, and whether we can conclude that other work-life arrangements offered by the organisation, like part-time work, flexible hours or home-based telework, suffice to achieve a good work-life balance for employees and their households. The organisation in question is very generous in this respect, in another organisation a different picture may arise. At present, in many Dutch households men work full-time and women part-time, the latter providing households the needed flexibility. A further rise in women's labour market participation is likely, and this may give FBPs more rationale in the light of balancing work and family in the future. Further research is needed to see how parents view FBPs as a means to facilitate the combination of work and family, and how they are used in combination with other work-life balance arrangements.

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12 Household outsourcing: a transaction cost approach

Esther de Ruijter and Tanja van der Lippe

INTRODUCTION

Households increasingly face competing claims made by their jobs and homes as a consequence of women's growing labour participation. Households can use various arrangements to manage their tasks at home: tasks can be organised within the boundaries of the family, or be totally or partially outsourced to the market. Household outsourcing has become a well-known strategy for dealing with the coordination problems

associated with conflicting demands at work and at home (Bittman et al. 1999). These coordination problems are more likely to arise when multiple roles at work and in the family have to be synchronised (e.g. Voydanoff 1987, 1988). Housecleaners, babysitters, home maintenance suppliers, take-out food and dining out are all common examples of outsourcing.

In the social sciences, the outsourcing of household and caring tasks has received increasing attention. Studies on outsourcing are typically inspired by the notion of 'harried' households trying to meet the demands of both the home and paid work (Bellante and Foster 1984; Brayfield 1995; Cohen 1998; Oropesa 1993; Soberon-Ferrer and Dardis 1991). Informed by theories on the household division of labour, researchers generally assume that households with less available time (and higher incomes) outsource their tasks relatively more often. Empirical evidence does not support this view consistently though, and limited time for household tasks does not necessarily increase the use of outsourcing services (see De Ruijter et al. 2003 for an overview of outsourcing studies). Studies do generally find that a higher income allows more outsourcing (see De Ruijter et al. 2003).

Application of theories on the division of labour to the explanation of household outsourcing is not that straightforward in reality. Most studies ignore the fact that hiring outside help for domestic work is different from dividing household tasks between partners. For one thing, while the division of domestic work and caring tasks between partners takes place within the context of family loyalty, which overrules the unbridled pursuit of self-interest (Pollak 1985), the outsourcing of household tasks to outsiders involves substantial trust problems, which may act as a deterrent. The outsourcing supplier is less concerned with the welfare of the household than the household members are, so household tasks may be performed unsatisfactorily. Moreover, family loyalties – based on care, love and affection – are created, among other things, by performing domestic tasks, for domestic labour is not just work but also an expression of social bonds (e.g. Ahlander and Bahr 1995; DeVault 1991). Therefore, the explanation of outsourcing calls for a more subtle approach than a mere transfer of ideas on the division of labour within households. Naturally, theories on the division of household labour can be useful in the study of domestic outsourcing, but the trust problems associated with employing outsiders have to be taken into account as well.

In household outsourcing, an outsider comes to perform domestic tasks for the household, which means that the privacy of the household is invaded in two major ways. First, the supplier of the outsourcing service often enters the home physically, even at times when there are no household members present. Households hiring domestic help often worry particularly about the theft of household items (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001:78), whereas parents hiring a babysitter may even fear physical abuse or the children being left to watch television. Second, the outsourcing supplier (partially) takes over tasks of special value to the

household. It is important that suppliers of outsourcing services can be trusted within the private sphere of the household, especially when it comes to special tasks such as childcare. Trust is a very important issue for parents when they hire someone for this 'labour of love' (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001: 68).

The transaction cost approach (Williamson 1981, 1985) offers insight into the repercussions of trust problems on market exchange. Organisational studies have shown that trust problems associated with the exchange between firms may cause firms to refrain from market transactions (e.g. Masten 1996), or to invest more time and effort in contractual arrangements (Batenburg et al. 2003). Coordination problems within firms may also encourage market exchange and prevent internalisation of certain activities (e.g. Baron and Kreps 1999). Trust problems may in fact be more salient for the study of household outsourcing than the economic exchange between firms, because norms or feelings of privacy play such an important role. In explaining other types of household behaviour, for example making financial arrangements in intimate relationships, application of the transaction cost approach to the household has proved successful (e.g. Ben-Porath 1980; Pollak 1985; Treas 1991, 1993). Transaction costs not only involve costs to prevent and solve problems of trust with third parties but also with problems of coordination within the household. Transaction costs are incurred to 'reduce day-to-day hassles of negotiating and coordinating changes' in the household (Treas 1993:724).

In this chapter we use insights from the transaction cost approach to derive and test hypotheses on the effects of transaction costs on the outsourcing of four particular household tasks, namely home maintenance, cleaning, childcare and cooking. Both the transaction costs associated with household labour performed by household members and those associated with outsourcing are taken into account.

HYPOTHESES

Transaction costs associated with own production

Within the context of the household, transaction costs are involved in reducing daily hassle. Transaction costs are higher when more coordination is required. Specialisation in couple households reduces coordination problems, as one partner devotes more time and energy to the household while the other concentrates on paid work. As a result, specialisation increases efficiency (Becker 1981) and decreases coordination problems. Whereas specialised couples have a clear and fixed division of labour, unspecialised couples are confronted with the everyday problem of coordinating domestic work and care. Unspecialised couples will face problems particularly when it comes to the performance

of routine household chores or core tasks (Bianchi et al. 2000, Hochschild 1989). Coordination problems are less likely to arise for occasional or discretionary tasks, such as outdoor chores, repairs and gardening (Hochschild 1989).

Unspecialised couples have to incur more transaction costs than specialised couples to overcome the coordination problems of everyday life. Couples adopting a lifestyle without extreme specialisation have become more common over the last few decades (e.g. McLanahan and Casper 1995). In such unspecialised couples, also known as dual earners or, in the case of partly specialised couples, one-and-a-half earners, both partners participate in the labour market instead of just one. Some of the couples with two working partners are still partly specialised in the sense that one partner, usually the female, carries the responsibilities for the household. Yet compared to specialised couples, partly specialised couples too will experience more coordination problems and are more likely to outsource. Fully unspecialised couples will experience even more coordination problems than partly specialised couples, and are expected to be more likely to outsource than both specialised and partly specialised couples.

Singles can also be expected to experience more coordination problems than specialised couples, because only one person carries the responsibility for household and caring tasks. Coordination problems are especially big for working singles, because they have to coordinate paid work and home tasks by themselves. Similarly to unspecialised couples, working singles experience the problem of synchronising multiple roles. Singles have a smaller workload at home than couples, and do not face the coordination problem of synchronising the roles of different household members or adjusting to one's partner, a coordination problem which is typical of couple households. However, compared to specialised couples, who do not have to synchronise multiple roles, working singles face far more coordination problems, and are expected to be more likely to outsource than specialised couples.

Housework volume

Coordination problems within the family rise with the number of (young) children (Coverman 1985). So does the amount of household work, increasing the likelihood of coordination problems. A larger volume of household work increases the demands of fulfilling the role at home. Parents also need to arrange and combine multiple tasks in the family, namely housework *and* caring tasks. For this reason, transaction costs associated with own production increase with the number of children, and it can be expected that having more (young) children increases the likelihood of outsourcing.

Transaction costs associated with outsourcing

With respect to outsourcing, the extent to which households need to invest in transaction costs depends on the likelihood and the potential consequences of trust problems. This is also referred to as the *problem potential* (Batenburg et al. 2003). A higher problem potential increases the transaction costs of outsourcing, decreasing its attractiveness. The likelihood of problems depends on the opportunities and incentives the supplier gets for not delivering proper work – for instance, problems are more likely to arise when the household cannot observe the effort and quality of the supplier's work. The potential consequences refer to the costs that a supplier's undesirable behaviour – for instance, delivering improper childcare – can bring upon the household. The household's perception of the problem potential also depends on people's general level of trust. Some households are more inclined to be trusting, and this too influences the transaction costs associated with outsourcing.

Outsourcing creates a higher problem potential, and consequently more transaction costs, under the four following conditions: when the household cannot easily observe the effort and quality of the service supplier (monitoring problems); when the household is dependent on the supplier (one-sided dependence); when the potential consequences of undesirable behaviour are more severe (immaterial assets); and when the household is less trusting (general level of trust).

Problems monitoring effort and quality

Direct observation allows households to judge the efforts of the supplier of an outsourcing service, such as whether the housecleaner works the agreed number of hours. If direct observation is not possible, the household is less likely to outsource. Supervision of the supplier is only possible if household members can be at home while the supplier is working. Labour force participation restricts the possibility of being at home, while flexible schedules and telecommuting allow monitoring the supplier and decrease transaction costs. For certain tasks, supervision of the supplier's efforts is not an option, and the possibility of monitoring only influences the outsourcing of tasks that have to be performed in the home, such as housecleaning and maintenance (De Ruijter et al. 2003). The outsourcing of cooking and childcare outside the home lies beyond the bounds of monitoring. Besides, if a childcare provider had to be supervised continuously, outsourcing would become unnecessary or unfeasible. Telecommuting and flexible work schedules may actually decrease the demand for outsourcing, because flexible parents are better able to take care of the children themselves.

Households may also face difficulties in judging the quality of the work under their supervision, for instance due to lack of skills. When household members have more skills and expertise in a certain task, they are better able to judge the quality of the supplier's work. Even in the case of poorly

developed skills, expertise reduces the difficulty of judging quality and increases the likelihood of outsourcing. If more specialised tasks are involved, however, it may be impossible to judge the quality of the supplier's work. For example, it is relatively easy to check whether the housecleaner has cleaned the bathroom, but judging the work of a plumber who has repaired a leakage can be more difficult, even under direct observation. For obvious reasons, 'skilled' households are less likely to outsource because they can perform certain tasks themselves at a relatively low price. Unskilled households may have to outsource difficult tasks such as certain types of maintenance, because they lack the skills to do these tasks themselves. The monitoring advantage may thus be offset by the low costs of one's own household production.

One-sided dependence

The dependence of households on the supplier is higher when more relation-specific investments are involved (Williamson 1981, 1985). An example of a relation-specific investment is the emotional bond a child develops with the babysitter. This type of investment can only be recouped by the household within the context of the relation with the outsourcing supplier, in this case the babysitter (Ben-Porath 1980; Treas 1993). When the outsourcing relationship ends, households will have to make the same investment again if they want to switch to another supplier. Parents may also prefer the stability of having one single care provider (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001), which further increases their dependence on the supplier.

The relation-specific investments associated with outsourcing depend on process values, or the importance households attach to how domestic and caring tasks are done. The greater this importance, the more time and effort is needed to explain routines and rules to the supplier. For example, parents who assign a high value to consistency in the upbringing of their children will have to inform the babysitter or day care worker about this, or will have to search longer to find a supplier with similar values to their own. Higher quality standards too require more relation-specific investments. Such standards reflect the level of performance that household members will tolerate (Bianchi et al. 2000). For instance, if strict cleanliness is regarded as essential, the household will have to instruct the supplier carefully and may have to search longer for a suitable housecleaner.

Immaterial assets

Immaterial assets, such as domestic standards and process values, influence the consequences of potential trust problems and increase transaction costs. Therefore, households with higher domestic and caring standards are less likely to outsource their tasks. Again, this is due to the relation-specific investments involved.

General level of trust

Households differ in the extent to which they believe suppliers may behave in an undesirable way. People with a high level of trust are more likely to have faith in a supplier than 'low trusters' (Yamagishi 1986). General trust is a belief 'in the benevolence of human nature in general' (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994:139). People with a high general level of trust are more likely to have faith in a supplier than low trusters, because they think it improbable that the supplier will take advantage of them. The more trusting households are, the lower the perceived likelihood of problems and the more likely it is that outsourcing services will be sought. The level of trust does not affect coordination problems within the household.

DATA AND METHOD

Data collection

Data were collected using a multi-stage sample of employees of 30 Dutch firms. This survey was designed to study the causes of and solutions to work-home interference (Van der Lippe and Glebbeek 2004). Because our sample comprises an overrepresentation of highly-educated employees, it should be noted that our use of outsourcing may be relatively high. Home interviews were conducted with 1,114 employees and, if applicable, their partners, at a response rate of 29%. In the Netherlands, response rates for interviews at home vary from 25% to 45% in national probability samples (Kalmijn et al. 1999). The response rate of nearly 30% seems reasonable, certainly if the two-step contact procedure is taken into account. Employees were first called at work via telephone number lists provided by the organisations. They were requested to participate in the survey and, if willing to do so, were asked to give their home address. This approach was necessary because organisations have to protect the privacy of their employees and therefore cannot provide home addresses. Of the 3,970 employees contacted, 39% agreed to participate. Each employee was subsequently contacted at home to make an appointment for the home interview. Between the two contact moments, employees in couple households had to ask their partner to participate as well. Of all the employees contacted at home, 28% were not interviewed in the end, usually because the partner had refused to cooperate.

Operationalisation: dependent variables

The dependent variable in our analysis is the outsourcing of several household tasks: cleaning, home maintenance, childcare for children younger than 13, and cooking (take-away, pre-prepared food,

restaurants). Because outsourcing involves trust problems regardless of number of hours or instances, the dependent variable simply measures whether a household outsources for a task (1) or not (0). Both formal and informal outsourcing were included in the measures for home maintenance and childcare. Almost all households outsource cooking to some extent; for this reason, we used the number of restaurant visits and purchases of take-away and pre-prepared food. In total, 75% of all households had outsourced maintenance in the preceding year (Table 12.2). Of all households in the sample, 40% hired domestic help and 80% of the households with children used some form of childcare. On average, households used alternatives for home cooking approximately seven times per month.

Operationalisation: transaction costs associated with own production

Three dummy variables were constructed for the specialisation of couple households, based upon information on number of working hours of the partner and share of the female in domestic and caring tasks. Specialised couples, of whom the female works less than 16 hours per week and takes on more than 60% of all household tasks, constitute the reference group. Of all households in the sample, 14% was a specialised couple. Another dummy variable was included for partly specialised couples (32% of the households in the data), of whom the female works at least 16 hours per week and is responsible for more than 60% of domestic work and care. Couples with two working partners and an equal division of household tasks constitute the unspecialised category (25%). The third dummy variable was for 'other' couple households with an equal division of household tasks and a female who works less than 16 hours per week. A dummy was also included for working singles. Housework volume is indicated by number of children younger than 13.

Operationalisation: transaction costs associated with outsourcing

Problems monitoring effort were measured by means of job characteristics. A dummy for working from home was included, with a value of 1 if the employee and/or the partner occasionally work from home. Flexibility of work schedule(s) was measured with two questions, namely (a) how easy is it to take a day off or to work from home when an unexpected domestic event has taken place (0 not possible – 4 easily possible), and (b) who determines the beginning and end times at work (0 usually someone else – 4 only me). For couples with two working partners, the average value was included. For singles and single-earner households, the flexibility of the working partner was included. A higher value indicates more flexibility and fewer problems monitoring the supplier's efforts.

Problems monitoring quality are indicated by the skills and expertise of

the household members in each of the four tasks. The respondents were asked to judge themselves and their partner (if any) on a scale from 1 to 10 on their cleaning, cooking, home maintenance and childcare skills, and on how well they could judge whether a task had been done correctly. A higher value indicates fewer problems monitoring quality. In general, people judged their skills highest for childcare, with an average of 8.41, while the skills for home maintenance were lowest although still reasonable, with an average of 7.19.

Quality standards and process values are indicators of both one-sided dependence and immaterial assets of the household. Process values were measured by asking respondents to what extent they agreed that domestic and caring tasks have to be done in the habitual way, on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree/strongly agree). A higher value indicates higher process values. The reported minimum acceptable quality levels of cleaning, cooking and childcare, which range from 1 (low output standard) to 10 (task has to be done perfectly), indicate the quality standards. Not surprisingly, quality standards are especially high for childcare: parents indicated a minimum level of nearly 9 on a 10-point scale. The data did not provide a measure of material assets.

The household's general level of trust was measured with the following six items from Yamagishi's trust scale (Yamagishi and Sato 1986; Yamagishi 1986): (1) in dealing with strangers, it is better to be cautious until evidence has been provided that the stranger is trustworthy; (2) in these competitive times, one has to be careful or someone will take advantage of you; (3) one should not trust others until one knows them well; (4) most people will tell you a lie if they can benefit by doing so; (5) if someone gives you a compliment, it is because they want something from you; (6) given the opportunity, people are dishonest. Both employee and partner replied to each of these items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The items were then added and divided by 6. Cronbach's Alpha, indicating the reliability of the scale, was .83 for both employees and their partners. For couple households, the lowest level of trust of both partners was used, on the assumption that households will only outsource if the highest level of problem potential is dealt with satisfactorily. A higher value on the scale indicates a higher level of trust and a lower perceived problem potential.

Operationalisation: control variables

We controlled for age of the respondent (continuous variable) and the highest educational level in the household. Some studies show that age has a positive effect on the use of domestic help (Bittman et al. 1999; Cohen 1998), while others find no age effect (Zick and McCullough 1996). A higher educational level is associated with more outsourcing (Bellante and Foster 1984; Cohen 1998; Soberon-Ferrer and Dardis 1991; Van der Lippe et al. 2004). A higher household income also increases the

likelihood of outsourcing (Bellante and Foster 1984; Bittman et al. 1999; Spitze 1999). Net monthly household income and income squared were included. We also controlled for home ownership as an indicator of financial resources. Homeowners have a higher demand for maintenance and domestic help (Oropesa 1993).

Method

Because three of the dependent variables are dichotomous (whether or not a task is outsourced), logistic regression models were estimated for the outsourcing of home maintenance, domestic help and childcare. OLS regression models were estimated for the number of times per month that alternatives for cooking were used. Due to the multi-stage sample, the households in the sample were clustered in 30 organisations. The standard errors in the regression models were modified for clustering of the observations (Rogers 1993).

RESULTS

Cleaning

Transaction costs associated with own production appear to be an important determinant of the outsourcing of cleaning (Table 12.3). Households with living arrangements that diverge from the traditional, specialised couple are significantly more likely to hire domestic help. The difference between unspecialised and specialised couples is larger than the difference between partly specialised and specialised couples, as anticipated. The presence of children under the age of 13 also increases the likelihood of outsourcing cleaning.

Regarding outsourcing transaction costs, households that are able to monitor the supplier are significantly more likely to outsource cleaning. Both working from home and a flexible work schedule increase the likelihood of domestic help. Being able to monitor the quality of the supplier's work, as indicated by skills and expertise, does not influence the outsourcing of cleaning. Lower relative costs of one's own work associated with higher skills may actually offset the effect of monitoring advantages. Another explanation could be that all households can easily judge cleaning, regardless of skills and expertise.

Process values and domestic quality standards do not influence the likelihood of outsourcing cleaning either, possibly because only a relatively small investment has to be made which can be used throughout the outsourcing relation. Households may have to invest a few hours in the beginning, but this does not outweigh the advantage of having help thereafter. Alternatively, households with high standards may have a particular demand for outsourcing, which may outweigh the required

investments in transaction costs. We find the expected effect for the general level of trust: if couples are more trusting, they are more likely to outsource cleaning.

Home maintenance

As expected, the analysis reveals no effect of either specialisation or number of young children. Because home maintenance is considered a discretionary, 'male' task (Bianchi et al. 2000; Hochschild 1989), household coordination problems do not increase the likelihood of outsourcing.

As for cleaning, working from home and a flexible schedule indeed increase the likelihood of hiring someone for maintenance, because the required transaction costs associated with outsourcing are lower. Both conditions make it possible for household members to observe the efforts of the maintenance supplier. Households whose members are able to monitor the quality of the supplier's work are not any likelier to outsource home maintenance. Apparently, the lower relative costs of one's own labour associated with greater skills and expertise offset the monitoring advantages.

Relation-specific investments and immaterial assets do not decrease the likelihood of outsourcing. Households that attach more value to how domestic work is done are even more likely to outsource maintenance. Households with higher process values may find good maintenance of their house more important, which increases the demand for maintenance services. Again, household trust increases the likelihood of outsourcing home maintenance.

Childcare

Dual-earner unspecialised and partly specialised couples are indeed more likely to outsource childcare than specialised couples, as they face more coordination problems and have to invest more transaction costs in organising childcare. As expected, unspecialised couples are more likely to outsource childcare. Working singles do not outsource childcare more often than specialised couples, possibly because only 19% of the working single parents in the sample had children younger than 4. Since our sample only contained employees, singles with children that demand full-time care were not well represented. The number of children does increase coordination problems, and consequently the likelihood of outsourcing childcare.

The findings on the effects of transaction costs associated with outsourcing show that, as expected, working from home does not increase the likelihood of outsourcing childcare. Working from home offers the opportunity to observe the efforts of the supplier, but childcare is often provided by a supplier outside the home; indeed, direct monitoring would

make such outsourcing redundant. Flexible work schedules facilitate the use of outsourcing alternatives for childcare, although less for reasons of monitoring than because day care centres often have strict opening hours.

Higher skills and expertise do not influence the likelihood of outsourcing significantly. Perhaps the outsourcing of childcare is difficult to judge, regardless of skills and expertise. Again, the general level of trust appears to be important when deciding whether or not to have an outsider taking care of the children.

Cooking

Singles are more likely to outsource cooking than couples. This provides some evidence that coordination problems increase household transaction costs and make outsourcing more attractive. The outsourcing of cooking may also entail coordination problems for couples, because partners have to adjust their activities to each other. The number of children decreases the use of outsourcing alternatives for cooking. This is not surprising, because eating out also involves coordination problems. Besides, the outsourcing of cooking does not have scale benefits, while home cooking has. Another explanation of the negative effect is that eating out with children is not exactly convenient or relaxing.

Working from home and a flexible schedule do not increase the possibility of monitoring the supplier, therefore these variables have no effect. Greater cooking skills, indicating the ability to monitor quality, decrease outsourcing. Perhaps experienced cooks are not convinced of the quality of outsourcing alternatives, and are more confident about the quality of their own cooking. In addition, cooking skills decrease the relative costs of cooking, thus making outsourcing less attractive.

As expected, households with high-quality standards are less likely to outsource cooking. This can be explained by immaterial assets, as they make a substandard meal more costly. One-sided dependence does not account for the effect because households are not tied to a supplier.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the past, studies on domestic outsourcing have used theories on the division of household tasks between partners to explain the division of labour between the household and third parties. This study advances on such research by taking account of the consequences of getting outsiders into the privacy of the home. Differences between households in the use of domestic outsourcing have been explained by applying insights from an extensive literature from organisational theory on trust problems. The transaction cost approach specifies the conditions under which transaction costs associated with outsourcing and household governance

are high. Taking a transaction cost perspective has allowed us to include the consequences of trust problems for household outsourcing into the analysis.

Trust matters in household outsourcing. The possibility of directly observing the efforts of the supplier decreases the likelihood of undesirable behaviour and hence the transaction costs associated with household outsourcing. As a result, the probability increases of outsourcing tasks such as housecleaning and home maintenance, both of which allow for direct monitoring. Interestingly enough, the general belief of households in the trustworthiness of other people has proved to be an important factor in explaining outsourcing tasks that involve risk. Households with a high level of general trust are more likely to outsource childcare, cleaning and home maintenance. These tasks all entail the actual involvement of suppliers in the privacy of the home or a 'labour of love', which highlights the importance of trustworthiness. With respect to cooking, general trust is less relevant, as outsourcing is incidental and there are many different suppliers whose quality is relatively easy to judge. Only if the privacy of the home or actual entry are involved does trust become a significant determinant in household decision-making.

The transaction cost approach to household outsourcing seems promising. Transaction costs associated with own production, which are needed to reduce coordination problems and day-to-day hassle, have an important influence on outsourcing decisions. Consistently with results from earlier family studies that apply the transaction cost approach to household decision-making, this study has shown that households include transaction costs in their outsourcing decisions. In addition to providing a theoretical framework for existing hypotheses in the outsourcing literature, the transaction cost approach to households has also provided new insights into their outsourcing behaviour. Households attempt to minimise transaction costs and are more likely to use outsourcing alternatives for core household tasks if the investments necessary to reduce coordination problems are higher. Transaction costs increase with monitoring problems and a higher perceived likelihood of problems, which decreases the probability of outsourcing. All of this means that the notion of transaction costs can be a useful tool for comparing the relative costs of different 'governance structures' in household organisation. Moreover, the transaction cost approach to household governance raises new questions on the use of household outsourcing by couple households. For instance, outsourcing can be an important strategy for reducing internal conflict and negotiations about the division of household labour. Family research can thus benefit from the extensive organisational literature on the relative transaction costs of different modes of organisation.

In contrast to the present study, earlier applications of the transaction cost approach to households and organisations have provided strong support for the claim that exchange partners choose arrangements that offer protection against the hazards associated with one-sided

dependence. In addition to the potential explanations given above, limited differences between households in relation-specific investments may well explain the different results of our study. Households always make substantial relation-specific investments when they allow a supplier to enter their private domain. Compared to the one-sided dependence involved in allowing a third party into the home, differences between households in standards and process values are relatively small. Assuming that outsourcing always involves relation-specific investments, the effect of monitoring problems is remarkably consistent with the findings from organisational studies. In exchanges between firms, the effect of monitoring problems hinges on relation-specific investments (Shelanski and Klein 1995).

This study has moved beyond existing research by including trust in the explanation of household outsourcing. The influence of trust problems on household outsourcing involves more than the choice of whether or not to outsource. Trust problems also affect supplier choice (De Ruijter et al. 2003). Households may choose a supplier they know and trust, which opens up the possibility of integrating the outsourcing activities performed by friends or relatives with pre-existing, ongoing and significant personal relationships (Pollak 1985). Outsourcing within a familiar social context reduces trust problems and makes it more similar to household tasks performed within the context of family loyalty. The required transaction costs for outsourcing depend on the number of suppliers that are available from network sources. For instance, the availability of different childcare suppliers should be considered. Further research into supplier choices is desirable.

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13 Time competition in home-based telework: a theoretical framework

Peter Standen

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades much has been written about home-based telework as a new way of organising work with important consequences for time competition. From the beginning, greater control over time has been seen as the prime attraction of telework to many self-employed and employee teleworkers, across a range of professional and clerical occupations (Huws 1984; Olson and Primps 1984; Pratt 1984). Other time-related benefits have been found in reduced commuting time, and greater productivity and quality of work from improved concentration. Alongside such benefits, the dangers of conflict between the time schedules of work and home life have also been widely reported, particularly for women with major responsibility for child-care (e.g. Huws 1984; Olson and Primps 1984).

A few recent studies have focussed on time in telework, but retain this ambivalence. Tietze and Musson (2003) show how telework brings clock-based organisational time frames into conflict with task-based domestic time, concluding that such “flux and tensions” allow individuals to better accommodate these different frameworks, “albeit precariously and inchoately” (2003:452). Steward (2000) found that time flexibility afforded only “occasional and brief” opportunities to resolve such tension, requiring “complex construction and organization of more or less permeable boundaries, and new ways of calculating time” that “predominantly worked to employers’ advantage” (2000:72).

The experience of time in telework appears as a paradoxical mix of benefits and problems, in part because for many people it has both outcomes, and in part because teleworkers’ circumstances are as diverse as the institutions of work and home. However, both public and academic discussions continue to portray telework as either a win-win solution to time competition or too problematic to be widely adopted. What is needed is a better understanding of *when* and *for whom* these benefits and problems arise. This will require careful empirical studies which, given the

variety of telework arrangements, will need a comprehensive theoretical base. This chapter offers a step in this direction.

Telework has been described as a “disruptive experiment” (Ahrentzen 1990) in contemporary life, where the values of the public world of work directly contact those of the private realm of home life. The resulting accommodations and conflicts highlight aspects of each domain that are often taken for granted in the other. The experience of time pressure is a good example. In workplaces time pressure is often thought of as too little time to complete desired activities, a quantitative phenomenon. However, studies of work at home highlight the very different *qualities* of time in home and office workplaces. For example, work time in a large corporation is often of fixed duration (e.g. 37.5 hrs per week), highly regimented (8:30 to 4), closed to interruption by outside events (‘time off’ only by prior permission), controlled by others (managers), required to follow public norms (‘business hours’) and often future oriented (dedicated to end of year profit or performance indicators). Time at home tends to be less regimented, more subject to negotiation amongst participants, and judged by the quality of the present and past as well as the future (eg. Adam 1995). Time at work is often valued by cognitive and objective outcomes to do with efficiency (e.g. Whipp 1994), while time in private life may have more emotional significance (e.g. Carstensen et al. 1999).

While time pressure is often seen as a shortage of time (eg. Gevers et al. 2001) increasingly, studies of time in many disciplines move beyond the metaphor of clock time towards qualitative or subjective studies of the meaning or experience of time. Experience of time has been shown to be influenced by cultures (Kluckhohn 1959), industrial organizations (Hassard 1989), the family (Constantine 1986), religion, education or personality (Zimbardo and Boyd 1999). This chapter starts from the premise that time competition in telework can be assessed by examining *subjectively experienced* characteristics of the temporal environments of work and home as well as changes in the amount of time available.

Why do people telework?

The reasons people telework are varied and may involve complex tradeoffs. As noted, studies have reported greater control over time as a major motivation, whether to better balance work and family demands (e.g. Olson and Primps 1984; Pratt 1984; Bailyn 1989; Huws et al. 1990; Devine 1997), to balance work and recreation (Bailyn 1989; Pratt 1984), to reduce travel time (Salomon and Salomon 1984; Kraut 1987; Quaid and Lagerberg 1992) or to avoid interruptions at work (Kraut 1987; Olson 1987; Hartman et al. 1991). The time factor appears amongst both employees (e.g. Olson 1987) and the self-employed (e.g. Christensen 1988), and while it is perhaps more available to professionals, who enjoy greater autonomy over work organization generally (for an alternative

viewpoint see Steward 2000), it is also important to clerical workers (Devine 1997; Dubrin 1991). Despite tradeoffs such as slower career advancement, loss of organisational supports or greater home-work conflict, such reports show that some teleworkers are primarily motivated by time pressure and find relief in work at home.

Telework may also be chosen for reasons not related to time: reduction of travel costs (Pratt 1984), a more congenial work environment through avoiding social problems in workplaces (Pratt 1984; Huws et al. 1990), or commuting difficulties from pregnancy, illness, disability or the need to care for family (Standen 1997). Others telework because the job demands it, such as sales staff based at home to be nearer their territories, or where they have been forced out of the office (e.g. Harris 2003) to cut costs, perhaps through practices such as hot-desking.

Whether telework is chosen to enhance control over time or not, the literature suggests time competition is a serious issue. The sections below develop propositions concerning qualitative and quantitative aspects of time pressure. First, the concepts of telework and time pressure are clarified. Time pressure is then explained as a function of variables in the telework environment to do with role conflict, role ambiguity and social supports. Finally, moderating effects of attributes of the teleworker are described.

THE CONCEPT OF HOME-BASED TELEWORK

'Telework' here refers to 'white collar' employees working at home¹. Telework appears to be growing in many industrialised nations aided by technologies such as email, the world-wide web and video conferencing, although IT-based telework dates back to the 1970s and telephone-based telework even earlier (Kraut 1987). While technology may be important in the expansion of telework across occupations and worker levels, as studies of other forms of telemediated work suggest (e.g. Huws and O'Regan 2001), it is not central to the propositions below.

Further, some categories of teleworker are excluded from the framework below. Self-employed home-based workers, of whom there are considerable numbers (Huws and O'Regan 2001) are ignored as the aim is to compare home and office workplaces. Teleworkers are assumed to be salaried rather than on hourly rates, contracts or piecework, and to spend more than half the week at home. Those who work at home irregularly to 'catch up' are excluded, and telework is assumed to be a long-term arrangement. Katz (1987) describes a case of adaptation to telework in three phases (conflict, transition and steady state) stretching over 6 months, while Frolick et al. (1993) report that a year is necessary to achieve stability.

Both the technology involved and the nature of the telework arrangement may moderate the experience of time pressure, and should

be assessed in empirical studies. Given the paucity of data on the frequency of different types of telework, the framework here may describe only a small portion of 'teleworkers' defined differently.

A final assumption in comparing home and office workers is that they perform similar tasks. Some evidence shows this is not always so (e.g. Bailyn 1989). Bailey and Kurland (2002) suggest that telework more often involves independent, cognitive or creative tasks that can be performed at home, although there is plenty of evidence that teleworkers also do routine work such as word-processing and telephone answering (e.g. Huws and O'Regan 2001). On a different level, Olson (1987) reported teleworkers faced less role conflict and ambiguity because their work was more formally defined and less subject to demands. Therefore, the tasks and occupations involved in telework arrangements are also important moderators of the propositions below.

There are also many implicit assumptions in the use of 'home' and 'family' in telework studies. 'Home' may exclude significant numbers of teleworkers in sites such as farms, military bases, hospitals, or industrial estates. And contrary to much media and practitioner reporting, home is not always a suburban retreat from the ills of the CBD (Ahrentzen 1990; Huws et al. 1990). More fundamentally, telework studies highlight different interpretations of 'home', 'family' and 'work' according to gender, socio-economic level, culture and other social variables. Gender is especially significant given the predominance of women in certain service occupations (especially in low skill, low paid areas such as customer services and data processing), their roles as primary care givers and their position in household decision-making (Leidner 1988; Christensen 1988; Gurstein 1991; Huws et al. 1990). Gender is a central moderator of the predictions below, although space prevents adequate treatment of its complex role in the concepts of work, home and family.

THE CONCEPT OF TIME PRESSURE

The experience of time pressure can be described by six variables covering its objective and subjective properties (Figure 13.1), based on telework studies cited below and on unpublished data from an interview study of teleworkers (Omari and Standen 1996). In describing time pressure as a component of work-family role pressure, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) distinguish between physical and psychological disengagement as components of time pressure; however it is unclear how these might be assessed. The more detailed model here may, however, require further investigation of the interrelationships between components.

Time pressure is firstly a conflict between the *amount of time* available in one domain and the amounts required in other domains. In telework, for example, a child's unexpected illness may reduce time available for work

in the current day or week, or a work deadline may lead to working longer hours at the expense of family time.

The remaining variables underly the perceived *quality* of a time period². Quality may be considered an affective judgement of like or dislike in the experience of time. One way to understand the distinction between quantity and quality is to consider that a work week of 40 hours (say) can take on a very different quality if it is (a) subject to interruptions, (b) spread over scattered parts of the week, (c) forced into times when one is not mentally alert or emotionally focussed, (d) imposed on a person without their control, or (e) evaluated through achievement of deadlines rather than goals inherent in the task.

The first two dimensions of quality describe loss of unity in the experience of time. *Interruptability* refers to irregular, unpredictable switching between tasks in response to interruption by members of a different role set. The *modulation* of time is the experience of reduced quality due to repeated and predictable switching between roles, usually over longer time periods than interruptions. Interruptability and modulation are different forms of role switching.

Engagement signifies the degree of cognitive or emotional immersion in the present a person experiences. Engagement may be the dimension that most directly captures the experience of time quality, judging by its role in experiences in which consciousness of time is minimal, in experiences of timelessness (Mainemelis 2001) or flow (Csikzentmihalyi 1990).

A person's experience of control over time or temporal *autonomy* is also expected to influence assessment of pressure. As noted earlier, such control is a central attraction of work at home for some people, and its loss a significant penalty for others. Choosing when to do a task and how long to give to it are expected to reduce perceptions of time pressure, compared to the same task performed under externally imposed deadlines.

Finally, the experience of time pressure is related to values placed on time, here called *time orientation*. These derive from a variety of sources. Kluckhohn (1959) distinguished cultures in terms of focus on past, present or future. Levine (1998) found different cultures vary in time urgency, as measured by attributes such as accuracy of clocks, pace of walking and punctuality. Gonzales and Zimbardo (1985) described seven time perspectives considered to be stable psychological traits. These focus on past, present or future, and variously see time from hedonistic, fatalistic, socially-obligated, pragmatic or goal-seeking perspectives. Carstensen and her colleagues (e.g. Carstensen et al. 1999) find that impending endings in life cause individuals to move towards social and emotional goals and away from cognitive goals. In later life stages, or approaching endings of shorter time-spans, individuals' focus shifts accordingly from future to present.

Organisations and families also influence values toward time.

Organisations are said to emphasise clock or calendar time in coordination of activity, and to have a strong focus on future outcomes (e.g. Whipp 1994). Families may have task-based orientations (Tietze and Musson 2003) and cultural values favouring relationships and personal satisfaction (Clark 2000); these may focus more on the present.

In telework studies, time orientation appears as a complex issue related to life goals. Bailyn (1989) studied the meaning of work in the context of other life goals in a group of teleworkers and a group of office workers doing similar work. She distinguished two groups of teleworkers, a group of males for whom flexibility to work at home enables greater access to leisure, and a group of females for whom flexibility means intrinsic interest in the work and their own self-development in the context of balance between work, family and pleasure. The office workers were motivated by extrinsic factors of income or success as central life goals, and had low concern with family, flexibility, the work itself or self-development.

Time orientation in telework is also influenced by variations at the family level, as illustrated in Beach's (1993) study of home business operators. One group of men and women preferred to work at home to meet family needs, and had values favouring close work-family interaction. They worked fewer hours, had frequent interruptions, and were more focused on household chores and child care, while others working at home for non-family reasons were much less tolerant of the mixing of these spheres. Beach attributes these differences to the family as an 'ideological filter' acting on the construction of work and family schedules. Constantine's (1986) classification of families as closed, random or open systems, each with a distinct orientation towards time, provides another perspective on family variations.

Time orientation is a complex but important aspect of time pressure. A first step in its measurement would be to discriminate orientation towards past, present and future, a theme in all the above studies. For example, a present-centred person is likely to appreciate work at home if it reduces conflict with a future-orientated organizational culture. A future-oriented person might welcome the emphasis on predictability, planning and schedules at work compared to the flux of a present-centred household devoted to children's rapidly changing needs, or to its opposite, the expansiveness of unstructured time alone.

ROLE THEORY AND TIME COMPETITION

The concept of social roles is central to understanding time pressure in the home work environment. Multiple roles have long been considered a distinguishing feature of modern life in industrialised nations (Dubin 1956; Goffman 1959; Kahn et al. 1964). In particular, the distinction between work and family roles³ is considered fundamental (Ashforth et al. 2000), although leisure may also be an important source of role identity for some

people (Kabanoff 1980).

Changes in work and family roles in recent times appear to have increased time competition, creating interest in telework in many countries. Australia is typical of many: women tend to participate more in work but retain primary responsibility for family, and while men participate less in work, working hours have grown over recent decades. Dual income families and single parent families are more common, and the percentage of part-time and casual workers is growing (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003). There is also evidence of a shift in identity for many people, away from private life (Morf 1989) to work (Pocock 2000). These trends suggest that an increasing proportion of people seek better integration of home and work life.

However, integration has both positive and negative aspects. These can be understood by looking at role 'boundaries' (Eckenrode and Gore 1990), conceptualised here as having physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive and relational components (Ashforth et al. 2000). Boundaries are not just mental representations of where one role ends and another begins, but are continuously enacted through communications with others (Kahn et al. 1964). Other members of a 'role set' (e.g. work supervisors or colleagues) continually 'send' roles to a person, and in following those roles an individual sends messages to others (e.g. other home residents) about what is expected.

The need to enact roles through communication means they are not always switched instantaneously or independently of the social and physical environment. The process of role transition in telework has been studied by Ahrentzen (1990), who finds that teleworkers engage in a variety of rituals in moving from one mind-set to another. An extreme example would be a teleworker who dresses in business attire, exits the front door at 9am, enters the home office by another door, maintains complete separation until 5pm, then reverses the process. In a more theoretical account Ashforth et al. (2000), based on the work of Van Gennep (1960), describe a three-stage process of psychological disengagement and re-engagement involving rites of separation, rites of transition and rites of incorporation. Shumate and Fulk (2004) further develop the notion of rites, distinguishing them from rituals and routines used to achieve similar purposes.

Ashforth et al. (2000) propose that the importance of such role transition processes varies, with transitions viewed on a continuum between segmentation and integration. Segmented roles have highly contrasting role identities, and inflexible and impermeable boundaries (permeability is defined as the potential for roles to be sent from another physical location). The work/family boundary in office workers is considered to be close to highly segmented. Transitions between segmented roles are more effortful, and the boundaries tend to be institutionalised over time, becoming progressively divergent. Segmented roles are not easily 'blurred' since they are distinguished by symbolic

markers (eg., rituals and physical cues such as dress and building decoration). They are less subject to inter-role distraction and highly psychologically compartmentalised. However, their separateness renders conflict more significant when behaviours, thoughts or emotions do 'spillover' across the boundary.

Conversely, integrated roles have more similar role identities and flexible and permeable boundaries. Work roles, such as team member or subordinate, tend to be more integrated than work and family roles. Transitions between integrated roles are less effortful, more frequent and have less emotional impact. However, role blurring is more likely, and is expected to happen more readily and without warning. Fully disengaging identities is therefore more effortful.

Ashforth et al. describe work at home as 'lending itself' to high integration (2000:479), citing Ahrentzen's observations of home-workers' transition activities as 'relatively simple rituals to get motivated to start work'. They suggest the home work environment reduces the overall severity of work-family conflict but increases role ambiguity and makes conflict more frequent than in office work. The present framework departs from this view in two ways. First, the segmentation of work and family roles at home is hypothesised to vary considerably according to aspects of the household, the telework arrangement and the individual teleworker (discussed in the previous section, and below). Second, if telework is judged in relation to office work, changes in work-role boundaries must also be considered.

Offices typically contain powerful role senders in a variety of role sets – executives, supervisors, team members, professional groupings, social networks, subordinates and so on. Individuals may experience segmentation between their view of their work role and those sent by others. For example, Perlow (1998) describes a variety of boundary control mechanisms applied by management to the time of professional members of a US company: imposing demands through meetings and requests; reviews and deadlines; restricting vacations; requiring staff to attend training; monitoring by standing over or checking up or observing; and modelling long working hours. Fully half of Perlow's sample were classified as resisting these bureaucratic and cultural boundary controls. Such individuals might find telework appealing, just as Huws et al. (1990) note that offices are sites of alienation and harassment for many people. Distance from the office may reduce permeability and increase flexibility of work role boundaries, with positive effects from reducing role conflict. Negative effects might also follow if reduced communication with important role senders reduces performance or job satisfaction.

While Ashforth et al. propose that home-work roles tend to have higher contrast than work roles, it may be that some people choose telework to reduce work role conflict, while others are influenced by home-work conflict (of course, some may have both concerns). All face the challenge of greater segmentation of work roles, and many are challenged to better

integrate work and family roles. Consequently, the overall effect of telework on time pressure is here evaluated in terms of both reduced contact with the office and increased contact with family life. Both can be either positive or negative experiences.

TIME PRESSURE IN THE HOME-BASED TELEWORK ENVIRONMENT

The sections below develop propositions relating aspects of the telework environment to the experience of time pressure, drawing comparisons with office environments. Role theory underpins many of the propositions.

Quantity of time

Commuting reduction has been considered a major outcome of teleworking (eg. Kitamura et al. 1991). While the evidence on whether telework is chosen for this reason is not clear (see Bailey and Kurland 2002), for many workers commuting and associated tasks (e.g. preparing work clothes, maintaining a car) occupy significant time that becomes available in telework. A reduction in time pressure is consequently predicted.

P1 Teleworkers will have less time pressure due to savings in commuting time.

Two qualifications are noted. Commuting time may be very important in maintaining boundaries between work and domestic roles. It appears a significant proportion of workers appreciate commuting as a 'time for being by themselves' (Delasalle and Poggi 1981, quoted in Salomon and Salomon 1984). Ahrentzen (1990) finds that teleworkers develop new rituals to aid boundary transition, and if work and home life are in high contrast (Ashforth et al. 2000) then such role transitions remain effortful and time-consuming in the home environment. Accordingly, the time-savings from reduced commuting may not be fully realised. A second complication is that transportation researchers find that work journeys are often multipurpose trips (Salomon and Salomon 1984), mixed in with shopping, medical, recreation or other activity.

Time available might also increase due to greater work productivity, at least where teleworkers have discretion over work hours. There are many anecdotal accounts of greater work productivity and a number of self-report surveys (e.g. Olson 1987; Bailyn 1989). However, rigorous empirical research is limited to a few studies (e.g. Devine 1997; Dubrin 1991) and all telework studies are limited by small sample sizes and other methodological problems, including doubts about accuracy of self-reports, differences in the type of teleworkers studied (Bailey and Kurland 2002),

and comparability of office worker 'controls' (Kraut 1987). Consequently, time-savings from increased productivity are not proposed at this time.

Fragmentation of time

Fragmentation of time is an important consequence of role conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Two forms can be identified, corresponding to two time pressure variables. *Physical intrusion* occurs in both office and home-based work. The integration of roles in offices often results in little control over interruptions (Bailey and Kurland 2002; Perlow 1998). As mentioned earlier, greater ability to concentrate on work is an important attraction for teleworkers (Olson and Primps 1984; Hartman et al. 1991), especially though not exclusively in professional or semi-professional occupations where mental concentration or creativity are required. Greater engagement with work is expected to reduce experience of time pressure in telework. Conversely, physical intrusion by family members is obviously more likely at home and has often been described as stressful to teleworkers (e.g. Olson 1987; Christensen 1988).

The second threat to temporal unity lies in the very different *schedules* of work and family roles, and in the significant differences between some work roles. For example, teleworking mothers may schedule work around household care requirements (Ahrentzen 1990; Leidner 1988), including the externally controlled timetables of schools, child-care centres, shops or medical facilities. A day where a mother works, drops children off to school, works again, picks up the children, does some shopping, feeds the children and goes back to work offers great possibility for experience of time pressure. Time spans in each role are reduced, much time is spent in transitional actions, and planning ahead to structure or 'juggle' time is stressful in its own right.

On the other hand, work at home may be less influenced by schedules set for other work roles. For example, Bailyn (1989) found over a quarter of her sample of professional teleworkers were more productive outside traditional office hours, and reported increased productivity through greater individual control of the timing of work. Such control was the reason these individuals chose to work at home.

P2 Teleworkers seeking greater work-family integration will face increased time pressure from physical intrusions and the need to juggle different schedules, experienced as increased fragmentation of time.

P3 Teleworkers seeking greater temporal flexibility in work roles will face less time pressure from intrusions and conflicting schedules, experienced as reduced fragmentation of time.

It is expected that for teleworkers with families, both effects may be

present simultaneously, and the overall outcome will depend on the permeability and flexibility of boundaries and the contrast between roles.

While the experience of *fragmentation* of time is hypothesised to cause time pressure in its own right, intrusions and schedules may also have secondary effects of reducing cognitive or emotional *engagement* with a task, reducing *autonomy* over time and lowering the *amount* of time available. Indeed, the need to actively transition back to the focal task suggests their real significance may be greater than the time spent out-of-role, especially for work-family boundary intrusions. Further, these effects may be different in home and work domains: following Carsky et al. (1991) it may be that work tasks are less easily performed under disruption than family ones.

Emotional spillover

Research on work-family interaction in office workers shows that strains in one domain (negative moods such as tension, anxiety, fatigue, and depression) can spillover into the other (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Burke 1988). Spillover of moods and emotions⁴ might be more frequent in telework as the home-work boundary is more permeable. Perceived quality of time is predicted to lessen where emotions from another domain intrude into a teleworker's work or home life, affecting concentration and emotional responsiveness in the focal activity, and reducing feelings of temporal autonomy.

P4 Spillover of emotions between work and family roles will increase time pressure by lowering cognitive and emotional engagement and reducing perceived autonomy over time.

Relationship issues with individuals in work roles are also sources of stress, and some teleworkers choose the arrangement to help regulate social contact at work (Pratt 1984). These workers may reduce work-role spillover if distance from colleagues, superiors or clients leads to more segmented work-role boundaries.

P5 Spillover of emotions will be reduced for teleworkers with difficulty managing work-role boundaries, increasing cognitive and emotional engagement and perceived autonomy over time.

Spillover of behavioural styles

Work and family life are typically characterised by very different behavioural styles. For example, the managerial style in organisations values self-reliance, low emotionality, aggressiveness and objectivity (Schein 1973), characteristics in conflict with the emphasis on nurturing, relating, emotional satisfaction and self-identity at home (e.g. Greenhaus

and Beutell 1985; Clark 2000). The different bases of power relations at home and work (Hoffman 1989) also influence behavioural styles.

These styles value time in quite different ways (Clark 2000; Tietze and Musson 2003) Work styles emphasising time-urgency, deadlines, schedules and planning can conflict with those in home life. Conversely, achievement of work goals may be impeded if behavioural styles from home life are transferred to work. A person who acts like a time-critical, future-oriented manager at home, or is overly expansive, present-centred or reflective at work, will disengage both themselves and others.

Again, the effect on time pressure might include both positives derived from escaping role conflict in offices and negatives from greater work-family conflict. Teleworkers might use more relaxed behavioural styles in work at home, improving concentration, creativity, self-awareness and emotional focus. Improved quality of work has been reported in many studies (e.g. Frolick et al. 1993; Olson 1987; Katz 1987; Devine 1997).

Behavioural styles can be considered manifestations of the cultural, social and personal values described earlier as time orientations (amongst other values). Time pressure is experienced when a role sender's behavioural style is at odds with the time orientation a person brings to the focal role.

P6 Behavioural spillover between work and home in telework will increase, increasing experience of time pressure through conflict between time orientations.

P7 Behavioural spillover between work-role styles will be reduced in telework, decreasing time pressure by decreasing conflict between time orientations.

Behavioural styles (and associated time orientations) are often cued by symbols in the physical environment (Ahrentzen 1990; Christensen 1988). These symbols may separately influence teleworkers' experience of pressure in ways parallel to behavioural spillovers. Indeed, Giuliani (1991) describes time orientation as a basic dimension of human identity that is manifested in psychological attachments to physical places, including homes and offices. This may be an interesting area for future telework research.

Role ambiguity

Greater blurring of home and work roles is expected to follow from their closer integration in telework (Ashforth et al. 2000), as noted earlier. The absence of physical, social or temporal markers for work roles in the home, alongside greater opportunity to enact non-work roles, makes it easier to transition out of and into work than in an office (Gurstein 1991; Ahrentzen 1990). Role ambiguity is a source of anxiety known to reduce

wellbeing in office workers (Kahn et al. 1964; Warr 1987).

Ambiguity produces time pressure through the mismanagement of role boundaries, for example through shuttling back and forwards between domains and losing focus in a 'shrapnel of tasks' as one teleworker put it (Tietze and Musson 2003). Overwork is a particular manifestation of ambiguity, and widely considered a significant problem in telework (e.g. Olson 1987; Gurstein 1991; Frolick et al. 1993), especially in professional or managerial occupations where overachievement is rewarded and work has intrinsic interest. Overwork is a precursor to stress and burnout, and undoubtedly puts significant strain on relationships and the psychosocial development of children (eg. Pocock 2000).

Ambiguity also exists in work-role boundaries. Where people choose telework to better segment work roles, for example by avoiding unwanted distractions or socialising, a positive effect may be recorded. This could equally be a liability if reduced communication with other workers leads to lower performance, although such arrangements are not likely to be sanctioned by management or to last.

As role ambiguity leads to problems in managing time, pressure is expected to be experienced first as reduced *autonomy* and secondly as loss of cognitive or emotional *engagement*.

P8 Ambiguity in the home-work boundary will increase in telework, creating time pressure by reducing experience of autonomy and engagement.

P9 Work-role ambiguity will be decreased where telework provides greater segmentation of roles, reducing time pressure by increasing autonomy and engagement.

Supports

Work-family studies have more often concentrated on negative spillover than the positive effects of boundary integration. When roles become less segmented greater support from people in other roles may follow. Wadsworth (2003) reports that social supports in the home and at work spillover to the other domain, reducing conflict and increasing work-family enhancement in both domains. Support can be understood on many levels, including instrumental, emotional and informational (House 1981, cited in Greenhaus and Beutell 1985).

Teleworkers may enjoy emotional, informational or instrumental family supports that office-based counterparts do not, for example when family members provide affection, food or computer assistance during work (e.g. Beach 1993; Mann et al. 2000). Depending on their nature, these supports may increase perceptions of the *amount* of work time available, *engagement* with work or *autonomy* over time.

Support from others in work roles will often be diminished, although the

consequences will vary according to teleworkers' need for supports. Some teleworkers appear to be very autonomous individuals (e.g. Pratt 1984; Olson 1989) and teleworkers are generally expected to self-select as having lower needs for support. At the same time, reduced management and co-worker support have been found to create stress and emotional problems in some studies (e.g. Mann et al. 2000; Dixon and Webster 1998), although the extent of this remains unclear. In particular, management support through flexibility in scheduling demands or office visits may greatly increase perceptions of *autonomy* in that domain.

P10 Supports in the work or home domain will increase teleworkers' perceptions of the amount of time, work engagement and autonomy over time.

VARIABLES MODERATING EXPERIENCE OF TIME PRESSURE

Changes to the segmentation of roles in telework are thought to be moderated by characteristics of the individual (Standen et al. 1999), some of which relate to time pressure. *Personal autonomy* is the ability to direct one's self, in this case within and across family and work environments. Autonomy is a major influence on psychological well-being: low levels of control and high role demands are associated with stress in the work-family literature (e.g. Baruch et al. 1987) and with physical health problems in more general studies (Warr 1987). Note that while the experience of autonomy over time is a key dependent variable in the propositions above, personal control over work and family roles is discussed here as a moderating variable.

Personal autonomy is expected to vary with personality (see below), gender and occupational status. Studies show that women's personal autonomy is less than men's where they also bear more responsibility for family life (e.g. Christensen 1988; Beach 1993; Gurstein 1991), reducing their ability to screen out interruptions, schedule work according to preference, avoid role ambiguity, or seek new sources of variety, social contact and self-identity in or outside the home (Gurstein 1991; Ahrentzen 1990).

Occupational status is also clearly linked to autonomy over time in the telework literature, with workers in routine jobs being more subject to tight time schedules and monitoring of time, while professional or managerial workers often have considerable discretion over when and how long to work at home (Leidner 1988; Bailyn 1989). Indeed, these can be seen as two completely different forms of telework (e.g. Olson and Primps 1984; Leidner 1988). A third group might be managerial workers, amongst whom a culture of long hours limits autonomy despite flexibility in

scheduling work (Tietze and Musson 2003).

Further, gender and occupational status may interact, for example where the market value of women's skills is lower than for men in equivalent work (Leidner 1988) or where they have less opportunity to leave the home due to the social construction of caring roles (Lewis 1994; Pocock 2000).

The *ability to set boundaries* between work and non-work involves a set of coping strategies and skills for switching between roles (Shamir and Salomon 1985; Kraut 1987; Bailyn 1989; Christensen 1988), tolerating distraction (Carsky et al. 1991) and coping with fatigue and time pressure. Ahrentzen (1990) found that professional teleworkers did not experience greater role overlap than conventional workers due to well-developed strategies for creating physical, temporal and psychological transitions between work and non-work roles. These might involve everyday activities such as dressing, reading or exercise, performed as rituals that fostered cognitive and emotional transition. Richter and Meshulam (1993) suggest that teleworkers should enact transition periods of 20 minutes when switching roles. In keeping with the prominence of individual variation in studies of boundary setting (Ashforth et al. 2000; Nippert-Eng 1996), this ability is expected to vary greatly amongst individuals.

Finally, it is expected that personality variables will affect the experience of time pressure. One that appears relevant is time urgency (Conte et al. 1998), an internal sense of urgency that creates a need to create and attend to deadlines, constantly monitor time and fill time with activities. Time urgency is seen as a component of 'Type A' behaviour (Conte et al. 1998). A related concept is time perspective (Zimbardo and Boyd 1999), mentioned earlier. Waller et al. (2001) combine the concepts of time perspective and time urgency to propose four prototypical work behaviours: visioners, organisers, relators and crammers. They propose that conflict arises when individuals of different styles interact, or when task requirements do not match individuals' styles.

TIME PRESSURE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Time pressure in telework may have significant health consequences. Evidence that role conflict, role ambiguity and supports affect *psychological well-being* has been cited above. Well-being has proven a useful construct in examining mental and physical health consequences of telework (Standen et al. 1999). A comprehensive model of psychological well-being has been developed by Warr (1990), comprising nine dimensions developed from a wide range of studies relating well-being to experience of positive and negative effects, experience of integration, competence and control over life. Time pressure is implicated in a number of these dimensions, notably *opportunity for control* (that is reduced autonomy over time), *goal and task demands* (lack of and quality

of time) and *environmental clarity* (interruptability and modulation, time orientation conflicts). Thus, significant and sustained time pressure is expected to lower psychological well-being which, following the evidence of Warr and others, is associated with both psychological and physical symptoms. Time pressure can be a serious issue for both office and home-based workers.

CONCLUSION

As a 'disruptive experiment', home-based telework offers a different and important perspective on time pressure. It highlights work-role conflicts – little acknowledged aspects of office environments – and new forms of role conflict and ambiguity arising when work and family or leisure are co-located. As well, changes in flexibility and permeability of work-role and work-family boundaries affect the social supports enjoyed by teleworkers.

However, the sum of these influences is not easily predicted, making empirical studies essential to testing, refining and aggregating the propositions presented here. In these, the question of whether telework reduces or increases time pressure is better reframed to discover the types of telework and groups of teleworkers in which it has these effects, given the variety of work and family contexts and of moderating influences in personal attributes and social affiliations.

Unfortunately, the research behind the propositions here is heavily qualified. Telework studies are almost entirely based on surveys or qualitative reports using small samples. They cover many varieties of work experience, extending across time and corporate or national cultures. What distinguishes telework from other work is not often clarified, and home environments are treated very homogeneously. Time pressure and its consequences are not well defined. For these reasons, the present step towards understanding the complexities of this very subjective experience will undoubtedly need refinement.

Until such research is available only a few conclusions can be drawn. First, as time pressure is largely an outcome of role conflict and ambiguity, teleworkers should have maximum discretion over work times within the context of task and organisational needs. Role conflict and ambiguity should be recognised in home and workplace discussions, along with their origins in the difference between time orientations in offices, based on clock-time and future achievement, and those in private life where task time and present-centredness may have greater salience. When these temporal values spillover across roles, through actions, emotions and behavioural styles, serious effects on psychological well-being can be expected. Discussions of telework should also respect the different perspectives of individuals towards time, including those of women and men and managers, professionals and other occupational groups.

Beyond these considerations, the research shows that telework offers some advantages to workers needing to juggle work roles and family or leisure needs; some studies do report increased life satisfaction (e.g. Bailyn 1989; Hartman et al. 1991). Those who cope best are predicted to be those with high levels of autonomy, good boundary setting abilities and time orientations relevant to or adaptable across the two domains. Support from managers and work colleagues, and co-residents at home, will be important.

Home-based telework has been seen as part of a broader trend towards 'significant diversification of the nature of working time ... from a single temporality – time imposed synchronistically – to a plural temporality – individually chosen working time and variable hours' (Bouilin et al. 1993). Empirical research on the relationships proposed here may have much to say about the consequences of this new temporality beyond the setting of telework.

NOTES

- 1 Telework is literally work at a distance and therefore includes work in offices or field locations away from an employee's base.
- 2 While not being specific about the time periods, it is recognised that they cover intervals of different duration.
- 3 A limitation of this paper is that it uses 'home', 'family' and 'non-work' somewhat interchangeably and without definition due to lack of space.
- 4 Some psychologists differentiate moods and emotions on the basis of their temporal longevity (e.g. Gray and Watson 2001), and different propositions might therefore apply to these. Here, emotion is used to refer to both categories.

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14 Access to home-based telework: a multi-level and multi-actor perspective

Pascale Peters and Tanja van der Lippe

INTRODUCTION

European and national policymakers, employers, employees and 'work-life balance' scholars often view home-based telework (HBT) as a work-life arrangement that has the potential to harmonise employees' professional and private lives. HBT refers to working at home during at least part of employees' contractual working hours, usually mediated by information and communication technology (Nilles 1998). Through HBT employees can save commuting time (Ory and Mokhtarian 2006) and gain more time sovereignty (Van Sell and Jacobs 1994; Tremblay 2002:164), perhaps leaving more time and energy for family and leisure activities (France et al. 2002).

Since the 1990s, the percentage of teleworkers in the Netherlands has increased tremendously, putting the country at the European forefront (Gareis 2002; Van Klaveren et al. 2005). By 2003, about 70% of the larger Dutch firms allowed (part of their) personnel to work from home, mostly part of the contractual working time. This was arranged for either formally (14%) or informally (55%) (Peters and Batenburg 2004). Interest in HBT is high among Dutch workers. A large-scale cross-national study in 2002 showed that about three-quarters of the Dutch working population indicated being interested in some type of telework (Gareis 2002). The study also revealed that 20.6% of the Dutch employed population does telework already; this includes those working from home less than one day (11.6%) and one day or more per week (9%).

Although many stakeholders view HBT as a promising strategy to harmonise work and life, a growing teleworkability of professional tasks does not guarantee a further breakthrough of telework into employees' daily lives. From the existing literature it is clear that not all job categories or all individual employees have equal access to HBT (Peters and Batenburg 2004). Teleworkers are most likely to be knowledge workers – like policymakers, managers and professionals – higher-educated and males (Bailey and Kurland 2002). In the present study we argue that managerial aspects such as coordination, control and trust problems play an important role. Telework policies may relate to job categories, to individual workers, or to both. Assuming that working from home is often a voluntary employee strategy, it is also not known beforehand who is in power to deal with employees' telework requests. About half of the larger Dutch companies (51%) indicate top-management as having the power of decision regarding who can telework or not (Peters and Batenburg 2004). In 44% of the teleworking organisations this power is in the hands of lower-level management, including direct supervisors (*ibid.*). Therefore, it is not unthinkable that organisations also make telework decisions at the individual level. In fact, in many organisations top managers are not aware of the existence of telework practices in their companies, let alone who has access to it, especially since this is often arranged informally (Van Klaveren et al. 2005). The present study aims to further analyse which factors affect employees' access to structural (weekly) HBT by looking into work traits at two levels: job category and individual employee. But what are the underlying mechanisms that can explain differences in formal or informal access to HBT? What job category and individual worker traits do managers take into account (implicitly or otherwise) when making decisions on who has access to HBT? In the present study, these questions will be approached from a combined economic and sociological perspective, and theoretical viewpoints will be linked to insights from the literature.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Introduction

Next to a lack of information on telework (Illegems 2001), the literature also points to a lack of interest in and even resistance towards telework among managers (Bailey and Kurland 2002). According to the disruptiveness theory (Powell and Mainiero 1999), managers' reluctance regarding work-life balance arrangements like HBT results mainly from their expectation that alternative work arrangements will complicate their own work. Managers are said to anticipate problems with regard to the management and coordination of work activities, and the control of work activities when their subordinates are not simultaneously present (Nilles

1998).

Coordination and control problems are expected to play an important role with regard to who can telework. This question has similarities with make-or-buy decisions that are studied from a transaction costs approach (Williamson 1985; Batenburg et al. 2003; De Ruijter and Van der Lippe 2006). The transaction cost approach is taken as a starting point in this study too. The importance of trust is emphasised in relation to the control problem. Trust can be viewed as the core issue of telework management (Nilles 1998; Huws et al. 1990; European Commission 1999; Harrington and Ruppel 1999). Whereas transaction cost theory focuses primarily on the characteristics of the employment relation itself, New Economic Sociology (Grannovetter 1985) points out the importance of the social embeddedness of the employment relation as a way to generate trust. Therefore, this theory will be added to the explanation. In the following, these two theoretical approaches will be further explained and our three main hypotheses developed.

The problem potential

Transaction cost theory focuses on the management of an economic relation between two parties. Every economic transaction engenders a particular 'problem potential,' i.e. the odds of unwanted outcomes. Before a trustor agrees to a transaction, he will make an estimation of the magnitude of the costs that are involved to reduce the problem potential, such that the risk associated with the transaction will be acceptable (Batenburg et al. 2003). The magnitude of these transaction costs depends on the size of the problem potential. On the one hand, the problem potential depends on the risk and consequences of predictable and unpredictable contingencies (coordination problems); on the other, it depends on the odds and consequences of opportunistic behaviour of the trustee (control problems) (Batenburg et al. 2003). Since transactions with a higher problem potential induce more costs, organisations will be more likely to choose for a more hierarchical governance structure that allows closer coordination and control. With respect to the choice for teleworking, which can be viewed as a hybrid type of 'make-or-buy decision' (since employees work away from the central office), organisations will be led by the problem potential of teleworking, and hence by the associated costs. A straightforward application of transaction cost theory to our research problem would suggest that a high problem potential of certain employment relations implies an organisation is less likely to allow a job category or individual employee to telework. However, the choice for telecommuting can be viewed as a new contract added to an existing employment relation, the associated risks having been reduced or already accepted by the organisation. In order to understand differences in telework opportunities we should rather consider any *additional* problem potential associated with teleworking, as employers will probably be more

inclined to allow employees to telework when the (perceived) additional problem potential is relatively low.

Coordination problem hypothesis

Employers may be more reluctant to allow teleworking when severe coordination problems are more likely. Existing coordination problems are even assumed to accrue when work is performed at a distance. Job activities may vary with respect to potential (additional) coordination problems. Some job activities demand frequent and often unpredictable contacts between co-workers, managers or clients. When workers highly depend on each other's input, knowledge and skills, i.e. when their assistance is required often, employees need to be accessible. Teleworking may easily lead to a loss of communication, accessibility, feedback and information exchange. The coordination problem will also depend on the extent to which activities can be planned. Unexpected contingencies, like rush jobs, can disturb the work process, often requiring managers and individual workers to reorganise their tasks. When employees have supervisory tasks, the potential coordination problem may be severe too. Telecommuting may not only affect their own job performance, but also that of their subordinates. Especially since it is their job to facilitate, coordinate, motivate and control the work of others, their physical absence may bring about problems, such as challenging opportunistic behaviour of subordinates or failing tasks due to a lack of supervision and feedback.

Given transaction cost theory's assumption that a larger (additional) coordination problem demands higher transaction management in order to reduce the telework risk, it can be expected that job categories *and* individual employees whose work activities can be characterised by a small (additional) coordination problem are more likely to have access to telework than others. More concretely, employees with access to HBT are expected to be found more often amongst job categories or individual employees whose work is either less likely to be interrupted for consultation and by unexpected contingencies, or amongst employees without supervisory tasks.

Control problem hypothesis

When it comes to certain job categories or individual workers, controlling the work process directly is always problematic, regardless of whether the work is being performed at the regular workplace or at home. The additional risk associated with telework may therefore be relatively small. High-grade knowledge work, for example, requires intense levels of concentration and creativity that cannot be enforced by strict, direct control. This type of work requires a certain amount of freedom. Close supervision may even affect creativity and productivity negatively.

Besides, even in a regular workplace situation, certain job categories and individual employees are used to a high degree of freedom. Their sovereignty may apply in terms of scheduling freedom ('when the work is done') or degree of job control ('how the work is done' in terms of order, method and speed of doing things). With job categories and individual workers that have more time sovereignty and job autonomy already, employers always face a high, but obviously acceptable, trust problem. Mobile workers performing their tasks away from the regular workplace, sometimes using online connections during business trips or in the field, also experience a relatively high level of freedom. When the existing direct control problem of job categories and individual workers is reduced by exercising output control – meaning that they are controlled and rewarded on the basis of their results (task orientation) rather than on actual 'face hours' at work (time orientation) – the additional risk potential of telework is relatively small.

Here the expectations for access to telework are the same as for the coordination problem hypothesis. Employees with access to HBT are expected to be found more often amongst employees who have flexible working hours, who have more job autonomy (including mobile workers and higher-educated workers) and who are managed on the basis of output.

Dyadic embeddedness hypothesis

Telework decisions are embedded in an existing employment relation. A long-term dyadic embeddedness may imply that, on average, employees can be considered more trustworthy and thus more likely to be allowed to telework. The dyadic embeddedness has two components: the history of the current work relation (often referred to as the 'shadow of the past') and the future expectations ('shadow of the future') (Batenburg et al. 2003). A longer work history provides employers the opportunity to judge better whether an individual is suitable for telework (Buskens and Raub 2002). Selecting employees for telework might be viewed as a form of *ex ante* control (Hales 1993) that reduces the trust problem (Nilles 1998; Sparrow and Daniels 1999). Employees' future expectations about the employment relation may provide the employer with some control options (Buskens and Raub 2002). In this respect, the type of job contract may play a role. Two trust problem-reducing mechanisms might be possible: if the future job tenure is expected to be relatively long and/or the employee has good career opportunities, the reciprocity of interests of employer and employee may generate trust and loyalty (Batenburg et al. 2003), reducing the trust problem. Alternatively, a temporary contract can also reduce the trust problem since it allows an employer to sanction employees' opportunistic behaviour by not extending the employment relation. This can be viewed as a form of *ex post* control (Hales 1993).

To summarise, there is a twofold reason to add the dyadic

embeddedness of the employment relation to the explanation of employees' access to HBT: a long work history with the current employer may reduce the trust problem and increase employees' likelihood of being given access to telework. With respect to the type of labour contract, our expectation is not directed.

DATA, OPERATIONALISATION AND METHOD

Data

In 2003, unique multi-actor data were collected from 1,114 employees working in 30 organisations spread over 89 job categories. The data collection was part of a larger NWO research program entitled *Time Competition: Disturbed Balances and New Options in Work and Care* (Van der Lippe and Glebbeek 2004). The research design comprised various types of questionnaires. For purposes of this study, four were used: a written organisation questionnaire filled out by the HRM department; a written questionnaire for each single job category filled out by the manager related to the job category under study; a written employee questionnaire; and an extensive set of structured questions that were asked in a face-to-face interview with the employee at home.

The dependent variable

Employees were asked whether they were given weekly access to HBT. Based on their answers, a dummy variable was constructed (1= yes, I do have weekly access to HBT). Noteworthy is that telework was explicitly not equalled to doing work at home after working hours – paid or unpaid. Descriptive analysis shows that 28% of the employees in our data set had access to weekly HBT (see Table 14.1 for descriptive analyses of all variables used).

The independent variables

Coordination problem hypothesis

- Potential work interruptions
These were measured at two levels, i.e. the job category level and the individual employee level, using almost the same set of propositions, on a five-point scale. Managers were asked for traits of job-holders in the particular job category they are responsible for. For example, managers were asked to respond to a proposition saying that 'employees are often interrupted during work'. At the other end of the continuum it is stated that 'employees can work for long hours at a stretch'. Other items in the scale concern unexpected contingencies, rush jobs, work

interference due to mutual consultations, and interrelated work activities of employees. At the job category level, five items were used ($\alpha=.69$). At the individual employee level, six items were used ($\alpha=.69$). A higher score on the coordination problem scale indicates a lower telework risk. Strikingly, the two scales were significantly ($p<0.001$) but not highly correlated (.14).

- Supervisory tasks
Having supervisory tasks was measured by asking individual employees whether they have supervisory tasks, and if so, how many subordinates they are supervising. On the basis of these questions, a dichotomous variable was constructed (1= yes, I do have supervisory tasks).

Control problem hypothesis

- Time sovereignty
We inquired about time sovereignty at both the job category and the individual employee levels. At the job category level, managers were asked how employees' working hours are controlled: if they are not controlled by direct supervision or by technical means such as a time clock, employees are considered to have a high degree of time sovereignty. At the individual level, employees were asked whether they have a fixed schedule. On the basis of their answers, a dichotomous variable 'no fixed schedule' was constructed (1= no fixed schedule). Employees could also indicate on a five-point scale to what extent they were in control of their personal working hours. A high score implies a high degree of time sovereignty.
- Job autonomy
Job autonomy was measured at the job category and individual employee levels. Measurements vary. At the job category level, eight items on a five-point scale were used. Job autonomy refers to employees' freedom with respect to working hours, pace, planning, order and style, job content, cooperation and quality assessment ($\alpha=.84$). At the individual level, three items for job autonomy on a five-point scale were used (.69). These items refer to employees' individual freedom and say with respect to doing the job (Bakker et al. 2003). A high score represents a high level of job autonomy. The presence of mobile tasks at the job category level is measured by a dichotomous variable (1= yes, mobile workers present in this job category). In addition to these measurements, the educational level of the employee is taken into account as an indication of a high level of job autonomy of high-grade knowledge workers. The correlation between access to weekly HBT and educational level is relatively high ($r=0.39$).
- Output-related rewards
Output management was measured at the job category and individual

employee levels. At the job category level, managers were asked whether employees were given a bonus related to their individual, group or organisational performance. On the basis of their answers, a dichotomous variable 'output related rewards' was constructed (1= yes, employees are rewarded on an output basis). At the individual employee level, employees were asked to respond to the statement on a five-point scale stating that 'I am rewarded on the basis of a certain amount of returns or output', not necessarily referring to financial rewards. A high score refers to employees' perception of output-related rewards.

Dyadic Embeddedness Hypothesis

The influence of the dyadic embeddedness hypothesis was measured at the individual employee level by two factors: number of years with current employer and temporary versus fixed contract (dichotomous variable: 1= permanent contract).

Control variables

To control for other influences that are likely to affect employees' access to HBT, several control variables were taken into account. First, managers' telework attitude was measured at the job category level, asking managers to respond to 11 propositions (Cronbach's $\alpha=.75$), even when no teleworkers were present in the particular job category. The items relate to consequences of HBT, like (expected) productivity gains, co-worker cooperation and organisational commitment. A high score on the attitude scale implies managers are well-disposed towards HBT. Second, the branch in which an organisation operates may affect telework decisions. A distinction is made between private companies, public organisations and non-profit organisations. In the analyses the non-profit organisations were used as a reference category. Third, the organisation questionnaire allows us to control for size of the organisation. Due to economies of scale, larger organisations may have lower transaction costs per individual teleworker, and are more likely to allow their employees to telework (Peters and Batenburg 2004). Fourth, and in the same vein, organisations with a higher percentage of highly educated workers, whose work is more likely to be teleworkable, will more probably have introduced teleworking (Peters and Batenburg 2004). Fifth, the influence of the technological teleworkability of individual employees' jobs is taken into account. The frequent use of a personal computer and e-mail may be viewed as indicators of technical teleworkability. Sixth, the gender of the individual worker is used as a control variable. Seventh, the number of contractual working hours is controlled for.

Method

Multivariate logistic regression analysis is used to test our hypotheses. Since the employees in our sample are all clustered within 30 organisations, a multi-level model will be tested. As employees within a particular job category are not necessarily working in the same department, job category will not be considered a level in the multilevel model. Consequently, only two levels are distinguished: employee and organisational. Since our main hypotheses are directed, tests will be one-tailed. The multivariate analysis applies (after listwise deletion) to 945 employees.

RESULTS

We will now present the results of the multivariate analyses.

Coordination problem hypothesis

The coordination problem hypothesis is only partly corroborated. The chance of work interruptions only appears to be a significant factor at the job category level. Employees in job categories whose work is less likely to be interrupted (e.g. due to consultation, rush jobs, or waiting for necessary input from others) are more likely to have access to telework. At the employee level, neither the (experienced) chance of work interruptions nor employees having supervisory tasks are shown to be significant factors. Obviously, access to teleworking is affected more by managers' perception of potential coordination problems than by individual workers' shop-floor experiences.

Control problem hypothesis

Generally speaking, the results of the multivariate analysis are supportive of the control problem hypothesis. Flexible working hours at the job category and individual employee levels have positive effects on telework opportunities. Strikingly, autonomy as a job category trait does not predict an individual worker will have access to telework, whereas as an individual job trait it does. In contrast to the coordination problem, the decision to allow employees to telework is less likely to be affected by job group characteristics and more by the level of job autonomy an individual worker is given. The educational level of the individual worker, seen as an indicator of more individual job autonomy, is also shown to be an important factor in employees' telework opportunities. In line with expectations, job categories and individual workers who are rewarded on the basis of output (individual, group or organisational) appear to be more likely to have access to telework than others. The trust problem

associated with telework is clearly reduced by output control, hence the telework opportunity is more likely to be given. When tasks in a job category also include mobile work activities, all employees are more likely to have access to HBT. By definition, mobile workers performing work activities away from the central office have to be trusted. Allowing mobile workers to work from home outside of their external job activities is likely to be much more efficient and time-saving, and thus more productive.

Dyadic embeddedness hypothesis

As expected, the number of years with the current employer appears to be a factor in employees' access to telework. A long work history obviously generates trust, reducing the need for investing in telework management. Having a temporary contract does not affect employees' access to telework. The controlling effect of a temporary contract that was believed to increase employees' chances of access to telework is possibly outbalanced by the positive effect of a fixed contract, which was believed to commit workers. The dyadic embeddedness hypothesis could therefore be supported only partially by our data.

Control variables

Employees working in job categories in which managers are well disposed towards telework are shown to be more likely to have access to telework than others (all else being equal). This suggests that not only the trust problem itself, but also the risk managers are willing to take determine employees' telework opportunities. Employees in the non-profit sector are no less likely to have access to telework. No systematic differences across branches are found when a different reference category is chosen. In line with expectations, organisational size and percentage of highly educated workers amongst the personnel are shown to increase the likelihood of employees being allowed to telework. This may be attributable to economies of scale. The higher the number of potential teleworkers, the lower the costs of telework management per teleworker. Larger organisations may also be better equipped to handle rush jobs, since there are more employees doing the same type of work. Such organisations have larger budgets to spend on IT and helpdesk services, enabling information and communication exchange with teleworkers and thus reducing the potential telework risk. Technical teleworkability plays a role too. Employees who use e-mail frequently are more likely to work at home; this habit may indicate that employees already depend on others outside the organisation or that they are less dependent on face-to-face contact, therefore facing few (extra) coordination problems. The degree of PC use by the individual worker does not affect access to telework. Female workers are less likely to be given the telework option. The number of working hours has no effect on

employees' telework opportunities.

The influence of the organisation

Only those characteristics such as size of the organisation and share of highly educated workers amongst the personnel are included in the analysis. Clustering by organisation does allow estimation of the share of other organisational factors in the unexplained variance. About 42% of the unexplained variance is shown to be attributable to the organisation. This share is significant ($p < 0.001$). Obviously, not only job category and individual workers' traits may be relevant but also organisational culture and environmental factors.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The present study shows coordination, control and trust problems to be important factors in formal and informal telework opportunities. When selecting teleworkers, organisations and managers obviously consider the management costs associated with telecommuting. As such, this finding may not be very surprising. However, whether managers are led by general job traits, individual work characteristics, contextual factors, or by all these characteristics often remains unanswered. Given the differences in decision power across organisations, both levels were included in the explanation. Inspired by the insights of New Economic Sociology, we also focused on the social embeddedness of the employment relation.

With respect to coordination problems, it is interesting to see that the selection of teleworkers is not determined by the actual need for individual workers to be available at the shop-floor level for assistance, consultation or rush jobs. Instead, the telework decision is determined by the general picture the organisation or manager has of (potential) coordination problems of the job category as a whole. Three explanations can be given. First, the coordination problem might be viewed rather as a collective problem than an individual one, precisely because coordination problems affect not only the individual, but also others (e.g. colleagues and customers). This holds especially true when several employees work together in the same project. The decision to allow telework depends more on group characteristics than on individual job traits. Second, managers may allow telework only when the work of all employees in a function group is characterised by relatively few coordination problems. In this case, economies of scale make it more worthwhile to invest in telemanagement and IT infrastructure. Third, telework is often viewed as a strategy (by employers and employees alike) to escape the hectic office and to be able to work long hours without interruptions in order to meet deadlines (Peters et al. 2004). Employees experiencing many work-related interruptions may have negotiated telework with their supervisors

at a bilateral level.

In contrast to the coordination problem, the control problem appears to play a role at both the job category and the individual employee level. Those job categories and individual workers that are more trusted in the regular work situation were also found to be more trusted when it comes to telecommuting. More concretely, employees whose time input was not as closely controlled were more likely to be given access to HBT. In the same vein, output-related reward systems, either introduced at the job category level or experienced by individual workers, were found to be capable of reducing the trust problem associated with teleworking. However, autonomy as a job category trait clearly does not convince organisations that each single employee is trustworthy to such an extent that telecommuting is possible without investing in telework management. When employees are given a high degree of job autonomy at an individual level, they are also trusted with teleworking. Two explanations can be given. First, trustworthiness is viewed rather as a characteristic of an individual employment relation (employer-employee) than a relationship between an employer (manager or supervisor) and all employees in a job category. Second, employees who are allowed to telework might experience a higher level of autonomy in their job, regardless of them using the telework option (Peters et al. 2004).

From the present study we can learn that in order to understand who can telework, traits at both the job category and the individual employee level play a role, as does the embeddedness of the employment relation. Obviously, the social context can reduce the (experienced) problem potential. Generally speaking, mutual familiarity between individual workers and their employer organisations connotes increased employee trustworthiness. Hence, the new economic sociology perspective can indeed be considered to be complementary to the transaction cost theory.

Altogether, both the use of multi-actor data, allowing us to distinguish between general job traits and details of individual jobs, and the building of a comprehensive framework, allowing us to integrate the reported coordination and control (trust) problems into one theoretical perspective, can be viewed as adding surplus value to the existing literature. Of course, some aspects of access to teleworking have not been addressed yet.

First, our research showed the selection of teleworkers to also have a subjective component. A positive attitude of the manager towards (consequences of) telework reduces the trust problem experienced, regardless of the actual coordination and control problem associated with telework. This finding may be a point of departure for future national and organisational policies aimed at stimulating telework practices: information and positive image-building among organisations and managers are likely to stimulate a more equal access to telework.

Second, our basically economic approach did not focus on power and status issues. Still, our finding that highly educated workers had more

access to telework than others may be related not only to them doing high-grade knowledge work, but also to managers' willingness to delegate power to their subordinates (Peters and Den Dulk 2003). Telecommuting and self-control used to go together with more authority, prestige and status, and were therefore traditionally inappropriate for subordinates (Van der Wielen and Taillieu 1994). Third, given that part of the unexplained variance in access to telework could be attributed to organisational factors, future research may also look into the organisational culture (Standen 2000; Peters and Batenburg 2004) or the organisational context, such as labour market conditions.

Finally, the content of telework requests may also influence who gets to telework. Our study showed female workers to be less likely to be given access to telework. This could be attributed to their motivation, as women may mention non-work-related issues in their telework requests more often, whereas men may emphasise the need for better concentration and meeting deadlines (Omari and Standen 2000; Peters and Den Dulk 2003). In view of employees' combined daily problems, this issue needs further examination.

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15 Does telecommuting really save commute time? Time, distance, and speed evidence from State of California workers

David T. Ory and Patricia L. Mokhtarian

INTRODUCTION

Telecommuting has found a place on the menu of policies designed to reduce travel and improve work/family balance by (among other ways) saving commute time. Various studies (e.g. Hamer et al. 1991; Mokhtarian et al. 1995) suggest that telecommuters (on days they telecommute) do, in fact, travel less than non-telecommuters. This evidence has encouraged lawmakers to enact policies that encourage telecommuting.

Unfortunately, nearly all of the empirical studies on which the positive reputation of telecommuting is based have focused on the short-term impacts of telecommuting, typically within one to two years of individual or organizational adoption. A number of researchers (e.g. Janelle 1986) have raised the issue that the ability to telecommute may prompt workers to move farther away from their jobs to cheaper or higher-amenity residential locations, resulting in a longer, though less frequent, commute. Total commute travel in such cases may actually be higher after telecommuting than before. If such cases are quite common, then the degree to which telecommuting is promoted as a travel-reduction/time-saving strategy should be re-examined. Hence, we need information on the nature of the longer-term relationships among telecommuting, one-way commute length, and commute frequency in order to inform telecommuting policies.

This paper builds upon two previous studies, each using the same cross-sectional survey of current, former, and non-telecommuters working in various California state government agencies. The survey targeted agencies that have continued telecommuting programs since the late 1980s, and retrospectively inquired about residential and job relocations, commute characteristics (time, length, and mode), and telecommuting engagement for each three-month quarter over a ten-year period. Mokhtarian et al. (2004) used this data to compare, quarter by quarter, the one-way commute length and average daily person-miles traveled of telecommuters. The authors found that although telecommuters do live farther from their workplaces than non-telecommuters, they commute infrequently enough to travel less, on average. Ory and Mokhtarian (2006) directly examined the issue of causality in the relationship between telecommuting and residential/job relocations, asking: does the ability to telecommute encourage more distant relocations, or do more distant relocations (caused by reasons other than telecommuting) encourage telecommuting? The authors found more evidence in support of the latter argument, that distant relocations are encouraging telecommuting.

The current study departs from the work of Mokhtarian et al. (2004) by using a different baseline market segment (discussed in later sections), and undertaking a completely new analysis of commute duration and person-minutes traveled. The differences found in the comparisons of time and distance between telecommuters and non-telecommuters led us to examine commute speed as well, exploring why telecommuters' commutes are faster than non-telecommuters', and how much of telecommuters' time savings can be attributed to faster speeds as opposed to shorter distances.

Granted that, in the aggregate, commute time and distance are lower for telecommuters than for non-telecommuters, a devil's advocate might ask further questions:

- Could this result be due to large savings for just a minority of

telecommuters? In other words, on an individual basis, for what proportion of telecommuters is the aggregate result true, i.e. for what proportion of telecommuters is commute travel actually reduced during telecommuting episodes?

- Are telecommuters still “commute villains” overall? Given that telecommuters, even during non-telecommuting episodes, live farther from work than those who never telecommute, are the commute reductions they experience during their telecommuting episodes sufficient to compensate for the “surplus” commuting they engage in during non-telecommuting episodes?

Answering these questions comprises additional new analyses of this study. In time, distance, speed, and mode measures, we have a relatively complete picture of the commute characteristics of telecommuters and a comparable control group over a ten-year period.

Although the transportation impacts of telecommuting have been empirically analyzed for at least 15 years, to our knowledge this is the first such study to focus primarily on time rather than distance savings. The latter focus probably arose because travel distances are easier to measure than travel times, but time may be more important to the travelers themselves, especially across a period of years (e.g. with a static home-job combination, an individual may suffer from increased congestion even without a change in commute distance). The focus on time also places the work within the general study of time competition (e.g. does telecommuting free up time to engage in other activities?).

EMPIRICAL SETTING AND AVAILABLE DATA

From 1988 to 1990, the State of California conducted one of the best-known early telecommuting pilot programs for its employees, involving around 150 telecommuters in 14 state government agencies (JALA Assoc. 1990; Kitamura et al. 1990). Through the years, telecommuting has continued to thrive in some of these agencies, offering an opportunity to explore the long-term relationships of interest in this study.

To gather the desired data, a 16-page self-administered survey was designed and distributed in November 1998 to employees of six California state agencies, each of which has kept their telecommuting programs active since the pilot implementation in 1988. The survey was distributed to those who responded to an initial broadcast email message, sent to key divisions or groups within each agency. The message stressed the need for participation from telecommuters, non-telecommuters, and former telecommuters, and offered a drawing for cash prizes. Due to the intended approach of enriching the sample with telecommuters, the ratio of telecommuters to non-telecommuters in the sample is higher than in the population as a whole. However, to the extent that each subsample is

representative of the population from which it is drawn, comparisons of average behavior across subsamples will be valid even if the share of the sample in each group is not itself representative.

Thus, more important is the question of whether the telecommuters in the sample are representative of the general population of telecommuters. Unfortunately, there are no reliable data on the demographics and other characteristics of telecommuters in the population, making any comparison of our sample (in terms of gender, income, etc.) to the population of telecommuters impossible (see Ory and Mokhtarian 2005 for further discussion). Important demographic characteristics of the sample are included in Table 15.1.

The survey instrument contained two 10-year timelines (segmented into quarter-years) that captured the key data for this analysis. On the first timeline, current and former telecommuters indicated all the periods of time during which they telecommuted regularly, the frequency with which they telecommuted during each of those periods, and reasons for quitting or changing frequency in each case. ("Regular" telecommuting was defined as "at least two days a month on average, for at least three consecutive months"). On the second timeline, all respondents recorded their job and residential relocations that took place during the 10-year span and, for each job-residence location pair (including the initial one), indicated their one-way commute length, duration, and primary mode. The current study focuses on the 218 individuals having essentially complete timeline responses; preliminary analysis of other parts of the survey can be found in Gertz and Mokhtarian (1999).

PERSON-MILES/-MINUTES TRAVELED AND TELECOMMUTER DEFINITIONS

The primary focus of this paper is on the joint relationships between telecommuting and commute time, distance, and speed. The analyses of person-miles/-minutes traveled are isolated to the commute to and from work and do not include other trips. Group-specific averages for each measure (commute length, duration, speed, mode share, person-miles traveled and person-minutes traveled) are computed for each quarter-year during the ten-year time frame of the retrospective survey. To differentiate between the one-way commute distance/time and the average daily two-way person-miles/-minutes traveled, the following terminology will be used throughout the chapter: the one-way, single-trip commute distance will be referred to as *commute length*; the one-way, single-trip commute time will be referred to as *commute duration*; average daily two-way person-miles traveled as *commute distance*; and average daily two-way person-minutes traveled as *commute time*. The commute distance and commute time computations are based on the average one-way commute length or duration, the number of working days per quarter,

and the reported telecommuting frequency (see Mokhtarian et al. 2004 for further discussion).

When assessing the impact of telecommuting in the analysis, the rules for labeling each individual, or more specifically labeling each individual in each quarter-year time period, as a telecommuter or a non-telecommuter are important. The survey instrument defined telecommuting simply as "...working from home (or a nearby center) instead of going to your normal workplace at the usual time." The respondents were instructed to indicate on the timeline the quarters in which they telecommuted "regularly" (as defined in the previous section).

Each individual in the sample is defined as a telecommuter (or not) in five different ways in each quarter-year, as follows:

- *Current telecommuter*: individual telecommuting regularly during the current time period;
- *Non-telecommuter*: individual not telecommuting regularly during the current time period;
- *Ever telecommuter*: individual who telecommutes regularly at any point during the ten-year data collection period (varies by individual level but not by quarter);
- *Never telecommuter*: individual who does not telecommute regularly at any point during the ten-year data collection period (also varies by individual but not quarter);
- *Former/Future telecommuter*: Ever telecommuter who is not regularly telecommuting during the current time period.

Thus, at any given quarter the sample can be partitioned into Current and Non-telecommuters (with Non-telecommuters further divided into Former/Futures and Nevers), or, independent of quarter, into Ever and Never telecommuters (with Evers further partitioned into Currents and Former/Futures at any given quarter). This permits multiple comparisons of interest. For example, comparing the Former/Future telecommuters with the Never telecommuters illuminates to what extent people who ultimately adopt telecommuting may differ from those who never do, while comparing Current to Former/Future telecommuters is an appropriate way to assess the impacts of telecommuting on the group of eventual adopters. In any given quarter, we treat the Former/Future telecommuters as roughly representing the counterfactual conditions for telecommuters had they not been telecommuting.

Due to the bounded time frame in which the data were collected, the Former/Future and Ever/Never definitions will erroneously classify individuals when their past or future telecommuting engagement falls outside the ten-year period of the survey instrument. Also, the arbitrary nature of the definition of "regular" telecommuting will impact the classification. However, any duration and frequency requirements will be arbitrary, and given the fact that one's telecommuting status is always a

“moving target”, these definitions should reasonably well capture the behavior of the groups of interest over a typical 10-year period.

ONE-WAY COMMUTE DURATION

In this section, commute duration is examined (for brevity, the focus in this and subsequent sections is on the time dimension; please see Ory and Mokhtarian 2005 for a complete discussion of distance as well as time). The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether or not telecommuters are, in fact, living farther from their jobs than non-telecommuters, as has been found elsewhere (see e.g. Mokhtarian et al. 1995; Gareis 2003).

The commute duration results for Current, Former/Future, and Never telecommuters are shown in Figure 15.1. The sample sizes for each of these groups for each quarter are shown in Figure 15.2; these sample sizes hold approximately – to the extent the respondent gave valid time, distance and telecommuting frequency responses – for all the remaining figures. The slight rises in the sample sizes of both the Ever and Never groups over time reflect the phased entry of some respondents into the workforce over the ten-year study period. As discussed in Mokhtarian et al. (2004), the one-way commute lengths of our sample are longer than national averages, probably because of the relatively large concentration of higher incomes and white-collar workers in the sample; the same observations likely hold for commute durations as well.

Figure 15.1 indicates a general trend of Current telecommuters commuting to work longer than Former/Future telecommuters. These differences are statistically significant (shown with larger markers on the Current telecommuters’ series) in the last three intervals captured by the survey. Figure 15.1 also indicates a general trend of Former/Future telecommuters commuting to work longer than Never telecommuters, though not statistically significantly longer in any quarter. This latter finding makes sense in that those who live farther from work may be more likely to choose to telecommute in the future, or more likely to have recently engaged in a telecommuting episode, than those who live closer to work. Interestingly, during the last three time intervals, when the majority of Former/Future telecommuters are of the former variety, the Former/Future segment lives, on average, closer to work than Never telecommuters.

The implication is that either once the respondent moved closer to work she stopped telecommuting, or once she stopped telecommuting she moved closer to work. The latter explanation fits more closely with the temporal logic of the result (if the move came first there would be at least one quarter for which the respondent would be a *Current* telecommuter living closer to work, which would attenuate the differences among the three groups), but the former explanation is still possible for some cases.

Further, if *ceasing* to telecommute is more likely a response to, rather than a cause of, moving *closer* to work, the same logic seems to support the inference that *beginning* to telecommute is more likely a response to, rather than a cause of, moving *farther* from work. That is, telecommuting appears more likely to be, on net, a benign travel reduction tool rather than a malignant instigator of sprawl (for an interesting introduction to the debate over urban “sprawl”, or the ongoing spread of metropolitan regions through low-density development on their peripheries and beyond, see Ewing 1997). Although these conclusions are far from definite based on the evidence presented here, Ory and Mokhtarian (2006) explore which of the two directions of causality is more likely, by analyzing the temporal sequence of moves and telecommuting episodes, and by cross-tabulating self-reports of the importance of telecommuting to a move decision against the changes in commute length resulting from that move.

The results in this section establish an important starting point: telecommuters do have longer commutes than non-telecommuters. This finding is critical because the contention being examined is that telecommuting prompts workers to live farther from work and, in doing so, increase their commute travel over non-telecommuters'. For this point to warrant further investigation, the evidence should at least point to telecommuters, over a ten-year period, consistently living farther from work than non-telecommuters.

COMMUTE SPEED

Comparing the results for commute length found in Ory and Mokhtarian (2005) to those for commute duration found in the previous section, indicates that the differences in commute length between Current and Former/Future telecommuters are of greater magnitude than the differences in commute duration. The implication is that commute speeds differ by group, a speculation that is investigated in this section.

The average commute speeds of Current, Former/Future and Never telecommuters are shown in Figure 15.3. The individual average commute speed is computed from the self-reported commute length and duration measures captured by the survey instrument, and then averaged across individuals in each group, for each quarter. Compared to the plot of commute duration in Figure 15.1, the plot of commute speed shows a more convincing difference between Current and Former/Future telecommuters: 20 of the 41 points are statistically different (shown by the larger markers on the Current telecommuter series). It is interesting that among one-way commute length, duration, and speed, the most telling difference between Current and Former/Future telecommuters is travel speed. Somehow, telecommuters are, rather consistently, traveling faster than their non-telecommuting counterparts, with the speeds of the Former/Future telecommuters generally higher than, but statistically

indistinguishable from, those of the Never telecommuters.

These differences inspire several hypotheses, including: telecommuters may be living more on the urban fringe compared to non-telecommuters, allowing them to spend more time on less congested roadways; Current telecommuters may have more flexible time-of-day work schedules on days they travel to the office, allowing them to avoid peak-hour congestion; and, Current telecommuters may be more likely to commute by automobile than the control group.

The first hypothesis is supported by the data: Table 15.1 shows that telecommuters in this sample are far more likely than Never telecommuters to live in a town or village/countryside, medium-size city, or suburb, and less likely to live in a large city. Similarly, Table 15.1 supports the second hypothesis: telecommuters in this sample are less likely to work conventional work schedules than Never and Former telecommuters and are more likely to work a flextime or compressed schedule. Unfortunately, the data for city type and work schedule type is only available for the final quarter of data collection. Such a constraint is not in place for the third hypothesis: the survey instrument did inquire about travel mode at the start of the ten-year study period and after each relocation, allowing for a longitudinal examination of travel mode. The data indicate that toward the beginning and end of the study period, Current telecommuters were more likely to travel by automobile than Former/Future telecommuters. However, for at least half of the series the difference in share between the two groups is negligible, and the dominant trend is the difference in automobile share between Ever and Never telecommuters. These results suggest that the ability to travel by automobile is not the sole (and probably not the dominant) reason why Current telecommuters are able to travel at higher speeds than Non-telecommuters (Former/Future and Never).

COMMUTE PERSON-MINUTES TRAVELED

As shown in Figure 15.1 and in Ory and Mokhtarian (2005), Current telecommuters tend to live farther from work in terms of time and distance, on average, than Former/Future telecommuters, with both groups tending to live farther than Never telecommuters. This suggests that, all else equal, Ever telecommuters would engage in more commute travel than Never telecommuters. However, there are several ways in which the longer one-way commutes of Ever telecommuters can be compensated for such that total commute amounts would be lower:

- By themselves, contemporaneously: Current telecommuters could telecommute often enough that their total commute travel is less than that of Never telecommuters.
- By others, contemporaneously: Not all Currents may telecommute often

enough to make their overall commute travel lower, but their surplus travel could be more than outweighed by the savings of other Currents.

- By themselves and/or others, longitudinally: Greater commute amounts during non-telecommuting episodes (i.e. as Former/Futures) could be outweighed by commute reductions during telecommuting periods (i.e. as Currents), at least at the aggregate level if not by each individual. Those reductions are a function not only of how frequently the person telecommutes, but also for how long a period.

In this section we assess whether any of these potential compensating mechanisms are supported by the data. The next two sub-sections investigate from the contemporaneous perspective, that is, comparing commute travel quarter by quarter. In the first sub-section, we calculate the average daily commute-minutes traveled by each of the three comparison groups, and find that Current telecommuters do, in fact, have less total commuting, on average, than either of the other two groups. This indicates that some combination of the first two mechanisms is in effect. To investigate the extent to which those results can be accounted for by the first mechanism alone, in the next sub-section we determine the proportion of Current telecommuters who commute less than the median for Former/Future and Never telecommuters. We find that 65.2% of Currents commute fewer minutes than the median Never telecommuter of the corresponding quarter, and 60.2% of Currents commute fewer miles than the median Never. Thus, clearly the second mechanism is in effect as well, so that the surplus commuting of above-average Current telecommuters is more than compensated for by the deficit in commuting of the below-average Currents.

The observation that Former/Future telecommuters commute even longer distances and times than Never telecommuters (because their one-way commutes are longer, and they are not telecommuting to compensate), raises the question of whether the surplus commuting generated during those non-telecommuting episodes (when they are Former/Futures) is outweighed by the commute reductions during their telecommuting episodes (when they are Currents). Thus, the final sub-section turns to a longitudinal analysis of the data: we compare the per capita daily commute-miles and -minutes of Ever versus Never telecommuters, computed over the entire ten-year study period. We find that over the decade of interest, Evers do commute slightly less than Nevers on average. In particular, Evers commute 4.4% less time (although 2.6% more distance), in the aggregate, than Nevers during the ten-year study period.

Quarter-by-Quarter Average Commute Person-Minutes Traveled

Commute times

Figure 15.4 shows the average two-way commute person-minutes

traveled (commute time) for Current, Former/Future, and Never telecommuters. Significant differences between Current and Former/Future telecommuters are shown in large diamond markers on the Current series. Figure 15.4 shows, rather consistently, that Current telecommuters travel less than (or, at worst, statistically similar amounts to) Former/Future telecommuters, who, in turn, travel more than Never telecommuters. In this view, telecommuting seems to be beneficial as telecommuters are traveling less, in the aggregate, than non-telecommuters. The fact that Former/Future telecommuters travel more than Never telecommuters is also expected: members of this market segment may be more attracted to telecommuting in the future, or may have telecommuted in the recent past, because of their high travel amounts.

When considering Figures 15.1 and 15.4 together, the idea of using telecommuting as a travel reduction/time saving policy seems appropriate. The fact that Ever telecommuters, during periods when they are *not* telecommuting (i.e. Former/Future telecommuters), commute more than the Nevers suggests (but does not definitively prove) that they have an innate tendency to travel farther to work than average, whether due to a desire for a higher-amenity home, school, or workplace environment, or to other household constraints or preferences. Also, the fact that Ever telecommuters, during periods when they *are* telecommuting (i.e. Current telecommuters), commute *less* than when they are *not* (as well as less than Never telecommuters), indicates that telecommuting is an effective way to ameliorate the commute burden of this segment while allowing them to maintain their lifestyle preferences/needs.

What saves more time: shorter distances or higher speeds?

Figure 15.4 indicates that telecommuters are spending less time commuting than Non-telecommuters. A portion of this difference is a result of the shorter distances they are traveling (Ory and Mokhtarian 2005) and a portion is a result of the higher speeds at which they are traveling (as shown in Figure 15.3). To estimate the relative impact each of these two factors has on the end difference in travel times, the person-minutes traveled for Current telecommuters is recomputed by applying the quarterly average speed of Non-telecommuters to the commute distance of Current telecommuters (for simplicity, here we combine Former/Future and Never telecommuters to form Non-telecommuters).

The proportion of the difference between the Current telecommuter and Non-telecommuter series accounted for by the Speed-adjusted telecommuter series is then computed. Thus, it is assumed that the Speed-adjusted series accounts for the difference in travel speed (which, at the aggregate level, it does exactly) so that the remaining difference between the Current and Non-telecommuter series can be said to be due to the difference in travel distances. The average of this ratio is 0.701. The interpretation of this average value is that approximately 70.1% of the

time savings enjoyed by telecommuters is due to their increased travel speeds; the remaining 29.9% of the time savings is due to their reduced travel distances. As such, the reasons behind the increases in travel speed (only hypothesized in the Commute Speed section) are extremely important to the travel-time-reducing benefits of telecommuting.

Distribution of individual commute amounts of current telecommuters

Figure 15.4 portrays a positive picture of the impacts of telecommuting on total commute time, but as mentioned earlier, a devil's advocate might wonder whether the average savings shown in those figures represent "typical" results or are skewed by large savings for a minority of individuals. Figure 15.5 addresses this question, by first reproducing Figure 15.4 (the average daily person-minutes traveled chart) and then adding two series representing, at each quarter, the percent of Current telecommuters whose commute time falls below that quarter's median for Former/Futures and Nevers, respectively. From the data underlying the figures, it can be calculated that over the approximately 1,350 Current telecommuter person-quarters of the ten-year study period, Current telecommuters' daily commute-minutes were lower than the Former/Future median in 67.7% of them, and lower than the Never median in 65.2% (see Figure 15.5). The conclusion is that the favorable result shown in the aggregate in Figure 15.4 is achieved at the individual level for a sizable majority (roughly two-thirds) of Current telecommuter person-quarters, with any surplus commuting of the remaining person-quarters being more than outweighed by the savings of that majority.

Longitudinal analysis

For the longitudinal analysis we make two comparisons: one of Ever telecommuters against themselves, by comparing their commute behavior during telecommuting and non-telecommuting episodes, and one of Ever telecommuters against Never telecommuters, by comparing the overall commute behavior of each group across the ten-year period. Specifically, in the following two subsections we respectively answer two questions:

- How many individual Ever telecommuters actually commute less per day during their telecommuting episodes (when Currents) than during their non-telecommuting episodes (when Former/Futures)?
- Do Ever telecommuters commute less, per capita, over the entire ten-year study period than Never telecommuters?

The first question relates to how often Evers telecommute *frequently* enough during telecommuting episodes to compensate for their longer-than-average one-way commute lengths and times. The second question addresses whether, and how often, they telecommute *long* enough (as

well as frequently enough) for their commute savings during those periods to outweigh their surplus commuting when they are not telecommuting.

Ever telecommuters: when telecommuting (current) versus when not telecommuting (former/future)

To what extent do individual telecommuters reduce their commute travel during telecommuting episodes? To address this question, we consider only the travel of the 94 Ever telecommuters. The person-minutes and -miles traveled are then computed for each quarter in the study period. For each individual, the average of the daily quarterly averages of these quantities during quarters in which the individual telecommutes is compared to the same measure during quarters in which the individual does not telecommute. These computed ratios help answer the question: how often are individuals traveling more while telecommuting (due to moves farther from work or home or to changes in travel conditions) versus traveling less?

The results support the positive view of telecommuting as a commute reduction policy for the majority of adopters, while giving some credence to the possibility of the negative view for a minority. On the positive side, the vast majority (approximately three-fourths) of respondents in the sample commute less (in terms of time and distance) while they are telecommuting than while they are not telecommuting. Further, the average across all individuals results in an average ratio of less than one: telecommuters' daily commute person-minutes traveled during telecommuting episodes averages 77% of that during non-telecommuting episodes, and their person-miles traveled during telecommuting episodes averages 90% of that during non-telecommuting episodes.

To keep these ratios in perspective, it should be remembered that even during a so-called "telecommuting" period, Currents may be telecommuting as little as two days a month; certainly in general these workers commute more often than they telecommute. Even so, the average ratios may seem rather high when compared to Figure 15.4: there, Current telecommuters' average daily commute time comprises 69% of Former/Futures'. The difference is that the numbers in Figure 15.4 compare the average commute amounts of Currents at each quarter with the average commute amounts of Former/Futures in the same quarter (where they are by definition a different group than the Currents, with sample sizes of each group varying from quarter to quarter), whereas the numbers presented here are the averages of the paired comparisons of all Ever telecommuters with her/himself, during Current and Former/Future periods, respectively. Thus, it is not surprising that the two sets of measures differ, but in the current context it is of interest to realize that the average commute savings *rate* of individual Current telecommuters, compared to the commutes of the same group when they are Former/Future telecommuters, is relatively modest (i.e.,

telecommuting results in a 23% “discount” of minutes and a 10% discount of miles, on average using the mean, and a slightly more substantial discount of 25% of minutes and miles using the median).

In fact, on the negative side, approximately one-quarter of the sample commuted in greater amounts while telecommuting than while not. However, this result can be interpreted as a negative impact of telecommuting only to the extent that telecommuting *created* these increases in commute amounts by encouraging more distant residential or employment relocations. And even in the worst case that telecommuting is responsible for all of the additional travel by these respondents, telecommuting still has a positive *net* impact on commute amounts (with those who do save travel more than compensating for those who do not), as illustrated by the aggregate analysis shown in Figure 15.4 and by the average disaggregate ratios shown here.

Ever vs. never telecommuters: per capita commute amounts over ten-year study period

Given that Ever telecommuters commute more, on average, than Nevers during their non-telecommuting periods, while commuting less than Nevers during their telecommuting episodes, it is of interest to ask: does their telecommuting compensate for their surplus commuting during their non-telecommuting periods, or are they still “commute villains” overall? That is, over a sustained period of time involving both telecommuting and non-telecommuting episodes – specifically, for the 10-year study period – do Ever telecommuters commute more, or less, overall, than Never telecommuters? This final question is addressed by Figure 15.6. Here, the sum and daily average of person-minutes traveled are presented for each telecommuting market segment, as well as for the entire sample (person-miles were also computed; see Ory and Mokhtarian 2005 for details). A comparison of the daily averages for each group is nearly equivalent (to the extent each person worked for the entire 10-year period) to comparing total commute amounts for each person (averaged within a group), while providing a more natural measure. As shown in Figure 15.6, the average commute time for the entire sample is approximately 57.3 minutes. Current telecommuters reduce this amount to 45.3 minutes and those not currently telecommuting increase the amount to 59.5 minutes. Those who Never telecommute during the ten-year period commute an average of 58.4 minutes per day and those who do telecommute at some point, travel slightly less at 55.8 minutes.

Thus, in terms of time, the shorter distances and higher speeds of Current telecommuters do more than compensate for the longer-duration commutes of Former/Future telecommuters, with the net result that Ever telecommuters commute for 4.4% less time, on average, than Never telecommuters (comparing 55.8 to 58.4). This trend does not hold for the distance estimates. Here, the Ever telecommuters commute so much more than average during their non-telecommuting episodes, their

telecommuting is not frequent and/or long enough to entirely negate those longer commutes and they end up commuting slightly (2.6%, comparing 31.0 to 31.8 miles per day) longer distances, on net, than Never telecommuters.

These results can be interpreted in two very different ways. On one hand, the slightly higher travel distances and lower travel times of Ever telecommuters compared to Never telecommuters suggests that, at the aggregate level, the availability of telecommuting as an option resulted in small increases in overall commute distance and decreases in commute time. This would suggest that telecommuting is having a relatively minor impact on travel amounts. On the other hand, however, to the extent that those in the Former/Future telecommuting market segment travel more due to innate desires or constraints, and those factors would be present with or without telecommuting options, telecommuting can be viewed as a very successful commute reduction/time saving policy in that it is adopted by a high-travel population, and substantially reduces their travel (by 26%, comparing the 61.6 min./day average of Former/Futures to the 45.3 min./day average of the Currents, despite the fact that Currents have longer one-way commutes than do the Former/Futures, as shown in Figure 15.1).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study we investigate ten-year retrospective data on the telecommuting engagement and commute amounts of a sample of 218 employees of six California state agencies that have operated telecommuting programs since 1998. The study focuses on the relationships between telecommuting and commute distances, times and speeds.

The findings here indicate that, compared to Never telecommuters, Ever telecommuters have longer one-way commutes (in terms of time and distance) on average, but commute less frequently during telecommuting episodes. The end result is that Current telecommuters commute less, in terms of average daily person-minutes (26% less), than Former/Future telecommuters (despite the fact that Currents live somewhat farther from work than Former/Futures at the outset). Current telecommuters also travel at significantly higher speeds than their non-telecommuting counterparts, accounting for approximately 70% of the commute time savings (the remainder being due to the shorter total distance traveled).

When examining the aggregate commuting amounts over the entire ten-year study period, those who telecommuted at some point in the ten-year period averaged slightly (4.4%) fewer person-minutes traveled and slightly (2.6%) more person-miles traveled than those who did not engage in telecommuting. This result could be interpreted as indicating either that telecommuting, in the aggregate, provides no travel savings and actually

increases travel, or that telecommuting is effective in that it attracts those who would otherwise commute even more, and substantially reduces their travel. The choice of interpretation is dependent on whether or not one believes that those who initially commute longer distances are then attracted to telecommuting as a commute reduction mechanism, or, conversely, that those initially with the ability to telecommute then move to more distant locations and, in doing so, increase their commute amounts. This issue of causality is the focus of another paper (Ory and Mokhtarian 2006), which finds that the more benign interpretation of the role of telecommuting (that is, as an effect rather than a cause of longer one-way commutes) is the stronger one. Thus, it appears reasonable to develop and maintain policies to increase telecommuting, from the perspectives both of travel reduction and of time savings to promote better work/life balance. Since telecommuting is arguably a self-rewarding choice, these policies should perhaps focus more on removing barriers to increased adoption (which could be legal/regulatory, technological, or institutional) than on providing incentives for individual workers to adopt it.

Due to the relatively small sample sizes and isolated sample used in this study, more research is needed. Ideally, comparable groups of telecommuters and non-telecommuters should be tracked over a long period of time to more directly measure the impact of telecommuting on residential/job relocations and commuting over time. Having a full range of socio-demographic and attitudinal data through time would also be extremely useful for analyzing the influence of those factors on telecommuting engagement and frequency. The findings in this paper demonstrate the importance of determining the direction of causality in the relationship between telecommuting and residential relocation. Further, the significantly faster commute travel speeds of telecommuters warrants more investigation into possible reasons for this result.

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