

First International Conference

Women and men facing everyday challenges. Work and life demands in the context of gender.  
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# Technology, time allocation and gender in Portugal

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# Factors influencing the relationship between work, family and personal life

Time use;  
Instruments;  
Organization;  
Social norms.

Gender is transversal to all these factors

# In the domestic context: Technology: a facilitator?

Household appliances;



Information technology;



Means of transport.



# An ongoing debate (1)

How substantial is the degree to which technological equipment reduces the time spent on household and caring work?

- A. Very (Gershuny and others);
- B. Hardly (Bittman and others).



# (1) Influence of technology on time use

## Reasons for the diversity of research outcomes and their interpretations:

- Diverging definitions of «household work».
- Difficulties of measuring the time dedicated to household work, because of its low status and its dispersed and fragmented character.
- Comparisons between different researches are difficult to make, as they often do not take into account social, demographic and cultural facts.
- The presence and the use of mechanical household appliances has not always been taken into account in time-use surveys.

Norman Rockwell - USA 1950s  
(to the right: *Housewife at tea break*)



## An ongoing debate (2)

Do these devices promote a balance between work, family and private life?

## (2) Work-life balance

More flexibility, but ...

Because of new technologies:

“The lost advantages of temporary non-connection.” (Geser 2004).

“When work becomes home and home becomes work” (Hochschild 1997).

“Blurring boundaries” (Chesley 2005)





## An ongoing debate (3)

Do these technologies promote gender equality in the participation in household and caring tasks?

### (3) Gender equality

«Technology» associated with masculinity.

(Wajcman 1991; Oldenziel 1999; Frehill 2004)

- Gender identity:  
also constructed and  
confirmed through the  
carrying out of certain activities.  
(«Doing gender» - West & Zimmerman 1987)



For a correct approach,  
account for diversity of  
cultures and historical periods:

▪

- Norms of cleanliness and tidiness;
- The place of the children in the family;
- Gender roles.



# RESEARCH

«Time and technology:  
a gender approach for the Portuguese context.»



# Portugal - some facts

Population 2015: 10 300 000 (estimate)

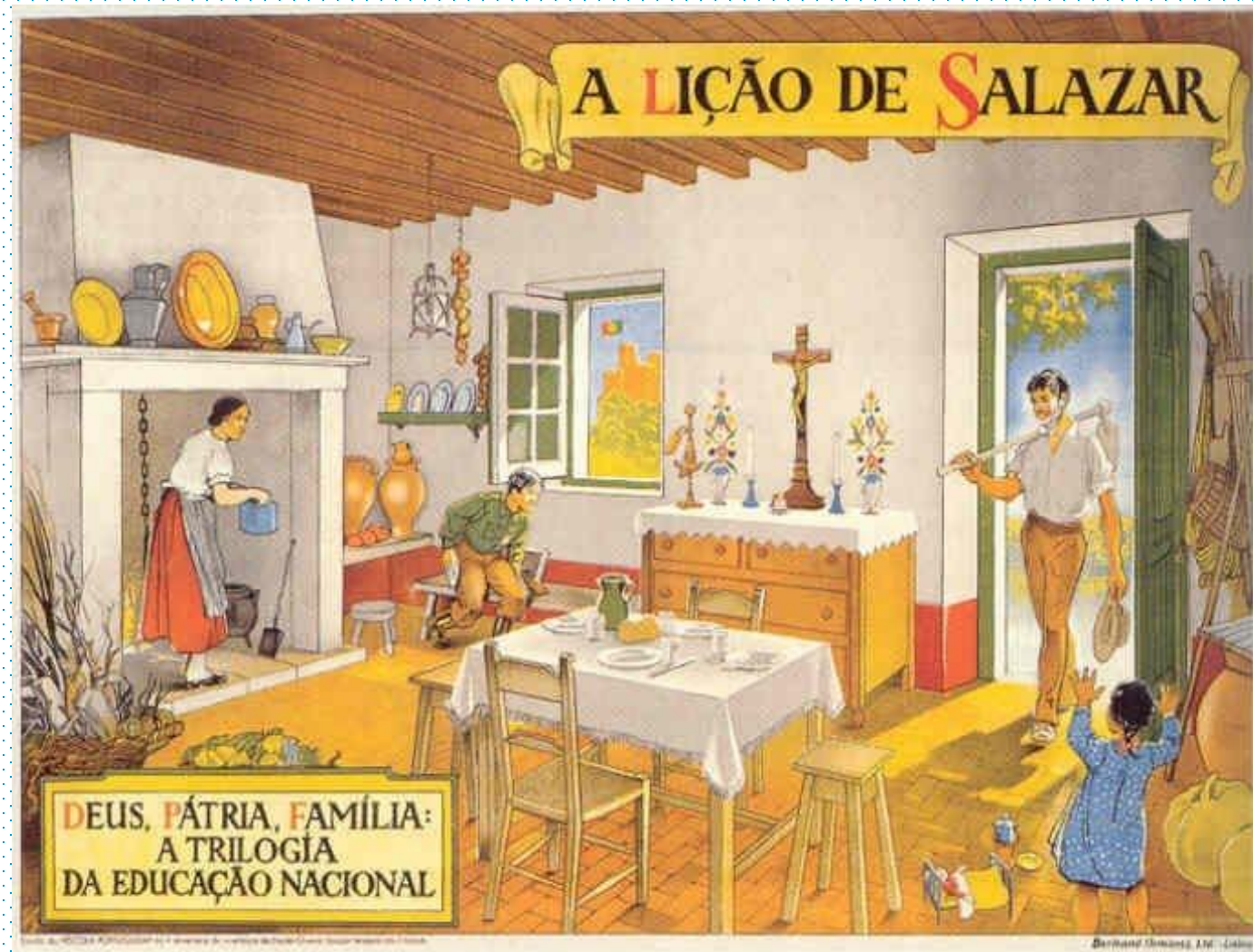
Late introduction of mechanical household appliances.

High female participation in the labour market.

High gender difference regarding participation in household work.

Considerable time and attention devoted to householding.

# Authoritarian, patriarchal regime 1926-1974



# Research questions included:

Ideas about and use of technologies in and around the house, by men and women, respectively.

The (real or perceived) relationship between use of technical appliances and time use.



- Research population

Men and women who live in a marital (heterosexual) relationship, in the districts of Castelo Branco and Braga.



# Research techniques

- A questionnaire survey among 430 couples;
- 4 focus group sessions;
- Individual in-depth interviews with 11 couples.

# Some results



# Uso do tempo: Homens e Mulheres

	Men	Women	Difference
Total domestic work	410m (6h 50m)	1640 m (27h 20m)	1230m (20h 30m)
<b>Paid work</b>	47h	40h	-7h

# Home-centered technologies:

Influence on the execution and duration of domestic chores and caring tasks:

- Faster;
- Less laborious.
- But: still lots of time are spent on housework.

Women spend their «free time» on other domestic activities, or to enhance household work

*“When, for example, the dishwasher or the washing machine is working, she can in the meantime, for example, do the ironing, do other jobs.”*

(Man, 43 years, basic education, carpenter).

## ... including caring activities

*“Watching a children’s programme on tv with my son”*

(woman, 36 years, higher education, secretary)

“Technology helps parents, both mothers and fathers, organise and co-ordinate this slow, quality time with their children”

(Wajcman 2014)

## «child-centredness»

*“.... It is a lot of time, at least that’s what I think... that there is much time dedicated to the children. I can tell you something ... we, at home, were five brothers and sisters and my father and my mother did not lose half of the time which I lose ... with one ... I have just one! ... attention!”*

*(Man, 41 years, secondary school, sales manager)*



# The use of time and the technologies

- Time-saving equipments (mostly «female»)
- Time using equipments (mostly «male»)
- White goods // Brown goods

# Technologies and the gendered allocation of domestic work.

No fundamental change ....

Examples:

The car;

The telephone;

The washing machine // the vacuum cleaner

## «Doing gender»:

*“The [washing] machine, ... they [the men] don’t know which are the clothes that have to be laundered at a high or at a low temperature. Ironing, that ... would be the end of the world.”* (woman, 62 years, basic education, retired factory worker).

Higher permeability between the domestic, personal  
and professional domains.

More flexibility;

More stress.

# Some general conclusions

1. Gender roles and gender identity are major factors affecting the perception and use of time and technology.

## Some general conclusions (cont.)

2. The artefact does not define the use, but the use defines the meaning of the artefact, and the gender of the user is here of great importance.

- # Research report

## Time and technology



<http://hdl.handle.net/10400.6/3296>

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