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# Tiger Mother: A Professor and Mother's Reaction

# *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother by Amy Chua*

From her WSJ article “Why Chinese Mothers are Superior” (1/8/2011)

A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it. Here are some things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:

- attend a sleepover
- have a playdate
- be in a school play
- complain about not being in a school play
- watch TV or play computer games
- choose their own extracurricular activities
- get any grade less than an A
- not be the No. 1 student in every subject except gym and drama
- play any instrument other than the piano or violin
- not play the piano or violin.



# Today's Presentation

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Using time diary studies to analyze whether there is a “Tiger Mom” effect.

If I have time, I will also talk about long-run trends in time spent on childcare

# Roadmap

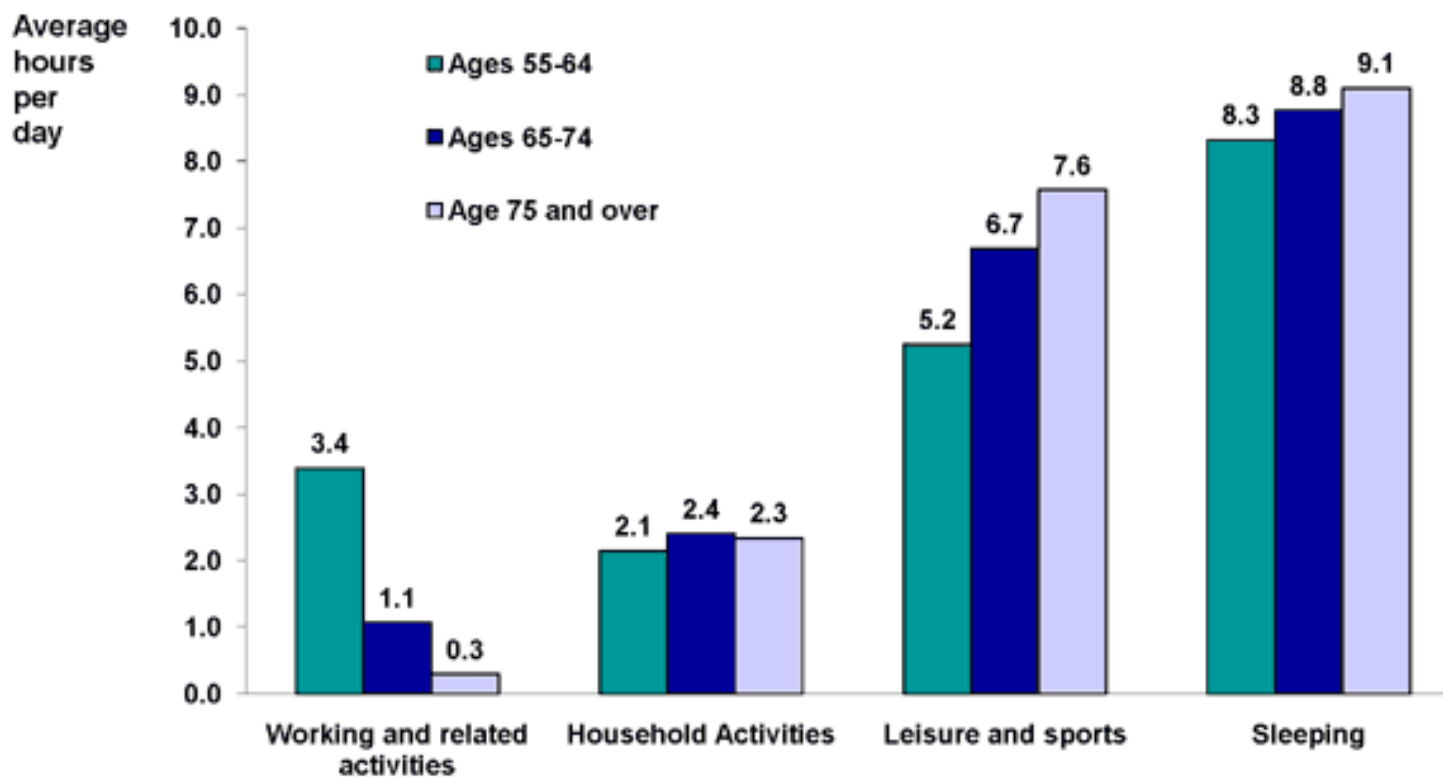
- **Description of time diary studies**
- **Differences across ethnic groups in the 2000s**
- **Does this time investment affect children's outcomes?**
  - Circumstantial evidence: Test scores in California schools
- **Trends in time spent with children – all ethnic groups combined**

# What are time diaries?

- Time Diaries have been used in a series of studies spanning at least 100 years and over many countries.
- US Department of Agriculture surveyed thousands of farm wives in the 1920s and 1930s; Academic researchers conducted studies from the 1960s through the 1990s.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics started collecting data in 2003, based on its survey of households for measuring unemployment.

Interview people about what they did the previous day

## Hours per day that individuals age 55 and over spent doing selected activities



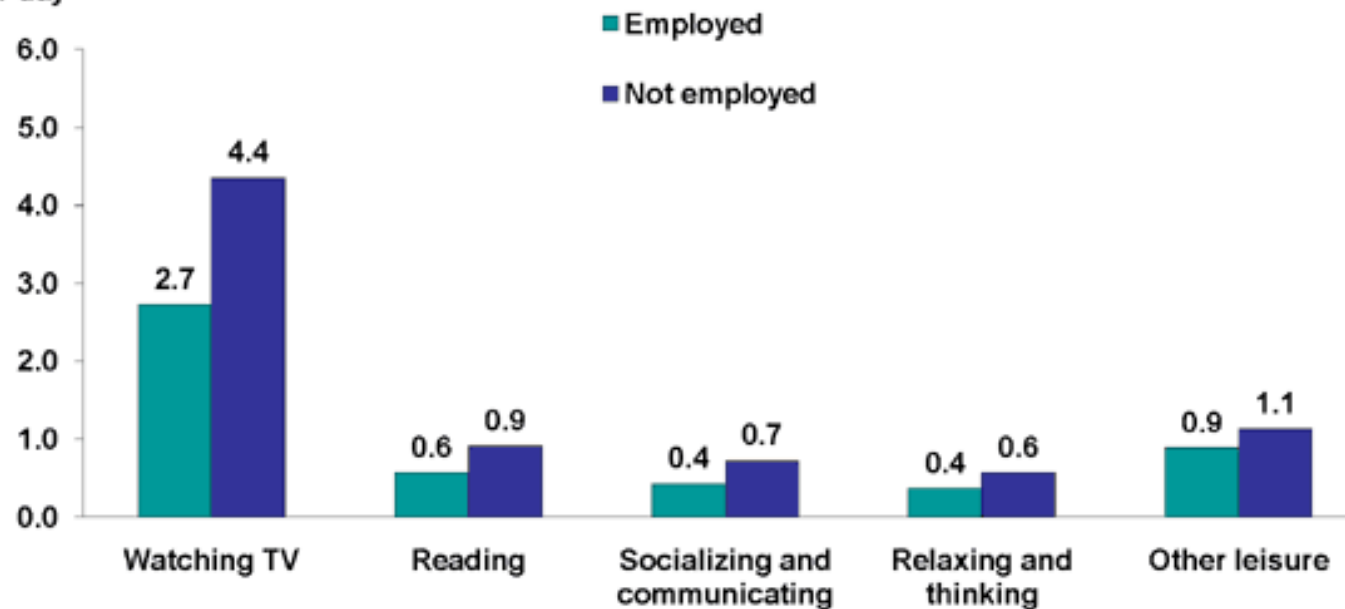
NOTE: Data include all days of the week and are averages for 2005-09.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Leisure time of individuals age 65 and over: employed vs. not employed

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Average hours  
per day



NOTE: Data include all days of the week and are annual averages for 2009. Other leisure includes travel related to leisure.

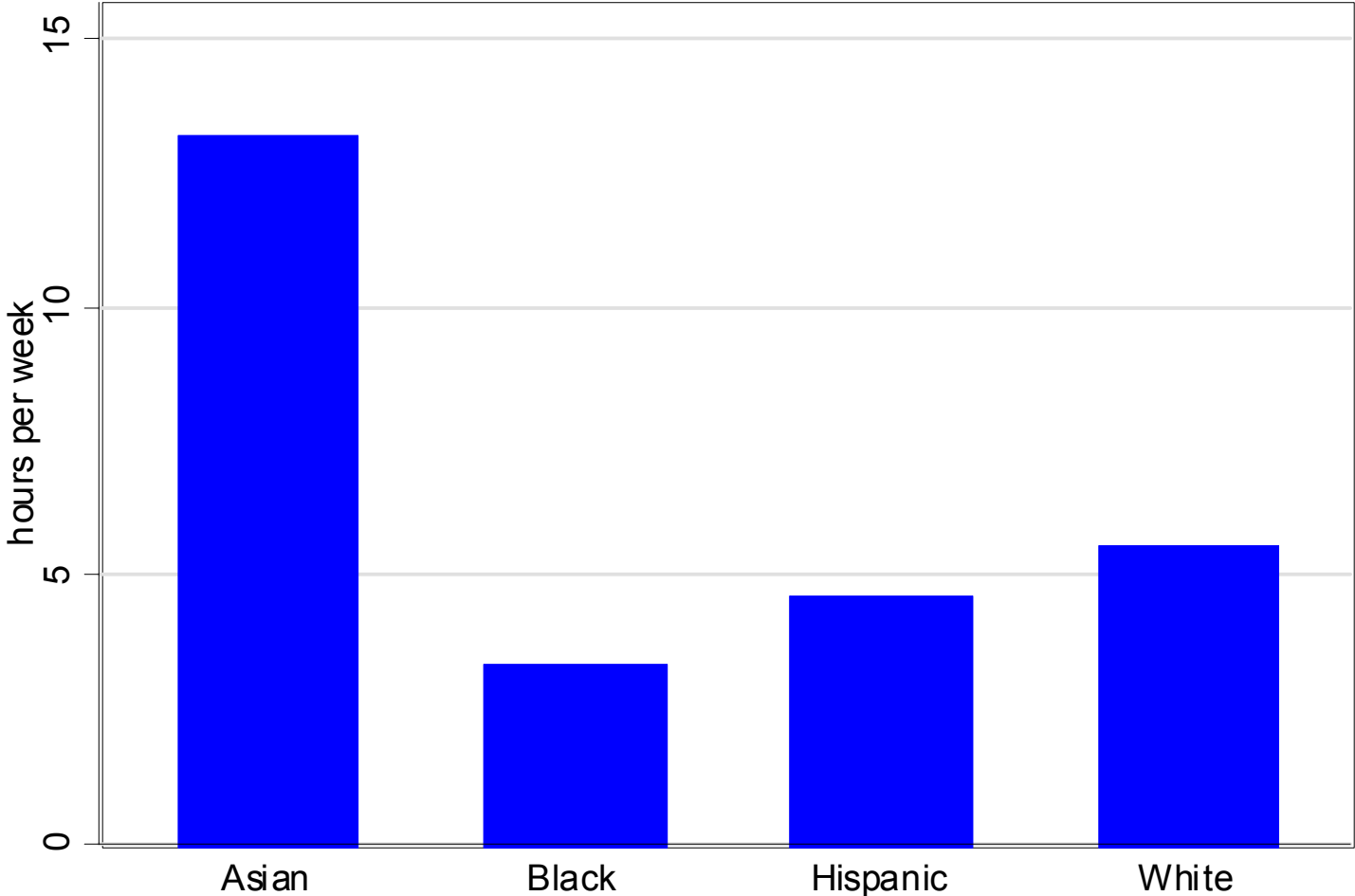
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Are there Tiger Mother effects in the time use data?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics Surveys from 2003-2009 include a nationally representative sample of individuals from ages 15 and up.

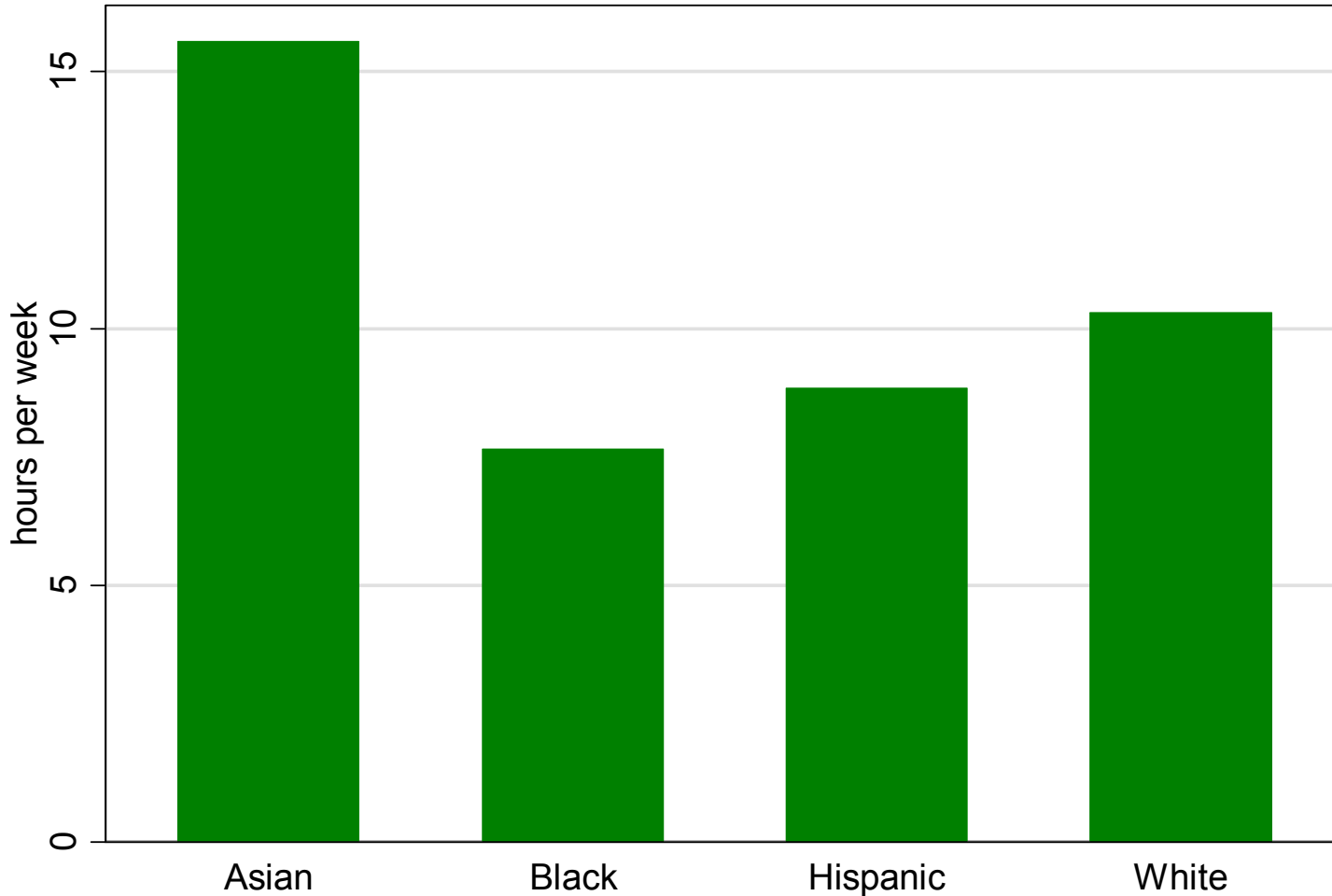
Let's look at how much time full-time students spend on schoolwork

# Time Spent Doing Homework by High School Students



Weekly hours, averaged over entire year

## Time Spent Doing Homework by College Students



Weekly hours, averaged over entire year

# Summary

- Asian kids are spending a lot of time studying!
- Thus, we certainly see a “Tiger Mom” effect in the data.
- There are only 168 hours in a week. What are they giving up?

## High School Student: Hours per Week

All Backgrounds (\* denotes diff from White at 5%)

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
<b>Class</b>	24.0	22.9	25.0	23.4
<b>Homework</b>	13.1*	3.4*	4.7*	5.6
<b>Work</b>	2.4*	4.1*	3.1*	5.8
<b>Chores</b>	4.7	4.5*	5.7	5.9

**High School Students: Hours per Week**  
**All Backgrounds (\* denotes diff from White at 5%)**

	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>
<b>Socialize</b>	5.0*	7.5	8.1	7.7
<b>TV</b>	13.6	17.6*	15.6*	13.7
<b>Computer</b>	8.5*	5.1	4.7	5.6
<b>Sports</b>	3.5*	6.0	4.8	5.1

**High School Students: Hours per Week**  
**All Backgrounds (\* denotes diff from White at 5%)**

	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>
<b>Music</b>	1.2	1.0	0.9*	1.3
<b>Volunteer</b>	2.2	1.3	1.5	1.8
<b>Leisure</b>	34.8	40.2*	38.3	38.2
<b>Sleep</b>	63.1	67.2*	65.3	63.9

# Do Asian parents spend more time on childcare than other parents?

## Total Childcare

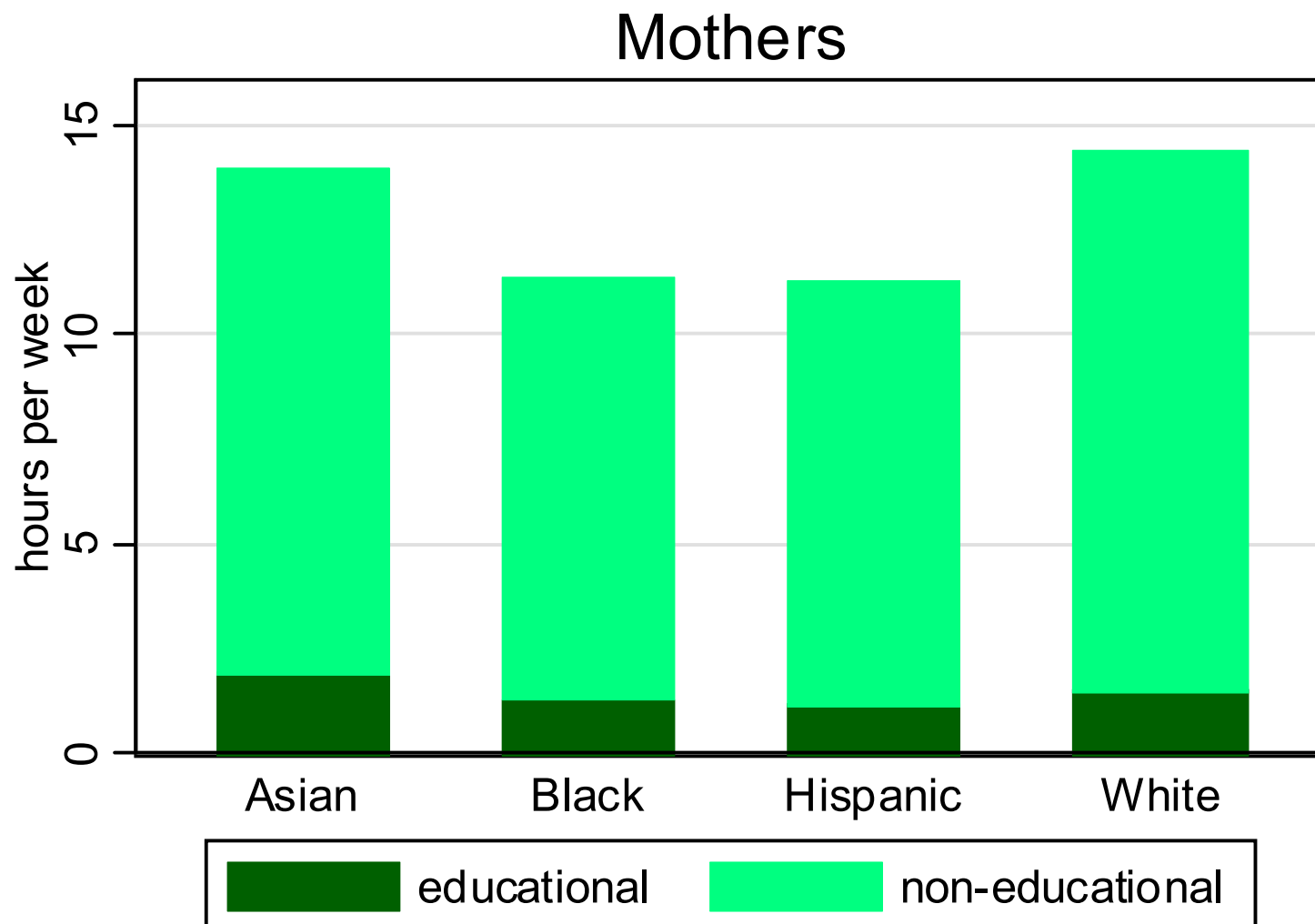
Basic childcare, helping, organizing activities, teaching, talking, reading, playing with, medical care, dealing with day care providers, general travel related to childcare

## Educational Childcare

All activities related to child's education – helping with homework, meeting with teacher, attending, reading to child.

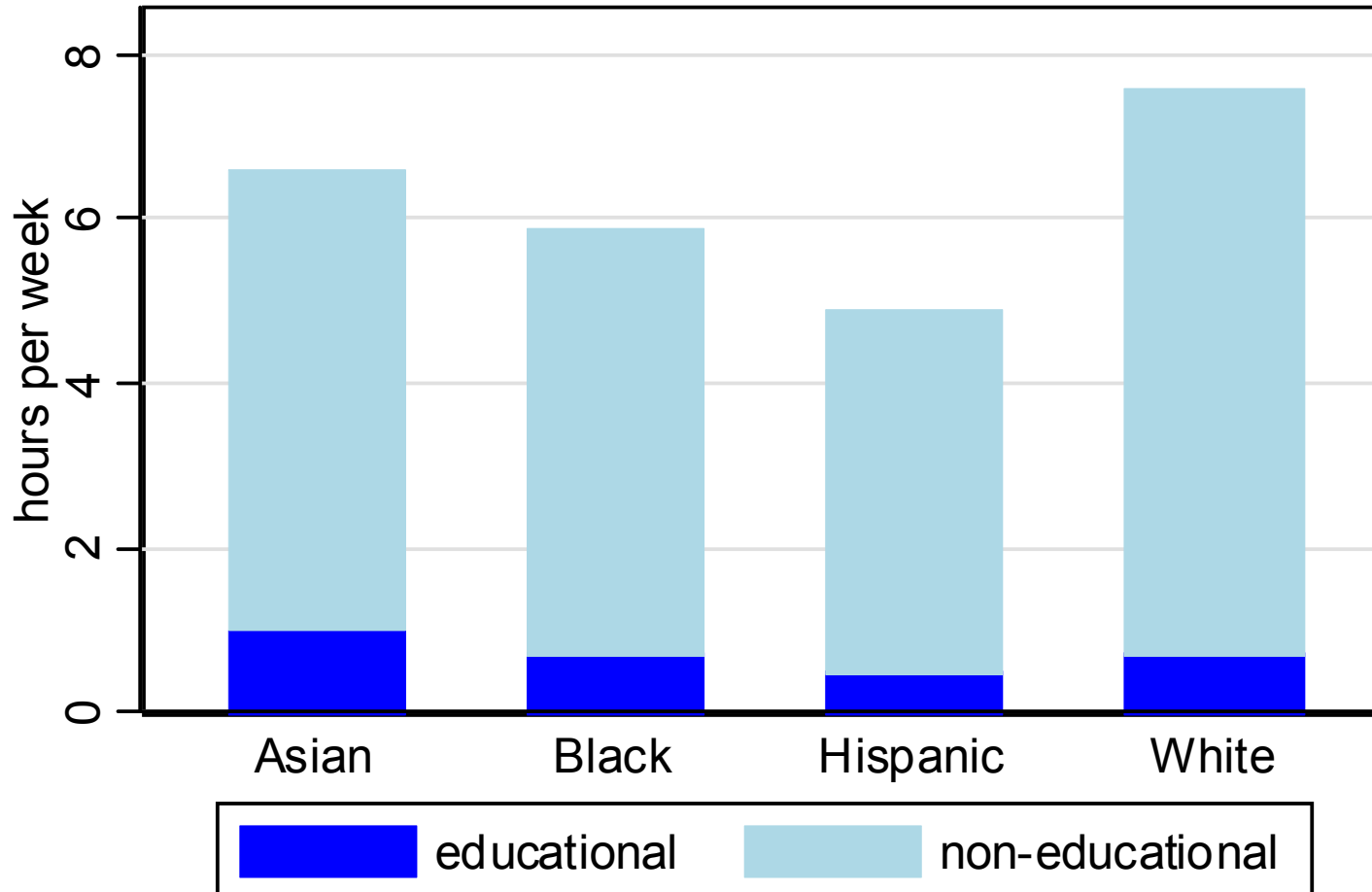
All estimates control for age of the parent, whether they have a college degree, the age of the youngest child, the number of children, whether the parent is married. Years 2003-2009. Parents ages 25-34.

# Weekly Hours Spent on Childcare as a Primary Activity



# Weekly Hours Spend on Childcare as a Primary Activity

## Fathers

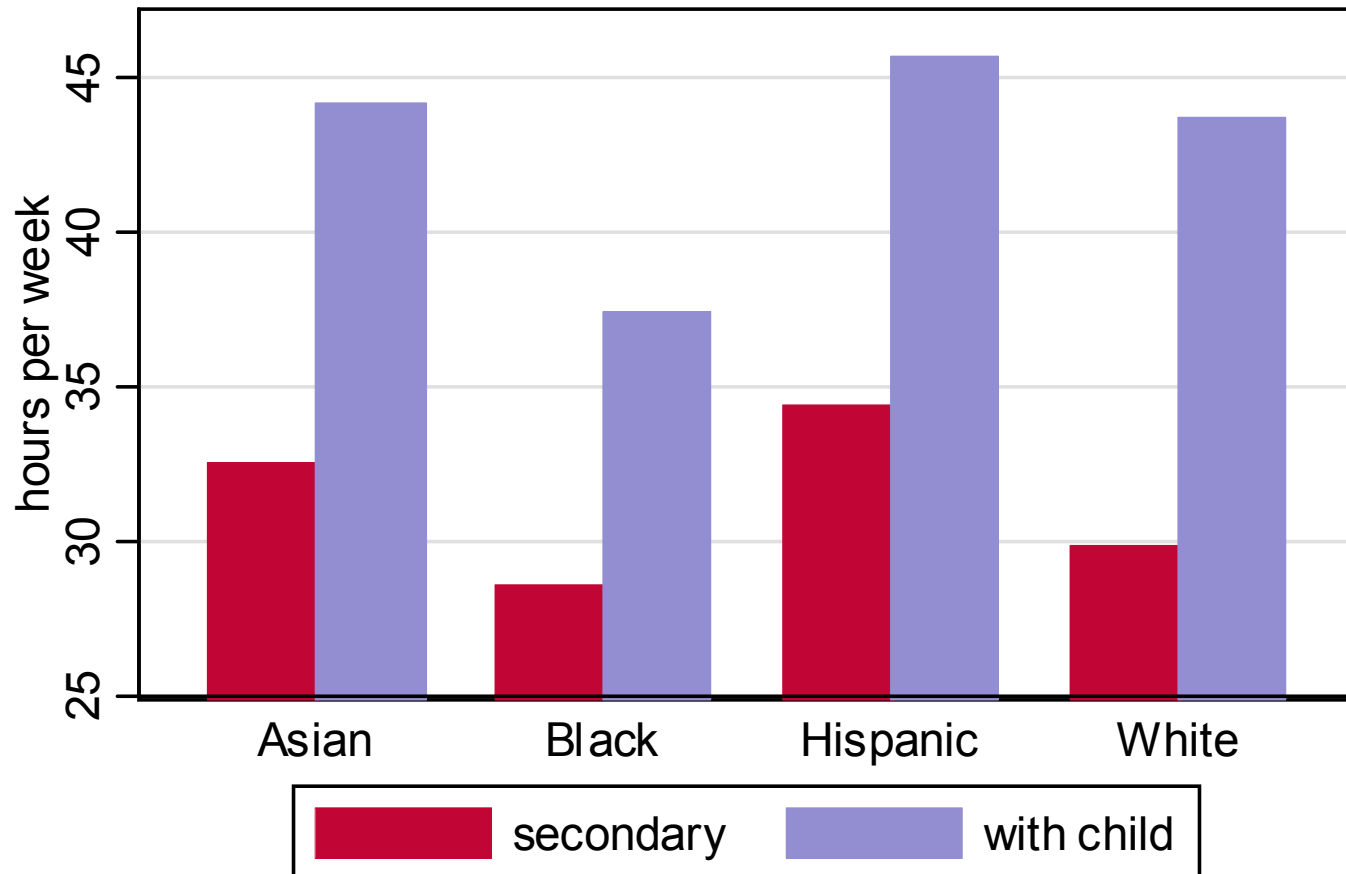


## Perhaps we should think of childcare more broadly

- Childcare as a secondary activity
- Time spent with children

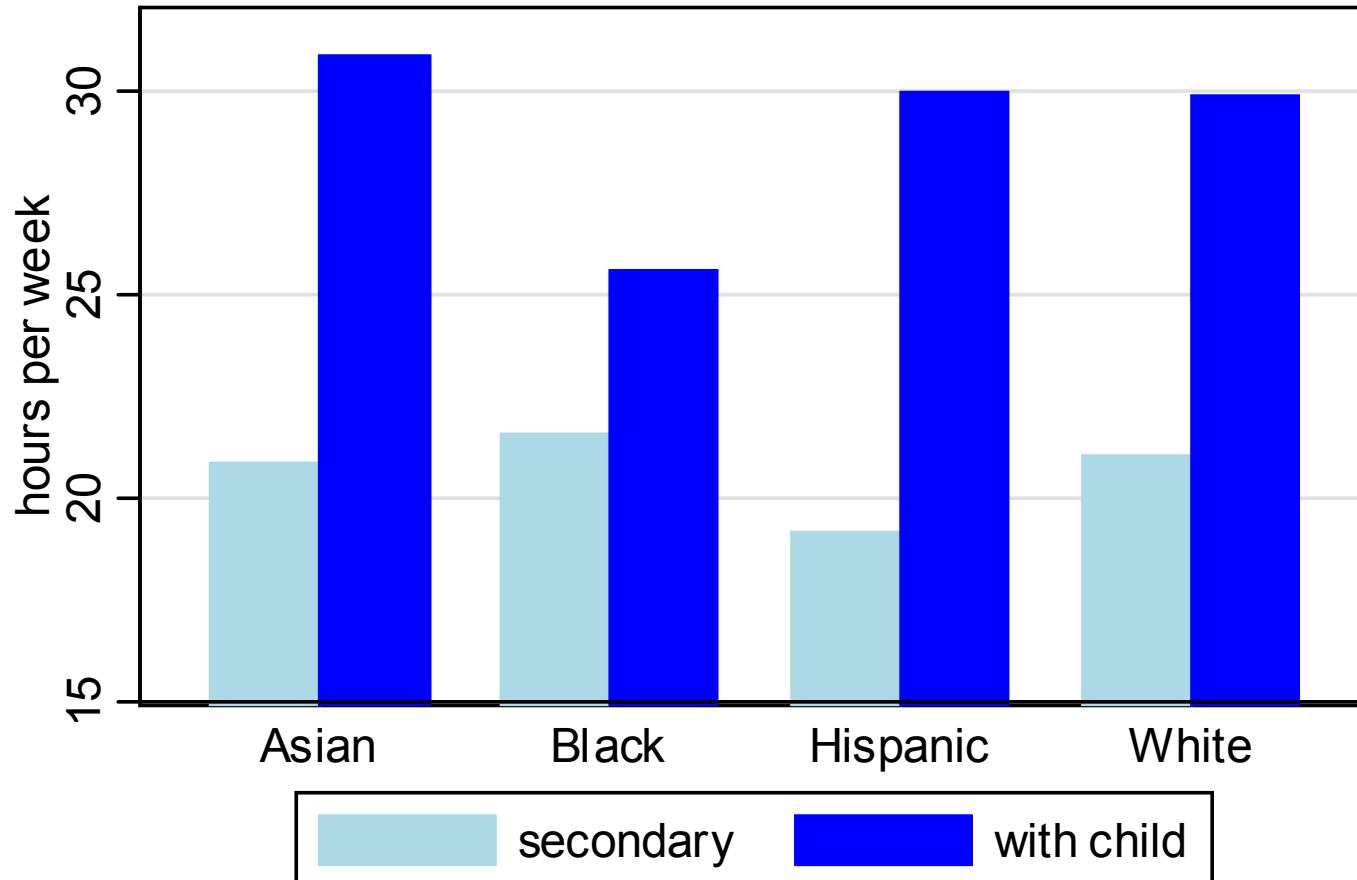
# Secondary Childcare and Time Spent in the Presence of Children

## Mothers



# Secondary Childcare and Time Spent in the Presence of Children

## Fathers



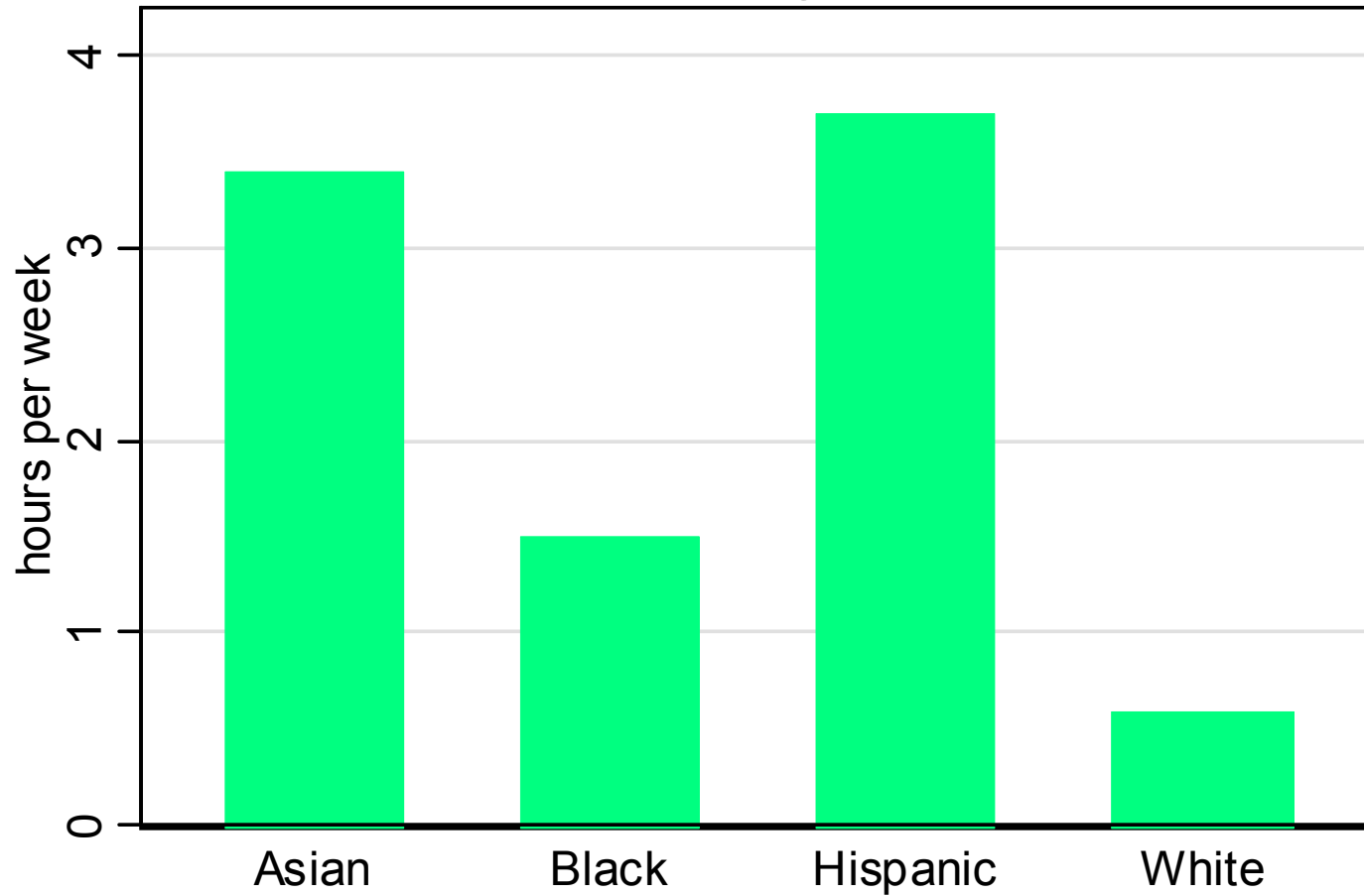
# Extended Family Inputs

- How does grandparent time with children differ across ethnic groups?
- The surveys do not tell me who has grandchildren.
- However, the surveys do indicate when an individual was spending time with a grandchild.
- Problem: the # of children 0-18 per person 60+ differs across ethnic groups:

Asian: 1.87    Black: 2.58    Hispanic: 4.35    White: 1.06

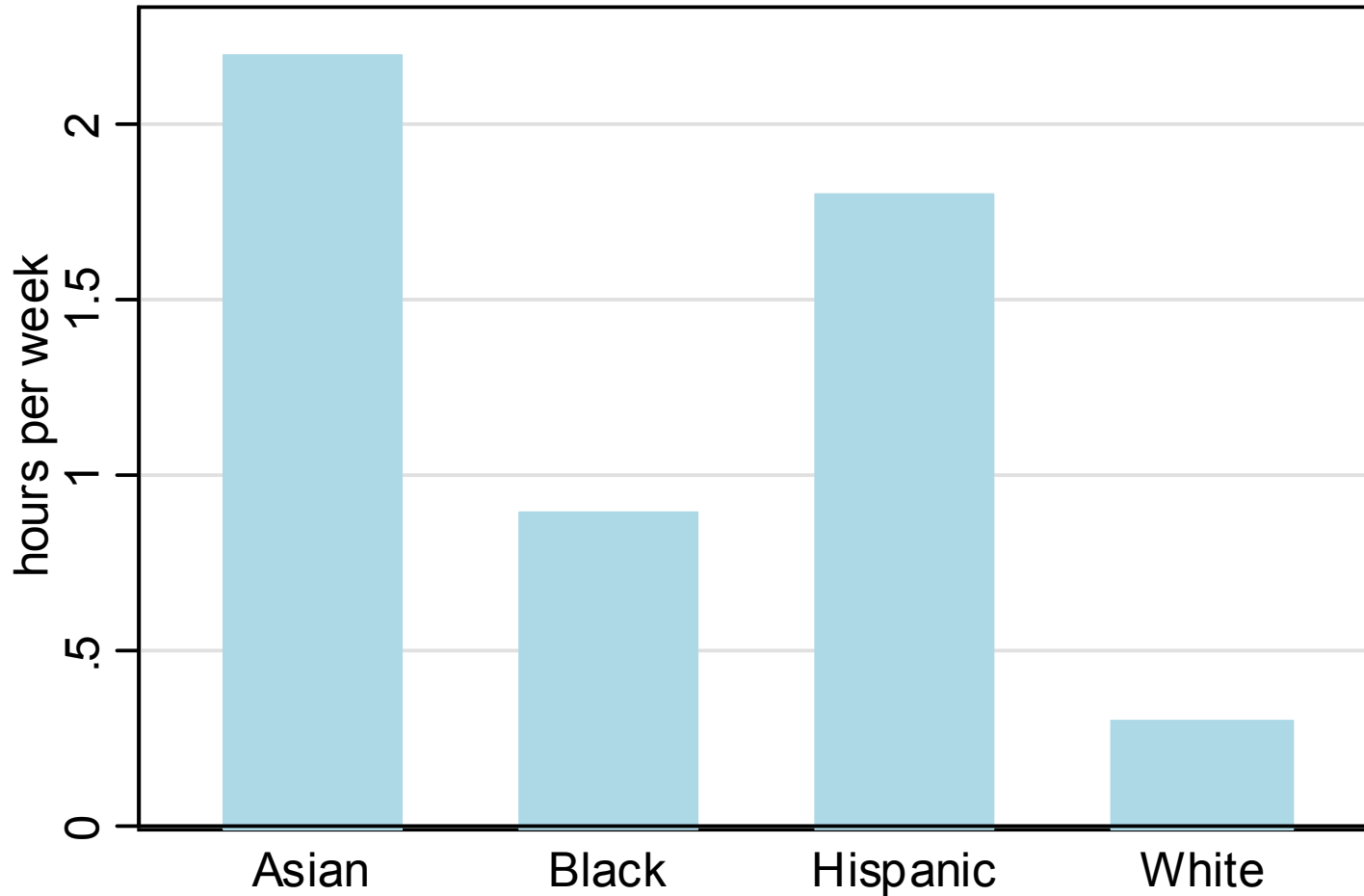
# Time Spent with Grandchildren

Women Ages 60+



# Time Spent with Grandchildren

Men Ages 60+



# Summary

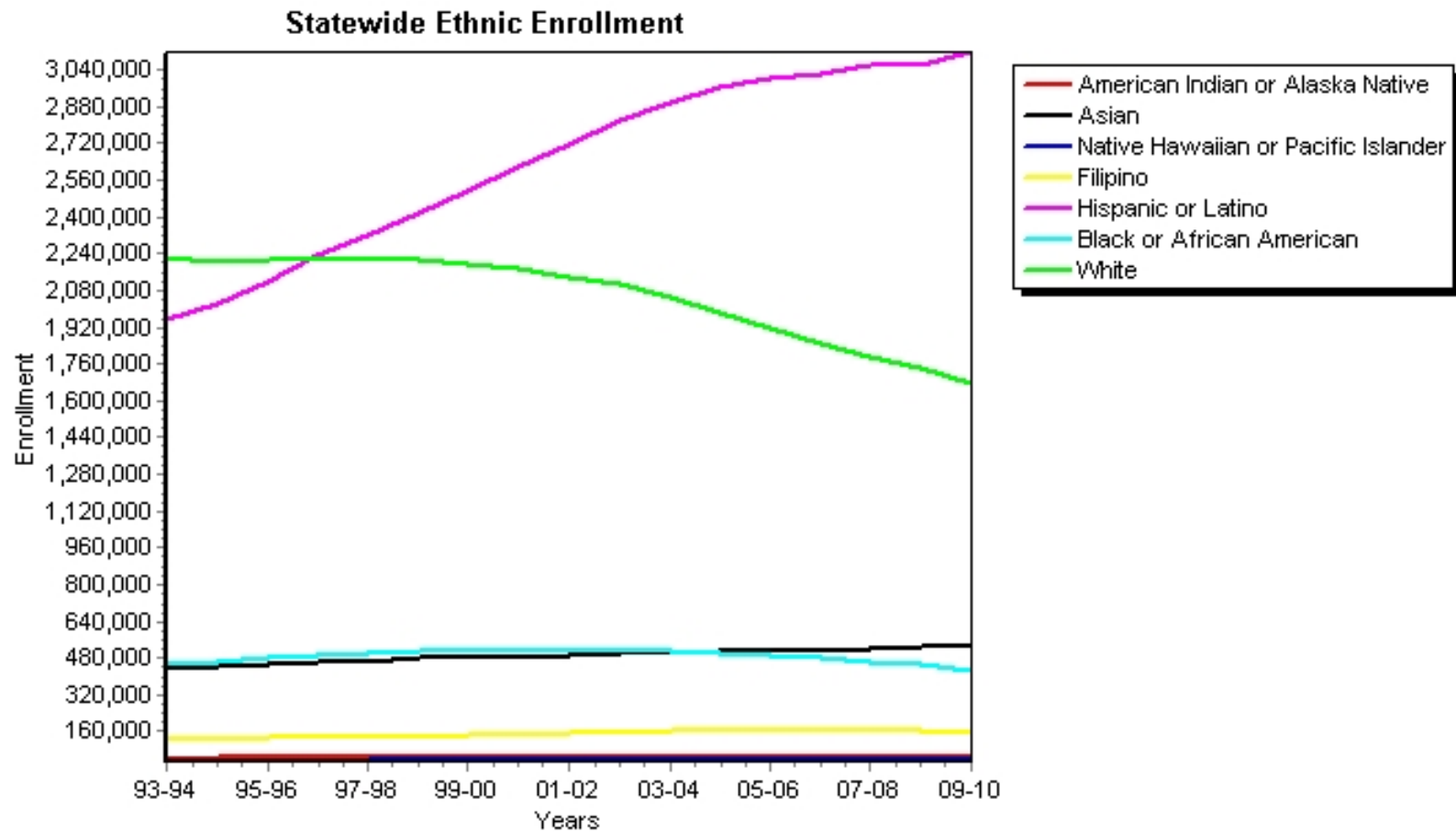
- Asian kids are spending a lot more time studying, but less time on sports and work.
- Asian mothers spend ½ hour more per week on educational activities, but not more time on childcare overall.
- Asian mothers spend 2.7 hours more per week on secondary childcare
- Older Asians spend more time with grandchildren than any other ethnic group.

**Does all of this time allocation show up  
in academic achievement?**

Evidence from California

# California K-12 Public Schools Enrollment

Total enrollment: 6,190,425



## Some Surprising Data from California

Group	% of high school graduates	% of Admits to the Univ. of Calif.	% of Admits to UCSD
White	36	34	28
Black	7	4	2
Hispanic	41	20	14
Asian/Filipino/PI	15	33	46

Data from 2009

# Test Scores in California K-12 Public Schools

- I have data on test scores by group from 8,969 schools.
- Mean scaled score: 334.7
- Standard deviation across individual students:
- 61 in English scores, 73 in Math, 53 in Science

**Mean Scores Relative to Whites**  
**(within school differences)**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Disadvantaged Students</b>	<b>Not Disadvantaged Students</b>
<b>Black</b>	-24.6	-28.4
<b>Hispanic</b>	-16.2	-22.1
<b>Asian</b>	20.7	25.9

**Mean Scaled Math Scores Relative to Whites  
(within school differences)**

	<b>Disadvantaged</b>	<b>Not Disadvantaged</b>
<b>Black</b>	-24.8	-31.4
<b>Hispanic</b>	-11.0	-23.0
<b>Asian</b>	34.3	40.1

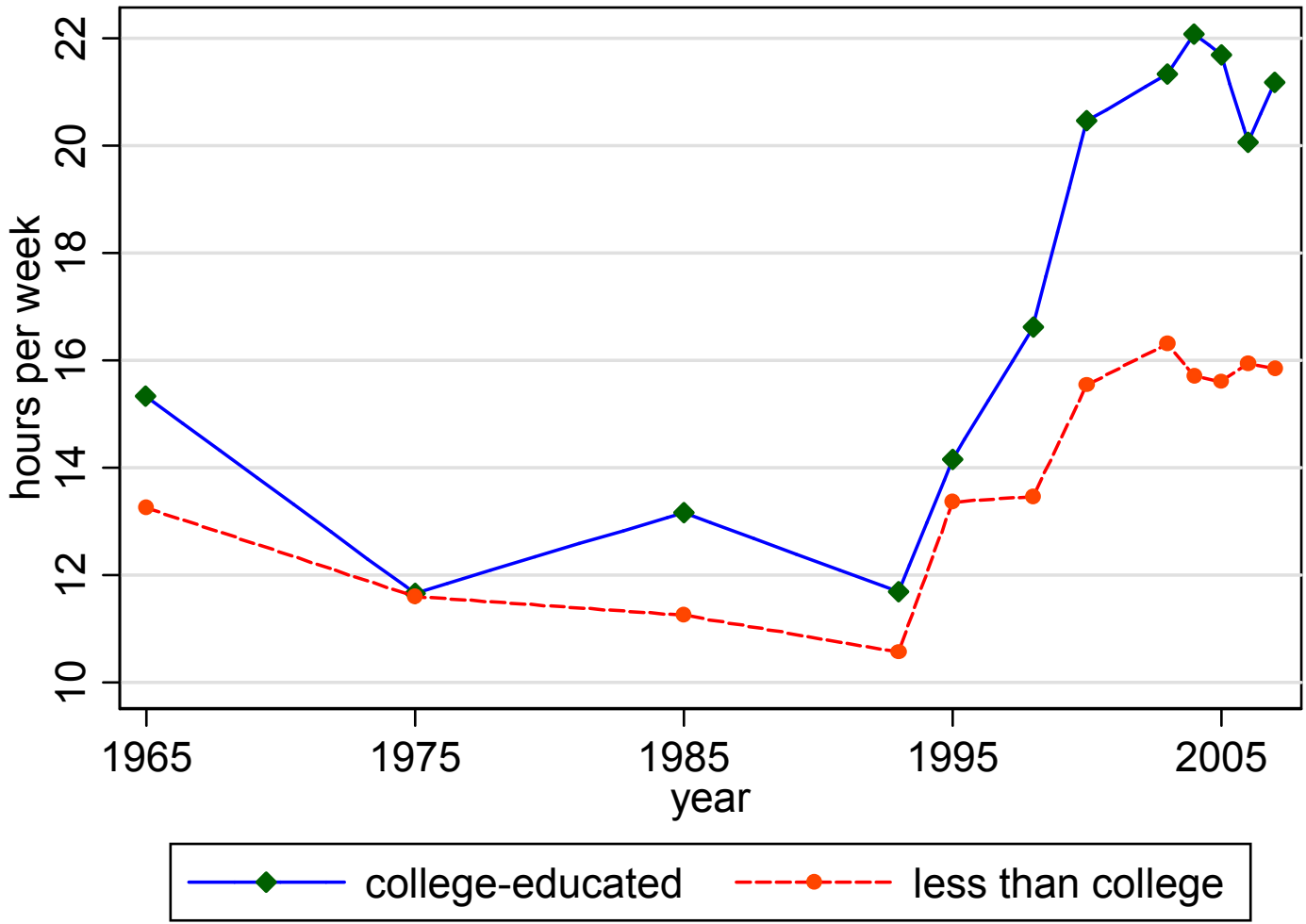
## Summary of California Results

- **The gap in test scores between Asians and Whites is almost as big as between Whites and Blacks**
- **Given these test scores in K-12, it is not surprising that Asians are over-represented in UC admissions.**
- **Million \$ question: Could we raise test scores if we could somehow teach all parents to be “Tiger Mothers”**

## Long-Run Trends in Time Spent on Childcare

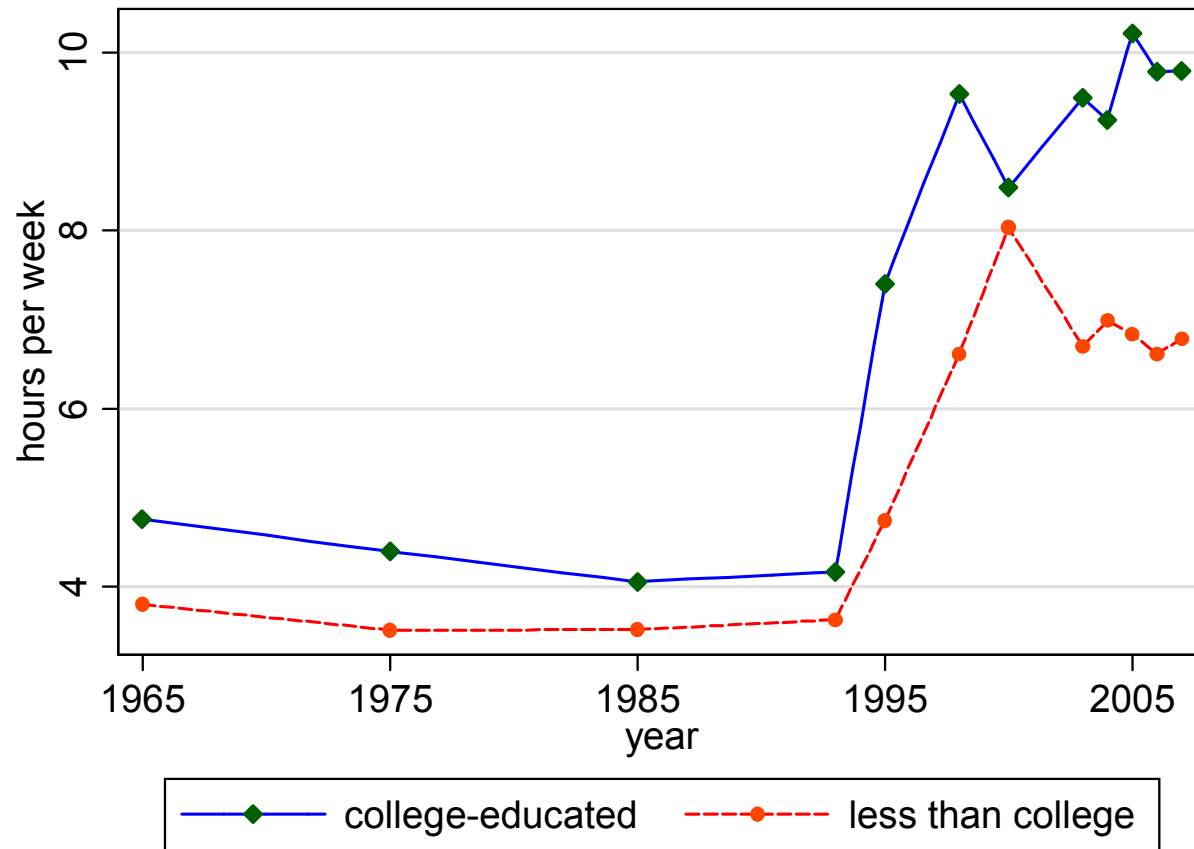
- Does it seem that your children are spending much more time raising their children than you did?
- You aren't imagining it, as my paper with Garey Ramey "The Rug Rat Race" confirms.

# Weekly Childcare by Mothers (Ages 25 – 34)



Based on Ramey & Ramey "The Rug Rat Race"

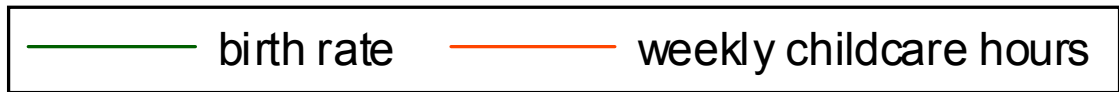
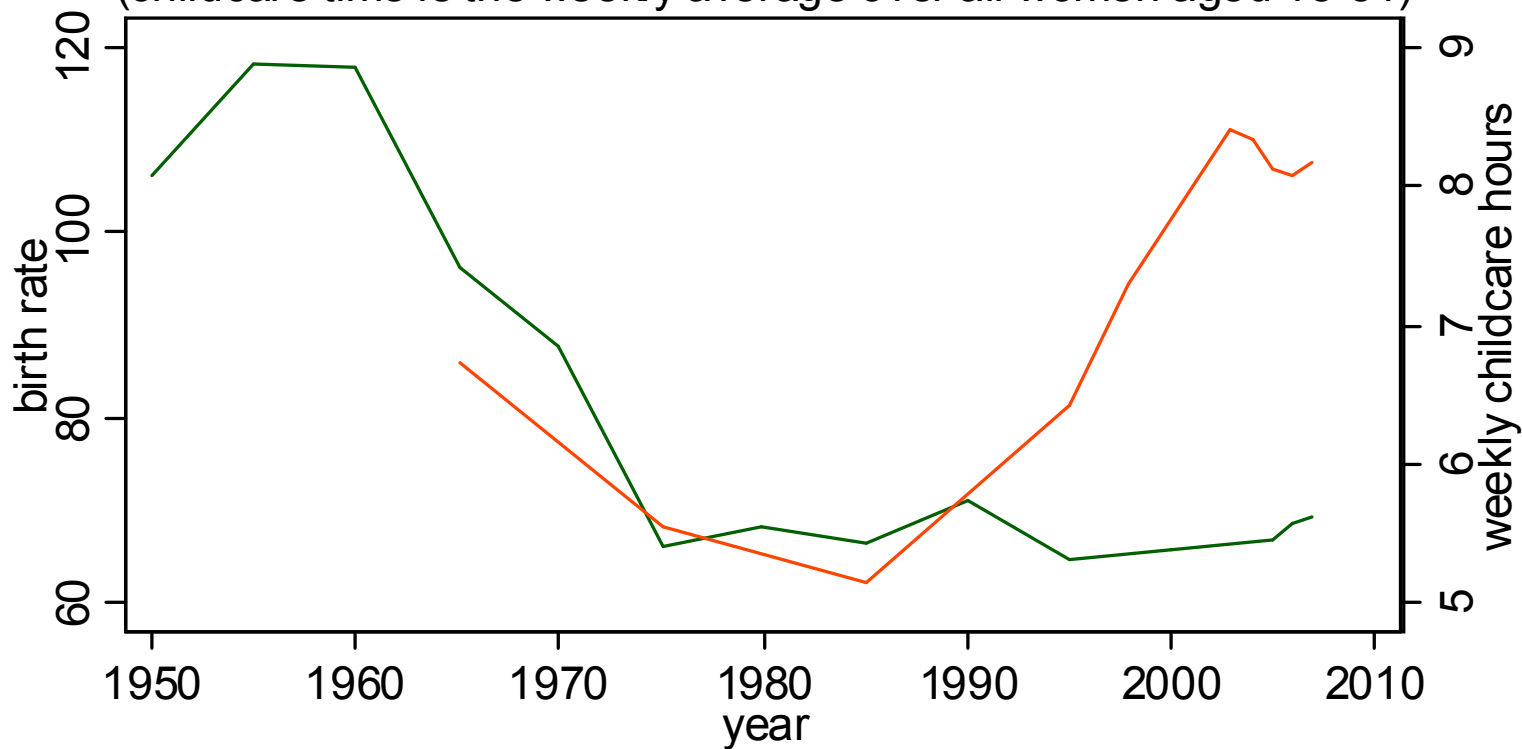
## Weekly Childcare by Fathers (Ages 25-34)



Based on Ramey & Ramey "The Rug Rat Race"

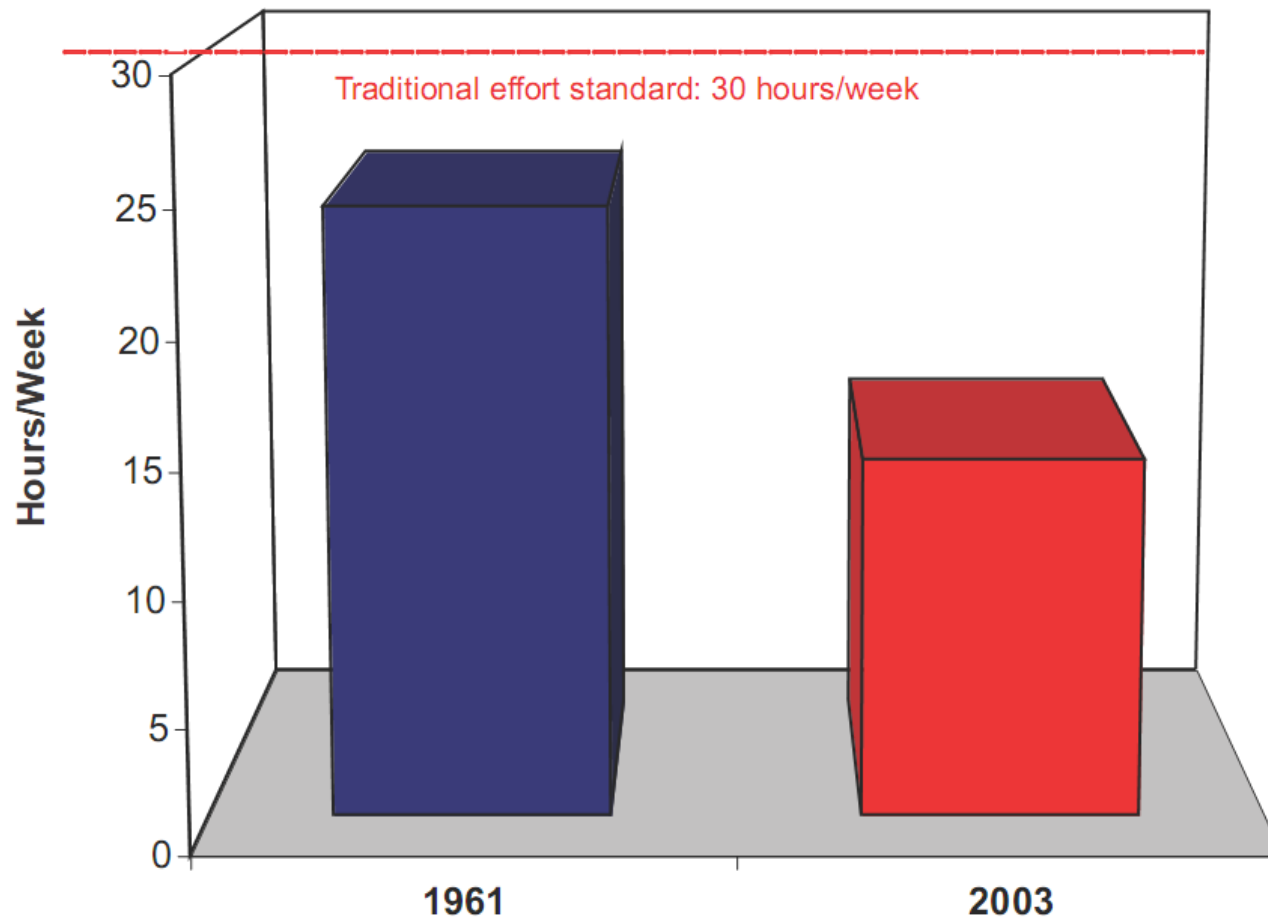
# Trends in Fertility and Childcare Time

(childcare time is the weekly average over all women aged 18-54)



But college students are spending less time on studying  
(Based on study by Babcock and Marks)

AVERAGE STUDY TIME FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS  
AT FOUR-YEAR U.S. COLLEGES, 1961 AND 2003



# Conclusions

- Yes, there is a “Tiger Mother” effect in the data.
- Both across ethnic groups and over time, there is no apparent relationship between the time parents spend on primary childcare and the amount of time children spend studying.