

Parental Time and Labour Market Participation¹

Elsa Fontainha

elmano@iseg.utl.pt

The aim of the research is to study the effects of household and family characteristics on parental time use and parent-child relationships and the allocation of time amongst adults, children and adolescents.

The main aspect analysed in relation to households are the employment status of household members. Special emphasis is given to the labour supply of a family with three members (woman, man and children less than 15 years old). In the case of children (divided here into two age groups - aged under 6 and 6-14) and childcare, the times and frequency of such care are analysed, both in terms of physical care and socialisation. Also analysed are their participation in leisure and educational activities and the respective support provided for this, and the market and non-market arrangements for child care.

The research is based on data from the first national Time Use Survey conducted in Portugal in 1999, by the Office of National Statistics, which adopted the guidelines of the harmonised European Time Use Survey. The information was collected on the basis of household questionnaires, individual questionnaires and diaries (total sample size: 5,500 household units and 10,000 individuals). The weighted data are considered to be representative of the nation as a whole.

In the present analysis of the Portuguese case, since there is no time series data available on the use of time, the trend identification cannot be performed accurately. This paper is based on data resulting from the TUS for the year 1999 (the first Portuguese TUS at a national level), but we formulate hypotheses on Portuguese economic and demographic trends in order to identify some evolutionary scenarios. The questions that constitute the orientation of the present research, were essentially suggested by Bianchi (2000) and Zuzanek (2001) researches. Bianchi (2000:402) points out four aspects concerning maternal time and employment status which could bias empirical results: overestimate of available time for children when mothers are out of the labour market, changes in children ways of life, needs and family size, mother management priorities and fathers changing behaviour. Some of the questions that constitute the orientation of the present research were also based on those proposed by Zuzanek, J. (2001:127) who embarked upon an analysis about parental time with a view to characterising the situation and identifying trends based on the data from several Canadian Time Use Surveys during last decades.

The questions of research are:

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- Does the employment status of the family members has any influence on the amount and quality of the time dedicated to child-care?
- Is child-care time compromised by work time, or do the parents compensate for this " lack of time for their children and family " with less time spent on their own leisure, personal matters and rest?
- Do the children's ages influence the time, frequency and forms of attention given to the children by their parents?
- Is there a gender gap or a gender bias in parental time, which is manifested in quantitative as well as qualitative terms?
- How will parental time and labour supply evolve in the context of increasing participation of women in the labour market and the rising standards of female educational and vocational attainment?
- How will parental time and labour supply evolve in the context of an increasingly rapid transformation of the structure, ties and size of Portuguese families?

In order to answer these questions a preliminary empirical research is done based mainly on Portuguese Time Use Survey presented on *Section 2*. Analysis of parental time, family composition and labour market is pursued on *Section 3*. Finally, on *Section 4* conclusions about the main research questions are presented and some avenues for further research are suggested.

The study of the Portuguese Parental time is particularly interesting, because this country presents certain aspects in common with more developed European countries and other aspects similar to Southern European countries. Portugal has a much higher women participation rate on the labour market when compared with Spain, Italy and Greece. (Del Boca and Locatelli 2003 :7) . Portugal presents some particular situations compared with other countries as is referred for example in research carried out by MOCHO Project The Rationale of Motherhood Choices : influence of Employment Conditions and of Public Policies. team: public spending for children aged is one of the lowest of Europe, has a mediocre ranking related with childcare system of the dual earner family (Henau, Muelders and O'Dorchai 2004a, 2004b).

In Portugal the ration between women and men non paid activities is similar or higher compared with other countries (Fontainha 2005 : Table 5; Symeonidou 2004: 52) and very different from the situation in the 80's, when the proportion of time spent at housework was about 5,25 hours for women and 0,75 for the other members of the family. Fontainha (1989 : 161).

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