

Wife's employment and allocation of resources in families with children

An examination of resource use by married parents finds that married men spent more time working on an average weekday or weekend day on which they worked than did married women; regardless of their wives' employment status, married men were less likely to spend time in housework than wives who were not employed for pay

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The time pressures faced by working wives have led economists to predict that market goods and services would be substituted for those produced at home. Current Population Survey data show that, in 59 percent of married-couple families with children under 18 in 2009, both the wife and the husband worked for pay.¹ This article examines and presents spending data from the 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) and time use data from the 2009 American Time Use Survey (ATUS) in order to obtain a better picture of resource allocation patterns of husband-wife families with children under 18 years and with a husband employed full time.

According to Becker's theory of the allocation of time, wives who participate in the paid labor force place a higher marginal value on time available for household work than wives not employed for pay. Working-wife families, other factors being equal, should use less time and substitute more market goods for household production than families in which the wife is not employed for pay.²

Becker's theory suggests that working-wife families purchase more timesaving du-

rables, nondurables, and services than comparable families in which the wife is not employed. Existing research, however, indicates that a wife's employment is *not* related to expenditures on timesaving durables.³ Research studies using CE data have found that a wife's employment status has some influence on the purchase of nondurables and services. These same studies, however, found that factors such as family income, a wife's education, and a wife's age have more influence on expenditures than does a wife's employment status.⁴

CE data were used to examine expenditures that one might expect to vary with a wife's employment status and the presence of children under 18. Two samples of ATUS data, one of married men employed full time and one of married women, were analyzed. The first sample examined whether married men's time use differed by their wives' employment status, while the second sample explored married women's time use by their employment status.

The Consumer Expenditure Survey

Conducted continuously since 1980, the CE has two components—a weekly Diary Survey and a quarterly Interview Survey—each with its own questionnaire and sample. Each

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component queries an independent sample of consumer units selected to represent the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population. CE data are collected by the Census Bureau under contract with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The Diary Survey is designed to obtain information about small, frequently purchased items, such as food and personal care products, that are hard to remember over long periods, but it is not limited to these expenses. About 7,000 consumer units are sampled annually for the Diary Survey, with each consumer unit completing two consecutive 1-week diaries, yielding around 14,000 diaries a year.

The Interview Survey is designed to obtain spending information that can usually be remembered after 3 or more months. Included is information on large expenditures, such as major appliances, and those which occur regularly, such as rent or health insurance premiums. About 7,000 consumer units are interviewed each quarter. The research that went into this article used data from the Interview Survey only.⁵

The American Time Use Survey

Since January 2003, the ATUS has collected information about how individuals spend their time. As with the CE, the Census Bureau, under contract with BLS, collects ATUS data from households chosen to be representative of the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population. These households are selected monthly, with interviews conducted continuously during the year. One individual, age 15 or older, is randomly chosen from

each household as the “designated person” and is assigned a “diary day” about which to report. The designated person is then interviewed by telephone the day after the diary day. In 2009, about 13,100 individuals were interviewed for the ATUS.⁶

CE Sample

The CE sample consisted of husband–wife consumer units⁷ with at least one child under 18 and with the husband employed full time. This sample was divided into three subsamples by the wife’s employment status (employed full time, employed part time, and not employed for pay).⁸ In these families, half of the wives were employed full time, 21 percent were employed part time, and 29 percent were not employed for pay, or, simply, not employed. The average family size was 4.0 for families with full-time working wives, 4.1 for families with part-time working wives, and 4.3 for families with wives who were not employed. In 2009, average annual expenditures were \$59,325 for families with full-time working wives and \$61,803 for families with part-time working wives, both significantly higher than the \$53,565 for families in which the wife was not employed. The expenditure difference between families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives was not statistically significant. (See table 1.)

ATUS samples

ATUS data consisted of two samples: one of married men employed full time and with at least one household child under 18, the other of married women with husbands employed full time and with at least one household child under 18. Both

Table 1. Characteristics of husband–wife families with children under 18, Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey, 2009

Category	Households with husband employed full time			
	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed
Total expenditures	\$58,172	\$59,325	\$61,803	\$53,565
Percentage of families	100.0	50.1	20.9	29.0
Family size	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.3
Average number of vehicles owned or leased	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.2
Percentage of families with at least one vehicle owned or leased	97.0	97.7	97.4	95.4
Housing tenure:				
Homeowner	78.4	82.9	83.1	67.3
Renter	20.9	16.7	16.3	31.5
Other	.7	.4	.6	1.2

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

samples were segmented into three subsamples based on the wife's employment status.

The greatest proportion (42 percent) of married men had a full-time working wife, while 21 percent had a wife who worked part time and 37 percent a wife who was not employed. Average family size was 4.0 for husbands of full-time working wives and 4.3 for both husbands of part-time working wives and husbands of wives who were not employed. The greatest proportion of married women (48 percent) worked full time, while 21 percent worked part time and 32 percent was not employed. Average family size was 4.1 for full-time working wives, 4.3 for part-time working wives, and 4.4 for wives who were not employed.

ATUS data show the average percentage of persons engaged in selected primary activities on weekdays and on weekend days and the average hours per weekday and weekend day for those engaged in these activities.⁹

Findings: weekdays

Work and childcare. Among those who did work and work-related activities,¹⁰ married men averaged 8.63 hours on weekdays, compared with 7.83 hours for full-time working wives and 4.86 hours for part-time working wives. (See tables 2 and 3.) Table 4 shows that the proportion of families reporting childcare expenses and the amount spent by those reporting were lowest for families with wives who were not employed (15.7 percent and \$2,962) and highest for families with full-time working wives (27.5 percent and \$6,864). Conversely, the proportion providing childcare and the average time spent were highest for wives who were not employed (93.2 percent and 3.11 hours) and lowest for full-time working wives (81.0 percent and 1.65 hours). Nearly 26 percent of part-time working-wife families reported childcare expenses, with an average expense of \$4,320. This finding may reflect the fact that a smaller proportion of part-time employed wives than full-time employed wives was working on weekdays and those who worked spent less time working than did full-time employed wives. Almost 90 percent of part-time employed wives provided an average of 2.82 hours of childcare per weekday. A smaller proportion (51.4 percent) of husbands of wives who were not employed provided childcare on weekdays, compared with 59.1 percent of husbands of full-time working wives and 60.6 percent of husbands of part-time working wives. The time they spent providing childcare ranged from 1.20 hours for husbands of full-time working wives to 1.71 hours for husbands of part-time working wives.¹¹

Transportation. Virtually all families reported transpor-

tation expenses, which include vehicle repair and maintenance costs. These expenses were lowest for families with wives who were not employed (\$2,652), but there was no difference in spending between families with full-time working wives (\$3,094) and with part-time working wives (\$2,971). One reason for the spending difference is that families with wives who were not employed owned an average of 2.2 vehicles, compared with 2.7 vehicles for both families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives.¹²

Almost all husbands spent time in travel on weekdays,¹³ and there was little difference in the frequency of both reporting and time spent by a wife's employment status. While nearly all full-time working wives and part-time working wives spent time in travel on weekdays, a sizable majority (85 percent) of wives who were not employed also spent time in travel. The time wives spent traveling showed little variation by employment status, averaging about 1.4 hours per weekday for those who traveled.

Household activities. The ATUS defines household activities as activities done by individuals to maintain their households. These activities include housework, food preparation and cleanup, and maintenance and repair of the dwelling (interior and exterior).¹⁴

Although husbands of full-time working wives were more likely to engage in household activities than other husbands, the average time spent by those who did household activities was 1.43 hours, a figure not appreciably different from that of both husbands of part-time working wives and husbands of wives who were not employed. Most wives spent time doing household activities regardless of their employment status. The proportion who did household activities on an average weekday and the time they spent doing household activities, however, were lowest for full-time employed wives (88.3 percent and 1.69 hours, compared with 95.8 percent and 2.77 hours for part-time employed wives and 97.0 percent and 4.01 hours for wives who were not employed).

Housework. Full-time working wives were less likely to spend time doing housework (housekeeping; laundry, drycleaning, and alterations) on weekdays than were other wives. For example, 28.7 percent of full-time working wives did any housekeeping on an average weekday, compared with 52.8 percent of part-time working wives and 70.1 percent of wives who were not employed; for laundry, drycleaning, and alterations, the proportions were 27.9 percent, 40.5 percent, and 39.3 percent, respectively. Average housekeeping time ranged from 1.07 hours per

Table 2. Average number of hours per weekday spent in selected primary activities,¹ and percentage engaged in each activity, by married men employed full time and with own household children under age 18, American Time Use Survey, annual averages, 2009

Activity	Average percentage engaged in the activity per weekday				Average number of hours per weekday for those engaged in the activity			
	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed
Household activities	66.0	72.6	61.9	60.7	1.32	1.43	1.35	1.18
Housework	15.1	18.5	14.4	11.6	1.13	1.11	.93	1.38
Housekeeping	11.8	13.3	11.9	10.5	1.22	1.18	1.00	1.41
Laundry, drycleaning, and alterations	5.4	7.9	4.6	2.2	.52	.61	(?)	(?)
Food preparation and cleanup	43.8	50.2	44.5	36.0	.63	.64	.54	.67
Maintenance and repairs (interior and exterior)	13.1	13.3	14.7	11.3	1.68	1.98	1.82	1.29
Purchase of consumer goods and services	32.2	31.4	32.5	34.2	.73	.75	.70	.73
Childcare (for household children)	56.3	59.1	60.6	51.4	1.43	1.20	1.71	1.55
Working and work-related activities	88.9	87.7	91.5	90.2	8.63	8.86	7.90	8.77
Travel	96.1	97.1	97.0	95.1	1.50	1.45	1.54	1.55
Eating and drinking	97.7	98.1	98.2	96.9	1.11	1.07	1.23	1.10
Eating and drinking at home	81.4	82.5	79.6	81.3	.71	.68	.73	.73
Eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar	17.4	16.1	23.7	15.3	1.00	1.03	1.02	.95

¹ A primary activity is an individual's main activity. Other activities done simultaneously are not included.

² Approximately zero.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 3. Average number of hours per weekday spent in selected primary activities,¹ and percentage engaged in each activity, by married women with husbands employed full time and with own household children under 18, American Time Use Survey, annual averages, 2009

Activity	Average percentage engaged in the activity per weekday				Average number of hours per weekday for those engaged in the activity			
	All	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	All	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed
Household activities	92.6	88.3	95.8	97.0	2.72	1.69	2.77	4.01
Housework	60.2	44.9	65.4	78.9	1.75	1.13	1.57	2.33
Housekeeping	47.2	28.7	52.8	70.1	1.50	1.07	1.35	1.82
Laundry, drycleaning, and alterations	34.1	27.9	40.5	39.3	1.01	.73	.78	1.42
Food preparation and cleanup	84.6	78.7	89.0	90.3	1.25	1.02	1.17	1.58
Maintenance and repairs (interior and exterior)	8.9	4.1	14.4	12.5	1.68	1.11	1.94	1.77
Purchase of consumer goods and services	54.1	49.6	59.1	57.5	.92	.74	1.02	1.07
Childcare (for household children)	86.8	81.0	89.8	93.2	2.41	1.65	2.82	3.11
Working and work-related activities ²	57.6	92.9	62.4	4.8	7.03	7.83	4.86	1.69
Travel	92.9	97.2	96.3	84.9	1.42	1.45	1.42	1.39
Eating and drinking	97.7	96.8	99.1	98.4	1.01	.96	1.05	1.07
Eating and drinking at home	87.0	82.7	88.3	92.4	.75	.61	.81	.89
Eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar	14.4	12.5	16.7	15.8	1.04	1.06	1.08	.99

¹ A primary activity is an individual's main activity. Other activities done simultaneously are not included.

not meet the ATUS definition of being employed.

² Estimates include a small amount of worktime by persons who do

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 4. Average annual expenditures and percentage reporting expenditure, husband–wife families with husband employed full time and with children under 18, Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey, 2009

Expenditure category	Percentage reporting				Average annual expenditures for those reporting			
	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed
Food at home	99.7	99.7	100.0	99.4	\$6,653	\$6,569	\$6,810	\$6,683
Food away from home	86.7	89.8	89.5	79.4	2,915	3,092	2,869	2,606
Childcare	23.7	27.5	25.6	15.7	5,538	6,864	4,320	2,962
Household maintenance and repair services	25.6	25.6	27.8	23.9	3,018	3,427	2,971	2,300
Housekeeping services	7.0	8.3	7.6	4.3	2,529	2,336	2,266	3,504
Laundry and drycleaning services	27.8	26.1	29.1	29.7	475	484	455	476
Transportation and vehicle maintenance and repairs	98.5	98.8	98.3	98.0	2,941	3,094	2,971	2,652
Personal care services	69.9	72.8	75.1	61.2	555	573	560	515

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

weekday for full-time working wives on days they did housekeeping to 1.82 hours for wives who were not employed. Similarly, 27.9 percent of full-time working wives did laundry, drycleaning, and alterations on an average weekday, compared with 40.5 percent of part-time working wives and 39.3 percent of wives who were not employed. On those weekdays on which they did laundry, drycleaning, and alterations, working wives spent about three-quarters of an hour, compared with 1.42 hours for wives who were not employed.

Fewer husbands than wives spent time doing housework on weekdays. For example, only 11.8 percent of husbands did any housekeeping on an average weekday, and those who did spent an average of 1.22 hours in housekeeping. Just 5.4 percent of husbands spent about a half hour doing laundry, drycleaning, and alterations on an average weekday.

CE data indicate that the differences in time spent in housework were not due to the substitution of paid services for time in working-wife families. For example, only 7.0 percent of all families reported spending on housekeeping services, with a range of 4.3 percent for families with wives who were not employed to 8.3 percent for families with full-time working wives. The amounts spent by families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives were similar (\$2,336 and \$2,266, respectively) and were significantly less than the \$3,504 reported by families with wives who were not employed. Using housekeeping services is often seen as a timesaving strategy for working-wife families, but previous research has found that income, not a wife's employment status,

is positively associated with spending on housekeeping services.¹⁵

A larger proportion of families (27.8 percent) reported spending on laundry and drycleaning services; the range was from 26.1 percent for families with full-time working wives to 29.7 percent for families with wives who were not employed. There was no significant difference in the amounts spent by each group. These findings are consistent with previous research that found no relationship between a wife's employment status and the purchase of laundry and drycleaning services once the effects of family income and other factors were taken into account.¹⁶

Maintenance and repairs. About 13 percent of all husbands did maintenance and repairs on weekdays; the range was from 11.3 percent for husbands of wives who were not employed to 14.7 percent for husbands of part-time working wives. The time they spent doing maintenance and repairs ranged from 1.29 hours for husbands of wives who were not employed to 1.98 hours for husbands of full-time working wives. Almost 9 percent of all wives did maintenance and repairs per weekday, with a range from 4.1 percent of full-time working wives to 14.4 percent of part-time working wives. The time spent ranged from 1.11 hours per weekday for full-time working wives on days they did maintenance and repairs to nearly 2 hours for part-time working wives.

Almost 24 percent of families with wives who were not employed reported spending on household maintenance and repair services, compared with 25.6 percent and 27.8

percent, respectively, of families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives. Average spending by families with wives who were not employed was \$2,300, much less than the \$3,427 spent by families with full-time working wives. Families with part-time working wives spent \$2,971 on household maintenance and repair services, but this amount was not statistically different from the amounts reported by the other groups. Additional analysis of those with expenditures revealed that the homeownership rate was 94 percent for families with full-time working wives, compared with 96 percent and 89 percent, respectively, for families with part-time working wives and families with wives who were not employed. Total annual expenditures for those reporting repair and maintenance outlays were similar for families with part-time working wives (\$80,287) and families with full-time working wives (\$77,308); families with wives who were not employed averaged \$80,975, significantly more than the other groups.

Food preparation and cleanup. On an average weekday, 43.8 percent of husbands spent time in food preparation and cleanup; the range was from 36 percent of husbands of wives who were not employed to about half of husbands of full-time working wives. Approximately 85 percent of wives did food preparation and cleanup per weekday, with a range from 78.7 percent of full-time working wives to 90.3 percent of wives who were not employed. On the weekdays they did food preparation and cleanup, the time they spent in this activity ranged from about an hour for full-time working wives to 1 hour and 35 minutes for wives who were not employed, more than the 32- to 40-minute range for husbands.

Virtually all families reported spending on food at home. Annual outlays ranged from \$6,569 for families with full-time working wives to \$6,810 for families with part-time working wives, but the differences were not statistically significant.

About 90 percent of working-wife families reported spending on food away from home, compared with 79.4 percent of families with wives who were not employed. Families with full-time working wives spent significantly more (\$3,092) than families with part-time working wives (\$2,869) and families with wives who were not employed (\$2,606). There was no significant difference between the latter two groups in the amount spent on food away from home.¹⁷

Only 12.5 percent of full-time employed wives and 16.1 percent of husbands of full-time employed wives spent time eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar on an av-

erage weekday, compared with 16.7 percent of part-time employed wives and 23.7 percent of husbands of part-time employed wives. Differences in spending on food away from home between full-time working-wife and other families may be related to differences in the proportion of husbands and wives who did food preparation and cleanup on an average weekday and the time they spent in that activity. It is possible that purchases of food away from home by families of full-time working wives were for items used to reduce time spent in meal preparation and cleanup.

Purchases of consumer goods and services. This category includes time spent purchasing consumer goods such as gas and groceries. Also included is time spent obtaining, receiving, and purchasing personal care services and professional services. Personal care services include services provided by barbers, hair stylists, tanning salons, and day spas. Professional services include childcare, as well as banking, legal, medical, and veterinary services.

The time spent arranging for and purchasing household services is included in this category as well. Household services include housecleaning; cooking; lawn care and landscaping; pet care; laundering, drycleaning, and alterations; and home repairs, maintenance, and construction.

Wives were more likely to purchase consumer goods and services on an average weekday than were husbands (54.1 percent compared with 32.2 percent). Roughly half of full-time working wives made such purchases, compared with 59.1 percent of part-time working wives and 57.5 percent of wives who were not employed. On days they shopped, full-time working wives spent about three-quarters of an hour per weekday purchasing consumer goods and services, compared with about an hour each for part-time working wives and wives who were not employed. The proportion of husbands who did this activity varied little with a wife's employment status, and the average time husbands who shopped spent in the activity was about three-quarters of an hour per weekday for each of the three groups.

ATUS data do not permit a detailed analysis of the time spent arranging for and receiving personal care services, often considered a job-related expense that should increase with the number of earners. CE data, however, show that 61.2 percent of families with wives who were not employed reported spending on personal care services, compared with 72.8 percent and 75.1 percent, respectively, of families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives. The amount spent ranged from \$515 for families with wives who were not employed to \$573 for families with full-time working wives, but none

of the differences was statistically significant. Existing research using CE data has found no association between a wife's employment status and spending on personal care services once the effects of income and other factors are taken into account. Thus, it appears that spending on personal care services is influenced by factors other than a wife's employment status.¹⁸

Findings: weekends

Because time is a fixed resource, hours spent in employment reduce time available for household activities, childcare, and the purchase of consumer goods and services. However, the majority of the employed work Monday through Friday,¹⁹ so weekend days could be used to make up for household production time that is unavailable on weekdays. The rest of this section examines whether working wives and husbands of working wives allocate more time to household production activities on weekends than do wives who are not employed and husbands of those wives.

Work and childcare. About a third of married men worked on an average weekend day; the range was from 29.3 percent for husbands of full-time working wives to 38.3 percent for husbands of wives who were not employed. Hours worked ranged from 4.1 for husbands of part-time working wives to 5.6 for husbands of wives who were not employed. (See table 5). Thirty percent each of full-time employed wives and part-time employed wives also worked weekend days, averaging 3.50 hours and 3.91 hours, respectively. (See table 6.)

Regardless of a wife's employment status, a smaller proportion of married men provided childcare on weekend days than on weekdays. The same pattern was found for married women. Among those providing childcare, married men, all of whom were employed full time, and full-time working wives spent slightly more time in this activity on weekend days than on weekdays. One explanation is that on weekdays paid childcare services were probably substituted for the time that husbands with working wives and full-time working wives spent in employment. Wives who were not employed likely provided more childcare to compensate for the time their husbands spent working.

ATUS data show that most mothers and fathers spend more time providing secondary childcare than primary childcare.²⁰ In addition, married mothers and fathers spend more time providing secondary childcare on weekends than on weekdays. For example, ATUS data from 2003 to 2006 show that married mothers employed full time spent 4.5 hours on weekdays and 9.1 hours on week-

end days providing secondary childcare to children under 13. Married fathers employed full time spent 3.3 hours on weekdays and 7.9 hours on weekend days providing secondary childcare.²¹

Transportation. Although fewer married men and women worked on weekends, the proportion of husbands and wives who spent time traveling was not substantially smaller on weekend days than on weekdays. For example, 91.3 percent of married men and 88.6 percent of married women spent time in travel on an average weekend day, compared with 96.1 percent and 92.9 percent, respectively, on an average weekday. Regardless of employment status, among married men and women who spent time in travel, the time spent differed little between weekdays and weekends. Note that data from the 2009 ATUS indicate that, on the days that they worked, 24 percent of employed persons did some or all of their work at home, compared with 84 percent who did some or all of their work at their workplace.²²

Household activities. Although a larger proportion of married men did household activities on weekends compared with weekdays, married men with wives employed part time and married men with wives who were not employed showed the greatest average increase. The time spent in household activities on weekend days was nearly double that on weekdays, regardless of a wife's employment status.

Although the proportion of married women doing household activities on weekends was similar to that on weekdays (94.2 percent compared with 92.6 percent), findings differed by employment status. Among wives employed full time, 95.0 percent did household activities on weekends compared with 88.3 percent on weekdays. Fewer wives employed part time, as well as fewer wives who were not employed, however, were engaged in household activities on weekends than on weekdays. Among those doing household activities, the time spent on weekends differed little by employment status. The three groups, however, differed in the time they spent on weekend days compared with weekdays. On days they did household activities, full-time employed wives spent 3.03 hours in household activities on weekend days compared with 1.69 hours on weekdays. In contrast, wives who were not employed spent 3.14 hours in household activities on weekend days compared with 4.01 hours on weekdays. For wives employed part time, there was little difference in the time they spent doing household activities on weekends or on weekdays.

Table 5. Average number of hours per weekend day spent in selected primary activities,¹ and percentage engaged in each activity, by married men employed full time and with own household children under age 18, American Time Use Survey, annual averages, 2009

Activity	Average percentage engaged in the activity per weekend day				Average number of hours per weekend day for those engaged in the activity			
	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed	All	Wife employed full time	Wife employed part time	Wife not employed
Household activities	75.0	76.6	78.5	70.6	2.63	2.88	2.55	2.34
Housework	28.5	30.1	24.6	29.2	1.62	1.68	1.60	1.50
Housekeeping	24.7	24.8	21.3	26.5	1.51	1.62	1.33	1.42
Laundry, drycleaning, and alterations	7.4	10.0	9.2	3.6	1.18	1.03	1.20	1.69
Food preparation and cleanup	44.8	41.7	57.9	40.4	.97	1.03	.92	.92
Maintenance and repairs (interior and exterior)	24.5	28.2	23.2	21.1	2.85	2.97	3.01	2.59
Purchase of consumer goods and services	47.1	49.2	44.9	45.7	1.26	1.26	.93	1.46
Childcare (for household children)	48.0	47.6	53.4	44.6	2.13	2.11	2.25	2.05
Working and work-related activities	33.8	29.3	34.9	38.3	5.09	5.18	4.10	5.60
Travel	91.3	90.3	91.8	92.1	1.45	1.48	1.54	1.35
Eating and drinking	96.2	95.4	97.8	96.1	1.36	1.35	1.43	1.32
Eating and drinking at home	81.8	78.4	83.6	84.9	1.03	.99	1.11	1.01
Eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar	21.3	24.1	21.0	18.7	1.07	1.13	1.07	.99

¹ A primary activity refers to an individual's main activity. Other activities done simultaneously are not included. SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 6. Average number of hours per weekend day spent in selected primary activities,¹ and percentage engaged in each activity, by married women with husbands employed full time and with own household children under 18, American Time Use Survey, annual averages, 2009

Activity	Average percentage engaged in the activity per weekend day				Average number of hours per weekend day for those engaged in the activity			
	All	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed	All	Employed full time	Employed part time	Not employed
Household activities	94.2	95.0	93.0	93.9	3.05	3.03	2.96	3.14
Housework	63.8	65.9	65.5	59.5	1.92	2.06	1.59	1.97
Housekeeping	49.2	49.6	52.2	46.4	1.54	1.67	1.29	1.54
Laundry, drycleaning, and alterations	36.2	40.4	33.5	31.9	1.30	1.31	1.10	1.43
Food preparation and cleanup	79.8	78.7	79.5	81.6	1.29	1.22	1.31	1.39
Maintenance and repairs (interior and exterior)	14.8	15.2	16.1	13.2	2.03	1.80	2.20	2.26
Purchase of consumer goods and services	56.4	61.5	51.9	52.2	1.38	1.34	1.36	1.45
Childcare (for household children)	69.1	65.2	70.5	73.8	2.28	2.08	2.20	2.60
Working and work-related activities ²	21.8	30.0	30.0	3.7	3.57	3.50	3.91	2.40
Travel	88.6	93.6	85.6	83.5	1.41	1.33	1.59	1.39
Eating and drinking	97.4	97.5	98.0	96.8	1.25	1.19	1.27	1.32
Eating and drinking at home	84.0	83.5	82.3	86.1	.91	.83	.93	1.01
Eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar	19.0	18.9	20.8	17.9	1.22	1.20	1.19	1.26

¹ A primary activity is an individual's main activity. Other activities done simultaneously are not included.

² Estimates include a small amount of worktime by persons who do

not meet the ATUS definition of being employed.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Housework. Regardless of a wife's employment status, a larger proportion of husbands did housework on weekends than on weekdays. However, only one-fourth of all husbands did any housekeeping, and only 7.4 percent did laundry, drycleaning, and alterations, on an average weekend day. The amount of time spent by husbands doing these activities on an average weekend day was 1.51 hours for housekeeping and 1.18 hours for laundry, drycleaning, and alterations.

The proportion of part-time working wives doing housework on weekend days was similar to that on weekdays. A larger proportion of full-time employed wives and a smaller proportion of wives who were not employed did housework on weekend days than on weekdays. For example, about half of all full-time working wives averaged 1.67 hours in housekeeping on weekend days, compared with 28.7 percent of all full-time working wives, who spent slightly more than an hour in housekeeping on weekdays. A similar pattern was found for laundry, drycleaning, and alterations, with 40.4 percent of full-time working wives averaging 1.31 hours on weekend days compared with 27.9 percent who averaged 0.73 hour on weekdays. In contrast, 46.4 percent of wives who were not employed averaged an hour and a half in housekeeping on weekend days compared with 70.1 percent who averaged 1.82 hours of housekeeping on weekdays. Although a smaller proportion of wives who were not employed did laundry, drycleaning, and alterations on weekend days, the time they spent in these activities was similar to the time they spent on weekdays.

Maintenance and repairs. On weekend days, 24.5 percent of married men did household maintenance and repairs, nearly double the proportion who did these activities on weekdays. The proportion of husbands who did maintenance and repairs on an average weekend day ranged from 21.1 percent for husbands of wives who were not employed to 28.2 percent for husbands of full-time working wives. On weekend days that they did these activities, both husbands of full-time working wives and husbands of part-time working wives spent about 3 hours doing maintenance and repairs, compared with 2 hours and 35 minutes for husbands of wives who were not employed. Almost 15 percent of married women did maintenance and repairs on an average weekend day, compared with about 9 percent who did so on an average weekday. On weekend days that married women did maintenance and repairs, the time spent ranged from 1.8 hours for full-time working wives to 2.26 hours for wives who were not employed.

Earlier, it was noted that families with wives who were not employed spent less on maintenance and repairs but were less likely to be homeowners than working-wife families. This may explain why a smaller proportion of husbands of wives who were not employed did maintenance and repairs, and spent less time doing these activities, than did husbands of working wives. It could also mean that wives who were not employed did needed maintenance and repairs during the week.

Food preparation and cleanup. Nearly 80 percent of wives and about 45 percent of husbands spent time in food preparation and cleanup on an average weekend day. A larger proportion of married men with part-time working wives and married men with wives who were not employed did food preparation and cleanup on weekend days than on weekdays, while the reverse was true for married men with full-time working wives. The proportion of full-time working wives who did food preparation and cleanup was the same on weekend days as on weekdays, while smaller proportions of both part-time working wives and wives who were not employed spent time in this activity on weekend days than on weekdays. Although husbands who engaged in food preparation and cleanup spent more time in the activity on weekend days than on weekdays, they averaged only about an hour in food preparation and cleanup per weekend day, regardless of their wives' employment status. On days—whether weekend days or weekdays—that married women, no matter what their employment status, did food preparation and cleanup, they spent more time in that activity than married men did.

The proportions of married men and married women who spent time eating and drinking at a restaurant or bar on a weekend day were greater than on a weekday. The largest increases were among married men with full-time employed wives and married women employed full time. Whether the increase was because these groups enjoy eating out more when time is available or because time spent in other weekend household activities reduced the time available for meal preparation and cleanup cannot be determined from ATUS data.

Purchase of consumer goods and services. About 47 percent of husbands spent time purchasing consumer goods and services on an average weekend day, compared with about a third on an average weekday. Regardless of their wives' employment status, husbands spent more time purchasing consumer goods on weekend days than on weekdays. The proportion of wives purchasing consumer goods and

services on weekend days was similar to that reported on weekdays (56.4 percent, compared with 54.1 percent). The proportion of full-time working wives purchasing consumer goods and services on weekend days, however, was greater than that on weekdays, while the reverse was true for the other two groups. The time spent purchasing goods and services by those who did so on weekend days ranged narrowly from 1.34 hours for full-time employed wives to 1.45 hours for wives who were not employed.

ANALYSIS OF TWO SAMPLES OF ATUS DATA, one of married men and the other of married women, shows that married men spent more time working on an average weekday or weekend day on which they worked than married women did. Married women, however, spent more time in household activities and childcare on days they did those activities than married men did. These findings reflect the fact that the wives in the study sample were less likely to be employed full time and that, regardless of their employment status, wives were more likely to spend time in unpaid household work than were the married men in the ATUS sample.

When the data were broken down by a wife's employment status, however, differences were uncovered. Full-time employed wives were less likely than both part-time working wives and wives who were not employed to provide primary childcare on weekdays, and those who did provide childcare spent less time. Similarly, married men, regardless of their wives' employment status, were less likely than married women to provide primary childcare on weekdays, and on the days that they did provide childcare, they spent less time doing so. These time use patterns may account for the fact that childcare expenses were the highest for families with full-time employed wives.

Regardless of a wife's employment status, virtually all families reported expenses for transportation and vehicle maintenance and repairs. The average amounts spent by both families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives were virtually identical and were slightly higher than that reported by families with wives who were not employed. This was probably because families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives owned an average of 2.7 vehicles whereas families with wives who were not employed owned an average of 2.2 vehicles. It is often assumed that transportation

and maintenance costs are lower when a wife is not employed for pay, because she spends less time commuting to the workplace. When time spent traveling is averaged across the entire week, however, the data show that, on an average day,²³ 84.5 percent of wives who were not employed spent time traveling for an average of 1.39 hours. Although greater proportions of both full-time working wives and part-time working wives (96.2 percent and 92.8 percent, respectively) spent time traveling on an average day, the time they traveled was similar to that of wives who were not employed.

A greater proportion of full-time employed wives engaged in housework activities (housekeeping; and laundry, drycleaning, and alterations) on weekend days than on weekdays. When time spent in housework is averaged across the entire week, however, it is seen that the proportion of full-time employed wives doing housework (51.1 percent) on an average day was smaller than that of both part-time employed wives (65.4 percent) and wives who were not employed (73.3 percent). On days they did housework, full-time employed wives and part-time employed wives spent a similar amount of time doing housework, but they spent less time than did wives who were not employed. Regardless of a wife's employment status, the proportion of married men doing housework on an average day was much smaller than that of married women. For married men who did housework, the time they spent doing this activity differed little by a wife's employment status.

CE data indicate that the differences in time spent in housework were not due to the substitution of paid services for time in working-wife families. Few families reported spending on housekeeping services. Although more families reported spending on laundry, drycleaning, and alterations, the amount spent did not differ by a wife's employment status.

Married men were more likely than married women to do maintenance and repairs, regardless of both their wives' employment status and the day of the week. On an average day, 16.3 percent of married men spent 2.23 hours doing maintenance and repairs, compared with 10.7 percent of married women, who spent 1.82 hours. Regardless of their employment status, married women were more likely to purchase consumer goods and services. On an average day, 54.8 percent of married women spent 1.06 hours purchasing consumer goods and services, compared with 37.0 percent of married men, who spent 0.93 hour. □

Notes

¹ See "Employment Characteristics of Families—2010," USDL-11-0396 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 22, 2010), http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/famee_03242011.pdf.

² See Gary S. Becker, "A Theory of the Allocation of Time," *Eco-*

nomic Journal, September 1965, pp. 493–577.

³ See Charles B. Weinberg and Russell S. Winer, "Working Wives and Major Family Expenditures: Replication and Extension," *Journal of Consumer Research*, September 1983, pp. 259–263; and Ann

C. Foster, Mohamed Abdel-Ghany, and Carl E. Ferguson, "Wife's Employment—Its Influence on Major Family Expenditures," *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics*, June 1981, pp. 115–124.

⁴ See Ann C. Foster and Sheila Mammen, "Impact of wife's employment on service expenditures," *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics*, March 1992, pp. 9–18; Ann C. Foster, "Wife's employment and family expenditures," *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics*, March 1988, pp. 15–27; and Don Bellante and Ann C. Foster, "Working Wives and Expenditure on Services," *Journal of Consumer Research*, September 1984, pp. 700–707, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2488976.pdf>.

⁵ A more detailed description of the Consumer Expenditure Survey may be found in *BLS Handbook of Methods* (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, no date), Chapter 16, "Consumer Expenditures and Income," <http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch16.pdf>.

⁶ For more information on the American Time Use Survey, see the news release "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results," USDL-10-0855 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 22, 2010), http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/atus_06222010.pdf.

⁷ A consumer unit is defined as (1) all members of a particular household who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or some other legal arrangement, such as foster children; (2) a financially independent person living alone, sharing a housing unit with others, or living as a roomer in a private home, lodging house, or permanently in a hotel or motel; or (3) two or more persons living together who pool their incomes to make joint expenditures. (For more information, see *BLS Handbook of Methods*, Chapter 16.)

Although *consumer unit* is the proper technical term for the purposes of the CE, it is often used interchangeably with *household* or *family* for convenience. This article uses *family* instead of *consumer unit*.

⁸ Full-time workers are those who usually work 35 or more hours per week, while part-time workers are those who usually work less than 35 hours per week. For the purpose of this research, an individual is considered not employed for pay if unemployed, retired, a student, taking care of children or other family members, or neither working nor seeking work.

⁹ A primary activity is the main activity an ATUS respondent was doing at a specific time. A secondary, or simultaneous, activity is an activity done at the same time as a primary activity. The ATUS does not systematically collect information on secondary activities, except for the care of children under 13. Unless otherwise indicated, all ATUS estimates that appear in this article are for primary activities only.

¹⁰ Working includes (1) doing the specific tasks required of a main job and any secondary jobs, (2) doing work-related activities, (3) engaging in income-generating activities that are not part of one's job, and (4) carrying out job search activities. Work-related activities are activities that are not obviously work but are done as part of one's job. Examples are having a business lunch and playing golf with clients. Income-generating activities that are not part of one's job are activities done "on the side" or under an informal arrangement. Examples are selling homemade crafts, babysitting, maintaining a rental property, and having a yard sale. Through these activities, wives who are not employed for pay may still engage in work and work-related activities. (For more information, see "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results.")

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of time spent in childcare and other forms of unpaid household work, see Rachel Krantz-Kent, "Measuring time spent in unpaid household work: results from the American Time Use Survey," *Monthly Labor Review*, July 2009, pp. 46–59, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/07/art3full.pdf>.

¹² Vehicle repair and maintenance is often considered a household

production activity that can be purchased in the market to save time. Given the complexity of today's vehicles, however, many men and women probably lack the expertise to engage in this activity and have no choice but to pay for these services. This situation may account for the fact that only 3.9 percent of married men did any vehicle maintenance and repair on weekdays and 6.6 percent did so on weekends, compared with less than 1 percent of married women on both weekdays and weekends. Among those who did vehicle maintenance and repair, married men spent an average of 1 hour on weekdays and 2.25 hours on weekends.

¹³ For more information on what constitutes travel, see *American Time Use Survey Activity Lexicon, 2009* (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, no date), pp. 36–38, <http://www.bls.gov/tus/lexiconwex200.pdf>.

¹⁴ See "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results," p. 6.

¹⁵ See Foster and Mammen, "Impact of wife's employment"; Sharon Y. Nickols and Karen D. Fox, "Buying Time and Saving Time: Strategies for Managing Household Production," *Journal of Consumer Research*, September 1983, pp. 197–208, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2488924>; and Bellante and Foster, "Working Wives."

Additional analysis revealed that, for those with outlays for house-keeping services, annual expenditures averaged \$156,772 for families with wives who were not employed, compared with \$77,308 and \$80,287, respectively, for families with full-time working wives and families with part-time working wives. In contrast, among all family groups, annual expenditures averaged \$59,325 for families with full-time working wives, \$61,803 for families with part-time working wives, and \$53,565 for families with wives who were not employed.

¹⁶ Family income was positively associated with spending on laundry and drycleaning services, and households living in urban areas spent more on these services than rural households. (For more information, see Foster and Mammen, "Impact of wife's employment"; and Nickols and Fox, "Buying Time and Saving Time.")

¹⁷ Food away from home is made up of school meal purchases, as well as meals, snacks, and nonalcoholic beverages purchased at full-service restaurants, fast-food outlets, cafeterias, vending machines, concession stands, and mobile vendors, whether the food is eaten on site, carried out, or delivered.

¹⁸ See Foster and Mammen, "Impact of wife's employment"; and Foster, "Wife's employment and family expenditures."

¹⁹ In 2009, for example, 89.2 percent of men employed full time and 86.6 percent of women employed full time worked on an average weekday, compared with 35.8 percent and 31.8 percent, respectively, who worked on an average weekend day. Among women employed part time, 60.2 percent worked on an average weekday, compared with 35.7 percent who worked on an average weekend day. (For more information, see "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results.")

²⁰ Primary childcare activities include time spent providing physical care; playing with or reading to children; helping with homework; and dropping off, picking up, and waiting for children. Secondary childcare is care for children under age 13 that is done with another activity, such as meal preparation. (For more information, see "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results," Technical Note, pp. 6, 7.)

²¹ These data are for married parents ages 25–54. (For more information, see Mary Dorinda Allard and Marianne Janes, "Time use of working parents: a visual essay," *Monthly Labor Review*, June 2008, pp. 3–14, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2008/06/art1full.pdf>.)

²² For more information, see "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results."

²³ The average day is defined as the average distribution across all persons in the reference population and all days of the week. (For more information, see "American Time Use Survey—2009 Results.")