

# GENDER INEQUALITIES, SOCIAL TIME AND THE THIRD SECTOR

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## A B S T R A C T

THIS PAPER FOCUSES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER IMBALANCES AND THE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES USED BY THIRD SECTOR VALENCIAN VOLUNTEERS TO ORGANISE THEIR TIME. THE ANALYSIS, BASED ON IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS, STUDIES HOW THE AVAILABLE TIME IS DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN UNPAID DOMESTIC AND FAMILY WORK, PAID WORK AND VOLUNTEER SOCIAL ACTIONS. ITS MAIN CONTRIBUTION IS BASED ON THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THREE DIFFERENT WAYS OF DISTRIBUTING THE AVAILABLE TIME AMONG THE DIVERSE CHORES AND FUNCTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THESE THREE FIELDS AND OBSERVING HOW THEY ARE INFLUENCED BY SOCIALLY ASSIGNED GENDER ROLES.

## KEYWORDS:

GENDER INEQUALITIES, UNPAID WORK, SOCIAL TIME, THE THIRD SECTOR.

## INTRODUCTION

Everything about social roles carried out by men and women in Spain make it a very contradictory country. Favourable attitudes towards equality co-exist with asymmetric everyday life private domestic behaviours. Catherine Hakim (2003), focusing on the ideal models used as a reference when choosing lifestyles among European citizens, explores the degree of social acceptance of the three different models of couples. In the «egalitarian» one, the two members of the couple sustain economically the family and share, in equal terms, domestic work and childcare. In the «compromise» one, the women's paid work is less absorbent than the man's one and she employs more time in housework and taking care of children. And finally, in the third, the «separate roles» one, each member has its own task, that is to say, males have a paid job and the females take care of domestic and family work. In general terms,

European women tended to choose more often than men the egalitarian family model and the same happened between the younger and the more elderly generations. There are also geographical differences. While in Western Germany, Luxemburg and Ireland most people elected the «compromise» model, in Denmark, Spain and Great Britain the dominant option was the «egalitarian» one. However, interestingly enough, projected ideals are significantly distant from everyday life reality, except in the case of Denmark, as most citizens in Great Britain and Spain do not belong to a family unit where roles are shared in equal terms by men and women.

These conclusions coincide with trends observed in studies on the social distribution of time. Surveys on time use and un-paid work carried out in Europe allow stating that the two members of the couple do not contribute to un-paid work carried out in the house in equal terms. In Spain, according to 1996

data, men employ a mean of 14 hours a week in un-paid work in the house, and women, more than 47. The situation varied scarcely in homes where women were employed in the market (Durán 1999). As shown by empiric evidence, nearly a decade after, the situation remained practically the same. In effect, the *Encuesta sobre empleo del tiempo 2002 – 2003*<sup>1</sup> (INE 2004) shows very small variations in the imbalanced distribution of time devoted to domestic and family work between sexes. While men continue to employ 14 hours weekly, women use 31 hours. The reduction of the mean time dedicated to domestic work by women during this decade coincides with a clear reduction of time employed in leisure and an increase of time used for paid work. There are no data allowing to state that the reduction of female hours used in un-paid domestic and family work is due to an increase of male participation in them (Instituto de la Mujer 2007).

#### CITIZENSHIP, LABOUR MARKET AND FAMILY: GENDER IMBALANCES

Within this context, as many studies indicate, the diverse family policies put into place by the different tendency Spanish governments of the last 40 years have not been able to transform gender equality into a general interest issue and therefore have had little influence on the previously mentioned situation. Contradictions and variations in the established family policies have kept us away from a model which would have allowed integrating a woman's right to enter the labour market and a working woman's right to have a family (Madruga 2002). In my view, the recognition of this last right implies taking private sphere gender imbalances as a starting point, particularly those related to un-paid work and the need to take care of dependants, and promoting new political and economic meas-

ures which instead of deepening differences between public and private spheres, transform the latter into a public interest issue.

Inefficient conciliation policies<sup>2</sup>, particularly those fighting scarcity of public care services for dependant people, a social time management neglecting any vital need unrelated to paid productivity and Spanish men's low response to their co-responsibility with un-paid family work have situated Spanish women in a clearly disadvantaged position when trying to develop their autonomous labour trajectories. When observing, on top of labour integration, the way women exercise their citizenship rights through volunteer social organisations, the same situation becomes apparent. Despite the increasing number of women in Third Sector Spanish entities (Fundación Tomillo 2000, Pérez Díaz y López Novo 2003), it is more difficult for women than for men, except in organisations working on women's rights or which develop gender egalitarian policies, to get continuously involved in the organisation's managerial bodies, particularly in those entities which have a high degree of institutional formalisation and, in consequence, women tend to carry out tasks with little public visibility (Perelló 2007, Dema 2008). Therefore, Spanish women integration in the labour market and in civil society organisations presently largely depends on each woman's capacity to develop her personal and private strategies to reconcile personal life, un-paid family work, a paid job and her active exercise of citizenship.

The discourse elaborated by male and female volunteers working in social organisations in Valencia on how they daily combine domestic work, private sphere un-paid care, labour market paid work and civic volunteering in non-profit Third Sector organisations will be analysed, in the following pages, taking into account what has been stated in

<sup>1</sup> *Survey on Time use. 2002 – 2003* (INE 2004).

<sup>2</sup> The *Ley de Conciliación de la Vida Familiar y Laboral de las Personas Trabajadoras* (Law 39/1999, of the 5th of November), the partial development of this Law in the *Real Decreto 1251/2001* and the *Plan Integral de Apoyo a la Familia 2001 – 2004* have shown to be inefficient. As data shows, it is mostly women who take conciliation measures like flexible or part-time work and parental and other leaves to take care of dependants in the family or their own or adopted children. The *Ley de Promoción de la Autonomía Personal y Atención a las Personas en situación de Dependencia* (Law 39/2006, 14th of December) and the *Ley para la Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres* (Law 3/2007, of the 22nd of March), improve the legislation that existed before as they situate conciliation measures in the centre of gender equality policies. However, they have created expectations, which cannot be met without proper stable financing and public services allowing putting them in place.

the former paragraphs<sup>3</sup>. The organisations which formed the reference universe to design the samples for in-depth interviews are part of the so called *Plataforma de Voluntariat Social de la Comunitat Valenciana*<sup>4</sup>. In general, interviewee characteristics are very similar to trends observed in the Valencian volunteer social organisations and also in the Spanish society as a whole (Cf. Ariño 2001, Pérez Díaz y López Novo 2003).

### TIME, GENDER AND VOLUNTEERING: SKETCHING A TYPOLOGY

The basic reasons for participating in the wide world of organisations are time availability and a certain need to fulfil oneself. The main motivations behind social volunteering in non-profit organisations, including those to which we refer in this paper, are, together with the latter mentioned factors: altruist motivations and the promotion of activities oriented to a collective defence of certain problems and civil participation permitting to exercise citizenship without taking into account the public administration's inefficiencies and interference are (Perelló 2007). From here on, I will focus specifically on «time availability» and I will do it from a perspective in which personal subjectivity, social objectivity and situation inter-subjectivity are integrated with one another in such a way that individual vital experiences related to time use make sense, particularly, within the framework of socially constructed conceptions and practices.

In any approach taking time as a main thread to analyse social action, the former emerges as a conditioning factor - a main border and a scarce individual resource. In the discourse developed by interviewees belonging to Third Sector Valencian entities,

time is defined as a scarce good which needs to be constantly daily managed. Moreover, when defining the time employed in the organisation and devoted to volunteering they all seem to start doing it from two qualities, in which, in their own words «its great social value»<sup>5</sup> stands, though it is a scarcely recognised and visible value:

- a) Time employed in any voluntary organisation's activities and ends is time spent away from market parameters. It is given away «nearly without limits», with no kind of economic remuneration.
- b) In addition, time «devoted» to it depends on the needs and demands which the ends of the non-profit organisation intends to satisfy. Therefore, «the more one gets implied, the higher one's awareness of what still needs to be done».

All interviewees agree in these two points. And they are described in detail by those in charge of management or have responsibility posts in the organisation. This is a particularly relevant aspect, as, for men, it is, generally, a new experience. Socially, leaving aside time devoted to paid work, adult males still have an autonomous and self-directed concept of free time. The way it is used depends very much on the male's own needs and inclinations. Nevertheless, for women, the experience is generally not that new. Time, for adult women with family responsibilities, has to be diverted in several directions as it is subject to other people's demands, full of constant choices between their own needs and those of others, between their own autonomy and care tasks socially ascribed to them. Therefore, in general, time employed by interviewee adult women to volunteering does not

<sup>3</sup> The analysis explores 30 interviews, selected from a saturated sample which contemplated two representation levels: that of associations where the interviewees develop their activities and that of the social position they occupy within the social structure. In the first level, the entity's degree of formalisation and the organisation's explicit aims were taken into account. In the second, the interviewee's sex, age, labour situation (active, employed, unemployed, inactive, housewife, retired, students), the existence or not of un-paid responsibilities related to caring for dependant relatives and finally, the degree of participation in the reference association (number of weekly hours and holder or not of a responsibility post). Fieldwork ended in 2004 and was carried out by Verónica Ramírez y Elena Gadea. It was developed within the framework of there research I directed called *Género y voluntariado. La participación de las mujeres en las ONG de la Comunitat Valenciana*, ordered by the Plataforma de Voluntariat Social de la Comunitat Valenciana and in which Isabel de la Cruz also participated.

<sup>4</sup> Valencia Community Social Volunteering Platform.

<sup>5</sup> From here on, I will be inserting between [« »] significants specifically and frequently used by interviewees when elaborating their discourse on their experience within the field of voluntary social action.

involve breaking with their daily life experiences, which is not the case of adult volunteer men.

Dedicating one's own time to the organisation in which one is implicated means having to make constant sacrifices in the personal, family or labour fields, including daily «establishing priorities» between diverse activities or «taking the association home or to work». For those actively participating in volunteering «combining» and «choosing priorities» among all the responsibilities they have is a very important matter, independently from their age or their sex. However, from a sociological point of view, it is known that even if assigning time to an activity or another is conceived as a personal decision, it is highly conditioned by physiological and social demands. The latter requirements or expectations greatly explain the differential use of time by diverse sex, generation and social class social agents. We already know how asymmetric time availability and time use is between men and women, due to their socially ascribed gender roles in relation to non paid family work and the labour market. We are also aware of imbalances in time use by generation. And these socially ascribed roles, with obvious consequences on time employed in each of the assumed responsibilities, explain to a large extent, men and women's uneven departure situation when participating or getting involved in social volunteer organisations.

“[...] in volunteering life, as I have said before, it is much more, *it is more complicated*, I think, *for a woman to have access to, to this type of volunteering than, than, than for a man* [...]. Another thing, from a participation point of view, would be, well as a collaborator, socially collaborating with volunteers, well helping sick

people, helping to clean disabled or other people, well that might be a job, maybe, which women, as the occupation they have is, they can do it better, but maybe when it has to do with carrying out a project in the Third World and being out there a month, two weeks, two months, well that is more complicated, *for a woman which, when she has dependants*. [...] really it is difficult to put these issues, because you say to a woman «Look! You are going to Madrid» [the interviewee indicates the women's lack of reply with some seconds of silence], but if you say to a man «You are going to Madrid», he takes his suitcase and he leaves saying «for how many days?» That is the problem.” (Man, between 31 and 40, employed, with dependants, low degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>6</sup>.

Taking into account what has been stated up to now as background considerations, I would like to draw the basic features of the three different ways of «combining» time employed in social voluntary actions in non profit associations and that devoted to other social activities or responsibilities. All three ways emerged in the interviewees discourse when explaining their specific experiences on the time they employ participating in Valencian Third Sector organisations.

They all imply «establishing priorities» to the detriment of other aspects in civic voluntary, domestic work, un-paid dependant care or labour market paid employment. In the three cases, gender social ascriptions which reproduce social expectations on the tasks, functions and roles men and women should (mainly) carried out act as a possible reference horizon for social action. When roles are totally

<sup>6</sup> In the original Spanish: “[...], en la vida del voluntariado, como te he dicho antes, es mucho más, *es más complicado*, yo creo que, *para la mujer acceder a este tipo, a este tipo de voluntariado que, que, que para un hombre* [...]. Otra cosa es que, a nivel participativo, puede ser, pues a nivel de colaborador, de colaboración social del voluntariado, pues ayudando a enfermos, ayudando a limpiar a personas discapacitadas o no, pues a lo mejor es un trabajo, a lo mejor, que a las mujeres, como la ocupación que tienen es, lo pueden desarrollar mejor, pero a lo mejor a la hora de irse a un proyecto al Tercer Mundo y estar un mes, quince días, dos meses, pues eso es más complicado *para una mujer que, en este caso, tenga cargas familiares*. [...] realmente sí que es dificultoso a la hora de hacer esas cuestiones, porque tú le dices a una mujer: «¡Oye! Te vas a Madrid» [el entrevistado expresa durante unos instantes de silencio la no respuesta de la mujer], y le dices a un hombre: «Te vas a Madrid» y él coge la maleta y se va, y dice: «¿Para cuántos días?» Entonces, ese es el problema.” (Varón, entre 31 y 40 años, ocupado, con cargas familiares, baja participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

separated, these social ascriptions urge women to assume a lifelong implicit social contract, transferring without any monetary compensation their working time, so that they are able to take care and give attention to other family members. Men are not subject to this social obligation. Instead, they have to sell their time in the labour market, enough time to generate sufficient rights to maintain himself and his own family. In Spain, as we have explained at the beginning of this paper, there has been little improvement in dissolving the social ascription of women to domestic work and un-paid family care.

*FIRST MODALITY. CITIZENSHIP AND (RELATIVE) SUSPENSION OF GENDER SOCIAL ASCRIPTIONS*

In this case, the central element impelling people to get involved in social volunteering is the existence of «free time». Here, we are referring to young generations as well as to the elderly ones. Young interviewee volunteers state that many causes and circumstances have played a role in deciding to work altruistically in an organisation, that it is ultimately only option, a «merely personal» matter, in the same way that it is not to participate in them. The main explicit factors which originated the decision of these young volunteers, men and women under 30, usually university students, to participate in voluntary work are the desire to do something, to organise and «fill time» in another way (because vital circumstances have changed, their own political convictions push them to do it or they are sensitive to social injustice).

“[...] A volunteering course was done, and a guy from [name of the association] went to do it, then well my colleagues and I, who knew each other, we had known each other for some time, some

of us were friends and so on, we all agreed «OK, well lets go» [...]. I wanted to do something for other people, *I wanted to use my free time in a productive way*, helping people who need it [...]” (Woman, under than 30, not occupied, without dependants, low degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>7</sup>.

These young males and females belong to the wide Valencian middle classes. They are university students who do not work professionally yet nor have not formed their own family, they share in many aspects a gender position which we can call neutral: a part from compromises they personally decide to assume, their time is guided autonomously, it does not depend on other family member's needs nor on the necessity to obtain economic resources to sustain themselves. They are not yet totally responsible neither for domestic work, family care, nor a labour market job. They can «choose priorities» on the basis of their own «availability».

“[...] I organise my vital spaces *on the basis of my availability*, *I have my priorities at each moment* depending on what life in, each time brings me, and there are moments when you leave more aside certain things and you leave less others. What I do, is what people normally do, weigh up things, and *at each moment in life, well you choose some things or you choose others*, there are times when you get more implicated in this subject, and other times you get less implied [...]” (Man, under 30, not occupied, without dependants, high degree of participation in the association and with a responsibility post in it)<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> In the original Spanish: “[...] Se hizo un curso de voluntariado y fue a hacer ese curso un chico que estaba en [nombre de la asociación], entonces pues mis compañeras y yo que nos conocíamos, nos conocíamos desde hacía tiempo, algunas éramos amigas y tal, pues nos pusimos todas de acuerdo, «Vale, pues vamos» [...]. Yo estaba con el tema de hacer algo por los demás, *aprovechar mi tiempo libre de una manera productiva*, ayudando a personas que lo necesiten [...]” (Mujer, menor de 30 años, no ocupada, sin cargas familiares, baja participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

<sup>8</sup> In the original Spanish: “[...] yo organizo mis espacios vitales *en función de mi disponibilidad, tengo mis prioridades en cada momento* y en función de lo que la vida en, cada vez te pone delante, y hay veces en que aparcas más unas cosas y aparcas menos otras. Yo lo que hago es lo que normalmente hacemos todos, valorar a ver lo que hay, y *en cada momento de la vida, pues eliges unas cosas o eliges otras*, hay veces en que te implicas más en este tema y hay veces en que te implicas menos [...]” (Varón, menor de 30 años, no ocupado, sin cargas familiares, alta participación en la asociación y con cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

The time which elderly volunteers can devote to actively exercising their citizenship is related to the possibilities which are opened to them when their vital and biographic trajectory allows them to stop assuming certain social responsibilities related to their socially ascribed gender roles. In the male case, this condition takes place when men retire and their socially assigned role of being the main economic maintainer of their families no longer involves carrying out a paid job or profession. For women, it becomes possible when both the labour trajectory finishes and care responsibilities over family dependants diminish, because children have grown up and they are no longer in the house or because in that moment there are no dependants to care. It is at that moment when elderly men and women can have personal own time which they can use in several ways. And one of them is occupying free time in carrying out voluntary work.

“Well, now I see it from another perspective, now I see that *I needed to fill my time with something*, then I looked, looked... [...] volunteering we have always done, because who has not taken care of «the children of»? Well, I have always been in organisations of I do not know what, but never seriously, taking it as up to now, here [...]” (Woman, more than 50, not occupied, without dependants, low degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>9</sup>.

“[...] I’ve already decided to get into this, no? *In am freer, I have more time*, I am a slightly restless person when intending to help others [...]. My experience was, of, I will enter for justice, eh?, because I have devoted sixty five years to the family and to work, always, earning for the family and

for..., and then, I can tell you, I entered for justice, because I had dedicated so much time to myself and to my family that I needed to give myself a bit more to others [...]” (Man, more than 50, not occupied, without dependants, high degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>10</sup>.

SECOND MODALITY. CITIZENSHIP AND PREDOMINANCE OF THE ASCRIPTION «BREAD WINNER»

In this type, the main element allowing dedicating time to social volunteering is not «spare» time availability. Most interviewed adult men with a remunerated employment, and a significant amount of volunteer adult women participating in the labour market and who do not have children nor other dependants are a clear example of a very particular way of distributing time between volunteer civic actions, the labour market and family responsibilities.

“We have a lot of activities to carry out throughout the day, not only a job, in which the great majority of women who come [to the association] have to respond, but afterwards, also afterwards, maybe, well personal issues, more or less stable [...]. Me, for example, [...] *I have a family which I love a lot and which I have to be with and I have a partner, and I have a job which, well! Is something which, which takes up all my time and then there is this, which is also enormous*, it is complex. I suppose it involves trying to find equilibrium, choosing one’s priorities and above all, delegate [...]” (Woman, between 31 and 40, employed, without dependants, high degree of participation in the association and with a responsibility post in it)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> In the original Spanish: “Pues, ahora lo veo desde otra perspectiva, ahora veo que *necesitaba llenar mi tiempo con algo*, entonces estaba buscando, buscando... [...] voluntariado siempre hemos hecho, porque ¿quién no ha cuidado a «los niños de»? O sea, yo siempre he estado en organizaciones de no sé qué, pero nunca en serio, el cogérmelo como hasta ahora, aquí [...]” (Mujer, mayor de 50 años, no ocupada, con cargas familiares, baja participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

<sup>10</sup> In the original Spanish: “[...] he decidido ya meterme en esto, ¿no? *Estoy más libre, tengo más tiempo*, soy un poco inquieto en el sentido de ayudar a los demás [...]. La experiencia mía fue, de, yo entré por justicia, ¿eh?, porque son sesenta y cinco años que he dedicado a la familia y trabajar, siempre, en esa cosa de ganar para la familia y para... y luego, ya te digo, de que entré por justicia, porque ya había dedicado tanto tiempo a mi persona, a mi familia, que necesitaba darme un poco más a los demás [...]” (Varón, mayor de 50 años, no ocupado, sin cargas familiares, con alta participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

However, one does not always find this «equilibrium», as devoting oneself fully to a job, particularly when aiming to have a successful professional career or thinking in the responsibilities which come with it, and getting strongly involved in obtaining a volunteer organisation's goals, means spending a good amount of time and energy. «Choosing priorities» among the diverse tasks and activities to be done becomes essential. This therefore implies learning to «renounce», something which is not always easy. Adult voluntary men tend to locate priorities within the area of their paid job, and sacrifices in the family and private ones. Time devoted (or «given») to voluntary associations, a time which is personally «lost» but «won» by the organisation, is dedicated to the organisation insofar other issues in the private, family and domestic areas can be «left unattended». Everything would indicate that, in this case, the areas which are more frequently and generally left in second term are those of personal leisure and time shared with the partner or the family.

“It’s difficult, it’s difficult, that is, *the way life is built nowadays, it is difficult to devote lots of time* [to the association], particularly because, *it’s like always, conciliating work and family life*, and this already means dedicating a lot. Now [at work], I have somebody waiting for me, and at twelve I have another person, at four p.m. I have a company agreement revision up to eight

or nine in the evening, at eight I have a meeting [...]. Things can not be like this, things can not be permanently like that, that is, [...] it’s a lot.” (Man, between 31 and 40, employed, with dependants, low degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>12</sup>.

“I have been working for three years, three years working full time, but I have been working since I was a student, I worked and studied at the same time, but it was something different, but *now that I am already working and wanting to give the most of myself*, well, obviously! [...] *what happens is, you are at home or you are in* [the association] *and you are thinking on work, or in another thing*. Yes, yes, I must have many more hours, or I suppose that will come with time, at work, that you get slightly used to it, then it’s changing a bit of life style [...], but, it’s true that *most of the time now is for work*, no? Now, I [...] *the association and work*, are the only things I do.” (Man, between 31 and 40, employed, without dependants, high degree of participation in the association and with a responsibility post in it)<sup>13</sup>.

THIRD MODALITY. CITIZENSHIP AND PREDOMINANCE OF THE AS-  
SCRIPTION «HOUSEWIFE AND CARER»

The last form I want to mention here is nearly the reverse (and complement) of the one which

<sup>11</sup> In the original Spanish: “Tenemos muchas actividades que desarrollar a lo largo del día, no sólo un puesto de trabajo, en el que la gran mayoría de las mujeres que están viniendo [a la asociación] tienen que responder, sino después, también después, a lo mejor, pues cuestiones de índole personal, más o menos estables [...]. Yo, por ejemplo, [...] *tengo una familia a la que quiero mucho y con la que tengo que estar y tengo pareja, y tengo un trabajo que ¡bueno!, es algo que es que, es que me quita todo el tiempo del mundo y después está esto, que también es tremendo*, y es complejo. Supongo que es ir buscando el equilibrio, ir priorizando, y sobre todo delegar [...]”. (Mujer, entre 31 y 40 años, ocupada, sin cargas familiares, alta participación en la asociación y con cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

<sup>12</sup> In the original Spanish: “Es que es difícil, es que es difícil, o sea, *conforme está montada hoy la vida, es difícil dedicarle mucho tiempo* [a la asociación], más que nada porque es que, *es lo de siempre, conciliar la vida laboral y familiar*, y eso ya te dedica mucho. Ahora mismo [en el trabajo], ahí tengo a uno esperándome, a las doce tengo otro, a las cuatro de la tarde tengo revisión de un convenio de una empresa hasta las ocho o nueve de la noche, a las ocho de la noche tengo reunión [...]. Eso no puede ser, es que no puede ser permanente, o sea, [...] es mucho.” (Varón, entre 31 y 40 años, ocupado, con cargas familiares, baja participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

<sup>13</sup> In the original Spanish: “Llevo tres años trabajando, tres años trabajando a tiempo completo, pero yo he estado trabajando desde que estaba estudiando, compaginaba el estudio y el trabajo, pero eso era una cosa distinta, pero *ahora que ya estoy trabajando y queriendo dar el máximo*, pues, ¡claro!, [...] *lo que te pasa, que estás en casa o estás en* [la asociación] *y estás pensando en el trabajo, o en otra cosa*. Sí, sí, tengo que tener muchas más horas, o supongo que vendrá con el tiempo, en el trabajo, que te vas acostumbrando un poco, entonces, es el cambio un poco del estilo de vida [...], pero, la verdad es que *la mayoría del tiempo es para el trabajo en este momento*, ¿no? Yo, ahora, [...] *la asociación y el trabajo*, es lo único que hago.” (Varón, entre 31 y 40 años, ocupado, sin cargas familiares, alta participación en la asociación y con cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

we have just described. In it, the way of «combining» time in voluntary social action with time employed in other social activities or responsibilities, involves a predominance of domestic and un-paid family work over the paid one carried out in the labour market. This way of articulating what should come first and what is secondary has only come up through the discourse maintained by interviewee adult voluntary women when explaining their own experiences on the time they employ in participating in Valencian Third Sector organisations. There is nothing strange in this singularity, as Spanish women as a whole, are the social group which assumes more family and domestic responsibilities. As I have already stated at the beginning of this paper, we are faced with a good example of one of the basic components of the sex-gender system as it has been built by modernity (Pateman 1988, Murillo 1996, Izquierdo 2006) and without which men could not «dedicate themselves full time» to the labour market, a dimension intimately linked to a man's social requirement to basically fulfil the role of becoming the family unit's economic supporter.

“Lets see, *I have my* [household] *chores* no?, *and when I am not working*, because you are there by contracts or whatever, well, I plan myself, I plan my things, when I have to do them, and always, *I always have a little spare time*, and well, as you always already know more or less how much time you have to spare, well you project it in the area you like and you carry it out like that.” (Woman, between 41 and 50, employed, with dependants, high degree of participation in the association and with a responsibility post in it)<sup>14</sup>

“I organise myself by hours and not by things I have to do, because if I organised myself by things I have to do I would turn mad. I have to say, from that time to that other. *I get up at six in the morning*, at seven latest, and I organise myself. Then, *when I leave home I have organised lunch and I have organised my things so I don't have to worry* and if I come back late there aren't problems. That's why I am telling you that my organisation, I have become much more organised, because I organise myself by hours. From this hour to that I do this or that and when it's two o'clock I know I have to be near home because people and my family are coming to eat. Then I have to be in this place at a certain time or at another at a certain other [...]” (Woman, more than 50, not occupied, with dependants, low degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>15</sup>.

Generally, when men actively participate in voluntary entities they have to combine their labour and occupational obligations with responsibilities assumed in the organisation. When women try to get implied in social action they have to reconcile compromises they contract in the voluntary organisation with the non remunerated work load which is socially ascribed to them (domestic work and care services for the rest of the family members) and, if they have opted to have their own relationship with the labour market, not derived from the family's men, also with paid work carried out in it. These are two different ways of articulating time available.

“You have to look at two aspects, if you have a family or you don't have a family. If you don't

<sup>14</sup> In the original Spanish: “Vamos a ver, *yo tengo mis quehaceres* [domésticos] ¿no?, *y cuando no estoy trabajando*, porque estás por contratos o por lo que sea, bueno, pues yo me lo planifico, me planifico mis cosas, cuándo las debo hacer, y siempre, *siempre sobra un poquito de tiempo*, y bueno, y como más o menos sabes ya cuánto te sobra, pues lo proyectas al área que te gusta y así lo haces.” (Mujer, entre 41 y 50 años, ocupada, con cargas familiares, alta participación en la asociación y con cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

<sup>15</sup> In the original Spanish: “Yo me organizo por horas y no por asuntos, porque si me organizara por asuntos me volvería loca. Yo tengo que decir, de tal a tal hora. *Yo me levanto a las seis de la mañana*, lo más tardar a las siete, y entonces me organizo. Entonces, *cuando salgo de mi casa yo ya tengo organizada mi comida y tengo organizadas cosas para quedarme tranquila*, porque si vengo más tarde no hay problemas. Por eso te digo que mi organización, me he hecho mucho más organizada, porque me organizo por horas. Yo de tal a tal hora tengo tal cosa y, cuando ya llegan las dos, ya sé que tengo que estar por la puerta de mi casa porque me viene la gente a comer y mi familia. Entonces, tengo que estar a tal sitio a tal hora o en tal sitio a tal hora [...]” (Mujer, mayor de 50 años, no ocupada, con cargas familiares, baja participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).



have a family, no, I consider, *if you don't have a family you are practically like them*, but if you have a family you always have to distribute, then in my case [...]. In my case, if I stay there all day, when I get home I have everything to do, I have to take care of my girls, of my home, of my husband, then it is not the same. A married man gets home and has everything done, he hasn't got to worry if he has to go and buy something, if there isn't this or that, if the girls have to come [...].” (Woman, between 31 and 40, not occupied, with dependants, high degree of participation in the association and without a responsibility post in it)<sup>16</sup>.

“Then the problem really, we have realised now, that the problem isn't neither men nor women. Well, it's very clearly the men, no? But I want to tell you that the problem is not if you are, that is not a problem, I don't know how to tell you. *The problem is in that, hey? Women have to be relieved from domestic work so she can go to an organisation or get integrated in an organisation*, in this one or in a neighbour's one or wherever she wants, because if you do not relieve her of domestic work it's impossible, it's impossible [...].” (Man, more than 50, employed, without dependants, high degree of participation in the association and with a responsibility post in it)<sup>17</sup>.

Once more, everything indicates that women's traditional adscription to the household limits is closely related to their possibilities of participating and getting socially involved. It does not only have to do with the fact that women have to make an

additional extra effort to obtain the same things as men. It is also that they do not have a care infrastructure within the private family sphere, as men normally do, which allows them to «liberate time» (and responsibilities), to be able to carry out any activities they desire to fulfil away from the domestic private sphere, employing in it as much time as they consider necessary. This ascertainment, which nowadays emerges as one of the factors explaining paid work or politics gender imbalances, taking into account what interviewees have expressed in their discourse, also seems satisfactorily applicable to the area of non-profit social action entities.

### THE ISSUE AT STAKE

Each society builds up its own time. The time we are building in societies with flexible capitalism, is only a *flash* time, kaleidoscopic, which allows us linking events in such a vertiginous way that «not having time» has become a strong point in any account on life experience. Neither men nor women have time to carry out what they really consider as important. Flexibility coexists with an individualisation process and relational instability with emancipation from longstanding links. Questions like who takes care of who, when and during how much time or when is it time for someone to rest or to have free time, are starting to become central. Ultimately, when we are speaking of gender imbalances and time the issue at stake is not only women's disadvantaged position within the social structure. I consider that the key issues are the way in which the consumer capitalism and estamental gender stratification brought about by modern times function together, and how market production and free

<sup>16</sup> In the original Spanish: “Tienes que ver dos aspectos, si tienes familia o si no tienes familia. Si no tienes familia, no, considero, yo, *si no tienes familia eres prácticamente como ellos*, pero si tienes familia tienes que repartir siempre, entonces en mi caso [...]. En mi caso, si me paso ahí todo el día, cuando llego a casa lo tengo todo por hacer, tengo mis hijas que atender y tengo mi casa por atender y tengo a mi marido por atender, entonces no es lo mismo. Un hombre casado llega a casa y lo tiene todo hecho, no se tiene que preocupar si tiene que ir a comprar, si le falta esto, si le falta aquello, si las niñas tienen que venir [...].” (Mujer, entre 31 y 40 años, no ocupada, con cargas familiares, alta participación en la asociación y sin cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

<sup>17</sup> In the original Spanish: “Entonces, el problema realmente, nos hemos dado cuenta ahora, que el problema no es ni de la mujer ni del hombre. Bueno, es del hombre, está clarísimo, ¿no?, pero quiero decirte que no es el problema si se es, no es un problema, no sé cómo decirte. *El problema está en que, ¿eh?, hay que descargar del trabajo doméstico a la mujer para que pueda atender una asociación o que pueda integrarse en una asociación*, en esta o en una de vecinos o en la que le de la gana, porque como no las descargues de trabajo doméstico es imposible, es imposible [...].” (Varón, mayor de 50 años, ocupado, sin cargas familiares, alta participación en la asociación y con cargo de responsabilidad en la misma).

everyday family work allocated to women are articulated. I would also state that achieving a radical transformation depends on everybody, both men and women. And this extreme change should allow us to create a social link in which a moral economy based on good and services reciprocity, in cooperation and human dignity and in caring others, sustains a new social pact, a life policy for which I can not imagine another thing but a slow, patient timing, very different from that we presently know.

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