

Colombia: total workload of women and men; discriminatory attitudes towards women in the workplace; and unemployment



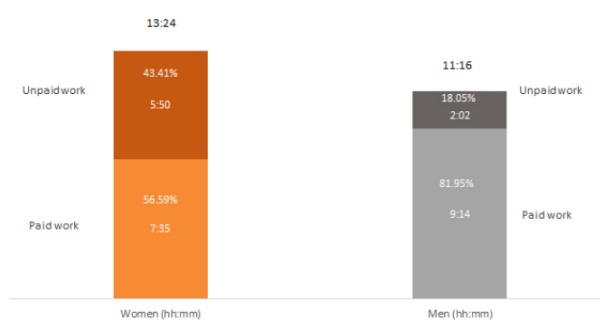
Key points

- In Colombia, in 2017: employed women spent 2 hours and 8 minutes more than employed men in paid and unpaid work per day; in the population aged 10 years and older, women worked 2 hours and 10 minutes more than men — this gap persists across all age groups.
- While gender gaps in paid work for indigenous persons (1:32 hours, with women working 5:31 hours and men 7:03) and for Afro-Colombians (1:54 hours, with women working 6:54 hours and men 8:48) were similar to the gender gap in the total population (1:39 hours, with women working 7:35 hours and men 9:14), indigenous and Afro-Colombian women and men spent proportionately less time in paid work than women and men in the total population.
- Cultural norms and traditional gender roles contribute to the sexual division of labour, with older persons and people living in rural areas tending to agree with the following statement: “The head of the home must be the man”, and with men agreeing more than women across all age groups (overall agreement: 37% of all women versus 47% of all men).
- Engagement in unpaid work impacted participation in the labour market by Colombian women and men. In the period 2009—2019, the unemployment rate among women was higher than that among men by at least 4.9%. The unemployment rate among women never fell into a single-digit number range during this time period.
- In Colombia, the unemployment rate among women was higher than that of men across all levels of education, although in 2019 the unemployment rate dropped to 5.5% for women with postgraduate education. Women aged 18—24 were most affected by unemployment and faced the largest gender gap.

There is a gender gap in time use in Colombia

In 2017, the **total workload** of women in Colombia was 13 hours and 24 minutes per day, of which 56.5% was dedicated to paid work and 43.5% to unpaid work. The total workload of men was 11 hours and 16 minutes a day, 82% of which corresponded to paid work and 18% to unpaid work. In total, employed women worked 2 hours and 8 minutes more than employed men per day (see figure I).

Figure I: Total time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work by employed women and men: 2016—2017 (Percentage)

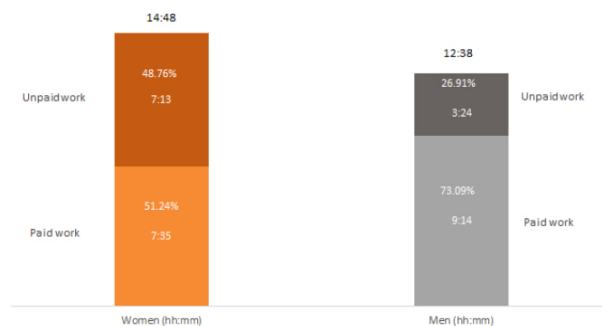


Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017 (correspondence with DANE on 12 March 2020).

Note: Paid hours include work accounted for in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA; total workload takes as reference the employed population.

Similarly, among the working population aged 10 or older, Colombian women worked about 2 hours more than men. Women received remuneration for 51.2% of their total working time, while men were paid for 73.1% of their total working time (see figure II).

Figure II: Total time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work by women and men aged 10 and older: 2016—2017 (Percentage)

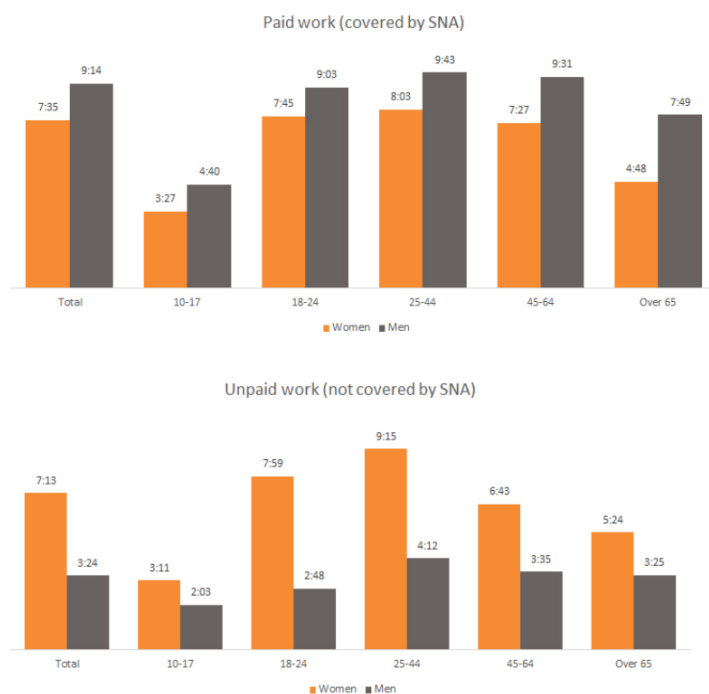


Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017 (correspondence with DANE on 12 March 2020).

Note: Paid hours include work accounted in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA.

Data indicate that Colombian women have less time available for personal activities, including rest and study, and less paid hours, which affects their economic empowerment, their bargaining power inside the home and their well-being. This gap persists across all age groups (see figure III), resulting in a sexual division of labour¹ within households throughout the life cycle.

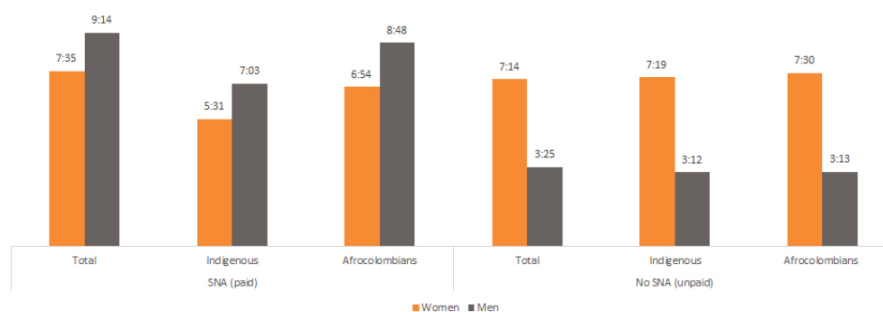
Figure III: Average time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work and related activities by age group and sex: 2016–2017



This sexual division of labour was also observed by ethnicity (see figure IV). In the case of Afro-Colombians, the gender gap in unpaid work hours per day (4:17 hours, with women working 7:19 hours and men 3:12) was 11.8% (27 minutes), which was greater than the gender gap observed in the total population (3:49 hours, with women working 7:14 hours and men 3:25).

Gender gaps in paid work for indigenous persons (1:32 hours, with women working 5:31 hours and men 7:03) and for Afro-Colombians (1:54, with women working 6:54 hours and men 8:48) were similar to the gender gap in paid work in the total population (1:39 hours, with women working 7:35 hours and men 9:14). Nevertheless, among indigenous persons and Afro-Colombians, both men and women spent proportionately less time in paid work than men and women in the total population.

Figure IV: Average time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work activities by ethnicity and sex: 2016—2017



Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017.

Note: Paid hours include work accounted in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA.

The division of labour between women and men is enabled by cultural norms and traditional gender roles

In order to measure perceptions about stereotypical gender roles among women and men in Colombia, the national Time Use Survey: 2016—2017 included five questions containing sexist statements. Understanding the prevalence of rigid gender stereotypes in the population is crucial for the formulation of policies to promote cultural change towards the elimination of **harmful social norms and discriminatory attitudes**.

The prevalence of the sexual division of labour is not surprising given that 65% of the population agreed that "Women are better for domestic work than men", and more than 35% thought that "A man's duty is to earn money; a woman's duty is to take care of the home and family". In answers to almost all such questions in the survey, a greater proportion of men than that women agreed with the sexist statements (see table).

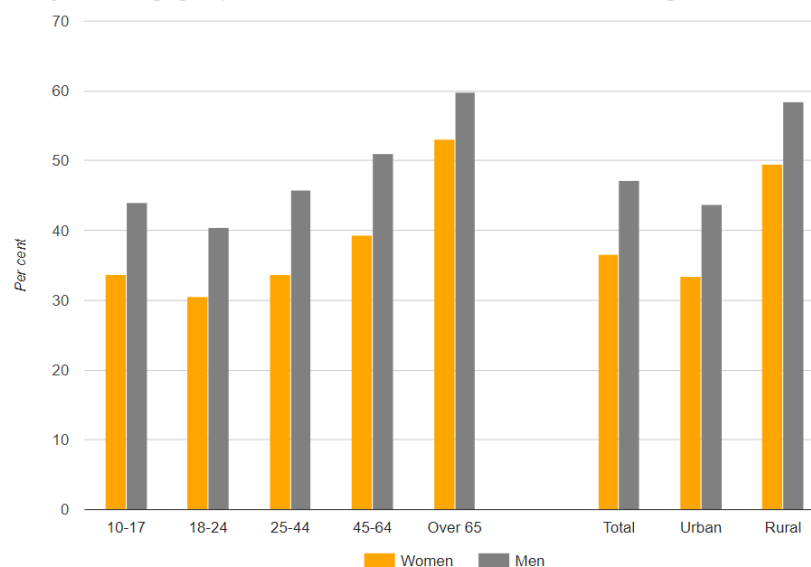
Table: Percentage of women and men in agreement with sexist statements

Statements	Women	Men
"A man's duty is to earn money; a woman's duty is to take care of the home and family"	36%	41%
"Women are better for domestic work than men"	67%	69%
"A working mother can form a relationship as warm and safe with her children as a mother who does not work"	60%	58%
"The head of the home must be the man"	37%	47%
"The husband must make the decisions related to the wife's life"	15%	22%

Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017.

Furthermore, elderly people and people residing in rural areas tended to be more in agreement with the following statement: "The head of the home must be the man." To varying degrees, the proportion of men agreeing with that statement was higher than that of women across all age groups, but the proportion of men in agreement was above 40% in all cases (see figure V).

Figure V: Proportion of people in agreement with the statement "The head of the home must be the man" by sex and age group, in urban and rural areas: 2016–2017 (Percentage)



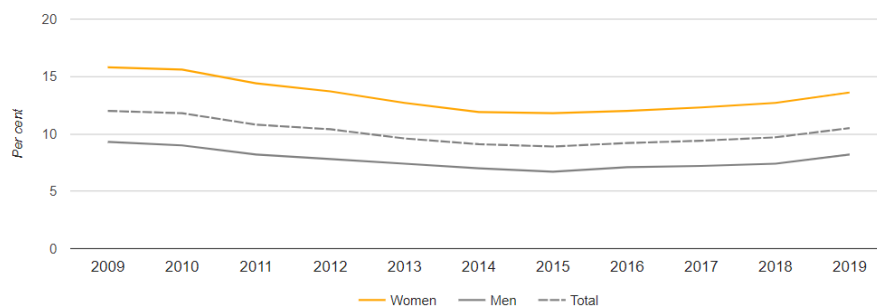
Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016–2017.

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Decisions about which member of the household engages in unpaid work impact the labour market participation of women and men

Time is a scarce resource. During the entire period 2009–2019, the **unemployment rate** among women was higher than that of men, and the gender gap was measured, at its lowest, at 4.9 percentage points during the period 2014–2016. The overall unemployment rate among women did not fall into a single-digit number range during the entire period 2009–2019 (see figure VI).

Figure VI: Unemployment rate by sex: 2009–2019 (Percentage)

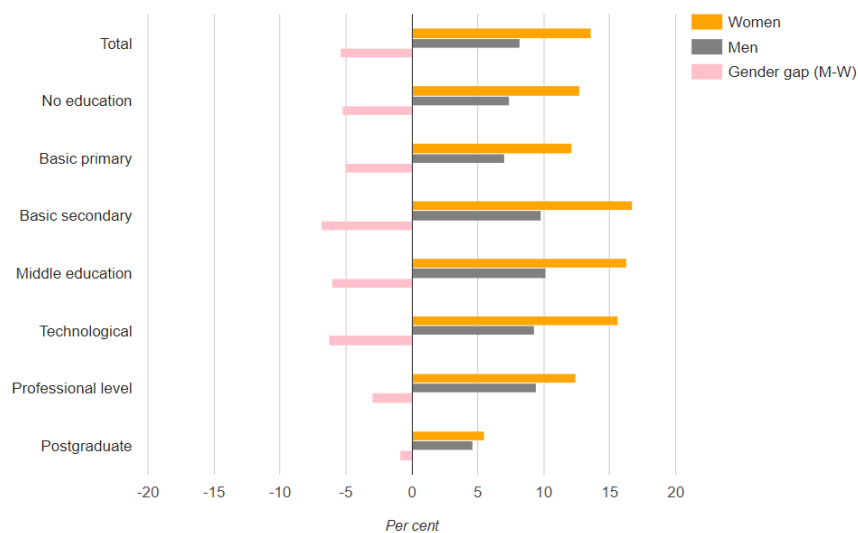


Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Large-scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): 2009–2019.

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Against this backdrop, younger women and women with middle level education were more affected by unemployment compared to men. Women have a higher unemployment rate than men across all levels of education, although, in 2019, the rate dropped to 5.5% for women with postgraduate education (see figure VII).

Figure VII: Unemployment rate by sex and education level, including the gender gap: 2019 (Percentage)



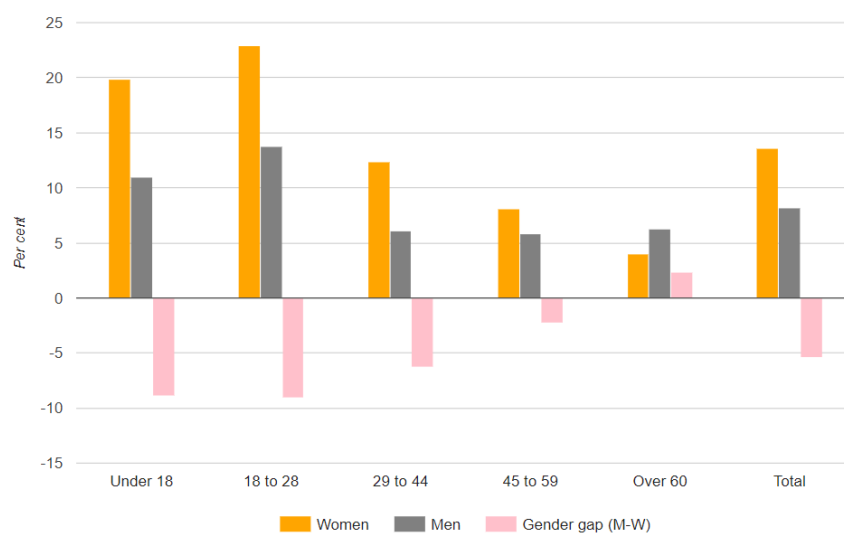
Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Large-scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): 2009—2019.

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Women aged 18–24 were most affected by unemployment, and that age group was also the one with the most significant gender gap against women in the rate of unemployment (see figure VIII).

Figure VIII: Unemployment rate by sex and age group, including the gender gap: 2019 (Percentage)



Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Large-scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): 2009–2019.

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About the data

Definitions

- Total workload by sex is the **number of hours spent by women and men in paid and unpaid work each day. Unpaid work includes activities not included in the System of National Accounts (SNA), including the provision of unpaid domestic and caregiving services for the household and family members, as well as volunteer work for other households, the community or organizations.**
- Proportion of people in agreement with sexist statements by sex **measures female and male perceptions about traditional roles and sexist stereotypes through their responses to predefined statements about women and men.**
- Unemployment rate by sex **provides information on the proportion of women and men in the labour force in Colombia (aged 12 and above in urban areas and 10 and above in rural areas) who were unemployed during the reference period.**

Coverage and availability

Women and men in Colombia in various age groups, with available data pertaining to 2017 (total workload, attitudes) and the period 2009–2019 (unemployment). Data are further disaggregated by ethnicity (total workload), geographic location (for example, urban versus rural attitudes) and education level (unemployment).



Footnotes

1. Work specialization within households has been a concept in economics since the proposal of the unitary family model by Gary Becker in his paper, "[A Theory of the Allocation of Time](#)" ([The Economic Journal](#), vol. 75, No. 299, 1965), including the argument of efficiency, later criticized by a number of feminist economists, including Bina Agarwal in her paper, "[Bargaining](#)" and gender relations: within and beyond the household", Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi.

