

Developments over the last few decades have seen substantial changes in the way people use one of their most valued resources: time. The combination of technological change, expanding access to high-speed internet and development of tools facilitating smooth long-distance connections and online work, have had a major impact on the nature of work and, in particular, where work is conducted. These developments have been significantly accelerated by the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, when in the face of lockdowns employers became more open to facilitate work-from-home arrangements, and to more flexible allocation of work hours during the day and over the course of the week. These processes followed and overlapped with broader changes in the labour market related to skill-biased technological change, increasing degree of automation, and changing demand for different labour tasks. The developments raise important questions regarding the scale of how people's lives have changed, how much their work time differs today from what it looked like in the early and mid-2000s, what groups have been affected the most, and how to measure the resulting changes in welfare. At the same time the developments in the way our time is allocated to work-related activities, processes which can largely be thought of as exogenous from the individual point of view, translate into different ways in which people allocate their time outside the labour market. Understanding the details of how the changing nature of the labour market affected different groups of workers, how it changed the time they allocate to work, and how they use their non-work time, is of significant interest on its own. At the same time, though, the changing work environment implies different dynamics of time allocation within households, which for many people will be decisive from the point of view of the potential welfare consequences.

We address the above issues using detailed time-use data available in three editions of the Polish Time Use Survey (PoTUS) conducted in 2003, 2013 and 2023. These data will be examined in combination with more general information from the Polish annual Household Budget Survey and the quarterly Labour Force Survey. The project will be conducted in international collaboration with prof. Daniel Hamermesh, a world expert on time-use analysis and one of the pioneers of time-use research in the field of economics. As in a number of recent collaborative publications we will combine the analysis using PoTUS data with the results based on the American Time Use Survey as well as data from other countries available in the Multinational Time Use Study. The project is set within the context of public debates concerning shortening the number of days worked, facilitating greater flexibility of work arrangements including access to working from home, and the distribution of the burden of home production between men and women in couples. Poland is an excellent test-case for the analysis of the problems we want to address: the two decades between 2003 and 2023 have seen important changes in the conditions on the labour market, which have been much sharper than those in the so-called 'old' EU countries and in the English-speaking world. Additionally, apart from the socio-economic changes which took place in Poland, the quality and scope of the PoTUS data offer unique research opportunities with a potential for significant contributions to the understanding of the drivers behind the examined outcomes. Each round of the PoTUS data contains detailed information on the allocation of time of nearly 40 thousand individuals, with two daily time diaries completed by each respondent, one filled in on a weekday and the other on a weekend. Moreover, the survey runs over the entire span of the calendar year, and time-use diaries are collected from all members of participating households.

Using this unique research infrastructure, in combination with the high variation in socio-economic conditions in Poland, and with complementary analysis for other countries, the project will be concentrated in the following research areas: (1) 'The changing nature of work time allocation in Poland: 2003-2023', in which we look at the extent and distribution of the benefits resulting from flexible work arrangements, as well as the implications of the increasing allocation of work time between 2003 and 2023 for time devoted to home production and leisure. (2) 'Work time allocation patterns as reflections of job quality', in which the analysis will focus on the examination of negative aspects of work and how these have changed over time in several countries, with a particular focus on Poland and the US, and a focus on coexistence of so-called 'non-preferred' work arrangements. (3) 'Work and non-work time arrangements between partners in couples', in which the unique scope of the PoTUS dataset, which includes reported patterns of time-use by both partners in couples, will be used to build on recent developments on the role and value of 'togetherness' in couples. The analysis will identify how the changed patterns of work have affected the degree to which partners spend time together, and examine how this has influenced the temporal distribution of time committed to household production by men and women.