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Gendered Shares of the Family Rush Hour in Fulltime Dual Earner Families. A Cross National Comparison

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Abstract

There are recognised cross-national differences in the average amount and gender division of paid work and unpaid domestic work and care, but country differences between men and women in the timing and intensity of this daily workload remain under-investigated. Using couple-level time-use data from Australia, the UK, Finland, Korea and Spain (n=1,838), we probe cross-national differences in gendered time availability and constraint, focusing particularly on the early evening 'family rush hour'. We identify daily time periods during which one partner in a fulltime dual-earner parent couple performs routine time-critical household labor and care, whilst the other partner is simultaneously at leisure. In all five countries fathers in dual fulltime earner couples are more likely than mothers to be at leisure whilst their partner does unpaid work, and this disparity occurs most in the early evening. Multivariate analyses reveal the unpaid work-leisure gap is widest in Korea and narrowest in the UK, confounding expectations that social democratic Finland would be most equitable in this measure.

Keywords: Time-use; Gender Division of Labour; Family Rush Hour; Gender & Family

Gendered Shares of the Family Rush Hour in Fulltime Dual Earner Families. A Cross National Comparison

1 Introduction

Dual-earner households with children must combine the demands of family life with those of paid work. It was expected that as more women entered the paid labour market, gender differences in shares of paid work and unpaid work would diminish (Bergmann, 2005), but the increased labour market participation of women has not been matched by equivalent growth in men's domestic work (Fisher, Egerton, Gershuny, & Robinson, 2007; Sayer, 2016). Women generally do a much larger share of unpaid work than their male partners, and men are more likely to arrange family life around paid work and women to arrange paid work around family life, even in dual earner families in which both partners work fulltime (Monna & Gauthier, 2008). Being full time employed but also disproportionately responsible for unpaid work heightens subjective time stress (Craig & Brown, 2017). A central reason for this is that both paid work and some housework and childcare tasks have temporal imperatives, not only in amount, but also in timing.

Whilst seldom the direct focus of analysis, domestic scheduling matters because it has implications for men and women's work prospects, leisure time, and subjective wellbeing (Shaw, 2008). Workplaces have been described as 'greedy institutions' (Sullivan, 2014) with the 'ideal worker norm' reflecting an expectation that employees prioritise their work over other activities (Drago, 2007; Williams, 2010). Yet family duties can be similarly demanding, and also generate inflexible daily deadlines (Blair-Loy, 2003; Sullivan, 2014). Many household and childcare tasks are routine in both recurrence and timing. They bring schedule constraint because they not only have to be done every day, but also at the same time of every day. For example, someone must pick up the children from day care or school, cook dinner, help children with homework, bath and dress them for the night and put them to bed at regular times. These activities generally occur in the early evening, and for parents employed standard fulltime hours, involve concentrating unpaid work activities into a narrow time window at the end of their working day. The urgency of the tasks, for example leaving work and getting home in time to deal smoothly with children's fatigue and hunger, is an additional stressor. Thus, the early evening becomes a highly time-pressured and demanding period of unpaid work, that has been labelled the 'family rush hour' (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000).

Yet little research has explicitly calculated gender differences in who participates in this daily period of time-crunch. Inferences about the temporal constraints of care upon mothers and fathers have been derived from the type of activity performed, such as cooking dinner, or the activity context, such as the presence of children (Craig, 2006). In a new contribution, this paper addresses the scheduling aspect of work and family life directly, by specifically examining timing, and by looking at how the most time-pressured daily period of family care is shared between partners. Using couple-level data, it focuses on fulltime dual earner couples with children, because these households are known to be the most time-poor (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Specifically, it examines whether one partner in a fulltime dual-earner parent couple performs routine time-critical household labor and care in the early evening, whilst the other partner is simultaneously at leisure. That is, we see being at leisure as indicating the opportunity to participate in unpaid work alongside one's partner if one chose. If fulltime working mothers shoulder the responsibility for the family rush hour alone rather than sharing it with fathers, it could be a contributing factor in the rising incidence of working mothers with young children suffering anxiety and stress (Buddelmeyer, Hamermesh, & Wooden, 2018; National Women's Health Survey, 2019; Sintas, de Francisco, & Álvarez, 2015).

We take a cross-national perspective, because gender divisions of labour are influenced by macro-level factors which influence time demands upon mothers and fathers (Crompton, 2006;

Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Hook, 2010; Lewis, 2009). We draw on data from five countries from different welfare regimes, with varying social policies and norms in relation to gender equity in work and family participation. Established welfare regime categories are social democratic (exemplified by Scandinavia); corporatist (exemplified by Western Europe), familialist (exemplified by Southern Europe); and market oriented/liberal (exemplified by the English speaking countries) (Arts & Gelissen, 2010). North Asian countries exhibit both market-oriented and familialist features, so can be classified as liberal-familialist (Kwon, 2005; Ochiai, 2009). Here the regimes are represented by Australia and the UK (*liberal),* Finland *(social democratic),* Spain (*familialist*) and Korea *(liberal-familialist*). Finland and other social democratic countries in Scandinavia have been found to have a more gender-equal distribution of paid work and the unpaid work of childcare than either liberal or familialist countries, attributed to multiple factors including lower average employment hours, more generous parental leaves and more readily-available childcare services (Altintas & Sullivan, 2017; Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Hook, 2006; Kwon, 2005; Lee, 2005; Ochiai, 2009). However, prior research suggests that gender differences in the *type* of childcare provided are less variant cross-nationally than the *amount* of childcare provided. For example, across countries, fathers are less likely than mothers to perform care alone in sole charge of children, to organise and manage family leisure time, or to do the bulk of the daily routine physical care (Craig & Mullan, 2011, 2013). Here we build on these enquiries to compare care *scheduling*, and whether the family rush hour is shared more equitably in social democratic Finland than in the other countries.

2 Theoretical background

We first acknowledge that within countries, household and individual-level factors also shape gender divisions of labour. Theoretical debates have mainly focused on three main explanations for gender disparities in paid and unpaid work: gendered attitudes/ideology and role performance, marital bargaining on the basis of relative resources, and time availability (Aassve, Fuochi, & Mencarini, 2014). The role performance approach argues that gender is constructed, recreated and reinforced through everyday interaction (West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). How men and women 'do', or 'undo', gender is underpinned by their own gender ideology or by the accountability they feel for behaving in ways consistent with prevailing cultural beliefs about masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2009). This suggests women do more housework and childcare because they feel accountable for these tasks as a wife and mother, whereas they are not as central to men's self-conceptualisation as a good husband and father (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Also relevant is that ideals of masculinity seem more resistant to change than ideals of femininity, perhaps because in most respects, men stand to lose while women stand to gain (Chafetz, 2004; Connell, 2009). Gender ideology can be held individually, and also manifest in shared social norms and attitudes (Crompton, 2006; Hook, 2010; Lewis, 2009). Gender attitudes differ across the countries in this study (see below), and we expect this to underpin cross-national differences in gendered participation in the family rush hour (see below).

The relative resources approach is ostensibly gender-neutral and suggests that household bargaining power arises from one partner having more personal resources than the other (Manser & Brown, 1980). For example, higher job status, education or income translate to more power, which can be used to avoid domestic chores. A comparative advantage in doing either paid work (usually men) or unpaid work (usually women) leads to gender specialisation, which maximizes overall household utility (Becker, 1965). Feminist scholarship has highlighted serious flaws in this argument, including that it fails to explain why gendered divisions of housework persist despite women gaining tertiary degrees and entering the labour market, thus ceasing to specialise solely in home duties (Folbre, 2004; Nelson, 2006). Also, research has found that men with higher education and professional jobs are likely to partner with women of similar status, to have more liberal gender

attitudes and wish to be involved fathers, which may also minimise the relevance of relative resources (England & Srivastava, 2013). In this study we capture individual resources through job status and educational achievement (see below) and control for the possibility they have an independent effect on gendered participation in the family rush hour.

The time availability approach relates time in domestic chores to time spent in the labour market (Presser, 1994). Coverman (1985) hypothesized that "domestic hours are a function of *demands* on husbands to fulfil domestic responsibilities along with their *capability to respond* to these demands" (p. 84, original italics). She argued that men's response capacity depends on the hours they spend in paid work. A body of literature has tested this hypothesis. For example, Aassve et al. (2014) analysed data from nine European countries and found that "fulltime employment among men brings about lower gender equality in household sharing" (p. 1070). They also found that women's fulltime work is associated with them doing less household work. However, as more women now work fulltime, the time availability explanation is inadequate to explain gender shares because it assumes one partner can trade off paid work against the other's housework. This is not as possible for dual earners as for sole breadwinner or full-time/part time worker households (Crompton, 2006; Gornick & Meyers, 2003).

Of course, time availability may still matter if fulltime dual-earner couples' employment schedules are desynchronised. Presser (1994) criticised the time availability approach on the grounds that focus should not be entirely on the *number* of hours employed but also on the *timing* of employment, that is, *which* hours are worked. She showed that in US dual-earner families, desynchronized employment schedules can make women less available to do certain time-critical household chores (e.g. cooking dinner, putting children to bed) which in turn requires men to do these tasks (Presser, 2005). In Australia, also, women working nonstandard schedules that mean they are absent while men are at home, is a much more reliable predictor that men will do routine childcare tasks than women's work hours per se (Craig and Brown 2017). While nonstandard work schedules can be imposed by employers (Fenwick & Tausig, 2001), some families may choose them specifically because they facilitate one partner being available for home duties whilst the other does paid work (Presser, 2005).

Scheduling is also relevant to the time availability argument in dual earner parent couples who both work fulltime standard hours. In principle, if couples' employment schedules are broadly synchronised, they could also have gender-similar participation in time-critical periods of unpaid work including the family rush hour. If both partners have left their paid work for the day, they theoretically both have time 'available' to pitch in with the unpaid work of the family rush hour if they choose to. This matters because if mothers meet the constraining demands of domestic temporal imperatives alone during this time-critical period, whilst their partner is doing neither paid nor unpaid work, this would indicate an unpaid work-leisure gap wherein fathers enjoy an advantage in daily leisure scheduling - the opportunity to relax and unwind at the end of the working day - whilst their partner is performing unpaid work *at the same time*. This paper investigates this joint couple scheduling aspect of time availability and how it compares cross-nationally for the first time.

2.1 Country context

As noted above we analyse data from Australia and the UK, Spain, Korea and Finland. The countries represent four welfare regimes: *liberal, familialist, liberal-familialist and social democratic* respectively (see Arts & Gelissen, 2002, 2010; Ochiai, 2009 for discussion of regime typologies and gender-relevant features). Table 1 indicates how the five countries compare on social gender attitudes and workforce participation patterns, contextual factors which reflect and shape the gendered division of labour and the timing of paid and unpaid work in each country.

Table 1. Cross-national indictors of gender attitudes and workforce participation patterns (%)

	Korea	Spain	Australia	UK	Finland
Gender attitudes					
Attitude to maternal childcare: "when a woman works children suffer" (strongly agree/agree) [1,a]	69.3	52.7	31.1	30.6	21.1
Attitude to work: "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income" (strongly agree/agree) [1,a]	69.5	93.2	52.5	62.9	78.2
Workforce participation patterns					
Male employment rates aged 15-64 [2]	75.9	69.0	78.7	79.6	73.7
Percentage of men who usually work 40+ hours[2]	85.3	77.5	57.8	61.6	53.5
Female employment rates aged 15-64 [2]	57.2	57.8	69.2	70.5	70.6
Female part-time employment (2009) [2]	18.2	21.6	37.5	36.4	17.8
Fulltime dual earner couples with children [2]	30.1	34.4	23.3	31.3	55.7
% of employed working evening/night on weekday (7pm-7am) [3]					
Men	28.3	27.7	19.8	15.2	12.0
Women	10.0	20.8	24.6	11.7	8.1

[1]International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), latest data available, [2]Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), latest data available; [3]Authors' calculations on countries' time use surveys.
[a]Spain uses a 4-point Likert scale (strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree) whereas all other countries use a 5-point Likert scale including a neutral category.

First, behaviour and ideas about appropriate gender roles are mediated through cultural norms and values (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, & Alldred, 2003). International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) questions capturing attitudes to maternal childcare provision and dual earning indicate that of the five countries, Finland has most consistently gender-equal social attitudes across the two measures. Spanish respondents are progressive on dual earning but more conservative on childcare. Korea, similarly, displays contrasting views on the two indicators, including the least gender-equal attitude to childcare. The UK and Australia are moderate on both measures (see first part of Table 1).

Second, differences in national time availability and daily scheduling are implied by contrasting workforce participation patterns (see second part of Table 1). Korea and Spain have high percentages of employed men with average workweeks over 40 hours (85% and 77.5% respectively). This could constrain their domestic participation more than men in the other countries, particularly Finland, where only 58% of men work longer than 40 hours. Conversely, the average incidence of female part time work is low in Finland (alongside Korea and Spain) and much higher in Australia and the UK, where women likely thus have more time available for domestic duties. Furthermore, in 57% of couples with children in Finland, both partners are fulltime employed, substantially higher than elsewhere (range 34.4% in Spain to 22.9% in Australia). Taken together, these average workforce participation patterns suggest that couples have most similar work schedules in Finland, leading us to expect that care timing would also be most gender-similar there.

No integrated comparative indicators of the average incidence of nonstandard work schedules across the five countries are available. However, previous research leads us to expect cross-national variation. For example, Presser (2005, p. 214) argued that in the USA 'nonstandard work schedules are [ubiquitous and] no longer that nonstandard' (p. 214). According to the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) approximately half of European workers work evenings or weekends at least once a month (Eurofond, 2012). Labour Force Survey (LFS) figures suggest that 15 percent of European workers usually work in the evening and 10 percent or more usually work weekends

(Presser, Gornick, & Parashar, 2008). Regarding daily scheduling, our own calculations using the time use surveys of the countries in this paper indicate that on weekdays 28.3% of Korean men and 24.6% of Korean women work outside the hours of 7am to 7pm (see Table 1). Weekday evening/night work is also quite common for Spanish workers (27.7% of male and 20.8% of female workers). It is less so for male and female workers in Australia (19.8% and 10.0%), Finland (15.2% and 11.7%) and the UK (12.0% and 8.1%). These patterns do not necessarily reflect shift work, since they could indicate long working days consistent with the longer average male work hours in Korea and Spain noted above. In any event, more employment occuring in the evening suggests fewer workers would be available to participate in the family rush hour in Korea and Spain than in the other three countries. Overall, evening/night work on weekdays is more common in male workers than female workers in all countries.

2.2 Expectations

Overall, we expect to find that women are more likely to perform unpaid work during the family rush hour while their male partner is at leisure than vice versa. However, our main focus is comparative, and we expect the size of this gender difference to vary cross-nationally. Specifically, we expect to find most gender-equal participation in the family rush hour (indicated by the smallest unpaid work-leisure gap) in Finland, given the shorter worktime regime, egalitarian gender attitudes and more equal labour market participation amongst couples in that country shown in Table 1. We expect that the unpaid work-leisure gap found during the family rush hour will be most gendered in Spain and Korea, because gender attitudes are most traditional in those countries and average male paid work hours are longest there. We expect the UK and Australia to fall between these two poles.

3 Method

3.1 Data

To test these expectations, we analyse nationally representative time-use surveys (TUS) which collected information from households in Australia, Spain, Korea, the UK and Finland, using time-dairies in which respondents recorded all their activities over the course of the day. The surveys are collected separately by the national statistical insitutes of each country (except in the UK, where it was undertaken by an independent social research agency). The surveys all draw data from probability samples of households (or individuals) from the population register or national census (see HETUS guidelines from EUROSTAT, 2009).[1] The results were made available to the research community as confidentialised unit records (CURFs). Dairies covered a randomly assigned weekday and weekend day in the UK, Korea and Finland, a randomly assigned day of the week in Spain, and two consecutive days with a randomly assigned starting day in Australia. Fieldwork periods ran for

[1] Australia – Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3414.0main+features262011%20(Edition%202);
Spain – Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INe) https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/en/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176815&menu=resultados&idp=1254735976608#!tabs-1254736194826;
Korea – Statistics Korea (KOSTAT) http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/11/6/index.board?bmode=read&bSeq=&aSeq=273283&pageNo=1&rowNum=10&navCount=10&currPg=&searchInfo=&sTarget=title&sTxt=;
The UK – NatCen Social Research and deposited by the Centre for Time Use Research (CTUR) at the University of Oxford https://www.timeuse.org/node/10833;
Finland – Statistics Finland https://www.tilastokeskus.fi/meta/til/akay_en.html.

at least one year to account for seasonality.

To investigate the timing of the workload of partners who are subject to similar temporal constraints, from each county's CURF we select heterosexual couples with at least one child aged under 15 in which both partners are employed fulltime (>34 hours per week). We are unable to include same-sex couples in the sample because this information is not collected across the surveys. Sample sizes (number of couples) are Australia n=179, Spain n=381, Korea n=945, the UK n=161, Finland n=172. Because employment and childcare demands differ over the week and time is particularly tight on weekdays, creating the family rush hour, results for Saturdays and Sundays are not presented (but are noted in the text and are available upon request).

3.2 Measures

Paid work is defined as all primary activities recorded in relation to respondents' employment, including breaks at work, time spent at work but not working, work-related training, and travel to and from work.

Unpaid work is defined as all activities that relate to household upkeep and maintenance, household administration and management, physical childcare, passive childcare, care for other family members living in the household, and travel for any of these activities. Many of these activities are routine, urgent, or time-constrained, but others are more intermittent or can be flexibly scheduled (e.g. doing household finance, cleaning the yard). Therefore, as a subset of unpaid work, we measure time-critical *routine unpaid work.*

Non-work includes all time that is not devoted to paid or unpaid work. It includes leisure, socialising, sleep and personal care. Some of these activities are motivated by necessity (i.e. eating, sleeping, showering), whereas others more reflect preferences and autonomy over one's time. So as a subset of non-work, we measure *leisure*, defined as time spent on socialising, entertainment, culture, events, sports, gaming, reading, watching TV, hobbies, and leisure related travel.

The TUS yield data on the time allocation of both partners at the same day(s) of the week in sequences of 10 minutes. Using this couple data, we calculated the *unpaid work-leisure gap* by identifying time intervals during which one partner was performing routine time-critical unpaid work while their partner was simultaneously at leisure.

Comparing these surveys cross-nationally to create these measures involves detailed harmonisation of each country's time use codes (see Table A1 for detailed coding of routine unpaid work in each of the countries). Due to cross national differences in the accuracy and quality of recording secondary activities, they are not included in the calculations.

3.3 Analysis plan

First, to complement the country context information above, we present an overview of total paid and unpaid workload, and its composition by gender, in each country. Since partners' time allocation is not independent (e.g. if one picks up the kids, the other does not have to) we use paired sample t-tests to test significance. Second, we focus on the time one partner spends on routine time-critical unpaid work while the other partner is at leisure. To understand scheduling, we plot the timing of this unpaid work-leisure gap over the day. Third, we investigate country differences in the size of the unpaid work-leisure gap using linear regression analysis. Our key independent variable is country. We control for individual factors which may affect household bargaining through relative resources; education of each partner (yes/no tertiary degree), and professional job status of each

partner (yes/no). As indicators of scheduling and time availability we enter whether or not each partner worked on nonstandard hours (outside 7am and 7pm) on the diary day (yes/no), and the length of the working week for both partners (34-39 or 40+ hours per week). It is a limitation of the data that we have no measures of individual gender attitudes so cannot include them in the model, but social gender attitudes are part of the country variation as discussed above. We control household variables; age of each partner (yes/no less or equal to 45 years), the number of children under 15 years in the household (ranging from 1 to 5 children) and household income (in equivalised income deciles). We tested interactions of all the independent variables with country, and report all significant results. Sample characteristics on the measures are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample characteristics

		Korea	**Spain**	**Australia**	**UK**	**Finland**
Couples (n)		945	381	179	161	172
Partners' characteristics		%	%	%	%	%
Age ≤ 45 years	Male partner	75.4	69.6	71.5	73.3	69.8
	Female partner	78.2	83.2	78.2	85.7	82.0
Tertiary degree	Male partner	34.9	45.7	37.4	50.3	30.8
	Female partner	23.5	56.4	52.0	64.4	41.9
Length of working week	Male partner 35-39 hrs	1.0	20.7	19.0	29.8	31.4
	Male partner 40+ hrs	99.0	79.2	71.0	70.2	68.6
	Female partner 35-39 hrs	35.7	80.6	59.2	78.3	83.1
	Female partner 40+ hrs	64.3	19.4	40.8	21.7	16.9
Professional job status	Male partner	16.7	40.9	20.1	37.9	36.0
	Female partner	22.8	58.3	33.5	46.5	54.1
Worked outside 7am-7pm on diary day	Male partner	69.3	57.0	54.2	41.0	47.7
	Female partner	46.7	35.7	22.3	20.5	29.1
Household characteristics		mean	mean	mean	mean	mean
Number of children under 15 years		1.6	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.7
Household income in equivalized income deciles		7.3	8.0	6.9	6.6	7.1

4 Results

4.1 Cross-national paid and unpaid workload

The total paid and unpaid weekday workload of fulltime employed men in dual earner families with at least one child under 15 years is highest in Australia, followed in order by Spain, the UK, Finland and Korea (Table 3). The total paid and unpaid workload of women in the same work and family situation is highest in Australia, followed by Spain, Korea, and the UK. It is lowest in Finland. In the two liberal countries (UK and Australia) and social democratic Finland, partners' total weekday workload does not significantly differ by gender. This is consistent with prior research finding that, in many countries, total workloads are similar for men and women notwithstanding gender divisions in paid and unpaid work (Burda, Hamermesh, & Weil, 2013; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003). However, conversely, in liberal-familialist Korea and familialist Spain, fulltime employed mothers have much higher workloads than fulltime employed fathers (1.5 hours

and 0.7 hours per day respectively). In all countries women's workload includes a higher proportion of unpaid work than men's workload. The difference ranges from a low of 1.3 hours per weekday in Finland to a high of 2.6 hours per weekday in Korea (due to men's very low contribution there). Thus, although the difference is still highly significant and substantial in Finland, it is lowest there because Finnish men do most unpaid work (supporting the social democratic model).. The situation in Korea, which combines liberal and familial instutional features, is harshest for women, because they do high average paid work as well as much more unpaid work than men(Table 3).

Table 3. Cross-national comparison of workload amount and composition of fulltime employed men and women in dual earner households with child(ren) in hours per weekday [mean (st.dev.)]

		M	F	Δ	Sig.
Korea (n=945)	Paid work	9.0 (2.7)	7.8 (2.5)	1.2 (3.3)	***
	Unpaid work	0.8 (1.2)	3.4 (1.9)	2.6 (2.2)	***
	Total workload	9.8 (2.5)	11.2 (1.8)	1.5 (2.7)	***
Spain (n=381)	Paid work	8.3 (3.6)	6.6 (3.7)	1.7 (4.4)	***
	Unpaid work	2.5 (2.0)	4.8 (2.8)	2.4 (3.4)	***
	Total workload	10.8 (3.0)	11.5 (2.9)	0.7 (3.0)	***
Australia (n=179)	Paid work	9.6 (3.0)	6.3 (4.1)	3.3 (4.8)	***
	Unpaid work	2.4 (2.1)	5.4 (3.3)	3.0 (4.0)	***
	Total workload	12.0 (2.2)	11.8 (2.7)	0.2 (2.9)	n.s.
UK (n=161)	Paid work	8.3 (3.8)	5.4 (4.7)	2.9 (6.0)	***
	Unpaid work	2.3 (2.1)	4.9 (3.3)	2.6 (3.7)	***
	Total workload	10.6 (3.0)	10.3 (3.4)	0.3 (4.1)	n.s.
Finland (n=172)	Paid work	7.1 (4.3)	5.7 (4.1)	1.3 (5.2)	***
	Unpaid work	2.9 (2.4)	4.2 (2.8)	1.3 (3.5)	***
	Total workload	10.0 (3.6)	9.9 (3.2)	0.1 (3.5)	n.s.

Notes. n=number of couples, *M*=men, *F*=women, Δ=absolute difference in mean, *Sig.*=two-sided significance of paired sample t-test. Levels of significance: ****P*≤0.001, ***P*≤0.01, **P*≤0.05, n.s. not significant.

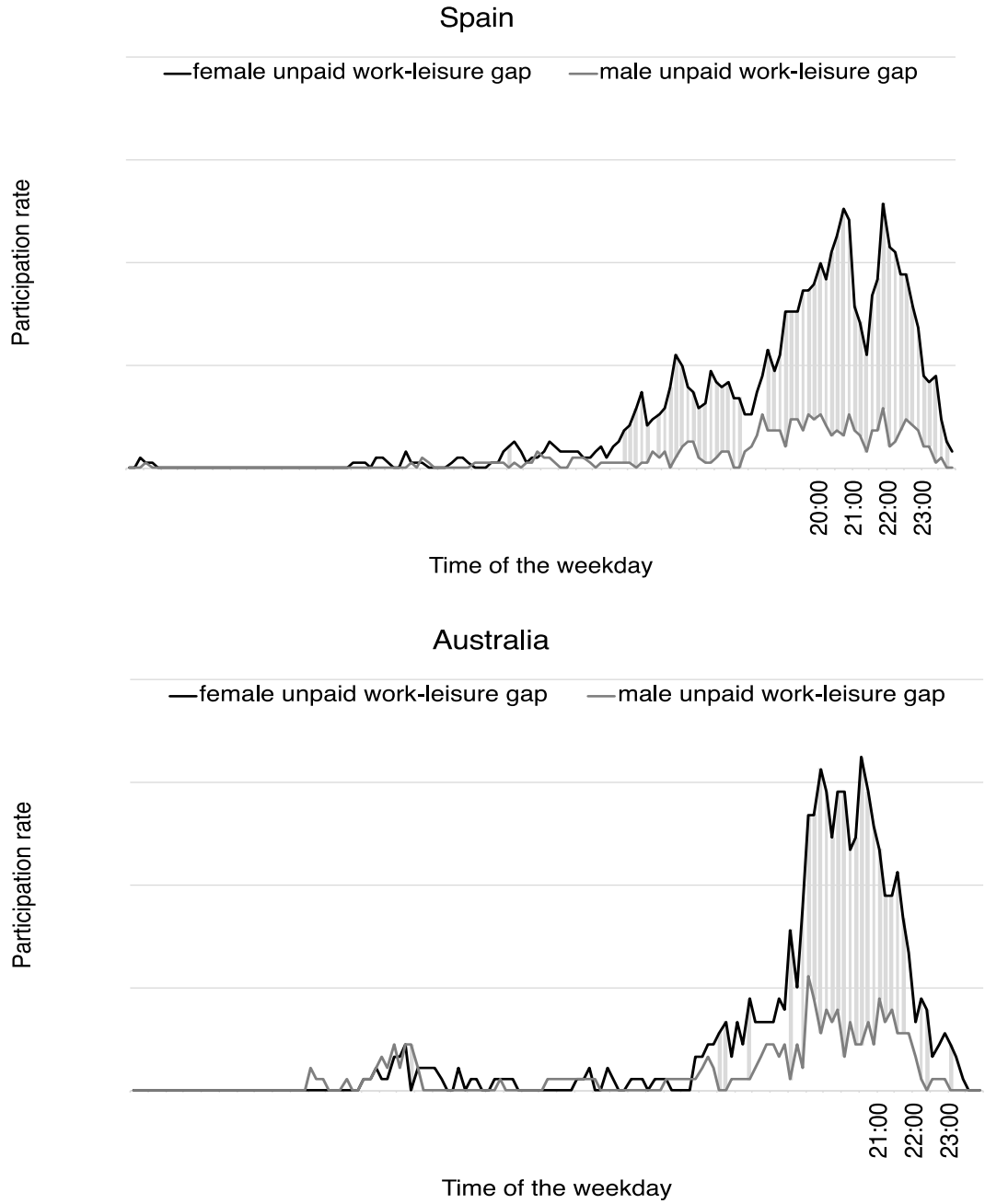
4.2 Timing of the unpaid work-leisure gap

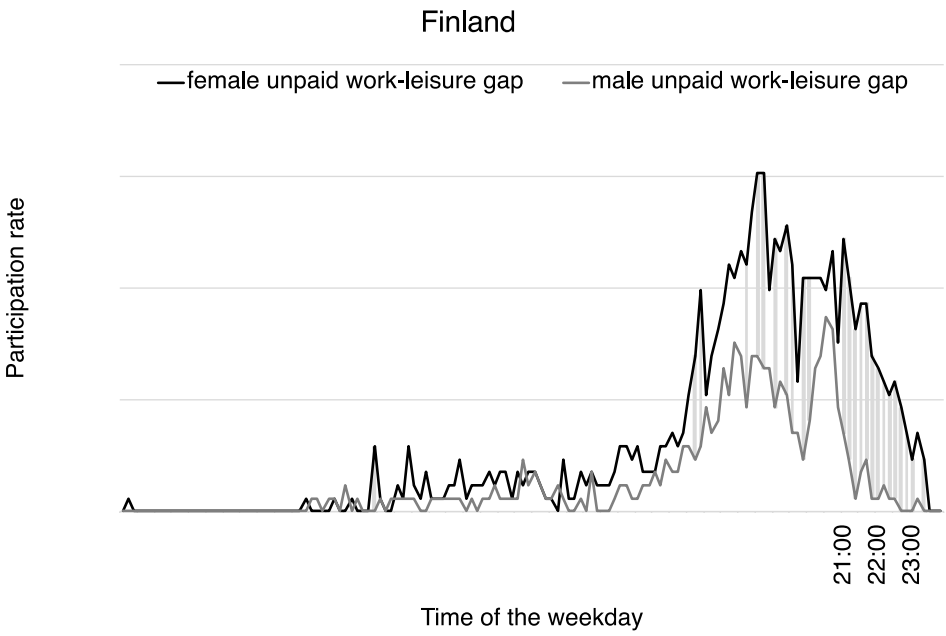
Drawing on the time use data of matched couples together, Figure 1 shows the time during which one partner is doing routine, time-critical unpaid work while the other partner is simultaneously at leisure. The lines represent the percentage of fulltime employed fathers and mothers in dual earner families (y-axis) over the course of the day (x-axis) performing routine unpaid work while their partners are at leisure (black line for women, dark grey line for men). The vertical light grey lines indicate the times of day at which there is a significant gender difference in the simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap.

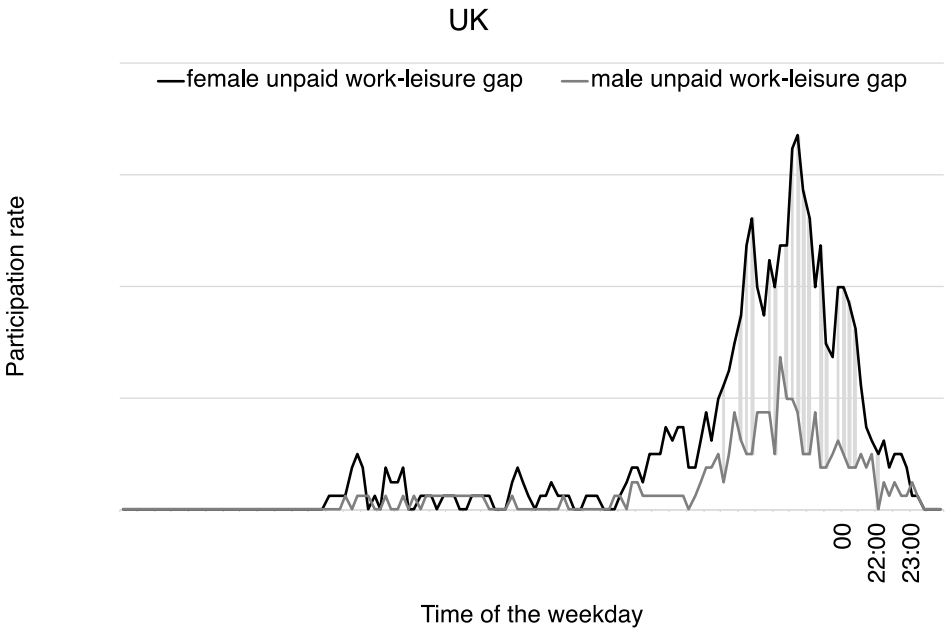
Two key observations stand out. One, time during which one partner is at leisure while the other performs routine unpaid work largely occurs between 4 pm and 10 pm. This is when working parents must pick up children from school or day care, travel home, and perform tasks such as feeding children, supervising homework, bathing and preparing children for night-time, and cleaning up the house. This confirms the cross-national ubiquity of the evening family rush hour. Two, much higher percentages of mothers than fathers do these activities whilst their partner is not also performing either paid or unpaid work. That is, in fulltime dual earner households, mothers not only do most of the routine unpaid work at peak times of household demand but do so while their male partners could be of help because at that same time they are at leisure.

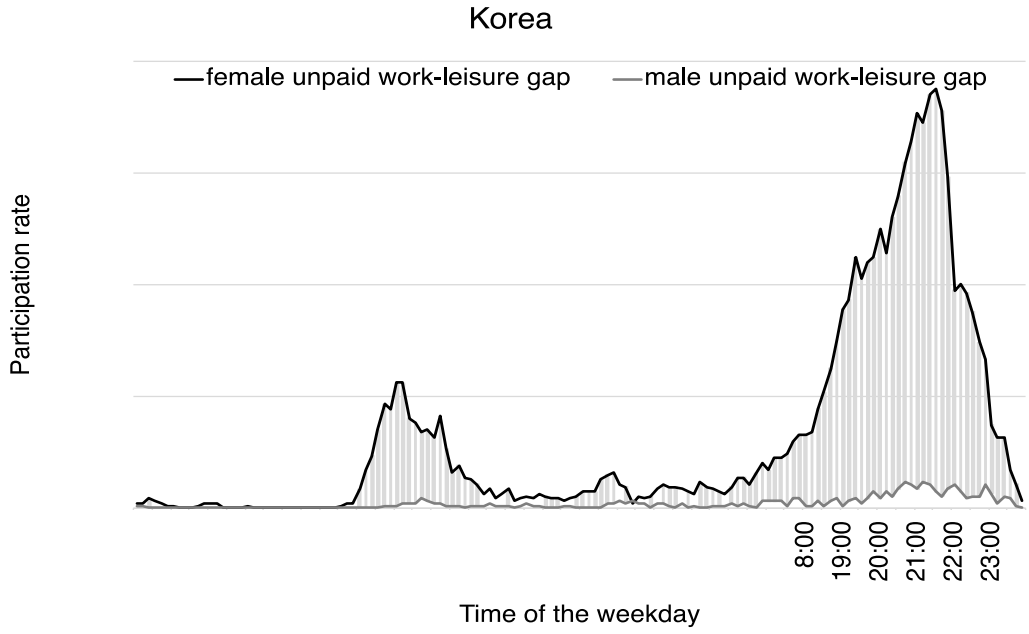
Gender differences in the simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap are statistically significant in all countries. All but Spain have a peak of over 15% of mothers in doing routine unpaid work while their partners are at leisure. Finland has the highest percentage of fathers doing routine unpaid work while their partners are at leisure, followed by the UK and Australia. However, percentages are low (around 5% of fathers). In Spain and in Korea almost no fathers do routine unpaid work while mothers are at leisure. Also, in these two countries, the female unpaid work-male leisure gap occurs over a wider daily timespan than in the other three countries. Korea, uniquely, also has a small morning peak period between 6.00 and 9.00 am during which a significant percentage of fulltime employed mothers are doing routine unpaid work while their partners are at leisure.

Figure 1. Cross-national comparison of the percentage of fulltime employed men and women in dual earner households with child(ren) (y-axis) at a particular time of weekday (x-axis) performing unpaid work while their partner is simultaneously at leisure




Finland
female unpaid work-leisure gap
male unpaid work-leisure gap
Participation rate
21:00
22:00
23:00
Time of the weekday


UK
female unpaid work-leisure gap
male unpaid work-leisure gap
Participation rate
00
22:00
23:00
Time of the weekday



Note. Vertical light grey lines represent a significant difference in the proportion of men and women doing unpaid work while their partners have leisure at the time of the day (paired-sample t-test against α=0.05)

On weekend days the time-critical family rush hour is less relevant. In supplementary analyses (results not shown but available on request), an unpaid work-leisure gap was still evident, but it spread over the course of the day. In all countries at almost any time between 6 am and 10 pm on the weekend, more mothers were doing routine unpaid work while their partners were at leisure than vice versa. This suggests that weekend behaviour patterns echo weekdays, rather than being an opportunity for couples to rectify the gendered work-leisure differences of the working week.

4.3 Estimators of the unpaid work-leisure gap

The multivariate analysis tests for country differences in the size of the simulataneous unpaid work-leisure gap in our sample of fulltime employed mothers and fathers in dual earner families, net of individual and household characteristics (see Table 4). All else equal, women are estimated to spend 0.93 of an hour (56 minutes) per weekday more on routine unpaid work while their male partners are at leisure than vice versa. If different in no other characteristic than country, the gender gap in simultaneous leisure and unpaid work is wider in Korea (+0.27 hours) and smaller in the UK (-0.24 hours) than it is in reference-category Finland. The gaps in Spain and Australia are not significantly different from that in Finland.

Table 4. Linear regression of gender difference in amount of daily time one partner in dual earner households with child(ren) performs unpaid work while their partner is simultaneously at leisure on a weekday

		B	s.e.	Sig.
Constant		0.93	0.13	***
Country characteristics				
Country (ref. Finland)	UK	-0.24	0.11	*
	Australia	-0.15	0.10	n.s.
	Spain	0.05	0.09	n.s.
	Korea	0.27	0.09	***
Individual characteristics of female partner				
Female >45 years old *(ref. no)*	Yes	0.06	0.07	n.s.
Female tertiary degree *(ref. no)*	Yes	-0.01	0.05	n.s.
Female weekly working hours *(ref. 34-39 hrs/w)*	40+ hrs/w	0.01	0.05	n.s.
Female professional job status *(ref. no)*	Yes	-0.05	0.05	n.s.
Female worked on nonstandard hours *(ref. no)*	Yes	-0.27	0.04	***
Individual characteristics of male partner				
Male >45 years old *(ref. no)*	Yes	0.01	0.05	n.s.
Male tertiary degree *(ref. no)*	Yes	-0.01	0.05	n.s.
Male weekly working hours *(ref. 34-39 hrs/w)*	40+ hrs/w	0.05	0.07	n.s.
Male professional job status *(ref. no)*	Yes	-0.38	0.13	**
Male worked on nonstandard hours *(ref. no)*	Yes	-0.33	0.04	***
Country interaction terms (only significant effects shown)				
Country x male professional job status (*ref. Male professional in Finland*)	Professional in UK	0.44	0.18	*
	Professional in Australia	0.15	0.20	n.s.
	Professional in Spain	0.21	0.15	n.s.
	Professional in Korea	0.30	0.15	*
Household characteristics				
Number of children <15 years		0.00	0.03	n.s.
Equivalised household income in deciles		-0.02	0.01	*
Adjusted R^2	0.092			
Model statistics	F(df)=10.345(20), $P<0.001$			

Notes. B=unstandardized regression coefficient, *s.e.*=standard error, *Sig.*=two-sided significance of t-test. Levels of significance: ***$P\leq0.001$, **$P\leq0.01$, *$P\leq0.05$, n.s. not significant.

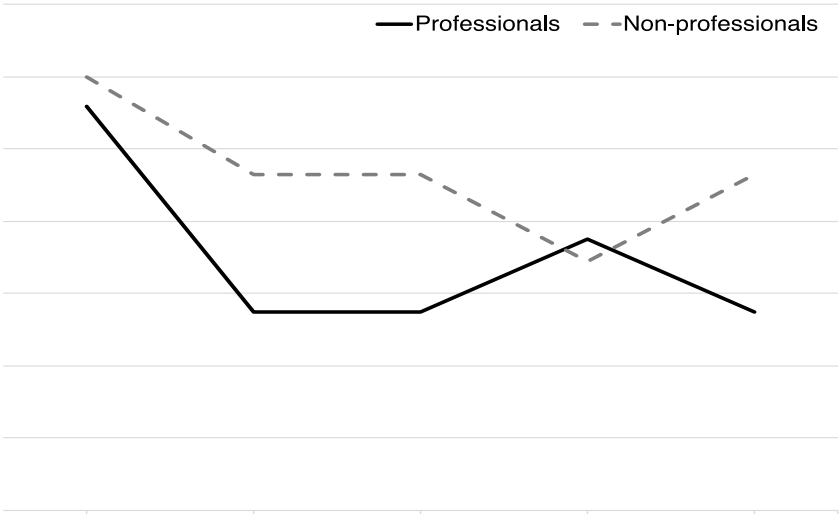
Net of country, no individual characteristics of female partners were significantly associated with the gendered unpaid work-leisure gap, except for working nonstandard hours (outside 7am-7pm) on the diary day. This predicted the gap would be -0.27 hours smaller than if the female partner worked a standard schedule. Men's nonstandard hours on the diary day were similarly predicted to reduce the simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap, in this case by -0.33 hours. This accords with prior research suggesting that nonstandard hours can facilitate one partner being available to do family care while the other works (Presser 2005; Craig and Brown 2017). Interaction terms (not shown)

indictated no cross-national variation in the effect of nonstandard hours.

The only other significant individual characteristic was men having a professional rather than a non-professional occupation, which was associated with the simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap being smaller by 0.38 hours. This is consistent with research suggesting that professional men and women commonly partner with each other and that gender attitudes are more liberal, domestic outsourcing more common, and divisions of labor more equitable, amongst professional couples (England & Srivastava, 2013; Sayer, Gauthier, & Furstenberg, 2004). However, men having a professional job did not have the same effect across countries. Interaction terms reveal that in the UK and Korea, the male partner having professional job status was more positively associated with the unpaid work-leisure gap (+0.44 and +0.30 hours respectively), compared to reference-category Finland. This counteracted the negative main effect and meant that the net difference between households containing a professional rather than non-professional male partner was much narrower in the UK and Korea than in the other three countries.

In the case of the UK, this suggests the narrower unpaid work-leisure gap found as a main country effect reflected households with non-professional men. This is consistent with research suggesting that in the UK many working class men are more involved in family care than their equivalents in other countries (Crompton & Lyonette, 2007), which may be related to the lower incidence of working evenings in that country (see Tables 1 and 2). In the case of Korea, it means the *wider* unpaid work-leisure gap found as a main country effect applies to both professional and non-professional men, suggesting this indicator of gender inequity is consistent across classes in that country. The substantive results of the interaction terms are illustrated in Figure 2, showing that the significant professional/non-professional difference found in Finland (and Australia and Spain) is minimal in the UK and Korea.

Figure 2. Differences across countries in simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap in fulltime dual earner parent couples for professional and non-professional men [hours per weekday]



Note. Calculated from the results of Table 3. Gap for non-professionals in Finland is equal to the intercept and gap for professionals in Finland is calculated by summing the intercept and main effect of professional status; gaps in other countries calculated by summing the intercept and significant main effects for country (for non-professionals) and main effect for professional status and significant interaction between country and professional status.

Across all the countries, the number of children under 15 in the household predicted no significant variation in the unpaid work-leisure gap, but it was estimated to reduce by 0.02 hours (1.2 minutes) a day in association with each decile increase in household income.

5 Conclusion

The new contribution of this paper was to directly examine the timing of fulltime dual earner parents' daily workload, analysing time-use data from matched couples in five countries. We found strong gender patterns in the timing of unpaid work and leisure, even when holding employment hours and schedules constant. Fulltime employed mothers not only had a higher proportion of their total work unpaid than fulltime employed fathers did, but were also much more likely to do routine and time-critical unpaid work while their partner was simultaneously at leisure, and thus theoretically able to assist. In addition, most of this simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap occurred in the evening 'family rush hour'. This demonstrates that for a substantial share of households the temporal structures of family duties (e.g. day care closing times and needs of children for care and attention) are more of a constraint upon fulltime employed mothers than upon fulltime employed fathers within the same household. The timing of these peak moments falls at the fringes of standard working times. The temporal rhythm by which paid work occurs during the day and leisure in the evenings is a gendered phenomenon in about one in six dual earner families. This has been implicit in prior research on gendered task allocation, but what we show here explicitly for the first time is that fathers are available at these times and could share in the time-critical unpaid work if they forewent their early evening leisure.

The results using our new measure reveal the inadequacy of the time availability approach in explaining gendered divisions of labour. If partners are at leisure, they are not at work, so by definition, they *are* available. Fulltime employed women face a two-fold constraint. Not only do they do more routine household tasks than their partners, but they are also locked into performing them at times that make them unavailable to respond flexibly to work demands (e.g. work late) and/or restrict their access to leisure and other non-work activities. We also found little support for the relative resources approach. A *smaller* simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap was associated with a male partner's professional job status in Finland, Spain and Australia, suggesting men do not use this status to bargain out of unpaid work during the family rush hour. In the UK and Korea, there was little substantive difference on this basis, suggesting in those countries, dominant patterns in the gendered unpaid work-leisure gap applied across this measure of job status. Education and women's professional status had no significant effects, suggesting gender outweighs these potential advantages. A data limitation is that we do not have information on partners' individual earnings, so cannot test their independent effect on domestic bargaining. Gender wage gaps suggest that fathers are more usually the higher earner (OECD, 2020), but since female career progression is likely limited by the gendered temporal constraints identified here, the effect on domestic bargaining would be circular.

Thus, consistent with previous research on other aspects of domestic labour, (see for example Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010) gender difference in accountability and responsibility for family labour is the strongest explanation for our results. They show that even in dual fulltime earner families with working hours and schedules held constant, many men do not subject themselves to the same temporal constraints upon their leisure and downtime as their partners. They support the gender ideology/role expecations approach to the gender division of labour. To the extent that gender roles are created and perpetuated by everyday interaction (West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009), we provide a further example here. Some might attribute our results to

female ‘gate-keeping’. There is evidence that women protect time with children (Bianchi, 2009), and some may be reluctant to give up domestic control (Gaunt, 2008). However, given the strain of meeting deadlines and juggling the demands of paid and unpaid work at the end of the working day, it seems likely that women would welcome their partners’ input at this time. It seems more probable that our results are driven by male choice, with their relatively privileged social position increasing their chances of having their preferences, rather than those of women, prevail (Chafetz, 2004). As noted above, ideals of femininity have changed more than ideals of masculinity, perhaps because men stand to lose while women stand to gain and resist relinquishing power in the household (Connell, 2009). Men’s willingness to enjoy leisure or to be socialising *at the same time* as their partner, who also works full time, looks after the home and children under concentrated pressure of time, presents as an exercise of privilege.

We found this result in all five countries examined. In line with the institutional differences summarized in Table 1 we found cross-country variation in total workload and in the division of paid and unpaid work (see Table 3), but less in the simultaneous unpaid work-leisure gap. Furthermore, this gap was not narrowest where we had anticipated it would be; in the progressive social democratic country of Finland. We had expected that Finland’s more relaxed worktime regime, egalitarian gender attitudes and more equal labour market participation would engender most gender-similar participation in the family rush hour. And indeed it was the case that in Korea, where gender attitudes are most traditional and male work hours are longest, the unpaid work-leisure gap was wider than in Finland. However, it was not statistically different in Finland than in Spain and Australia, respectively a familialist and a liberal country with relatively sparse policy supports for gender equality in work-family reconciliation (Crompton 2006; Lewis 2009). Net of covariates, the gap was actually smaller in the UK, also a liberal country with a relatively conservative approach to gender equality, than in Finland. This may reflect the comparatively low incidence of week-day work outside standard hours (see Tables 1 and 2), which could facilitate the family involvement of working class men in that country (Crompton & Lyonette, 2007).

Overall, the findings suggest that crossnational differences in social norms and work arrangements affect the dynamics of gender in/equality in paid employment much more than they do household labour patterns and responsibility for childcare (McDonald, 2013). ‘Women-friendly’ policies largely focus on encouraging women’s employment rather than promoting male domestic participation (Lewis, 2009). That is, policies that directly aim to increase male domestic involvement are few and greater domestic equality is generally expected to be a by-product of enhancing women’s public opportunities (Bergmann, 2005). Our results contribute to scholarship on comparative policy settings by pointing up the limitations of this approach. They suggest that the greater average gender equity in paid and unpaid labour in countries like Finland does not obviate the gendered temporality of unpaid work, particularly in the constraining time-critical labour of the evening family rush hour.

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Appendix.

Table A1. Coding of routine unpaid work using time-use data for each country

	Routine unpaid work				
Country	Food preparation etc.	Cleaning	Caring for textiles	Childcare	Other
Australia	410 Food and drink preparation/cleanup 411 Food and drink preparation/service 412 Preserving/freezing 413 Wine/beer making 414 Set/clear table 415 Cleanup after food preparation/meals 419 Food and drink preparation/cleanup nec 481 Travel associated with domestic activities	430 Other housework nfd 431 Dry housework 432 Wet housework 439 Other housework nec 468 Disposing of rubbish	420 Laundry and clothes nfd 421 Washing, loading/ unloading washing machine 422 Hanging out/bringing in washing 423 Ironing 424 Sorting, folding clothes 425 Clothes upkeep/care 426 Clothes making 427 Sorting clothes for disposal 429 Laundry and clothes care nec	500 Childcare activities nfd 510 Care of children nfd 599 Care of children nec 511 Physical care of children 512 Emotional care of children 541 Minding child 521 Teaching/helping/ reprimanding children 531 Playing/reading/talking with child 581 Travel associated with child care activities	611 Purchasing consumer goods 481 Travel associated with domestic activities
Spain	311 Food preparation and conservation 312 Dish washing	321 Cleaning dwelling 323 Heating and water 324 Arranging household goods and materials 329 Other or unspecified household upkeep	331 Laundry 332 Ironing 333 Handicraft and producing textiles 339 Other (un)specifed making and care for textiles	389 Other (un)specified childcare 381 Physical care & supervision of a child 382 Teaching the child 383 Reading, playing and talking with child 384 Accompanying child	300 Unspecified household and family care 930 Travel related to household care 936 Travel related to shopping 938 Travel related to childcare
Finland	311 Food preparation 312 Coffee and snack preparation 313 Baking 314 Dish washing 315 Preserving 319 Other or unspecified food management	321 Cleaning dwelling 323 Heating and water 324 Various arrangements	331 Laundry 332 Ironing 333 Producing textiles 334 Handicraft 339 Other or unspecified care for textiles	389 Other or unspecified childcare 381 Physical care and supervision of child 382 Teaching the child 383 Reading and playing with child 384 Accompanying child 385 Outdoors with child 386 Talking with child 938 Travel related to childcare	300 Unspecified household and family care 361 Daily consumer goods 931 Travel related to household care

Notes. ndf=not defined, *nec*=not elsewhere classified

Table A1. *Continued*

	Routine unpaid work				
Country	Food preparation etc.	Cleaning	Caring for textiles	Childcare	Other
Korea	411 Preparation of food 412 Dish washing 413 Pickles, preserves, etc.	431 Tidying 432 Routine indoor cleaning	421 Laundry, hang clothes on the line 422 Put clothes away 423 Ironing, repair clothes 424 Taking clothes to the cleaners 425 Sewing, knitting	5192 Unspecified child care - under school age 5292 Unspecified child care 511 Physical care for child - feed, wash etc. 5191 Medical care to child - under school age 5291 Medical care to school - aged child 521 Prepare the child to go to school 522 Help with homework 5121 Read to child 5122 Play with child 851 Family care related travel	499 Other domestic work 451 Grocery, routine shopping 4531 Routine shopping - online/TV 841 Domestic related travel
UK	3100 Unspecified food management 3110 Food preparation and baking 3130 Dish washing 3140 Preserving 3190 Other specified food management	3200 Unspecified household upkeep 3210 Cleaning dwelling 3230 Heating and water 3240 Arranging household goods and materials 3250 Disposal of waste	3300 Unspecified making and care for textiles 3310 Laundry 3320 Ironing 3330 Handicraft and producing textiles 3390 Other specified making and care for textiles	3800 Unspecified childcare 3890 Other or unspecified childcare 3810 Unspecified physical care & supervision of a child 3811 Feeding the child 3819 Other and unspecified physical care & supervision of a child 3820 Teaching the child 3830 Reading, playing and talking with child 3840 Accompanying child 9230 Travel escorting to/ from education 9380 Travel escorting child other than education	3000 Unspecified household and family care 3611 Shopping mainly for food 9310 Travel related to household care

609