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TIME USE IN SERBIA

Note by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia¹

Invited paper

ABSTRACT

Half of the total population in Serbia is female, but this is not always reflected in the economic, social and educational structure of the population. For example, women mostly participate in unpaid housework and care of the family members.

Time use survey (TUS) offers a detailed portrait of how individuals spend their time, illustrating which activities people engage in and for how long. Time use statistics are quantitative summaries of how individuals “spend” or allocate their time over a specified period – typically over the 24 hours of a day or over the 7 days of a week.

Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia has already started to implement the Time use survey according to the EUROSTAT recommendations. In order to conduct this very demanding survey, a pilot TUS was conducted during the summer of 2009. This pilot survey was of immense importance for the survey’s instruments (methodology, questionnaires, interviewer instructions, activity code rules), as well for the organization of the survey.

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PREFACE

1. The majority of the population in Serbia was under the negative influence of crisis in many aspects in last two decades. The female population has been particularly affected. Half of the total population in Serbia is female (51.4%), but this is not necessarily reflected in the economic, social and educational structure of the population. For example, most unpaid housework and care of the family members is performed by women.

2. The social and political reforms started in 2000, as well as accession of the Republic of Serbia into the EU community, have brought about some notable social changes. It also means the respect of all relevant international conventions, as well as the empowerment of women in society and the establishment of gender equality and gender machinery.

3. Gender statistics help to monitor the situation on women and men in the country. Of course, there are some gaps in the routine statistics that could be avoided. Time use survey could help on the filling the gaps by the information about how, how much and in which activities women and men spend their time. How we choose to spend our time is one of the main factors that shape our lives, and time use studies provide an opportunity to measure these choices and the routine of everyday life. The way in which these choices affect time use has important implications for public policy, in particular in areas of employment, social security, childcare, labor market, living standard, health and education.

4. Time use survey is based on writing down all the activities of an individual during the day. Every interviewed person who is 15 years and over fills out a time diary for each fixed 10-minutes interval. The diary has to be filled in during the designated diary days, and the interviewees need to describe in their own words how they use their time and with whom.

5. Based on the collected data the following information can be obtained:

- differences in time use between women and men
- differences in the use of time for paid and unpaid work
- differences in the use of time between employed and unemployed
- differences in the use of time during the weekdays and on weekends
- the time that women and men use for economic activities
- the time that some social groups use for economic activities (single parents, families with two or more children, multiple age group households, etc.)
- time spent on study
- time spent in leisure activities
- time spent with individual family members
- time spent on travel
- types of vehicles depending on the travel reason.

6. The range of the TUS is very broad and its implications will be felt at both local and national level. Data users recognized the comprehensive set of data relevant for measuring paid and unpaid work. Since then, time use surveys started to be regarded as a powerful tool for monitoring both economic and social phenomena. The main goal should be an estimation of the contribution of women to the national economy and to study the gender discrimination in household activities.

I. TIME USE SURVEY

7. Serbian gender machinery succeeded to put some important issues into the National strategy on improvement of position of women and promotion of gender equality, such as the demand for conducting a Time use survey in Serbia by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS).

8. Since the spring 2008, the Statistics Sweden (SCB), financially supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), started organizing several courses devoted to the conducting of TUS in Serbia. Thanks to these seminars, Time use survey will be conducted by the EUROSTAT standard methodology and data collecting recommendations.

9. In order to conduct this very complex statistical survey, it was decided that pilot TUS should be conducted during the summer 2009 with the financial support of the EU through the project of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This pilot survey was of immense importance for the conducting the main survey.

10. First of all, pilot survey was the first test of all survey instruments like methodology, questionnaires, interviewer instructions, activity code rules and activity coding list. Besides that, data entry software and data processing were a big challenge for the statisticians and IT experts of the SORS.

11. Also, the other side of the survey is a simulation of the organization of the survey fieldwork which is very complex and demanding.

12. This pilot survey served as training for the interviewer and controller activity working plan. Taking into account that this is a multi-dimensional survey, good plan for the territory and time scheduled is very important for the realization of the survey.

II. TIME USE PILOT SURVEY IN SERBIA

13. Time use pilot survey was conducted during July 2009. The survey was designed to target persons aged 15 and over belonging to the household population. People living in institutions were excluded from the survey population.

14. Interviewers were trained to present time use survey to the visited households, to explain the purpose of the survey and to ask them to take part in the survey. Survey was voluntary. Sample for the pilot was not representative of Serbia, but the survey covered the whole territory of the Serbia, each regional statistical office took a part in it, and there were households from the urban and rural areas.

15. There were several questionnaires prepared for the fieldwork and some additional material for the monitoring of the interviewer work:

- List of selected households in the sample (IKV-a)
- Household Questionnaire (IKV-1)
- Individual questionnaire for the person who is 15 years and over (IKV-2)
- Diary for the person who is 15 years and over (IKV-3)
- Weekly schedule of working hours (IKV-4)
- Interviewer's report (IKV-i)

- Methodological guide
- Letter for household
- Authorization for the interviewer
- Letter for announcing the second visit.

16. Interviewers were engaged directly by the regional offices of the SORS and 31 interviewers and 16 controllers were trained for the conducting of the Pilot TUS in Serbia.

17. Besides the sample plan of the territory and plan of interviewing household members, time plan is also important for this survey. The TUS methodology recommends that any person of the above mentioned age should fill out two daily diaries. One diary should be filled out for a weekday (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday), and the other one for one day of the weekend (Saturday and Sunday). The randomly selected day for the first diary day may either be a working day, or a weekend day.

18. For the pilot survey, one single question was excluded from the household questionnaire. That question was voluntary and it considers the sources of income that household has. For the main survey, this question was included in the questionnaire. On the other hand, several voluntary questions were excluded from the individual questionnaire that was used for the pilot and for the main survey and most of them were related to the income of the individual. Finally, there were no excluded questions or any deviation in the form of the diary and weekly schedule.

19. Speaking about the fieldwork, 160 households were visited on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, of which 100 households were from urban and 60 households from rural settlements. Except for Belgrade, where 20 households were surveyed, in 14 regional departments of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 10 households were visited in each one.

20. Household Questionnaire is used to collect data relating to the household as a whole. On the other hand, Individual Questionnaire had to be completed for each household member aged 15 years and above, either the particular person was interviewed or other household members took part in filling it (proxy interview).

21. Pilot survey in Serbia provided general information for 477 household members in 160 households that were visited. Also, due to the age limit for the Individual Questionnaire, there were 395 persons who were 15 years and over. Among the predicted interviewed population, only three of them did not fill in the Individual Questionnaire for the person who is 15 years and over. This makes the response rate for the Individual Questionnaire 99%.

22. During the fieldwork, 339 diaries were collected for the first day, and 338 for the second day. This makes the response rate for the completion of the diaries 86%.

23. If there was no possibility for some persons to complete a diary on the in advance predicted day, filling the diary could be postponed for one, two or three weeks. So it could be postponed, but the original day had to be kept, as it was prescribed. Among all diaries from the pilot survey, only 5 of them were postponed.

24. After fieldwork, controllers from the regional offices controlled the survey material and coded main activity of the local unit and occupations of the individuals. Collecting of the entire material from the regional departments was done at one place according to the previously arranged dynamics and order. Supervisors from headquarter took over some additional visual

control and checking of a content of the questionnaires and diaries that were collected from the fieldwork.

25. After that phase, survey material was ready for coding of the activities on time use. Supervisors have adopted and prepared activity coding list that adjusts to the Serbian society. Coding of each particular activity from the diaries is a very important phase of work. Namely, the coding of activities is almost impossible without a broader insight of the educational and economic situation of an individual, position in the labour market, relations to the other family or household members or some common activities with others during those two selected days. Data checking and data coding should be continuously supervised and approved.

26. IT specialists from SORS worked on the application for data entry and data processing. Data entry application should be done for the Blaise data entry program, and it was very complex and demanding in its structure. There are several levels within each questionnaire and all of them need to be connected to each other. That is a household level, the level of a household member, the level of individual who is 15 years and over, and two diaries for every single person aged 15 and over. Data entry and further data processing should be done properly and survey data must be organized and connected in a correct and logical manner.

III. RESULTS OF PILOT SURVEY

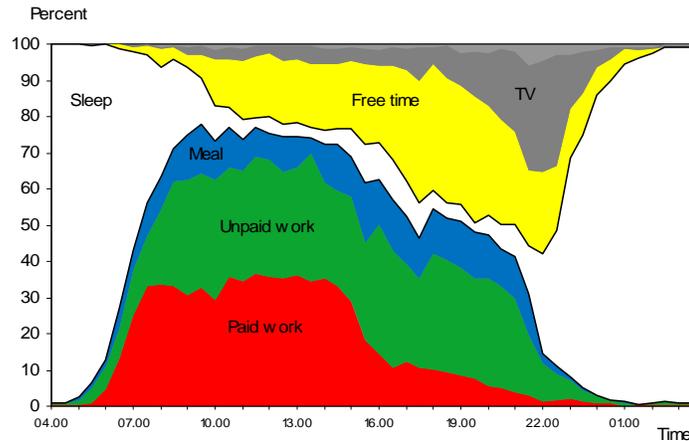
27. Taking into account that this pilot survey had to be a practice for conducting the main survey, it gave us a plenty of data related to the following important elements:

- time required for filling out a household questionnaire and an individual questionnaire
- time required for control of a household questionnaire and an individual questionnaire
- time required for control of a filled diary
- time required for coding a diary
- most frequent errors during the filling out of a questionnaire by interviewers
- most frequent errors during the filling out of a diary that was done by the person of predicted age from a visited household
- possible corrections in the questionnaires and adjustments in the methodology guide
- possible corrections and additions in the coding rules.

28. Results of the Time use pilot survey in Serbia show that there are significant differences in the use of time of female and male interviewed population and their daily activities.

29. Graph 1 represents the chronological sequence of episodes of different activities - daily rhythm of Serbian women aged 15 to 74.

Graph 1. How time is used during the day, Women 20-74 yrs, All days, Serbia, July 2009



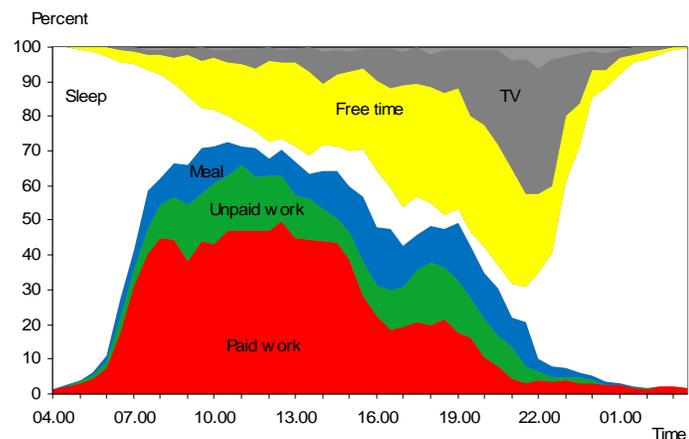
30. Women in Serbia participate in unpaid and paid work during the entire day. The highest percentage of women, 37%, do paid work at 11:30 a.m., while unpaid work at 11 a.m. is performed by 36% of women. Paid work for women has a drastic increase in the morning hours (7a.m.), and that it is held on a similar level for the next 8 hours with small variations. After that time, it is a decline of the paid work, but it is significant that during the entire 24 hours, there are some work activities for women in Serbia.

31. Unpaid work starts earlier in the daily routine than paid work. It increases as the day progresses and peaks (36%) at around 4 p.m. This is expected because when employed women arrive home after the paid work, they continue to do their unpaid work for a household or family. The unpaid work of women takes up more time during the day, has relatively fewer fluctuations during the period between 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Between 25% and 30% of the female population reported some form of unpaid work.

32. The percentage of women engaged in leisure activities slowly increases during the day. Women mostly use their free time in the period between 6 and 8:30 p.m., and after 10 p.m. their participation in these activities declines.

34. Watching TV is especially pronounced on this graph, and it is interesting that almost every third woman watches TV between 10 and 11 p.m.

Graph 2. How time is used during the day, Men 20-74 yrs, All days, Serbia – July 2009



35. This graph confirms the saying that the picture speaks more than thousands words. At the first glance, we can see that there is larger participation of men than women in paid work, and that lasts longer and more intensely during the day, and during the night. At 12:30 one of two men, aged 20 to 74 years performed some work-related, paid activity.

36. If we look at the unpaid activities at 11 a.m. the percentage of unpaid activities of men reaches its maximum of 19%. The line of unpaid activities of men has a similar path as that of women, but its values are lower by an average of over 15%.

37. The percentage of men who are engaged in leisure activities also slowly increases during the day. Every third man uses their free time between 6 and 10 p.m. After this time, men's participation in leisure activities begins to decline. Watching TV occupies a third of the male population in the next hour from 10pm until 11pm.

38. The main result is that the pilot TUS confirmed that the work of women (wives, mothers and daughters) within the household is invisible for the official statistics. From the gender perspective, the Time use survey is a relatively precious source of information on gender statistics, and it fills a number of gaps in the statistical system.

39. The experience from pilot survey was of immense importance for all participants in the survey: methodologists, controllers, interviewers, coders and employees responsible for data entering. This experience is used to improve the main Time use survey, and to improve other surveys that are conducted in the SORS.

IV. CONDUCTING THE MAIN TIME USE SURVEY IN SERBIA

40. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia has started conducting the main Time use survey on February 15th 2010 in accordance to the EUROSTAT Harmonized European time use surveys recommendations. The survey was designed to achieve a representative sample of the population living in households in Serbia. The sample unit of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia made a sample plan with the time schedule for the days in a week that diaries should be filled in. Schedule consists of the exact days and dates for 2340 households from urban and rural areas in Serbia.

41. SIDA provided financial support for the conducting main Time use survey in Serbia, which should last 365 days, and it will engage 35 interviewers and 20 controllers for the fieldwork.

42. Survey material has already started coming to headquarter of the SORS for the final control, coding of activities and data entry. The fieldwork will be finished during the February 2011, but as it is well known, after that phase, there are a lot of jobs that should be done.

43. All activities implemented in those two projects contribute to capacity building of SORS. Besides that, it is very significant progress in methodological and organizational issues for the SORS staff at all, and especially for gender sensitization.
