The effects of the family work day on family time

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Labor participation rates for French women and men aged 25 - 49

Source: INSEE, labor surveys and census.
The daily balance of family and work for dual-earner couples

- General increase in the female labor force participation rate
  - 80% in 2003 in France (25-49)
- Dual-earner couples
  - 70% of couples in 2002 in France

How work and family are balanced in daily life?
A simple question... not that easy to answer

**Family time**
- Traditional time-budget perspective: primary activities
- But only direct care is registered (what about family dinners?)
- Other approaches:
  - Secondary activities
  - Interaction perspective: ‘with whom’ information

**Family work day**
- Traditional time-budget perspective: work time is reduced to durations
- Other solution: indicators (night work, Sunday work, etc.)
- Better solution: typology which takes into account both the number of hours worked and their scheduling
- *Family work day*: the combined durations and scheduling and their possible non-overlap must be analyzed
Data and method

• French time use surveys of 1985-86 and 1998-99 (diary for both spouses)
• ‘With whom’ information used to measure family time
• A variant of Optimal Matching Analysis is used to build a typology of family work days
Families without children (1985)

• Conjugal time = 3h23
• Three main activities:
  – Meals (55 min)
  – TV (54 min)
  – Other leisure (44 min)
Families with children (1985)

• Conjugal time = 44 min (mainly TV)
• Parents and children = 1h06
  – Meals (27 min)
  – Leisure (15 min) and TV (12 min)
• Mothers alone with children = 1h57
  – Unpaid work (37 min)
  – Care (35 min)
• Fathers alone with children = 29 min
  – TV (6 min) and other leisure (5 min)
  – Care (6 min)
# The family work day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of family work day</th>
<th>1985-86</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Duration of the</td>
<td>Duration of the</td>
<td>Synchronicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>husband's work</td>
<td>wife's work day</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double standard work day</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>08:36</td>
<td>07:54</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atypical</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With long hours</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11:04</td>
<td>08:51</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With shifted schedules</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>07:05</td>
<td>07:07</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in the morning for men</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>06:34</td>
<td>06:48</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in the evening for men</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>07:21</td>
<td>07:39</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- perfectly shifted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>08:15</td>
<td>07:16</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a partially worked day by women</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>08:54</td>
<td>04:49</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With short/irregular work hours</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>05:47</td>
<td>04:15</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>08:09</td>
<td>06:53</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The family work day

- Atypical family work days, and thus desynchronization, increased between 1985 and 1999
- The family work day is highly correlated with social position: the higher the social position of couples the highest the synchronicity
- Desynchronization is indirectly imposed by firms to the subordinate working class
The effects of the family work days on family time

- Desynchronization reduces conjugal time and parents with children time (symmetrical family time)
- Desynchronization increases fathers’ share of parental work (asymmetrical family time)

Consequently

- Dual earner work schedules’ synchronicity has dramatic consequences on families’ daily life
- Parental work/presence is shared more equally in dual-earner families than in male breadwinner families
- But the new father, if he is ever to be seen, is not in the well-off families but rather in the subordinate ones as a result of desynchronization: inequalities in the economic field counterbalance gender inequalities in the family
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