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Work time. Leisure time. On women's temporal and economic wellbeing in Europe

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Abstract

In the study of work time, a wealth of influential ideas have emerged about the potentially damaging impact of too many hours in the labour market on the rest of peoples' lives, as well as about the negative economic ramifications of short hours working. The paper focuses on the temporal and economic wellbeing of female employees in Europe, stimulated by the importance of work time in debates over time poverty and work life integration. It asks whether women in shorter hours jobs are happiest with their time, for paid work and leisure, but also what might the lower wages from reduced hours working mean for women, particularly those in low level occupations. The paper shows first that although working fewer hours contributes to women's satisfaction with their time in many countries, it is long full-time hours that have the strongest (negative) relationship with women's temporal wellbeing across Europe. Second, the paper demonstrates the damaging impact of working in low level occupations – both part-time and full-time - on the economic wellbeing of women's households. It stresses the importance of a combined work time and occupational class approach in the ongoing analysis of women's working lives.

Introduction

Time is a fundamental element of peoples' working lives (Crow and Heath 2002; Perrons et al. 2006). A core topic of study is how the time spent in paid work connects with the time dedicated to other aspects of life. Within this topic, the implications of committing long or short hours to the labour market have both generated substantial literatures. Given the significance of these literatures, and given the recent attention paid to having enough time within work-life integration debates too, the study of time clearly remains vital for analysing working lives. The paper thus focuses on the temporal wellbeing of female employees in Europe, stimulated by the importance of work time in debates over time poverty and work life integration. It asks whether women in shorter hours jobs are happiest with their time, for paid work and leisure. The paper also explores economic wellbeing, asking what might the lower wages from reduced hours working mean for women, particularly those in low level occupations.

Work time. Leisure time.

The broad topic of paid work has received an immense, long-standing level of academic attention. The central importance of paid work has been reiterated within diverse disciplines such as economics, geography, history, psychology, and sociology and social policy, and all have demonstrated work's critical relevance in peoples' lives (see the review in Strangleman and Warren 2008. Also Jahoda 1982; Warr 1987). A particular concern has been with the time that workers commit to paid work. While there are a range of dimensions to paid work time, in addition to number of hours, the question: 'are we working too many hours?' has been fundamental. Outside the study of work too, the crucial importance of hours of work is well demonstrated by the long history of extensive worker campaigning against too many hours (Bosch et al. 1993; Russell 2000).

While paid work, and the time spent doing it, has been critical for many disciplines (Epstein and Kalleberg 2001), leisure has received less attention. This is despite the fact that more of a person's total waking life is spent outside paid work (Veal 1987) and despite the clear linkages between the time spent on work and leisure in peoples' lives. Nevertheless, an extensive and multidisciplinary study of leisure has emerged. Here, two broad approaches have dominated: one that focuses on leisure experiences and the other on leisure time (Esteve et al. 1999; Haworth and Lewis 2005; Haworth and Veal 2004; Lewis 2003). There are direct links to the study of work in both. In the first approach, leisure has often been conceptualised as opposed to work: as enjoyable activity; with no material end; engaged in for intrinsic satisfaction. In the second approach, leisure has most commonly been seen as residual time: that time that is left after paid work time, time committed to housework and caring, and personal time have been taken away (Harvey and Mukhopadhyay 2007; Roberts 1999; Robinson and Godbey 1999). Looking at work and leisure together, two major topics have emerged in debates on time and are considered next: time poverty and work life integration.

Work time, leisure time: time poverty and work life integration

One of the most influential studies shaping the examination of the paid work-leisure interface was sociologist Veblen's (1899) *Theory of the Leisure Class*. Here, Veblen posed what was to become perhaps the most central question for those interested in work and leisure relations: will paid work expand, impacting negatively on the rest of people's lives, or will the pursuit of leisure and 'conspicuous abstention from labour' (Veblen 1963: 42) create a leisure society in the future?

Veblen's question regained prominence in the latter decades of the twentieth century when an alleged growth in long hours working fuelled speculation over emerging rushed and time-poor societies in which leisure time was harried and being squeezed out by work (Linder 1970). These ideas received especial attention in the 'wild west' (as opposed to 'nice north') societies of the USA and UK that were characterised by weak or absent regulation of work hours (Gershuny 2000), in particular after the proliferation of employer-led 'temporal flexibility' in the labour market and the destabilisation of the 'social organization of work time' (Boulin 2006) following the economic crises and rising levels of unemployment in the 1970's (Bosch *et al.* 1993). The linkages between work time and leisure time thus arrived firmly on the academic agenda. In the theoretical study of time, for example, Elias (1992) prioritised the relationship between work time and leisure time, stressing the importance of *loisir* in particular: a time for personal fulfilment, while time theorist Adam (1995) talked about the need for the better co-ordination of life's 'multiple times'. In the study of work, however, it is Juliet Schor's 1991 *The Overworked American* that became most lauded for stimulating debates over work time: via problematising time poverty as a result of the growth of a long hours culture. For Schor, this culture originated amongst higher level workers but spread throughout American workplaces, where devoting surpluses of time is taken to be 'symbols of loyalty and trust, as well as measures of performance and productivity in uncertain 'greedy' organizational environments' (Schor 1991: 67). Extensive research since Schor's publication provided more evidence of a growing time poverty, in the USA, UK, and elsewhere, as work hours lengthened (Garhammer 1998; Sirianni and Negrey 2000; Zuzanek *et al.* 1998), and as the bulk of workers expressed their preferences for avoiding such hours (Bielenski *et al.* 2002). Key for this paper is that alongside Schor's focus on time, she also examined the linkages between consumption and debt, work and spend, and

standards of living, and so highlighted the strong relationship between temporal and economic well-being (see also Boulin 2006; Linder 1970; Sullivan 2008).

Similar concerns about ‘too long’ hours, seen in Veblen’s quotation above and in time poverty debates, are also expressed in a growing literature on work-life integration. This literature is concerned with issues additional to temporal wellbeing, but one of its key questions is whether the number of hours committed to the labour market integrate smoothly with the rest of peoples’ lives or overwhelm them (Gregory and Milner 2009; MacInnes 2005; Riedmann et al. 2006). Detailing the development of interest in work life integration, Lewis and colleagues (2007) discuss how its predecessor - the focus on work-family balancing that emerged in the 1960’s when women with children were entering the labour market in larger numbers – was limited in a number of ways. In particular for this paper, conceptual developments within work-family debates led to more holistic discussions that aimed to include areas of life other than just the workplace and the family. This important broadening out from work-family to work-lifeⁱ was stimulated too by parallel, multi-disciplinary studies of wellbeing, satisfaction, happiness, and quality of life (Hildebrandt 2006; Layard, 2005; Lewis and Campbell, 2007; Phillips, 2006). In this substantial literature, rather than just family and work, 170 different areas or domains of life had been identified. Key ones for work life integration are paid work and leisure (Cummins, 1996), as we see next.

Paid work has been shown to have a significant impact on work life integration, and a positive correlation with all other life domains (Anttila et al., 2005; Delle Fave and Massimini 2003; Haworth and Lewis 2005; Haworth and Veal 2004; Lewis and Purcell 2007; Lloyd and Auld, 2002). In the study of paid work time and work life integration,

both long hours and short hours have featured. A concern with ‘too many hours’ of paid work emerged since those with the longest hours have been identified as facing the most problems ‘integrating’ all aspects of their lives (Dex and Bond 2005; Cousins and Tang 2004; Riedmann et al., 2006; White et al. 2003). Part-time work, meanwhile, has been described as the original means of work life integration (Bonney 2005. See also Dex and Bond 2005), in part because short hours jobs have been shown to present fewer job-spillover effects than full-time and to create less work-to-home conflict (Booth and van Ours 2008; Ginn and Sandall 1997; Secret, 2006). At the same time as identifying the attractions of working part-time hours, however, commentators have been acutely aware of the contrasting conditions of part-time employment under diverse national work time regimes (Rubery et al. 1998). In the UK, for example, part-time jobs are associated with low level occupations and low wages, the result of a history of weak state regulation and limited collectively agreed employment protection for part-time workers (Anxo et al. 2006). Whether short hours working is beneficial for workers’ work life integration thus remains a highly debated topic (Warren 2004).

Time for leisure also exerts a strong influence on work life integration. We saw earlier that time theorist Adam pinpointed leisure as critical for the co-ordination of life’s ‘multiple times’. Leisure has also been identified as one of the major life domains associated with wellbeing: charged with producing positive psychological wellbeing, more social interaction and higher levels of life satisfaction (Camporese et al., 1998; Donovan et al. 2002; Hsieh, 2003; Iso-Ahola and Mannell 2004; Massam, 2002). Accordingly, it has been argued strongly that incorporating leisure into work-life debates is essential to facilitate a broader understanding of what constitutes ‘life’. In this way, we

can better move away from a focus only on work-family (Clough 2001), and also ‘round the triangle’ in the study of paid work, caring and leisure (Perrons 2000).

Work time, leisure time: gender and class divisions

Work time and leisure time are both important elements in achieving work life integration, but the advantages that arise from paid work and leisure are distributed unevenly in society. The paper examines gender and class as two of the most fundamental – though not the only - indicators of social inequalities (Bottero 2005; Payne 2006).

Focusing on gender first, a gender division of paid work is a well recognised and persistent feature of all labour markets (Crompton 1999). On the topic of time, Rubery and colleagues (1998: 251) have shown compellingly how work time is ‘a key gender issue’ because women and men have different patterns of work time use, on a daily, weekly and life-time basis (see also Perrons *et al.* 2006; Sabelis *et al.* 2008; Sirianni and Negrey 2000). Indeed, a fundamental criticism of the mainstream portrayal of work time from a gender perspective is that work has been conceptualised too narrowly: largely viewed as waged time spent within the public sphere. Valuable critiques from feminist accounts of work, including from the theorising and study of domestic work (Oakley 1974), have all added fuel to the growing recognition that work is a multi-dimensional concept and that meanings of work shift, across time and cultures (Haworth and Veal 2004; Haworth and Lewis 2005; Pahl 1984; Strangleman and Warren 2008). We return to this to conclude.

Heightened awareness of gender relations has also contributed to our understanding of leisure in a number of key ways (Deem 1986; Green *et al.*, 1990; Kay 1996). Gender

analyses have shown, for example, that definitions of leisure based uncritically on free time are limiting. A blurring of boundaries between unpaid domestic work and leisure for many women means that their leisure is commonly ‘contaminated’ by domestic work, so that women have less ‘pure’ free time than men: with leisure punctuated more by childcare for example (Bittman and Wajcman 2000). Hence women have less opportunity to ‘refresh and reinvigorate’ themselves (Mattingly and Bianchi 2003. See also Deem 1996; Davidson 1996). Reflecting the importance of this gendering of leisure, political theorist Fraser’s (1997) influential seven normative principles for gender equality in a society include equality in leisure time.

Gender represents a core division in paid work time and leisure time, but neither women nor men represent a homogenous mass, and inequalities amongst them are linked to experiences of work and leisure too. Class represents one of the major sources of social division, signalling substantial inequity in work time (Fagan 2001; Perrons et al. 2007) and leisure time (Critchler and Bramham 2004; Haworth 2007; Green et al. 1990; White 2004). In terms of time poverty and work life integration, we know that long hours in the labour market are problematised, but the extent of long hours working and the difficulties it causes vary substantially by class. On the one hand, it has been suggested that workers in the highest level jobs face the most time pressures, with total time commitment expected from senior executives (Riedmann et al., 2006). Job-spillover effects also appear to be less in lower level short hours jobs that bring fewer responsibilities (Booth and van Ours 2008; Ginn and Sandall 1997; Secret, 2006). On the other hand, long hours working is common too for workers in low waged occupations, who are often forced to work over-time and/or multi-job in order to earn a living wage (Lautsch and Scully 2007). Furthermore, such workers are far less able to ‘buy back time’ than are the middle classes,

by paying for their homes to be cleaned, for example, or their children and/or other dependents to be cared for (Roberts 2007; Warren 2004). The low incomes and weaker economic positions of working class women and men thus impact negatively on their ability to ‘time their lives appropriately’ (Adam 1995).

Class divisions bring us to a final key domain for this paper. While work-life researchers highlight the importance of temporal wellbeing, many other aspects of life have been identified too: the economic is particularly fundamental since it has critical linkages to all aspects of wellbeing including interrelating closely with the domains of paid work and leisure (Böhnke, 2005; Schrecker, 1997). As we saw earlier, Schor stressed the strong links that exist between time and money; and between paid work, free time and economic wellbeing. In her critique of long hours working in the US, she located its expansion in part in the need to meet higher standards of living that are increasingly based on the wages from two full-timer earners. Rather than seeing the emergence of ‘time pioneers’ who choose to cut their work hours, Schor argued that income constraints have meant longer working to maintain new standards of consumption, though with huge differences in consumption - and debt – developing by class and race. As a result: ‘only when the poorest make a living wage can their right to free time be realized’ (Schor 1991: 150). Work time theorist Boulin (2006: 20) asks similarly: ‘what good is it to have free time, if economic reasons mean you can’t use it’, while Lautsch and Scully (2007) show the ‘tough trade offs’ faced by the working classes between their economic livelihood and achieving quality in other areas of life. Leisure is engaged in more often and rated most positively by those with financial security and higher incomes. In situations of financial difficulty, for example, the resulting stress means that leisure time is often used primarily for recuperation rather than enjoyment and pleasure (Delle Fave and Massimini 2003;

Haworth 2007). For Roberts, as far as leisure is concerned ‘the higher the income the better’ (2002: 170).

In the context of this wealth of influential ideas about, first, the potentially damaging impact of too many hours in the labour market on the rest of peoples’ lives, and, second, the negative economic ramifications of short hours working, the paper reconsiders the relationship between paid work time and work life integration. It asks first about temporal wellbeing: are shorter hours workers happier with their time, for paid work and leisure? Second, on economic wellbeing, given the importance of the relationship between work life integration and the economic domain, what might the lower wages from reduced hours mean for workers, particularly those in low level occupations? And does this differ under diverse working time regimes?

In asking these questions about workers’ temporal and economic well-being, the paper focuses on the work time of women. Women account for the vast majority of short hours workers in Europe, even in countries like the Netherlands where part-time employment for men has been actively promoted (Anxo et al. 2006; Delsen 1998; Plantenga 1996). Since very few men work other than full-time hours, hours diversity amongst men is far less than amongst women, within and between nations. The paper is interested in diversity amongst women, both cross-nationally and within nations by class.

Data

The paper is based on cross-national, comparative secondary descriptive analysis of a large-scale quantitative data-set. Secondary data analysis has been defined as: ‘any further analysis of an existing data-set which presents interpretations, conclusions or

knowledge additional to, or different from, those presented in the first report on the inquiry as a whole and its main results' (Hakim 1982: 1). The advantages of secondary analysis for quantitative researchers are well recognised (Dale, Arber and Proctor 1988; Hyman 1972). In particular, for this paper, it offers access to a high quality cross-national data-set containing information on many thousands of respondents (see below). Such large samples produce invaluable opportunities for sub-group comparisons, here of groups of women workers. Of course, there are a number of challenges for the secondary data analyst, and these have been categorised as technical, institutional and epistemological (Glover 1996). Technical and institutional difficulties include the process of gaining access to the data (see Acknowledgments), as well as obtaining full data documentation. More substantively, however, epistemological concerns include what questions are asked and not asked of respondents; and what categories of a variable are available. Rarely does a data-set meet the exact needs of a research project, and compromises invariably have to be made in what can be asked according to the data which is available, as we will see below. Despite its limitations, however, the strengths of the quantitative analysis of secondary data-sets are substantial.

The data analysed for the paper come from Wave 7 of the Users Database of the *European Community Household Panel Survey* (ECHP 2000, released in June 2003. Eurostat 2003). The *ECHP* provides comparable information on income, work, poverty, housing, health, and so on, of private households and individuals in the EC. In its first wave in 1994, the sample size was around 60,500 nationally representative households (approximately 130,000 adults aged 16 years and over) in the then 12 Member States. Austria, Finland and Sweden were added since, and so 15 countries were included in

2000. The sample analysed was restricted to women aged 25-55 to allow a focus on the peak years of both working life and child-rearing.

The core concept of the paper is paid work time. Various dimensions exist including hours worked, commuting hoursⁱⁱ, their timing, predictability, and workers' control over hours. The paper examines hours spent on paid work only. The volume of hours has been shown to determine work life integration more strongly than these other dimensions (Burchell et al. 2007). This is not to say that the other aspects of paid work time are not important, and we return to this in the conclusion. As outlined above, however, it is rare for existing data-sets to fit a research project perfectly. Tijdens and Dragstra (2007) have pointed out that very few general household surveys cover all aspects of work time, with many only collecting number of paid work hours. The European household survey here is no exception. Hours of paid work are thus operationalised as weekly hours in main job, plus any usual over-time hours. Given the extra problems with examining such typical weekly hours of the self-employed, and the small minorities of working women in self-employment in many of the countries, the paper focuses upon employees.

Work life integration research has been innovative for pushing an agenda to explore the quality of experiences, not just their quantity, and so of examining subjective measures of various life domains (Delle Fave and Massimini 2003). Accordingly, the subjective assessment of women's time is examined here: the available questions in the *ECHP* asked about individuals' satisfaction with their amount of time, in paid work and leisure. It was stated earlier that analyses of leisure based on an uncritical use of leisure time are limited, for research into women's lives in particular since their time is likely to be more contaminated by other activities. The paper does not explore number of hours of leisure,

(these are not available in the data-set), but women's reported satisfactions with 'the amount of leisure time they have':

Temporal well-being questions:

- a. How satisfied are you with your present job in terms of number of working hours?
(1 not satisfied to 6 fully satisfied. 'Satisfied'= responses 4 through 6).
- b. How satisfied are you with your present situation in the following areas? Using the scale 1 to 6 again please indicate your degree of satisfaction in each case: (1: not satisfied to 6: fully satisfied. 'Satisfied'= responses 4 through 6): the amount of leisure time you have.

Subjective data are a valuable means with which to research issues of work life integration, but they do present some obstacles for analysis. Survey experts show how variables that try to explore subjective experiences raise the most difficult measurement problems in surveys (Marsh 1982). The challenge for this paper is how we interpret women's expressions of satisfaction since simple survey questions are known to obtain superficial responses. Of course, whilst satisfaction data collected in large scale surveys are invariably an over-simplified means to tap into work and other life experiences, and while large scale quantitative data will never produce the depth of data that good qualitative interviews can provide, analysing any attitudinal data - even from depth interviews - is challenging. Attitudes do not exist in thin air, rather they are 'shaped by (amongst other things) habit, low expectations and unjust background conditions' (Crompton, 2006, 50). We return to this point to conclude. Furthermore, attitudes are not set: they change as people adapt to their situations (Schor 1991), and may even be shaped by the interview itself. In addition to this warning about data interpretations, it also known

that respondents commonly group together when asked to evaluate aspects of their lives in surveys. In responses to the widely used Likert scales, for example, samples show resistance to choosing any of the ‘very’ categories that denote the extremes of ‘delighted’ and ‘terrible’ (Mellor et al. 1999). The majority of respondents in the sample here did respond similarly, and largely positively, to questions asking about their satisfactions, but still interesting variations emerged.

The economic domain was analysed objectively via monthly net wages and subjectively via women’s assessments of economic well-being. Monthly wages were used, rather than hourly, so that the full economic impact of varying work times could be better depicted: the impact of a combination of hourly wages and actual hours worked on ‘living’ rather than pro rata wages. Subjective economic well-being was explored using those variables available in the data-set that depict women’s overall feelings about their economic positions: their assessments of their wages and own financial situation and their views on the economic situation of their households:

Individual economic well-being questions:

- a. How satisfied are you with your present job in terms of earnings? (1 not satisfied to 6 fully satisfied. ‘Satisfied’= responses 4 through 6).
- b. How satisfied are you with your present situation in the following areas?
Using the scale 1 to 6 again please indicate your degree of satisfaction in each case: (1: not satisfied to 6: fully satisfied. ‘Satisfied’= responses 4 through 6):
your financial situation.

Household economic well-being questions:

- a. A household may have different sources of income and more than one household member may contribute to it. Thinking of your household's total monthly income,

Is your household able to make ends meet? (1 with great difficulty to 6 very easily. 'Difficult': 1-3).

Is there normally some money left to save (considering your household's income and expenses)? (1 yes; 2 no or very little).

To examine the impact of class on worker's temporal and economic wellbeing, a variable indicating occupation in current job was used to group women into two occupational classes. The sample was split at the lower and higher non-manual occupational boundary, between clerical and associate professional jobs, since these occupational types are differentiated according to job responsibilities for women workers (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992). In addition, by far the lowest waged women in the sample were in elementary, manual and low level non-manual jobs: clerks; service workers; shop and market sales workers; skilled agricultural and fishery workers; craft and related trades workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers; elementary occupations. High level non-manual occupations consisted of legislators, senior officials and managers; professionals, technicians and associate professionals.

Women's hours of paid work in Europe

The key question of this paper is whether hours of work in the labour market play a role in women's temporal and economic wellbeing. In this section, then, we recap on the typical employed hours of female employees in the countries analysed. A wealth of previous research has shown that women's typical hours in the labour market are shorter

than men's across all countries (see Burchell et al. 2007 for example), but that there is substantial variety in the number of women's paid hours between and within nations. This variety was confirmed here.

Examining mean hours first, women's shortest weekly hours were in the Netherlands, followed by Ireland and the UK (Table 1a). The highest mean hours were in Portugal, and Finland and Greece. When hours were then grouped into the commonly used bands of part-time (at less than 30 hoursⁱⁱⁱ); moderate full-time (30-39); and longer full-time (40+) hours, almost half the female employees in the Netherlands were working part-time, compared with just over a third in Ireland, and just under a third in the UK, Austria and Luxembourg. Very small minorities of women in Finland and Portugal worked fewer than 30 hours a week. In Finland, most women (71%) worked moderate full-time hours, similar to the other Nordic country in the sample Denmark (77%). Fully 64% of the Portuguese women were working long full-time hours. When we look at hours worked by occupation, we can see that very differing proportions of women worked part-time, by occupation, across the sample (Table 1b). In the UK, the Netherlands, Ireland and Austria for example, more clerical and manual women worked part-time, while more managers than other female employees worked part-time hours in Portugal and Italy. A range of writers have usefully discussed the diverse work time and gender regimes that lead to these similarities and differences in hours of paid work for women (Bielenski et al., 2002; Fagan 2001; Perrons et al. 2007). This paper is interested in any implications for women's temporal and economic wellbeing across Europe.

INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE

Temporal wellbeing

The first concern of the paper is with women's temporal wellbeing: analysed via their expressed satisfaction with their hours worked and with the time they have for leisure.

a) Paid work time

There was variation in satisfaction with paid work hours according to the number of hours women worked, as we might expect. Table 2 shows the percentage of each group of women who reported being satisfied with their employed hours, according to whether they worked part-time, moderate full-time or long full-time hours a week. Rather than focus on their absolute levels of expressed satisfaction, comparing these absolute figures between countries, responses from sub-groups of female employees will be compared with those of their national peers. Comparing relative advantage and disadvantage within a society in this way is a common approach in cross-national research to help control for differences in the ways that questions are interpreted in differing national contexts, since there is a complex interplay between social norms and the perception of satisfaction (Haworth and Lewis 2005).

In most countries, those women working part-time hours held a slight time advantage. Part-timers who express satisfaction with the hours that they work are a familiar phenomenon in the UK, though there is a long-standing debate as to what such expressions of satisfaction mean, with ongoing discussion over the relationship between preferences and satisfaction; and over what factors shape preferences and restrict their enactment (Crompton 2006; Hakim 1991, 2000; Ginn et al. 1996; Lewis et al. 2008; Warren et al. 2009). Here, 92% of women working 1-29 in the UK were hours-satisfied, compared with 81% and 60% of the moderate and longer full-timer groups respectively.

The size of their advantage was not a universal result, and we focus on some key examples next.

Part-timers emerged most positively in Denmark and the UK. This is despite very different proportions of women working part-time in Denmark and the UK, and despite two contrasting work time regimes. Work time is more regulated in Denmark than the UK, with long full-time hours and short part-time hours curtailed, and with Danish part-timers faring far better in terms of their working conditions too (Rasmussen et al. 2004). Nevertheless, part-timers seemed equally hours-satisfied in both countries. Reflecting on this similarity, it is interesting to observe that the types of women in part-time employment in the two countries are known to be rather different. Two ideal-typical part-timer profiles have been identified in Europe; a carer ideal type and a transitional worker ideal type (where a part-timer is a worker entering the labour market at the beginning of a career or exiting from it at the end. Warren 2001). British women fit the former and Danish women fit the latter profiles more closely: for example Danish female employees (aged 25-55) with a child aged less than 12 were no more likely to work part-time than were those without (around 12% of both were in part-time jobs). The proportions for Britain stood at 50% and 23% respectively (data not shown). Even though the minimum age category for the sample was set at 25 to control in some way for the various ages at which women leave education and enter the labour market across Europe, in Denmark older students are common. The higher (relative) levels of satisfaction with part-time hours at work, expressed by the British and Danish female part-timers, are both linked to the fact that part-time jobs have been taken to fit with other commitments: but these are more likely to be caring related for the British part-timers.

INSERT TABLE 2 AROUND HERE

Given these Danish-UK results, it is revealing to compare the UK with Austria. Not only did very similar proportions of women work part-time in the two countries, female part-timers in both countries are largely women with children (Auer, 2002; EIRO 2006). The part-time hours advantage did not emerge in Austria, however, and indeed there were few differences in expressed hours satisfaction at all. A pertinent work time difference between these two countries is that Austria has far more established working time laws, offering better job protection for short hours workers and exerting more effective caps on long hours working. We can see here that, as a result, hours variation is less extreme, with hours seeming less important for women's working lives (see Auer, 2002 too).

Comparing the very hours-satisfied part-timers in Denmark with part-timers in the other Nordic country in the sample is also revealing. Part-timers stood out in Finland for expressing low levels of satisfaction with their hours of work, grouped closely with Finnish women working long full-time hours. In contrast to Denmark, Finland is characterised by a far stronger full-time work regime, for women and men, and so most Finnish women, including those with young children, work full time. On the one hand, Finland facilitates mothers' full-time hours via an extensive system of public childcare but, on the other hand, part-time jobs are rarely offered by employers and the cost of living makes a part-time wage very unattractive (EIRO 2003). As a result, many women working part-time hours in Finland are in 'involuntary' part-time employment – wanting to work longer hours (Anttila et al. 2005; Mauno et al., 2005). The majority of Finnish women work 30-39 hours, and most of these were hours satisfied (87%). Of course, it is important to note that despite their relatively poor position in the satisfaction figure, still

the majority (68%) of part-timers in Finland did express satisfaction with their hours (with 32% also saying they were ‘fully’ satisfied).

Aside from these examples, it is telling that in many of the other countries examined (France, Greece, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands) there were few differences in expressions of hours satisfaction between part-timers and women working moderate full-time hours. It was 40 or more hours that stood out as the most problematic for women’s temporal wellbeing across the bulk of countries (and see Burchell et al. 2007).

In addition to the number of hours employed, we saw earlier that occupational class has also been associated with higher or lower levels of temporal wellbeing. Examining how work time and occupation impacted on hours satisfaction, and focusing on some key examples from above, in the UK and in Denmark both groups of part-timers (those in low and higher level jobs) were equally hours-satisfied (Table 2). In Finland, however, we can see that the problems for part-timers’ hours satisfaction were more rooted in those women in low - not higher - level occupations. In other countries (France, Greece, Ireland and Italy), part-time managers were more likely to be satisfied with their working hours than other women, giving some support to the thesis that women in higher level occupations who work part-time are in ‘retention jobs’ that have accommodated the women’s hours preferences, thus increasing their hours satisfaction (Tilly 1991).

b) Leisure time

The next indicator of women’s temporal wellbeing to be examined is satisfaction with leisure time. The links between paid work time and leisure time might seem obvious: surely those women in part-time jobs with less paid work have more, and hence more

satisfactory, hours for leisure? However, many women (aged 25-55) who work part-time hours do so expressly to help them combine employment with child- and/or other caring responsibilities, using non paid work time to carry out unpaid work and caring. The extra second, third and even fourth shifts of work (Hochschild 1997a; Venn et al. 2008) that such women carry impact first on their hours for leisure and second on the amount of their 'pure' leisure, perhaps reducing their satisfaction with the leisure time that they have.

In many of the countries, it was women working part-time hours who were indeed most likely to express satisfaction with their leisure time: see Denmark, France, Greece, Italy and Spain (Table 2). In Denmark, for example fully 93% of part-timers were leisure time satisfied compared with 68% of those working forty hours or more. We saw earlier that this is likely to be related to the profile of these women, who are younger and have fewer caring responsibilities, thus with more pure time perhaps. In the other countries, however, part-timers were hard to distinguish from those working moderate full-time hours, with only long full-time hours emerging again as a main problem for women's leisure time satisfaction. This was as true for Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK - where part-time working is common for women - as it was for Portugal where part-time employment is less prevalent. Women working long full-time hours stood out as less leisure time satisfied than their national peers in all countries (except Austria), reaffirming the central importance of 'too long' hours for time poverty and work life balancing debates.

Looking at leisure time by class and occupation, lower level jobs with fewer responsibilities might mean less out of hours working that impacts negatively on the amount of time available for leisure: that is fewer job-spillover effects or work-to-home conflicts. In some countries, part-time low level workers were indeed most likely to be

leisure time satisfied (Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal), providing some support for this thesis^{iv}. There were a number of exceptions to this pattern, however. In Finland, the most leisure time satisfied women were full-timers in low level jobs. Since most Finnish women are full-time, there is relatively little variety according to hours there, and so most variety is rooted in occupation. Higher levels of satisfaction for women in the low levels jobs suggests that they did face less job spillover. In France, both groups of part-timers were satisfied. In Spain the women in part-time high level jobs were most leisure time satisfied.

Economic well-being

Finally, the paper examines women's economic wellbeing. Much of the research carried out into short hours working for women stresses its convenience for integrating their employed and family lives. This positive perspective has been prevalent despite the widespread acknowledgment that women in part-time jobs in Europe tend to face poorer conditions at work than female full-timers and male employees, including facing reduced wages (Corral and Isusi, 2004). Examining wages here, women's monthly or living net wages are considered, relative to the female overall median. Exploring women's wages by work time, part-timers were more poorly paid per month than both groups of full-timers, but there was diversity in the degree of wage disadvantage they faced (Figure 1). For example, part-timers were most concentrated in the lowest waged quartile (Q1) in Finland (90%), and Spain, Denmark, and Austria (60-70%). The bulk of these women were in manual jobs. In Greece and Portugal, almost 50% of part-timers were in the highest quartile, reflecting the higher occupational positions of part-timers here, in comparative perspective.

INSERT FIGURE 1 AROUND HERE

UK research has thrown up the rather controversial image of poorly paid female part-time employees who are nevertheless highly wage satisfied (Hakim 1991). In the UK here, 56% of the wages of part-timers were in quartile one and yet part-timers were slightly more likely than full-timers to be wage satisfied (Figure 2). This was true in only two other countries: Denmark and France, but differences were insubstantial. Aside from these three examples, it was a slight part-time disadvantage in wage-satisfaction that occurred in most countries but again this disadvantage was neither statistically nor substantially significant in most. The country that stood out most was Finland where the part-time/full-time gap in wage satisfaction stood at 22%. This links to the fact that fully 90% of part-timers' wages were in the lowest quartile in Finland, reflecting the women's high concentration in manual jobs. Spanish part-timers were also highly concentrated in manual jobs, facing low wages and, here, reporting low levels of wage satisfaction too.

INSERT FIGURE 2 AROUND HERE

Examining wage inequalities further, by far the lowest monthly wages for female employees, within each country, were earned by those part-timers in low level jobs. Figure 3 shows that Denmark represents one extreme on the scale of these women's wages, with part-time low levels workers faring best relative to other women (at 70% of the median). Portugal stood at the other pole (at 41%). Despite their universally low earnings, still this group of women were not the least wage satisfied female employees in all countries (Table 3a). In a very heterogonous picture, they were most satisfied in Denmark; most dissatisfied in Greece; and about average in Austria, the UK and the

Netherlands. On women's reported satisfaction with their finances, similar heterogeneity again was the main finding (hence data not shown).

INSERT FIGURE 3 AROUND HERE

Despite this heterogeneity at the individual level, low level part-timers in the majority of countries were the women most likely to report financial problems at the level of the household: that their households found it difficult to make ends meet and had nothing/very little left to save. 'Making ends meet' is a basic need (Lautsch and Scully 2007) and so offers us a very broad and useful evaluation of women's assessment of their household economies. It shows that in Austria, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK, the part-time low level workers fared poorly in their countries. However, full-time low level workers were often similar or close behind them in reporting such problems. This signals the clear importance of occupational class for any understanding of the women's economic well-being at the household level across most countries. Key exceptions to this conclusion are Denmark and Finland where there was little heterogeneity, aside from the (very small number of) Finnish women in part-time managerial positions. Esping-Anderson (1990) categorised welfare regimes in part according to how possible it was to survive without resource to commodified or waged work. Reflecting the strong position of the Nordic welfare states on this indicator, diversity in wages has less impact on the ability of women's households to make ends meet in both Denmark and Finland than elsewhere (See Kangas 2007 too on the buffers that these welfare states provide). However, there was more variety amongst women in their households 'being able to save'. These results point to longer term negative implications for the women's economic wellbeing, despite the support offered by the

Danish and Finnish welfare states, if their households are building up smaller financial safety nets.

INSERT TABLE 3 AROUND HERE

Conclusion

Inspired by influential and long-standing debates over the impact of ‘too long’ hours in the labour market, the paper has explored the relationship between working time and work life integration in Europe. In particular, it asked whether working shorter hours is more beneficial for women workers’ temporal well-being, and about the ramifications for their economic wellbeing.

The paper showed first that hours of paid work are important for the analysis of temporal wellbeing in Europe. Working fewer hours a week did contribute to women’s temporal wellbeing in many countries: understood here as women’s satisfaction with the hours worked in the labour market, and satisfaction with their time available for leisure too. But there was no universal link between part-time hours working and being more time satisfied. Instead, the paper offered more conclusive evidence that working long full-time hours, 40 or more, presents the most problems for women’s temporal wellbeing, in paid work and in leisure, in almost all countries examined.

Second, the paper has contributed to the ongoing debate over the usefulness of the part-time/full-time dichotomy in the study of women’s employment (Fagan and Rubery 1996; Gash 2008; Warren and Walters 1998). Previous research into gender and work time has stressed the importance of disaggregating the part-time/full-time dichotomy to look at

more detailed hours bands. Disaggregation of the part-time band appears in a range of studies that usefully identify differences in the quality and type of part-time job according to hours worked: with recognition of diversity amongst peripheral or marginal part-time jobs, and those with half or moderate and longer or ‘reduced’ hours (Dex 1988; Hakim 1997; Tilly 1991; Warren and Walters, 1998). Sample sizes of female part-time employees precluded this further disaggregation across the board here, unfortunately, but the experience of temporal wellbeing amongst diverse groups of part-timers in Europe remains a fascinating topic for further study. Innovatively, the paper did disaggregate the full-time band. This is less common in studies of female than male workers but it is important to remember that the majority of women employees work full-time hours, certainly in all the countries examined here. Diversity amongst female full-timers is likely to be substantial and it requires far more academic attention. For example, we know from work time preference research that women in the EU prefer moderate over longer full-time hours (Bielenski et al. 2002), and here we saw the temporal problems faced by women working 40 or more hours a week.

Third, the paper has shown the value of widening the ways in which we examine the economic well-being of women workers by moving beyond a sole focus on the individual and her wages: it is important to examine household finances and incorporate subjective dimensions of economic wellbeing too. The paper’s fourth contribution is in its demonstration that part-time working was not a good route to economic wellbeing at the household level in Europe, and the important class dimensions to this.

Examining economic well-being at the level of the individual (via women’s satisfactions with individual wages and financial situations) revealed a very mixed picture, one in

which women were satisfied with low wages and weak financial situations in some countries but not in others. In the data section, it was shown that interpreting women's expressions of satisfaction presents a real challenge. National level research in the UK has explored how women's subjective interpretations of their paid work are shaped by habit, expectations and background conditions (Crompton 2006). Accordingly, women's expressed satisfaction with low wages has been interpreted as their 'satisficing' or 'making do' for the time being, particularly in local contexts where few well paying job opportunities are available for working class women (Crompton and Harris 1998; Walters 2005). It is clear that in-depth, cross-national comparative research is now needed into how women feel about their (low) wages.

Given the above findings at the individual level, it is fascinating that when we examine women's interpretations of their household economies we see a more widespread part-time low level job disadvantage. There is far less evidence that women are willing to 'satisfice' or 'make do' with their household finances. This result calls for further research into women's interpretations of their economic well-being, comparing individual and household level responses. Further, since the household disadvantage reported by women in low level part-time jobs was also followed closely by economic disadvantage for women in low level full-time jobs, these classed results on household economies remind us of the household context within which workers make their decisions over work and work time (Wheelock and Oughton 2003). Analysis of women's households, by class, remains an important area of research with questions remaining here about variation in the household types of female part- and full-workers: within country by occupation and between countries too, and the implications of this for household income and expenditure.

There are a number of limitations to the research that it is useful to reflect upon. While a main stimulus to the paper was the question of time poverty arising from too long hours in the labour market, and while the evidence cited for a growth in long hours working might seem resounding, it is important to acknowledge that a number of influential writers have queried the growth of such work intensive lives. They have suggested instead that work time has remained constant or even declined in many societies and/or that long hours have only impacted on certain social groups (Cricher and Bramham 2004; Jacobs and Gerson 1998; Roberts 2007, 1995; Robinson and Godbey 1999). At the same time, a number of studies have examined the attraction for workers of spending so much time in paid work^v. Rather than seeing long hours at work as ‘too long’, writers have affirmed that the Noel Coward quote ‘work is much more fun than fun’ applies for some types of worker, but of course this refers in particular to those in high level occupations who report on the thrill and ‘buzz’ they gain from their employment (Gershuny 2005; Hewlett and Luce 2006; Hochschild 1997a; Lewis 2003; Veal 2004).

A second limitation was the paper’s focus only on one dimension of work time: hours of work. A range of studies have shown that the times of the day and week when paid work is undertaken, and workers’ autonomy over their hours, are crucial factors in shaping how they perceive their time, with feelings of rush and crunch impacting negatively on satisfaction with work life (Zuzanek 2004), and attitudes to time having key implications for work life integration (Roberts 2008). Thus, the importance of qualitative and experiential rather than just quantitative measures of work time have been recognised (Bittman and Wajcman 2000; Epstein and Kalleberg 2001; Hassard 2000; Presser 1995, 2006; Southerton 2006; Southerton and Tomlinson 2005; Thompson and Bunderson 2001). Linked to this, it is increasingly recognised that time wellbeing has a number of

different dimensions. Reisch (2001) identified that in addition to the chronometric dimension of time wealth (having enough time), there are the chronologic (time at the right time); sovereignty (control); and synchronisation (time that fits) dimensions (see also Boulin 2006; Breedveld 1998; Garhammer 1998). Importantly, focusing only on the chronometric dimension to temporal wellbeing has been found to undercount the time poverties that are experienced by working-class women and men, who may be less likely than the middle classes to experience chronometric problems but who face more problems in terms of time sovereignty and synchronisation: having free time at the right time and that fits in with family members (Roberts 2002, 2007; Warren 2004). It is clearly vital to broaden research beyond only the chronometric dimension, examined here, to fully explore variation in temporal wellbeing amongst workers across Europe.

The paper focused on paid work but it recognised that gender (and other) analyses have highlighted the limitations of such an overly narrow conceptualisation of work (Pahl 1984; Pettinger et al 2006). The necessary linkages between the public and private spheres, and the work that is carried out within them (both waged and unwaged), is a core area of research and theorising. A central question in the study of work then is how diverse forms of work are inter-linked, and organized and experienced by social divisions. Time analysis is a valuable tool for researching this ‘total social organization of labour’ (Glucksmann 2006). Indeed, time spent on unpaid domestic work was also a feature of Schor’s analysis, and it appears in many other accounts from researchers that aim to examine total or composite work time (Bittman 2004; Bittman et al. 2004; Burchell et al. 2007; Gershuny 2000; Gershuny and Sullivan 2003; Sullivan 1997).

Despite these limitations, the paper has contributed to our understanding of women's temporal and economic wellbeing in a number of key ways. It confirmed the importance of hours worked in the labour market for women's temporal well-being. Within this, it showed that, though working fewer hours in the labour market had no universal impact on feeling satisfied with time (for paid work and leisure) for women across Europe, long full-time hours working exhibited a far more widespread and negative relationship. The paper showed too how the analysis of women's temporal well-being needs to incorporate the potential impact of diverse hours in paid work on women's economic well-being. Economic well-being needs to be operationalised more broadly than just via women's wages since it is revealing to include subjective evaluations, and to do this at individual and household levels too. In this way, we can better explore key class divisions in economic well-being amongst women workers. In conclusion, given the ongoing importance of work time for women's temporal and economic wellbeing, what is needed now is an holistic approach that focuses both on broader notions of work as well as on multiple dimensions of temporal and economic wellbeing to better explore the ramifications of different work times for diverse groups of women across Europe.