

CARING AND SHARING

Definition

Hours in paid work refer to the average number of hours usually worked per week per person on the main job. Full-time employment is defined according to a common definition of more than 30-weekly-usual hours worked in the main job. Part-time employment is defined according to a common definition of less than 30-weekly-usual hours worked in the main job.

Unpaid work is the production of goods and services by family members that are not sold on the market. The boundary between unpaid work and leisure is determined by the “third-person” criterion. If a third person could be paid to do the activity (e.g. cooking, cleaning), it is considered to be work. Where this is not the case (e.g. watching a film), activities are considered to be leisure. The amount of time spent on unpaid work is measured using detailed time-use surveys.

Overview

Be it paid or unpaid, people spend about one-third of their time working. In most countries, people spend more time on paid work than on unpaid work such as cooking, cleaning, volunteering, home maintenance or childcare. On an average working day in OECD countries, people spend about eight hours per day in paid work. On an average day people spend nearly three and a half hours doing unpaid work.

But there are significant gender differences in who is doing the paid and unpaid work. People in OECD countries with jobs spend about 38 hours a week in paid work on average, with men putting in almost a day more per week than women at 41 hours compared with less than 35. By contrast, women do significantly more unpaid work than men.

On average men of working age in OECD countries spend just over two hours per day doing unpaid work, while women spend more than four and a half hours cooking, cleaning or caring – a gender gap of two and a half hours daily, or more than 17 hours a week.

The time spent by women on paid work has increased over time and the amount of unpaid work has fallen, but women are still doing more unpaid work than men everywhere.

In Korea, for example, women in paid work average 41.7 hours a week, while men are working 46.7. But when it comes to unpaid work – cooking, cleaning, caring, volunteering – women of working age are spending nearly three hours every day, compared with just 45 minutes for men. In the Netherlands, where women work 24.5 hours a week and men 35.7, the women are spending more than four hours a day in unpaid work, compared with about two hours (163 minutes) for men.

Even in Australia and Turkey, where people spend slightly more time on unpaid than on paid work, women are doing more unpaid work than men.

What is all this unpaid work time for? Most unpaid work is cooking and cleaning – on average 2 hours and 8 minutes of work per day across the OECD, followed by care for household members at 26 minutes per day. Shopping takes up 23 minutes per day across the OECD on average. The time spent caring for household members includes children but also elderly or dependent relatives. About 66% of carers between the age of 50 and 64 are women.

Unpaid work is an important contribution to well-being for individuals and for society, regardless of who is doing it. Measuring how much time men and women spend on unpaid work provides valuable information on the delivery of care services and work-life balance.

Sources

- OECD (2011), *Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2012), *OECD labour market statistics*.

Further information

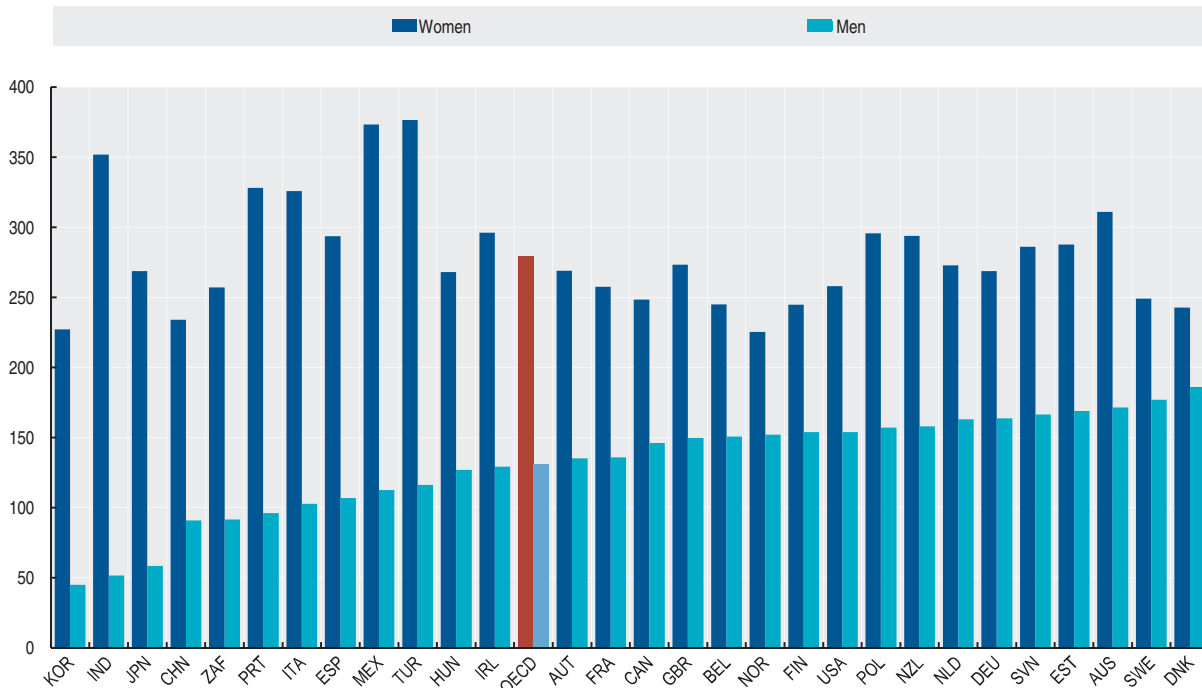
Analytical publications

- Miranda, V. (2011), “Cooking, Caring and Volunteering: Unpaid Work Around the World”, *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 116, OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap, Act Now*, OECD Publishing.



Unpaid work by gender

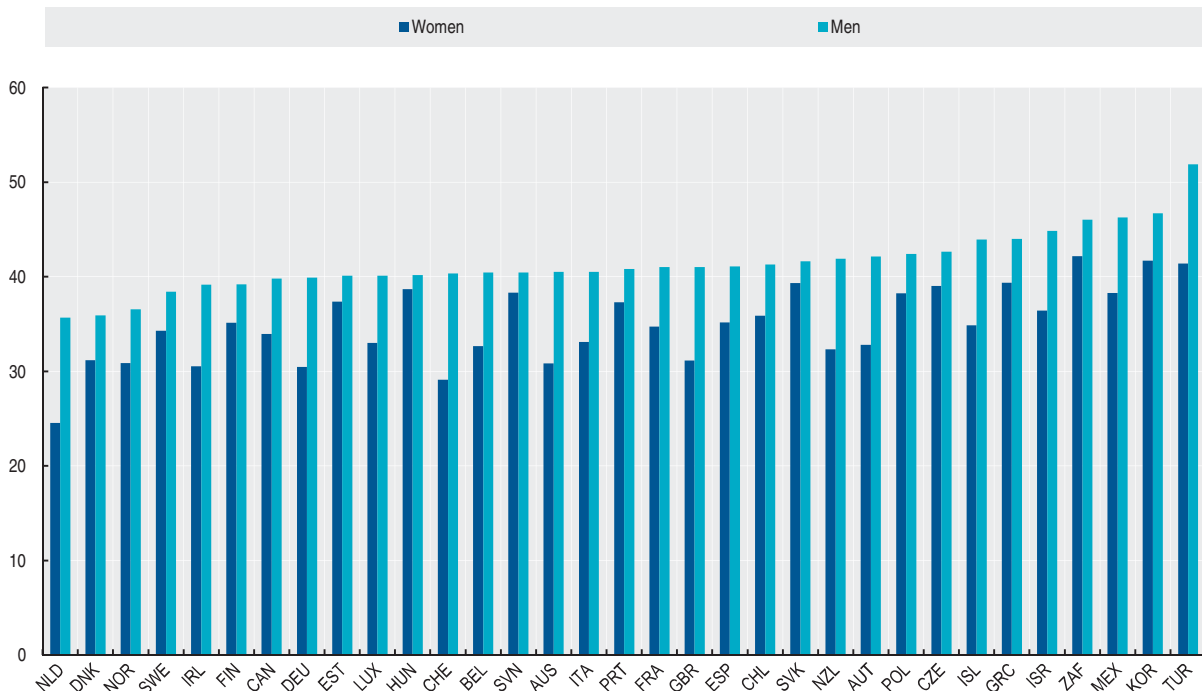
Minutes per day, 1998-2009



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932381494>

Paid work by gender

Weekly hours worked on main job, 2011



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932708351>



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