

Changing Times

How Americans spend their day reflects a shifting economy and population

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Americans are sleeping more and working less

Americans overall are working less and sleeping more than they were a decade ago, trends that point to an aging population and fewer people in the workforce. But among those who have a job, people are working more. And in general, men spend more time than women on leisure activities, while women sleep about a half-hour more each day.

The annual American Time Use Survey, released on Friday from the Labor Department, breaks down how Americans spend their days (<http://www.bls.gov/tus/>) by a number of characteristics, including employment status, gender, age and whether children are in the home.

The average American spent 3 hours and 32 minutes a day working or commuting to work last year, including weekends. That's down from 3 hours and 42 minutes in 2005 and is four minutes less than in 2014.

(<http://www.wsj.com/articles/were-working-more-hours-and-watching-more-tv-1435187603>)

Meanwhile, Americans slept an average of 8 hours and 50 minutes a day in 2015, 13 minutes more than a decade earlier and two minutes more than in 2014. Leisure time—5 hours and 13 minutes a day on activities including watching television, socializing and exercise—fell by five minutes from 2014 but is still five minutes more than a decade earlier.

“Individuals who are out of the labor force, either because they’re discouraged from finding a job or are in poor health, are sleeping more and reducing the overall time Americans work,” said Liana Sayer, director of the Time Use Laboratory at the University of Maryland.

Overall

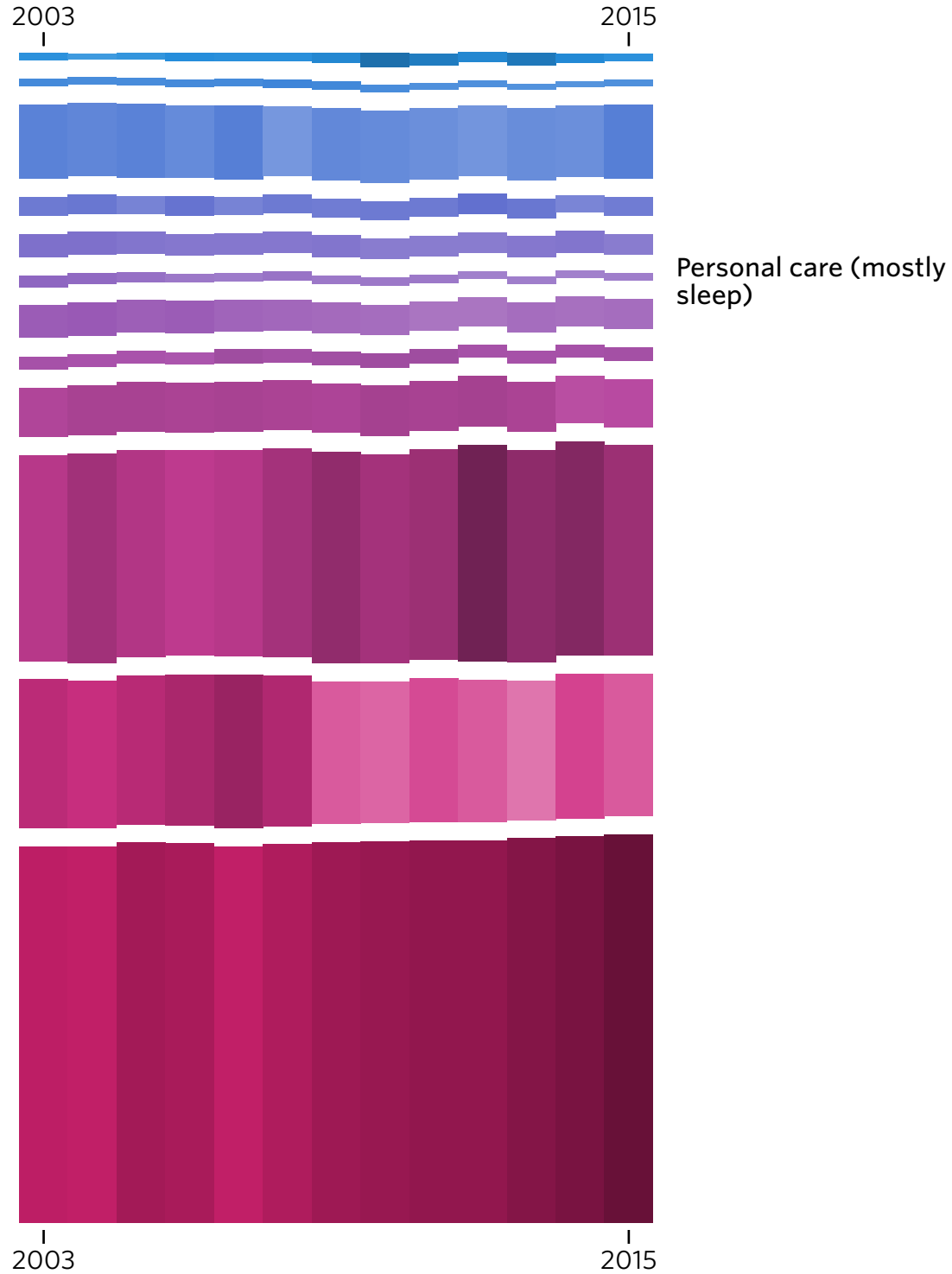
Miscellaneous
Phone, mail, e-mail

Household activities

Education
Caring for family
Caring for nonfamily
Shopping
Civic/religious activities
Eating and drinking

TV, leisure, sports

Working



Those with jobs are working slightly more and have less leisure time

While the overall figures run counter to the notion that Americans have less free time, those with jobs are working slightly more. On weekdays, Americans with full-time jobs spent 8 hours and 8 minutes a day working or traveling to work, five minutes more than a decade earlier. (<http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2015/06/24/americans-havent-been-working-this-much-since-2008/>)

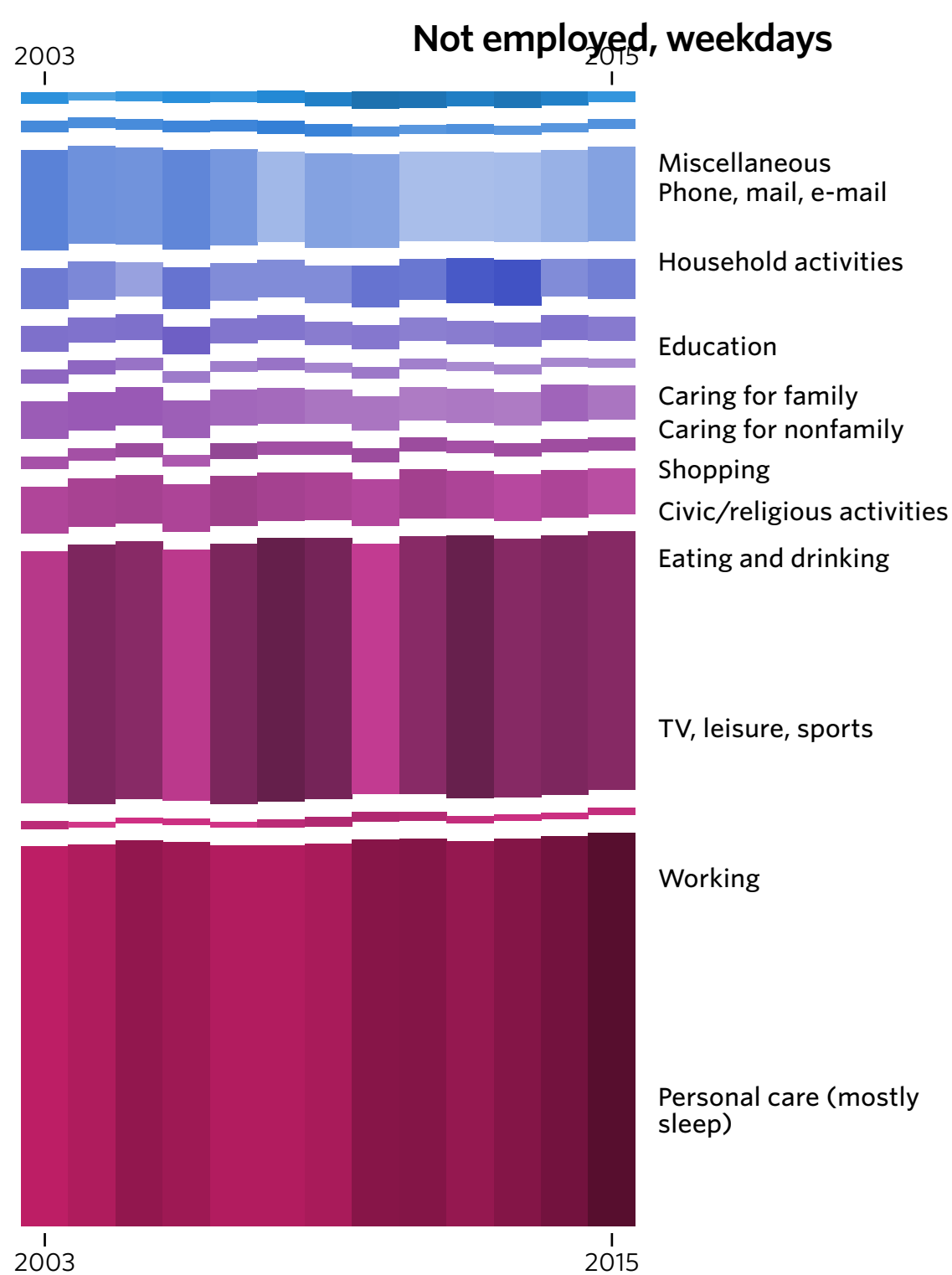
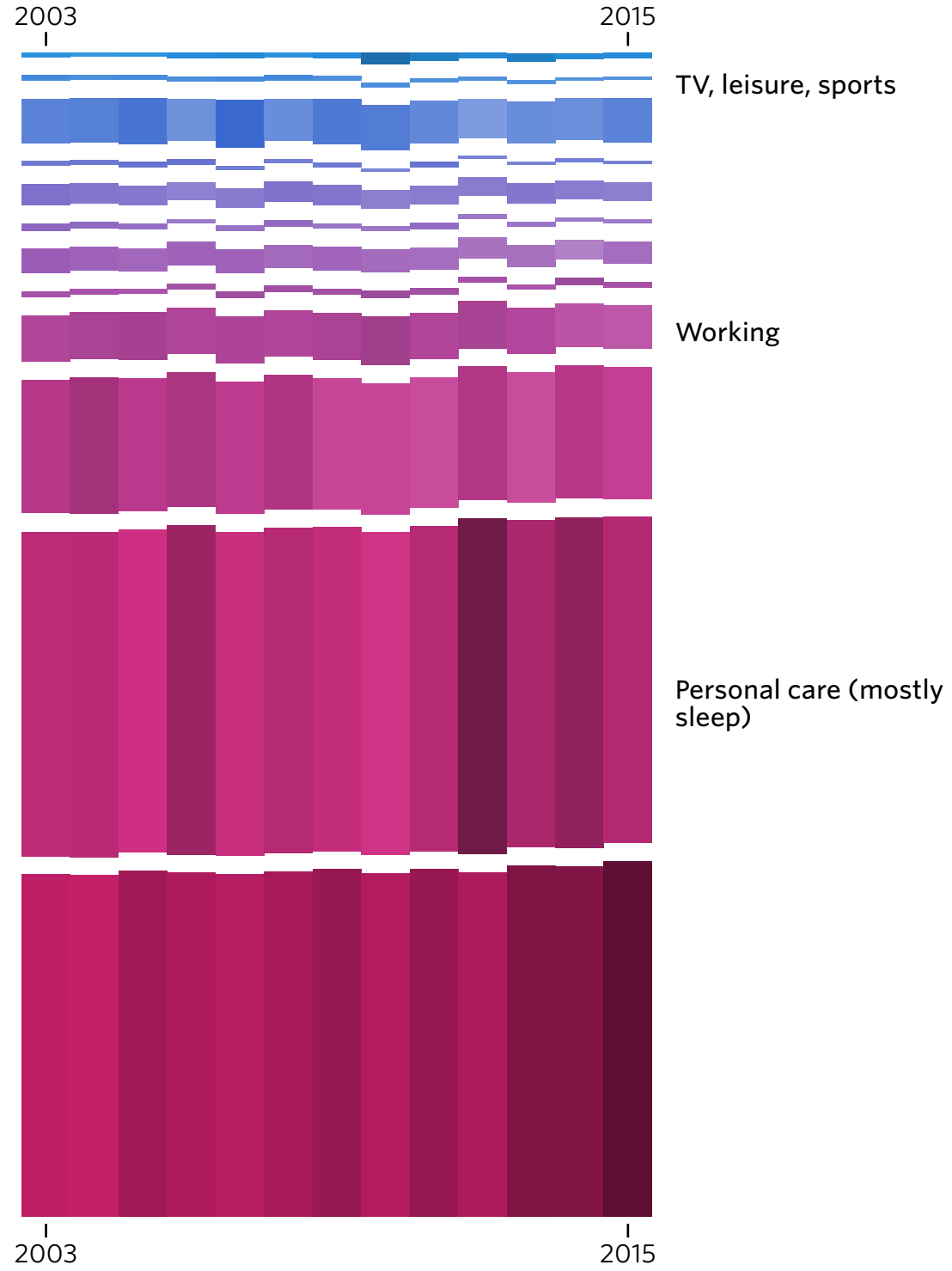
Dr. Sayer, a sociology professor, said the survey’s underlying figures show a widening split. Those without jobs and those with less education are spending more time sleeping and watching television, offsetting increased time on the job for many better-educated workers.

Those with jobs dedicate 8 hours and 52 minutes to sleep and personal time on weekdays, a figure that increased by seven minutes from a year earlier. But they still sleep much less than those without jobs, who spent more than 10 hours per weekday sleeping or on personal care. “Not employed” people includes those who are looking for work and who are retired or otherwise choose not to work.

The jobless spend three hours more each day than working adults watching television or other leisure activities. That group, however, dedicates more than an hour a day to education, versus almost nothing for those with a job, and twice as much time on household activities.

Employed full time, weekdays

- Miscellaneous
- Phone, mail, e-mail
- Household activities
- Education
- Caring for family
- Caring for nonfamily
- Shopping
- Civic/religious activities
- Eating and drinking



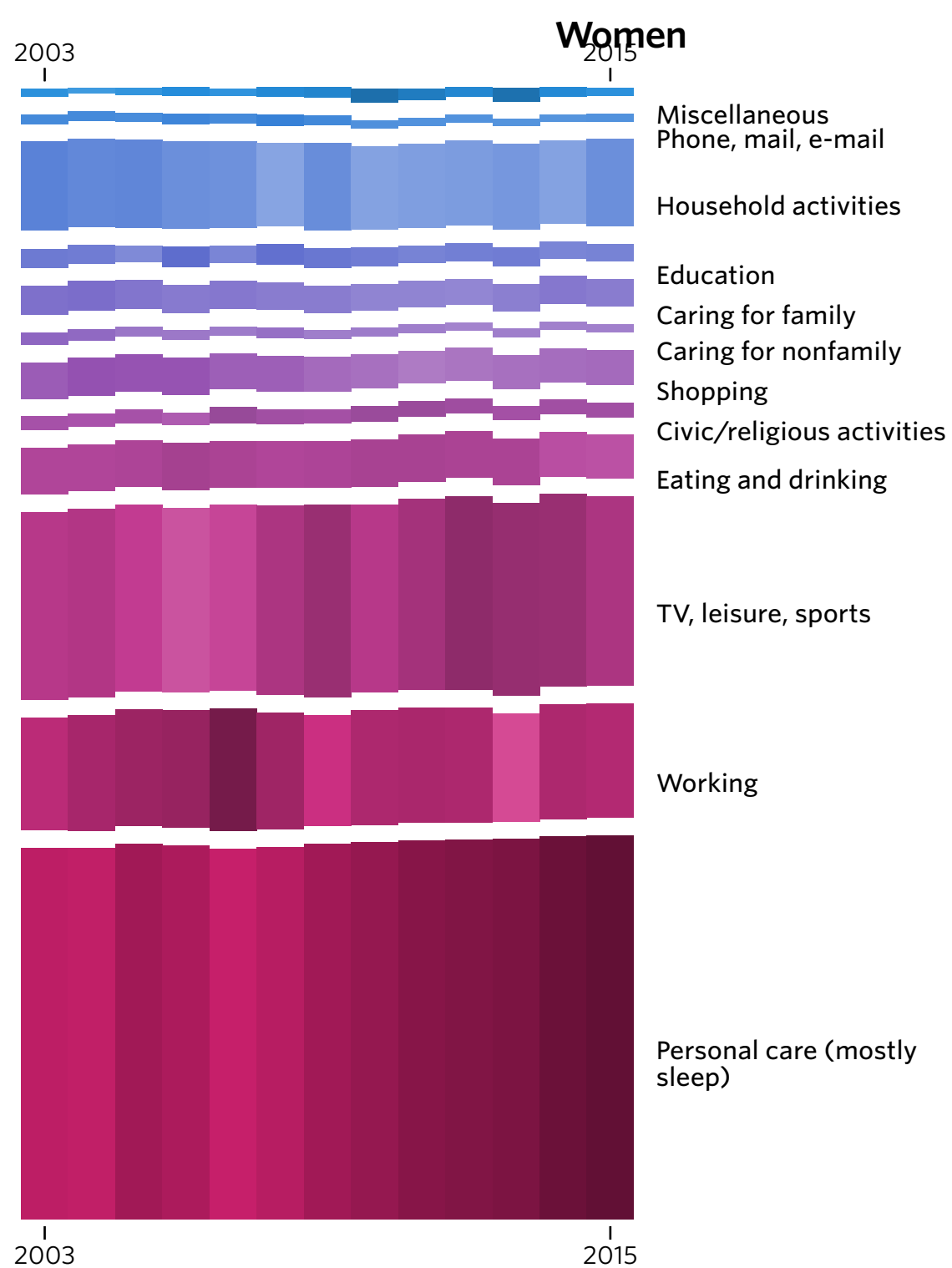
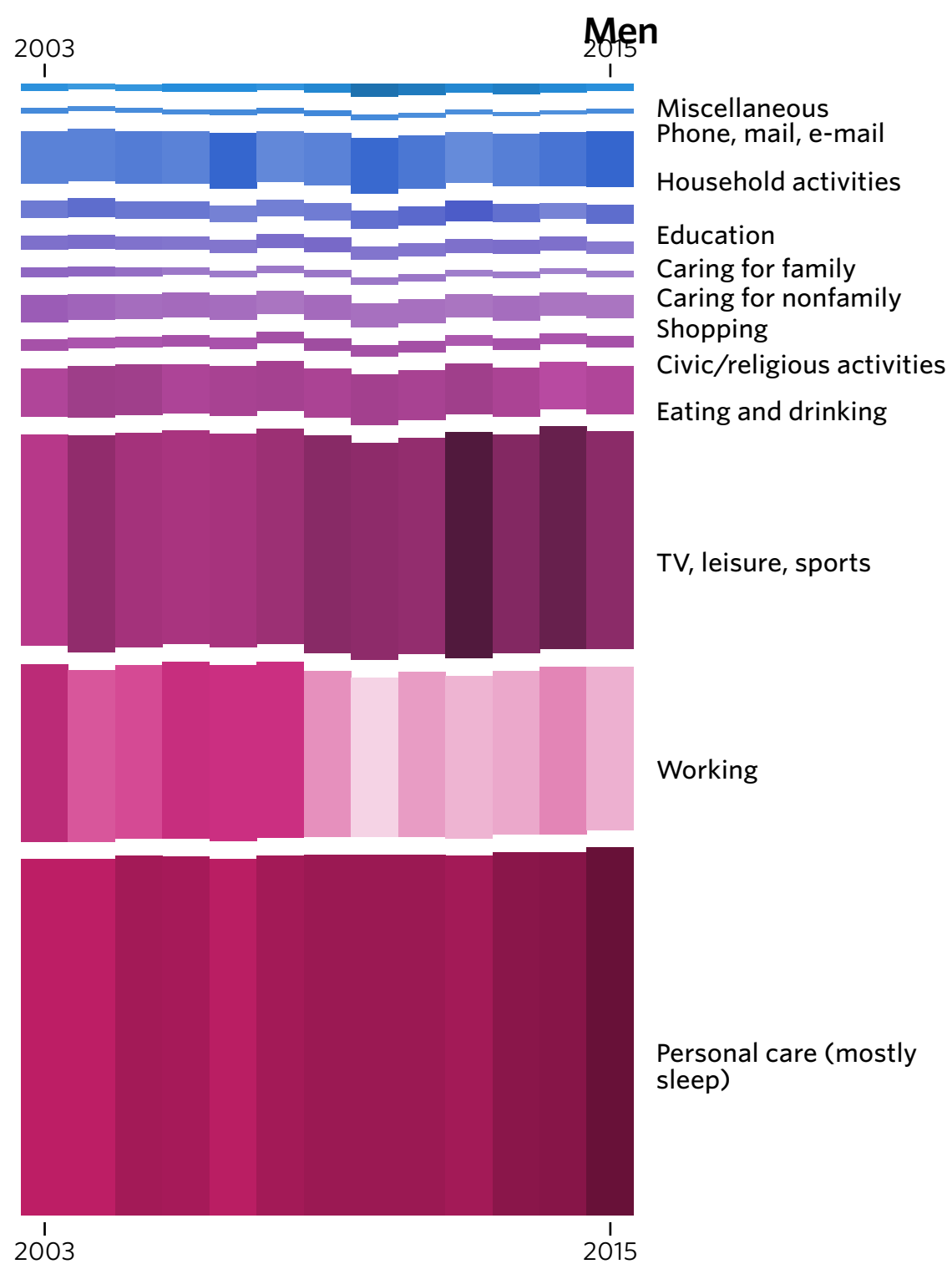
Men are taking on more chores, but women still do the bulk of household tasks

Women spent 2 hours and 14 minutes on household activities last year, while men only spent 1 hour and 26 minutes on the same chores. The amount of time men spend on housework has increased from a decade earlier. But Dr. Sayer said that doesn't show a more equal distribution of domestic responsibilities—rather, it shows more men are living by themselves.

The average woman works 76 fewer minutes a day than the average man. That largely reflects that a smaller share of women—56.7% in May (<http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/06/03/the-may-jobs-report-in-12->

charts-2/)—are in the labor force, compared with 68.9% for men.

Both men and women worked less per day in 2015 than they did in 2007, when the recession began.

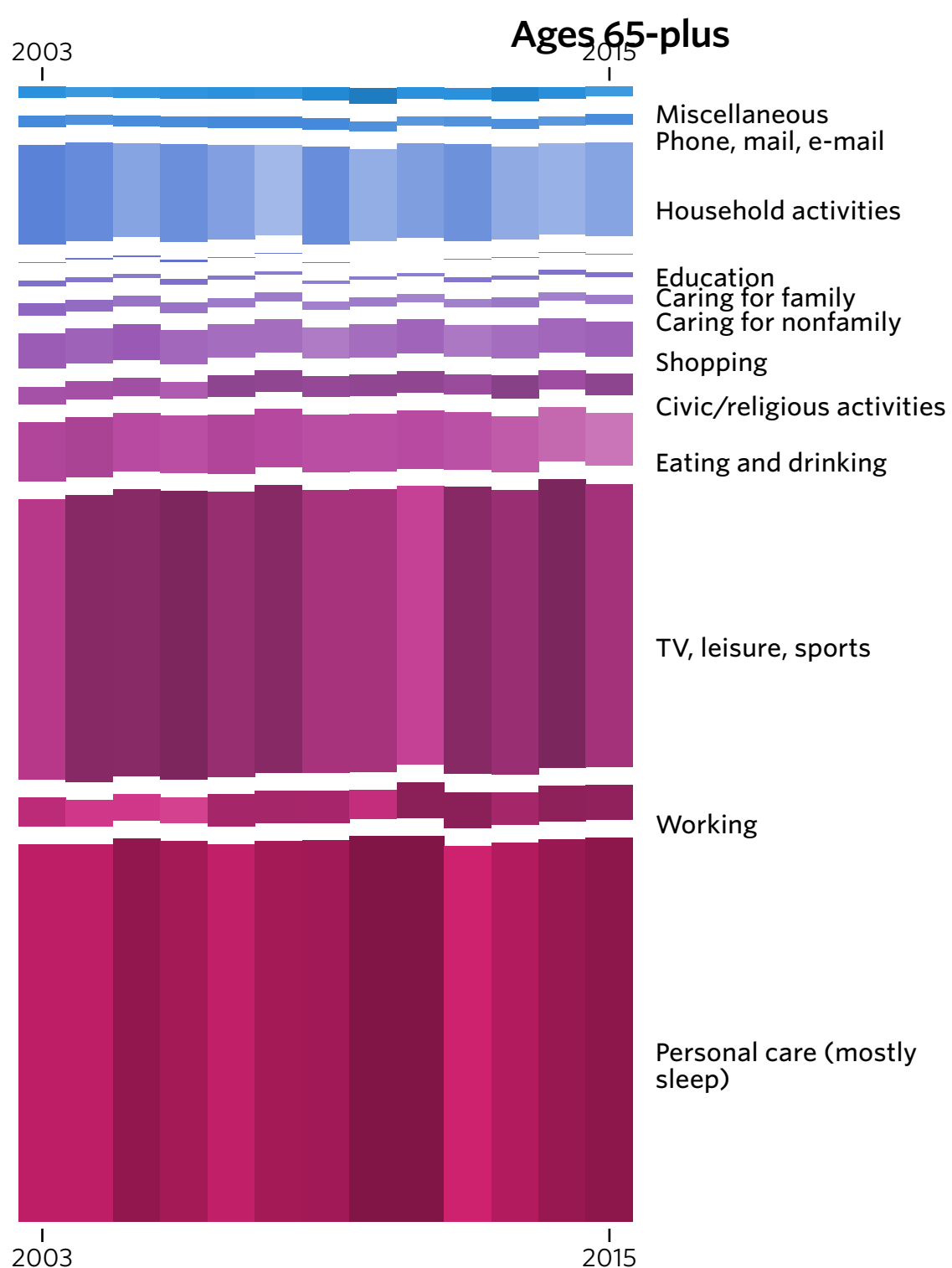
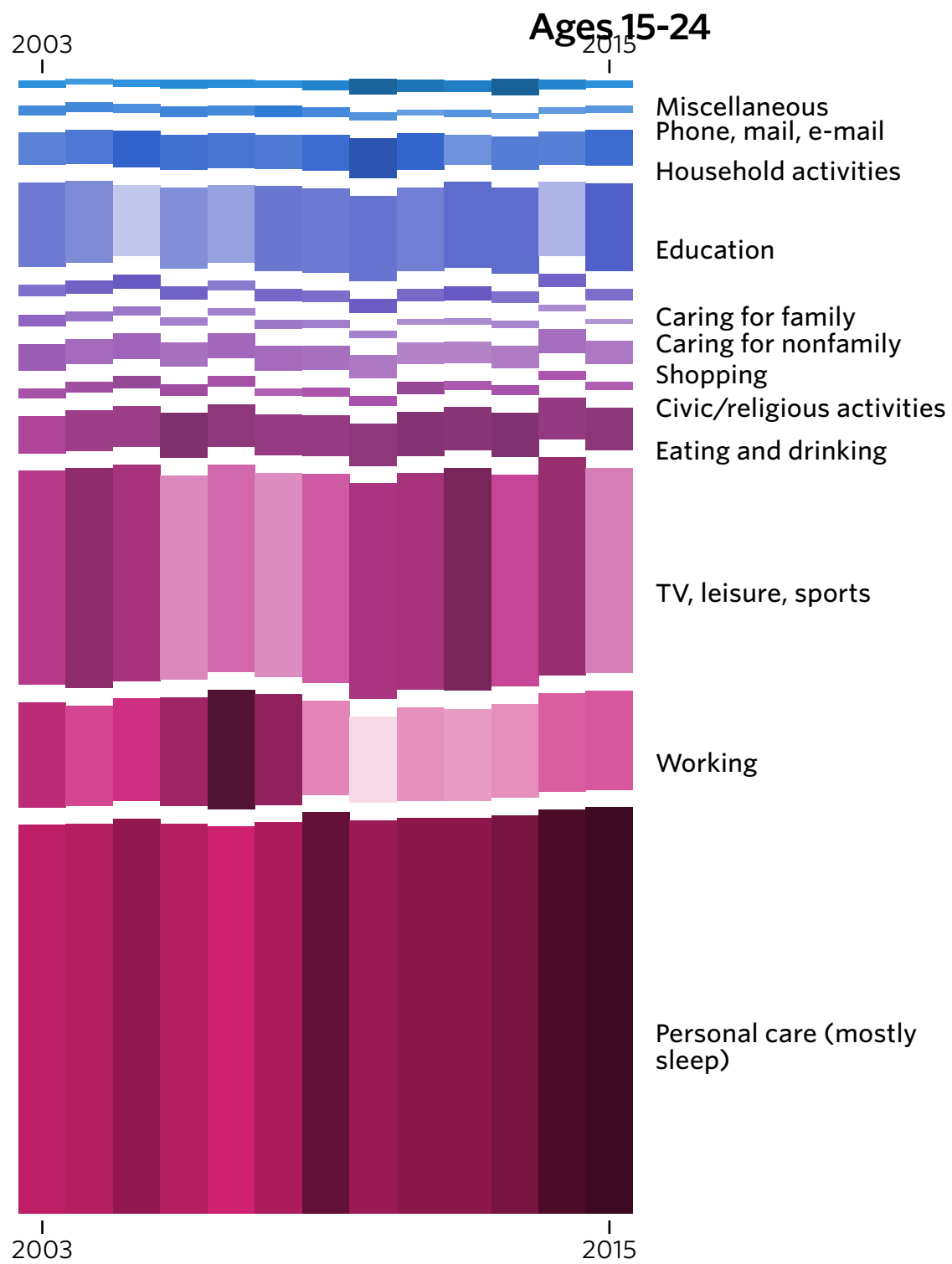


*Younger Americans spend more of their time asleep
and at school, compared with older adults*

Americans overall are sleeping more, possibly because of the aging population. But it's the youngest group surveyed—those between 15 and 24 years old—who sleep the most. The group spends 10 hours and 24 minutes

on sleep and other personal care. Adults who are 65 and older spend just under 10 hours on those activities.

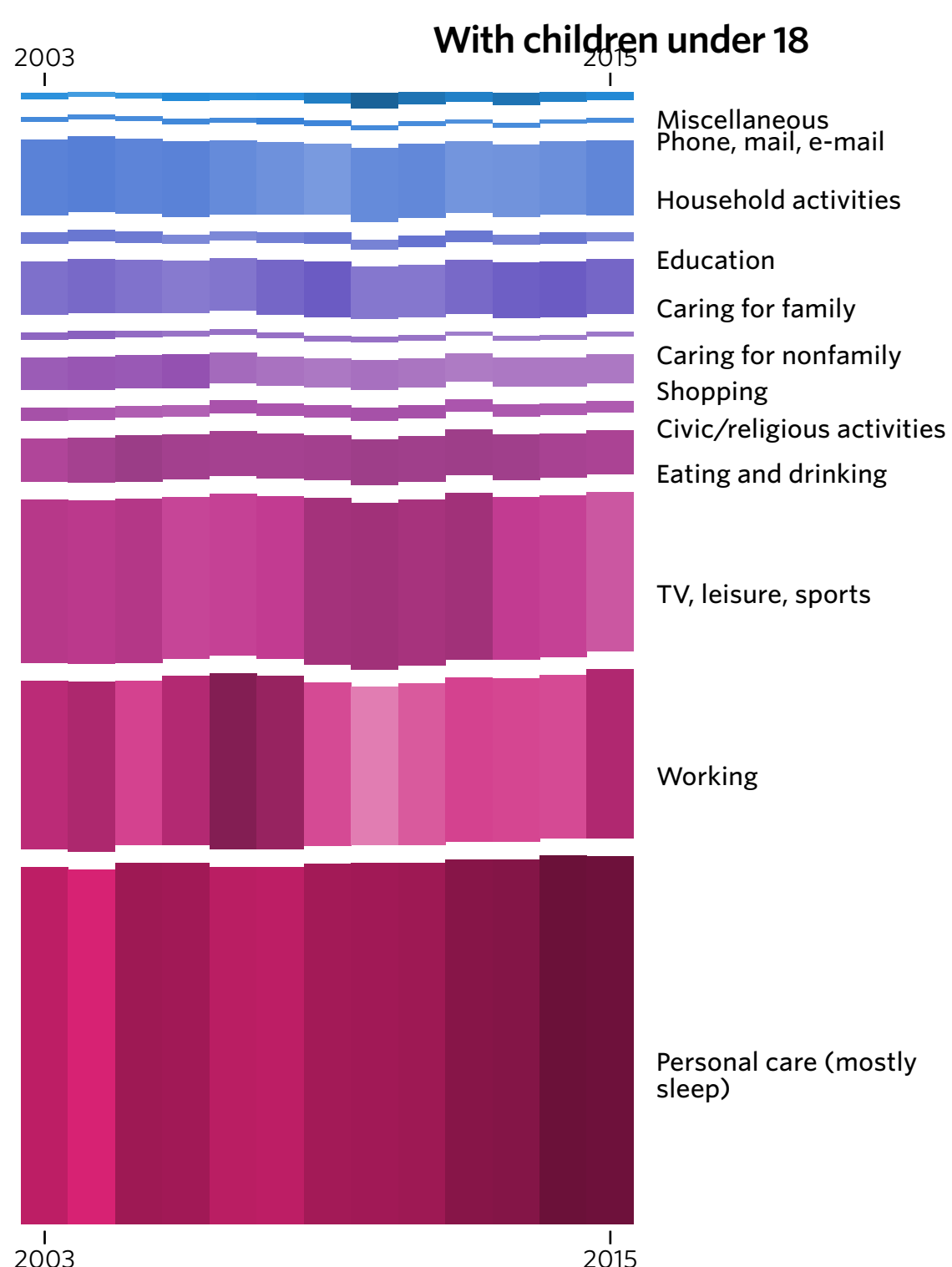
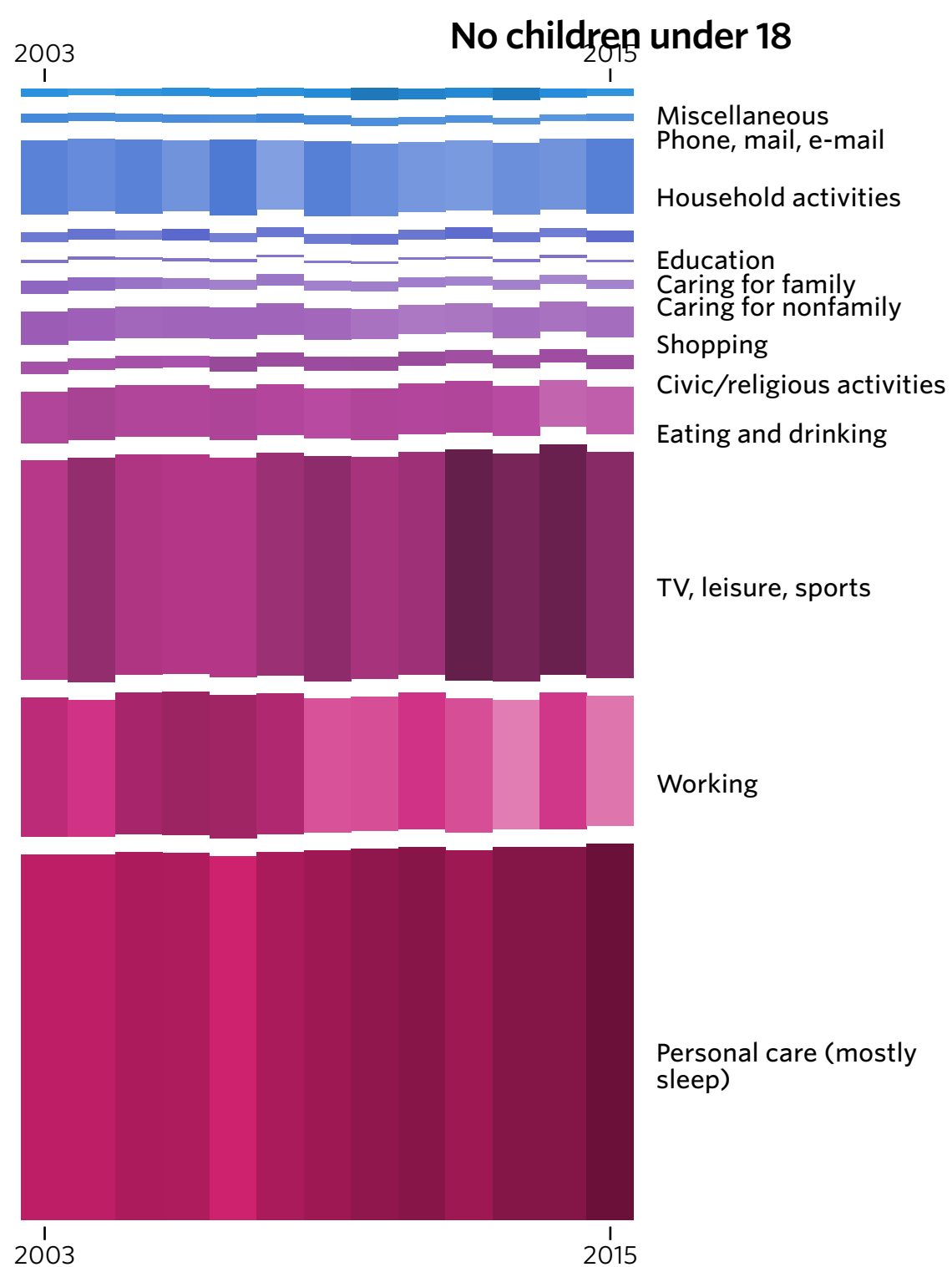
The younger group, most of whom are high school and colleges students, do spend much more of their time on education—2 hours and 14 minutes a day—and less on leisure. Those over 65 spend 7 hours and 14 minutes on leisure, mainly watching television.



*Those with children have more care responsibilities,
but sleep nearly as much as those without kids*

Americans with children under 18 years old in their homes spend more time caring for family members—just under an hour and a half—than those with no children. That group only spends four minutes caring for family members.

Parents and others in homes with children sleep less and have less personal time—9 hours, 26 minutes—than those without children, who spend 14 more minutes on those activities. Among adults living in households with children under age 6, women spent one hour providing physical care, such as bathing or feeding a child. Men spent half that time (25 minutes) providing such care.



Other highlights from the survey

The latest data showed remote work is becoming more popular. On the days employed people worked in 2015, 24% did at least some tasks from home, up from 19% in 2003, the survey's first year. In this same period, people with a job worked on average 40 more minutes each workday.

On an average day, 22% of men did general housework, compared with half of women. But men are cooking and cleaning more: The share of men preparing food and cleaning their homes increased to 43% last year from about one-third in 2003.

Men spend 43 minutes more a day on leisure activities, including watching TV. Women sleep slightly more—about 25 minutes extra per day.

What is the American Time Use Survey?

The American Time Use Survey is designed to show the average day for an American ages 15 or older. In 2015, nearly 11,000 people were interviewed, the Labor Department said.

Respondents are assigned a day of the week about which to report. The interview creates a “diary” of how each person spent the previous day from 4 a.m. until 4 a.m. on the day of the interview.

For each activity, respondents are asked how long the activity lasted, where they were and who was with them. If respondents report doing more than one activity at a time, they are asked to identify which one was the “main” activity.

Notes

The 'Caring for family' category includes all household members, while 'Caring for nonfamily' includes care for all those outside the household. All activities include related travel time.

Source: Labor Department's American Time Use Survey (<http://www.bls.gov/tus/>)

Additional credit goes to Jessica Ma (<https://twitter.com/jessiaspa>) and Laura Holder (<https://twitter.com/lauratitian>) for design, and Sarah Portlock (<https://twitter.com/sarahportlock>) for editing and direction