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Couples' time management systems: Your time, my time or our time?

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Abstract

Time should be understood in relation to others, not as a private matter. Therefore time, including its use and experience, is subject to negotiations, power relations and inequality. This paper utilises the concept of the household economy and the household money management systems model to explore couples' practices in relation to time. The research questions are: what time management systems can be identified, and how are couples differentiated? The study uses interview data from 22 heterosexual couples (44 individuals) interviewed in 2016 in different parts of Finland. The analysis identifies four types of time management system: (a) a female-managed system, (b) a male-managed, (c) a pooling system, and (d) an independent management system. The study contributes to existing research on time and the family by identifying couples' time management systems and social aspects of time.

Keywords: time; family; family time; household work; household money management system.

Wordcount: 7655

Introduction

Time is an essential aspect of the daily lives of individuals, families, communities and societies. Daily life includes many temporal dimensions, such as spending time on and the timing of activities, the pace of time and turn-taking (Daly, 2002; Southerton, 2006). Our understanding of time is based on the view that it is a commodity to be spent, saved and used; in this sense, time is perceived as a quantifiable object. Inequalities exist between individuals, e.g. regarding the right to have time or decide about the activities that take place in time; therefore, time needs to be understood as a social phenomenon that includes power structures, rights, agency and relationships with others. The way individuals use and experience time and the activities taking place in time cannot be isolated from the wider societal context – shaped by, for example, culture and gender relations (Lewis, 2002; Pfau-Effinger, 2004) – that can be witnessed in everyday life. In this paper, I examine how couples organise time and if there is a specific time system for couples.

Time is an important research focus, with Maher et al. (2008) stating that ‘time has become a crucial resource in families’ (p. 548). While there is a significant amount of literature on families, time and work, there are surprisingly few studies on the micro-mechanisms of couples for organising their time and daily lives. Such micro-mechanisms are the components of time systems (Morgan 1996, 2001) and include practices relating not only to families’ time structures and timetables but also to how time is, can and should be spent; who has access to time; and whose activities are to be prioritised.

This study utilises the principles of Jan Pahl (1980) and Carolyn Vogler’s (Vogler and Pahl, 1994; Vogler, 1998) household money management system model to explore couples’ practices related to time. The paper contributes to research on families’ and couples’ practices and time and is particularly aimed at illustrating how couples’ ways of organising schedules and dividing work not only is about the time available but also includes gender role attitudes and differences regarding who has the managerial and strategic power over time. Furthermore, the paper

adds understanding about the substantial variability among couples. In this regard, the aim of the current study is to explore the usefulness of the concept of couples' time management systems.

Family Time

Time is subject to control, possession, exchange, negotiation, competing interests and conflicts, and it is one of the critical factors in the organisation of family life. It is both subjective and objective (Daly, 2001; Ashbourne and Daly, 2012). Detailed knowledge about everyday practices is critical for understanding how time is allocated (DeVault, 1991, 2000; Southerton, 2006) as time is always positioned in relation to others (Roseneil and Ketokivi, 2016).

There is a significant amount of literature on families and time, work and the family/life interface (Pitt-Catsouphe and Christensen, 2004; Shockley et al., 2017; Wayne et al., 2017; French et al., 2018), the gender division relating to a household's market/non-market work, breadwinning and use of time (Folbre, 2004; Nomaguchi et al., 2005; Bianchi et al., 2012; Burda et al., 2013; Aassve et al., 2015; Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Mullan and Chatzitheochari, 2019; Blom and Hewitt, 2020), as well as parenting, motherhood and fatherhood (O'Brien, 2009; Norman, 2017) and gender role attitudes (Crompton et al., 2005; Yu and Lee, 2013). All such studies contribute toward our knowledge about the significance of time in everyday life. Time in the context of family life is characterised by pressure and constant negotiation. Research on families has long reported that working parents in particular struggle to balance work and family responsibilities and cope with the various related demands – such as school, hobbies, friends and, more recently, the time demands of social media (Hochschild, 1997; Daly, 2001; Folbre, 2004; Nomaguchi et al., 2005; Mullan and Chatzitheochari, 2019).

Although the family as a unit shares a certain reality and experience of time, it is evident that men and women face different cultural expectations and experiences. Women carry out most household tasks across countries, regardless of their work status (Coltrane, 2000; Erickson, 2005;

Alberts et al., 2011; DeGroot and Vik, 2020), while men remain the main breadwinners (Blom and Hewitt, 2020); in addition, particular cultures and norms place different expectations on women's and men's roles as breadwinners and as parents. For example, the criteria for 'good motherhood' and 'good fatherhood' are different in many countries (Eerola and Mykkänen, 2014). Cultural expectations influence the use of time and perceptions of time, such as whose time is given priority (Adam, 1995; Folbre, 2004; Epp and Price, 2008), and adaptation to the balancing of gender roles has been slow (Erickson, 2005; Lammi-Taskula, 2017; Oinas, 2018; Blom and Hewitt, 2020; DeGroot and Vik, 2020).

There are several competing theories related to gender specialisation, differences in time use and gender divisions of household work that can also assist in understanding couples' time systems. *Relative resource theory* (Becker, 1991) concentrates on economic aspects, such as household finances and economics (Deutsch et al., 1993; Presser, 1994; Lui, 2013). This model is based on each partner's relative advantage in the labour market, e.g. men specialising in market and women in non-market work. However, this approach disregards the fact that access to resources and decision-making is determined by power relationships within the family, which are influenced by cultural factors (Lewis, 2002; Folbre, 2004; Pfau-Effinger, 2004) and that a family is not one entity but is made up of individuals with competing interests and power relations (Oakley, 1974; Coltrane, 2000; DeGroot and Vik, 2020).

Unlike relative resource theory, *doing gender theory* (West and Zimmerman, 1987) concentrates on socialisation and cultural norms, according to which gender is performed in daily interactions and is constructed through social interactions that reaffirm gender and gendered expectations (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Cultural expectations not only affect the use of time but also who is expected to organise schedules and how time is viewed; commonly, time coordination is performed by women (Davis, 1987; Nomaguchi, Milkie and Bianchi, 2005; DeGroot and Vik, 2020). This is persistent even in gender egalitarian countries such as Finland

(Bonke and Esping-Andersen, 2008; Aassve, Fuochi and Mencarini, 2014; Aassve et al., 2015).

Another qualitative difference relates to how time is viewed; in this sense, men's and women's time is understood differently, cultural expectations vary, and all this affects the way time is used. In her study on time, Adam (1995) uses the concept 'open-ended time' to describe women's need to have non-allocated time to be able to respond to the unexpected, time-bound care needs of the family. Therefore, it is likely that women have less time for themselves and carry the ultimate responsibility for their families' activities.

I use the concept of the couples' time system to illustrate the differences between and inside couples with regard to the way of viewing time and qualitative aspects related to time, such as coordinating activities. For the analysis, I look at the division of household work and rights to spend time for individual leisure that I perceive are illustrative of power relations and the cultural differences and norms relating to time. As part of the power relations in couples' time management systems, I examine negotiation over time – is there room to negotiate the existing time order?

Household money management systems

I draw on Pahl and Vogler's framework for understanding how couples manage household budgets (Pahl, 1980, 1983, 1989, 1995, 2007; Vogler and Pahl, 1993, 1994; Vogler, 2005; Vogler et al., 2006) in order to examine how families construct relational systems of time. Studies utilising the household money management system model have concentrated on heterosexual couples – either married or cohabiting – with children. This model is presented as falling into four to six patterns, with variation in the naming and detailing of such patterns (Coelho, 2014). For the purpose of this study, a five-pattern construct is suitable because it is sufficiently detailed to identify the partners' roles (see Table 1). This five-pattern model includes the following systems: (a) the female whole-wage system; (b) the male whole-wage system; (c) the housekeeping allowance system; (d) the pooling system; and (e) the independent management system. This classification is based on the

idea that there are differences between families in the way money is controlled and allocated, including the extent to which money is earmarked for specific purposes, access to financial resources, and the meanings attached to money. The present study explores the applicability of this framework to time.

According to studies on money management systems, differences occur based on family income; for example, dual-earner families are more likely to use a pooling or independent management system (Pahl, 1980; Vogler and Pahl, 1994; Coelho, 2014). However, such differences do not solely occur on the basis of the family's employment model but also include the household income level and views on power, equality and gender roles. Drawing on an extensive review of money management system research, Coelho (2014) concludes that a family's money management system may, for example, depend on the following:

- Income: Low-income families tend to use systems managed by women;
- Gender ideology: A traditional ideology increases the likelihood of male control;
- Employment pattern: Couples where only the man is employed or where the woman is employed part-time or receives low earnings tend to adopt systems managed by the woman; and
- Education level: a higher level of education increases the likelihood of shared resources and decisions.

The literature also suggests that there is a cultural effect whereby choices are affected by comparisons with others. Gender inequality tends to be less pronounced in couples with joint control of pooled money, but it is particularly pronounced in families where the man controls the finances (Pahl, 1995; Vogler, 1998; Vogler et al., 2006). Table 1 presents a summary of the five household money management systems.

[TABLE 1 AROUND HERE]

The household money management system model has been criticised as having a narrow conceptualisation and understanding of power as part of family relations (Vogler, 1998). In this regard, Vogler (1998) explains that power in the model is seen in terms of control over decision-making and who is in charge of managing the resource, i.e. who holds *strategic control* or who has responsibility for *money management*. I apply the division of strategic control and management to the empirical analysis.

Aims, data and methods of the study

Aims of the study

Inspired by household money management systems and previous research on family time, gender roles and work division, this study explores the applicability of the money management system model to time in order to understand how couples organise time and the power relations that exist around it. Although time is often viewed as a private matter, there is a need to understand it in relation to others. This study argues that couples constitute temporal microsystems that are affected by household management. In this research, I focus on couples and adopt the concept of the couples' time management system to refer to how couples organise and negotiate time and to explore couples' practices related to time. Specifically, I explore the usefulness of the household money management system model to explore the couples' time management system.

Data and methods

The study uses interview data from 22 heterosexual couples (gathered during couples' interviews, i.e. with 44 individuals) who were interviewed in 2016 in different parts of Finland. The themes of the interviews concentrated on family life, work, use of time and division of household tasks.

The ages of the respondents varied between 21 and 65. Most respondents were employed or self-employed; three were both studying and employed or on parental leave; three women were on parental (maternity or family) leave; and one was unemployed. Seven couples had no children, three couples had adult children who were not living at home. There was thus substantial variation in the families' statuses and stages. All names and other information (about hobbies or work, for example) that could potentially identify the participants have been changed. Table 2 presents the characteristics of the couples.

[TABLE 2 AROUND HERE]

The method of interviewing both partners at the same time is not often used in family studies as it is laborious and requires both partners to be present at the same time: busy schedules mean that it is difficult to recruit participants because families are often pushed for time. It is likely that this led to selection bias in the data in this study, given that the couples who agreed to be interviewed may have been those who had more room in their schedules and perhaps also less conflicts or pronounced power differences. However, the data set also includes couples who reported having extremely busy schedules. Daly (2002) describes his experience of using both individual and joint couple interviews. He explains that when the individual and joint interviews were compared, the descriptions of time were similar. The value of joint interviewing was to observe how the couples talked about and negotiated time in their lives. Daly (2002) adds that joint interviewing results in couples aiming to create 'a common narrative', which can be both a weakness and a strength. It may be a weakness as power relations may impact on the interview. For example, significant disputes or disagreements within the couple may not be brought up in an interview situation; in fact; due to self-selection, such couples may not even participate. This proved to be the case for the

couples interviewed in this study – none of the couples referred to any significant conflicts in their division of work or as a couple.

The themes of the semi-structured interviews were the characteristics of the informants' work and careers, their family histories and daily lives and their time negotiations. All the participants were given information in advance about the aims and implementation of the study and the ethical issues involved. Participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any point during the interviews. All of the participants gave their consent to the use of the data for scientific purposes. In other words, the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012), the national scientific ethics committee, were followed throughout the project.

Thematic analysis and typification were conducted to categorise the informants. In the first phase of data analysis, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was conducted. Drawing on the couples' money management systems identified by Pahl and Vogler (1994) and on the research into family time, gender roles and the division of work, the analysis identified two main themes and seven sub-themes (see Table 3). First, the analysis concentrated on gender roles specifically relating to time as a commodity, managerial power, and gender role attitudes. Second, the analysis concentrated on principles and practices relating to time, i.e. access to private time and hobbies, decisions about these (strategic power), the division of household work, and negotiations around time. The analytic strategy is presented in Table 3, which also outlines the detailed questions guiding the analysis and the themes' dimensions. Each couple's characteristics based on these five dimensions were simplified, and couples were grouped together based on these dimensions. While there was variation, the couples were placed at one end of the dimension, and these dimensions accordingly formed the couples' time systems. Table 4 summarises the dimensions and systems that were identified based on the analytical strategy (as outlined in Table 3).

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Results

The analysis identified the following couples' time management systems: (a) a female-managed system; (b) a male-managed; (c) a pooling system (shared/joint); and (d) an independent management system. Each system is different from each other, but the differences may be located in one dimension. For example, female-managed and male-manageds share similarities in practices relating to time but differences in gender roles and values. Next is a short summary of each system, with an accompanying empirical example of each case. The couples' time systems are summarised in Table 4.

Female-managed system

In the female-managed system, the female has sole responsibility for managing all activities and household work and for coordinating family schedules. In this sense, she holds the managerial and strategic power over time. The couples using this system represented different age groups and various economic activities. Eight couples (Table 2: 1, 5, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18, 22) were categorised in this group. The system was identified among various family types, and therefore it did not only relate to the role of the mother. However, these couples tended to hold traditional gender role attitudes, i.e. they viewed women's role as primary carers and men's as the main providers responsible for household maintenance.

In the female-managed system, the male partner has more time off from household chores, but he has less managerial power to decide on schedules – his role is to adapt to the schedules. Some couples even reported that the woman manages the household in a very practical manner, e.g. leaving notes about what tasks the man should do while she is out at work as a way for him 'to get things done'.

The female-managed system is expressed in how household work and time coordination are managed. Laura (couple 22, Table 2) explained her family's time system like this: 'Well, I have divided that [household work] in a certain way. I let Noel empty the dishwasher, and he can pick up his clothes when they are dry, but he cannot do the dishes and hang up the laundry, unless I am really busy, that is when I need help, and then I will ask.' Noel agreed that this was the case. It is noteworthy that this couple were young and shared strong traditional values regarding household responsibilities. Laura explained that she controls how the household work is done, by whom and when. The female-managed system is coupled with women having restricted access to so-called free or private time, simply because family and household chores take up the available time. In this system, managerial and strategic power do not lead to an advantageous position in terms of having time available.

The female-managed system also results in very unequal situations in respect to the management of time, with the male partner even being 'lost on the family schedule' – not knowing the weekly routines. One example (couple 12, Table 2) arose when a couple discussed their child's hobbies. Alan stated, 'Then, over the winter, there was cooking club,' followed by Rita's surprised answer: 'This year, there wasn't that anymore.' Alan went on to ask: 'Really, there wasn't that anymore?' To which Rita explained: 'No, earlier there was, but now with the sports club... before that, there was the cooking club, but then not this winter anymore. And then there is riding.'

Male managed

In the male-managed it is primarily the man who has the power over time, which represents the traditional family model. This system was found among all age groups and different economic activities, and in couples with or without children; therefore, the system is not only based on the role as parents. Three couples (4, 10, 20) were categorised in this group.

In the male-managed system, the orientation to time differs when compared to the female-managed system: here, men's personal time is viewed as their 'own' time for leisure, but the time of the female is viewed as the shared time of the family, which should be spent on household duties or coordination. This time management system was vividly present in discussions about time for hobbies in that men have more access to time for hobbies and so-called free time to be used based on their preferences. Ron (couple 4, Table 2) said: 'My time is my own time [...] spent on hobbies, alone or with friends'. His partner Sharon went on to say: 'My time is our time [...] spent on household work and spent together with the family.' Couples that display a male-managed time system express traditional values and a traditional division of labour.

Pooling system

The pooling system means that access to time and responsibilities is, in principle, non-segregated. Both partners have access to individual time, and both are thought to be responsible for the management of family matters and household work. Time is viewed as a shared commodity drawn from a shared pool, and responsibilities are seen to belong to both partners. This was the most equal system for viewing time and managing household duties found in the study.

The pooling system was found among the oldest couples, but it was also found among younger couples in some cases. Eight couples (2, 3, 7, 13, 15, 17, 19 and 21) were categorised in this group. The basis of this system is holding egalitarian values. What was explicit is that these couples shared the principle of equal gender roles ideologically as well as in practice, including the equal sharing of household work and responsibilities. This system seems to include respect for the other as an equal part of the shared family system. Both partners paid work and leisure activities are seen as important, and there is also the understanding that partners inform each other about 'what is going on', i.e. what activities are taking place, where and when. As Nina (couple 2, Table 2) put it:

‘That you constantly update [one another about] what is going on... That is perhaps the most important thing.’

Independent management system

The independent management system means that there are individual time resources and individual responsibilities in the family. This system means that neither partner has primary responsibility for family activity or the coordination of schedules; instead, they are the responsibility of the individual. It also means that both partners have equal access and rights to time. This system was present among the youngest couples. Two couples (6 and 14) were categorised in this group. These were young couples whose routines were stamped with individualist identities and who had no or very few responsibilities. They may have recently moved in together, and some still exhibited control over their own resources and responsibilities: ‘My food, my laundry – your food, your laundry.’ Young adult Elle (couple 14, Table 2), who lived together with Daniel, explained that their responsibilities are partly shared but mostly individual: ‘Usually, we do grocery shopping together because we don’t have a car. If I cycle, I can only buy my own stuff, and perhaps something little for Daniel.’ There is a clear rationale of not having shared needs, but individual and time use is prioritised to her own needs. Having individual systems is not absolute; in other words, time as a couple does exist. However, in this system, time is organised and managed as an individual possession, and these young couples lack a view of time as a shared commodity.

To summarise, couples’ time management systems differ due to structural factors or time availability, such as employment status or family structure or stage, in addition to also depending on gender role attitudes or perspectives on equality. Time systems vary based on various dimensions and concerns relating to differences in managerial and strategic power over time. For example, the female-managed and male-managed systems seem to be opposing poles; however, there are very

profound differences in relation to how time is viewed and who makes decisions on time. The analysis also included perspectives on how time systems affect time and negotiations on time. First, there are substantial differences in the time use and responsibilities on family life. Second, it is clear that the more gender specialised the roles are, the less room there is to negotiate and change the practices relating to time and various responsibilities. Therefore, time as a commodity is subject to negotiation only among couples who have more gender egalitarian roles and attitudes. The analysis revealed this, but it is also based on various dimensions within these factors: a time system is more than the sum of its parts.

[TABLE 4 AROUND HERE]

Conclusion

Just like money, time is seen as a commodity in our societies. We sell time at work, and we spend free time. Some workplaces even have ‘time banks’, where time can be ‘saved’ and then used later. In principle, time is equal – there are 24 hours in every day. However, the social understanding of time imbues it with significant differences and inequalities (Davis and Greenstein, 2013). For example, Christmas Day is socially defined as being different from an ordinary Tuesday. Differences also occur within families in regard to how they experience time and power relations over time.

At the heart of this study are couples’ time management systems. A couple’s time system refers to practices related to time, how time is coordinated and managed, whose time is given priority, and the overall way couples organise time. The study contributes to understanding time as relational, as well as expectations based on gender roles and the use of time. Ultimately, the study contributes to understanding time as a commodity that is used and spent. The research took

place in Finland, which is, by international standards, a gender-egalitarian country, especially with regard to the employment status of women (Grönlund et al., 2016). Nevertheless, even among the limited number of couples in this study, differences were identified. Couples' time management systems were built on a wide range of dimensions. Thus, time is not simply an objective commodity – it is spent, managed and coordinated in relation to others and as part of the family system.

In the study, my aim was to explore the usefulness of the household money management system model and analyse the *couples' time management system*. Present day family life is a constant struggle of time pressures, hurriedness and negotiations over time, with competing demands on couples' time (Mullan and Chatzitheochari, 2019; Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Burda et al 2013; Bianchi et al, 2012; Nomaguchi et al., 2005). The demand to manage time is marked, and there is a need to explore these micro-level practices by concentrating not only on individuals but also on couples' patterns in managing time. Time availability defines the time that is used for paid work or studies and the time that is available for use as a family, for leisure or for couple time (DeGroot & Vik, 2020; Erickson, 2005; Alberts et al., 2011). Other structural factors are also important, such as commuting to work, work-hour scheduling and caring responsibilities. However, these structural factors alone do not define the time management system adopted or how it is played out.

The couples' time management system has to be understood as part of 'doing gender' theory, which includes analysis and examination of gender roles, socialisation of these roles and culture (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). Rather than sharing equal values on gender roles, differences occurred between the interviewed couples, albeit they did not explain any disagreements they may have had on gender roles. This is in line with previous studies utilising couple interviewing, an interviewing technique that creates a common narrative (Daly, 2002). It is beyond the scope of this study to examine if this shared view would be challenged in other occasions where the partner was not present. However, the focus here is on the shared and

expressed views on time management systems, as the study is concerned with how couples explain their time management.

The time management systems differed in the extent to which there was negotiation over time (see Table 4). Those couples with egalitarian attitudes had more room to negotiate, and couples' time management systems required negotiation. This is important because it seems that traditional values, accompanied by unequal access to private time and hobbies, do not leave room for negotiation – roles are fixed and more stable. For daily life, negotiation means a constant balancing and discussion. With the aim of achieving more equal gender roles, female-managed and male-managed systems were the most fixed with regard to maintaining existing ways of organising time, with less priority given to renewing gender roles and responsibilities in daily life. In addition, power relations were unequal, which included managerial and strategic power over time. While some dimensions seem similar in two or many time systems, constructing an overall view of systems requires taking various dimensions together. The view on time seems to be an outcome of various components characteristic of each system.

The methodology used in this paper was to interview couples together, a laborious method not often used in family studies (but see Doucet, 2015; Twamley, this issue). Typically, such studies include individual interviews. Interviewing couples has advantages but also limitations. An advantage was that the method revealed how couples explained their time systems. Some of the interviews were not balanced, i.e. there were substantial differences in the extent to which the partners participated. However, a disadvantage of the method was that couples may not have brought up significant differences on contested topics, even where such differences existed. Previous research has shown that women interviewed in couples are significantly less likely to say that they feel deprived in family life when compared with women who are interviewed alone (Pahl, 2007). For the purpose of this study, however, it was decided that interviewing couples would yield more in-depth data about the couples' systems compared to individual interviews. Another

limitation is selection bias. In this regard, particularly with interviewing couples, there is a strong bias in who agrees to be interviewed, and it can be assumed that couples with the greatest time pressure will decide not to participate.

This study has concentrated on everyday life rather than major life events, although the latter was also discussed in the interviews. This was a methodological choice in that the study sought to focus on time systems at the micro level. It is therefore evident that this study provides a ‘snapshot’ of each couple’s situation. An interesting topic for further research would be to analyse how time systems evolve across time. Some couples – older couples with long histories together – referred to their past family histories and discussed their significance for the present. It would therefore be interesting to follow couples over a longer period of time in order to identify how their time systems develop and which components produce the differences.

The aim of this study has been to discuss if time can be analysed in a similar way to household finances. Time is different from money; unlike finances, there is a fixed amount of minutes and hours available in the day. However, time as a social construct has similar characteristics to money, as inequalities and power relations exist and people have differences with regard to their access and rights to time. Time is a fascinating focus of study; while it seems to be an objective and measurable fact, it is actually a social construct, with activities taking place in time and the value given to time being socially constructed and relational to others. In this regard, the identification of differences in couples’ ways of deciding about and managing time illustrates the variations that exist.

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Table 1. Summary of household money management systems

<i>Female whole-wage system</i>	Woman has responsibility for managing all household finances. Man gives his salary to woman, and also hands over responsibility for budgeting or worrying about bills. Woman has no personal budget to spare.
<i>Male whole-wage system</i>	Man has sole responsibility for managing all household finances, including budgeting and spending money. Often leaves woman with no personal spending money.
<i>Housekeeping allowance system</i>	There is a separate household allowance – a fixed sum of money for housekeeping expenses. Rest of money stays under personal control.
<i>Pooling system</i>	Financial responsibilities are in principle equal and non-segregated. Both partners have access to all or nearly all household money, and both are thought to be responsible for management and expenditure from the common pool.
<i>Independent management system</i>	Both partners have independent incomes, and neither has access to all household money. In principle, both have equal responsibility for budgeting and paying bills.

Source: Author's compilation based on Pahl (1980), Vogler and Pahl (1994), and Coelho (2014).

Table 2. Characteristics of the couples.

	Female characteristics	Male characteristics	Children
1	Age:40-49 Employed, blue collar, ft	Age:40-49 Employed, blue collar, ft	two teenaged
2	Age:30-39 Employed, white collar, ft	Both 30-39 Employed, blue collar, ft	one child, under 10years
3	Age:50-59 Work: Employed, blue collar, ft	Age 60-65 Retired	no (living at home)
4	Age:20-29 Parental leave	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	one, under 5years
5	Age:60-65 Employed, white collar, ft	Age 60-65 Employed, blue collar, ft	no (living at home)
6	Age:20-29 Employed /student, blue collar, pt	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	no
7	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	no
9	Age:30-39 Student	Age:30-39 Employed, blue collar, ft	two, teen aged
10	Age:60-65 Retired	Age 60-65 Employed, white collar, ft	no (living at home)
11	Age:20-29 Student	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	no
12	Age:40-49 Employed, white collar, ft	Age:40-49 Employed, blue collar, ft	one, under 10rs
13	Age:40-49 Unemployed	Age:40-49 Employed, white collar, ft	one, teenage
14	Age:20-29 Employed /student, blue collar, pt	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	no
15	Age:30-39 Parental leave	Age:30-39 Employed, white collar, ft	two, both under 5rs
16	Age:50-59 Self-employed, ft	Age:50-59 Self-employed, ft	four; all teenaged
17	Age:30-39 Parental leave	Age:30-39 Employed, blue collar, ft	two, both under 5rs
18	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	no
19	Age:20-29 Student / Parental leave	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	two, both under 5rs
20	Age:30-39 Employed, white collar, ft	Age:30-39 Employed, white collar, ft	no
21	Age:50-59 Employed, white collar, ft	Age:50-59 Employed, white collar, ft	one, teenaged
22	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	Age:20-29 Employed, blue collar, ft	no

ft= full-time work, 35 hours and more a week; pt=part-time work, less than 35 hours a week

Table 3. Analytical strategy of the couples' time management systems

Themes	Questions asked:	Dimensions
Managerial power	Who makes decisions about time?	Female /male partner alone <i>to</i> both partners equally
Gender roles	Is there gender role specialisation? What views on gender roles are expressed?	Traditional <i>to</i> egalitarian values
Strategic power	Who holds the strategic power on decisions of time?	Female/ male <i>to</i> context contingent
Access to private time and hobbies, and strategic power	Do couples express same rights and access to time? Is the division of time balanced or unequal?	Equal <i>to</i> unequal
Division of household work (tasks, division, rationale)	How is household work divided?	Differentiated <i>to</i> same roles and responsibilities
Negotiations about time	Is there negotiation on time, and if so, to which extent?	None <i>to</i> continuous
Understanding of time as commodity	Is time individual or shared property? How is partners' time viewed?	Female/male time: Individual <i>to</i> shared

Table 4. Summary of the couples' time systems

Themes	Couple time management systems			
	<i>Female managed</i>	<i>Male managed</i>	<i>Pooling system</i>	<i>Independent management</i>
Managerial power	Female	Male	Both, context contingent	Both individually or context contingent
Decisions about time	Unequal	Unequal	Egalitarian	Context contingent
Strategic power	Female	Male	Both	Both
Family members' access to private time and hobbies	Unequal	Unequal	Equal	Equal
Division of household work (tasks, division, rationale)	Traditional, women natural carers, separated roles	Traditional, women natural carers, separated roles	Egalitarian, similar roles	Varying: egalitarian to traditional, varying roles.
Negotiations about time and roles	None or modest	None or modest	Continuous negotiation	No, modest
Understanding of time as commodity	Female time is for the family. Male time is for the family whenever needed.	Male time is his time, but the time of the female is a property/ shared time of the family.	Time is private, but also shared equally. Both have access to same quantity of private time.	Time is individually possessed.