

Gender or country? Analysing determinants of daily time-use and psychosocial health in Italy and Norway

Altweck, Laura*

Schröder, Lina*

Schmidt, Silke

Tomczyk, Samuel

University of Greifswald, Institute of Psychology, Department Health and Prevention

(*shared first authorship)

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Background. A plethora of studies shows that daily time-use patterns are deeply linked to our psychosocial health. In recent years, a gender perspective has enriched this research by asking questions about gender roles, gender ideologies, and consequently, gendered time-use patterns and health. From a health research perspective, gendered analyses of time-use surveys have the potential to illuminate individual times of stress and relaxation and thus uncover unique opportunities for preventive interventions. In essence, unpaid care work has been identified as a core aspect of gender inequality across countries, which is associated with negative emotions and psychological distress, particularly in women. The gendered association between time-use and health is strongly affected by sociodemographic characteristics and societal context. Gender policies on a national level – e.g., regarding childcare – determine gender ideologies and thus influence gendered time-use: in Scandinavian countries, time spent with work and childcare is more similar in men and women than in more traditional countries like Italy. However, less research has looked at health-related consequences of these time-use patterns. Therefore, the present study examines time-use patterns of women and men in Italy and Norway, and it analyses their relationship with other sociodemographic variables and psychosocial health.

Method. Italian and Norwegian data from the 2010 *Harmonised European Time Use Surveys (HETUS)* were used (Italian women: $N=13,134$; Italian men: $N=12,536$; Norwegian women: $N=2,922$; Norwegian men: $N=2,633$). We performed sequence and cluster analysis on activities (i.e., personal care, paid work, studying, housework, childcare, unpaid adult care,

sport, and leisure time) to determine common daytime (7:00-21:00) time-use patterns. Chi-square post-hoc tests with a Bonferroni correction were used to examine differences between the clusters in terms of sociodemographic factors and psychosocial health (i.e., age group, marital status, number of children in household, employment status, subjective health, and stress).

Results. Four time-use clusters emerged among Italian women, Italian men, and Norwegian men, while five clusters emerged among Norwegian women. A small cluster of ‘studying’ emerged in all samples (2-5%). ‘Working full-time’ was the largest cluster in most samples (42-51%), while Italian women worked part-time and full-time (25%) and, instead, here the ‘care work and free time’ cluster was the largest cluster (47%). The other clusters were a mix of housework, care work, as well as free time, where women tended to report more of the former and men more of the latter. Moreover, men’s engagement in unpaid commitments was seen mostly in practical tasks (i.e., housework), while women completed all types of tasks (i.e., housework, childcare, unpaid adult care).

The ‘studying’ clusters across samples were the youngest, least likely to be married, have children, and showed the best subjective health. In contrast, the worst subjective health was reported by individuals belonging to the ‘unpaid care work’ clusters, this association was true across genders and countries. Persons in the ‘working’ clusters were most likely to be between 20-30 years old and to report feeling stressed. In the Italian sample ‘working’ women were less likely to have children, while ‘working’ men were more likely to have children; this pattern was not seen in the Norwegian sample. The highest unemployment rate and the rate of other types of employment (other than full-time or part-time) was seen in the ‘free time’-only clusters (25-40%), which was extremely high in Norwegian men (90%). In contrast, the ‘free time and care work’ clusters showed high employment rates (70-85%); except in Norwegian women (65%), which was also consisted of one-third in other types of employment.

Conclusions. Time-use patterns appear to be more similar within gender than within country. For instance, men were less likely to take on unpaid commitments (e.g., child- or adult care) but engage in more leisure time activities. Societal norms evidently influenced time-use patterns, for example, Italian women – i.e., from a more traditional society – were least likely to work full-time and most likely to manage the unpaid work, while Norwegian women – i.e., from a more egalitarian society – were more similar to men regarding time-use patterns. In turn, the relationship with psychosocial health was consistent across gender and country: e.g., studying was associated with better subjective health, while care work with worse subjective health, and working was related to more stress. These results support the notion that men and

women's time-use is strongly shaped by gender ideologies and specific roles (e.g., care work which is more likely to be performed by women) are additionally related to worse psychosocial health.