The School of Social Science Seminar Series Presents:

Are we enjoying our time? A gender perspective

Dr Roger Patulny, Social Policy Research Centre
University of New South Wales

Date: Monday 28 March 2011
Time: 1:00pm - 2:30pm
Venue: School meeting rooms via video link
Kingswood Campus Building P.G.26
Bankstown Campus Building 1.1.30

ABSTRACT
Debates on gender equality draw increasing evidence from studies on the use of time. Men in nearly all countries are involved in more paid work, women in more unpaid work, and the extent of their involvement in other daily activities varies across time and countries. However, these debates often assume that labour - paid or unpaid - is an unpleasant task. Little is known about the degree to which they enjoy, or feel other emotions connected with these activities. Work by Kahneman and Krueger investigates emotionally-based utility on the basis of time for men and women, but the composite ‘unhappiness’ (u-index) measure they derive has not been disaggregated by gender, nor compared with other, older data on enjoyment. This paper uses data from the 1985 American Time Use Survey and the 2006 Princeton Affect and Time Survey (PATS) to examine the enjoyment and other emotional qualities associated with time-based activities, from a gendered perspective. Preliminary results suggest that, in the USA, in as much as ‘unenjoyable’ ratings in 1985 are comparable with ‘unhappiness’ ratings in 2006, education and unpaid work remain unpopular; paid work, home-based free time, and TV watching have become more unpopular; and child care, personal care and sports have all become more popular activities. With work, women show higher a incidence of ‘unhappiness’ with unpaid work, and have gone from finding work more enjoyable than men in 1985 to finding it more unhappy and less interesting in 2006.

SPEAKER
ROGER PATULNY is a Research Fellow and Australian Research Council Post-doctoral Fellow at the Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW. He has published widely on the subject of social capital in such journals as Family Matters and the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, and researched many related topics including volunteering, trust, and wellbeing.

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