

Marital Status and Mothers' Time Use: Childcare, Housework, Leisure, and Sleep

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ABSTRACT

Assumptions that single mothers are “time-poor” compared with married mothers are ubiquitous, but variation in mothers’ time use is less studied than differences between mothers and fathers. We use the 2003-2012 American Time Use Surveys (ATUS) to examine marital status variation in mothers’ time spent in housework, childcare, leisure, and sleep. We find no difference in time spent on childcare between mothers, suggesting that behavioral propensities to engage in childcare are similar for all mothers; children’s needs are immutable. Married mothers do more housework and spend less time sleeping than all other mothers. Never married and cohabiting mothers have significantly more leisure time than married mothers, although this time is mostly spent watching television. Differences in demographic characteristic explain two-thirds of the variance in sedentary leisure time between married and never married mothers. These results provide no support for the time poverty thesis but offer some support for the doing gender perspective.

Keywords: time use, mother, leisure, marital status

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INTRODUCTION

The widespread assumption that unmarried mothers are “time poor” as well as income-poor stems from the time poverty thesis that unmarried mothers are doubly disadvantaged by the spouse “absence” effect (Craig, 2005). Theoretically, married women are able to share income as well as work and family responsibilities with their spouses, resulting in more time for leisure compared with mothers living alone. Empirical studies offer some support for the spouse absence effect: unmarried mothers spend more time in paid work, and less time in housework, but not childcare, compared with married mothers (Craig, 2005; Kendig and Bianchi, 2008; Sanik and Mauldin, 1986; Sayer, Bianchi, and Robinson, 2004). However, gender asymmetrical time use changes over the past 40 years — with married mothers increasing employment time but still devoting about twice as much time to housework and childcare as fathers — suggests the assumption that mothers with a partner have twice as much time compared with solo parent families may be flawed.

Most of the time use literature has focused on explaining gender differences in time allocation rather than differences among women. The small literature that investigates time use differences among mothers focuses on time in specific activities, like housework or childcare, rather than multiple domains of time use. Research addressing these limitations is needed because time allocation patterns are associated with mothers’ economic, physical, and psychological well-being (Bird and Rieker, 2008; Jacobs and Gerson, 2004; Mattingly and Bianchi, 2003; McLanahan, 2004). Left unanswered is the vital question of whether time allocation pattern differences flow primarily from having less time available because of the absence of a spouse or from other sources. Investigations of differences in mothers’ time use may reveal whether time allocations reflect gendered dynamics within couple relationships, are

Marital Status & Time Use

functions of compositional variation in the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics among mothers, or are a combination of both.

Specifically, two mechanisms other than having less available time due to an absence of a partner could produce variation in mothers' time use. First, according to the *doing gender* perspective (West and Zimmerman, 1987), partnered mothers should allocate time differently than non-partnered mothers because spending time in certain activities and the absence of spending time in other activities is one of the key ways women and men reproduce and justify gender inequality. Consequently, compared with married women, unmarried women may do less housework and childcare, because their living arrangements elicit less frequent displays of their ability and willingness to engage in gendered behaviors. However, regardless of family structure, family work is gendered and single mothers, like mothers living with a male partner, adhere to norms of femininity, particularly expectations embedded in the social role of mother that require time-intensive devotion to children (Christopher, 2012; Hays, 1996). Single mothers may also attempt to refute discourses that characterize single mothers as irresponsible or shiftless through increased investments in activities deemed societally valuable, like paid work and childcare. This perspective suggests single mothers may do less housework and spend less time in leisure activities and sleeping, but no less time in childcare, compared with mothers living with a romantic partner.

Second, socioeconomic and demographic compositional differences between unmarried and married mothers mirror sociodemographic variation in time use patterns. Single mothers are less likely to have a college education, slightly more likely to be employed, are younger, and less likely to be White, compared with married mothers (Cohn, Livingston, and Wang, 2014). Black women are the least likely racial group to get married, having about half the marriage rates of

Marital Status & Time Use

Latinas, Whites, and Asians (Cohen, 2014). Married mothers make up two-thirds of all stay-at-home mothers (Cohn et al., 2014). Stay-at-home mothers are more likely to be married, younger, less educated, and to have incomes below the poverty line than employed mothers (Cohn et al., 2014). Differential selection of women by age, education, and race-ethnicity into marriage may account for some variation in how mothers spend time, independent of any spouse “absence” effect (Kendig and Bianchi, 2008). For instance, less educated mothers spend less time in childcare compared with college educated mothers (Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie, 2006). Lareau (2003) suggests this difference may stem in part from class differences in the culture of parenting. Additionally, although all mothers may adhere to intensive mothering ideals (Damaske, 2011), some research has found Black mothers spend less time with their children compared with White mothers (Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, and Robinson, 2004). Hispanic and Asian women tend to do more housework than Black and White women (Sayer and Fine, 2011). The relationship between maternal age and time spent with children is not clear, with some finding a negative relationship

We address these potential sources of variation in mothers’ time use by analyzing nationally representative 2003-2012 data from the American Time Use Surveys. We examine “gender” effects by investigating whether mothers’ time in housework, childcare, leisure, and sleep varies by relationship status, and, if so, whether the effect is mediated by mothers’ socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Our research contributes to the existing literature by examining the extent spouse absence, gendered interactional dynamics, and compositional factors account for variations in time allocations across four domains: housework, care work, sleep, and leisure.

TIME USE DIFFERENCES BY MARITAL STATUS

Although the lower economic well-being of single mothers compared with married mothers has been extensively documented (Casper and Bianchi, 2002; McLanahan, 2004), differences in time resources are indicative of household disparities (Casper and O'Connell, 1998; Vickery, 1977). Theoretically, partnered women are able to share income and labor with a spouse, while single women must devote sufficient time to both paid work and household labor. Early theories of the time poverty thesis assumed specialization in marriage, positing unmarried mothers' disadvantage stemmed from their greater paid work hours (Vickery, 1977). Even with converging labor force participation of married and unmarried women (Goldin, 2006; Sayer, Cohen, and Casper, 2004), partnered women can supposedly allocate some unpaid work to a spouse and gender specialization may lead to more efficient time allocation (Becker, 1981). Furthermore, compared with single households, dual-earner couples may be advantaged in their financial ability to outsource some household labor (Gupta, Evertsson, Grunow, Nermo, and Sayer, 2010).

How women allocate time is also reflective of *doing gender*, a way to express feminine identity and conform with cultural beliefs about gender differences (West and Zimmerman, 1987). For instance, while women have made substantial inroads in the workplace, the family domain continues to be a highly gendered institution (England, 2010). Compared with men, women do most of the housework and caretaking (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, and Robinson, 2000; Casper and Bianchi, 2010; Sayer, 2005) and they are more likely to combine leisure time with parenting (Milkie, Raley, and Bianchi, 2009).

Higher levels of gendered behavior are likely associated with all types of living arrangements that include other adults, not just marital unions. If the presence of another adult is a key reason why mothers' time use varies, focusing narrowly on marital status is inadequate

Marital Status & Time Use

because close to 50% of unmarried mothers live with a cohabiting partner, related family members, or unrelated adults (Casper and Bianchi, 2002). Evidence also suggests that grandmothers in multigenerational households are more likely to claim primary caretaking responsibility for their grandchildren than are grandfathers (Casper, Florian, Potts, and Brandon, in press). Hence, measuring living arrangements directly provides a better indicator of the presence or absence of other adults and thus a more accurate reflection of the constraints on mothers' time allocations.

Several papers on time use demonstrate differences in housework time by women's marital status but little variation in mothers' time spent on childcare. Though women do more housework than men in all family structures, single women (never married, divorced and widowed) do less housework than cohabiting and married women, with the gender gap widest between married women and men (South and Spitze, 1994; Vernon, 2010). Partnered mothers who are not in the labor force spend the most amount of time conducting household related tasks while employed, single mothers spend the least amount of time doing household activities (Sanik and Mauldin, 1986). The small literature on childcare differences by marital status suggests there is little difference in time spent with children. One older study reports that married and unmarried, as well as employed and nonemployed, mothers spend similar amounts of time communicating with their children and attending to their emotional needs (Sanik and Mauldin, 1986). More recent scholarship has found mothers who are single spend slightly less time with their children compared with married mothers, although the variation is largely accounted for by adjusting for other variables such as socioeconomic status and other characteristics (Kendig and Bianchi, 2008). Because parenting behaviors are associated with norms of femininity and masculinity, across family types, gendered expectations and identities may produce similar levels

Marital Status & Time Use

of childcare time among mothers regardless of the presence of a male partner (Biblarz and Stacey, 2010; Christopher, 2012; Damaske, 2011).

Fewer studies have examined how leisure varies across women. Several time diary studies document less leisure among married mothers compared with single mothers (Bittman and Wajcman, 2000; Mattingly and Bianchi, 2003), whereas others find that compared with single women, married women have more time for leisure (Passias, Sayer, and Pepin, 2015; Vernon, 2010). However, single women's leisure is of poorer quality, more likely to be sedentary and socially isolated, such as watching television alone (Passias et al., 2015). We argue there should be more focus on leisure given it is a more discretionary use of time, a good indicator of quality of life differences, and it has the clearest implications for health. Mothers with less or lower quality leisure are more at risk for social isolation and mental and physical health disorders (Bird and Rieker, 2008; Bittman, 2002; Miller and Brown, 2005).

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES BY MARITAL STATUS

It is also possible that mothers who are not living with a male partner have dissimilar characteristics and thus experience different time use constraints and opportunities compared with women who live with intimate partners. Marriage is increasingly chosen more by women who are advantaged (Schoen and Cheng, 2006). Although marriage rates for women in the U.S. have declined by 5%, rates for women without a high school diploma have decreased 30% and, among women who identify as Black, have decreased by 25% (Gibson-Davis, Edin, and McLanahan, 2005). Historically, women with more education were less likely to marry than their less-educated counterparts, but today that trend has reversed (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Goldstein and Kenney, 2001). Cohabitation is common across all education levels and racial-ethnic groups (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Smock, 2000). However, there is racial variation in expectations that

Marital Status & Time Use

cohabitation leads to marriage, with White and Latina women with similarly high expectations and Black women having lower expectations of a transition to marriage (Smock, 2000). Non-college educated women are also less likely to transition into marriage from a cohabiting union (Manning and Smock, 2002). Some research has found cohabitators are more likely to explicitly reject gendered marriage expectations, which suggests marriage intensifies gendered behavior (Ortyl, 2013). However, women increase time spent doing housework at the onset of co-residential unions, regardless of marital status (Gupta, 1999). Unmarried mothers historically were more likely to be employed, particularly full-time, compared with married mothers, but differences have narrowed in recent decades (Sayer, Cohen, and Casper 2004). However, today, education as much as marital status is linked with employment, such that college educated mothers are more likely to be employed than noncollege educated (Cohn et al., 2014).

Therefore, differential time use patterns by marital status could be a consequence of these compositional differences. Mothers who are younger, have less than a college education, and are employed full-time report lower levels of childcare time compared with older, college educated, and non- or part-time employed mothers. Younger age, college education, and full-time employment also reduce time in housework, and the latter two reduce time in leisure activities. White and Black women do less housework such as cooking and cleaning compared with Asian and Latina women (Sayer and Fine, 2011). Hence, the greater share of single mothers who are younger, Black, less educated, and employed suggests single mothers should do less housework and childcare compared with married mothers, although the lower education levels of single mothers is also highly correlated with underemployment and unemployment, which may increase time in housework, childcare, and perhaps leisure. The socioeconomic and demographic disadvantages of single mothers also mean that single mothers have less income with which to

Marital Status & Time Use

purchase alternative housekeeping and childcare services. How race-ethnicity affects childcare and leisure time is unclear because existing analysis have not yet disentangled influences of race-ethnicity from those of education. Research does indicate that race and education affect the quality of leisure, such that Black, Hispanic, and less educated mothers have higher levels of sedentary leisure like television viewing compared with White and college educated mothers (Passias et al., 2015). Research also suggests that women have more sleep than men, especially among those women who have a partner or children (Burgard and Ailshire, 2013). Yet, the increase in sleep time may be an indication of interrupted sleep to provide care, ultimately resulting in lower quality sleep (Burgard and Ailshire, 2013).

Our paper's contributions include disentangling influences of compositional factors and gendered behaviors on mothers' time use, and investigating the associations of marital status on a broad spectrum of time in household and care work, leisure activities, and sleep. This focus addresses gaps in the literature about mothers' time tradeoffs between activities and the contribution of compositional versus behavioral differences in accounting for disparate patterns of daily time. We investigate the gaps in knowledge about mothers' time in housework, childcare, leisure and sleep using data from the 2003-2012 American Time Use Survey. First, we test hypotheses derived from the spouse absence and doing gender perspectives. Specifically, we evaluate whether married and cohabiting mothers do less housework and childcare than never married and divorced/separated mothers, as the time poverty hypothesis predicts they should; or instead do partnered mothers do more housework and childcare compared with single mothers, as the doing gender perspective suggests. As a test of these perspectives, we attend to whether the presence of another adult in the household is associated with higher levels of gendered behavior or if an additional adult appears to act as an added time resource for mothers. Second,

we analyze the extent marital status differences in sociodemographic characteristics account for differential time use patterns among mothers. We pay particular attention to time use in leisure activities because its discretionary nature makes it a good indicator of quality of life differences that flow in part from behavioral preferences and in part from economic and cultural differences.

METHODS

Our analysis uses time diary data from the 2003 through 2012 American Time Use Surveys (ATUS). The ATUS sample is drawn from outgoing rotations of the Current Population Surveys (CPS). The surveys are specifically designed to gather nationally representative data on how adults allocate time to paid work, unpaid work, self-care, and leisure (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). ATUS data are collected by computer assisted telephone interviews in which respondents report their activities in the previous 24 hours. We pool data from the 2003-2012 surveys to maximize sample size and minimize noise from random fluctuations in time use. Sensitivity analyses (not shown) indicate differences are similar for single years of data, and when data are divided into pre-recession (2003-2007), recession (2008-2009), and post-recession periods (2010-2012). Response rates over this time period range between 52.5% and 57.8% each year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Our sample consists of 21,647 mothers' ages 25 to 54 with co-residential children under age 13. We focused on mothers with children under 13 years old because child care activities in the ATUS are captured for younger children but not for older children. We limit the age range to 25 – 54 years old to focus on adults in prime work and family life stages. We limit the sample to White, Black, and Hispanic mothers and exclude Asian and other race mothers, as well as widows, because of the small number of mothers in these categories.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Our primary dependent variables are four summary measures that indicate minutes per day mothers report in housework, childcare, leisure, and sleep on the diary day. Housework activities comprise time cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, grocery shopping, household paper work (bill paying, banking) and exterior cleaning, yard work, and household maintenance. Childcare activities include physical care (feeding, bathing, soothing young children), general supervision, children's health care, helping and teaching, reading and playing, and driving children to activities. Sleep time includes sleeplessness and time asleep.

We construct a summary measure of all leisure, and also disaggregate leisure into three mutually exclusive sub-categories: 1) Social activities, including socializing with others and going to entertainment and arts events 2) Active leisure, such as physical exertion (e.g. exercising) and cognitive exertion (e.g. reading); and 3) Sedentary leisure that mostly consists of television viewing, but also includes relaxation activities such as listening to music. We subsequently isolate television viewing and distinguish between total time spent watching television and time spent watching television alone because the solo or shared nature of television watching provides insight into how the time is linked with social isolation and well-being.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Marital status is the independent variable of primary interest. We classify mothers into four distinct categories: never married (11%); cohabiting with a romantic partner (4%); divorced or separated (10%); and currently married (76%). Never married mothers are the reference group for our regression analyses. Race-ethnicity is divided into three mutually-exclusive categories: White Non-Hispanic (66%), Black Non-Hispanic (12%), and Hispanic of any race (21%). The

Marital Status & Time Use

other independent variables represent demographic characteristics research shows affect time use allocations (Kendig and Bianchi, 2008). Education is constructed as a categorical variable: less than a high school degree; high school degree; some college education or an associate's degree; and bachelor's degree or more. Mother's employment status is divided into three groups: employed full-time, employed part-time, and nonemployed. We classify part-time employment as working 34 or fewer hours per week and full time employment as 35 or greater hours per week. Mothers are considered nonemployed if they are either looking for work or not in the labor force.

We include three dichotomous family structure variables: presence of an extended adult family member, presence of a child under the age of 2, and presence of a child aged 2 to 5 years old. Other adult family members could affect time use depending on whether the adult contributes time to housework or childcare, and thus is resource, or if instead they require care. The presence of young children increases housework and childcare time, while decreasing leisure and time sleeping. We also include a continuous measure of the number of children in the household to further account for the increased demand more children make on household work time. We control for completion of the time diary on a weekday or a weekend to account for time variation on the weekends.

PLAN OF ANALYSIS

First, we present bivariate statistics of the dependent and independent variables by mothers' marital status. Second, we show regression analyses of mothers' time use in four primary activities: childcare, housework, sleep, and leisure. We analyze both total leisure time, and because we are interested in marital status differences in the type and quality of leisure, estimate separate regressions predicting time in social, active, and sedentary leisure, and time in

Marital Status & Time Use

solo and shared television viewing. Our focus is how mothers' time varies by marital status and whether compositional differences mediate associations of marital status with childcare, housework, sleep, and leisure. We then conduct Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition analyses to identify the contribution of compositional differences and behavioral differences in explaining variation in leisure time by marital status. First, we implement a Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition separately for each independent variable to identify which compositional shifts are most responsible for time use differences in sedentary leisure time (we focus on sedentary leisure because it is the dominant type of leisure for all mothers and because differences by marital status are modest for social and active leisure). Second, using the Blinder-Oaxaca model estimates, we make counterfactual predictions of single, cohabiting, and divorced/separated mothers' leisure time as if they had married mothers' demographic characteristics. We compare the counterfactual predictions with actual differences to highlight compositional versus behavioral differences in mothers' time use patterns.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows means of all variables by marital status, with the time use variables listed in the first 9 rows. The bivariate results show married mothers spend more time in housework (about 3h) and childcare (2h) and the least amount of time in leisure (3h 20m) and sleep (8h 20m) compared with all other mothers. Never married mothers do the least housework, about 2h, of all mothers, and divorced mothers report the least childcare time, 1h 20m, or about 38m less than married mothers. On average, never married and cohabiting mothers spend about 4h in leisure activities, compared with 3h 30m among married and divorced mothers. All mothers report about 50m of social leisure time. Married mothers report the most active leisure, about 30m, whereas single and divorced mothers report the least, about 20 m. For all groups, however,

Marital Status & Time Use

the majority of leisure time is sedentary, with never married and cohabiting mothers averaging about 3h, compared with divorced mothers 2h 2m, and married mothers 2h. Never married mothers also report more sleep (about 9h) compared with other mothers.

Compositional differences by marital status are as expected. Seventeen percent of all mothers have an extended family member living in the home. Never married (32%) and divorced mothers (27%) are the most likely to live with an adult extended family member. The average number of children per household is two, with about 30% of households having children under the age of two and 35% having a child between two and five. Never married mothers are the least educated group, with 59% of single mothers holding a high school degree or less. Married mothers are the most educated -- 40% of mothers have a bachelor's degree or more. Forty-six percent of all mothers are employed full time, though a larger proportion of divorced mothers (58%) are employed full-time compared with the other mothers. Black mothers are a larger share of the never married (45%), and Whites are a larger share of married mothers (72%). Hispanic mothers are about 20% of every marital group. The average age of mothers in the sample is 36 years old.

< TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE >

Table 2 shows coefficients from OLS multivariate regressions of childcare, housework, leisure and sleep. Results indicate no significant differences in childcare time between married mothers and all other mothers, once we adjust for compositional differences, indicating all report about 2h 38m (see constant). In analysis not shown, we also ran the model excluding weekend days which shows divorced mothers spend about 9m less per week day than married mothers doing childcare ($p < .05$). Single and divorced mothers spend about 20m less per day than married mothers doing housework, but differences between cohabiting and married mothers are

Marital Status & Time Use

not significant. Both never married and cohabiting mothers spend significantly more time in leisure activities, 16m for the former, and 41m for the latter, compared with married mothers. Last, single and divorced mothers get more sleep, about 16m more for single mothers, and 11m more for divorced mothers, compared with married mothers. When we exclude weekend days from the model, single mothers get about 15m more sleep per weekday than married mothers ($p < .01$) but there are no differences for cohabiting and divorce mothers compared with married mothers.

As anticipated, sociodemographic and economic variation account for some of the differences in mothers' housework, leisure, and sleep by marital status¹. The presence of an extended family member decreases time spent on housework and childcare, but has no effect on leisure and sleep. This suggests the presence of another adult is most likely to be a time resource, not a time drain, for mothers. As mother's educational attainment rises, time spent doing childcare increases but time spent doing housework or leisure activities and sleeping decreases. Demands of full-time jobs reduce time available for other activities; employed mothers do less childcare and housework, and have less leisure and sleep. Nonetheless, net of compositional controls, marriage remains highly significant, increasing married mothers' housework and reducing their leisure and sleep time.

< TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE >

To examine the quality of leisure time, Table 3 shows marital status differences by sub-categories of leisure time, adjusting for the other model variables. In general, married mothers' leisure is higher quality: it is more social and active, and less sedentary compared with other

¹ In analysis not shown, we tested for interaction effects. Most interactions were not significant, but we did find differential effects for divorced mothers, particularly ones who are not employed. Divorced mothers who are not employed do less housework and childcare and have more time for leisure and sleep.

Marital Status & Time Use

mothers. Differences in social leisure time are modest but significant, about 8m per day or 56m more per week for married mothers than single mothers, and 5m per day or 35m per week more than divorced mothers. When we estimated the models only for the work week, there were no statistically significant differences in mothers' social leisure time by marital status. Married mothers do about 31m of active leisure, with divorced mothers doing about 6m less. Compared with married mothers' nearly 2 hours in sedentary leisure, all other mothers devote more time to this type of leisure: 2h 8m for divorced mothers, 2h 22m for single mothers, and 2h 40m for cohabiting mothers. Television makes up the majority of sedentary leisure time. Cohabiting mothers watch television for about a half hour more per day than married mothers, and never married mothers watch about 17m more than married mothers, but differences between divorced and married mothers are not significant. However, divorced and never married mothers are both more likely than married mothers to watch television alone, but differences between married and cohabiting mothers are not significant. The presence of an extended family member has no effect on social or active leisure, but does increase sedentary leisure time by about 11m per day.

The difference in sedentary leisure time is highest for the least educated mothers. Mothers with less than a high school degree spend almost an hour more per day in sedentary leisure activities compared with mothers with a bachelor's degree. Nonemployed mothers also devote about 40m more daily to sedentary leisure compared with mothers employed full time, but they also spend about 11m more in social and active leisure, suggesting that these differences are due to fewer competing demands on time (e.g. from paid work). As anticipated, the presence of young children and an increase in the number of children decreases mothers' leisure time. Black mothers spend about ½ hour more time in sedentary leisure than White mothers, but there is no difference between White and Hispanic mothers' time in sedentary leisure. Overall,

Marital Status & Time Use

nonemployed, less educated, and Black mothers spend the most time watching television, with others and alone.

< TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE >

To better understand these marital status differences in sedentary leisure time, we decompose the estimated time spent in all sedentary leisure, total television time, and time watching television alone. In Table 4, we present the total difference in average time in sedentary leisure, television time, and time spent watching television alone for single, cohabiting, and divorced mothers compared with married mothers. The characteristics line in Table 4 shows the proportion of the total difference attributable to demographic variables in the model.

< TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE >

For instance, the decrease of 40m of sedentary leisure time for single mothers indicates that average differences in family structure, educational attainment, employment status, race-ethnicity, and age compared with married mothers accounts for 69% of the sedentary leisure gap. Comparatively, these variables explain 56% of the difference for divorced mothers and only 30% of the difference between cohabiting and married mothers' sedentary leisure. Compositional differences account for over 64% of the difference in time watching television for single mothers compared with married mothers, and 80% of the difference between divorced and married mothers, but only 20% of the difference between cohabiting and married mothers. Single mothers spend on average 34m more per day than married mothers do watching television alone. If single mothers had the same characteristics as married mothers, their isolated television viewing would decrease by 19m.

Table 5 presents the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition estimates of the individual contributions of each predictor in influencing leisure time use differences. We use married

Marital Status & Time Use

mothers' characteristics to decompose variation attributable to compositional differences in time use between marital status groups, variation due to behavioral differences, and variation resulting from the interaction of compositional factors and behavior. Educational differences account for the largest portion of the characteristic differences between married mothers and all other mothers. For example, differences in sedentary leisure time would be reduced by about 17m if single mothers had married mothers' average educational attainment, about 30 % of the 58 minute total difference. The larger proportion of single mothers who are Black also accounts for some of the variation in leisure differences between never married and divorced mothers versus married mothers. That educational and racial differences account for the largest proportion of the difference in sedentary leisure points to income and perhaps resource constraints on active and social leisure. Television requires fewer resources than social activities like going out with friends or visiting recreational facilities. Additionally, television is available 24 hours a day, unlike some leisure options, and it does not require coordinating schedules with other people. Leisure activities may also be racially or class coded in ways that reduce access to these activities for Black single mothers (Passias et al., 2015).

< TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE >

In Figure 1, we show average time in sedentary leisure and separate sub-categories of time watching television and time spent alone watching television for mothers by marital status. For each leisure category we show the estimates for mothers by marital status, holding all other model variables at their mean. The patterned bars show the predicted time spent in each category for each group with their actual average characteristics. The solid grey bars depict mothers' predicted time in each category, holding constant all variables at married mothers' means. The differences between married mothers' actual estimates and the single, cohabiting, and divorced

Marital Status & Time Use

estimates adjusted by married mothers' averages represent the non-demographic difference in time use by marital status. For example, the average predicted estimate of time watching television for single mothers is nearly 2h 30m compared with 1h 40m for married mothers. The graph shows that adjusting for compositional differences is associated with decreases in the sedentary leisure gap for all mothers. In other words, if single mothers had married mothers' compositional characteristics, meaning if they had higher educational attainment, and a larger share were employed part-time instead of full-time, were older, and were White, their predicted estimate of time watching television would decrease to less than two hours a day.

< FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE >

In sum, our results indicate that differences by marital status in mothers' child care are more modest than differences in housework and leisure time. Married mothers' greater time in housework, and less time sleeping, points to the ways housework continues to be a potent symbol of femininity that is activated more so in legally recognized couple relationships. Behavioral differences account for smaller amount of the leisure differences by marital status, suggesting that differences flow from demographic variation in the types of mothers who marry compared with those who never marry or divorce.

DISCUSSION

Marriage today is a status symbol that represents achievement of a comfortable middle-class lifestyle (Cherlin, 2009). Our results suggest marriage remains a potential arena in which to "do gender" as well. Using the time poverty thesis, partnered mothers are predicted to spend less time doing childcare and housework and more time in leisure activities and sleeping than unpartnered mothers who lack a spouse with which to share home labor. By contrast, the doing gender perspective posits partnered mothers spend more time in housework and childcare

Marital Status & Time Use

activities as a way to express their feminine identity, leaving less time for leisure and sleep. We find no support for the time poverty thesis but some evidence of the doing gender perspective. Our results indicate minimal differences in childcare time among mothers, whereas married and cohabiting mothers spend the most time on housework. These differences are not reduced to nonsignificant once we account for associations of compositional factors. Thus, although partnered mothers theoretically can share some household labor with their romantic partners, our results indicate living with a heterosexual romantic partner increases women's housework. Additionally, it is the presence of a romantic partner, not the presence of another adult, that is associated with increased housework for mothers. These results are not surprising, as the majority of research on housework shows that having a man in the household leads to more cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Cohabiting mothers also have significantly more time for leisure than married mothers, suggesting that our regressions may not be accounting for all the ways marriage as an institution elicits gendered behaviors influential on time use. This possibility is supported by our decomposition that indicates compositional differences between cohabiting and married mothers account for only 30% of the difference in sedentary leisure time, with behavioral differences accounting for the other 70%.

Our results also suggest that never married mothers are not necessarily advantaged by the lack of a partner, in terms of time as a resource. Single mothers have more leisure and sleep time, compared with married mothers, but their leisure time is more likely to be sedentary and, for television, socially isolated. Compositional differences explain two-thirds of the variation in sedentary leisure time between never married and married mothers, with educational differences accounting for a large share. Behavioral differences, however, account for the remaining 33% of

Marital Status & Time Use

variation in leisure time, but the ATUS is limited in assessing sources of behavioral dissimilarities.

Our results are limited in other ways: we have only a one day snapshot of time use. For activities that occur frequently, like all activities estimated in this analysis, one-day diaries provide reliable, valid indicators of group differences in time allocation. But one-day, cross sectional time diary analyses are not able to discern causal relationships, and thus we are not able to examine how differential pathways into and transitions out of partnered or single motherhood affect time use patterns. We draw on the literature on health, cognitive, and social benefits to differentiate leisure into higher quality (social and active) and lower quality (sedentary) activities, but the time diary does not contain measures of how mothers actually experience these activities, in terms of health or social capital. Nonetheless, our results resonate with the broad literature on gendered time use allocations. Marriage is associated with more gendered time use, suggesting that more housework and less leisure remain potent ways to display gender.

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Marital Status & Time Use

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of All Variables (S.D. in parentheses)

Variable	All Mothers		Married		Never Married		Cohabitors		Divorced	
			76%		11%		4%		10%	
Housework	168	(146)	176	(147)	129	(130)	159	(145)	148	(146)
Childcare	116	(121)	123	(124)	96	(112)	106	(110)	85	(102)
Leisure (all)	208	(159)	201	(152)	239	(177)	252	(192)	209	(171)
Social Leisure	50	(93)	52	(93)	42	(90)	49	(101)	45	(91)
Active Leisure	28	(61)	31	(63)	20	(56)	25	(62)	21	(53)
Sedentary Leisure	129	(131)	119	(119)	176	(162)	177	(174)	142	(148)
Television (all)	108	(120)	100	(110)	145	(150)	145	(150)	114	(136)
Television (alone)	26	(67)	20	(53)	54	(111)	23	(56)	43	(90)
Sleep	510	(120)	505	(112)	540	(144)	517	(133)	519	(139)
Presence of Extended Family	0.17		0.14		0.32		0.15		0.27	
Number of Children	2.18		2.23		1.97		2.00		2.12	
Presence of Child Under 2	0.31		0.33		0.27		0.36		0.15	
Presence of Child 2-5 yrs old	0.35		0.36		0.34		0.35		0.26	
Less Than High School	0.12		0.10		0.21		0.18		0.14	
High School	0.26		0.24		0.38		0.37		0.30	
Some College	0.27		0.26		0.30		0.34		0.35	
BA or More	0.34		0.40		0.11		0.12		0.21	
Not Employed	0.35		0.36		0.36		0.33		0.26	
Part Time	0.19		0.20		0.15		0.19		0.16	
Full Time	0.46		0.44		0.49		0.48		0.58	
Black	0.12		0.07		0.45		0.14		0.19	
Hispanic	0.21		0.21		0.24		0.22		0.22	
White	0.66		0.72		0.31		0.64		0.58	
Age	36.02		36.52		32.44		33.20		37.05	
Weekend Diary Day	0.29		0.29		0.27		0.28		0.30	
N	21,647		16,473		2,284		809		2,080	

Marital Status & Time Use

Table 2. *Time Use for Mothers (ages 25-54) OLS Regression Analysis*

	Childcare	Housework	Leisure	Sleep
Marital Status (married is reference)				
Single	-1.54 (3.37)	-26.14 (4.20)	*** 15.95 (5.57)	** 16.14 (4.16)
Cohabiting	-7.93 (4.85)	-7.85 (6.91)	39.9 (13.99)	** 0.48 (7.63)
Divorced/Separated	-4.67 (2.63)	-18.84 (3.83)	*** -0.09 (4.54)	** 10.79 (3.48)
Family Characteristics				
Extended Family	-10.76 (2.95)	*** -10.08 (3.82)	** 7.43 (4.61)	4.59 (3.24)
Number of Children	5.33 (1.09)	*** 12.3 (1.32)	*** -5.00 (1.61)	** -8.15 (1.12)
Child Under 2	82.57 (2.55)	*** -0.89 (2.72)	-25.14 (3.27)	*** -7.34 (2.38)
Child 2-5 years old	25.62 (2.14)	*** 0.84 (2.52)	-16.93 (2.92)	*** -2.06 (2.18)
Education (BA or more reference)				
Less than H. School	-34.79 (3.88)	*** 38.62 (5.16)	*** 33.68 (5.79)	*** 37.91 (4.30)
High School	-25.43 (2.56)	*** 20.84 (3.09)	*** 32.89 (3.65)	*** 15.92 (2.59)
Some College	-21.15 (2.38)	*** 11.04 (2.68)	*** 12.23 (3.07)	*** 4.21 (2.28)
Employment (full time is reference)				
Nonemployed	49.56 (2.23)	*** 77.9 (2.75)	*** 61.42 (3.14)	*** 29.18 (2.40)
Part Time	21.87 (2.29)	*** 32.81 (2.90)	*** 28.36 (4.03)	*** 16.28 (2.54)
Race/Ethnicity (White is reference)				
Black	-25.82 (3.05)	*** -30.24 (3.70)	*** 18.92 (6.70)	** 9.58 (4.50)
Hispanic	-23.98 (2.60)	*** 20.92 (3.65)	*** -25.11 (3.80)	*** 14.28 (2.88)
Age	-0.37 (0.17)	* 2.6 (0.21)	*** -1 (0.26)	*** -1.68 (0.18)
Weekend Diary Day	-27.75 (1.66)	*** 27.35 (2.23)	*** 79.29 (2.54)	*** 62.29 (1.84)
Constant	97.78 (7.47)	*** -1.14 (8.93)	201.59 (10.80)	*** 542.9 (7.71)
Observations	21,647	21,647	21,647	21,647
R2	0.22	0.13	0.11	0.11

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Marital Status & Time Use

Table 3. *Mothers Leisure Activities (ages 25-54) OLS Regression Analysis*

	Social	Active	Sedentary	Television	Tele Alone
Marital Status (married is reference)					
Single	-7.59 ** (2.55)	-0.96 (1.71)	24.47 *** (5.19)	17.26 *** (4.86)	22.45 *** (3.53)
Cohabiting	-2.58 (4.23)	-0.23 (3.09)	42.66 ** (14.03)	30.74 ** (11.30)	-0.4 (2.62)
Divorced/Separated	-4.86 * (2.23)	-6.43 *** (1.27)	11.16 ** (3.99)	3.66 (3.65)	17.41 *** (2.34)
Family Characteristics					
Extended Family	-0.68 (2.24)	-1.99 (1.59)	10.04 * (4.06)	7.74 * (3.76)	-0.15 (2.25)
Number of Children	-1.48 * (0.76)	-0.13 (0.54)	-3.39 * (1.44)	-3.62 ** (1.28)	-1.94 * (0.78)
Child Under 2	-1.08 (1.70)	-9.69 *** (1.09)	-14.45 *** (2.90)	-12.34 *** (2.59)	-11.04 *** (1.31)
Child 2-5 yrs old	0.52 (1.58)	-3.26 ** (1.09)	-14.24 *** (2.51)	-12.63 *** (2.27)	-6.08 *** (1.26)
Education (BA or more reference)					
< H. School	-4.78 (2.93)	-16.17 *** (1.94)	54.57 *** (5.30)	51.58 *** (4.83)	9.97 *** (2.54)
High School	-0.86 (1.91)	-10.55 *** (1.39)	44.26 *** (3.06)	38.14 *** (2.72)	9.45 *** (1.58)
Some College	0.68 (1.76)	-9.17 *** (1.26)	20.71 *** (2.51)	18.82 *** (2.30)	3.06 * (1.24)
Employment (full time is reference)					
Nonemployed	10.84 *** (1.68)	11.09 *** (1.22)	39.51 *** (2.71)	33.36 *** (2.48)	10.11 *** (1.55)
Part Time	8.86 *** (1.83)	6.49 *** (1.33)	13 *** (3.59)	9.36 ** (3.02)	3.62 * (1.43)
Race/Ethnicity (White is reference)					
Black	-6.52 ** (2.42)	-12.27 *** (1.60)	37.7 *** (6.37)	28.37 *** (5.38)	23.97 *** (3.13)
Hispanic	-5.47 * (2.13)	-14.65 *** (1.30)	-4.99 (3.28)	-3.07 (3.01)	-5.79 *** (1.49)
Age	-0.38 ** (0.13)	0.19 * (0.08)	-0.81 *** (0.24)	-0.67 ** (0.22)	0.13 (0.13)
Weekend Diary Day	44.21 *** (1.55)	8.77 *** (0.97)	26.26 *** (2.19)	23.43 *** (2.02)	-2.79 * (1.13)
Constant	53.27 *** (5.56)	31.44 *** (3.65)	117.06 *** (9.74)	98.68 *** (9.08)	17.18 *** (4.97)
Observations	21,647	21,647	21,647	21,647	21,647
R2	0.05	0.04	0.09	0.08	0.06

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 4. *Decomposition of Characteristics and Behavioral Elements of Estimates of Mothers Leisure Activity (compared to Married mothers)*

	Sedentary Leisure		Television (All)		Television Alone	
	Coef.	% of Total	Coef.	% of Total	Coef.	% of Total
Never Married						
Characteristics	-39.83 (6.89)	69%	-28.78 (6.73)	64%	-18.56 (5.07)	54%
Behavior	-28.04 (5.86)	49%	-19.51 (5.55)	43%	-26.2 (4.17)	76%
Interaction	10.1 (7.40)	-17%	3.37 (7.18)	-8%	10.32 (5.24)	-30%
Total Difference	-57.78		-44.92		-34.44	
Cohabitators						
Characteristics	-17.35 (9.13)	30%	-9.41 (7.54)	21%	-2.28 (2.19)	80%
Behavior	-42.85 (13.05)	73%	-30.37 (10.63)	68%	-0.40 (2.64)	14%
Interaction	1.54 (9.10)	-3%	-4.96 (7.58)	11%	-0.17 (2.19)	6%
Total Difference	-58.66		-44.73		-2.85	
Divorced/Separated						
Characteristics	-13.33 (4.14)	56%	-11.51 (3.65)	80%	-9.05 (2.37)	39%
Behavior	-12.63 (4.25)	53%	-5.03 (3.87)	35%	-19.11 (2.47)	82%
Interaction	2.19 (4.15)	-9%	2.14 (3.68)	-15%	4.95 (2.40)	-21%
Total Difference	-23.77		-14.41		-23.21	

Standard errors in parentheses; Percentages are the percent of the total difference

Marital Status & Time Use

Table 5. *Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition: Details of Characteristics and Behavioral Estimates of Mothers Sedentary Leisure Activity (married mothers reference group)*

	Total Diff.	Characteristics		Behavior		Interactions	
		% of Total	Coef	% of Total	Coef	% of Total	Coef
Never Married							
Extended Family		15%	-5.87 **	31%	-8.77 *	50%	5.00 *
Number of Children		-3%	1.06	65%	-18.31	-24%	-2.42
Child Under 2		5%	-1.84 **	-19%	5.37 *	12%	1.19 *
Child 2-5 yrs old		1%	-0.40	-7%	1.97	1%	0.10
Education		42%	-16.76 ***	52%	-14.57	45%	4.55
Employment		0%	0.01	18%	-4.93	2%	0.18
Black		38%	-15.03 ***	18%	-5.00	42%	4.23
Hispanic		0%	-0.03	2%	-0.58	1%	0.08
Age		4%	-1.41	76%	-21.40	-27%	-2.69
Weekend		-1%	0.45	9%	-2.45	-1%	-0.11
Intercept				-145%	40.65		
Total	-57.78		-39.83 ***		-28.04 ***		10.10
Cohabitors							
Extended Family		1%	-0.26	7%	-2.94	13%	0.21
Number of Children		-20%	3.51	99%	-42.26	-304%	-4.68
Child Under 2		13%	-2.24	37%	-15.90	201%	3.10
Child 2-5 yrs old		0%	0.04	15%	-6.59	-24%	-0.37
Education		110%	-19.01 ***	59%	-25.42	533%	8.22
Employment		-12%	2.01	38%	-16.11	-64%	-0.99
Black		22%	-3.86	8%	-3.39	114%	1.75
Hispanic		-3%	0.53	-19%	8.00	-33%	-0.51
Age		-11%	1.92	123%	-52.55	-341%	-5.25
Weekend		0%	0.01	-16%	6.77	3%	0.05
Intercept				-251%	107.54		
Total	-58.66		-17.35		-42.85 **		1.54
Divorced/Separated							
Extended Family		7%	-0.95	5%	-0.61	14%	0.30
Number of Children		3%	-0.40	24%	-2.99	-7%	-0.15
Child Under 2		15%	-2.02	0%	-0.06	-4%	-0.08
Child 2-5 yrs old		28%	-3.78 **	-36%	4.54	89%	1.95
Education		57%	-7.65 ***	48%	-6.04	67%	1.46
Employment		-55%	7.27 ***	84%	-10.61 **	-167%	-3.65 **
Black		43%	-5.69 **	26%	-3.31	97%	2.13
Hispanic		-2%	0.23	-24%	3.02	-10%	-0.21
Age		-1%	0.13	225%	-28.37	19%	0.41
Weekend		4%	-0.48	4%	-0.48	1%	0.03
Intercept				-256%	32.28		
Total	-23.77		-13.33 **		-12.63 **		2.19

FIGURE 1. LEISURE TIME BY MARITAL STATUS AND PREDICTED MINUTES WITH MARRIED MOTHERS' AVERAGE CHARACTERISTICS

