

Measuring time use

By

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Abstract

The way people organize and distribute their time has important impacts on their lives, careers, families, and societies. In particular, the way men and women distribute their time in various daily activities reveals fundamental questions of gender aspects that stems from the roles traditionally associated with each one, in particular, in terms of responsibility for domestic activities. Although the current scenario allows the massive incorporation of women in the economically active population, the domestic obligations remain overloading women's workday, with consequent detriment of their overall well-being (Milosavljevic and Tacla, 2008). As well attests Oliveira (2005), "the public world has been invaded by women, but the private life continued structured in terms of time use and responsibilities, as women still live like their grandparents, as if nothing had happened. It was defined as equal a world in which women would 'only' have to keep doing what they always do, adding to their lives works until then reserved to men". In this context, measures of time use become important tools for the development of indicators to assess the living conditions of the population and examine how, in general, the "time" is used differently between men and women, between age groups, between people of different ethnic groups or the various social classes.

Aware of the growing prominence of the issue in the international context, the Brazilian government instituted, in 2008, the Committee for the Study of Gender and Time Use (CGUT). It was from the creation of the CGUT that the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and other institutions involved officially committed to the topic, started to organize national and international seminars and implemented the first time-use survey, conducted in 2009/2010 as a supplement of the pilot test of the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (Continuous PNAD), which is expected to replace the current annual National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) and the Monthly Employment Survey (PME) in 2015. According to Hany, Cavalcanti and Paulo (2010), the test environment of the new household survey was conducive to the inclusion of research on time use, as a new and complex theme as this would need to go through a methodical assessment before being applied in the whole country. The test was conducted in a sub-sample of the Continuous PNAD on five federative states and the total sample consisted of about 12,000 households, applied for a selected household member at least 10 year-old. It was used the time diary instrument (paper and palmtop) and the main references for the Brazilian methodology were the experiences of HETUS (Harmonized European Time Use Survey) and ATUS (American Time Use Survey). The classification of activities was based on the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS/2005) and the key variables and indicators used for data analysis were: sex, age groups, years of schooling, composition of the household unit, employment status, average time dedicated to the main activities, participation rates in the main activities and average time dedicated by participants to the main activities. Currently, although there is no short term forecast to perform a new survey nationwide, many lessons can be learned from conducting this pilot survey. Meanwhile, some of

these indicators (time spent in housework, caregiving, displacement to work) can be obtained through the National Household Sample Survey from direct questions on these topics.