

Introduction

There is a long line of research on income poverty measures, but far less research examines the phenomenon of time poverty. Individuals can be time poor and not have enough discretionary time to engage in leisure, physical, and other activities that improve their wellbeing. Understanding time deficits and inequalities is a critical social question because of the association between time pressures and negative physical and psychological outcomes.

The issue of time scarcity is particularly pertinent to women and their relationship status. Women's competing burdens of market work, household work, and family caregiving is associated with gender gaps in the quantity of leisure as well as market wages. Single parent households can suffer from severe time deficits because of the lack of economic and family caregiving support provided by a partner.

With demographic shifts, including high rates of divorce and increases in nonmarital childbearing, children are more likely to be living in single parent households. Researchers and policy makers have traditionally focused on economic constraints that unpartnered mothers face, but it has been argued that single mothers face severe time deficits (Vickery, 1977). Without a partner, single women must balance work and family commitments and perhaps at the cost of time with their children.

Time is a finite resource and time shortages can result because of family structure, living arrangements, or economic constraints. This paper extends the burgeoning literature on time poverty by measuring time poverty among women and their time poverty gaps using data from the American Time Use Survey (2003-2010). I investigate time poverty gaps using all available waves of the American Time Use Survey (ATUS). Specifically, I address the following questions: (a) What are the time poverty gaps (in minutes) for parents by subgroups defined by

employment status and marital status?; (b) For these subgroups, are there differences in time poverty gaps by income quintiles?; (c) Among single mothers, are there differences in time poverty gaps among mothers who live with and without other family members?

Time poverty, child-care time, family structure

The essence of measuring time poverty is to capture the deprivation of leisure time that results from a disproportionate amount of time spent working, either in the paid labor market or in unpaid domestic work. There is little discussion regarding a ‘standard’ measure of time poverty. Although, most techniques construct time budgets on “four kinds of time”, including contracted, committed, necessary, and leisure/free time (As, 1978). There are no well-established procedures to measure time poverty. Vickery’s (1977) seminal work on measuring time poverty was based on developing a method to incorporate the concept of time poverty into the construction of income poverty thresholds. Vickery’s framework was updated by Douthitt (1993) who shed light on the prevalence of time poverty for different types of households in Canada, and later developed by Harvey and Mukhopadhyay (2007), who estimated time-adjusted income poverty thresholds and rates for single and dual parent Canadian families. Both studies find high levels of time deficit among employed single parent households and that time poverty exacerbates problems generated by income poverty. Neither of these studies addressed subgroup differences between one and two parent families and both studies were limited in explaining trends since they utilized cross-sectional data.

Other researchers have developed stand-alone measures of time poverty. For example, Bittman (2002) measured time poverty using 50% of median free time. Bardasi and Wodon (2006) studied time poverty in Guinea and used a relative standard, which privileged contracted time. Both Bittman (2004) and McGinnity and Russell (2007) measured time poverty using 60%

of median uncommitted time, which included a combination of both personal and free time. The latter group of researchers creates thresholds for both weekdays and weekends and finds women to have significantly less free time along with self-employed individuals, parents of young children, and family caregivers.

This paper uses measures constructed from earlier work and applies an absolute measure similar to Kalenkoski, Hamrick, and Andrews (2010). The measure constructed in my analysis departs from previous absolute measures by imputing sleep for individuals. This is to be mindful that individuals, in particular parents, may draw upon sleep to increase their discretionary time or to protect time in market work or childcare.

Preliminary Results

Results show that single mothers and dual working parents who work fulltime are furthest below the time poverty line. Mothers in the second and third income quintiles have the largest time poverty gap. Further analysis will examine differences among single mothers who live with and without other family members.