



Ten Research Questions You Might Answer with ATUS Food-Related Data

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The Revolutionary ATUS

- Immensity of sample size
 - Four months of ATUS 2003 exceed any previous US sample
 - 2003-2005 ATUS exceeds any previous sample worldwide
- Sample size allows focus on narrow subgroups' time use
- Continuing sample allows measuring changes over business cycles

- Allows link to respondents in CPS. This provides information on non-diary spouses.
- Allows link to CPS Supplements—e.g., Food Security—for 1/3 of each year's ATUS respondents.
- Allows link to March Income/Demographic information—for 1/3 of the ATUS.
- ATUS vaults U.S. from derriere garde to forefront of time-use data worldwide
- Caveat: One can hope that research with this rich resource goes beyond pedestrian summing-up of time use by category by demographic group.



Integrative Questions

- Time-diary data are usually summed into categories
- A few sample food categories in ATUS
 - Grocery shopping
 - Purchasing non-grocery food
 - Eating and drinking
 - Food and drink preparation
 - Kitchen and food clean-up





1. How Are Time and Goods Inputs into Eating Related?



- ATUS provides data on all food-related activities.
- Link these to 2003 CEX data on food spending
- Create age-education-marital status cells
- Measure how the time-goods ratio varies across cells—the roles of price of time and income
- Assess the “food welfare” of the population—looking at food spending *in vacuo* is insufficient





2. How Have Food Time and Food Spending Changed over Time?



- Fundamental U.S. fact—rising earnings inequality since the middle 1970s
- Use earlier time-use and CEX data with current CEX, ATUS to examine demographic/economic correlates of changing goods and time inputs into eating
- Allows measuring the importance of an additional dimension of changing inequality





3. How Do the Location and Time Spent in Food Consumption Relate to Obesity?



- Use ATUS location information to examine demographic/economic correlates of where and how much time is spent on eating—food at home vs. food away from home
- Relate this information by state or even metro area to obesity data
- Is time spent on food—eating, shopping, etc.—related to obesity? Is location?





4. What are the Implications of the Social Context of Food Consumption?



- Use ATUS data on context (persons) to examine social aspects of food consumption
- What determines differences in who consume with?
- What are roles of income, value of time, education, etc?
- What does this imply about the future demand for food?





5. How Does Eating Function as Child Care?



- Use ATUS time and context data to examine eating and cleaning-up time with older (≥ 6) children
- How do food-related activities function as child care and attitude formation? Eating together as creating human capital
- Are there demographic/economic and geographic differences—what would one expect?





6. What Determines Food Shopping Time?



- Food shopping is food search—can we use predictions of search theory to develop empirical models of time use?
- How does time differ by marital status, demographic/economic correlates?
- Are there geographic and urban/suburban/rural effects?
- Can also examine food shopping as a social activity using ATUS context data





Instantaneous Questions

- Time diaries come in episodes; the activity summaries are computed from the original episode data
- Very little research of any kind using timing information (but see DSH papers)





7. What is the Role of “Grazing?”

- How many times per day do people eat?
- How does grazing relate to demographic/
economic characteristics?
- Theory might rely on set-up costs,
demand for variety
- Potential importance for nutrition



8. At What Times of Day Do We Eat?



- Are there demographic differences in the timing of eating? Is there anything beyond work timing?
- Again, potential link to nutrition/obesity issue
- Importance of spousal behavior/work—implications for family bargaining





9. What is the Role of Eating During Work?

- Who is able to eat during work—what is the relation to kinds of work, wages/income?
- What does eating during work due to time spent in other eating activities in shopping/
cleaning up?
- Is eating during work an amenity—something valued by workers, costly to employers?





10. What Determines the Timing of Food Shopping?



- When do people shop for food—day of week, time of day?
- How is the timing of shopping related to work status, demographics, income and time value?
- What are the implications of these facts for regulations involving store opening hours?

