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**ITALIAN EXPERIENCE IN ANALYSIS OF “DIFFERENT TIMES” AND  
METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN MEASUREMENTS OF UNPAID WORK:  
THE EUROPEAN PILOT SURVEY ON TIME USE**

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In Italy Time Use Surveys are considered a fundamental source for gender statistics. One of the first important statistical analysis of gender differences along the various phases of life has been done using time use data collected by ISTAT between June 1988 and May 1989. This was the first national survey on time use in Italy, although some local surveys had been done previously. The sample consisted of 19,728 households spread over 1,132 Italian Communes and it produced data on how population aged three years and over used its time.

Italian National Institute of Statistics has invested much effort in analyzing those data, sharing work and interest with other Institutions, such as National Commission on Parity and Italian National Institute for Population Research. Therefore the data could be used for political and public evaluations, too. The reflections and results presented above are a synthesis of that study, which constituted a basic starting point for the Italian participation at the 1995 World Women Conference of Beijing.

***Different times***

There is greater inequality in the division of roles in the South than in the Centre-North of Italy and it is more obvious in families where the men and women have a low social status or in any case a lower educational level, and is more marked when the woman is a full-time housewife. However the burden of family work involves all women without exception whereas men are only partially involved in particular stages of their lives and regarding strictly selected tasks such as caring work, cooking and shopping. Regardless of social status, living in a large or small town or living in the North or the South, what changes is the degree of difference between men and

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women - it goes without saying that there is always a difference. The results of this analysis of the various aspects of gender differences are sufficient to show that even though there are differences within differences and different paths along the road, nevertheless the division of roles is always present. In Italy there seems to be a cultural model and a kind of social organisation that causes gender roles to continue to exist and in any case to be inflexible and never interchangeable. Many changes are underway, for both men and women and there are constant - possibly secret - attempts to reconcile the various areas of life, but clear and definite changes in behaviour have yet to be observed.

There is no clear dichotomy between different lifestyles and different types of family organization - on the contrary there are many nuances which arise due to the vast range of different situations that people find themselves in: the double presence, the double "burden", the potential double presence, unequal roles, etc.. Much of these has its own characteristics which depend on different ways of thinking about the family and the life of the couple. However, in reality, much of these is to be found within two basically different life paths,, that of men with their differences and that of women with their differences. A man must work and can choose whether or not to help at home but a woman always carries the burden of responsibility for and commitment to the family and can choose whether to work outside the home as well, even if in both cases the choices depend on circumstances. The finishing posts may or may not be the same but the starting points are always opposed. When the differences are found, it is always because nuances emerge from that basic initial difference along the gender road - being a man or being a woman.

Gender roles emerge at a very young age, develop through adolescence and young adulthood and gradually become consolidated during the long stage of preparation leading up to the two basic turning points in life which are different for men and women. There is a kind of official recognition and institutionalisation of the woman's role within the family when she gets married and begins her life as a part of a couple i.e. before the birth of her first child. When children are born they simply cause the changes that began at the start of a woman's life with the partner to become even more marked. A man's life does not change when he gets married nor when he has children. His turning point is starting work which represents the beginning of inflexible timetables in his life, a reduction of free time and the sequential and hierarchical organisation of daily time. This is true even when a young man is still living with his parents when he starts work. Thus, even life's turning points are different for men and women, influencing the rest of their lives, with no possibility of "turning back". Habits are so strongly formed that even in the third age, when outside work no longer has any influence, the organisation of men's and

Therefore, the difference emerge in childhood, develops as one grows up and leads to two turning points, after which the difference is more stable and specific when the children leave the nest and old age sets in. The difference is seen in the way in which the day is organised from morning to night, and in the way in which the weekend is used. The difference can be seen in all parts of Italy and at all social levels even if in different forms. This difference also crosses generations.

***Little men and little women: gender roles and behavioural models in children***

Is time different for boys and girls? Are gender roles already in evidence? In the context of the three main divisions of time the study looked at (basic needs, compulsory time and free time), there is no certain proof of any significant difference between boys and girls. However, by delving deeper within these macro-subdivisions we find some differences in behaviour which anticipate future adult roles. We can make a first comparison in the context of compulsory time in particular by looking at the subcategory of "housework". More than half the girls aged 11 or over spend about an hour a day on housework whilst only about 30% of their male peers do any housework at all and when they do, they spend less time on it (about 30 minutes). There is a clear distinction between participation in activities such as cleaning/tidying and in laying the table. About 50% of the girls help around the house for a period of 54 minutes a day, whilst only 23,6% of the boys help and they do so for 30 minutes. 37,4% of the girls spend more than an hour a day laying and cleaning the table whilst only 18,3% of the boys help in this way and for less than half-an-hour.

Further differences emerge in the vast category covering free time and in particular as regards sporting activities. Boys aged 11-13 take part in both organised and non-organised sport whilst far fewer girls do so. Differences in the area of play are extremely clear in the 11-13 years age group. Boys play more (63,5% as against 53,6%) and their games last longer. There are also big differences as regards reading. Girls like reading books (12,7% for 48' as against the boys' 4,6% for 36') whilst boys like reading comics (01,8% for 42' as against 2,5% for 36'). Naturally these differences are more marked in the higher age groups. No precise information emerge as regards the youngest ones.

Examining how young people living with their parents spend their time from a gender point of view, from an early age the activity which divides the two sexes is daily housework. This activity involves a big commitment on the part of young women but only marginally involves young men. In fact young women help around the house for about an hour a day more than young men, but what is more significant is that more females than males do housework anyway. Furthermore, the participation rate for young women increases with age whereas for young men it decreases. 68,8% of the youngest women aged 14-17 are involved in housework on a daily basis and 75,5% of those aged 18-30. The comparative figures for young men are 16,8% and 15,7% in the two age groups. Basically, already at this age the divide between men and women has begun to open up.

Therefore young women take on some responsibility for the running of the home and the main daily tasks and they are taught to give active help to their mothers. Young men on the other hand are taken care of by their mothers and sisters and prepared for a social role outside the home. Their participation in housework is very low whilst a high percentage of young women make a contribution. This is surely an important crossroad along the road of gender differences and in the "segregation" of women as regards housework. The different role education which began in early childhood is in fact intensified.

Lastly, as regards free time, there is both a quantitative and qualitative difference in favour of males. Boys go out more frequently, they have more opportunities for socialising and they do more sport, in this last case above all in adolescence.

***Time for family work - time left over or central time?***

Let us analyse the time-use of men and women living as part of a couple as partners and those living in one-parent families as lone parents. We can see straightaway that men's time-use does not vary much according to the various forms of family life but the time-use of their wives does.

The first observation to be made is that after time dedicated to basic needs, for a woman it is family activities (whilst for men it is their jobs) that take up the major part of the day. All women spend some of their daily time to family activities, but women who live as part of a couple with children have the heaviest load (7h18'). Men concentrate more on their work, nevertheless leaving themselves a large space for leisure activities. Only childless women manage to have an amount of free time for leisure closer to that of men. For women, in general, leisure time is the time left over, especially in the case of married women with no children (4h12') and minimal for lone mothers (3h18'). For men, on the other hand, leisure activities take up an important part of their time whilst what is left over is for the family. In fact family work is done by fewer men (respectively 70,3% and 56,1% for men with and without children) and for a limited amount of time (1h48' and 1h24').

If we look more closely at women's time-use we see that the daily housework (i.e. service work), done by almost all women, takes up the largest share of family work time and in this case too, women who live as part of a couple with children do the most (5h30'). Time spent on shopping or caring for children under 14 years of age does not vary much. Men's time is not organised in this way at all since men do not seem to be very much involved in service work for the family (0h48') although they do help a little with caring for the children (1h12'). There are no differences as regards service work between men with and without children. work time, as we can see by looking at the participation rates, involves a limited number of women compared to men and although it is an important part of the day, less time is spent at work in the case of one-parent families.

However, an interesting thing to emerge from this initial general analysis is that women who have to cope with children on their own do not seem to be at any particular disadvantage due to the absence of a male partner as far as running the home is concerned. Men's contribution to the housework and the care of the children is so small that the absence of a husband actually reduces the total amount of housework to be done by the woman overall. In fact, in the case of a married couple, it is the woman who also has to take care of the man (washing, ironing, preparing meals, etc.), and this takes up a lot of time - time which is saved in one-parent families. The position of men and women as regards family work begins to be clear. The man dedicates a very small part of his time to service work and care for the family, the woman gives the main part of her time to it. The result is that as far as family work is concerned, the man benefits from having a female partner, the woman benefits from not having a male partner.

Table 1 - How men and women aged 18 to 44 years,  
living as part of a couple or in one-parent families, spend their time  
(Specific average duration and participation rate)

ACTIVITY	Couples with children *		Couples without children		Lone mothers Time
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
	<i>Specific</i>	<i>average</i>			

	<i>duration</i>				
<i>Family work</i>	1h48'	7h18'	1h24'	5h06'	5h00'
Daily housework	0h48'	5h30'	0h42'	4h24'	3h24'
Shopping	0h48'	1h00'	0h42'	0h54'	1h06'
Caring for children*	1h12'	1h36'	-	-	1h42'
<i>Employment</i>	7h36'	6h24'	7h36'	6h30'	6h00'
<i>Basic needs</i>	10h48'	10h54'	10h48'	11h06'	11h06'
<i>Leisure time</i>	4h42'	3h30'	4h42'	4h12'	3h18'
	<i>Participation rate</i>				
<i>Family work</i>	70.3	99.7	56.1	99.3	100.0
Daily housework	28.3	99.0	31.3	96.4	98.4
Shopping	20.4	55.3	11.9	60.4	45.1
Caring for children*	29.6	64.9	-	-	44.4
<i>Employment</i>	77.6	29.7	78.3	41.5	54.9
<i>Basic needs</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Leisure time</i>	98.4	96.1	100.0	98.4	99.0

\* Children under 14 years of age

Source: ISTAT, Multipurpose Survey (Indagine Multiscopo) 1988-1989

### ***When there are children the mother's time-use is radically changed, the father's remains inflexible***

The birth of a child means that women have to reorganise their time and dedicate more of it to their families. After the arrival of the first child, the mother has to spend about an hour more than before on the family - time that is usually taken from her leisure time. When the second child is born, a further hour for the family has to be found and, when there is a third child, time spent on the family by the mother increases by yet another hour, even if she goes out to work.

And what about men? Men's time-use continues to be different from that of women. Comparing mother's and fathers' time-use, one sees that the gender role division widens visibly. The amount of time men spend at work increases by about three-quarters of an hour as the number of children increases from 0 to 3 or more children whilst that of the mother steadily decreases. The time women spend at work stays about the same between 0 and 1 child but it decreases by about half-an-hour a day when she has two children and by an hour if she has three or more children. As far as is possible, working women try to reduce their working hours in order to cope with new needs at home. Men, on the other hand, work more in order to provide for their family's growing needs.

### ***Women never retire***

Elderly men retire but this is not entirely true for elderly women. Proof of this is to be found in the time spent on housework and family work and the different weight this has in daily life. For men, as we have seen, leisure comes second after sleep - leisure time is central and family work residual. The opposite is true for women - family work is central, above all for women living as part of a couple or those who are lone mothers in the 65-74 years age group who spend more time on family work than on recreational pursuits. It is the natural extension of the situation of the previous stages, when leisure time for basic needs were reduced to meet new family needs.

It is true that many elderly men are involved in daily housework - 63,4% of the total - and in this sense one witnesses the fact that men use their time in a more “womanly” way- However, these figures vary according to whether or not a man’s life is at home. In couples with children, 46,9% of elderly men do some housework, in couples with no children 53,7% do so, in lone parents families, the figure is 80,6% and for lone elderly men, 87,6%. Nevertheless, the time spent on housework is very little - an hour and a half overall as against the almost five hours spent by women aged between 65 and 74 years. This is not the case as regards time spent on caring for the family since two separate time-use models for men and women do not emerge. In fact 10% of both men and women spend about the same amount of time (1 hour) on this kind of activity.

So all women always work and they always work more. The need to continue to shoulder such a significant burden of domestic activities when health and strength are deteriorating may even oblige women to reduce time spent on basic needs as well as time spent on leisure. On the contrary, once men are no longer constrained by their working hours they have more time for leisure activities and time for themselves.

### ***Creative housework and routine housework***

Not all housework activities are carried out by the same percentage of men and women. Considering only the everyday tasks, we find that in the case of women, the majority cook, lay and clear the table and clean the house. Men’s preferred activities are cooking and laying the table but the participation rate is in any case below 30%. The fact that men’s involvement in housework

involvement is concentrated, in particular, on meal preparation which is considered to be one of the more creative activities in this field. Men almost never do any cleaning in the strict sense of the term, for example, washing or ironing. Furthermore, men prefer to concentrate on more creative activities such as gardening and taking care of animals which bridge leisure activities and housework in the strict sense.

Women retain the basic burden of the daily running of the home in all its various aspects with no exceptions - doing the routine housework and making sure that everything runs smoothly for all the family members.

### ***The European Pilot Survey on Time Use***

From the analysis of gender differences the need to build a satellite account emerged. In Italy is strong the interest in conducting very soon another Time Use Survey (possibly by the year 2000) in order to repeat the analysis already done and to go further through a detailed measure and evaluation of unpaid work. Therefore, ISTAT has participated with strong involvement to the European Pilot Survey on Time Use and is focusing on methodological topics in the process of collecting, coding and analysing diary data in order to understand better how measurement of unpaid work can be done and what are its limits.

The following reflections take origin from the monitoring of the coding process and the analysis of the diary data collected in the European Harmonised Time Use Pilot Survey conducted in Italy during 1996.

A short description of the survey methodology is necessary to understand the following results. In order to have a “representative “ pilot survey, all 20 Italian regions were involved and the selection of survey units was stratified by area according to different characteristics in degree of urbanisation. The numerosity of the sample was set at 200 households, for an expected total of ca. 600 individuals and 1,200 daily diaries (2 per person); the diary dates were fixed in order to represent all the seven week days, too. The diaries used to collect data were strongly structured and binding on the respondents. 144 ten minutes intervals have been drawn (one line each) on the few pages that made up a 24 hours diary. Besides primary and secondary activities, some more information were asked: “help” in case the primary activity was done to help somebody and “with whom” the time was shared. All these pieces of information have been vertically arranged on a page of horizontal lines. This scheme was intended to forcibly confine the description of time-passing into a shape easy to code and to be automatically treated.

A comparison between pilot data and previous survey data has been done - in terms of type of common major activities and their duration by sex; the results let one trust in the pilot data, not certainly to obtain estimates but to produce a small picture of the methodological problems which can emerge when collecting diary data.

### ***What kind of housework emerges from the diaries?***

In the first part of the paper a picture of different time-use between men and women has been drawn, with particular respect to housework. The pilot data still confirm that on women is concentrated the major burden of the household: 80% of women devote 30-40% of their daily time to unpaid household work. But a generic word as “housework” can hide a lot of different activities, laying of different points of a scale according to muscle and brain involvement, relations with external world (outside the family), responsibility, etc. Analysing more in detail the big box of unpaid work many differences emerge. For example, also in the pilot data 52% of women dedicate more than 10% of their daily time to food preparation, whilst for men this proportion is 18%. The same happens for house upkeep: 38% of women and 12% of men spend more than 10% of their time in upkeeping the house. The picture coming out from the pilot data clearly reflects the one described in the first part of the paper.

Since the distinction of roles begins very early in life, the data presented below take account of all the diaries collected, that is the diaries of people three years old or more are included in the analysis.

The first need in evaluating and measuring housework (or every other activity) is that diary data are sufficiently detailed so as to represent the various activities done during the day. Unfortunately, since the beginning of the coding process a recurrent difficulty have arisen: that is a lack of “small” and intermediate activities preluding and causing other major activities. For example, it is not unusual to see diaries filled as follows: from 9 to 10 p.m. “eating” - from 10 p.m. to 6 am “sleeping”. On these occasions the diaries seem to cover only the most common and typical activities. This was not only a “feeling” reported by coders, but the analysis of diary data lead to some evidence of it, too. Very often the diaries appear to be completely covered by

“basic” activities (sleeping, eating, washing and dressing, working, studying, food preparation, house upkeep, purchase). For 7-8 diaries out of 10 basic activities cover more than 90% of daily time. Is this a true picture or is something missing?

Moreover, if 11 is the mean number of episodes lasting 10 minutes in a diary, 22% of the diaries have less than six episodes lasting 10 minutes. Such diaries with few short episodes seem to be less accurate, since they describe only “wide” time periods. Concentrating, for example, on the personal care - washing, dressing, combing etc. - 36% of the diaries have less than three episodes dedicated to personal care and in 26% of the diaries less than half an hour a day is devoted to personal care, whilst the mean value is 1 hour and 15 minutes. Those episodes belong to a private sphere and are usually implicitly omitted also in common life and conversation. Moreover those activities last often less than 10 minutes (e.g. washing hands before eating) and are ancillary to some other principal activities.

Something similar can be said when analysing housework. This kind of activity can be typically broken into small separate bits since taking care of a household and family members require to dedicate bits of time to a wide variety of activities. Passing from meal preparation to ironing, from teaching the children to arranging outside services at home, the one who works at home and for household often does multiple activities at the same time or passes rapidly from one activity to another. The detailed coding list and the prefixed 10 minutes intervals used for the pilot survey were supposed to let such situations emerge. But, actually, it is not easy to demand a house worker to describe in details every single activity he or she does. In fact, on one hand there is a tendency to compile the diaries in a very imprecise and rough manner, and on the other hand there is a clear difficulty in extrapolate and separate activities which can easily fall into a generic category. For example, child care, care of textiles or household management often are mixed and intertwined with classical works such as cleaning, washing or cooking. This phenomenon is clearly represented by the sentences used in the diaries to describe daily life. Long sentences describing more than one activity or too generic sentences often don't allow to attribute specific codes and to delimit precise time boundaries. Furthermore, the column of the secondary activity is not frequently filled in and its content do not match easily with primary activity. 15% of the diaries don't report any secondary activity and 36% report less than one hour. Nevertheless, reflecting on our life style, it is very usual to combine two or more activities in the same time interval. The point is that is not so easy to define one activity as a primary and another as a secondary, because, time can often be devoted to the first or the second alternatively, depending on the necessity. It is the case, already mentioned, of child and house care. Those difficulties are on the side of the respondents, but even when interviewed people try to be detailed in filling the diary, some problems arise for the coders. When two or more activities are reported in the main column, is not easy for the codes to choose the secondary one and attribute it the proper duration. On other occasions, when there is a primary activity lasting for a long time, while the secondary activity changes (e.g. supervising a child while gardening and then cooking) the main activity is reported at the beginning, then is left understood, while the main column is used to describe the secondary activity, until the end of the implicit main activity appears again.

Anyway, at the end of the coding and data entry processes a data set was obtained and, therefore, a deeper analysis of household and family care work could be done, going into details on the distribution and meaning of the specific codes as they came out from the pilot survey and

keeping in mind that the coding list was hierarchical and allowed to attribute as long codes (from 1 to 4 digits) as detailed were the textual descriptions of the diaries.

Looking at the data on the following table 2 one can realise that only 2% of the women's diaries contain the one digit code '3' which represents the very generic category of household and family care. This let one think that, when reported, house and family work is described with some detail, allowing to attribute at least a two digit code which distinguish, for example, food preparation from shopping or household upkeep. But analysing in details the table it appears that housework is made almost only of cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking and purchasing, while the management of the family life (e.g. access to health, bank or other public services) tends to be diluted in more common activities such as house upkeep or shopping, depending whether it is done inside or outside the house.

The code 37 which is intended to describe planning and arranging, budgeting, paperwork, making a shopping list, arranging and supervising outside services at home, phone calls to institutions, correspondence to authorities etc. is totally absent from the great majority of the diaries. But, a person who takes care of the family is certainly involved in such activities almost daily, because the burden of the household conduction is not only a matter of spending physical energies in doing practical things. The problem is that what we could express as "brain and management activities" are not easily reported since they often last very shortly or are done while carrying out other "major" activities. The same conclusions can be drawn focusing on the codes related to shopping. The code 361 for "purchases" cover almost the entire field of shopping and services, which should describe visits to offices, institutions, administrative and commercial services, too.

Table 2  
Number and percentage of diaries containing at least an episode of various household and family work activities

Cod e	ACTIVITY	Women		Men	
		N.	%	N.	%
<b>3</b>	<b>Household and family care</b>	10	1.7	10	1.8
<b>31</b>	<b>food preparation</b>	2	0.3	1	0.2
311	<i>meals and snacks</i>	439	76.0	144	25.6
312	baking	6	1.0	1	0.2
313	<i>dish-washing</i>	243	42.9	38	6.8
314	preserving	5	0.9	0	0.0
319	other food preparation	13	2.2	5	0.9
<b>32</b>	<b>household upkeep</b>	48	8.3	10	1.8
321	<i>cleaning dwelling, cellar, garage</i>	372	64.4	69	12.3
322	cleaning yard	3	0.5	8	1.4
323	disposal waste	2	0.3	4	0.7
324	heating and water	0	0.0	0	0.0
325	<i>various arrangements</i>	124	21.5	54	9.6
329	other household upkeep	8	1.4	4	0.7
<b>33</b>	<b>making and care of textiles</b>	10	1.7	0	0.0
331	<i>laundry</i>	115	19.9	4	0.7
332	<i>ironing</i>	114	19.7	2	0.4
333	care of clothes and shoes	4	0.7	2	0.4
334	producing textiles	2	0.3	0	0.0
335	handicrafts	38	6.6	0	0.0
339	other for textiles	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>34</b>	<b>gardening and pet care</b>	2	0.3	2	0.4
341	tending plants	40	6.9	9	1.6
342	tending animals	21	3.6	18	3.2
343	walking the dog	14	2.4	17	3.0
349	other gardening and pet care	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>35</b>	<b>construction and repairs</b>	2	0.3	9	1.6
351	house construction and repairs	1	0.2	11	2.0
352	repairing house furniture and goods	2	0.3	12	2.1
353	vehicle maintenance	3	0.5	20	3.6
354	production of household goods	0	0.0	0	0.0
359	other construction and repairs	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>36</b>	<b>shopping and services</b>	16	2.8	13	2.3
361	<i>purchases</i>	160	27.7	94	16.7
362	commercial services	1	0.2	0	0.0
363	administrative services	6	1.0	9	1.6
364	vehicle services	0	0.0	4	0.7
365	medical services	12	2.1	8	1.4
366	other personal services	8	1.4	4	0.7
367	veterinary services for pets	0	0.0	0	0.0
369	other shopping and services	2	0.3	0	0.0
<b>37</b>	<b>household management</b>	10	1.7	21	3.7
379	other household management	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>38</b>	<b>child care</b>	15	2.6	4	0.7
381	<i>physical care</i>	122	21.1	34	6.0
382	supervision	7	1.2	6	1.1
383	reading or playing	42	7.3	51	9.1
384	talking with the child	13	2.2	5	0.9
385	teaching the child	17	2.9	8	1.4
386	accompanying child	18	3.1	8	1.4

387	visiting school or nursery	2	0.3	0	0.0
389	other child care	2	0.3	0	0.0
<b>39</b>	<b>adult care</b>	52	9.0	30	5.3
Total n. of diaries		578		562	

Source: ISTAT, Time Use Pilot Survey 1996

To that point it has to be added that travels and actions are often intertwined, therefore there is a serious difficulty for the coders in distinguishing the duration of movements and activities which are commonly expressed by a couple of verbs: “to go and buy”, “to come and see” or more generally the expression “going shopping”, which includes every activity done outside the house that involves purchases, services etc. In Italian language the verb “to go” is often coupled with another verb which describes an action and then there is the habit of describing simultaneously the travel and its scope. Despite the instructions enclosed in the diary, respondents kept writing in the diary the sentences that are used in the common conversation.

This reflection can be applied as well when comparing the detailed list of codes with the results in terms of episodes reported in the diaries. On one hand the researchers express clear needs in detailing activities so as to measure and value various aspects of the time spent, on the other hand respondents are unconscious of those needs and goals and fill the diary according to common habits and common sense. Given that the majority of the diaries are filled at the end of the day or the day after, respondents perceive the need of synthesis and of expressing how they spent time using short sentences, not getting crazy splitting the description in very short time intervals and following the rigid scheme of the questionnaire. The figures in table 2 would allow to think that, when recalling the activities done during the day, the more common and the heavier ones - in terms of physical effort - emerge and guide the compilation of the diary. The respondents seem more conscious and willing to declare what typically costs them more time and effort. It needs to be said, as well, that for housewives, the diary compilation is more difficult. For these people there is not the code 11 “work”, that allows a quick and synthetic description of many hours in the day. In addition to that, women carry an extra burden in compiling their own diaries, those of their children and sometimes also that of the husband or other household members.

### ***What about the unpaid work not done for one’s own household?***

Till now the focus has been put on the activities done for one’s own household and family, but is still missing the other side of the coin: unpaid work done for somebody who is not part of the household, i.e. help to other households, voluntary work, civic and participative activities.

With this respect a specific field were included in the diary, to be crossed by the respondent when an activity was done for somebody who was not member of the household. Unfortunately this “help” column has been found to be the less filled in the diaries (only 1.2% of the activity episodes are signalled as being an “help”). People don’t recognise as “help” what is commonly perceived as normal exchange in the net of relationships among relatives or neighbourhoods and therefore one simply forgets to report it on the diary. Furthermore, even when this information is reported, there is a clear tendency to make a cross in the first 10 minute interval when the activity is begun, and not cross off anymore for the duration of the activity. Therefore, it is not easy to understand whether the presence of help continues or ends. Actually the “help” column will be left out of the diary in the future definitive survey according to Eurostat.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the section of the household questionnaire - to be filled together with the diaries - dealing with “Help and services received”. The meaning of “Help received” is not always understood. There are, in fact several activities that are “received”

normally from relatives or friends, that are not perceived as help (e.g. child care or sharing meals). They are seen rather as part of social life and the normal exchange among those belonging to the same extended family (e.g. grandparents, grandchildren), or to the network of close relationships (friends). For this reason, one has the impression that many activities that the questionnaire should identify, are not declared. In addition to that, when a help activity is reported, it is not easy for respondents to remember the number of times and the duration of the last time they received help.

### ***Conclusions***

All the described problems and difficulties contribute to confuse the identification of an episode in terms of type of activity and time boundaries. Thus, also the measurements of the activities themselves are confounded.

In order to reach an adequate method for attributing value to unpaid work and for calculating satellite accounts, it seems necessary to concentrate on data collection methodology, too. Time use data are interesting and fascinating, but not clear from errors when used to measure detailed activities and their duration in hours. Therefore some strategic aspects - apparently out of the specific scope of satellite accounting - have to be taken into account when giving monetary value to unpaid work, i.e. data collection and coding methodology.