

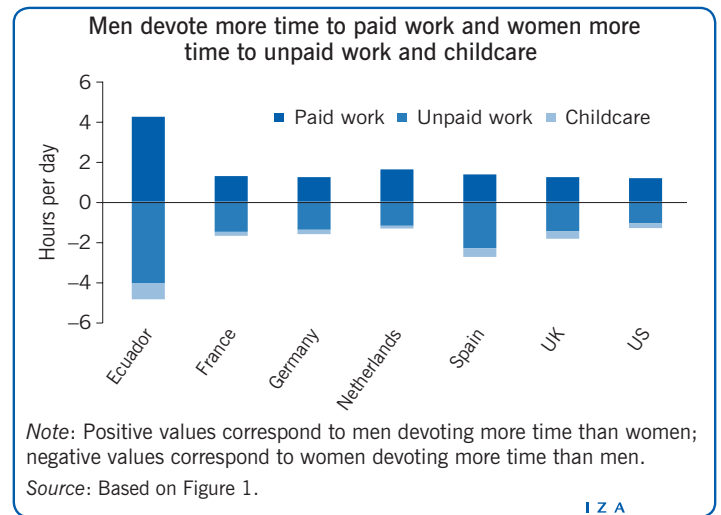
The gender gap in time allocation

Gender inequalities in daily time allocation may have detrimental effects on earnings and well-being

Keywords: paid work, unpaid work, gender gap

ELEVATOR PITCH

Many countries experience gender differences, of various magnitudes, in the time devoted to paid work (e.g. market work time) and unpaid work (e.g. housework and childcare). Since household responsibilities influence the participation of women, especially mothers, in the labor market, the unequal sharing of unpaid work, with women bearing the brunt of housework and childcare, is one of the main drivers of gender inequality in the labor market. Understanding the factors behind these gender inequalities is crucial for constructing policies aimed at promoting gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination.



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KEY FINDINGS

Pros

- ⊕ The gender gap in time allocation in both paid and unpaid work has decreased over time in most countries.
- ⊕ An increase in female education has contributed to a narrowing gender gap in paid and unpaid work.
- ⊕ Public policies aimed at increasing female participation in the labor market contribute to closing the gender gap in time allocation.
- ⊕ Increased paternity leave duration and coverage for men may boost participation of men in unpaid work and childcare time.
- ⊕ The use of market substitutes for unpaid work and childcare may decrease the gender gap in time allocation.

Cons

- ⊖ Gender differences in unpaid work and childcare time persist.
- ⊖ Public policies aimed at tackling gender inequality in time allocation mainly focus on labor market aspects, leaving aside unpaid work inequalities.
- ⊖ Gender differentials in unpaid work and childcare caused by social norms are difficult to eradicate.
- ⊖ Household joint taxation may boost specialization within couples, perpetuating the gender gap in paid and unpaid work.
- ⊖ The gender gap in unpaid work limits women's wages, thereby making it more difficult to increase female participation in the labor market.

AUTHOR'S MAIN MESSAGE

Gender gaps in time allocation produce gender inequalities in work experience and earnings. Efforts to reduce the gender wage gap and equalize the roles of men and women in society may be helpful in reducing the gender gap in time allocation. Policymakers should also consider the role that tax schemes, paternity leave policies, and the presence of women in politics may have in reducing gender gaps in time allocation. The consequences of gender gaps can be significant in terms of pensions, foregone economic productivity, and growth, notwithstanding the issue of equality of opportunity between men and women.