

## 1. Background

The last fifty years have been a time of great change for American marriages and families. Comparing marriage now to fifty years ago, individuals are marrying later (Lesthaeghe 1995), are more likely to divorce (Ruggles 2007, Kennedy and Ruggles 2013), and there has been a significant rise in non-marital cohabitation (Bumpass and Sweet 1989, Smock 2000). While marriage was often previously defined by specialization of roles within the household, the rise of dual earner couples and the increase in marital homogamy has changed the average couple (Stevenson and Wolfers 2007, Schwartz and Mare 2005, Lam 1988). Over the past fifty years, scholars have also shown increased income inequality and a growing inequality in the amount of free time or leisure time that people have (Sevilla et al. 2012; Aguiar and Hurst 2007). In light of these changes in the American family and changes in inequality, it is likely that the time available for, and spent with, family members has also been changing. In fact, parents have been found to spend *more* time with children now than in the recent past despite women's increased participation in the labor market (Sayer et al. 2004; Sandburg and Hofferth 2001). At the same time, while recent literature has shown that over the past few decades time spent with spouses alone has decreased for couples (Dew 2009), there is little work fully investigating the time couples spend together. In this paper, we consider three measures of time spent with spouses to investigate how time with a spouse has changed over the last 50 years, differentiating between time alone with a spouse and time with a spouse and children. Because work-family arrangements and the composition of the population have also changed over this period, we examine differences across various demographic dimensions in spouses' time spent together. Finally, we analyze the extent to which the specific activities couples do together over the past fifty years have changed.

Our paper is an extension of recent work on couples' shared time. Dew (2009) examined whether parents had lost time alone together between 1975 and 2003 due to increasing attention paid to children (intensive parenting norm - Hays 1996) and work demands, especially women's greater participation in the labor market in 2003 compared to 1975. He found that couples in 2003 spent about an hour less alone with their spouses per day, on average, than in 1975 regardless of parenthood. This paper extends Dew's (2009) research to consider both total time with one's spouse (whether others are present or not) and time spent with both a spouse and a child. Our goal is to present a more holistic picture of couples' shared time in the context of rising pressures to be "devoted" (Blair-Loy 2003) to both work and family at the same times as demands in both realms have increased.

Flood and Genadek (2013), using ATUS data from 2003-2010, examine the amount and quality of time couples spend together and differences by work and family arrangements. They find that dual-earner couples spend less time together than single-earner couples and that parents of school age children spend about 15% less time together than other parents and non-parents. However, at the same time, it is parents with very young children who spend the least time alone together despite being with one another more than parents of older children. Additional results showing that couples are happier and find activities more meaningful when they are done with a spouse (regardless of who else is present, if anyone)

underscore the importance of examining couples' shared time. We extend this paper specifically by considering the time couples spend with children and changes over time.

## 2. Data and Measures

This paper uses five time use surveys spanning nearly 50 years from the American Heritage Time Use Study (AHTUS). The AHTUS is a harmonized database of US time diary data, and our analysis includes samples from 1965, 1975, 1998, 2003, and 2012. Time diaries ask respondents what they were doing and who they were with throughout the day for a 24 hour period. Each survey collected demographic information as well as reports about daily time use. While the detail available in the diaries varies by sample, the AHTUS data have been harmonized for comparability across samples.

The samples vary in size and population representativeness and were obtained from different projects. The 1965 sample corresponds to the Multinational Comparative Time Budget Research project and represents the national working population of the USA. The 1975 sample were obtained from the American's Use of Time and it is also representative of the adult population of USA. It is a longitudinal project where each household participated in more than one wave. We include only one observation for each individual, selecting the first interview per person. The 1998 sample used is from Trends in Time Use Study (FISCT) and represents the national population living in private households. The original dataset for 1998 contains also information from the National Survey Parents, but this survey has not been used because only contents information for parents. The 2003 and 2012 samples are nationally representative and are part of the American Time Use Survey, which is the first federally-funded, ongoing survey in the United States. Table 1 provides sample sizes and descriptive statistics about the year-specific samples we are using for our analysis.

In contrast to most analyses of time diary data which examine time spent in various activities, we use the co-presence information in the data to examine *who* activities were done with. Because our focus is on time spent with one's spouse, we restrict our sample to the men and women ages 20-64 in married or cohabiting unions. Prior to 1998, we are unable to distinguish married from cohabiting couples.

In our broader examination of the time spouses spend together than has been done in previous research, we focus on three measures of time spent with a spouse. *Total time* spent with a spouse captures any time the respondent spent with his/her spouse during the course of the diary day. We also consider two subcategories of total time with one's spouse: time alone with one's spouse and time with one's spouse in the presence of children. *Spousal time* measures time spent alone with a spouse when no one else was present. *Family time* indicates time spent with a spouse *and* children under age 18.

### 3. Preliminary Results and Plans

Figure 1 shows the trends in daily time with one's spouse in the United States between 1965 and 2012. Total time with one's spouse has been quite stable between 1965 and 2012; despite the increase from 1965 to 1975 and decrease between 1975 and 1998, the differences between 1965 and 2003 (and 2012) are modest at around 15 minutes per day, on average. Estimates of total time, however, mask important changes in how couples spend their time together. In 1965, the vast majority of time spent with one's spouse was alone with one's spouse. There has been a convergence spousal time and family time between 1965 and the years including and following 1998. Spousal time has decreased from 219 minutes per day to 120 minutes in 1998 and 146 minutes in 2012. At the same time, family time has increased from 8 minutes per day in 1965 to 119 minutes per day in 2012.

The dramatic changes in spousal and family time we observe in these descriptive statistics require further investigation. We first seek to shed light on the following questions.

What are the activities that couples aren't doing alone together anymore? Are they the same

activities that couples are now doing with children? Preliminary results suggest that increases in couples' shared leisure between 1965 and 2012 have been driven primarily by increasing time in leisure with both the spouse and child(ren). Media time and unpaid work are activities which total time with one's spouse has remained largely consistent over time, but couples now do it more in the presence of children than they did in 1965. Couples' co-parenting (or shared time in primary care) has also increased dramatically between 1965 and 2012.

Our next steps are to examine the extent to which the general and activity-specific patterns of couples' shared time are explained by changed in population demographics, marriage and the family. We will use multivariate analysis and decomposition analysis to investigate how much of the observed differences in spousal and family time can be attributed to shifting population patterns such as women's labor force participation and education versus actual changes in behavior.

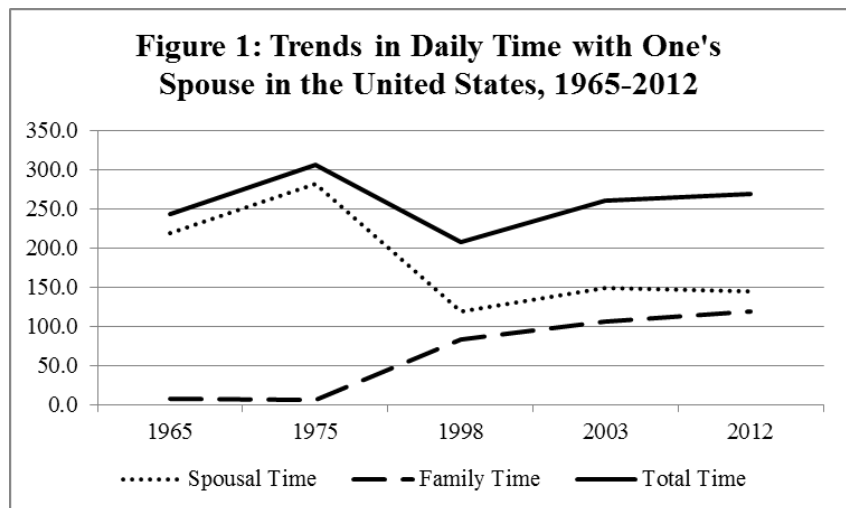


Table 1. Sample Sizes and Descriptive Statistics

	Years				
	1965	1975	1998	2003	2012
Total	1528	690	485	9661	4975
Age 20-34	37.43	44.35	30.72	26.66	24.88
Age 35-49	38.94	33.91	47.42	47.43	47.42
Age 50+	23.63	21.74	21.86	25.91	27.70
Single-earner, male	32.92	46.38	76.49	63.69	62.31
Single-earner, female	64.40	48.26	17.94	27.82	28.40
Dual-earner	2.68	5.36	5.57	8.49	9.29
No children	30.24	35.51	35.26	35.18	31.16
Children under 5	33.44	20.58	34.23	28.10	29.21
Children 6-18	36.32	43.91	30.52	36.71	39.64
White	89.01	91.74	85.57	88.70	84.62
Black	5.43	6.23	6.39	6.43	8.04
Other	5.56	2.03	8.04	4.88	7.34
Less than HS	33.12	25.65	2.89	8.52	6.57
HS degree	39.86	42.17	34.23	27.55	22.09
Some college	27.03	32.17	62.89	63.93	71.34
Male	46.73	50.58	43.51	46.71	47.30
Female	53.27	49.42	56.49	53.29	52.70

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