

Time to Care: A Comparison of How Couple and Sole Parent Households Allocate Time to Work and Children

Author/Contributor:

Craig, Lyn

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**TIME TO CARE: A COMPARISON OF
HOW COUPLE AND SOLE PARENT
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WORK AND CHILDREN**

By Lyn Craig

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Bruce Bradbury, Peter Saunders and Kylie Valentine
Editors

About the Author:

Lyn Craig is a research scholar of the Social Policy Research Centre. For a detailed description of her thesis visit the Centre's website.

Correspondence to: Lyn Craig
Email: lcraig@unsw.edu.au

Abstract

Households provide their members with both financial support and caring services. In sole parent households, the vast majority of which are headed by women, the functions of earning money and caring for children fall to one individual. The risk that sole mothers may fail to perform either or both of these functions adequately has made these women and their children a subject of social concern and policy interest. The financial consequences of sole motherhood have been extensively studied both in Australia and cross nationally. The other area of concern, that the children of sole mothers are disadvantaged in terms of parental attention, has not been systematically investigated. To begin addressing this research gap, this paper analyses the Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use Survey 1997 (over 4000 randomly selected households) to establish whether, in Australia, the time sole mothers spend with their children differs in either quality or quantity from that of mothers, and/or fathers, in couple families. The related issue of whether sole mothers suffer more time pressure or time constraint than partnered mothers is also addressed.

1 Introduction

Households provide both financial support and caring services to their members. This is a challenge for all families. Households with children are faced with both a higher expenditure burden and, in addition, with performing a great deal more domestic labour than childless households. So in addition to the extra financial demands of parenthood, parents need to devote much more time to unpaid work than do non-parents. This demand is very much more acute for women than for men (Craig and Bittman 2004).

This paper addresses the situation of a group of women for whom balancing market work and care is particularly problematic: lone mothers. One of the many changes in family life in western countries over the last century has been that due to an increase in divorce and separation, de facto unions and in the number of unmarried women giving birth, parenthood and marriage have become separable (Land and Lewis 1997; Scott et al. 1999, Ellwood and Jencks 2002; Lewis 2001). A by-product is that more children are living with one parent (Land and Lewis 1997). In the vast majority of cases, in both Australia and elsewhere, that sole parent is a woman (Moynihan et al. 2002). The dilemma of whether to work for money or to undertake household production is a problem for all mothers, but it is particularly severe for lone mothers (Land and Lewis 1997; McLanahan 2001; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). 'Working single mothers face substantial and under recognized conflicts between worker and mother roles' (Scott et al. 1999).

Douthitt argues that time poverty is the flip side of sole mothers' employment. If they work to improve their financial situation, they must reduce the time they can devote to household production, including childcare. When both time and money are included in the equation, employed and unemployed sole mothers have similar poverty rates. Compared to two-parent households, lone parents have not only reduced money but also half the adult time resources available (Douthitt 1992).

This is not an entirely private problem. More than is the case for couple-headed families, the situation of lone parent households is a matter of public concern and policy interest. The concerns about sole mothers can address either or both of the caring and earning aspects of parental responsibility. They include worry about the mothers' own welfare (are they living in poverty, are they over burdened?), worry about their children (are they living in poverty, are they neglected?) and worry that addressing these concerns through state support such as pensions unfairly advantages them as against couple families. Questions arise as to what extent, in which tasks and on what grounds the state should compensate for the lack of a second parent. Policy responses differ cross nationally; a sole mother may be primarily expected to engage in market work or to care for her children, or to do both (Duncan and Edwards 1997; Lewis 1999). To a large extent, the policy responses and expectations of lone parents will depend on the type of social welfare regime in each country.

1.1 Welfare regimes

Esping-Andersen (1990) categorised countries according to how they draw on the three pillars of welfare (states, markets, and families) to create a social policy regime. He divided western states into a 3-way grouping; liberal, corporatist, and social democratic. Liberal welfare states (USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand) are

market based. Citizens are expected to provide for themselves through work force participation. Welfare support is targeted towards those with demonstrated need, through modest means tested benefits for those who cannot support themselves. The state intervenes only if the market fails. In corporatist states (Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, France), social insurance systems group people in similar occupations. Rights are accrued through contribution, and are attached to class and status, and so welfare is a product of group membership. In the social democratic model (Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden) rights accrue from citizenship and there is equality of the highest standard, not of minimum needs (Esping-Andersen 1990).

A major marker of welfare state typology was what Esping-Andersen called de-commodification, the degree to which people could be independent of market work force participation. There was extensive feminist criticism of relying on de-commodification as a criterion, because it underplayed family inputs to the provision of welfare. In addition to the criteria of the necessity to work and not to work, an essential dimension of social risk for women is the freedom to provide or to not provide caring services (Korpi 2000, Arts and Gelissen 2002; Lewis 1998; O'Connor et al. 1999; Sainsbury 1996; Siaroff 1994; Taylor-Gooby 1991; Trifiletti 1999).

This led researchers to propose that an important element of difference between welfare regimes was whether they assumed a male breadwinner household model or treated women as autonomous individuals (Korpi 2000; Arts and Gelissen 2002; Lewis 1998; O'Connor et al. 1999; Sainsbury 1996; Siaroff 1994; Taylor-Gooby 1991; Trifiletti 1999). This has implications for the welfare of all women, but is of particular moment to sole mothers. Some feminist researchers argue that the treatment of sole mothers within a country is a marker of welfare regime type (Duncan and Edwards 1997). Within feminist comparative welfare regime research, single motherhood is often used a litmus test, or indicator of gendered social rights in welfare regimes (Hobson in (Sainsbury 1996, Cass 1993, Millar 1996, O'Connor et al. 1999). Of particular significance is the comparative ability of unpartnered women to maintain independent households for themselves and their children (Shaver and Burke 2003).

Financial circumstances of sole mothers

Table 1: Percentage of children living below the poverty line, 1990-1992

	Children in two-parent family	Children in solo mother family
Sweden	2.2	5.2
Denmark	2.5	7.3
Finland	1.9	7.5
Belgium	3.2	10.0
Italy	9.5	13.9
Norway	1.9	18.4
Netherlands	3.1	39.5
Canada	7.4	50.2
Australia	7.7	56.2
United States	11.1	59.5

Source: Luxembourg Income Study, Working Paper No. 127. The poverty line is defined as 50% of national median income after taxes and transfers.

Most research into sole mothers and their children has focused on their financial vulnerability. The likelihood that sole parents and their children will live in poverty varies cross nationally (see Table 1). Poverty rates of sole parent households are particularly high in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States. In 1992 in Australia, Canada and the United States, over 50 per cent of sole mother families were living below the Luxembourg Income Study poverty line. Denmark, Finland, and Sweden had a high percentage of children in sole-mother families (Phipps 1998), yet fewer than 10 per cent lived below the poverty line (Luxembourg Income Study, (Moynihan et al. 2002).

Moynihan et al. refute suggestions that the cross-national variation in poverty rates in lone parent families is because of different employment rates or because of different profiles of sole-maternal characteristics in each country. They point out that employment rates for sole mothers are only slightly correlated with child poverty rate across the countries, and suggest that it is the differences in social support packages that produces the poverty rates, not variance in the demographic structure of households across nations (Moynihan et al. 2002). However, despite such evidence that the likelihood that sole mothers and their children will live in poverty is more dependent upon social policy measures such as childcare availability and income support than work force participation, policy makers in some countries assume that paid work is the best means for sole mothers to escape poverty. At the extreme, getting sole mothers into paid work is currently such an important goal in the US that income support for parents is only available for a total of two years (Scott et al. 1999).

The policies of other countries seem more ambivalent about so clearly prioritizing the family earning function above the family caring function. Australia is an example of this. Although it is commonly categorized as a liberal welfare state, some argue that Australia is an anomalous case because the impact of policy is generally redistributive, and because women can claim assistance independently of male partners (Cass 1994; Castles and Mitchell 1993; Mitchell 1991). While benefits are means-tested and not generous, they do not rely on previous contributions (Cass 1994). In Australia it has been known since the 1970s that lone mother families have higher rates of poverty. Since that time, the preferred Australian answer to the worker/mother issue has moved from supporting sole mothers at home towards encouraging them into paid work (Shaver 1998). Recently, the McClure Report (2000) confirmed that paid employment was a favoured solution to lone parent poverty (Gray et al. 2002). Increased attention has also been given to eliciting financial contribution from non-resident parents (Shaver 1998).

The current Australian policy response to supporting sole parents is three-pronged. The Child Support Act, intended to increase child maintenance payment by non-resident parents, was introduced in 1988. In 1989 the Sole Parent Pension, payable until a sole parent's youngest child reaches 16, and only available¹ to those who claimed child support from the absent parent, was introduced. It is currently \$A470 a fortnight. Family Tax Benefit Part A and B are additional payments, which help with

¹ There are some exceptions to the obligation to seek child support. For example, in the case of violence, where the identity of the father is unknown or where the resident parent is unable to locate the other partner (McHugh, M., 1999)

the costs of raising children in sole parent families, and there are also concessions on government services (FACS 2004). At the same time, the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) scheme was introduced, with the aim of helping sole parents gain skills with which to enter the paid work force (McHugh and Millar 1997). However, the scheme is not supplemented by policies that ensure childcare is available and affordable (McHugh and Millar 1997).

This combination of policy measures suggests that there is continued ambivalence regarding the relative importance of financial independence and care provision (Cass 1994; Gray et al. 2002; McHugh and Millar 1997). Despite its low rate, the provision of the pension is an implicit policy acknowledgement that the ability of sole mothers to care for their own children matters. On the other hand, the low rate means that sole mothers who do care for their own children full time are likely to be financially disadvantaged.

So how do Australian sole mothers address the quandary of providing either financial support or caring services, or both, to their children? Despite the importance of both aspects of parental responsibility, we have an imbalance of information. In contrast to the welter of research into the financial consequences of sole motherhood there is an almost total lack of information about the non-monetary side of the equation. Despite the widespread concern at the possibility that the children of sole mothers receive inadequate care (see for example (McLanahan 2001), there has been remarkably little systematic investigation into the extent and nature of sole mothers' caring duties.

1.2 Sole mothers and time allocation

Time use investigation offers a way of researching this important but obscured aspect of the lives of sole mothers and their children. At issue are questions as to the amount and nature of parental attention the children of single mothers receive, and how burdened single mothers are by time pressure and time commitment to work and to children. This paper will address both these aspects of sole mothers time use, by testing the hypotheses that

1. With their commitments to both paid and unpaid labour, sole mothers are working longer hours than either single women or partnered mothers.
2. Because sole mothers have no partner to assist with household work and childcare, they do more unpaid labour than partnered mothers.
3. Children of sole parents are receiving fewer hours of parental care than are children in two parent families.
4. Children of sole mothers are receiving qualitatively different parental care than are children in two parent families.

1.3 Data

This paper analyses data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use Survey 1997. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducts regular time use surveys. They randomly sample over 4000 households and require all individual household members over 15 to complete a time diary recording at 5-minute intervals all their activities

over two days. This provides an opportunity to investigate all time use including non-market work (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998)

1.4 Method

The analysis is in two parts. The first is descriptive analysis comparing work force participation and the childcare usage in families with children under 5 in couple and in sole parent households. The second is Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis, conducted in two stages, with two models. The first compares the time allocation of single childless men and women, partnered mothers and fathers and sole mothers. Unfortunately, the number of sole custodial fathers is too small to include.

Dependent variables

1. Daily hours spent in total work, (comprised of paid work and unpaid work) and its subcategories
2. Employment, and
3. Domestic labour (housework, shopping, home maintenance)

The constant terms in the regression model results represent time spent in the dependent variable on a weekday by a single childless woman who has no tertiary qualifications, uses no non-parental childcare, is aged 35-44, and has no disabled household member. To see whether the maturity of the children impacts differently on the time requirements of single and partnered parents, interacted variables for single mothers and for partnered mothers and partnered fathers with children under 5 and children aged between 5 and 11 are included.

The second OLS regression model compares solo mothers and partnered parents' time in childcare and child-related activities. An important dimension of time spent with children is that a very high proportion of childcare is done at the same time as other activities. In most previous studies, childcare has been significantly underestimated because it has been counted only when it was done as a main activity (Bittman and Wajcman 1999; Craig 2002; Ironmonger 2004) time diary surveys allow people to report simultaneous activities, but respondents who are in charge of children, and who undertake another activity such as shopping, tend to record shopping as their main activity than the childcare they are also performing. Parents record three times as much time spent in 'secondary' activity childcare as spent in primary activity childcare. Childcare as a secondary activity requires the parent's presence and at least part of their attention, and they are constrained in their choice of activities. So while primary activity is the time-use measure most widely available internationally, I also include secondary activity in the analysis of childcare, to give a more accurate estimate of the time involved. To overlook secondary activity would be a serious under-representation of the time constraints associated with responsibility for children.

Therefore, the childcare dependent variables are

1. The total hours per day spent in childcare, both as a primary activity and as either a primary or a secondary activity

2. Time spent in each of the subcategories of childcare, ‘interactive care’, ‘physical care’, ‘low intensity care’ and ‘travel and communication’²
3. All time spent in the company of children
4. Time spent in the company of children only
5. Time spent in childfree recreation.

The constant terms in the regression model results represent time spent in the dependent variable on a weekday by a partnered mother of one child under 5, who has no tertiary qualifications, uses no non-parental childcare, is aged 35-44, and has no disabled household member.

The model was run separately for partnered fathers. In this regression, the constant term represents time spent in the dependent variable on a weekday by a partnered father of one child under 5, who has no tertiary qualifications, uses no non-parental childcare, works full time, is aged 35-44, and has no disabled household member.

² Parental interaction with children ranges from passive, supervisory care to highly demanding forms of interaction with children that have important consequences for the development of their personal capabilities. Most studies simply tally child care in terms of total minutes of parental time. But the activity codes available in most time use surveys can be used to create a typology of categories ranging from the most to the least intense interactions. I define four categories as follows:

Physical and emotional care/High contact childcare – face-to-face interaction, carrying, holding, cuddling, hugging, soothing, feeding, bathing, dressing and putting children to sleep are all examples of physical and emotional care.

Interactive childcare/Developmental childcare – face-to-face parent-child interaction that involves activities believed to be critical for the development of children’s linguistic, cognitive, and social capacities. Examples of interactive childcare activities are teaching, helping children learn, reading, telling stories, playing games, listening to children, talking with and reprimanding children.

Minding children/Low intensity childcare – which is distinguished from other categories of childcare because parental involvement is less active. Activities included in this minding children category are being an adult presence for children to turn to, maintaining a safe environment, monitoring children playing outside the home, keeping an eye on sleeping children, supervising games and recreational activities such as swimming. This is rarely done as a primary activity (ABS 1993: 27).

Travel and communications – which are restricted to cases of journeys and communications associated with childcare activities. In addition to the time spent in motion, travel time includes time spent waiting when taking children to and picking them up from places, such as school, the house of a friend or relative, sports training, music and ballet lessons, parent and teacher nights, meeting trains or buses, etc. Only communications (in person, by telephone or written) centred on the care of children are included in this category. This includes discussions with a spouse, other family members, friends, teachers and child workers, when the conversation was about the child. Although these activities are not usually active interactions with children, they require a parent’s full attention, and cannot, unlike low intensity childcare, be combined with other activities.

Independent variables

The model controls for age, educational qualifications, the use of non-parental childcare, household income, day of the week, and whether there is a disabled person in the household.

2 Results

2.1 Descriptive analysis

Workforce participation

Table 2: Percentage of mothers in each level of employment hours by family structure

Usual hours employed	No children		Youngest child under 5		Youngest child aged 5 to 11	
	Single	Partnered	Lone	Partnered	Lone	Partnered
None	24	25	60	46	48	34
0-20	07	17	21	30	25	30
21-39	29	23	05	12	15	20
40 and over	40	35	14	12	12	16

Source: ABS Time Use Survey 1997

Being partnered and being a mother are both associated with a reduction in the time women allocate to the paid work force (see Table 2). Of the two effects, motherhood is the most profound, but the impact differs according to whether or not the mothers are partnered.

In the sample, childless single women and childless partnered women are about equally likely to be out of the work force altogether, (24 per cent and 25 per cent of each group, respectively), but single childless women who *do* work are likely to work longer hours than their partnered counterparts. There are many more partnered women than single women working part time, particularly in the 0-20 hour a week bracket, even if there are no children in the household. This indicates that for women, having a partner is in itself associated with a reduction in the likelihood she will work full time hours.

However, the presence of children increases the likelihood that a woman will not be part of the paid workforce more strongly. For both couple and lone mothers the effect is stronger the younger the child, but in both age categories, the association between motherhood and withdrawal from the workforce is more pronounced for sole mothers. With children under 5, 60 per cent of sole mothers do not participate in paid work, compared to 48 per cent of couple mothers of children the same age. Of those with school age children, 48 per cent of sole mothers do no market work, compared to 34 per cent of couple mothers

A similar proportion of solo and partnered mothers in the sample work full time, so the major difference is between the proportion of solo and partnered mothers who work part time. Particularly when they have a child under 5, solo mothers are less likely than partnered mothers to work part time.

Use of non-parental childcare

The lack of another adult in the household with whom to share the responsibilities of care and earning would logically imply that solo parents would be more reliant on

extra-household child care than partnered couples. An analysis of the non-parental childcare usage by those in my sample who have youngest children under 5 showed this is indeed the case.

Table 3: Percentage of families using each type of non-parental childcare by family structure

Type of non-parental child care	Couple households	Sole parent households
None	42	21
Formal care	33	34
Informal care	12	16
Both formal and informal care	13	29
Total	100	100

Source: ABS Time Use Survey 1997

Most Australian families with children under the age of 5 make use of non-parental care of either the formal and informal variety. Fifty-eight per cent of partnered couples in the sample utilize formal or informal care – 33 per cent use formal care, 12 per cent informal care and nearly 13 per cent of all married parents combine both types of care. However, as Table 3 shows, single mothers do rely more heavily on non-parental care than partnered couples. While 42 per cent of couple households use no non-parental care, less than a quarter of sole parents (21 per cent) make no use of it at all. The proportion of sole parent households using formal childcare (34 per cent) is similar to the proportion of two-parent households, but sole mothers are slightly more likely than couples to make use of informal childcare – 16 per cent rely on it exclusively.

An even greater difference in the childcare usage patterns by family structure is that single mothers are also more likely than mothers in two-parent households to use a combination of formal and informal care than couples do. Twenty nine per cent of sole mothers use mixed care, compared with 13 per cent of couple families. These results raise questions as to who is providing this informal care.

Table 4: Informal childcare type used, by family structure (proportion of all informal care users)

Type of informal childcare used	Couple households	Sole parent households
Grandparents	80	80
Other relatives	14	43
Other people	25	18

Source: ABS Time Use Survey 1997

Table 4 reveals that it is grandparents who provide the bulk of informal care. Of those parents who use informal care, 80 per cent call upon grandparents. This is the case for both couple and sole parent families. Sole parents are somewhat less likely than couple families to use the informal childcare assistance of ‘other people’ (18 per cent as against 25 per cent). Conversely, sole parents are much more likely than couples to call upon other relatives to provide informal care. Forty three per cent of sole parents use ‘other relatives’, compared with 14 per cent of couple families, for informal care provision. It is possible that this reflects not only greater reliance on the assistance of

extended family members such as siblings or aunts, but also some of the care contribution of the non-resident parent. Unfortunately, we have no good direct account of the time that non-custodial fathers are with their children but this result may be a partial and oblique indication of their involvement.

Table 5: Mean hours a week in non-parental childcare by family structure and type of care used

Type of non-parental childcare	Couple households	Sole parent households
Formal only	15	17
Informal only	22	12
Both formal and informal	28	45

Source: ABS Time Use Survey 1997

As can be seen in Table 5 the duration of care varies with the type of care used. Couple households who use formal care exclusively consume, on average, 15 hours per week of this service, whereas sole parents relying on formal care alone consume, on average, 17 hours per week. Where informal care services only are used, there is considerable difference between couple and sole parent households in the amount of care used, with partnered parents consuming an average of 22 hours a week, and sole parents an average of 12 hours a week. Parents placing their child(ren) in mixed forms of care consume the highest weekly averages of non-parental care, 28 hours for couples households and 45 hours among sole parents. From the information presented above, it appears that sole parents are not only more likely to use non-parental care, but their children also average longer hours in that care.

Taken together, the results above show that sole mothers spend less time in the paid work force than partnered mothers, but that they make more extensive use of non-parental childcare. They are more likely to use mixed formal and informal care, to rely more heavily on informal care arrangements, and use a multiplicity of informal care types. This implies that their childcare arrangements are subject to constant change and negotiation. Their relatives are more likely to be involved in substituting for maternal care than are the relatives of couple families. This implies that many sole mothers call on wide family support and that children of sole mothers are more likely to have contact with their relatives unmediated by the presence of their mother than children in couple families. As the time that the children of sole mothers spend in non-parental care is also longer, this suggests that their care is more of a joint extended family responsibility than is that of children in couple households.

2.2 Multivariate analysis

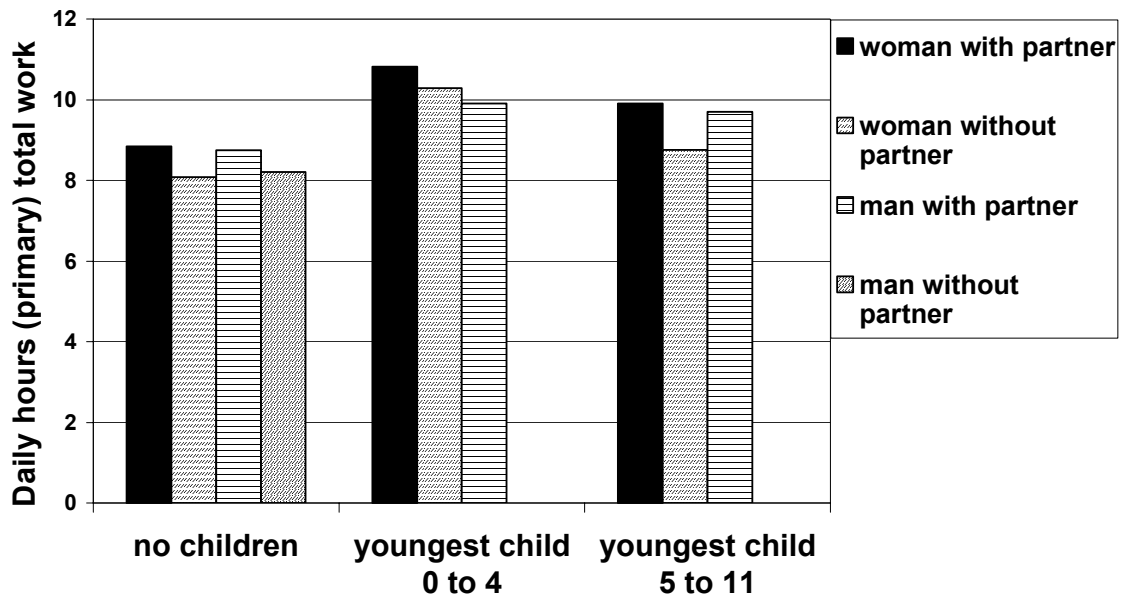
In all the figures below, households with no children are contrasted with households containing two children, because this is the modal category for families with children. The full regression model and results are in Appendix 1.

Total primary productive activity (paid and unpaid)

Figure 1 represents the time in total primary productive activity of men and women according to whether or not they are partnered (married or living in de facto relationship). Single men and women do the same amount of work in total. Being partnered but with no children is associated with an increase in workload for both men and women, with the effect being slightly more pronounced for women. Women who

have male partners do more work in total than single women, whether or not there are children in the household.

Figure 1: Comparison of predicted time in total productive activity by family structure and by age of youngest child



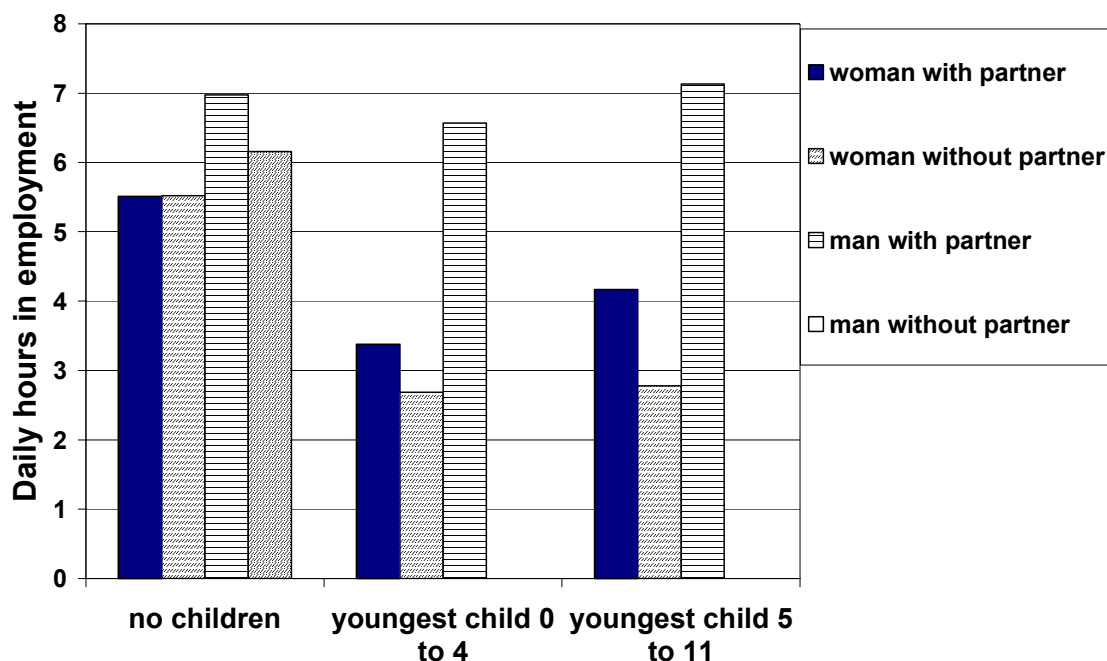
The results show that just being in a couple makes more total work for all. A partnered mother of a child under 5 spends 2 ½ hours a day more time working in paid or unpaid labour than does a single childless woman. A sole mother of two, the youngest of which is under 5, averages 2¼ more hours a day total work than a single woman, nearly half an hour less than does a partnered mother. In households with child aged 5 to 11, partnered parents both spend about an hour and a half more time working than a single woman. In contrast, a sole mother of a school aged youngest child is not statistically different to that of a single woman. Whichever their motherhood status, partnered women do more total work than non-partnered women. It is not sole mothers who have the highest total workloads, but women who combine motherhood with partnership.

For men also, being part of a couple is associated with a higher workload. So is fatherhood, although Figure 2 confirms that the time impact of fatherhood is lighter than that of motherhood. Unfortunately, the very low numbers of solo fathers (9 in the sample) makes it impossible to investigate how the time impact would vary according to whether fathers are partnered or non-partnered.

Total work is comprised of employment and unpaid work, with its subcomponents; domestic labour (housework and shopping), and childcare. In order to see whether these are associated with parenthood and partnership in the same or in different ways, I look at each of these sub components in turn.

Employment

Figure 2: Comparison of predicted time in employment by family structure and by age of youngest child

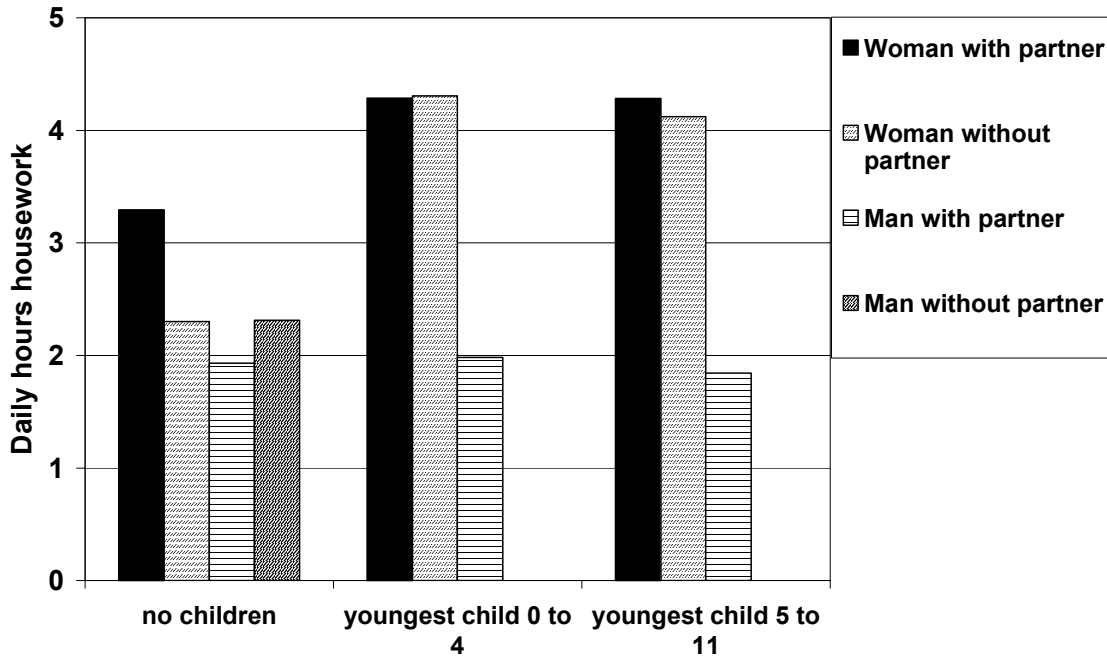


The higher male work time associated with being in a couple is all allocated to paid work (see Figure 2). Single childless men spend just over half an hour more than single childless women in paid work each day. For women partnership is associated with no upward swing in paid work but for men, being in a childless couple is associated with nearly 50 minutes more time in paid work than is being single.

Fatherhood in itself does not seem to have an upward effect on employment time independent of partnership. In contrast, for women, the effect of partnership on time spent in the paid work force is clearly separable from the effect of motherhood. While the presence of children has a downward impact on all mothers' time in paid employment, the effect is much more pronounced on sole than on partnered mothers. This continues as the children grow. While the workforce participation of partnered mothers is much higher after the youngest child goes to school, this is not the case for sole mothers. When their youngest child has matured to school age, partnered mothers' average time in paid employment is nearly an hour more a day than when they had a preschooler at home. In contrast, sole mothers with a youngest child at school average only 6 minutes longer in paid employment a day than sole mothers with a preschooler. This implies that lone mothers are not included in the well-recognised phenomenon whereby many mothers reallocate time to paid work upon the graduation of their youngest from nursery to 'big school'.

Housework (all domestic tasks except childcare)

Figure 3: Comparison of predicted time in housework by family structure and by age of youngest child



The effect of partnership upon the unpaid work time of men and of women is diametrically opposite. Women’s unpaid work goes up; men’s unpaid work goes down. While single women do somewhat more housework and shopping than single men (22 minutes a day), being part of a couple increases female domestic work time by an hour a day, and decreases male domestic work time by over half an hour a day. So the partnership workload penalty is different by sex. For men it is comprised entirely of paid work, while for women it includes additional domestic labour. But there is not complete symmetry. The net time penalty of partnership is higher for women than for men, because the higher male allocation to paid work associated with childless partnership is ameliorated by the reduction in male domestic work. There is no corresponding fall in paid work by partnered childless women. Her housework goes up, but her paid work time does not go down.

Sole mothers do no more unpaid work net of childcare than partnered mothers. The domestic specialisation apparent in childless couples is markedly increased by the presence of children. Men with a youngest child under 5 do not increase their input to housework and shopping beyond that of a married childless man, but women in the same family configuration up their housework and shopping by $\frac{3}{4}$ s of an hour more than a childless partnered woman. Sole mothers, who allocate an hour and $\frac{3}{4}$ s a day more to domestic tasks than single childless women, do the same amount in total as mothers in couple families. So in households with pre-schooler, lone mothers and partnered mothers do an almost identical amount of housework and shopping.

The partnership penalty for women is also apparent in households that have a youngest child over 5 years old. The housework undertaken by partnered mothers is slightly higher (by 12 minutes a day) than that of sole mothers. Men do not increase

their contribution towards housework, shopping and other non-childcare domestic tasks when there are children. Indeed, while fathers in families with youngest children under 5 do no more housework than men in childless couples, fathers in families with a youngest over 5 years old actually do *less* than men in childless couples. The absence of a male partner does not mean that solo mothers do more domestic work to make up for the lack of male input. On average, male contribution to domestic labour is a net deficit. Contrary to the popular expectation that being a single mother entails more housework than being a married mother, it seems that the absence of a man slightly reduces the domestic burden upon mothers.

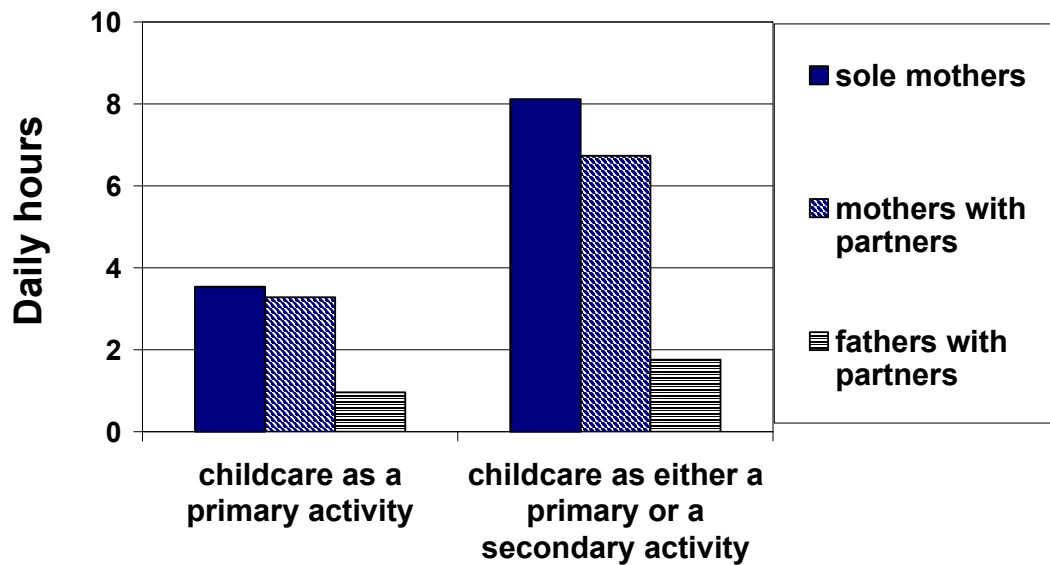
The other major component of unpaid work is childcare, and it is this aspect of the responsibilities of solo mothers that cause the most social concern. Time spent in parental childcare is the focus of the next part of this analysis, which investigates in close detail how partnered parents and solo mothers allocate time to their children.

Childcare

Time in childcare is negligible for non-parents. For this reason, I exclude non-parents from the following analysis and directly compare the childcare responsibilities of mothers in lone or couple households, by running regression analysis separately on mothers only, to find out whether and how the care they provide their children differs. Also, to give an indication of the childcare provided by men in two-parent families, I run the same model separately on partnered fathers only. As stated above, there are insufficient numbers of sole fathers to include them in the analysis.

The dependent variables examined here are childcare and its subcategories (see footnote 2), and time enjoying childfree recreation, time spent in the company of children, and time spent alone in the company of children. Calculating the amount of time spent caring for children as a primary activity does not capture either the magnitude or the complexity of childcare time commitment. Because of its importance in representing the full time commitment of caring for children, secondary activity is included in some of the variables as appropriate. The independent variable of interest is whether or not the mother is living with a male partner. For the female only regression, the constant term represents the time of a partnered mother aged 35-44, with no post-secondary qualifications, with one child under 5 and no disabled household member, on a weekday. For the male only regression, the constant term represents the time of a partnered father aged 35-44, who works fulltime, has no post-secondary qualifications, has one child under 5 and no disabled household member, on a weekday. All figures represent two child households.

Figure 4: Predicted childcare time spent by sole mothers, mothers with partners and fathers with partners



There is no statistical difference in the amount of time mothers are engaged in active care of their children according to whether or not they have a partner (see Figure 4). Both couple and lone mothers of two children under 5 average just less than 3 hours a day in childcare when it is counted as a main activity only. Men in partnered families contribute just over 50 minutes a day in primary childcare. This may seem to indicate that children in couple families, having regard to fathers' input, receive more care in total, but the nature of childcare time as much more likely to be a secondary or subsidiary than a main activity must be remembered.

When childcare is calculated with both primary and secondary activity included but not double counted, there *is* a difference according to mothers' partnership status in the time spent caring for their children. When simultaneous activities are acknowledged, sole mothers average 7 hours and 20 minutes a day in childcare, compared to a partnered mothers average of just over 6 hours a day. Fathers in two-parent families spend a total of an hour and 20 minutes in childcare a day when both primary and secondary activity is counted. This is almost exactly equal to the difference between the time sole mothers and partnered mothers spend in childcare. It appears that sole mothers, through increased double activity, compensate in quantitative terms for the absence of a partner.

This raises the question, whether, having regard to fathers' input, children in couple families receive more direct attention than children of lone mothers. This is relevant to the issue of whether children of sole mothers are receiving qualitatively different parental care than are children in two parent families. I investigate this by looking at the subcategories of childcare. I have identified those aspects of childcare that are likely to be almost entirely primary only (physical care, travel) almost entirely secondary only (passive care), or a mixture of the two (interactive care). The independent variables presented here are those that are the most representative

indicators of time in each of the subcategories of childcare. (For full results, see Appendix 1.)

Table 6: Partnered parents and sole mothers child-related time

	Partnered mother (constant term)	Lone mother	Partnered father (constant term)
Childcare subcategories			
Physical care	1.59	+0.05	0.13
Travel for/with children	0.08	+0.22**	0
Interactive care	1.36	+0.36*	0.58***
Passive childcare	3.41	+0.89*	0.80**
Company variables			
Hours a day in the company of children	12.32***	+0.75	6.65***
Hours a day alone in the company of children	3.89***	+5.73***	0.78***
Child-free recreation	0.09	+0.32***	0.53***

Source: ABS Time Use Survey 1997

Childcare subcategories

Physical care

Both partnered and solo mothers devote just over an hour and a half a day to the physical care of their children. While children in couple families receive the same maternal care, there seems to be a slight gain for them in that fathers in two-parent families also spend just less than 8 minutes a day doing physical childcare.

Child-related travel

Partnered mothers of pre-schoolers average 5 minutes a day in child related travel. Sole mothers spend nearly three times as long in this activity. There are two, non-exclusive, plausible explanations for this difference. I showed above that sole mothers have to rely more heavily on care outside the household to substitute for their own care and to use a mixture of care arrangements of their children than do women in couples. Therefore, it seems likely that this higher travel time results from taking the children to and from these multiple arrangements. Also, since sole mothers are on average much poorer than partnered mothers, it could be that fewer own their own cars, and rely more heavily on (slower) public transport. Fathers in two-parent families with one child under 5 average almost no time in child related travel.

Interactive care

Interactive care includes playing with, talking to, reading to and reprimanding children. It is the subcategory of childcare that is most mixed as to whether it done as a primary or a secondary activity. But while activities such as talking can be done either way, there is arguably a difference in the degree of intensity to having a conversation and doing nothing else at the same time as opposed to conducted while peeling potatoes. For these reasons, I have presented the results of both interactive care as a primary activity, and as either a primary or secondary activity.

Children of sole and partnered mothers receive the same amount of interactive care performed as a main activity; about 55 minutes a day. Children in couple families

receive in addition just less than 25 minutes a day interactive childcare as a main activity from their father. So when the attentions of both parents are counted, children in couple families receive a total of an hour and 20 minutes, just over 25% more interactive care as a main activity than children of lone mothers. However, it appears that although sole mothers do not match partnered mothers and fathers combined primary interactive care input, they do use simultaneous activity to close the gap. When simultaneous interactive care is acknowledged, partnered mothers time in this activity is an hour and 22 minutes a day. Sole mothers' interactive care time is an hour and $\frac{3}{4}$ s, 22 minutes higher. When both primary and secondary activity is counted, fathers' time in interactive care totals 35 minutes a day. This means that the net loss of interactive parental care time to children without resident fathers is about 13 minutes a day, which would probably be contemporaneous with mother care time.

Passive childcare

Supervising children while engaged in other tasks makes up the bulk of childcare. Although supervising children while doing absolutely nothing else at the same time is more common amongst fathers than mothers, overall, passive childcare is only rarely done as a primary activity. Therefore this variable is only presented as including primary and secondary activity (excluding time when the parent is asleep).

Partnered mothers average three hours and 25 minutes a day in passive childcare, and partnered fathers average 40 minutes a day. This paternal input is compensated for by solo mothers, who average 55 minutes a day more passive childcare than partnered mothers. By doing more than one thing at a time to an even greater extent than partnered mothers, sole mothers ensure that their children do not receive lower supervisory time inputs than children in two-parent families.

Passive childcare as secondary activity may not require much extra physical effort. It could even be conducted while the children are asleep. However, it does necessitate the continued presence of a parent. Therefore, the time of a sole mother is more constrained than that of a partnered mother. This is despite the higher usage of non-parental childcare by sole mothers discussed above. In ensuring her children are supervised for the same time as those in couple families, the lone mother is afforded less opportunity than partnered mothers to undertake other activities such as paid work.

Company variables

Time in the company of children (excluding time when the parent is asleep)

This is shown even more clearly when the variable considered is time spent alone in the company of children. Partnered and sole mothers spend the same amount of time in the company of their children. Both average 12 hours and 20 minutes a day with their kids. However, big differences are apparent in the amount of that time during which they are the only adult present. Partnered fathers spend about 6½ hours a day in the company of their children. Partnered mothers average nearly four hours a day alone with kids; sole mothers over 9½ hours, so a major consequence of not having a partner is that a sole mother is much more often alone with her children than a mother in a couple-headed family. Therefore, the time of a sole mother is more constrained than that of a partnered mother. In ensuring her children are supervised for the same

time as children in couple families, the lone mother is afforded less opportunity than partnered mothers to undertake other activities such as paid work.

However, while are not as deprived of adult company as sole mothers are, the presence of their spouse does not relieve partnered mothers of much of their childcare duty. The ability of sole mothers to match partnered mothers' input to children is because the time that fathers are their children's company is nearly all with their spouse present as well. Partnered fathers average only about three quarters of an hour a day alone with their children. So partnered fathers inputs to childcare provide their spouses with only limited opportunities to enter the paid work force. However, the difference between the average time in paid work between a partnered and a sole mother was identified above to be in the order of an hour a day. Fathers' time input to children is just adequate to explain this difference.

Childfree recreation

Perhaps mitigating the time constraints identified above, sole mothers enjoy more recreation without their children present than do partnered mothers. Partnered mothers get about five minutes a day in childfree leisure. In contrast, lone mothers average nearly 20 minutes a day. A possible explanation is that their greater use of childcare affords them the extra leisure. It is also likely that it reflects the input of non-resident fathers. The ABS time diaries are recorded on only two days, and it is therefore a matter of chance whether those days will coincide with paternal access, but in some cases it will. When non-custodial fathers see their children, it is not usually in the mothers' company. Thus, unlike the case for partnered mothers, in those families in which a non-custodial father maintains contact with his children, sole mothers have quite substantial periods of time in which they completely relieved of direct childcare responsibilities.

3 Discussion

This paper investigates the situation of lone mothers to whom, unless outside help is forthcoming, both the household functions of providing financial support and caring services to their members fall. That sole motherhood is associated with poverty, and that this is most pronounced in the liberal welfare states, including Australia, is well known. But in addition to having fewer financial resources, sole mother households also have half the adult time resources of couple families (Douthitt 1992). This study has looked in detail at the effects this has on the time allocation of lone mothers in Australia. It addresses four hypotheses:

1. With their commitments to both paid and unpaid labour, sole mothers are working longer hours than either single women or partnered mothers.
2. Because sole mothers have no partner to assist with household work and childcare, they do more unpaid labour than partnered mothers.
3. Children of sole mothers are receiving fewer hours of parental care than are children in two parent families.
4. Children of sole mothers are receiving qualitatively different parental care than are children in two parent families.

This study does not find clear support for any of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1, that with their commitments to both paid and unpaid labour, sole mothers are working longer hours than either single women or partnered mothers, is not borne out. Sole mothers' total workloads are less than those of partnered mothers. This is because they do both less domestic labour and less paid work than mothers in couple families. Single women do less housework than women in couples, and this holds true even when children are present in a household. There are greater domestic labour demands upon partnered mothers that presumably reflect the caring services they provide to their husbands. These are not met by a reciprocal increase in their husbands' unpaid labour. So in regard to non-childcare housework, Hypothesis 2, that because sole mothers have no partner to assist with household work and childcare, they do more unpaid labour than partnered mothers, is also disproved.

However, sole mothers do manage to almost match couple families' levels of childcare, largely because fathers' contribution so often overlaps that of their wives. In no type of childcare does partnered mothers' input outweigh that of sole mothers. Lone mothers do more supervisory childcare simultaneously with other tasks than partnered mothers do, and thereby nearly compensate for the absence of a resident father. So this analysis does not support Hypothesis 3, that children of sole parents are receiving fewer hours of parental care than are children in two parent families.

The differences between couple and sole parents households that do pertain are that when the (often simultaneous) input of both parents is counted, children in couple families have 8 minutes a day more physical care, and 13 minutes a day more total interactive care. Also, a slightly higher proportion of their interactive time with parents is as a primary activity. So children of sole mothers receive the same amount of care in terms of hours a day, but a total of 21 minutes day less than children in couple families if both partnered mothers and fathers' care are counted separately. This gives limited support to Hypothesis 4; that the children in sole parent families are receiving qualitatively different parental care than are children in two parent families. Children in couple families do not accumulate longer total hours of parental care, but they have two adults present more often than do the children of single parents. However, unless the simultaneous presence of both parents is seen as a major independent benefit, the results of this analysis should allay fears that the children of sole mothers are inadequately attended to. Also, the high involvement of grandparents and other relatives (who may or may not be the non-custodial father) in the care of children of lone mothers is another source of adult attention to these children.

Broadening the inquiry from childcare activity only, this research also found that sole mothers do not spend a different amount of daily time in the company of their children than couple mothers. What did differ was the amount of time that sole mothers were *alone* with their children. For many more hours a day than are partnered mothers, sole mothers are in the company of their children and no other adult. This indicates a very great constraint on their time. It seems likely that this is a major reason that sole mothers spend fewer hours in paid employment than partnered mothers do. The lower total workload identified above may have some advantages for sole mothers, but insofar as it reflects lower work force participation, it is not necessarily an unalloyed benefit. Lone mothers are not *working* longer or harder than mothers in couple families, but they are not able to leave their children alone. This

time commitment both ensures the children are supervised, and exposes a constraint that provides ample reason for a lower time allocation to paid work.

4 Conclusion

Sole mothers are faced, even more acutely than are mothers in couple headed families, with the competing demands of market and home production. The difficulty of meeting both these important aspects of parental responsibility is reflected in the Australian policy approach to sole mothers, which shows some ambivalence as to whether to prioritise maternal care or financial independence (Gray et al. 2002; McHugh and Millar 1997).

This comparison of time spent by lone mothers and the combined time spent by parents in couple families does not bear out concerns that children of Australian sole mothers are receiving much less time in each of the activities that comprise childcare, or fewer total hours of parental care, than are children in two parent families. Whether it arises from the positive (a desire to parent), or from the negative (that they are excluded from paid work by virtue of their commitments to care), sole mothers in Australia provide their children with very similar amounts and types of care to that available to children in couple families. The paper also shows that being without a partner has some time-related benefits. Sole mothers don't do as much housework as women in couples, and they enjoy more leisure without their children present than do couple mothers. These slight time gains must be placed in context. Australian lone parent households have a poverty rate of 56.2 per cent compared with 7.7 per cent for couple families (LIS 1997), but the exposure of the children of sole mothers to higher rates of poverty is not matched by a parental care deficit. This implies that even in the face of considerable economic deprivation sole parents prioritise their caring function over their earning function.

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Appendix A: Regression Tables

Model 1: Single and partnered people (with and without children)

	Childcare	Domestic labour	Unpaid work	Paid work	Total work (primary)	Total work (primary and secondary)
	B	B	B	B	B	B
Single woman with no children (Constant term)	0.172*	2.703***	2.875***	3.875***	7.193***	7.477***
Single man with no children	0.042	-0.391**	-0.349*	0.640**	0.120	0.104
Single mother with youngest child under 5	2.801***	1.779***	4.580***	-2.526***	2.047***	5.816***
Single mother with youngest child aged 5 to 11	1.326***	1.594***	2.920***	-2.434***	0.513	3.413***
Partnered woman with no children	-0.013	0.995***	0.982***	-0.009	0.758***	0.780**
Partnered man with no children	0.003	-0.595***	-0.592***	1.456***	0.659**	0.521*
Partnered mother with youngest child under 5	3.002***	1.758***	4.760***	-1.836***	2.576***	6.190***
Partnered father with youngest child under 5	0.934***	-0.544**	0.390*	1.354***	1.664***	2.735***
Partnered mother with youngest child aged 5 to 11	1.119***	1.755***	2.874***	-1.046***	1.660***	3.621***
Partnered father with youngest child aged 5 to 11	0.334***	-0.686***	-0.352	-1.918***	1.452***	2.220***
Aged 25-34	-0.024	-0.353***	-0.377***	0.193	-0.119	-0.223
Aged 45-54	-0.058	0.661***	0.603***	-0.764***	-0.262*	-0.289
Has postgraduate qualification	0.296***	-0.134	0.162	-0.211	0.292	0.768**
Has a bachelor degree	0.212***	-0.035	0.177	-0.161	0.340*	0.815***
Has university diploma	0.256***	-0.085	0.167	0.281	0.632***	1.146***
Has skilled vocational qualifications	0.101*	-0.117	-0.016	0.771***	0.747***	0.843***
Has basic vocational qualifications	0.085	-0.111	0.196	0.310	0.569**	0.790**
Total weekly income	0.000***	-0.000***	-0.001***	0.003***	0.002***	0.001***
Disabled person in household	0.040	0.200**	0.240**	-0.617***	-0.369***	-0.460***
Number of children under 15 years in household	0.139***	0.113**	0.253***	-0.153*	0.079	0.221**
Saturday	-0.039	1.080***	1.041***	-3.652***	-2.727***	-2.234***
Sunday	-0.003	0.808***	0.805***	-4.005***	-3.304***	-2.756***
R square	0.455	0.256	0.413	0.300	0.217	0.300

Source: ANS Time Use Survey 1997

* P<.05 ** P<.01 ***P<.0005

Model 2: Sole mothers and mothers with partners (childcare and time in the company of children in hours a day)

	Childcare (primary)	Childcare (primary or secondary)	In the company of children	In the company of children only	Childfree recreation
	B	B	B	B	B
(Constant)	2.953***	6.012***	12.32***	3.894***	0.097
Single parent of dependent children	0.260	1.379**	0.745	5.734***	0.324**
Aged 25-34	0.230*	0.533*	0.314	0.935***	0.047
Aged 45-54	0.077	0.331	0.178	-1.312**	-0.118
Has postgraduate qualification	0.505*	0.944*	0.365	-0.209	-0.193
Has a bachelor degree	0.283	0.906**	-0.013	0.613	-0.030
Has university diploma	0.612***	1.755***	-0.221	0.437	0.033
Has skilled vocational qualifications	0.361**	0.767**	-0.36	-0.279	0.021
Has basic vocational qualifications	0.118	0.253	0.163	0.614	0.069
Usual hours worked by husband/partner.	0.008	0.020**	0.032***	0.065***	0.000
Total weekly income	0.000*	0.000	-0.001***	-0.001*	0.000*
Hours child usually attends day care	-0.027***	-0.064***	-0.090***	-0.045***	0.000
Disabled person in household.	0.007	-0.421	0.076	-0.306	0.120*
Number of children under 15 years in household	0.232***	0.363**	0.319**	-0.21	-0.32
Youngest child aged 5-11	-1.999***	-3.616***	-3.199***	-2.747***	0.389***
Saturday	-0.313*	0.325	1.795***	-1.873***	0.161*
Sunday	-0.451**	0.165	1.942***	-2.368***	-0.094
R square	0.236	0.202	0.229	0.266	0.061

Source: ANS Time Use Survey 1997

* P<.05 ** P<.01 ***P<.0005

Model 3: Fathers with partners (childcare and time in the company of children in hours a day)

	Childcare (primary)	Childcare (primary or secondary)	In the company of children	In the company of children only	Childfree recreation
	B	B	B	B	B
(Constant)	0.869***	1.373***	6.658***	0.783***	0.530**
Aged 25-34	-0.069	-0.220	-0.326	-0.224*	-0.1.2
Aged 45-54	-0.120	-0.306	0.441	0.029	0.193
Has postgraduate qualification	0.359*	1.207***	1.034**	0.629**	-0.439**
Has a bachelor degree	0.342**	1.185***	1.118**	0.096	-0.44**
Has university diploma	0.147	0.583*	0.543	-0.148	-0.176
Has skilled vocational qualifications	0.101	0.271	0.009	0.014	-0.279**
Has basic vocational qualifications	0.009	0.881	0.337	0.004	-0.429
Usual hours worked by wife/partner	0.005*	0.019***	0.018**	0.015***	0.002
Employed part time	0.526**	1.270***	1.561**	0.771***	0.039
Not employed	0.558***	1.472***	3.362***	0.637***	0.467**
Total weekly income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000**	0.000*
Hours child usually attends day care	-0.003	-0.016*	-0.042***	-0.009*	0.002
Disabled person in household.	0.017	0.157	0.567**	0.114	-0.043
Youngest child aged 5-11	-0.672***	-1.192***	-1.343***	-0.545***	0.012
Number of children under 15 years in household	0.027	0.105	-0.029	0.010	0.020
Saturday	0.224*	1.060***	3.921***	0.169	0.322**
Sunday	0.476***	1.644***	5.086***	0.286*	0.031
R square	.099	.135	0.310	0.069	0.034

Source: ANS Time Use Survey 1997

* P<.05 ** P<.01 ***P<.0005

Model 2 continued: Sole mothers and mothers with partners (childcare subcategories in minutes a day)

	Physical care (primary)	Minding children (primary and secondary)	Interactive care (primary)	Interactive (primary and secondary)	Travel and communication (primary)
	B	B	B	B	B
(Constant)	95.166***	205.890***	53.792***	81.682***	4.986
Single parent of dependent children	3.254	53.392*	-6.180	21.556*	13.331**
Aged 25-34	23.796***	26.078	-2.033	-8.024	-1.812
Aged 45-54	2.225	23.494	-2.397	-14.652	-3.377
Has postgraduate qualification	22.891*	25.396	10.866*	24.696	-2.609
Has a bachelor degree	9.234	33.594	6.476	18.705	3.304
Has university diploma	15.837*	89.597***	11.398**	4.786	1.280
Has skilled vocational qualifications	22.759***	34.912*	1.871	2.490	-6.091*
Has basic vocational qualifications	16.270	26.171	3.466	-6.969	-11.974**
Usual hours worked by husband/partner	0.259	0.524	-0.124	0.359	0.356***
Total weekly income	-0.009	-0.018	-0.004	0.009	-0.003
Hours child usually attends day care	-1.320***	-1.819***	-0.299**	-1.230***	0.090
Disabled person in household.	-0.853	-16.702	-5.209*	-13.094*	1.214
Youngest child aged 5-11	-86.781***	-136.934***	-18.231***	-28.968***	2.874
Number of children under 15 years in household	4.798	1.423	-0.905	11.357***	7.939***
Saturday	-7.094	55.693**	2.200	-9.198	-17.688***
Sunday	-5.121	62.491***	-2.019	-16.562*	-24.03***1
R square	.248	.107	.049	.052	.100

Source: ANS Time Use Survey 1997

* P<.05 ** P<.01 ***P<.0005

Model 3 continued: Fathers with partners (childcare subcategories in minutes a day)

	Physical care (primary)	Minding children (primary and secondary)	Interactive care (primary)	Interactive (primary and secondary)	Travel and communication (primary)
	B	B	B	B	B
(Constant)	8.131	48.355**	25.877***	34.815***	-0.405
Aged 25-34	2.901	-19.947*	1.122	1.531	-0.828
Aged 45-54	-0.937	-15.502	-4.052	-5.622	0.823
Has postgraduate qualification	2.150	49.833**	9.128	20.235**	3.166
Has a bachelor degree	11.244**	42.062**	9.024**	17.358**	2.143
Has university diploma	3.873	23.933	6.692	9.136	-0.995
Has skilled vocational qualifications	0.805	11.945	2.439	3.057	1.209
Has basic vocational qualifications	9.236	33.946	-1.962	9.011	-5.284
Usual hours worked by wife/partner	0.146*	0.827**	0.002	0.075	0.093*
Employed part time	11.879**	51.951**	7.059	10.824	1.747
Not employed	8.155*	61.306***	17.765***	19.250**	4.188
Total weekly income	0.005	0.018	0.002	0.004	-0.001
Hours child usually attends day care	-0.005	-0.883**	-0.076	-0.175	0.116
Disabled person in household.	3.242	3.005	-3.213	-0.262	2.127
Youngest child aged 5-11	-18.449***	-47.130***	-13.431***	-14.542**	1.243
Number of children under 15 years in household	2.798*	0.847	-2.448	0.574	2.306**
Saturday	4.467	46.804***	4.879	16.332**	-1.149
Sunday	6.851*	65.535***	14.344***	29.574***	-1.078
R square	.086	.080	.075	.055	.024

Source: ANS Time Use Survey 1997

* P<.05 ** P<.01 ***P<.0005

Base OLS Regression Model (adults aged 25-54)

Dependent variables (hours per day)	Mean	Standard deviation	Number
Household time spent in childcare	2.08	2.63	1210
Household time spent in unpaid work	8.50	4.20	1210
Household time spent in total work (paid and unpaid) as a primary activity	17.93	5.39	1210
Male time spent in unpaid work	2.71	2.67	2067
Male time spent in total work (paid and unpaid) as a primary activity	9.23	3.86	2067
Male time spent in paid and unpaid work as either a primary or a secondary activity	10.34	4.09	2067
Female time spent in unpaid work	6.08	3.45	2207
Female time spent in total work (paid and unpaid) as a primary activity	8.87	3.33	2207
Female time spent in total work as either a primary or a secondary activity	11.39	4.79	2207
Mothers time spent in childcare (primary)	2.50	2.17	1708
Mothers time spent in childcare as either a primary or secondary activity ♦	5.86	4.28	1708
Fathers time spent in childcare (primary)	0.97	1.35	1459
Fathers time spent in childcare as either a primary or secondary activity	2.12	2.09	1459

♦ For regressions comparing partnered and solo mothers only

Independent variables of interest

Single man with no children (yes=1)
 Single mother with youngest child under 5 (yes=1)
 Single mother with youngest child aged 5 to 11 (yes=1)
 Partnered woman with no children (yes=1)
 Partnered man with no children (yes=1)
 Partnered mother with youngest child under 5 (yes=1)
 Partnered father with youngest child under 5 (yes=1)
 Partnered mother with youngest child aged 5 to 11 (yes=1)
 Partnered father with youngest child aged 5 to 11 (yes=1)
 Single mother (yes=1) ♦

♦ For regressions comparing partnered and solo mothers only

Independent variables

Aged 25-34(yes=1)
 Aged 45-54 (yes=1)
 Total weekly household income (mean=\$A1003 Standard Deviation= \$A474)
 Postgraduate qualification (yes=1)
 Bachelor degree (yes=1)
 University diploma (yes=1)
 Skilled vocational qualifications (yes=1)
 Basic vocational qualifications (yes=1)
 Disabled person in household (yes=1)
 Hours a week child spends in day care
 Both diary days weekend (yes=1)
 Diary from Saturday and weekday (yes=1)
 Diary from Sunday and weekday (yes=1)
 Number of children under 15 years in household
 Youngest child is aged 5-11 (yes=1) ♦

♦ For regressions comparing partnered and solo mothers only