Is the Mexican Youth an Agent of Change? An Analysis of Gender and the Heterogeity of Time Use Patterns of Mexicans 15 to 29 Years Old

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Abstract

In the last two decades, gender inequalities in Mexico have closed in several fronts. Years of schooling have increased substantially and the gender gap in schooling has narrowed, and even reversed in primary school. The probability that women work at least once in their lifetime is close to 70%, and the reasons for their incorporation to the labor market have changed. However, within households gender roles have changed little for the majority of the population. Time use patterns show that men spend little time in caregiving and household activities, while women do most of these. Past studies have shown that the youth behave, on average, differently and can be seen as agents of change. With the objective of determining whether gender roles may indeed change in the future in Mexico, in this paper we analyze the heterogeneity of the time use patterns of 15 to 29 years old.

Long abstract

Time use studies have been very effective to show that, in countries such as Mexico, where gender roles are still highly traditional, men and women employ their time in different ways. In specific, it has been demonstrated that men spend more time than women working for the labor market, and that those men who do domestic and caregiving activities spend very little of their time on these. Women, on the other hand, allocate more time than men to caregiving and domestic chores (Sayer, 2005; Craig and Mullan, 2011; INMUJERES, 2003; García and Oliveira, 1994, 1999 and 2007; Pedrero, 2004).

Past studies have analyzed how is it that the gender division of roles is determined, what factors affect the time use of individuals, and what conditions are needed so men and women participate in activities that until recently were considered characteristic of the opposite sex. One important result of these past studies is that, even when most of the men and women in productive ages in Mexico (24 to 64 years old) follow a traditional time use pattern, there is a group that can be characterized as innovators. Women in the innovators group behave more like men tan like women, in the sense that they spend more hours in the

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labor market and less hours in caregiving and domestic chores than other women. Meanwhile, men in the innovators group spend a lot of time in caregiving and domestic chores. Both innovator men and women share their young age (being less than 45 years old) and high education. The identification of these conditions can help to understand what is necessary to achieve the social change that allows men and women to participate in more egalitarian conditions in the future (Hernández and Rivero, forthcoming).

However, one limitation of these studies is that they restrict their analysis to those 24 years old and older. Another study, this time with individuals aged 15 to 29 years old showed that gender roles and expectations still have an important impact in determining the time use patterns of those in this age group (Pederzini and Rivero, 2013). In particular, Pederzini and Rivero showed that among those who did not study, work, or could be considered full-time homemakers, women spend more time in caregiving and household chores than men. In this case, the analysis did not include those who were working, studying, or homemakers. In consequence, it does not allow seeing whether there are any innovators in the youngest cohort.

The objective of this paper is precisely to analyze the time use patterns of those aged 15 to 29 years old. With this end, we use the 2009 Mexican Time Use Survey (INEGI 2009), searching to identify groups that follow similar time use behaviors. The methodology used to identify these groups will be latent class analysis. In a second step of the analysis, the main characteristics of each group will be identified. As this is the youngest generation, we expect to find that time use patterns as not as segregated by gender as they are in older generations. We also expect to find a larger proportion of women in groups that can be considered traditional male patterns and a larger proportion of men in groups that can be considered traditional female patterns. In addition, we expect to find some groups were men and women are equally present (such as the groups of students and the groups of those who are not studying nor working).