

The Gender of Time in the northern part of Cyprus: Invisible Labour and Time Poverty



Editor:
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**Turkish Cypriot
Association of
University Women**

FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1991, the Turkish Cypriot Association of University Women (TCAUW) has been a well-established organisation committed to strengthening women's equal participation in education, working life, and social life, while advancing a rights-based understanding of civil society grounded in knowledge, experience, and solidarity. Over the years, the Association has made significant contributions to raising the visibility of gender equality and fostering discussion at the policy level through its research, publications, advocacy activities, and collaborations.

Conducted between 2001 and 2003, the project "The Educational and Employment Profile of Turkish Cypriot Women" emerged as one of the first comprehensive data-based studies in this field. By presenting statistical evidence of inequalities relating to women's social position, the project generated substantial public awareness.

Building on this need, the "Partnership for Enhancing Women's Access to Productive Resources Project (Parity Project)," funded under the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community and implemented by TCAUW, was launched. Within the scope of the project, a comprehensive desk-based research report was first prepared, followed by the publication of the book *Gender Gap in Access to Productive Resources and Decision-Making Systems: What Do We Know About Women's Access to Productive Resources and Representation in Decision-Making Processes in the northern part of Cyprus?*, authored by Prof. Dr Fatma Güven Lisaniler and Assoc. Prof. Dr Feyza Bhatti.

The present volume constitutes the second book prepared within the framework of the Parity Project and has been developed to deepen the project's outputs.

The studies included in this book consist of two sections. The first section analyses how women and men use time in everyday life based on the findings of the time-use survey conducted within the scope of the Parity Project, and reveals forms of gender-based invisible labour. Focusing particularly on areas such as paid work, domestic labour, care activities, childcare, and time pressure, this section demonstrates that gender inequalities are reproduced not only within the labour market but also through the temporal organisation of everyday life. Through HETUS-based time-use data, women's unpaid care burden, experiences of the "double burden," and time poverty are made visible. In addition, the award-winning paper from the article competition is included in this volume, making an important contribution to academic discussions.

TCAUW does not regard these efforts as limited solely to academic production and data-based analysis; rather, it views them as part of an active advocacy framework aimed at social transformation. In this context, the Association engages in dialogue and cooperation with relevant institutions, policymakers, and civil society actors to ensure that the findings obtained are reflected in policymaking processes, that gender equality is taken into account in decision-making mechanisms, and that women's equal access to rights is guaranteed. Through advocacy activities, one of our primary aims is not only to make existing inequalities visible but also to contribute to the development of concrete policy recommendations that can enable structural transformation.

On this occasion, we would like to thank all the authors who contributed to the article competition. We extend our gratitude to the distinguished jury members, Assoc. Prof. Dr Berna Numan, Assoc. Prof. Dr Gözde İnal Cavlan, and Assoc. Prof. Dr Hasan Rüstemoğlu, for their meticulous evaluations. We also sincerely congratulate Nadia Karimi, whose article titled *Gender-based Invisible Labour and Urban Time Poverty in northern part of Cyprus* won the competition and was awarded the prize.

We would like to thank all the institutions and individuals who contributed to the realisation of this work, and we hope that this book will contribute to the construction of a more just and egalitarian society.

Turkish Cypriot Association of University Women
Board of Directors

About the Book

Gender inequalities are often discussed through the lens of labour markets, income disparities, or representation within decision-making mechanisms. Yet inequalities are reproduced not only in the public sphere, but also within the invisible structures of everyday life. Questions such as how time is used, who undertakes care work, and for whom rest and leisure time are accessible are of critical importance in understanding gender inequalities. This book has been prepared precisely with the aim of making these invisible spheres visible.

The present work constitutes a continuation of the academic and research-based outputs produced within the framework of the Parity Project, funded under the European Union's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community and implemented by the Turkish Cypriot Association of University Women. The first section of the book, authored by me, presents the findings of the first comprehensive HETUS-based time-use survey conducted in the northern part of Cyprus. This section analyses the patterns of time use among women and men in everyday life through the lenses of paid work, unpaid care labour, childcare, time pressure, and invisible labour. The research demonstrates that gender inequalities are reproduced not only through economic indicators but also through the temporal organisation of everyday life.

The second section of the book features the study by Nadia Karimi, which received first prize in the article competition organised within the scope of the Parity Project. Titled Gender-based Invisible Labour and Urban Time Poverty in northern part of Cyprus, this study makes a significant contribution to the literature by addressing discussions of invisible labour and time poverty within the context of urban inequalities. Supporting the critical and innovative work of young researchers in this field has been one of the objectives we have prioritised within the project.

This book is not merely an academic study; it is also the product of a collective effort aimed at contributing to the discussion of invisible labour, care burdens, and time poverty as social issues. I hope that this work will contribute to debates on gender equality in the northern part of Cyprus and open new areas of discussion regarding care policies, social policy, and everyday life studies.

Assoc. Prof. Dr Feyza Bhatti
Editor

CHAPTER 1

The Gender of Time in the northern part of Cyprus: A HETUS-Based Time-Use Study and Its Findings

Assoc. Prof. Dr Feyza Bhatti

Abstract

This chapter presents the findings of the time-use survey conducted within the scope of the Parity Project and analyses time-use patterns among women and men in the northern part of Cyprus from a gender perspective. Based on the HETUS methodology, the study reveals significant inequalities between women and men in areas such as paid work, domestic labour, care activities, childcare, and time pressure. The findings demonstrate that although women's total labour time is similar to men's, this labour is concentrated largely in unpaid care and domestic activities. In particular, employed women are required to carry out both paid work and care labour simultaneously, resulting in higher levels of time pressure and experiences of the "double burden" among women. The study reveals that gender inequalities are reproduced not only within the labour market but also through the temporal organisation of everyday life.

1. Introduction

Although time is one of the most fundamental resources of everyday life, it is not distributed equally within society. While every individual has the same twenty-four hours, how this time is experienced and used is shaped by social norms, economic conditions, labour market structures, and gender roles. For this reason, time use is not merely a matter of individual preference, but also constitutes an important field of analysis for understanding how social inequalities are reflected in everyday life (Gershuny, 2011).

Over the past four decades, the development of time-use research has made the effects of social structures on everyday life visible by systematically examining how individuals allocate their time between paid work, domestic production, care labour, and leisure. Feminist literature in particular emphasises that time use is one of the principal domains through which gender inequalities are reproduced. Numerous studies have demonstrated that a significant portion of women's everyday lives is structured around care labour and unpaid domestic activities, whereas men tend to have greater access to paid employment and leisure time (Craig & Mullan, 2011; OECD, 2023).

In this context, time-use studies are of critical importance for measuring invisible labour. While conventional economic indicators focus largely on paid labour, activities such as childcare, elderly care, housework, and emotional labour have long been excluded from definitions of economic production. Yet the continuity of social reproduction depends to a great extent on these activities, and a substantial share of this labour is undertaken by women (Folbre, 2006; Addati et al., 2018). Consequently, time-use data are regarded as one of the key tools for making gender inequalities visible at the level of everyday life.

Gender-based inequalities in time use have significant implications not only in terms of workload but also with regard to leisure, social participation, and quality of life. In the literature, the concept of "time poverty" refers to situations in which individuals lack sufficient time for rest, social life, or personal development due to compulsory activities (Vickery, 1977). Research shows that women experience time poverty more intensely, particularly because they are required to undertake both paid and unpaid labour simultaneously (Antonopoulos & Hirway, 2010). This demonstrates that time is not only an economic resource, but also one closely connected to social power relations.

The establishment of methodological standards has marked an important turning point in the development of time-use literature. In particular, the HETUS (Harmonised European Time Use Surveys) methodology developed by the European Statistical Office has become one of the most significant frameworks for collecting internationally comparable time-use data (Eurostat, 2019). The HETUS approach combines time-use diaries, individual surveys, and household surveys, enabling the analysis of everyday life practices with high temporal resolution. In particular, the distinction between primary and secondary activities provides an important advantage in rendering care labour and multitasking visible.

Nevertheless, despite the global expansion of time-use research, data gaps persist in small-scale economies and politically unique regions. The northern part of Cyprus represents a notable example in this regard. Although various studies on gender and labour markets exist in the region, there is no systematic and comparable data based on time-use surveys. This situation makes it difficult to analyse everyday life practices, care arrangements, and gender-based inequalities in time use in a detailed manner.

This study examines the first comprehensive HETUS-based time-use survey conducted in the northern part of Cyprus. Developed within the framework of the Parity Project, the research particularly aims to make gender inequalities visible and to provide data-based contributions to policymaking processes. The study makes three principal contributions. First, it produces a comprehensive and comparable dataset on time use in the northern part of Cyprus. Second, by analysing gender inequalities through everyday life practices, it presents the first empirical findings on care labour, leisure time, and the distribution of workload. Third, through methodological reflections on field experience, diary practices, and data production processes, it

provides important insights into the implementation of time-use research in small-scale contexts. In this respect, the study aims not only to generate empirical data but also to discuss how time-use data are produced, through which methodological and social processes they pass, and how the complexity of everyday life is reflected in the research process. Accordingly, the study approaches time-use research not merely as a technical process of data collection, but also as a reflexive methodological field shaped by social relations and everyday life experiences.

2. The Gendered Structure of Time, Care, and Everyday Life

This section examines the time-use literature through the lenses of gender, care labour, and everyday life practices. In particular, it explores how everyday life is socially structured through discussions surrounding the distribution of paid and unpaid labour, time poverty, and the care economy. In addition, methodological developments in time-use research and the HETUS approach are also evaluated.

2.1 Time-Use Literature

Time-use research has developed as an important field of study that systematically examines individuals' everyday life practices. One of the principal foundations of this literature is treating time as an economic resource. Becker's (1965) "time allocation" approach holds that individuals allocate their time among work, leisure, and other activities through rational choices. Within this framework, time is regarded as a limited resource, like income, and individuals are assumed to allocate it in a framework of utility maximisation.

Over time, however, the time-use literature has moved beyond an approach based solely on economic preferences. Social science scholarship has demonstrated that time use is shaped by far more complex social processes than individual choice alone. In particular, studies of everyday life emphasise that time is a socially organised structure. This perspective reveals that individuals' use of time is shaped by family structures, labour market arrangements, cultural norms, and social roles.

Jonathan Gershuny's work approaches time use as an important indicator of social change. According to Gershuny, technological transformation, labour-market changes, and shifting lifestyles directly affect individuals' everyday activities (Gershuny, 2011). For this reason, time-use studies constitute a critical tool not only for understanding individual behaviour, but also for analysing broader social transformations.

Similarly, Robinson and Godbey (1997), by examining how individuals organise their everyday lives, drew attention to the transformation of the boundaries between working time and leisure time. In particular, they argued that acceleration, intensification, and fragmented everyday life practices in modern societies have altered the experience of time. This approach considers time use not merely as a quantitative distribution, but also as the social organisation of everyday life.

In this context, time-use research has become increasingly important for revealing the invisible dimensions of everyday life. While activities such as care labour, domestic production, and emotional labour often remain invisible in conventional economic indicators, time-use data enable their measurement.

2.2 Gender-Based Time Allocation

Gender is one of the strongest determinants of time use. Differences in time allocation between women and men emerge in similar ways across many societies. The literature demonstrates that women devote more time than men to unpaid care labour and domestic work, while men tend to have greater access to paid employment and leisure time (Craig & Mullan, 2011; OECD, 2023).

This inequality has long been discussed within feminist literature. Arlie Hochschild's (1989) concept of the "second shift" demonstrates that women continue to undertake domestic work and care responsibilities even after completing paid work. This situation increases women's total workload while reducing their leisure and rest time. Hochschild's work revealed that gender inequalities are reproduced not only within the labour market, but also through the organisation of everyday life.

Subsequent studies have also supported these findings. Bianchi et al. (2012) demonstrate that despite women's increasing participation in the labour market, the burden of domestic work has largely persisted. This situation particularly indicates the continued gender-based distribution of care labour.

Gender-based inequalities in time use are not limited solely to workload. Leisure inequality has also become an important area of discussion within the literature. Numerous studies have shown that men are able to devote more time to leisure activities than women (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). The organisation of women's everyday lives around care labour and domestic responsibilities results in leisure time being experienced in fragmented and interrupted ways.

At this point, multitasking emerges as an important issue. Many studies show that women often perform multiple care and domestic activities simultaneously. Activities such as caring for children while cooking or continuing emotional care responsibilities while undertaking housework intensify and fragment women's experience of time (UNECE, 2021).

The literature also emphasises that women's experiences of leisure are often fragmented and interrupted. In particular, the continuity of care responsibilities means that women's leisure time is more frequently interrupted and intertwined with simultaneous obligations (Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). This points to gender inequalities not only in the quantity of leisure time, but also in its quality.

These discussions are also linked to the concept of emotional labour. Care labour consists not only of physical activities, but also of emotional support, planning, and mental load. For this reason, time-use research is important not only for understanding the quantitative dimension of invisible labour but also for examining the emotional organisation of everyday life.

2.3 Care Economy and Time Poverty

The care economy literature emphasises that the activities necessary for the sustainability of social reproduction are largely carried out through unpaid labour. Activities such as childcare, elder care, domestic work, and emotional support are central to the continuity of everyday life, yet they often remain invisible within the economic system.

Nancy Folbre's work demonstrates that care labour is systematically devalued and is largely undertaken by women (Folbre, 2006). This highlights the unequal structure of the relationship between economic production and social reproduction. The feminist economics literature considers the invisibilisation of care activities necessary for the reproduction of paid labour to be one of the fundamental mechanisms of gender inequality.

Within feminist scholarship, care labour is not understood merely as a set of household activities, but as a central component of social reproduction. The "social reproduction" approach emphasises that the care activities necessary for the maintenance of everyday life and the workforce are largely sustained through unpaid labour (Fraser, 2016). This situation leads to care labour often remaining invisible, despite its central importance to the economic system.

Care labour is also closely linked to debates on “invisible labour”. In particular, the naturalisation of domestic activities as part of everyday life contributes to the invisibilisation of their economic and social value. Time-use research, however, makes this invisible labour measurable, enabling a more concrete analysis of the care economy.

One of the key concepts in this literature is “time poverty”. Time poverty refers to situations in which individuals lack sufficient time for rest, leisure, or personal development due to obligatory activities (Vickery, 1977). In particular, women’s simultaneous engagement in both paid and unpaid labour leads to a more intense experience of time poverty (Antonopoulos & Hirway, 2010).

Time poverty affects not only individual well-being but also social participation, psychological welfare, and overall quality of life. For this reason, time-use research enables the analysis of social inequalities not only in terms of income, but also in terms of time.

2.4 HETUS and Methodological Developments

The establishment of methodological standards has marked an important turning point in the development of time-use research. In this context, the Harmonised European Time Use Surveys (HETUS), developed by the European Statistical Office, has become one of the most important methodological frameworks enabling the production of internationally comparable data (Eurostat, 2019).

The HETUS methodology is based on a multi-layered data-collection structure designed to measure time use with high temporal resolution. This structure primarily consists of a household survey, an individual survey, and time-use diaries. In particular, time-use diaries require individuals to record their daily activities in specific time intervals, thereby providing more detailed data than retrospective survey methods.

One of the key features of the HETUS approach is the distinction between primary and secondary activities. This method allows for the recording of multitasking activities performed simultaneously by individuals. Since care labour often takes place in the form of concurrent activities, the recording of secondary activities provides an important advantage in making gender inequalities visible (UNECE, 2021).

However, time-use research also raises significant methodological debates. One of these is the issue of “respondent burden”. The detailed structure of time-use diaries requires a high level of time and attention from participants. This can lead to data loss, particularly among individuals with intensive work schedules or high care responsibilities (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).

Another methodological debate concerns the difference between measuring time and experiencing time. Everyday life is often characterised not by a linear and orderly structure, but by fragmented, interrupted, and simultaneous activities. In particular, categorising activities such as care labour and emotional labour within standard frameworks can be methodologically challenging. For this reason, time-use research is regarded not only as a technical process of data collection, but also as a reflexive methodological field aimed at understanding the complexity of everyday life.

Despite these developments, time-use research remains limited, particularly in small-scale economies and contexts with restricted statistical infrastructure. Limited data production capacity leads to a lack of comparable time-use datasets, making it difficult to systematically analyse everyday life practices. This situation further increases the importance of time-use research in contexts such as the northern part of Cyprus.

3. Research Design and Adaptation of HETUS

This study is based on the first comprehensive time-use survey conducted in the northern part of Cyprus. The primary aim of the research is to measure individuals' everyday life practices, the distribution of paid and unpaid labour, care activities, and leisure patterns, and, in particular, to make gender-based time inequalities visible.

The study's methodological framework is largely based on the Harmonised European Time Use Surveys (HETUS) methodology. HETUS is widely recognised as one of the most important international methodological frameworks for producing comparable time-use data (Eurostat, 2019). However, rather than directly applying the standard HETUS approach, this study develops a research design adapted to the social, cultural, and practical conditions of northern part of Cyprus.

In the first phase of the study, the HETUS methodology was reviewed, and the survey instruments and time-use diaries were prepared in accordance with this framework. The diary design is based on individuals recording their daily activities within specific time intervals. This structure enables the analysis not only of which activities are performed, but also their duration, context, and simultaneous activities.

The distinction between primary and secondary activities was also retained in the study. This distinction was considered particularly important for measuring care labour, as care activities often occur simultaneously with other tasks.

The diaries were designed to include not only activities, but also the location where they took place, the people present, and the technologies used. This approach aimed to analyse everyday life not only in terms of "what is done", but also through the social contexts in which activities occur.

In designing the sample, the six districts of the northern part of Cyprus were taken as the basis. The number of households to be selected from each region was calculated according to population distribution. In this process, the study aimed to include as wide a range of age groups, household structures, employment patterns, and gendered experiences as possible.

3.1 Training Process and Pilot Study

Prior to field implementation, a three-day intensive researcher training programme was conducted from 30 May 2024. The training process was designed not only to cover survey administration techniques but also to provide comprehensive preparation for understanding the logic of time-use research. This is because, unlike standard survey applications, time-use studies require participants to record their everyday lives in considerable detail.

During the training period, field researchers were provided with detailed instructions on the HETUS methodology, activity classifications, completing time-use diaries, distinguishing between primary and secondary activities, recording multitasking, and communication procedures with participants. Particular emphasis was placed on how to record care labour and simultaneous activities.

On the final day of the training, a pilot implementation was conducted, and further pilot exercises were carried out at intervals in different districts thereafter. The pilot study was important for assessing the comprehensibility of the diaries, the adequacy of activity categories, and the practical challenges that could arise during data collection. As a result of the pilot implementation, various revisions were made to both the questionnaire forms and the diary design. In particular, it was deemed necessary to simplify

explanations, expand example entries, and prepare clearer instructions for participants.

During the pilot implementation phase, it was observed that some participants grouped various domestic activities carried out during the day into a single general category, "housework". Activities such as meal preparation, cleaning, childcare, and household organisation were often recorded together without being distinguished from one another. However, following more detailed guidance and examples provided by enumerators, these activities began to be recorded in a more disaggregated and detailed manner. This finding demonstrates that women, in particular, often do not treat unpaid domestic tasks as separate activities in their everyday lives, and that care and domestic labour are internalised as a "natural" part of daily routines. In this respect, the pilot process not only tested the data collection instruments, but also provided important methodological insights into how invisible labour is normalised and rendered invisible in everyday life.

One of the most significant issues encountered during the pilot phase was participants' initial difficulty in fully understanding the effort required to complete time-use diaries. Although participants agreed to take part in the study, they reported that completing the diaries was more demanding and time-consuming than they had anticipated. This clearly highlighted the issue of "respondent burden" commonly associated with time-use research.

For this reason, several adjustments were made to the data collection process before the full fieldwork began. In particular, instead of leaving the diaries with respondents and collecting them later, it was decided that enumerators would revisit households the day after the diaries were completed. The main aim of this approach was to review incomplete or incorrectly filled sections together with participants and thereby reduce data loss.

3.2 Sampling Strategy

The study's sampling design was initially planned on the basis of a probabilistic and systematic sampling approach. Accordingly, the six districts of the northern part of Cyprus were taken as the basis, and the number of households to be reached in each region was calculated based on population distribution. The study aimed to ensure coverage of both urban and rural areas and to construct a diverse sample including different age groups, household structures, and employment patterns.

However, due to practical and methodological challenges encountered during the fieldwork, the initially planned systematic sampling approach could not be fully implemented. In particular, the high level of participant effort required by time-use studies, the detailed nature of the diaries, and the need for repeated access to households significantly complicated the data collection process. For this reason, systematic sampling was combined with convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods during fieldwork.

In a small-scale context such as the northern part of Cyprus, where social relations are dense, access to participants was often facilitated through local social networks and relations of trust. In particular, local community leaders (mukhtars), local contacts, friendship networks, and community-based social ties played an important role in accessing households. Given that the study focused on relatively private domains such as everyday life practices, care arrangements, and household activities, participant trust was central to the data collection process.

Approximately 250 households were reached during fieldwork. However, due to the nature of time-use research, it was not possible to obtain complete data from all households. Some households initially agreed to participate but did not complete the time-use diaries, while in some cases, data were obtained only from

certain individuals within the household. In particular, the detailed and continuous recording requirements of the diaries led some participants to perceive the process as more demanding than expected.

As a result, complete data were obtained from 138 households, and 268 individuals were included in the study. 61.2% (n=164) of the participants were women, and 38.8% (n=104) were men. During the fieldwork process, it was observed that reaching male participants and ensuring the completion of diaries was particularly challenging. In some cases, while female participants were willing to take part in the study, male household members refused to complete the diaries. This demonstrates that gender relations shape not only everyday life patterns but also participation in research processes.

Participants were asked to complete two separate time-use diaries: one for a weekday and one for a weekend day. Within the scope of the study, a total of 268 primary diaries (weekdays) and 112 secondary diaries (weekend days) were collected. Accordingly, a total of 380 time-use diaries were analysed.

While completion rates for the first diaries were relatively high, greater data loss was observed in the second diaries, particularly those covering weekend days. Some participants completed the weekday diary but left the weekend diary incomplete or did not submit it at all. This clearly reflects the issue of "respondent burden", which is frequently discussed in time-use research.

3.3 Fieldwork Process and Challenges

The fieldwork phase of the study began in November 2024 and continued until October 2025. Spreading the data collection process over a long period enabled the observation of seasonal routines and variations in everyday life patterns, but also created additional challenges in terms of field coordination and participant follow-up. Many of the issues identified in the pilot study persisted throughout the fieldwork. The most significant methodological problem encountered during the study was the incomplete completion or non-return of time-use diaries by participants.

Participants were given detailed explanations of the research process, and explanatory leaflets on how to complete the diaries were prepared. Despite this, many participants agreed to take part without fully realising the level of detailed effort required by the diaries, and later either did not complete them or could not be re-contacted by the researchers.

This situation appears to be closely linked to the intensity of everyday life. Paradoxically, time-use studies require detailed time recording from individuals who are themselves under the greatest time pressure. Among individuals with high care responsibilities in particular, refusal to participate fully, incomplete diaries, or complete withdrawal from the process were more frequently observed. This demonstrates that the very time pressure the study seeks to analyse was also experienced within the data collection process itself.

Family-based participation also constituted an important challenge during the research process. Many participants initially assumed that only their own individual participation was required, and only later realised that other household members were also expected to complete diaries. In particular, involving male participants proved more difficult in some cases. While female participants were generally more willing to participate and complete the diaries, their spouses often refused to do so. This highlights the extent to which gender roles directly shape research participation processes.

Another notable finding from the fieldwork was the difference in how male and female participants described their everyday activities. Female participants experienced a stronger sense of pressure to appear continuously productive, whether in paid or unpaid work. Male participants, on the other hand, showed fewer reservations when reporting activities such as extended television viewing, resting, or playing games.

This reflects not only differences in time use but also the influence of gender norms on how everyday life is reported.

This situation demonstrates that time-use data is not merely a measured reality, but is also related to how participants perceive, interpret, and represent their everyday lives. In particular, gender norms influence which activities are considered “important”, “productive”, or “worthy of reporting”. Female participants often tended to describe care and domestic activities in greater detail, whereas male participants appeared more comfortable reporting leisure activities. This not only reflects differences in time use, but also makes visible how everyday life is socially represented. Participants were observed presenting their daily activities in ways that aligned with socially acceptable norms.

Within the scope of the study, data were collected from both urban and rural areas across six districts of the northern part of Cyprus—Nicosia, Kyrenia, Famagusta, Morphou, Trikomo, and Lefka. In a small-scale context such as the northern part of Cyprus, where social relations are dense, trust played a central role in fieldwork. Access to participants was often achieved not only through standard sampling procedures but also through local social networks, community-based connections, and interpersonal relations of trust. In particular, local community leaders (mukhtars), local acquaintances, and regional social ties played an important role in accessing households. Given that the study directly focused on everyday life practices, care arrangements, and household activities, participant trust became a critical component of the data collection process. In many cases, researchers and enumerators had to provide detailed explanations of the study’s purpose and build trust with participants. This demonstrates that, in small-scale contexts, time-use data are produced not only through technical instruments but also through social relations.

The fieldwork also required a significant level of logistical coordination. Each household required at least two visits. Despite prior telephone appointments, many interviews could not be completed due to working schedules, care responsibilities, or changes in daily plans. In particular, field visits to remote areas often resulted in substantial time loss due to participants being unavailable or diaries not being ready for collection.

3.4 Data Coding and Data Entry Process

In time-use research, the coding of diaries and the data entry process constitute as important a methodological stage as data collection itself. In particular, converting open-ended diary entries into standard activity categories, classifying simultaneous activities, and checking incomplete records required a careful, intensive data-processing procedure.

Prior to data entry, all diaries were first manually checked and coded using printed forms. Activities were pre-coded according to the HETUS classification, and incomplete, ambiguous, or contradictory entries were, as far as possible, re-evaluated using field notes and enumerators’ feedback. In cases where time intervals were left blank or activities overlapped, diaries were reviewed in detail. Activities recorded in the diaries were classified under core categories such as personal care, paid work, education, domestic activities and care labour, social life, leisure, media use, and travel.

Following the control and pre-coding phase, an Excel-based structured data entry system was developed in order to standardise the data entry process. Through this system, activities recorded in the diaries, time intervals, primary and secondary activities, location of activities, and persons present were systematically transferred into the dataset. The data entry template was designed to ensure that data entered by different researchers were coded as consistently as possible.

4. Preliminary Findings: Gendered Patterns in Everyday Life

This section presents the initial findings of the time-use survey conducted in the northern part of Cyprus from a gender perspective.

4.1 Characteristics of the Participants

Data were collected from a total of 138 households, and 268 individuals were included in the study. Participants were asked to complete two separate time-use diaries: one for a weekday and one for a weekend day. Within the scope of the study, a total of 268 weekday and 112 weekend diaries were obtained, for a total of 380 time-use diaries analysed.

Of the participants, 61.2% were women (n=164) and 38.8% were men (n=104). During the fieldwork process, it was observed that reaching male participants and ensuring the completion of diaries was particularly challenging. In some cases, while female participants were willing to take part in the study, male household members refused to complete the diaries. This demonstrates that gender relations shape not only everyday life patterns but also participation in research processes.

The average age of participants was approximately 45. The sample was constructed to include different age groups, ranging from young adults to older age cohorts. This allows for comparisons of everyday time-use patterns across different life-cycle stages.

In terms of employment status, a significant proportion of participants were active in the labour market. Approximately 62% of participants reported being engaged in paid work during the 7 days prior to the survey (n=166). In contrast, around 38% stated that they were not in paid employment. This structure is important for enabling the joint analysis of paid labour and unpaid care work within the study.

Regarding educational attainment, the sample shows a relatively heterogeneous distribution. High school graduates constitute the largest group among participants. In addition, individuals with primary, lower secondary, tertiary, and postgraduate education levels are also represented in the sample. This diversity allows for comparisons of everyday life practices across different educational groups.

Within the scope of the study, data were collected from both urban and rural areas across six districts of the northern part of Cyprus—Nicosia, Kyrenia, Famagusta, Morphou, Trikomo and Lefka. Approximately 71% of participants reside in urban areas, while 29% live in rural areas. This enables the comparison of everyday life patterns, care arrangements, and time-use practices across different spatial contexts.

4.2 Gender-Based Labour Time Inequality in the northern part of Cyprus

The study's findings show that there is no substantial difference between women and men in terms of total labour time in the northern part of Cyprus. Women perform an average of 42.8 hours of total labour per week, while men perform 42.1 hours. In other words, women and men allocate a similar amount of total labour time. However, this similarity conceals important differences in the nature of labour (Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, a significant share of women's time use is structured around unpaid domestic labour and care activities, whereas paid market labour is more dominant in men's time use. Men's total weekly market labour amounts to 31.9 hours, compared to 19.5 hours for women. In contrast, women's total weekly domestic labour is 23.3 hours, nearly twice that of men (10.2 hours). Women spend approximately 2.3 times as much time on domestic labour as men. Conversely, men devote significantly more time to paid work; they perform around 61% more market labour than women.

This pattern indicates that everyday life in the northern part of Cyprus is broadly consistent with the gendered division of labour widely discussed in the international literature. Although total labour time appears similar, women’s labour is largely concentrated in invisible, unpaid, and household-based activities. Men’s labour, by contrast, is concentrated in paid and visible market-based activities.

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Average Weekly Market and Domestic Labour Time in the northern Part of Cyprus (Hours), 2024–2025



Source: Parity Project Time-Use Survey, 2024–2025. Weekly totals are calculated using weighted weekday and weekend diaries.

When weekday patterns are examined, it is evident that men’s time is largely organised around paid market labour. On average, men spend 28.3 hours on market labour during weekdays, while women allocate only 17.9 hours to paid work. In contrast, women’s weekday domestic labour time amounts to 16.3 hours, significantly higher than men’s (6.5 hours). This pattern indicates that women simultaneously carry out paid employment alongside care and domestic responsibilities in their everyday lives (Table 1).

Weekend patterns are also noteworthy. While men’s market labour declines substantially at weekends, women’s domestic labour burden continues. Women perform a total of 7 hours of domestic labour at weekends, compared to only 3.7 hours for men. This finding demonstrates that domestic labour constitutes a continuous responsibility for women that is not confined to specific working hours. In other words, whereas weekends represent increased rest and leisure time for men, care and domestic responsibilities largely continue for women.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Weekly Labour Time in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025

Average work time · Main activity · Weekly estimate						
	Weekdays · 5 days		Weekend · 2 days		Weekly total	
						
	Market work	Household work	Market work	Household work	Market work	Household work
Women	17.9	16.3	1.6	7.0	19.5	23.3
Men	28.3	6.5	3.6	3.7	31.9	10.2

Source: Parity Project Time Use Survey, 2024–2025.
Weekly totals are calculated by weighting weekday and weekend diaries.

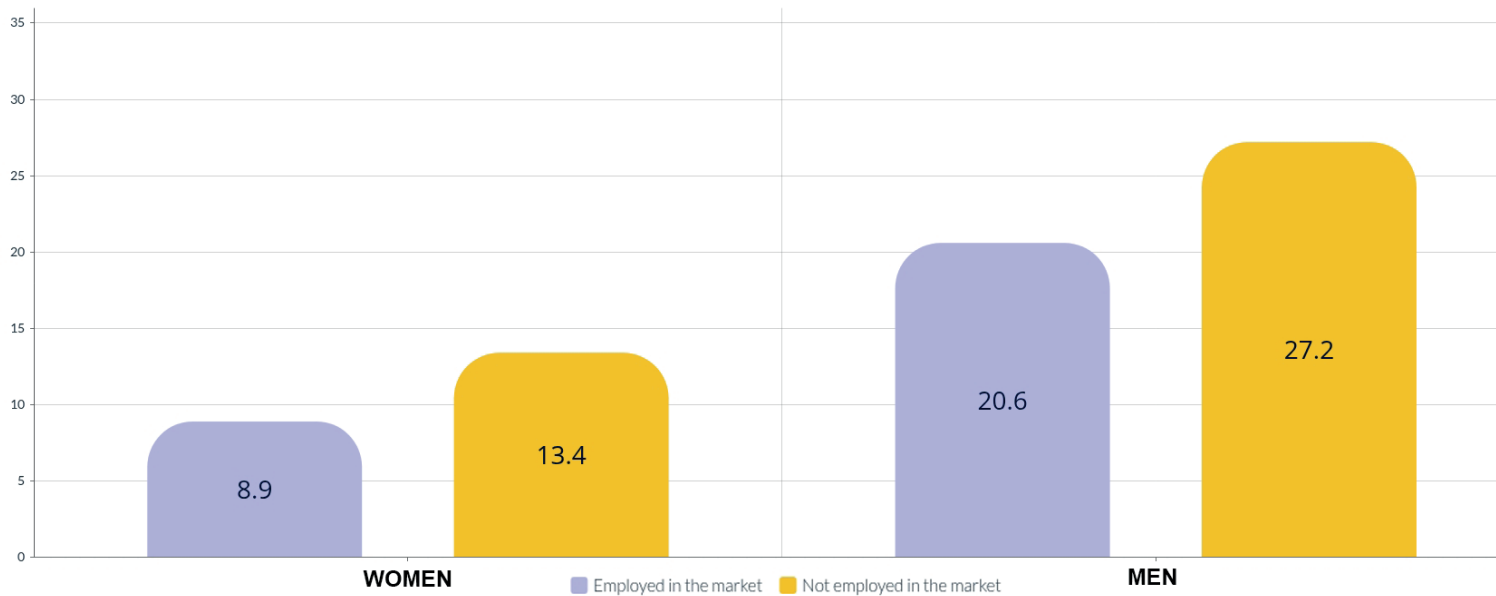
The study’s findings demonstrate that gender inequality is reproduced not only in the labour market but also through the temporal organisation of everyday life. In the northern part of Cyprus, the limited availability of public care services means that childcare, eldercare, and care for the sick are largely provided within households. This care burden is predominantly shouldered by women. As a result, women’s time devoted to unpaid care labour increases, while the time available for social life, rest, and personal activities becomes more constrained.

In this respect, time-use data show that gender inequality should be analysed not only through economic indicators, but also through the temporal structure of everyday life, care responsibilities, and relations of invisible labour.

4.3 Distribution of Unpaid Labour and Childcare Time

Figure 2 shows that women spend more time on domestic labour than men, regardless of whether they are in paid employment. Even women in paid employment allocate more time to domestic activities than men do. This indicates that women are required to simultaneously undertake paid work and unpaid care responsibilities. In other words, women’s everyday lives are largely shaped within a structure that can be described as a “double burden”.

Figure 2: Gender and Employment Status Distribution of Average Weekly Domestic Labour Time in the northern part of Cyprus (Aged 15+), 2024–2025



Source: Parity Project Time-Use Survey, 2024–2025. Weekly totals are calculated using weighted weekday and weekend diaries.

The findings of the Parity Project Time-Use Survey reveal a clear gender inequality in the time allocated to childcare in the northern part of Cyprus (Table 1). Among households with children, women spend approximately twice as much time on childcare activities as men do. These findings are consistent with the international time-use literature and indicate that childcare continues to be regarded primarily as a responsibility of women.

As shown in Table 2, women spend an average of 58.99 minutes per day (approximately 1 hour) on childcare, whereas for men this figure is 28.96 minutes (approximately half an hour). A similar pattern is observed among individuals in paid employment. Employed women spend an average of 67.44 minutes per day (approximately 1 hour and 7 minutes) on childcare, while employed men spend only 30.56 minutes. This demonstrates that women’s participation in the labour market does not reduce childcare responsibilities; rather, paid employment is added on top of an existing care burden.

When childcare activities are disaggregated into subcategories, the gender inequality becomes even more visible. Women spend an average of 22.17 minutes per day on physical care and supervision of children, whereas men spend only 6.04 minutes. Similarly, women devote 4.06 minutes to teaching the child something, 19.13 minutes to travelling for the child, and 12.17 minutes to reading, playing, or talking with the child. Men spend significantly less time on all of these activities. The fact that women spend nearly four times as much time as men on physical care and supervision is particularly striking.

By contrast, the only activity in which men spend more time than women is accompanying the child. Men spend an average of 6.46 minutes per day on this activity, compared to just 1.02 minutes for women. This suggests that childcare itself is internally differentiated along gender lines. Men tend to participate more in visible or externally oriented forms of care, while women carry out the routine, continuous, and sustaining dimensions of care work.

The findings also show that employed mothers spend more time on childcare than non-employed women. The increase in childcare time among employed women indicates that they are required to combine paid work with unpaid care responsibilities simultaneously, resulting in what can be described as a “double burden”.

Overall, the findings suggest that egalitarian norms regarding parenthood are not fully reflected in everyday practices. Although fathers do participate to some extent in childcare, the overall organisation of care work remains strongly gendered. Mothers continue to occupy the primary caregiving role, while fathers’ involvement remains more limited and secondary.

Table 2. Average daily time allocated to paid work, unpaid care labour, and childcare activities in households with children (minutes), by gender and employment status, the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025

Activity	All women	All men	Employed women	Employed men
 Total child care	58.99	28.96	67.44	30.56
 Physical care and supervision of the child	22.17	6.04	22.09	4.44
 Teaching the child something	4.06	0.21	6.51	0.28
 Travel for the child	19.13	9.60	24.88	11.39
 Reading, playing and talking with the child	12.17	6.25	12.33	5.28
 Accompanying the child	1.02	6.46	1.63	8.61
 Other child care activities	0.42	0.41	0.00	0.56

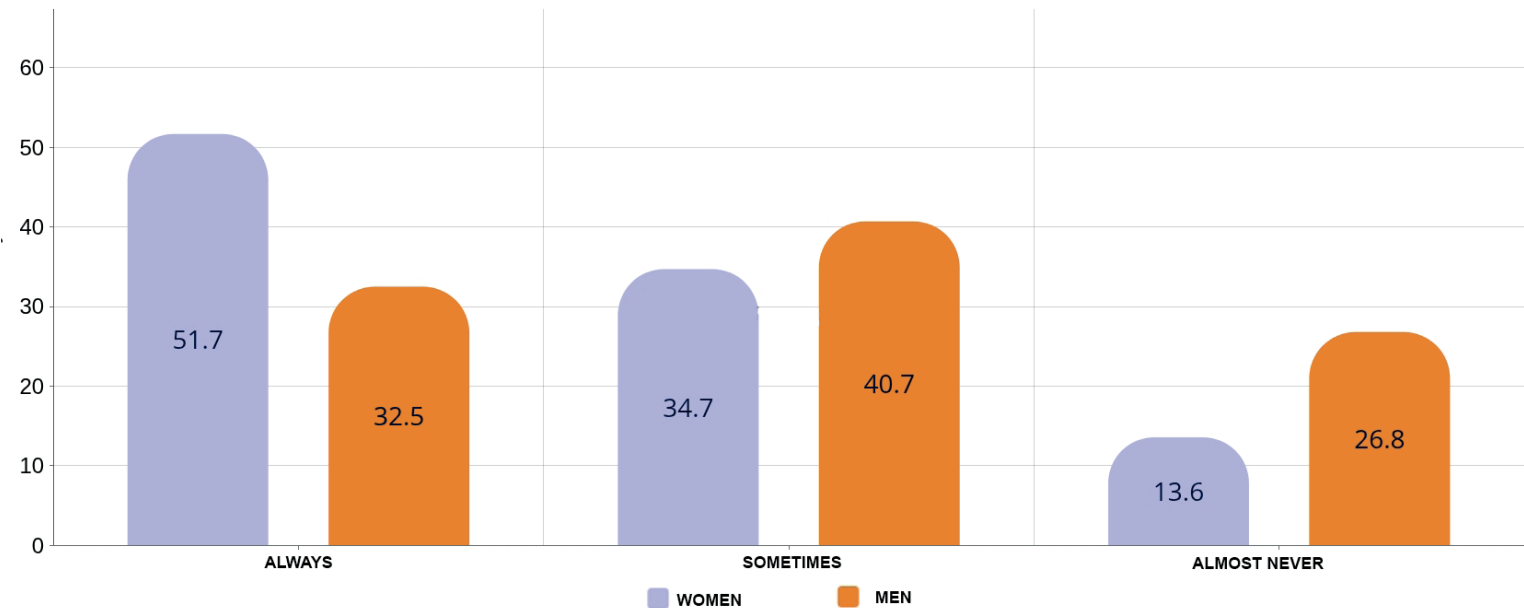
4.4 Time Pressure and Gender Inequality in Everyday Life

Figure 3 shows that women experience higher levels of time pressure in their everyday lives compared to men. While 51.7% of women reported that they “always” feel rushed, this proportion remains at 32.5% among men. In contrast, 26.8% of men stated that they “almost never” feel rushed, whereas this figure is only 13.6% for women.

These findings indicate that women’s daily lives are organised in a more intensive, fragmented, and continuously time-pressured manner. In particular, the simultaneous management of paid work, domestic labour, and care responsibilities limits women’s control over their time. Men, by contrast, appear to experience more uninterrupted leisure and personal time in their everyday lives.

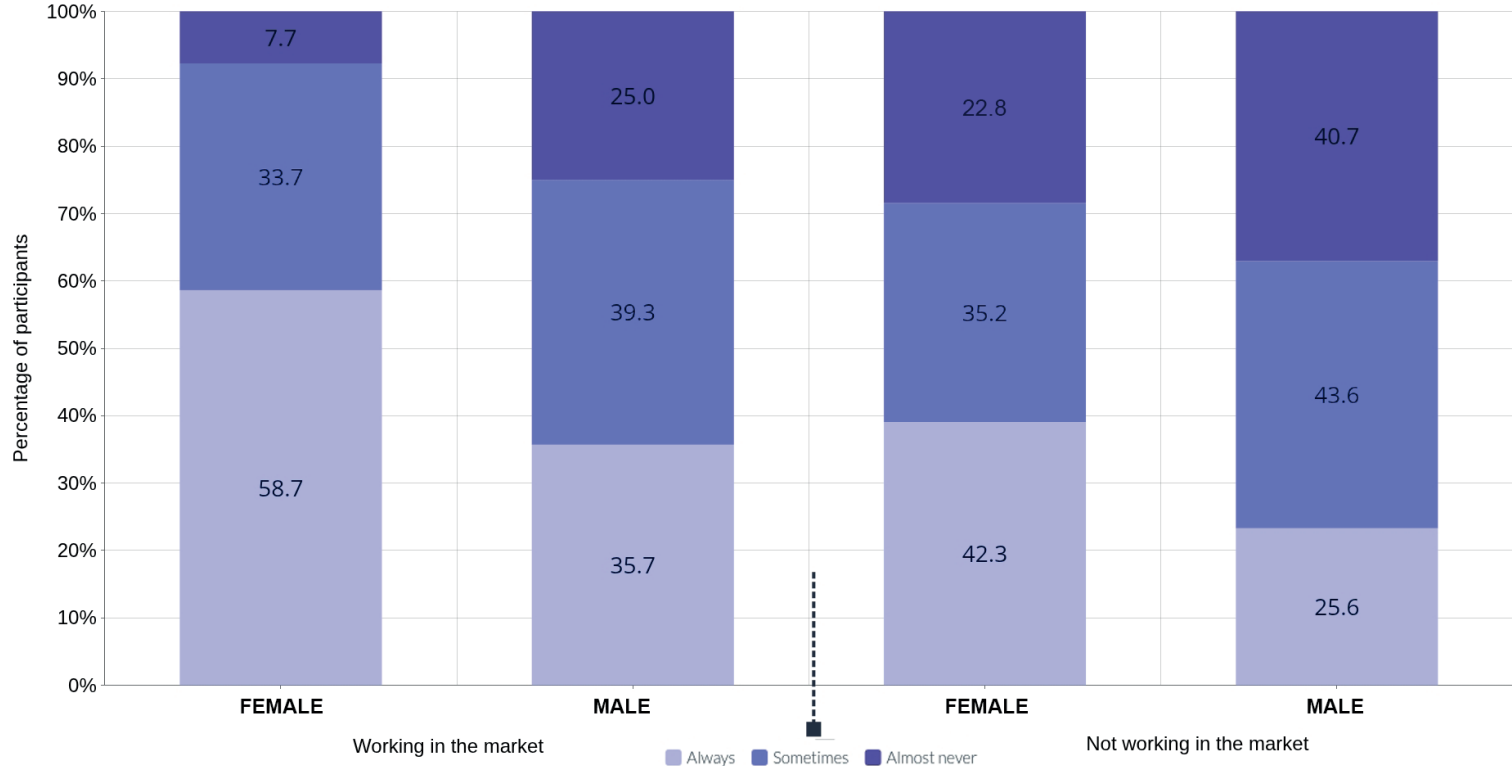
The findings also demonstrate that time poverty is not solely related to long working hours; it is also linked to individuals’ capacity to rest, to allocate time to themselves, and to exercise control over their daily schedules. Women’s higher levels of perceived time pressure make visible the impact of gendered care responsibilities on everyday life.

Figure 3. Distribution of responses to the question “How often do you feel rushed?” by gender (%), the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025



Source: Parity Project Time-Use Survey, 2024–2025.

Figure 4. Distribution of responses to the question “How often do you feel rushed?” by gender and employment status (%), the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025



Source: Parity Project Time-Use Survey, 2024–2025.

Figure 4 shows that time pressure is closely associated not only with gender, but also with paid employment status. In particular, women in paid employment experience significantly greater time pressure in their everyday lives. Among employed women, 58.7% reported that they “always” feel rushed, compared to 35.7% of employed men. In contrast, one quarter (25%) of employed men stated that they “almost never” feel rushed, whereas this proportion is only 7.7% among employed women.

A similar pattern is also observed among individuals who are not in paid employment. While 42.3% of non-employed women report that they “always” feel rushed, this proportion is 25.6% among men. In contrast, 30.8% of non-employed men state that they “almost never” feel rushed, which is considerably higher than the corresponding share among non-working women (22.5%).

These findings suggest that time pressure cannot be explained solely by labour market participation. The fact that even women who are not in paid employment report higher levels of time pressure than men highlights the central role of unpaid care labour and domestic responsibilities in shaping women's everyday lives. In other words, women's time poverty is not only rooted in their position in the labour market, but also in the gendered organisation of everyday life.

In particular, the highest levels of time pressure observed among employed women make visible the “double burden” arising from the simultaneous management of paid employment and unpaid care responsibilities. The consistently lower levels of time pressure reported by men, both employed and non-employed, indicate that control over everyday time is unequally distributed along gender lines.

These findings demonstrate that time poverty is not merely an economic issue, but a structural form of inequality closely linked to care responsibilities, the organisation of daily life, and gender norms.

5. Conclusion

This study, the first comprehensive HETUS-based time-use survey conducted in the northern part of Cyprus, demonstrates how gender inequalities are reproduced through the temporal organisation of everyday life. The findings show that although women's total labour time is close to that of men, it is largely concentrated in unpaid care labour and domestic activities. In particular, the simultaneous management of paid employment and care responsibilities among employed women generates higher levels of time pressure and time poverty.

The study also reveals that childcare and domestic labour continue to be largely perceived as women's responsibility. This indicates that gender equality cannot be assessed solely through labour market participation; it must also take into account care labour, everyday practices, and unequal control over time.

In this respect, the study makes visible the hidden dimensions of gender inequality in the northern part of Cyprus and provides important evidence-based contributions to care policies, public support mechanisms, and gender equality policy frameworks.

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CHAPTER 2

Gender-Based Invisible Labour and Urban Time Poverty in the northern Part of Cyprus

Nadia Karimi

ABSTRACT

Gender-based division of labour, particularly the invisible labour of women, is a critical but at the same time, undervalued and insufficiently recognised factor of urban gender inequality. While invisible labour is deeply rooted in social norms, it can reinforce urban gender inequality by unequal allocation of time to paid and unpaid labour, as well as to rest and leisure. This "time poverty", which has been structured and reinforced, can be a central component of broader gender-based spatial and social inequalities.

This study employs a unique and comprehensive quantitative dataset collected by the Turkish Cypriot Association of University Women under the EU-funded Parity Project, using detailed time use diaries from households and individuals in the northern part of Cyprus. This characteristic allows us to make an in-depth examination of daily routines and activities differentiated by gender. In doing so, activities are categorized comprehensively into paid employment, unpaid household labour involving cooking, cleaning, caregiving, and personal care, as well as sleeping, social participation, and leisure activities.

This study will analyse time-use data on the basis of participants' gender, employment status, rural and urban residence, and household composition variables. By using advanced pattern analysis methods (such as cluster analysis and activity sequencing), this study attempts to identify different behavioural and temporal patterns of time allocation within and between gender groups.

With this approach, the research explores how social norms function as structural constraints, shape the domestic distribution of unpaid labour, and contribute to unequal time allocation leading to urban time poverty. Thus, a particular focus is on how these gender-based labour patterns interrupt opportunities for rest or leisure and amplify experiences of time poverty differently by gender. In addition, caregiving activities (such as childcare, elderly care, etc.) and their social contexts are studied to understand their direct effects on individuals' understandings and realities of time poverty.

Overall, this research, by analysing time-use data, attempts to highlight invisible labour as an important factor of urban gender inequality and its role in creating unequal time allocation that leads to experiences of time poverty.

Keywords: Gender, Time poverty, Invisible labour, Urban inequality

INTRODUCTION

Yanatma, in a report published by Euronews, mentioned that, on average and compared to men, women spend 86% more time on unpaid work across 23 European countries. In other words, women are spending at least 262 minutes every day on unpaid work while men are spending 141 minutes. It means that we are facing 121 minutes of gaps each day. In simpler terms, if we want to rely on statistics and figures, in southern European cities, women's labour participation rates are the lowest (among OECD), with Italy at 42% and Greece at 45% in comparison with the EU average of 53% (Yanatma, 2025). These numbers are fuelling Time Poverty by scraping workforce participation. On the other hand, based on the EU Care Atlas, European women experience a Double Burden - working on their duties at paid jobs while accepting unfair responsibilities for unpaid work at their homes. This pattern can place women at greater risk, based on the demand for long-term care, which is mostly provided by women (EU Care Atlas, 2022; Hougaard Jensen, Pinkus, & Ruer, 2024).

Furthermore, Eurostat, in its 2025 report, emphasises that gendered time constraints and gender-based time poverty can operate as a structural barrier that is invisible, based on the traditional urban indicators (like employment or income), but at the same time, can lock women into domestic, education, and even care infrastructure routines (Eurostat, 2025).

Under these circumstances, the lens can zoom in a bit so that the northern part of Cyprus can be seen within the scope of Europe as well. This politically unrecognised and economically peripheral territory can be a compelling case for studying gender-based time poverty and examining all the circumstances and possibilities of its escalation.

Geopolitical isolation combined with strong family-based systems, can create conditions where women's unpaid care burdens remain invisible and at the same time systemically ingrained. To put it in a simpler word, this invisibility positions the northern part of Cyprus as a critical site for uncovering how gender-based time poverty can make a hidden but still powerful mechanism of urban inequality, especially when formal institutional support systems are limited and care responsibilities fall on women, unreasonably.

Whereas many time-use researchers (especially European ones) have documented persistent gender gaps in unpaid work, it has rarely been examined and evaluated how daily activity sequences can transform gender-based time poverty into a distinctly urban and spatial phenomenon. In other words, many of the studies measure hours, and just hours, but not the rhythms and limitations that form a day in one woman's life.

This study is trying to address this gap through three distinct contributions. Firstly, it deploys a time-use diary collected by the Parity Project. This time-use diary provides detailed records of daily activities, sequences, and time patterns from households in the northern part of Cyprus. Second, it utilises advanced pattern analysis methods like cluster analysis and activity sequencing to identify differentiated time routines and discover time poverty under the layers of daily rhythms rather than total numbers. Thirdly, this study explicitly frames invisible labour and gendered time poverty as processes that lead to urban inequality in a politically peripheral context.

This study follows three objectives. As the first objective, it evaluates how time is allocated across paid jobs, unpaid invisible labour(s) like cooking, cleaning, caregiving, etc., personal care and leisure activities as well. Then, disaggregating the patterns by gender, employment status, and urban-rural residence is the second step. The second objective is identifying temporal patterns and behavioural clusters that express gender-based time poverty through cluster and sequence analysis. And the last objective is situating micro-level patterns inside the broader context of urban inequality in the northern part of Cyprus. Trying to explore how limited formal care raises women's time limitations and reinforce spatial dimensions of gender inequality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender-based time poverty as a phenomenon, is where excessive unpaid work (mostly caregiving) limits time for paid labour, leisure, and personal well-being. This concept has emerged as a critical but understudied aspect of urban inequality, especially in peripheral European areas like the northern part of Cyprus. Despite the huge progress over this century, women still have a worse status than men in most economic, social, and political outcomes in EU and OECD countries. Here, unpaid work is a kind of barrier to paid work and even personal time for some women. On the other hand, unpaid work is like a second shift for many women, after they return home from their paid jobs (OECD, 2025a).

This literature review will review examine recent European studies (2023-2025) to evaluate time-use patterns, invisible labour, and methodological and spatial approaches to gender inequality. Besides, this literature review has a thematic order that can reveal persistent gaps in analysis and regional data coverage. Thereby, the cluster-based approach of this study is crucial for understanding how daily routines can form gendered (gender-based) experiences of urban inequality in the northern part of Cyprus.

Theme 1: Gendered Time Allocation and the Double Burden

Recent studies confirm that there is a persistence in the existence of gendered time poverty among European contexts. Women (girls as well) devote 2.5 hours more than men (per day) to unpaid domestic (mostly caregiving) work. It is worth noting that this amount in Northern African and Western Asian countries is at its highest level (UN Women, 2025). With a focus on Europe, it can be seen that women in 23 European countries do 86% more unpaid work than men. In other words, they spend 262 minutes per day, and men, spend only 141 minutes. As we can see, there is a 121-minute gap on a daily basis (Yanatma, 2025). But this inequality shows itself in a different way, when there is a goal to focus on employment contexts. In comparison to men, women have lower employment rates, and they are more likely to have a part-time job (to spend fewer hours on work) with the aim of being able to do their unpaid duties. This can negatively affect their earnings, their career prospects, and their social protection entitlements (like their pension income) (OECD, 2025b).

Based on the data we have from the UK and some other high-income countries, the concept of the "Double burden" remains robust and reveals a sharp divide. For instance, women are doing more unpaid work inside the house, and men are doing more paid work outside. The most important aspect of these data is that this pattern has remained stable over the past quarter-century, despite women's rising educational attainment (Our World in Data, 2024).

There is valuable research on Ghana, and its results demonstrate that women's working days are longer if time commuting and household work are included. Besides, because of women's greater dependency on public transport and higher rates of small-scale self-employment, women are experiencing more time poverty and its limitations than men (Nazneen et al., 2024).

These patterns show how unpaid duties and responsibilities interact with urban spatial structures, especially transport accessibility, and how they intensify gendered time poverty.

However, existing research mostly focuses on aggregate time totals rather than on how activities are sequenced throughout the day. And it can limit our understanding of how this kind of time-related limitations structures women's day-by-day experiences and their opportunities for rest, leisure, and autonomous time as well.

Theme 2: Methodological Approaches in Time-Use Research

Over the years, time-use research methodology has evolved, but there are still gaps in analytical approaches. Generally, the time-diary method is more reliable than other methods because it allows richer analysis of daily routines. To put it in simpler words, they are not only aggregating time routines but also measuring sequences and clock-times (Our World in Data, 2024).

Recent methodological innovations can demonstrate the crucial role of capturing time-related patterns. In other words, they can show the potential for analysing the types and time-related contexts of daily routines, including types of activities that can show how people spend the most important portions of time and spotting the when, where, and how those activities spread out through a day (Barber et al., 2024).

Researchers of Social Practice Theory admit that time-use surveys represent a considerable source of microdata about how people's activities are performed within a 24-hour day. The analysis of these kinds of time-related surveys can reveal a range of temporal activity connections, including both sequence and synchronisation with degrees of diversity/uniformity and sequential directionality (Southerton et al., 2024). The Centre for Time Use Research recently developed an instrument compatible with the Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS) classification, enabling comparative analysis (Centre for Time Use Research, 2024). But there is still an issue. Application of these kinds of approaches to gendered inequality and to urban contexts still remains limited.

Most of the European time-related and time-use studies still emphasise cross-national comparisons of total hours rather than investigate how time-related ordering and spatial contexts of activities can create and robust gendered experiences of time poverty. Therefore, we can say that this methodological gap is critical for understanding gender-based time poverty as an urban phenomenon, wherein care duties, commuting, paid jobs, and rest might be as important as total hours allocated.

Theme 3: Time Poverty and Urban Spatial Inequality

Despite growing recognition of Urban Inequality's multifaceted character, the spatial dimensions of time poverty, especially gender-based time poverty, are still significantly undertheorised. The world is moving in a direction where urban state, location, networks, and access shape everyday lives. Despite this reality, there are still many areas of academic research that conceptualise, measure, and understand inequalities as non-spatial and non-geographic as well (Sarkar et al., 2024).

Most urban inequality studies focus on how economic inequality interacts with differences and gaps in terms of race, age, gender, ethnicity, and even migration; and how these factors determine residential segregation, housing inequality, and environmental injustice. But they rarely have integrated gender-based time-use patterns into urban inequality frameworks (Florida & Fasche, 2020).

Gauvin et al. in 2020 studied the gender gap in urban mobility in Santiago, Chile. Their study revealed that women visit fewer unique locations than men and distribute their daily time, less equally between locations. Besides, there is a wider mobility gap linked with lower income and a lack of public/private transportation options. These findings show that urban spatial structures like transport infrastructure, service location, and even residential patterns directly form gendered time-related limitations.

There is another research on Southern European cities that examined spatial inequalities deriving from changes/shifts in local economies, welfare policy, housing markets, and even transportation. This research shows that these forces can reshape the social and spatial structure of cities (Mapping Inequalities Project, 2024); but unfortunately, this study has neither used or combined time-use analysis, nor evaluated how spatial layouts reinforce women's unpaid burdens and limit their time-related autonomy.

Theme 4: Peripheral Regions and Data Gaps

Time-related studies are also valuable from a geographical perspective. They can show important gaps that mirror broader patterns of scholarly attention. For instance, spatial inequality research in Europe documented growing urban-rural educational differences. Based on this study, urban-rural gaps in higher education access are greater between men than women. But there are still underexamined peripheral and contested territories (Zahl-Thanem & Rye, 2024). With more precision and focus, it should be said that peripheral European contexts, where not only formal care infrastructure is limited but also excluded from international statistical systems compound invisibility, receive no scholarly attention.

The northern part of Cyprus is a great example of this gap. The northern part of Cyprus is a politically unrecognised territory that is excluded from EU data collection systems. It caused absence from Eurostat's Harmonised European Time Use Survey, the European Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Equality Index, and OECD comparative frameworks. This absence is important in case of differences in women's and also men's labour market outcomes *that reflect gender norms and stereotypes around paid work and unpaid duties; and it's obvious that these stereotypes have an interaction with socio-economic environments, such as unequal distributions of family leave, insufficient access to an affordable childcare system and long-term care as well* (OECD, 2025a).

Conclusion: Research Gaps and Study Contribution

This literature review can help to reveal three critical gaps in academia. First, during aggregating well-documented time-use disparities, sequence-based analysis can reveal how activities are ordered within a day. But it has still remained rare with a limited understanding of how time poverty is actually experienced. Second, spatial dimensions of time poverty are still undertheorised. Therefore, there is still a question about how urban infrastructure, residential locations, and urban service accessibility interact with gender-based time allocation.

Thirdly, unfortunately, peripheral and contested regions that support systems (in their institutional forms) might be limited and are systematically excluded from European frameworks. That's why in these kind of places, women's time burden situation may be acute.

This study is trying to address these gaps through three contributions:

By deploying detailed time-use diary data from the northern part of Cyprus citizens collected by the Parity project, by employing cluster analysis and activity sequencing methods to find temporal patterns beyond aggregate totals, and finally, by framing invisible labour and gender-based time poverty as mechanisms producing urban-spatial inequality, explicitly.

This research aims to provide important empirical evidence for understanding how urban inequality operates through temporal and spatial mechanisms by examining how daily activity sequences can shape gender-based time poverty.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, cross-sectional time-use data were collected in November 2024 - October 2025 in urban and rural areas of the northern part of Cyprus as part of the Parity Project. The sample includes 138 households and 268 individuals aged 15 and older living in these households. Each household member completed an individual questionnaire and one or two 24-hour time-use diaries (a weekday and a weekend day), recorded at 10-minute intervals, and a total of 380 dairies were filled.

For each survey, respondents recorded their main activities, locations, and the people with whom they collaborated on those activities. Alongside that, they completed a detailed individual questionnaire to capture sociodemographic features, labour-market status, education, health, and household composition. Time-use diaries are coded into activity categories such as work (paid work), unpaid domestic work(s), unpaid caregiving duties, commuting, travel, personal care, sleep, leisure, and social time. For each respondent, the total minutes per day spent in each category are computed by summing all episodes across the two diary days and averaging to obtain a typical day. In this way, time poverty is operationalised in two ways: First, as a continuous measure that is defined by the total time spent on paid work, unpaid duties (domestic work + caregiving), and commuting for work and care responsibilities. Secondly, as a binary indicator that identifies individuals whose combined work, unpaid domestic duties, caregiving, and commuting exceeded 11 hours. In addition, to measure time pressure, a single question was asked in the individual questionnaire: how often respondents felt rushed in their daily lives. These indicators will be utilised for the analysis in this paper.

Our analysis will proceed in four different stages. The first stage is about objective time-use patterns, based on gender differences. These patterns will be characterised using our time-use diary data from the northern part of Cyprus across five important domains (Travel, leisure, paid work, unpaid care, domestic care). The means, medians, and standard deviations are used to describe and analyse time-use patterns, with the aim of determining gender gaps and heterogeneity.

The second stage is allocated to calculating threshold-based time poverty measures. We will identify the prevalence rate through the total work > 11 hours. Then, at the third stage, we will shift our analysis to subjective time poverty pressure through "Feeling Rushed" (Always/Sometimes/Almost never). Testing relations with gender-based crosstabs against structural factors by using χ^2 , linear-by-linear, and Spearman ρ tests, prioritising descriptive patterns. And at the final step, we will do a hierarchical interpretation. It can help us link our findings to gendered inequality, based on structural unpaid responsibilities.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Time Use Patterns by Gender

In this section, descriptive results and findings from the time-use diary data collected in the northern part of Cyprus during 2024 and 2025 are presented. Also, this study seeks to examine gender-based differences across important time-based categories and daily situations.

Besides, we will put the outcomes into global (mostly European) patterns to see the differences across parts of Europe that experience different institutions and monitoring processes.

As Table 1 shows, one of the most critical gender gaps revealed in our data was gender-based disparities in unpaid caregiving responsibilities within the families in the northern part of Cyprus. Here, women allocate an average of 3.26 hours a day to unpaid care work. While this average amount for men was only 1.20 hours per day. In other words, there is a 1.96-hour gap between men and women; and this data indicates a gender ratio of 2.51:1. This means that women perform approximately 2.5 times as much unpaid care work as men.

But this is not a new finding. This pattern is consistent with the global benchmark. According to UN Women, women spend 2.5 times as many hours per day on care and domestic tasks as men (UN Women, 2024a, 2025). At the same time, women perform 75% of the unpaid care work globally! This data tells us that women are dedicating (on average) 4 hours and 25 minutes per day to unpaid care works, while men`s number is 1 hour and 23 minutes (United Nations, 2025). Based on these data, we can say that the northern part of Cyprus`s finding of 3.26 hours for women is below the global average but still remains consistent with the regional pattern. Finally, UN Women (2023) projections demonstrate that from a global point of view, women spend 2.8 more hours than men on unpaid care and domestic works; and this is slightly higher than the 1.96 hours gap that was observed in the northern part of Cyprus.

Another gender-based gap revealed in the analysis of time-use data was unpaid domestic work. For this daily duty, we found another gender difference as well. Based on our data, women dedicate 2.88 hours daily to unpaid domestic work. Meanwhile, men allocated only 1.10 hours. It can be seen that there is a gap of 1.78 hours for unpaid domestic work as well. In simple terms, we could say that Household labour is still disproportionately feminine work even if women (increasingly) participate in paid works too.

Combining unpaid care (3.26 hours) and unpaid domestic work (2.88 hours), it can be concluded that women in the northern part of Cyprus spend, on average, 6.14 hours per day on unpaid domestic duties. In more simple words, more than 25% of a 24-hour day. This is a burden. A burden that represents critical constraints on women`s time-based autonomy, opportunities for full-time paid jobs, and even educational advancements.

Despite this, these findings align with the OECD (2025) data, which showed that women bear a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic work. Based on the report, women spend twice as much on unpaid domestic work, which acts as a barrier to paid jobs and even serves as a “second shift” for those who already have a paid job (OECD, 2025).

However, the narrative does not end here. There are more differences and disparities based on paid work patterns. Men spend (on average) 5.67 hours on paid work each day, whereas women spend around 3.59 hours. The difference is 2.08 hours. As we can see, this paid work gap, somehow, mirrors the unpaid care work gap (1.96 hours). A classic double burden pattern that can constrain the women`s capacity (and ability) for formal employment.

The gender-based employment gap in the EU was 10% in 2024- which means that 70.8% of women were employed, compared to 80.08% of employed men. According to the European Commission, women work more hours per week, but the key is that they spend more hours on unpaid work (European Commission, 2024). The northern part of Cyprus data reveals a temporal mechanism in this kind of employment gap, and distribution data can illuminate this pattern.

Approximately 36.6% of our respondents reported no paid work activity on the reference day. So, it can be proven that unpaid care burdens between certain groups (here, women) prevent formal employment. Worldwide, 45% of women of working age are outside the labour force solely because of their unpaid care and/or domestic duties. For men, this number is only 5% (UN Women, 2024b).

Based on data from the northern part of Cyprus, women dedicate almost twice as much time to child/elderly care as men. Here, it must be noted that this amount, compared with other unpaid domestic care and work, is lower but still reflects gender norms. This means that caregiving duties for children and older family members are firmly rooted in traditional gender roles. This cultural pattern can reinforce broader time poverty dynamics.

Finally, gender-based analysis of travel and commuting time presented an insightful picture. Men spend on average, 1.34 hours daily on travel activities, while women spend 1.19 hours. Here, based on the data,

we can see that men are more engaged in formal employment and out-of-home activities that require commuting. At the same time, the distribution data revealed important heterogeneity. Approximately 13.4% reported having no time for travel, while others say they commute over 5 hours daily. From the perspective of time poverty, we have to say that travel time can represent an additional time-based burden that combines paid jobs and unpaid duties. Particularly for those with multiple roles in their families.

Significant results can be observed by focusing on heterogeneity and gender-based time poverty in the data. For unpaid care work, the median value is 1.67-hour. Approximately 17.2% reported having no unpaid caregiving duties. At the same time, some participants informed about over 11 hours daily. This is an extreme disparity, highly concentrated within a certain group, and can constitute severe time poverty.

As a great paradox, despite the huge gap in unpaid care hours (2.5 times higher for women), men's and women's leisure time is almost equal. What insights can be gained from this portion of the data? The most important point is that this balanced time allocation for leisure between men and women is likely to be accompanied by levels of psychological pressure in daily life experience. In simpler terms, the objective patterns of time allocation are insightful, but they cannot necessarily reflect the lived experience of individuals (especially women) in their everyday lives.

Recent studies show that perceived time pressure often correlates weakly with actual and reported working hours (Kelliher et al., 2023); rather, it is more like a function of task combination and psychological pressure of multitasking (Darouei et al., 2024).

Table 1: Summary of objective time use patterns by gender in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025

Time Category	Women	Men	Gender Gap	Global Benchmark	Source
Unpaid Care Work	3.26 hours	1.30 hours	+1.96 hours (women)	4.42 hours women 1.38 hours men	UN Women, 2024
Unpaid Domestic Work	2.88 hours	1.10 hours	+1.78 hours (women)	4.37 hours women 2.35 hours men	Yanatma, 2025
Total Unpaid Work	6.14 hours	2.40 hours	+3.74 hours (women)	~4 hours women ~2 hours men	OECD, 2025
Paid Work	3.59 hours	5.67 hours	-2.08 hours (women)	70.8% employed women 80.8% employed men	European Commission, 2024
Childcare	0.38 hours	0.20 hours	+0.18 hours (women)	2.5x ratio (F:M)	UN Women, 2025
Travel Times	1.19 hours	1.34 hours	-0.15 hours (women)	-	Parity Time-use Survey 2024-2025
Leisure	6.37 hours	6.50 hours	-0.13 hours (women)	-	Parity Time-use Survey 2024-2025

Sources: TCAUW 2025 Time-use Survey 2024-2025

The Unequal Distribution of Unpaid Care Work

The distribution of unpaid care work can show us the right skewness, which means a substantial inequality in how care work is allocated across the population. The median number for unpaid care work is 1.67 hours. This number is considerably lower than the mean values (3.26 hours for women and 1.30 hours for men). This difference can signal that the distribution is skewed by some who perform exceptionally high amounts of unpaid care work. It should be remembered that 17.2% of our population reported 0 unpaid care work and some reported over 11 hours. The second group spends almost 46% of their daily time on unpaid caregiving duties.

UN Women, in 2024, notes that if unpaid care work for women were valued in money, it would exceed 40% of GDP in some countries. Still, this important labour remains invisible in national statistics and even national budgets. On the other hand, the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2024) also reported that women are carrying a disproportionate share of unpaid care work duties and responsibilities, and this amount is enough to prevent them from participating in the labour force.

Table 2: Distributional characteristics of key time-use categories by gender in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025

Time Category	Median (h)	Mean Women (h)	Mean Men (h)	Reporting Zero%	Max (h)	Distribution Type
Unpaid Care Work	1.67	3.26	1.30	17.2	>11	Right skewed
Paid Work	5.17	3.59	5.67	36.6	>15	Bimodal
Travel Time	1.00	1.19	1.34	13.4	>5	Right skewed
Unpaid Domestic Work	-	2.88	1.10	-	-	Right skewed

Sources: TCAUW 2025 Parity Time-use Survey 2024-2025

On the other hand, we can see a complementary heterogeneity in paid work. The median paid work, based on the northern part of Cyprus data is 5.17 hours. But, at the same time, 36.6% of our respondents, report 0 paid employment on the reference day. Also, we can find that there are some individuals who work for over 15 hours per day. What points can these numbers reflect? Maybe part-time and informal jobs, and the exclusion of some groups (here, women) from formal labour market participation.

Table 3: The care-employment trade-off in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024–2025

Zero-activity Group	% of sample	Gender Composition	Structural interpretation
0-Unpaid care	17.2	Men Predominantly	Freedom of care duties can enable full labour market engagements.
0-Paid Work	36.6	Women predominantly	Care burden(s) is excluded from formal jobs, non-working days and even retirements.
0-Travel	13.4	Mixed	Remote work, unemployment, care-bound

Sources: TCAUW 2025 Parity Time-use Survey 2024-2025

It is worth mentioning that the relationship between unpaid care work and paid work exclusion(s), reveals an important mechanism. This mechanism shows that time poverty can be translated into some kind of economic inequality. In this case, Hayes et al. (2020) confirmed that in the USA women spend more time than men on unpaid care work and this amount not only limits women`s career choices but also has a strong effect on their economic power as well as their health and well-being.

The median number for travel and commuting time is 1.0 hours! At the same time, 13.4% reported 0 time for travel, but we can see over 5 hours of daily travel. This tail can show individuals with long-distance commutes, multiple job locations, or care-related travel chain (such as home --> childcare drop-off --> workplace --> elderly care --> childcare pick-up --> shopping --> home).

From a time poverty perspective, this travel time number shows us an additional burden that is made by the combination of unpaid work and paid jobs. Nazneen et al. (2024) found that in Urban Ghana, women`s working days are longer than that of men`s, and because of this, they are experiencing more time poverty than men. Also, this study shows that in Urban Ghana, women rely more on public transportation and small-scale self-employment.

Table 4: Median-mean gaps as indicators of inequality in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024-2025

Time Category	Median (h)	Overall Mean (h)	Median-Mean Gap	Skewness
Unpaid Care Work	1.57	~2.28*	+0.61	extreme care burdens pull mean up
Paid Work	5.17	~4.63**	-0.54	many zero-work days lower mean
Travel Time	1.00	~1.27***	+0.27	extreme commutes pull mean up

*Weighted Average of Women (3.26h) and men (1.30h)

**Weighted Average of women (3.59h) and men (5.67h)

***Weighted Average of women (1.19h) and men (1.34h)

Source: TCAUW 2025 Parity Time-use Survey 2024-2025

Returning to the data, when distributions are right skewed, it indicates that while most individuals experience moderate levels, there is a subset experience high burdens that pull the mean upward (von Hippel, 2005).

The World Economic Forum (2024) informed that women are globally spending, on average, three times more hours than men on unpaid care work, but this number cannot show us the actual difference between countries. For example, in some Latin American countries, women spend up to 7 times and in India 8 times more hours than men. In the northern part of Cyprus, we see a ratio of 2.51:1. This finding shows the territory lies between Europe and extreme global experiences. And these distributional inequalities can be mentioned in the differentiated subjective experience of time poverty.

Threshold-Based Measures of Time Poverty

Threshold-based measures for time poverty provide a binary classification. This classification of individuals is based on whether their total work burden exceeds a pre-determined time limit or not. As mentioned in the methodology section and according to the time poverty literature, individuals who work 11 hours or more per day (at least 77 hours per week) for both paid jobs and unpaid duties and responsibilities, are classified as time poor (Bardasi & Wodon, 2010; Vickery, 1977). This approach shows a straightforward (and even simple) metric for measuring gender-based time poverty. But the case is, this simplicity can obscure some crucial gendered dimension(s) of time use. A database available in the northern part of Cyprus shows that 61.9% of men participate in the labour force. This number for women is only 38.3%. Also, the employment rate for men in the northern part of Cyprus is 58.9%, while the rate for women is only 36.1% (Statistics Institute, 2023).

It is important to keep in mind that when unpaid care responsibilities come into the field, the picture will become more complex.

Another research on Cyprus indicates that women spend more than 30 hours per week for unpaid care duties (Eurostat Time-Use Survey, as cited in Cyprus Mail, 2024). From this pattern we can learn about Mediterranean trends, in which women bear more domestic responsibilities despite formal employment.

Applying these threshold-based measures to the database in the northern part of Cyprus reveals somewhat similar time poverty rates between genders. Data estimates that approximately 10.6% of men and 11.0% of women exceed the 11-hour daily total work (both paid and unpaid) threshold. So here, the gender gap is less than 1%. But we cannot forget that the threshold approach aggregates all work hours into one single metric. And this single metric does not show any attention to composition, flexibility and/or psychological burden of different work types. So, based on what we have seen, while total hours may appear equivalent, the underlying experience is completely different.

Table5: Objective time poverty rates (≥ 11 hours 1 = ≥ 11 hours paid + unpaid work) by gender in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024-2025

Gender Groups	Not-time poor	Time-poor
Men	89.04%	10.6%
Women	89.0%	11.00%

Sources: TCAUW 2025 Time-use Survey 2024-2025

Moreover, we have to remember that threshold-based measures are not capturing the “rush” dimension of time-poverty (Kalenkoski et al., 2011). This critique reminds us of the need to move beyond the simple time aggregates.

As we said before, objective calculation of time poverty is an essential baseline. But still it gives us an incomplete picture of gender-based time poverty. There are some studies that claim time poverty affects (negatively) well-being, and also, there is a relationship between it and worse mental health and higher levels of stress, depression, and emotional exhaustion (Roxburgh, 2004; Sharif et al., 2021). Indeed, subjective time poverty can affect psychological well-being independently of objective (calculated) time poverty (Roxburgh, 2004).

So we, also, in the following section, shift our analytical lens to describe subjective experience by examining and evaluating respondents’ direct answers about their daily “rush” feelings.

Beyond Residence and Position: Gendered Patterns in Subjective Time Pressure

Crosstabulation analysis was performed on subjective time pressure, and based on that, we can conclude that feeling rushed among our participants is not shaped by residence type (urban or rural) or nationality. Among men, neither residence situation ($\chi^2=1.909$, $p=0.385$) nor nationality ($\chi^2=2.776$, $p=0.596$) shows a significant relationship with feeling rushed. This is the same for women as well. Residence situation ($\chi^2=4.424$, $p=0.109$) and their nationality category ($\chi^2=2.691$, $p=0.611$) do not show a significant relationship with time pressure experiences.

But there are still some secrets underlying the statistics. Almost 51% (50.9%) of women report “always” feeling rushed. We can say that this pattern is aligned with the research that demonstrates that women spend (on average) 4 hours and 37 minutes every day on unpaid care responsibilities. While men do less than half of this amount (UN Women, 2019).

Table 6: Distribution of feeling rushed by gender and residence status in the northern part of Cyprus, 2024-2025

Sex	Residence		Always feel rushed	Only sometimes feel rushed	Almost never feel rushed	Total
Man	Urban	%within Residence	36.5%	33.3%	30.2%	100.0%
Man	Rural	%within Residence	24.4%	43.9%	31.7%	100.0%
Man	Total		32.5%	40.7%	26.8%	100.0%
Woman	Urban	%within Residence	56.8%	28.4%	14.7%	100.0%
Woman	Rural	%within Residence	42.6%	44.1%	13.2%	100.0%
Woman	Total		51.7%	34.7%	13.6%	100.0%

Sources: TCAUW 2025 Parity Time-use Survey 2024-2025

Gender norms, almost always assign women responsibilities for unpaid work. At the same time, based on those gender norms, men can just focus on paid work (OECD, 2024).

The cross-tabulation analysis of feeling rushed with employment characteristics shows completely different mechanisms. For men, feeling rushed is concentrated among wage employees. 40% of them reported chronic time pressure. Besides, self-employed men and unpaid family workers report lower levels of sustained rush. So, the question is what can we learn from this pattern? Based on our data, men`s time pressure is mostly driven by the intensity and structure of paid work itself, longer hours of work, a rigid schedule, and also workplace demands.

But for women, the story is completely different. It can be seen that high levels of feeling rushed are found among all employment statuses. On the other hand, women engaged in unpaid family work and

self-employment, surprisingly, show the highest concentration in the “always feel rushed” category. So, employment status alone cannot mitigate women`s time pressure because unpaid domestic work and caregiving work have strongly remained. To support this result, we found a study that confirmed that in Rural Pakistan, 37% of employed women were time-poor. Because there, women are still culturally responsible for domestic duties, regardless of their employment status (Floro & Swain, 2013).

Gendered effects were also identified in the analysis of social security insurance status. For men, there was no substantial difference between insured and uninsured individuals. But for women, being uninsured means feeling more time pressure. Even insured women experience high levels of time pressure, though their distribution is more balanced.

So, based on this, insurance may mitigate women's time poverty but cannot eliminate it. It should be remembered that women in the labour force, are spending 4.9 hours (on average) on unpaid domestic responsibilities and caregiving work as well. This number is 3.8 for men (Hayes et al., 2020).

Regarding sectoral patterns, we can confirm that men report similar levels of time pressure across the public, private, and non-profit sectors. So here, the workload amount is more important than sectoral characteristics. On the other hand, women in the private and non-profit sectors show the highest levels of “feeling rushed”.

These findings confirm that women`s time poverty in the northern part of Cyprus is structurally embedded. The consistency of unpaid care duties (averaging 2.5 times more than a man) creates a time poverty level strong enough that women cannot fall from it, regardless of formal employment characteristics.

Health-Time Pressure Paradox

There is another cross-tabulation analysis whose results reveal more data about gender-based time poverty in the northern part of Cyprus.

Between men, there is a significant negative relationship between general health and feeling rushed. In other words, men who reported “very good” health are concentrated in the “almost never feel rushed” category. So, it can be claimed that men`s subjective time poverty reflects both their physical and psychological capacity to manage workloads.

But for women, there is no relationship between health and feeling rushed. Which means, even women who reported “very good” or “excellent” health still experienced high levels of time pressure. This information remains correct and valid when statistics are examined about women`s chronic illnesses and their health-related activity limitations.

What can be understood from this data? It can be claimed that men`s time poverty is more related to their individual capacities. While women`s time poverty is structurally and sometimes culturally imposed on them, it has consequences. Time poverty can threaten women`s health and the health of their children as well. When health is the issue, we can expect that women`s economic opportunities can be significantly limited (Floro & Swain, 2013). However, time poverty can damage women's health and at the same time can continuously remain regardless of health status (Seedat & Rondon, 2021), creating a cycle in which unpaid care and domestic works continue regardless of an individual's well-being status. For example, domestic responsibilities can occupy a large part of women's daily lives . So, women can feel there is no time to go and see a doctor. In this cycle, even when women experience severe health issues, their unpaid domestic care duties do not reduce meaningfully.

CONCLUSION

Gender-Based Time Poverty as Structural Reality: Urban Decline

The cross-tabulation analysis showed a completely relevant pattern. Based on our data, we know that men's time poverty and time pressure rate are responding to some elements like health capacity and formal employment intensity. On the other hand, women's experienced of time poverty and time pressure is flexible and based on their nationality, employment status, insurance coverage, health conditions, and even work sector.

It is important to note that urban women show the highest concentration of persistent time pressure: 56.8% report always feeling rushed, compared to 36.5% of urban men. In contrast, rural distributions are more balanced, suggesting what may be described as an urban presence–time isolation paradox.

Based on this paradox, we can claim that greater access to paid job opportunities in urban areas coincides with the persistent cognitive loads of unpaid family labour. To put it in simpler words, women, worldwide, are increasingly participating in paid jobs but their domestic and caregiving responsibilities remain the same. Studies can confirm that gender-based equitable and prosperous cities need to improve and even increase women's participation in urban governance and engagements. Yet women's foundational activities often fail when it comes to translating them into formal representations (Chant, 2013).

The consequence of such a situation is clear enough. Structural time poverty erodes women's social and political participation. Here in the northern part of Cyprus, as we observed, urban women experience higher time pressure despite greater urban opportunities. Obviously, it can create barriers to their social and political participation.

Here, gender-based time poverty serves as a mechanism that leads to political exclusion. Yet this mechanism functions at a lower level than formal legal barriers. To put it in simpler words, it is worth mentioning and reminding that even when women have equal human rights in their society, time poverty (in our case, structural time poverty) can prevent them from using their rights. As a consequence, women are marginalised, even in their modern societies and under their modern laws. And this is because of the fact that legal frameworks often overlook the deep structural and cultural patterns of society as well as the social infrastructure that shapes everyday life.

Based on this, while re-examining the data in the northern part of Cyprus, it is understandable that this kind of structural marginalisation can create undeniable barriers to civic participation and, as a consequence, to the formation and even stabilisation of social capital values.

Recent studies also confirm this claim. There is a two-way relationship between women's political engagement and the levels of well-being in society. Countries with higher women's political presence always show higher levels of subjective well-being for the entire population. This is because women always prioritise policies that address education, public health, and even poverty (Sundström et al., 2024).

So, it can be concluded that urban women's time poverty and time pressure that persist across almost all variables indicate that current social structures are systematically trying to exclude almost half of the population from meaningful, stable, and persistent civic participation. In this case, without a structural re-distribution of unpaid domestic work and unpaid caregiving responsibilities, urban women's presence will continuously reduce. It means empowering the process of hollowing out democratic governance from within and also, it means reinforcing the political power's focus between those whose time is structurally protected who are men who are freed from unpaid care responsibilities.

Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that the time isolation paradox is compounded by spatial inequalities that shape women`s mobility patterns on a daily basis. The important part here is that these patterns are keys to accessing urban opportunities. To support this claim, it is worth mentioning a study that shows women will visit fewer unique locations than men. In simpler words, they (women) distribute their time less equally among different locations. Researchers also noticed a gap between lower income and lack of public and private transportation (Barbosa et al., 2020).

On the other hand, women`s access to jobs and urban opportunities has more direct relationships with their leisure time and time limitations (Kwan, 1999).

Based on data from the northern part of Cyprus, we can claim that women`s caregiving responsibilities can compound these kinds of spatial limitations. For women, trips are more fragmented by school pickups, and household shopping, etc., while for men, mobility patterns are based on single-destination commutes to their paid jobs. So, in the northern part of Cyprus, these spatial inequalities can strengthen women`s time poverty and feelings of time pressure. Although urban areas can offer greater employment opportunities, fragmented trips impose higher costs on basic services. So, the final result here is a spatial trap: Urban women do not have full access to economic opportunities which is the goal (and even promise) of the urbanisation process. How can this be explained? Because spatial fragmentation assumes a male mobility model built on their almost uninterrupted trips to their formal jobs. And this ignores the multi-stop trips that unpaid caregiving works imposes on women daily.

Policy Recommendations

Addressing structural gender-based time poverty needs interventions that can redistribute unpaid responsibilities.

1- Huge investments in care infrastructure

Focus on childcare (0-12 years old) with the approach of extending hours, so that it can match with employment schedules. Besides, there is a need to focus on community-based elderly care. These can redistribute caregiving burdens. We can guess it can target reducing unpaid care by 15-20 hours weekly for urban women.

2- Redistribution in time-use mandates

Expand paternity leave (paid, non-transferable). It can normalise male child-caregiving responsibilities. Also, along with it, cultural shifts must occur to establish new domestic responsibilities.

3-Rethink urban planning

Implementing 15-minute care cities, which means cities where childcare, schools, and also medical clinics, and weekly shopping are available by walking, can reduce women`s time spent on care-related travels. It is worth remembering that in this case, public transportation can have a role as well.

It must be accepted and always remembered that without redistribution of unpaid work and responsibilities, urban women`s public presence will continuously reduce, and this can lead to undermining the democratic foundations of urban governance.

4-Redesign the transportation infrastructure

Public Transportation routes must connect residential areas to schools, clinics, important and famous markets in the city, not just employment centres, and redesign the time schedules based on the cultural and life patterns of society. It can fill the mobility gap by expanding women`s accessible urban spaces.

5- Collect and monitor data continuously

Mapping gender-based mobility patterns to identify spatial barriers based on societal changes to establish a baseline metric.

Based on this recommendation we can find answers to these questions as well:

Can spatial re-organisation with a care-compatible approach in urban design reduce women`s subjective time pressure? How can transportation infrastructure investments affect the gaps in gendered mobility patterns and subsequent access to stronger civic participation and better employment opportunities?

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