

Unpleasant Work and Contaminated Leisure? What Time and Affect Diaries Tell Us About the Subjective Wellbeing of American Men and Women

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Studies of subjective wellbeing (SWB) rarely account for the gendered quality of time-based activities. Landmark studies by Kahneman and Krueger attribute higher quantities of aggregated ‘unpleasant’ time to women without adequately examining gender differences in the quality of affect (happy, interested, tired, stressed, pain, sadness) associated with activities. We examine such differences using the US Princeton Affect and Time Survey, and find that women enjoy active ‘social’ leisure more, but paid and unpaid labour – particularly childcare – and ‘contaminated’ passive leisure (eg. television-watching) less than men. This suggests work and leisure activities impact on women’s emotional SWB more than previously realised