

PAPERS 49 TIME AND TERRITORY. TIME POLICIES OF THE CITIES

TIME AND TERRITORY IN THE CITY OF BARCELONA

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Introduction

Barcelona is a dense city and the diversity of its labour, commercial and land uses determines the proximity of services. It has an urban shape that affects the localisation and organisation of activities. Barcelona is also a complex city with respect to its time management: in all areas of life, its citizens must be able to reconcile the different times they need, although the city must also be adapted to the time needs of its 'users', both residents and those for whom Barcelona is a place to work, study, shop or go out.

*The Survey of Conditions of Life and Habits of the Population*² provides, for five specific times over a 20-year period (1985-2006), the basic data to be able to analyse how the population manages their time in different areas of life: working time, domestic/family time and free/leisure time.

The present article analyses the behaviour and perception of Barcelona's population about the different activities that 'consume' time and their localisation within the city. This analysis aims to point out initial characteristics both of Barcelonan's time and the space that they move in, so that public policies can move in the direction of facilitating personal and group management of daily life.

The article is divided into five parts. The first three analyse the time of the Barcelona population in the areas of paid work, family / domestic work and free and leisure time. The fourth part considers the population's difficulty in combining working life and family and domestic life, as well as the population's perception of how much free time they have. The last section analyses the different spaces that correspond to the spheres of daily life, as a first note in the relations between the morphology of the city and the habits of its population, which determine how people manage their time in differing degrees.

1. Paid working time

Paid working time is the total hours that the population spends in paid employment. Thus, it is time that is closely connected

to the status of people's activities and the organisation of the work day. The analysis of this area must also include travel time between home and the workplace, to be able to have an overall vision of the time that a good part of the population invests in one of the areas of daily life.

Hereafter, all the components that affect paid working time of Barcelona inhabitants are analysed, as well as the employment situation of the population, the state of the work schedule and the time spent in travelling from home to the workplace.

1.1. The principal activity of the population

The active or non-active status of people is a determining factor in their time management. The different periods of activity that the population experiences throughout their lives are one of the determining cruxes of the use of time in daily life. Working, studying, doing domestic and family chores, among others, structure the daily life of the population differently. These activities model living situations that are very different and also involve very different uses of time.

In 2006, a little more than half of Barcelona's population was employed, while 41.8% were unemployed, with retirees and those who do household work holding a predominant position in the latter group. Throughout the last 15 years, Barcelona has experienced relevant changes with respect to activity, which reflect changes that have taken place in the economic situation. On the one hand, data from the years 1990, 2000 and 2006 reflect periods of expansion and high employment levels, while indicators from 1995 show a period of economic recession (less activity, more unemployment). On the other hand, a slow and progressive reduction is seen in the percentage of people who exclusively work in domestic tasks, in parallel to a growth in the rate of activity among women (table 1).

Despite the fact that all indexes for measuring the population's activities point to a progressive incorporation of women in the employment market, their presence is still significantly lower than for men. Even after having grown in the largest proportion between the years 2000-2006, the rate of female activity is 51%, while the figure for males stands at 66.5% (table 2). The same thing happens with the employment rate: the rate grows more for women, but the rate for men is

higher. These data continue to reveal that there are relevant differences in labour insertion between men and women, which necessarily transfers over into the management of their time.

1.2. Time spent in paid work

Beyond the activity status of the population, the characteristics of the labour activity of employed persons also have a great influence on personal time management. Work organisation, which includes the type of work schedule and the number of hours worked, is seen as a very defining element when managing reconciliation between the different time periods of daily life.

Overall, the employed Barcelonan population opts for full-time work and this has been quite a stable situation since 1990, only changed due to the economic recession reflected in data from 1995 (table 3). However, there are significant differences between some groups in the city. Women select part-time employment four times more than men (21.0% compared to 5.1%) and young employed people lean more than any other group towards part-time work (up to 31% in 2006).

The principal reasons for selecting a part-time work schedule have experienced two inverse trends over the course of the last 15 years. On the one hand, the weight has decreased of those who have selected this schedule due to need ('it is the type of schedule that they found') and, on the other hand, the figure has grown for people who have chosen this schedule to be able to combine their jobs with other activities that consume time, such as domestic or family tasks or studies (table 4).

Similar to reasons for the schedule type selected, differences between men and women are a reflection of very different personal and social situations. While women seem to have much more freedom of choice than men (only 28.7% have part-time jobs because it is what they looked for, compared to 42.3% of men), women make this choice because they have to take care of domestic and family tasks (30.6%), while men do it because they are interested in this type of schedule (32.1%).

Another aspect of the work schedule is its distribution throughout the day, since this factor conditions the harmonisation of people's activities and their pace of life. The most typical schedule among the working population of Barcelona is

the split working schedule of morning and afternoon. While this workday option is the most common both for men and for women, its weight is very different: almost 63% of men have a split schedule, while for women the percentage does not even reach 50%. Conversely, the continuous working day in the morning or the afternoon is an option seen twice as much among the employed female population (40.4% compared to 20.4%), owing to a large degree to the greater presence of part-time jobs among this group (table 5).

With regard to the time spent in paid work, the majority of the employed population of Barcelona works around 40 hours per week (between 35 and 45), a figure that has been quite stable in the last 15 years. What has changed though is the growing proportion of those who work less than 35 hours per week at a paid job and the decreasing proportion of those who work more than 45 hours per week.

Gender differences in the employed population are also noted if the length of the working day is analysed. While the majority of men and women work around 40 hours a week—with very similar percentages—as a whole, the female employed population of Barcelona works six hours less than their male counterparts. This is due to the fact that one out of every four employed men works more than 45 hours, while one out of every four employed women works less than 35 hours (table 6). This highly-unequal distribution is also a reflection of the greater weight that part-time employment has among the female employed population.

1.3. Time for travelling to work

A third component of paid working time is the length of time spent travelling from home to the workplace. This variable is determined by the territorial distribution of homes and workplaces and the means of transport used in travel.

The city of Barcelona has a high degree of labour self-containment: in 2006, nearly three out of every four employed Barcelonans worked in the city itself. In the last 20 years, the weight of the population that resides and works in the city has continued to decrease, due to the growth of those who work outside the city and, above all, those who have variable workplaces (table 7). If we analyse this fact from a gender perspective, the difference is substantial: the location of the workplaces of the female employed population is concentrated much more in the city (82.8% compared to 62.9% for men) and has an almost insignificant level of non-fixed locations.

The territorialisation of workplaces that can be deduced from these data leads to the understanding that there may also be significant differences in travel time to

the workplace. However, a second very determining factor intervenes here: the mode of transport used for this journey.

As a whole, home to workplace travel in the city of Barcelona takes an average of 28 minutes and 15 seconds per trajectory, a time that has remained quite stable over the last 10 years. However, this overall figure hides a substantial change: the progressive reduction in the percentage of the population that spends less than 15 minutes in travelling to the workplace and the increase of those who spend more than 30 minutes (table 8).

Of the evolutionary analysis of transport modes used to get to work, there is an overall and growing predominance of motorised modes, which have increased more than 10 percentage points in 20 years, in parallel with decreased numbers in those who walk (from 23.5% to 16.1%). Similarly, within motorised modes, public transport was predominant in 2006, with important growth after 10 years of stability and a slight decreasing trend (table 9).

2. Family / domestic working time

Family / domestic working time is comprised of a wide range of activities related to the reproductive area, which includes both time devoted to the family (food, health, hygiene, taking care of children and dependent people, etc.) as well as time spent in household chores (shopping, cleaning, maintenance and repairs, etc.). They are often tasks that are done transversely and simultaneously or combined with other types of activity, which makes it difficult to give a time delimitation. In order to understand this area of daily life, the *Survey of Life Conditions and Habits of the Population* provides us with two pieces of information related to domestic and family tasks: the daily/weekly time spent and its distribution within homes.

The Barcelona population spends a daily average of 1 hour and 57 minutes on family and domestic tasks. In the last 15 years, this average has dropped by 42 minutes, at quite a constant five-year pace. The distribution of the population according to family and domestic working time has however undergone substantial changes. Firstly, the weight of the population has shrunk almost to one fourth who spends extreme amounts of time: no time and over six hours (see table 10). Secondly, the percentage of the population has grown by more than 25 points who spend up to three hours per day on domestic and family chores, so that in 2006, out of every three residents in Barcelona, one devotes between a few minutes, but less than 60, to domestic and family tasks, while another devotes between one and three hours.

The area of domestic and family tasks is where the usage of time presents the

greatest contrasts depending on gender, so that two highly-contrasting realities are sketched that, despite converging over time, continue to have substantial differences derived from the level of male and female activity and the endurance of traditional roles in the different areas of daily life. In 2006, the female population spent 1 hour and 37 minutes more than men on family-domestic work. This time difference has decreased by half in 15 years, although the reduction must be attributed more to the drop in women's amount of time (1 hour and 26 minutes less between 1995 and 2006) than in the growth of time spent by men, which is only 17 minutes. While part of the difference can be attributed to the greater proportion of women who spend their time exclusively on household tasks, there are also important differences among the employed population: employed women spend more than double the time each week than employed men on family and domestic work (15 hours and 23 minutes, compared to 6 hours and 53 minutes).

Despite the gender differences in this area of daily life still persisting, a process of change can also be appreciated that is reflected, among others, in the decrease in the time difference according to age. However, even among the young population, women devote more than twice as much time as men on the home, with this difference multiplied by three and by four in the case of the adult and elderly population, respectively (table 11).

3. Free time and leisure time

Free time and leisure time contain activities that are 'non-obligatory' for work, either paid or domestic and family tasks, or study, according to the definition given by the interviewees. Included here is time spent on more or less scheduled activities both at home and outside the home, to time spent on daily rest and the time perceived as free time that, as a subjective measurement, includes the time that people have for themselves, without any obligations, in the broadest sense of the term. Due to this, the dividing line between leisure time and free time is a very fine line that takes on life from the meaning that social groups and individuals attribute to it.

In leisure time, the activities done inside and outside the home are differentiated, given their different consequences on the management of people's uses of time. Activities that can be done at home tend to consume shorter periods of time and are not generally subject to strict schedules. Conversely, activities done outside the home require longer periods of time (travel time must be added to the time employed in the activity) and often depend on schedules not established by the person doing them.

Within the time not devoted to employment or family-domestic tasks, the daily time spent on rest must also be calculated, which in 2006 for the Barcelonan population was 8 hours and 2 minutes (14 minutes more than in 2000). The people who rest the most are those older than 65, with the figure standing at 9 hours and 3 minutes. Conversely, the population that sleeps least are the employed, at 7 hours and 29 minutes and those in the age range between 35 and 44, at 7 hours and 41 minutes.

Given the difficulty of specifying exactly what free time is and how each person decides to spend it, a good measure to appraise such a subjective question is the perception the population has about their availability of free time. In 2006, 36.3% of Barcelonans felt that they had very little free time, compared to 27.2% who felt they had a lot. This is a measure that varies according to age and employment status: employed people between the ages of 25 and 44 are those who feel that they have little free time in the greatest proportion.

The main activities that the Barcelonan population spontaneously cites when referring to domestic leisure³ are *watching television or videos* (57.2%) and *reading* (52.5%), followed at a large distance by *listening to music* (19.5%), *connecting to the Internet* (13.6%) and *doing work* (10.1%). Out of all possibilities, those done most often⁴ are *watching television* (60.7% of Barcelonans), *listening to music* (49.4%) and *listening to the radio* (42.7%).

With regard to leisure outside the home, the activity cited most spontaneously was *going for walks* (52.5%), followed at quite a distance by *going to the cinema* (21.8%), *going out with friends* (20.4%) and *doing sport* (19.9%); also noteworthy are the percentages of the population that cited *going shopping* (15.9%) and *going to a restaurant* (11.2%).

4. Reconciliation of activities

Combining paid working life with domestic-family tasks and the usage of personal time for leisure obligates the population to manage their different time needs, that is, to spend different and variable times on each of the activities that comprise their daily lives. Managing these times becomes progressively more complex in contemporary society and conflicts often arise when trying to make different activities in daily life compatible. Thus, alongside the greater or lesser availability of leisure and personal time, the time spent on employment and family-domestic tasks requires efforts of reconciliation that vary throughout people's lifecycles.

In 2006, over 40% of the Barcelona population stated that they had problems making employment and domestic-family lives compatible. This area of conflict in time management is particularly noticeable

in the case of 11.6% of the population who express having great difficulties in reconciling activities in their daily lives.

Although it can be seen that reconciliation is becoming a problem for the population as a whole, the situation is very different for women and men. On the one hand, there are many more men than women who state that they do not participate in household chores and, therefore, are not subject to reconciliation issues. On the other hand, there are many more women than men (46.9% and 36.5%, respectively) who declare that they have some or many problems making work life and domestic-family tasks compatible (see table 12).

Difficulties in making paid work and domestic and family tasks compatible mainly affect the population of an adult age, especially those living in homes with children. The percentage of the population that confirm that they have problems is 45.7% among 25 and 34 years of age and 48.6% between 35 and 44. Conversely, the youngest people, especially those who are still not yet emancipated, are those who express having the least problems, because their participation in domestic and family chores is very reduced.

In summary, both the information about the combination of paid work and domestic work and that referring to the perception of availability of free time shows the existence of a period in adult lives when time management becomes particularly complex. In general terms, this is the time of the lifecycle in which important dedication to jobs coincides with intense domestic work, often with the need to take care of young children. Difficulties are particularly concentrated among women, owing to the fact that they take greater responsibility in domestic and family tasks.

5. The city and time: the living spaces of Barcelona inhabitants

The interrelation between time and territory is important for the daily time management of citizenry. The way in which the territory is structured and the city is organised determines, to a large degree, people's strategies in carrying out their activities and the possibilities of different time usage models. There is a double interaction between the territorial structure (different occupation of urban lands, distribution and intensity of residential uses, of economic activities, community facilities and services, of infrastructures and technical services) and lifestyles (habits of the population according to specific daily patterns and, in particular, of daily uses of time).

The first approach to how the Barcelonan population makes use of the city and their most immediate environment is the territorial localisation of the principal daily activities. With this analysis, one can

understand what the living space of Barcelonans is, what the limits are of their real city and how the usage of space has changed in recent years.

The productive work space

As seen in the analysis of paid work and, concretely, the time invested in getting to work, Barcelona is characterised by having high labour self-containment: in 2006, 72.2% of the employed population of Barcelona worked in the city. However, this index dropped by 11 points since 1985, due above all to the decrease in the number of people working in their own neighbourhood, the growing tendency of Barcelonans to go outside the city to work and, this is the most relevant change, the increase of the employed population that state that they have an irregular destination with respect to their jobs (see table 13).

The changes in labour self-containment reveal that Barcelona participates in a metropolisation process. The interrelation of the city with its most immediate environment has become more pronounced over the years and has materialised in an expansion of the real daily city of Barcelonans. These territorial transformations have derived into an extensive use of the territory and in an increased need of citizens to travel.

The shopping space

In parallel to the real daily city expanding with the progressive dispersion of the localisation of workplaces, at a territorial level, a tendency is seen in the intensification of activities in their own neighbourhood, associated with the search for proximity as a growing value in a society where time has become well scarce and limited.

As confirmation of what was just stated, the Barcelonan population tends to do its daily shopping in the closest space—the neighbourhood—and a growing tendency is seen in a preference for this space of proximity (see table 14).

With regard to non-daily purchases—exemplified by the acquisition of clothing and shoes—the proximity value is not so noticeable, although the neighbourhood continues to be the predominant area. In the evolution of the last 20 years, the increase in purchases in their own neighbourhood is worth highlighting, which must also be connected to the territorial expansion of specialised trade, via shopping centres or through the strengthening of traditional or newly-created commercial hubs. In parallel, the weight of the population that does not have their regular non-daily shopping space so well defined has decreased to less than half (table 15).

The leisure and personal relationships space

The search for proximity is also very present in doing leisure activities. Municipal self-containment is very high

when going to look at shops, going to the cinema, to bars and discotheques, to restaurants, to the theatre and to museums and exhibitions. The attraction of other cities in the Barcelona metropolitan setting is very low. These are activities in which diversification and delocalisation of the offering has an effect on the fact that a significant percent of Barcelonans state that they do not regularly go to any specific place. The weight of those who move around indistinctly is highest for going to restaurants (35.2%) or to museums and exhibitions (35.3%). In the last ten years, a drop is seen in the preference for the city centre as a place to go to do different leisure activities and, as happens with shopping, a revitalisation of the neighbourhood of residence is seen as an ideal location to do them, with the exception of some activities that depend on facilities at a city level, such as theatres and museums and exhibition halls.

The majority of the delimitation of space for Barcelonans' social relationships is circumscribed in the city: 46.0% of Barcelonans preferably have relationships with people in the same neighbourhood in a proportion that has grown by 10 points in the last 10 years. Less than 10% of the population has relationships with people outside of the city. Therefore, proximity is also a growing value in the area of social relationships, the most appreciated and sought by the Barcelona population.

Spaces for residents and non-residents
In the definition of space and time in daily life, we have seen that there is not a single living space for the population of Barcelona and, while their own neighbourhood and the city in general are spaces of great relevance, for some of the most common activities —like going to work— usage space goes beyond municipal limits (see graph 1). This expansion of the city towards surrounding municipalities represents an increase in travelling and, consequently, more time spent on activities done outside the home, whether speaking of going to work or to a restaurant. This fact adds complexity to daily life time management, especially for the groups that have more difficulties in accessing quick and efficient transport.

In order to correctly manage the uses of time, Barcelona must also consider that its space is not only for city residents, but also a point of attraction for cities in the metropolitan area. With respect to employment, Barcelona receives 12.6% of residents from the province each day. The employment attraction of the city is greater the closer that people live: 30.7% of the residents in the first metropolitan ring work there, 10.8% of the residents of the second ring and 2.1% of those who live in the rest of the province. The search for proximity when doing the most regular shopping means that in this matter, Barcelona does not exercise much attraction over the surrounding region. Conversely, in some

of the leisure areas, it is indeed a pole towards which many of the inhabitants of the province converge, like the 61.8% who go to the theatre in Barcelona or the 46.0% that travel to the city to go to a museum or exhibition (see graph 2).

6. Closing thoughts

The activity in which the Barcelonan population spends time configures a social panorama that is extremely diversified and translates into the existence of highly-contrasting living situations with regard to how time is employed in daily life. The basic contrast occurs between the active and inactive sectors of the population. Thus, employment is a determining condition in time management of employed people, up to the point that it often becomes the main area that structures their daily time. However, the different activities of the population present extremely diverse vital situations between the retired population, those who work in household tasks, students and the unemployed.

The organisation of paid work is seen as very monolithic, founded on a work schedule and time spent working that affects the large majority of the population. In this predominant framework of rigidity, reconciliation of uses of time becomes difficult. However, there is a higher presence of part-time jobs among women and the young population and, furthermore, there is a tendency to voluntarily have this type of workday, in order to devote time to family tasks or studies to a large degree.

The area of domestic and family work has great contrasts based on the gender of the population. Women spend more time in these types of tasks than men and, furthermore, take responsibility for performing the large majority of domestic and family matters. This contrast becomes clear among the elderly and adult population, but is also seen among the young. Similarly, among the employed population, women also spend more time on domestic and family work than men. Additionally, there is a significant proportion of men who do not do any type of domestic work.

Despite what was just set forth, a process of change can be noted that ranges from the reduction in the time women spend on domestic and family work and an increase in the case of men, as well as a growing coresponsibility in doing this work. However, the change process is very slow and the most palpable is the reduction of working time by women, while the increase for men is only slight.

Free time is time for non-obligatory activities and encompasses a wide range of extremely diverse options for spending time. In addition to rest time, domestic-leisure time is founded primarily on watching television and reading, listening to music or the radio. In recent years, there

has been an explosion of Internet and video consoles as fundamental instruments of leisure at home for a good part of the population. Outside the home, leisure is based on physical activities, such as taking walks or playing sport and also relational activities such as going out with friends, as well as going to the cinema or to restaurants.

As a consequence of the described distribution patterns, it turns out that 4 out of every 10 people interviewed state that they have problems reconciling work life with domestic and family life. The most complex situation is seen in a tenth of the population that asserts that they have serious reconciliation problems.

The perception of availability of free time has highly contrasting situations with important percentages of people who state that they have a lot of or enough free time. At the same time a third of the population perceives that they have very little free time, a part of the population that is also increasing significantly.

As a whole, a specific segment of the adult population is identified, mainly between 25 and 45 years of age and employed, that has the most problems with reconciliation and a higher perception of having little free time. In this segment, intense dedication to jobs and extensive domestic working time coincide, often associated with taking care of children. Women are the gender who suffer the most reconciliation problems in this segment.

With respect to the location where the population carries out different activities in daily life, first, that the city of Barcelona has very high self-containment levels: the majority of Barcelonans do their daily activities in the same city. Furthermore, an increase is seen in the neighbourhood as a living territorial area —except for employment issues— associated with the search for proximity in daily life. This trend is influenced by city planning and economic changes that have taken place in the city in recent years (dispersion of shopping centres, strengthening of facilities and services for people...).

However, in parallel, especially with regard to the job market, the real city of the Barcelonan population has expanded starting with a metropolisation process that intensifies relations between territories and increases mobility needs. Barcelona is also a centre of attraction for residents from the rest of the province, both with respect to paid work and for doing certain leisure activities, above all going to the theatre and to museums and exhibitions. The intensity of these flows is highest in the first metropolitan ring.

Returning to what was said in the introduction, Barcelona is a dense city with a great diversity of activities, which must collaborate with its 'users' in the time management of daily life. Public

policy is the area that can most contribute to providing instruments to people for reconciliation of their time.

- 1 In recent years, IERMB has performed several studies on uses of time in the city and the metropolitan area of Barcelona. This article collects some of the main points developed in the study *L'ús social del temps a Barcelona, 2006*, done by Elena Sintès and Maties Vives, under the management of Carme Miralles-Guasch, for the Barcelona Town Council.
- 2 *Enquesta de condicions de vida i hàbits de la població*. Barcelona: IERMB, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000.
Enquesta de condicions de vida i hàbits de la població de Catalunya. Barcelona: IDESCAT e IERMB, 2006.
- 3 Open question: no activity was suggested to the people interviewed. Each person interviewed was given up to five response possibilities: these percentages refer to the total responses provided by the population of each territorial region.
- 4 This question was asked to every person interviewed, independently of the leisure activities mentioned in the open question about leisure activities they do at home.

TIME POLICIES IN EUROPE

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Introduction

It is likely that amongst social policy experts, the existence of time policies is still an unknown territory. The reason for this relative ignorance is, undoubtedly, the fact that those are very recent policies. Moreover, the fact that these policies include disperse initiatives or that they are considered less important also has to be taken into account as a possible reason for this lack of knowledge. Although time policies have been developed in Europe for some time now, it is not common to find them reviewed or discussed in the writings or discourses of the specialists that analyse, design or evaluate the policies on the welfare state; with just a few exceptions to this rule (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

The main goal of this report is to assess some of the initiatives that can be identified as European time policies and that have developed during the past 20 years. This assessment will start by mentioning the paradox that seems to be heading its development; namely, the fact that in Scandinavian countries, where policies on the welfare state have been thoroughly developed, time policies do not seem to exist.

First, it will be necessary to review the origins of these policies in order to understand and explain this paradox. Secondly, a brief summary of the main initiatives that can be regarded as time policies will be presented. To do this, a

hypothesis holding that the conception of time politics has been subject to two crucial influences (Torns, 2003) will be used as a starting point. The first of these influences, emerging from a gender perspective, are the thoughts and proposals of a few Italian social scientists, who were interested in the promotion of initiatives concerning time and welfare. The second influence are the initiatives on working time that have been developed in Europe in order to alleviate the transformations in the occupational structures.

The outline of the existing time policies will review the European labour policies that are focused on the regulation of the working day and that have had a greater impact. It acknowledges, as existing time policies, those that are more concerned with the first of the above-mentioned influences. As it will be further explained, these proposals evolve around different core interests, amongst others, time policy and the city. These initiatives, apart from being the best known policies in this field, also include the most innovative proposals and those that are more directly addressed to have an impact on the welfare of citizens.

1. A Brief History of Time Policies

The first thoughts and proposals to be known as time politics were influenced by a motto that was announced by female social scientists from the South of Europe. The pioneer was the sociologist Laura Balbo, who in 1987 published *Time to care*, a title that was completed with the sentence *Politiche del tempo e diritti quotidiani*. The text was a first call for the need to value reproductive work and claimed that time was a fundamental element of the new culture that had to be developed, in order to face the new citizenship rights that would arise from the process.

Balbo was specifically echoing the debates that were taking place in the North of Europe, where some social scientists criticised the welfare state policies because of their lack of equity between men and women (Hernes, 1990). Moreover, the Italian sociologist gathered the theoretical arguments and thoughts that this issue had fuelled in Europe since 1986 with the re-emergence of the feminist movement. She highlighted the importance of a new problem or, at least, a quite unknown issue in the field of social sciences: caring work time. This “new” activity and this time were socially and economically ignored and undervalued, despite the fact that they were absolutely necessary for the reproduction of the life of people and society. The “new” activity became visible under the name of housework in the debate between feminism and Marxism that had just developed. Balbo did not only defend that activity as an indispensable one, but she

also insisted on its recognition because of the need to acknowledge the time to carry it out.

The recognition of time became fundamental because the gender-blind conventional labour analyses were not able to conceive that there was another time that was needed to live. This time was neither to be devoted to production nor fixed by the working day schedule and it did not correspond only to leisure time, as industrial society had disposed it. This was the time for the reproduction of life, time for caring, and it existed in the same way as paid, wage-earning, productive work did. It was a time and a work that needed to be taken into account, because apart from generating welfare, they were, and still are, developed by the majority of adult females in contemporary societies; and, also, because its denial and invisibility made it easy to forget and undervalue the issue of this dual-work. This was a motto that Balbo herself (1978) had created to highlight the synchronic hindrance that women had, and still have, to face every day in both works: labour-work and housework. And also it was meant to emphasise the importance of caring work as a fundamental task in providing daily welfare for contemporary societies, in particular, those societies where welfare policies are not fully developed, such as the societies in the South of Europe, where the daily housework of women replaces the lack of a non-existent welfare state.

1.1. ‘Women Change Time’

The motto that entitles this section was the title given to a citizen-initiated draft bill that was promoted by the female members of the former Italian communist party in 1990, that, however, never saw its proposals passed into law (Cordoni, 1997). This draft bill has had a great impact on some circles of women interested in challenging the gender inequalities that affected them. The draft bill emerged from the debate held by those Italian women, in which they called for an improvement of the welfare conditions and the necessary reconsiderations to obtain it. In this sense, Italian women immediately realised that changing times did not only imply modifying schedules, but also finding new ways of life that could generate women-friendlier societies and, consequently, friendlier to everybody. This reconsideration claimed a new social and economic organisation, headed by values that would show the importance and the need of the reproductive process. This meant, firstly, a positive approach of the activities of this process (housework, family responsibilities and other caregiving activities) to highlight its social, political and economic importance. Secondly, the claim for a new gender solidarity (currently known as democratic equity) geared towards finding a new