

Gender, Employment and Time Use: Some Issues in South Africa

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INTRODUCTION: GENDER, POVERTY, EMPLOYMENT AND TIME USE

Debates of the links between poverty and economic growth have characterised much of the controversies about appropriate economic and social policy for developing countries. The phenomenal growth achieved by the East Asian economies in the period between 1960 and the mid 1980s was interpreted both as a case of market led growth (for example by the World Bank) and as a case of state-led growth policies (for example by heterodox economists such as Ha Joon Chang). More recently, the debate has shifted to globalisation. Does globalisation lead to improvements in the lives of the poor? A vast set of literature has explored the empirics of growth and its poverty effects in the recent wave of globalisation, often reaching contradictory conclusions and offering opposing policy advice.

An issue that is often not sufficiently analysed in these debates is that of employment – a critical pathway for increased incomes for the poor. Whilst levels of employment are often analysed, the quality of employment is often neglected. The reality in developing countries is that poor quality employment in the informal economy comprises one half to three quarters of non-agricultural employment (Chen et al, 2004). In many parts of the world informal employment is the norm. Further Chen (2001:72) cites that 83% and 93% of new jobs were created in the informal economy in Latin America and Africa respectively. Women play a particularly prominent role in the informal economy. Chen et al (2004:26) show that “other than in North Africa, where 43 per cent of women workers are in informal employment, 60% or more of women workers in the developing world are in informal employment (outside agriculture). In sub-Saharan Africa 84% of women non-agricultural workers are informally employed compared to 63% of men; and in Latin America the figures are 58% of women in comparison to 48% of men. In Asia the proportion is 65% for both women and men”.

One of the major contributions of feminist economics has been to highlight women’s unpaid work in social reproduction (see, for example, Elson 1995, 2002; Cagatay, Elson and Grown, 1995). As the South African time use survey shows, women spend large quantities of their time on these social reproduction activities. We attempt, in this paper, to link issues of poverty, gender, unpaid work and paid employment through an analysis of time use. The poor, and particularly poor women, we argue, are not only constrained by income deficits but also by “time deficits”. Unlike money incomes, the rich and the poor have the same basic allocation – 24 hours. However, the levels of income of individuals, the nature of their employment, and their unpaid work activities have a profound impact on not only how individuals use their time, but also on the returns to time spent in paid employment.

We begin by providing an overview of the time use survey in South Africa and of labour market developments in South Africa in the recent period. We then move on to the main analytical components of the paper. First, we examine some intra-household time use patterns seeking to establish links between gender, employment and time use. We examine how women and men’s time use patterns differ in South African households, depending on the employment and incomes of household members. Second, we investigate the impact of unpaid productive activities – collection of water and fuel – on the time that individuals have available for paid work in either the

formal or informal economy. We show that there are important links between employment, incomes, gender and time use. In particular, women's unpaid work activities are related to the time that they have available for paid economic activities, and consequently on their incomes.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN TIME USE SURVEYⁱ

The South African time use survey was conducted in 2000. The objectives of the survey were:

(to) measure and analyse the time spent from day-to-day by different individuals – women and men, girls and boys, rural and urban, rich and poor – on all major activities. The study will provide greater understanding to policy-makers on the economic and social well-being of different groups. It will provide new information on the division of both paid and unpaid labour between women and men and other grouping. It will provide greater insight into reproductive and leisure activities of household members, as well as into less well understood productive activities such as subsistence work, casual work and work in the informal sector. (Stats SA, 2001:13).

The fieldwork for the survey was conducted over three periods of the year 2000 – February, June and October. This was to ensure that the survey captured any seasonal variations in time use. Two respondents – aged ten years or above – were selected in each sampled household. The questionnaire captured details of the household, demographic information of the respondents, the activities performed by the respondents over a 24 hour period of the day preceding the interview.

The diary was divided into 30 minute time slots. Respondents were asked an open-ended question pertaining to the 30 minutes slots. These responses were recorded and then coded by the fieldworker, according to an activity classification system. Respondents were able to report three activities per time-slot and respondents were asked whether these activities were conducted sequentially or simultaneously.

The South African time use survey is representative of the country's population. The planned sample was 10800 households – 3600 for each of February, June and October. The realised sample was 8564 households, and 14553 respondents.

Activities recorded in the time diaries were classified into ten broad categories. The coding was done according to a trial UN classification system which sought to develop a system more appropriate for developing country situations, in particular to capture informal activities and more comprehensively to capture work activities. The classification system distinguishes between work for establishments, primary productive activities not for establishments, and other productive activities not for establishments.

The classification system is consistent with the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA), and allows for distinguishing between SNA activities, non-SNA productive activities, and non-productive activities.

The 10 broad categories used for classification were:

SNA Production

1. Work in establishments includes waged work, domestic employment, and seeking work.
2. Primary production not for establishments includes subsistence farming and collection of water and fuel.
3. Other productive activity not for establishments includes home-based production, informal street trading, and informal provision of services such as hairdressing.

Non-SNA Production

4. Household maintenance such as housework
5. Care for persons in the household, including looking after children, and sick and aged members of the household
6. Community service

Non Productive Activity

7. Learning activities
8. Social and cultural activities
9. Mass media activities including watching television and listening to the radio.
10. Personal care including sleeping, eating and drinking, washing and dressing, and receiving medical and personal care.

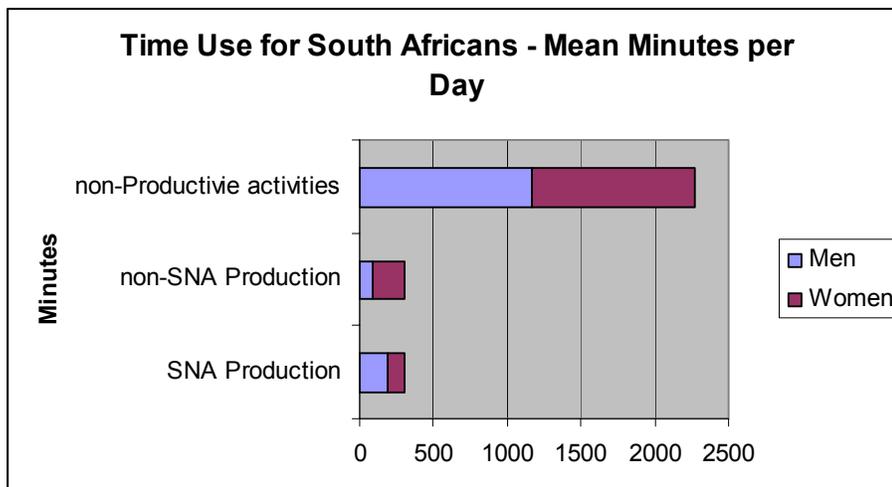
SNA production activities are work activities that fall within the SNA production boundary and counted in national accounts. Non SNA Production activities correspond largely with unpaid household production. Non-productive activities are not covered at all by the SNA. These activities fail the so-called ‘third person test’ – activities that cannot be performed for a person by someone else (for example, sleeping) – and are therefore not considered to be productive activities.

Table 1: Mean |Time Spent on Main Activities, in minutes

		Male (minutes)	Female (minutes)	All (minutes)
SNA Activities				
1	Work in Establishments	151	83	115
2	Primary production	26	22	24
3	Other production	13	11	12
Non-SNA Production				
4	Household maintenance	74	181	131
5	Childcare and other caring	4	32	19
6	Community service	5	3	4
Non-productive activities				
7	Learning	109	96	102
8	Social and cultural	218	171	193
9	Mass media	112	105	108
10	Personal care	727	734	731

These activities are summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Mean Minutes per day on Productive and Non-productive Activities



(Source: Stats SA, 2001:36)

RECENT LABOUR MARKET TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

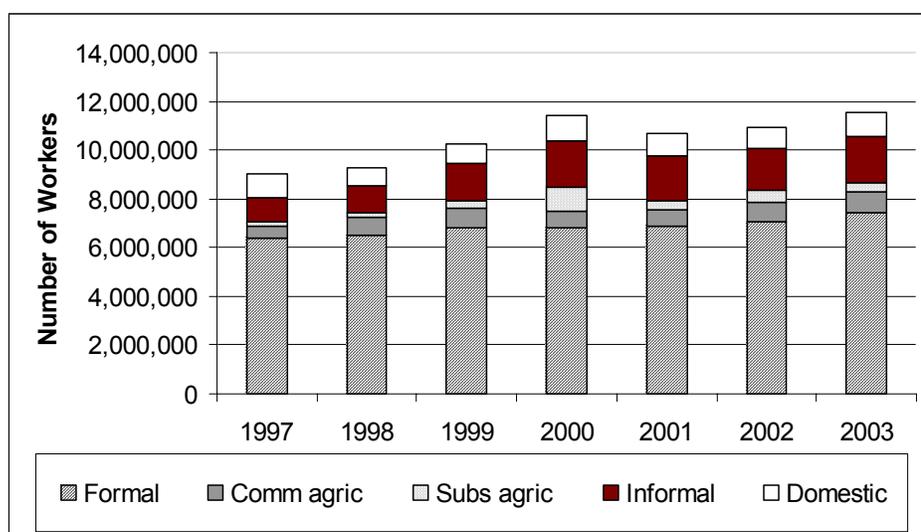
Table 2 below shows the broad trends in the labour market in South Africa over the period 1997 to 2003. There has been a sustained growth in unemployment (Table 2). Figure 2, using figures presented in Table 2, graphically represents the labour force i.e. those who are working. Employment in the formal economy has shown very limited growth over the period (Figure 2). One segment of the economy in which seems to have generated employment is the informal economyⁱⁱ. In this segment of the labour forceⁱⁱⁱ, employment increased from 965 000 in October 1997 to 1.9 million in September 2003, more than doubling over a period of 6 years. For a number of reasons, this trend must, however, be treated with caution. First, we are using data from the October Household Survey for the period 1997-1999 and the Labour Force Survey for the period 2000-2003, two surveys which are not directly comparable. Devey *et al* (2004) point to other problems with these estimates of informal employment. They highlight the fact that there are several inconsistencies in the data on informal employment. More importantly, they show that Statistics South Africa has improved its capturing of informal employment so that at least part of the increasing trend in informal employment is simply better capture of the phenomenon. Notwithstanding these difficulties it is now widely accepted that informal employment has grown since the political transition and that, as the data shows, this growth has declined in recent years (see Devey *et al*, 2004).

Table 2: Labour Market Status of Workers in South Africa, 1997-2003

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Formal	6,405,953	6,527,120	6,812,647	6,841,877	6,872,924	7,033,940	7,460,398
Commercial Agric.	495,530	726,249	804,034	666,940	665,941	810,998	831,893
Subsistence Agric.	163,422	202,290	286,856	964,837	358,983	520,259	350,384
Informal	965,669	1,077,017	1,573,986	1,933,675	1,873,136	1,702,415	1,899,114
Domestic	992,341	749,303	798,524	999,438	915,831	875,255	1,022,921
Unspecified	70,986	107,966	92,905	305,797	146,000	85,841	57,534
Unemployed	2,450,738	3,162,662	3,157,605	4,082,248	4,525,309	4,837,493	4,570,566
Not eco active	13,960,772	13,156,940	12,752,967	11,100,135	12,006,413	12,118,060	13,724,114
Total 15-65	25,505,411	25,709,548	26,279,523	26,894,948	27,364,538	27,984,260	29,916,924

(Source: own calculations from October Household Survey and Labour Force Surveys)

Figure 2: Labour Force by Type of Work in South Africa, 1997-2003



(Source: own calculations from October Household Survey and Labour Force Surveys)

FORMAL AND INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND TIME USE: SOME INTRA-HOUSEHOLD ISSUES

We explore some intra-household time use patterns for workers that are employed in formal and informal work. The issue that we're exploring is whether there are any discernable differences in gendered time use patterns inside the household, depending on the employment of each member of the household. In order to explore this we have selected only those cases in the survey where we have time use diaries for two employed members in the household - one male and one female. Table 3 below shows the combinations of employment and time use, for paid work (SNA activities), unpaid work (non-SNA productive activities), and leisure and personal activities (non productive activities) for males and females (the combinations are always male: female).

The data show that time use patterns are linked to both gender and employment. Irrespective of employment, compared to their male household counterparts, on average, women in the household spend more of their time on unpaid work and less of their time on paid work. The time use patterns are also related to employment. Where both members of the household are employed in the formal sector, on average males spend 18 units of time in paid work. Females spend less time on paid work and more time on unpaid household production (and less time on leisure activities). Interestingly, when the female member of the household is employed in the informal economy unpaid household work increases to 12.2 time units and (as is to be expected) time spent on paid work falls. This combination contrasts sharply with the opposite work combination where the male member is in informal work and the female member in formal work – although there is a reduction in time spent on paid work and increase in unpaid work the changes are not nearly as dramatic as that for informally employed females. The last combination, where both the male and female household member is employed in the informal economy is also interesting. Compared to the formal:formal combination both members of the household spend less time on paid work and more time on unpaid work. However, female members in informal:informal households spend significantly higher proportions of time on unpaid work while their male counterparts, on average, spend more time on leisure and personal activities.

Table 3 : Time Use Patterns by Gender and Employment (30 minutes time units)

Employment Combination	Paid Work	Unpaid Work	Leisure and Personal
Formal : Formal	18.0 : 15.3	2.4 : 7.9	34.3 : 32.9
Formal : Informal	17.3 : 8.8	2.3 : 12.2	34.2 : 34.5
Informal : Formal	16.8 : 14.0	2.9 : 7.2	34.8 : 32.8
Informal : Informal	10.8 : 9.1	2.9 : 12.5	40.0 : 34.2

Examining these time use patterns by household income reveals some additional gendered patterns to time use in South Africa. We define three types of households: Ultra poor, Poor and Non-poor with household incomes respectively of less than R700

per month, between R701 and R2500, and above R2500 (Approximately 6.3 South African Rand equals US\$1). These data are presented in Table 4 below.

In households where both the male and female members are employed in formal sector jobs, time use for paid work increases in poor household compared to ultra poor households and then decreasing for non-poor households. This trend is like to indicate that poor household are able to access more formal sector work (compared to ultra poor households), and that non-poor households are able to access higher paid employment thus reducing their time allocations to paid work. Interestingly, in formal-formal households women's unpaid work falls as income rises (probably because higher income households are able to employ domestic workers), and male unpaid work increases.

In Formal-Informal households, higher income households have males spending more of their time in paid work, with the informally employed female member spending less time on paid work and more time on unpaid work. In Informal-Formal household, male informal workers spend a large proportion of their time in paid work, although this tends to decrease as household income rises, probably indicating that these workers are able to access more lucrative informal economy opportunities. Their female counterparts in non-poor households spend more time than females in poor households on paid work, probably reflecting class differentiation in the labour market. Interestingly women's unpaid work in Informal-Formal non-poor households is lower than that of poor households, probably because these households employ domestic workers.

In households where both the male and female members are informal workers, we see evidence of much less time spent in paid work, and particularly for women informal workers higher levels of unpaid household work. It is interesting to note that non-poor households in this group have male members spending more time in paid work and females spending less time than poor household. This is probably evidence of men being able to access more lucrative opportunities in the informal economy. In poor households, men who are unable to access informal economy jobs, spend their time on personal and leisure activities while women in this position have higher levels of unpaid household work.

Table 4 : Time Use Patterns by Income Class, Gender and Employment (30 minutes time units)

Income Category	Paid Work	Unpaid Work	Leisure and Personal
Formal-Formal Households			
Ultra Poor	17.8 : 12.8	1.5 : 9.8	34.6 : 33.2
Poor	18.4 : 16.1	2.7 : 7.8	34.3 : 32.7
Non-poor	17.8 : 15.9	2.6 : 7.2	34.4 : 32.9
Formal-Informal Households			
Ultra Poor	16.2 : 9.8	2.4 : 12.4	35.6 : 32.6
Poor	17.0 : 8.1	2.5 : 12.6	33.7 : 34.1
Non-poor	19.5 : 8.8	2.0 : 12.7	31.4 : 31.6
Informal-Formal Households			
Ultra Poor	19.8 : 13.6	3.1 : 7.6	28.8 : 31.9
Poor	16.0 : 12.3	3.3 : 7.9	37.4 : 35.9
Non-poor	17.5 : 14.4	3.0 : 6.7	34.0 : 33.0
Informal-Informal Households			
Ultra Poor	10.6 : 8.9	2.8 : 12.9	40.4 : 33.4
Poor	10.6 : 10.6	3.2 : 11.2	40.7 : 35.9
Non-poor	13.0 : 7.3	3.4 : 12.0	36.1 : 36.0

UNPAID HOUSEHOLD TASKS AND EMPLOYMENT AND TIME USE

As in other developing countries, South African women, particularly those in rural areas, spend significant amount of time collecting fuel and water for daily subsistence. The time use survey for South Africa (Stats SA 2001:61) shows that more than half of rural household in South Africa use wood or dung for cooking purposes. As far as water is concerned, the survey shows that 35% of all South African households obtained water off-site. Up to 78% of households in some rural areas obtained their water off-site.

The households that collected fuel and water off-site were asked whether male or female members of the household were primarily responsible for these tasks.

Table 5 below shows that women are primarily responsible for the collection of fuel and water, and that there is a similar pattern to the collection of these vital subsistence resources.

Table 5: Usual Water and Fuel Collector by Sex

Collector	Water	Fuel
Female	70%	74%
Male	18%	16%
Both Male and Female	12%	10%

(Source: Stats SA, 2001:63).

The time diaries show that the average time spent collecting water was 44 minutes per day for those who accessed water from less than 100 meters from the household, rising to 71 minutes for those that accessed water more than 1 kilometre for the household. The average time spent collecting fuel was 78 minutes per day for those collecting fuel from less than 100 metres for the household, and 205 minutes for those collecting fuel 1 kilometre or more from the household (Stats SA, 2001:64). Thus, a typical rural woman in South Africa might spend up to 4.6 hours per day collecting water and fuel.

The issue of concern for us in this paper is how time spent on employment may be related to time spent collecting water and fuel. What, if any, is the relationship between the amount of time that South Africans spend collecting fuel and water and the amount of time spend on employment activities that would generate income?

Table 6 below is based on individual time use for those between the ages of 16 and 65 and contains data only for those that are employed and whose time diaries have been collected over the normal working week (Monday to Friday). The table shows average time units (i.e. 30 minute time segments) for males and females according to their employment (formal or informal), incomes, and household location (urban or rural). As is to be expected, on average, men spend more time on employment than women do. The data show some interesting trends about how the burden of fuel and water collection affects time spent on employment. Columns 2 and 3 show average time units spent on employment for males and females that are employed either in the formal or informal economy. For individuals that do not engage in fuel or water collection, men and women respectively spent, on average 14.8 and 13.3 time units on employment. Importantly, women's time use for employment falls much more dramatically than men's when individuals are collecting water and fuel. For women, this falls to just 2.5 time units compared to men's 7 time units when both fuel and water are collected. Columns 4 to 7 show the same informal but separated by whether the individual is employed in the formal or informal economy.

The final two columns, 8 and 9, show the amount of time spent on formal or informal employment among individuals in poor rural households. Here, the effect on paid working time of time spent on collection of fuel and water is most dramatically felt. Women from these households are able to spend 10.2 time units on paid work if they do not collect fuel and water. This falls to 2.5 units for females that collect both fuel and water.

Table 6: Average time units on Employment and Water and Fuel Collection

	Formal or Informal 2	Formal or Informal 3	Formal 4	Formal 5	Informal 6	Informal 7	Poor Rural 8	Poor Rural 9
Collects	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Both	7.0	2.5	9.3	3.6	NA*	2.3	6.3	2.5
Fuel	12.5	3.7	15.1	8.1	6.4	2.0	14.0	2.7
Water	9.4	3.9	13.9	10.2	6.3	1.8	11.0	2.8
Neither	14.8	13.3	17.2	14.4	8.6	7.4	15.0	10.2

Note: * too few respondents

CONCLUSION

This paper is a very preliminary analysis of some issues linking gender and employment through time use studies. The two pieces of analysis that we have conducted provide some useful insights into intra-household time use patterns, and how these are affected by gender and employment. Most important, the analysis we have done here demonstrate the value of time use survey for probing issues of gender and employment in developing countries.

We cannot, at this stage, however make any claims about the causal relationships between gender, employment and time use in South Africa. It is possible that poor women in informal employment spend large amount of their time on unpaid activities because they are unable to access paid employment and therefore have time at their disposal. Alternatively, these women may be unable to spend more time in paid and income generating work because of the heavy burden that they bear in social reproduction. We hope to explore some of these causal relationships in further work on the data.

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ⁱ This section draws extensively from Stats SA (2001).

ⁱⁱ The other area of employment showing rapid growth (and then rapid decline) is subsistence agriculture. See Aliber (2003) for an analysis of the trend in subsistence agriculture.

ⁱⁱⁱ Statistics South Africa defines someone as working in what they call the 'informal sector' if they work in a firm that is unregistered i.e. the enterprise definition is being employed.