



A question of time. Measuring time spent on unpaid house- and care work in Sweden

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Background



Purpose

One important purpose of the Swedish official gender statistics is to enable statistical follow ups of the Swedish gender equality policy.

The policy's overall objective is to ensure that women and men have equal power to shape society and their own lives.

One of six interim goals is an equal distribution of unpaid house- and care work.



Previous surveys

- 1990/1991
- 2000/2001
- 2010/2011
- In 2019 Statistic Sweden was assigned by the Swedish Government to draw up a proposal for how to implement a fourth time use survey.

The exploratory study



Results and recommendations

Main result:

- The use of diaries in any form as a tool for measuring time use in Sweden is no longer a realistic option due to its complexity, high costs, high response burden, and low response rates.

Other important recommendations:

- Use a shorter data collection period.
- Delimit the population to people aged 18-84 years.
- Carry out a pilot survey.



The pilot survey



Purpose

The pilot survey was designed to test different reference periods, question design, and to monitor any preferences in replying to the survey on-line or on paper. The overall results and patterns in the pilot survey was also compared with the findings from previous time use surveys.



Results and recommendations

- The response rate was higher in the group that answered for an optional day compared with those who answered for an assigned day. However, the former group responded to a lower extent for Fridays and Saturdays.
- Recommendations from the pilot included adjustments to the stratified sample to compensate for lower response rates among foreign born and some adjustments to the questionnaire.



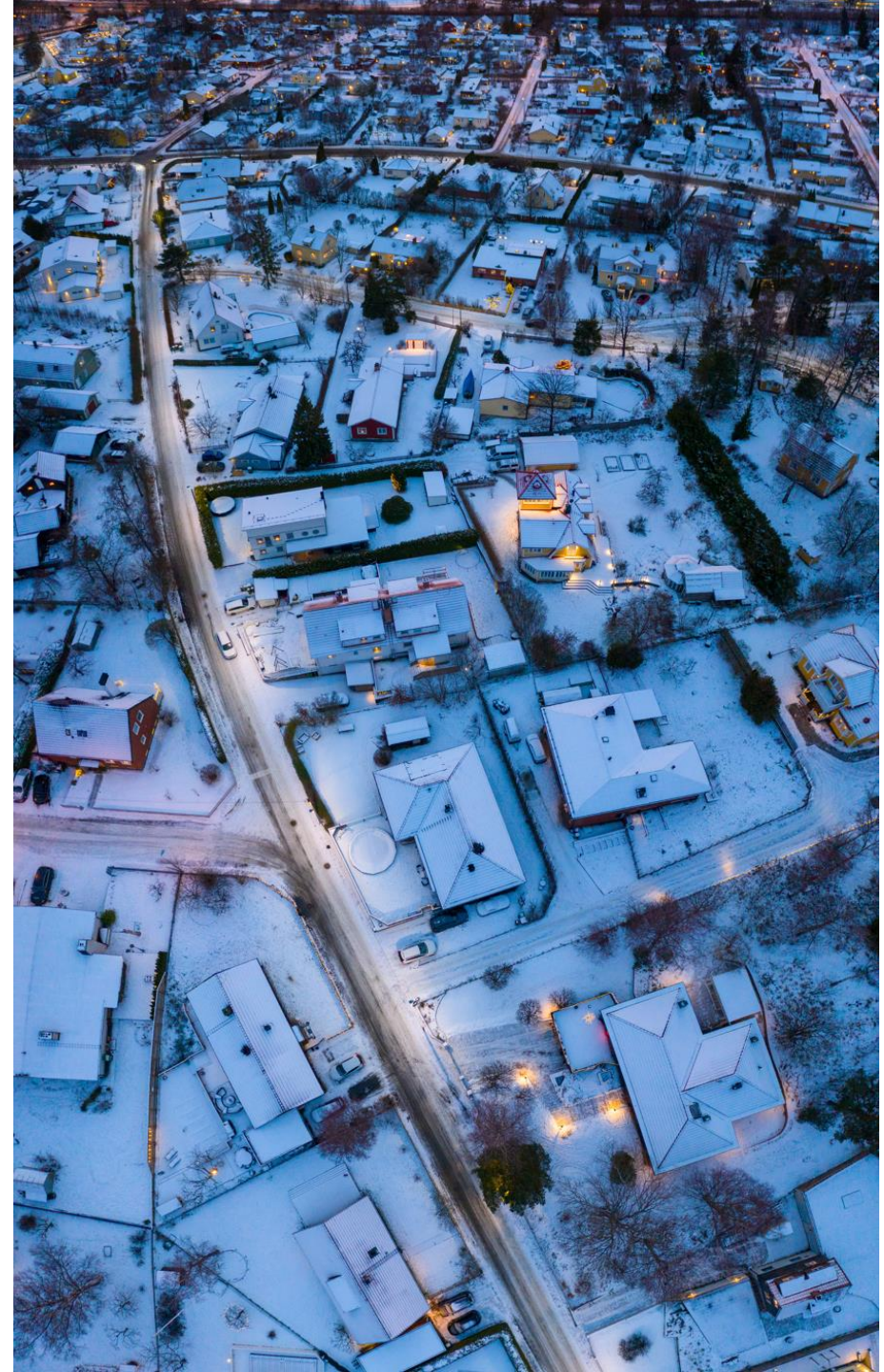
Main Survey



Results

The overall patterns in the new survey followed the patterns in the previous surveys:

- Women generally spend more time than men do on activities such as cleaning, washing, and taking care of children.
- Men generally spend more time than women on paid work, maintenance and repairs of the home and vehicles.
- It is important to take the actual amount of time spent on specific activities into consideration.



People aged 20–64 who often feel stressed due to having too much to do by type of household, 2022

Proportion (%) in each group

	Proportion		Measurement uncertainty	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Single without children	25	19	5	5
Single with children	41	28	6	7
Cohabiting without children	24	16	4	4
Cohabiting with children	39	23	4	4



Source: Statistics Sweden

Conclusions



Main conclusions

- The new method was developed to generate data of sufficient quality to a tolerable cost and response burden. The data can be used to analyse gender (in)equality in the division of unpaid work.
- A consequence of the new method is that findings cannot on a detailed level be compared with findings from previous surveys. Also, the actual number of hours and minutes that women and men in average spend on unpaid house- and care work in one day cannot be calculated.



Flexibility

- In any future surveys it would be interesting from a gender perspective to explore any possibilities of including a dimension of the flexibility of the activities into the analysis, since some activities are very time sensitive while others can be postponed until the next day or longer.



Thank You

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