Introduction

Among challenges that women will have to tackle in the next decade is workload. In this study, I treat work in a broad way as all productive activities performed for remuneration but also for free. I focus particularly on the division of work between women and men and paid and unpaid work. Traditionally, professional work was the domain of men while unpaid household work was the domain of women, especially the part concerning care work. The traditional division of labour began to change mainly due to the increasing professional activity of women. Nevertheless, the role of women in the household remains crucial. Currently, experts predict that major changes in such a broadly defined work will soon happen thanks to the increasing automation and robotisation of work. The changes overlap with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, whose consequences are also evident in the analysed sphere.

The main problem for this article is the division of paid and unpaid work between women and men, along with prospects for changes in this matter, which may result in an increase in workload for women. The first part discusses definitions. Then I present the current data on the division of work by gender in Poland, which I treat as an example for the case study of the division of work between the genders. The last part focuses on the projected changes in the work environment. In the article, I use the statistical data on Polish time budgets collected by Statistics Poland and other reports, including those of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Paid, unpaid, and care work: Discussion of definitions

In the common and also the most broadly accepted sense, work is a group of activities performed for remuneration, which means that the idea of work refers to activities that are sold on the market. In the dominant economic tradition, paid work is undertaken under conditions of scarcity to achieve benefits [Gardiner 1997]. Performing work also involves negative usefulness, i.e. dissatisfaction. The function of work is to produce marketable goods and services. Employers seek work and buy it, while employees sell it. A market game happens around the valuation of work, which results in a transaction [Standing 2009:6]. Kozek [2013:56–58] writes that work is a market good. However, Kozek adds that work is not a pure commodity because it simultaneously gives the individual a social, political, and existential meaning. In turn, Bauman [2006:41–42] notes that work is identified with employment, i.e. having a client and doing things that she/he considers necessary since she/he is willing to pay for them. The work one does provides for one’s livelihood and determines one’s social identity and self-esteem. On the other hand, Polanyi [1944] deems work a fictitious good because it is not “produced” for later sale on the market.

However, we may define work in a broader sense than just paid activities. Referring to the UN, Snyder [2007:13] defines work broadly as the participation of people in productive activities for which they either receive a salary in money and other goods or which they perform for the benefit of a family business or family free of charge. Such a work may
include housework, childcare, looking after elderly family members, building and repairing family-owned buildings, or volunteer work [UN 2000:109]. Moreover, the ILO proposes a definition that includes unpaid domestic service in the concept of work. In ILO’s definition, those activities that generate products and services – whether or not they are later sold – should be seen as work [Campillo 2003:11]. Therefore, in contrast to narrowly defined work, we may conclude that work includes activities necessary for survival, reproduction, and personal development [Standing 2009:7].

A special kind of work, both paid and unpaid, is care work. Many of the activities included in unpaid work do not fit the definition of care work: cleaning, shopping, or doing laundry. However, other household activities exemplify such a work, e.g. care for children, the elderly, or the sick. Care includes a relationship that forms between the carer and the caree. The value of care exceeds the market value calculated according to the service performed, considering the actual salaries received by carers. A paid carer can perform many activities usually done as unpaid work for the household. This is the case with nurses, the elderly, or kindergarten carers, and it can be part of other professions such as teaching or therapy. What is important in the care relationship is the carer’s positive attention to carees. The attention relates to the creation and keeping of a personal relationship [van Staveren 2015:45].

Care appears as a natural human activity that accompanies people throughout the entire life and for which interdependence is typical [Phillips 2009:38]. Care is both a social process and an everyday aspect of life. In society, individuals operate within social networks and care and mutual relations networks. Care is an integral part of such networks’ operations. Therefore, the concept of care bases on collective activity [Phillips 2009:97]. Engster [2009:25] proposes a definition that appears in works of other theorists such as Streuning, Baier, Fineman, Kittay, Walker, and West, who define care as a social practice necessary to sustain social reproduction. In turn, Standing [2001] defines care as work that relates the physical, mental, emotional, and developmental needs of an individual or more people.

Care is a concept that refers both to physical care – which can happen without a personal relationship between the carer and the caree – and to emotional care, in which such a relationship is essential [Himmelweit 1995:8]. It is a practice that consists of various factors like time, money, knowledge, skills, social relationships, and feelings. Care assumes reciprocity and interdependence, and it constitutes a part of a wider network of relationships throughout life [Phillips 2009:40–41]. Care is a relational concept because it bases on relationships in the family and social context. Thus, care is a part of the social tissue necessary for society’s development. At the same time, care can be a commodity or product of an extensive service industry that includes, among other things, state health services, social care, housing agencies, or independent and social organisations [Phillips 2009]. Care is work because it requires competence, skills, and knowledge essential to be properly performed. Moreover, care absorbs time, requires effort, and involves stress that results from the fear of not meeting the expectations of carees [Lynch et al. 2009]. Care work is a social relationship in which feelings such as altruism, mutual respect, dignity, and reciprocity play a significant role [Barker, Feiner 2004:44]. At the same time, as long as the purpose of care is to develop a personal relationship, it cannot be entirely outsourced. This means that many aspects of care work cannot be commodified and thus assigned a monetary value, which leads to problems in incorporating the concept of care into economic considerations.

Considering different types of work, we may indicate that household members must decide how to allocate their time between paid work, unpaid work, and rest. In fact, these activities often interweave. The traditional division of labour assigns unpaid work to men and domestic work to women, including care work. In their adult life, women do most of the work required in the reproduction process, including caring, while men have greater opportunities to find satisfactory work outside of the household and achieve positions of power. A 1995 World Bank report indicates that decisions related to the allocation of women’s working time between paid and unpaid work in the household pertain rather to public beliefs than rational economic choices. Women’s admission and participation in the labour market and other areas of the economy depends on the amount of time spent on unpaid household work, including care. Most men do not divide their working time in such a manner. The inequality restricts women’s employability, limits labour productivity, and reduces future global economic output [World Bank 1995:4]. We can even say that there is a set of norms and prejudices in society that systematically diminishes the role of women and reinforces labour division by gender [Baker et al. 2009:44].
The traditional pattern described above began to change in the twentieth century when women substantially entered the labour market. Men also increased their involvement in unpaid work, but this change was much less visible than that of women. Men’s level of involvement in unpaid household work was extremely low at the beginning and referred mainly to educated couples [Solera, Mencarini 2018:520]. Moreover, assigning women to care work affects their roles in the formal labour market. We talk about the phenomenon of feminised professions, according to which women are ascribed to care professions [Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz 2016].

Some theories try to explain the allocation of time between the genders. We may regard two of the theories as dominant [Solera, Mencarini 2018:521]: the specialisation theory (e.g. Becker 1981) and the bargaining theory (e.g. Lundberg, Pollak 1996). However, many researchers note that these theories base on the strong assumption of gender neutrality [Hewitson 2003, Himmelweit 2003; cf. Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz 2016]. Another group of theories includes gender in its considerations to suggest that it is more significant than money [Solara, Mencarini 2018:521]. In such a context, researchers indicate that even when women and men earn the same or even women earn more, the latter still do most of the unpaid work. Scholars explain this with norms and values, which are to be more important than earnings [Bittman et al. 2003]. Therefore, we may indicate the factors that determine the division of time and its allocation to paid and unpaid work. The factors that shape the decisions of women and men on how to divide time at the macro level include culture – maternity and paternity patterns – state policy, equality between women and men in the public and private spheres, the prevalence of part-time work, its feminisation, and associated traps of part-time employment, along with other policies that enable the mixing of professional and private life. What further shapes macro conditions are micro factors such as individual resources, time availability, and attitudes regarding gender roles [Solara, Mencarini 2018]. However, one crucial factor is the fact of having children, which emphasises the norms related to gender-specific behaviour. As a consequence, parenthood changes the division of work within a household much more than other events in life, such as marriage [Solera, Mencarini 2018:520].

Unpaid work engagement:
Data analysis

Irene van Staveren [2015:42] argues that the division of paid and unpaid work between the genders differs around the world. However, women spend on average more time doing unpaid work. At the same time, men spend more time doing paid work. Furthermore, the total working time of women is higher than that of men, while men allocate more time to leisure activities. Such a division of work has direct consequences in the form of income partition. A report of the ILO [2018] indicates that women provide 76.2% of all unpaid care work in the world. This share is more than three times higher than men’s unpaid care work. Estimates based on time budgets data from 64 countries – equivalent to 66.9% of the world’s working-age population – show that 16.4 billion hours are spent on unpaid care work every day. This is the equivalent of two billion people working eight hours a day without remuneration.

It is worthwhile to illustrate the universal picture with an example from Poland. The division of labour presented below was developed using the Statistics Poland data on time budgets. It is one of the methods to examine the division of work, most often employed in economic studies due to results quantifiability. Research on time budgets is a theoretical construction applied to measure time distribution among various activities. The first research of this type dates back to 1927. After the Second World War, Statistics Poland researched Poles’ time budgets, for the first time in 1969. That study relied on an unrepresentative sample because Statistics Poland conducted it mainly in cities [Hozer-Koćmiel 2010:72]. The next, improved studies happened in 1976, 1984, 2003–2004, and the last one between 1 January and 31 December 2013. The latter had a representative sample of 28,209 households and responses from over 40,000 people aged 10 and above. Selected households completed journals on how they spent time on two days: one weekday and one weekend day. The survey participants described their main and accompanying activities, reporting on them in ten-minute intervals, while also indicating the persons who accompanied them in the activities [GUS 2015:34–35]. The data collected during the research concerns the distribution of time among eleven categories: (1) physiological needs, (2) pro-
Professional work, (3) study, (4) domestic activities and chores, (5) voluntary work in and outside of organisations, (6) social life and entertainment, (7) sports and recreation, (8) personal hobbies, (9) media usage, (10) commuting, and (11) other activities not listed. The Table 1 elaborates these categories. I present the information divided by gender, age, and type of household. The provided data refers to the duration of an activity, hence it is counted only for persons who actually perform the activity.

The Table 1 shows the aggregate data for women and men over 15 years old. It presents the time spent on physiological needs – including sleep – professional work, and domestic chores, including care work. The below data concerns time, so it shows hours spent on an activity.

Table 1. The average duration of activities for women and men aged 15 and above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physiological needs, including sleep</td>
<td>11:21</td>
<td>10:58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional work</td>
<td>8:43</td>
<td>8:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic activities and chores,</td>
<td>7:02</td>
<td>8:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including care work</td>
<td>4:33</td>
<td>2:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:47</td>
<td>1:49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the above, women spend more time on physiological needs – including sleep – and domestic activities and chores, including care work. Men devote more time to professional work. If we treat work broadly and include domestic work into professional work, women work an average 11 hours and 35 minutes per day, while men work 10 hours and 51 minutes. Thus, women work 44 minutes longer every day.

As indicated in the first part of the article, the factor that differentiates the allocation of time between genders to the greatest extent is having children. The next Table shows the time spent by women and men on activities performed with children under 17 years old.

Table 2 presents data on selected activities: physiological needs – including sleep – paid and unpaid work – including care – and the amount of time spent on work; voluntary work for organisations was omitted again. There is a clear division of work between the genders. Men are more engaged in professional work and women devote more time to housework, regardless of other conditions.

The biggest difference in the time spent on professional work concerns people who live in relationships and have small children: 1 hour and 40 minutes. In the same category, there is the biggest disproportion in time spent on domestic activities and chores to the disadvantage of women. The disproportion is 3 hours and 31 minutes. In each category, the total working time is longer for women, and in the category of women in a relationship with small children, the difference is 1 hour and 51 minutes. The results are consistent with the results of Soler and Menzarini [2018], who studied the allocation of time in Bulgaria, France, and the Netherlands.

Table 2. Activity duration in hours and minutes for women and men who have children under 17 years old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Women in a relationship, with children aged single</th>
<th>Men in a relationship, with children aged single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–6</td>
<td>7–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological needs, including sleep</td>
<td>10:48</td>
<td>10:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional work</td>
<td>8:23</td>
<td>8:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic activities and chores,</td>
<td>7:17</td>
<td>6:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including care work</td>
<td>5:22</td>
<td>6:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:38</td>
<td>3:29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The future of work: Prospects

The above analysis of labour division between paid and unpaid work and between women and men shows the higher workload of women. The disproportion results mainly from women’s burden of unpaid work performed for the benefit of households. We should now consider the change that occurred between the last two times budget surveys were conducted in Poland: in 2003/2004 and 2013.

Table 3 shows the change that characterises two categories – professional work and domestic activities and chores – divided between women and men.

The comparison shows that working time increases. The time spent on professional work increases both for women and men, but so does the time spent on domestic activities and chores, also for both genders. The increase in time spent on work in total seems to be very relevant. This increase indicates that the total worktime has grown more for women. Thus, inequality in the allocation of time to the disadvantage of women only became more pronounced; it is a continuous change that we can qualify as evolutionary. Another change of a long-term character is demographic. In 2015, 2.1 billion people worldwide required care, including 1.9 billion children under 15 years of age – including 0.8 billion children under 6 years of age – and 0.2 billion elderly people. By 2030, the number of people requiring care will increase by 0.1 billion for children and 0.1 billion for the elderly [ILO 2018]. More rapid changes accompany such long-term changes, and we deal with such phenomena today. Two phenomena worth adding to my considerations are the automation and robotisation of work and the outbreak of the global Covid-19 epidemic.

Thinking about the challenges that await the world of work, the issues of robotisation and automation seem crucial. The McKinsey Global Institute published a report that predicts about half of people’s current activities will be automated [Manyika et al. 2017]. The authors of the report assume that this may happen by 2055, given current trends in technology development. The authors developed a list of 2,000 activities that make up 800 professions with a chance of future automation. Will this affect the division of work between the genders and between paid and unpaid work? The World Economic Forum [2016] predicts that the loss of workplaces for women and men will be fairly equal. However, Manyika et al. [2017] indicate that production displays a potential for automation at 60% and care at only 36%. At the same time, education displays the potential at 27%. Considering the current structure of workers in particular sectors, PwC [2017] in its estimates for 29 OECD countries indicates that although women are at risk of losing their workplaces in the short term, 36% of male jobs and only 26% of female jobs are at risk in the long term.

In many industrialised countries, care work increasingly moved from its traditional area of home and family – where women have done it – to the public spheres of the market and public care. However, women still prevail among carers and their salaries remain low compared to employees of other professions that require similar qualifications [Nelson 1999:43]. Thus, care remains low-status and low-paid labour. Besides, care is poorly regulated and deprived of social security. The low status and salaries of full-time carers reflect the lack of respect for care present in society [Lynch et al. 2009]. A survey conducted by the ILO [2018] in 45 countries that represent 85% of the world’s GDP and 60% of the world’s working population refers to care work not provided by households but by the market or public institutions. These studies estimate the changes in employment in the care sector. In 2015, the sector employed about 206 million workers, which accounts for almost 10% of total employment and corresponds to 8.7% of the total GDP in the surveyed countries. The studies ran two simulations related to demographic changes until 2030. The first simulation assumed that the trends would con-

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**Table 3.** The average duration of activities: comparison of time budgets in 2003/2004 and 2013 (in hours and minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Professional work</th>
<th>Domestic activities and chores</th>
<th>Duration of paid and unpaid work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:23</td>
<td>7:02</td>
<td>+0:39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>7:39</td>
<td>8:03</td>
<td>+0:24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continue – the status quo scenario – meaning that the change would correspond to demographic change but the employment rate, quality standards, and working conditions would remain the same, which would mean the care deficit would also remain unchanged. According to the status quo scenario, employment in education, health, and social care will increase by 2030 by one-fourth, to 248 million. The second simulation relied on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations and the Decent Work Agenda developed by the ILA. In the SDGs scenario, the number of workplaces in the care sector would increase to 326 million.

Changes concerning the division of labour result not only from long-term trends. Sudden and unexpected events can also matter; suffice to mention the Covid-19 pandemic. In this case, social isolation and difficulties in accessing the care system prove to be the major problem. Research conducted by Oxfam in mid-2020 [Oxfam 2020:9] shows that 70% of all students worldwide experienced restrictions in access to educational institutions due to national or local regulations that closed such facilities. In turn, this led to an increase in time spent on domestic chores, including childcare and work providing hygiene and care for the sick. Women continue to be disproportionately involved in domestic chores and activities, although men’s involvement increased during the pandemic. In the surveyed countries – i.e. the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Philippines, and Kenya – about half of all the sampled women declared an increase in unpaid work as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. A significant proportion of women reported that the increase in time was more than three hours a day; e.g. 26% in the US and 39% in the UK.

Noteworthy, in the context of the presented changes, in the long-time perspective, and assuming the persistence of professions' feminisation and masculinisation phenomenon, the work performed by women will still require direct involvement. However, it remains unknown on what conditions this work will be performed. Rubery [2018] argues that the changes caused by technological development, on the one hand, and demographic changes on the other hand, may indicate that the achievements of gender equality will be endangered. Rubery suggests that women may be encouraged to resign from paid work in favour of focusing on unpaid work, as was the case after two World Wars.

**Conclusion**

Labour includes not only professional work but also all activities that require time, energy, and skills. Work can be paid and performed for an employer/client or free of charge for the benefit of one’s household or community. Traditionally, men engaged more in paid work and women in unpaid work. This division of labour remains to this day but with some modifications. Today, women are also active professionally, while men are more involved in unpaid work. However, in Poland women’s activity increased to a greater extent, which resulted in a greater workload for women.

The division of work between the genders and the activities performed on a paid and unpaid basis is not equal and unchanged. We may write about evolutionary changes that result from long-term trends such as demographic shifts or the activation of women on the labour market. These trends indicate an increase in women’s involvement in work on the formal labour market, which entails an increase in men’s involvement in household activities, although to a lesser extent. Time budget analyses show that what also grows is the involvement of women and men in traditionally assigned types of work, i.e. women in the household and men in formal work. The automation of the economy overlaps with the considered changes, along with demographic and unpredictable changes like the Covid-19 pandemic. The demand for care work grows, while some manufacturing occupations may be considerably automated, thus reducing demand for certain occupations. On the other hand, the pandemic causes an increase in the care work burden, which is largely delegated to households. In such a situation, it is extremely important to involve the state in creating such conditions and regulations that will secure the position of women. What clearly remains significant is the division of paid and unpaid work between women and men, the regulation of work done outside the market, and finally, the issue of remuneration for care work.

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1 The Sustainable Development Goals replaced the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. SDGs indicate the directions of development: eliminating poverty, creating the basis for the rule of law, and nature protection (https://ungc.org.pl/sdg/sustainable-development-goals/).
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