Time for Each Other:

Work and Family Constraints among Couples

Sarah Flood[1]

and

Katie Genadek

University of Minnesota

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[1] Manuscript prepared for the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, 2010. Direct all correspondence to Sarah Flood, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, 225 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455; floo0017@umn.edu.

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Abstract: Our project investigates the time married couples spend together in the United States. Though time together is a premium among couples in our work-centered American society, we know little about amount and nature of the time couples spend together and sources of variation. Specifically, we focus on heterogeneity in couples' time together in general and with one another only by life stage and couple-level employment status. We draw on data from the American Time Use Survey (2003-2008) for married individuals ages 25 to 64 in single- and dual-earner relationships (N=35,644). We use multivariate techniques to address two specific issues: 1) the effects of single vs. dual-earner status on the time couples spend together, and 2) the effects of life stage (i.e. the age of the youngest child) on couples' time allocation. We find that dual-earners spend less time together, particularly on days that they work, and that they tend to compensate by spending more time together on non-workdays. Parents spend less time together than non-parents, and we see variation in the effects of life stage in both the time couples spend together in general and their time alone.

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Work has long been recognized as the primary source of meaning, routine, and relationships for men, and employment has become increasingly central to women's lives as their labor force participation approaches that of men (Moen and Roehling 2005). The implications are many, including 1) more men and women in dual-earner couples, and 2) family life as a source of conflict between couples. With time together a premium among couples in our work-centered American society, and especially so among dual-earner couples who face demands at home after finishing with their paid work, we know little about how much time couples have together and sources of variation. Yet, interaction with one's spouse is a key dimension of marital quality (Amato et al. 2007). In this paper we compare the amount and nature of time spouses spend together, considering couple status (dual vs. single-earner) and life stage as the primary sources of heterogeneity in couples' time allocation.

 We situate this work against the backdrop of large scale demographic trends showing a rise in dual-earner couples and instability in dyadic relationships. Spousal interaction is a key dimension of marital quality (Amato et al. 2007), and the time couples spend together is the focus of this paper. Previous research shows a positive association between time couples spend together and marital happiness and satisfaction (White 1983; Zuo 1992) and a negative relationship between marital interaction and conflict (Amato et al. 2007). The evidence, however, is mixed regarding the effects of children on the marital relationship. Some argue that becoming a new parent is a "crisis" (Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003); others suggest that young children stabilize marriages and older children disrupt the stability of marriages (Waite and

Lillard 1991). Still other research has found that children and other life-cycle factors do not influence the time couples spend together (Kingston and Nock 1987). Little research has looked directly at the time couples spend together (but see Gager and Sanchez 2003; Kingston and Nock 1987) and tried to understand if and how couples' employment commitments affect time together and how this varies across the life course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dual-earner families have increased dramatically over the last 50 years (Jacobs and Gerson 2001). Time diary data have been used to examine the effects of this demographic change on children's well-being, showing that women's labor force participation has not substantially changed the amount of time women spend with children (Sayer, Bianchi, and Robinson 2004; Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Sandberg and Hofferth 2001). Consistent amounts of time with children in the face of greater time pressures have been accompanied by reduced engagement in other activities, including the time spent with a spouse (Bianchi et al. 2006; Bianchi 2000; Amato et al. 2007). It is unclear, however, what the effects are of this change for couples' well-being and how their time together changes over the life course. How do dual-earner and single-earner couples compare in the time they spend with one another? And, how does parents' allocation of time change over the life course as children age and require less of their parents' time?

Minimizing the effects of women's labor force participation on children's well-being has resulted in parents sacrificing their own time together (i.e. couple time) (Sayer et al. 2004; Bianchi et al. 2006). Comparing parents to non-parents, Dew (2009), investigating spousal time together, finds that couples with children spend substantially less time alone with their spouses and with others than those without children. However, parental demands change as children age,

and there is evidence that parents of older children (13-17) spend more time in joint activities than parents of young children (0-12) (Kalmijn and Bernasco 2001). Similarly, controlling for the age of children, joint couple time follows a u-shaped pattern with more time together during the early years of marriage and later in the marriage (20+ years) (2001).

In the competition for scarce resources, work and parenthood often take precedence over time with a spouse and time alone (Wight, Raley, and Bianchi 2008; Voorpostel, van der Lippe, and Gershuny 2009; Daly 2001). Workers who put in long hours feel greater time pressures than those who work less (Jacobs and Gerson 1998), especially a lack of time with their spouses (Bianchi et al. 2006; Roxburgh 2006). Feelings of inadequate time together are rooted in reality—dual-earner couples spend less time together than single-earner couples (Kingston and Nock 1987), and this is particularly common among couples who work different shifts (Presser 2000; Wight et al. 2008). Time pressures have consequences for well-being, especially for parents' family and life satisfaction (Nomaguchi, Milkie, and Bianchi 2005).

PRESENT STUDY

To better understand how couples allocate time with spouses and how this varies by work arrangements and the age of children in the home, we use time-diary data from the American Time Use Survey (Abraham et al. 2008). Our analysis of the time couples spend together differs from previous research in two primary ways: 1) we use rich time diary data from a new, nationally representative sample to examine the actual amount of time couples spend together, distinguishing between whether they were alone (couple time) or accompanied by others as well as by earner status and life stage; 2) our primary focus is on the *time* couples spend together and secondarily on *what* they do together.

Based on previous research, we develop a set of expectations. First, regarding work arrangements, we expect single-earner couples to have more time together than dual-earner couples. Because single-earner couples likely have a stronger division of labor in which the partner not working for pay allocates time to maintaining the home, they should have more time to spend together overall when the spouse working for pay is home compared to dual-earner couples who will have home production tasks to do after finishing their paid work. At the same time, dual-earner couples must negotiate time together around two work schedules rather than just one possibly reducing the time they have available for one another. Third, to the extent that dual-earner couples have similar amounts of time for one another outside of paid work, dual-earner couples may be more likely to divide and conquer tasks around the house that need to be completed, thereby spending less time together.

We generally expect to find that couples without children will spend more time together than couples with children. However, we also anticipate that time with a spouse will vary over the life course, especially for parents. As children age couples should have more time available to spend together, for example, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers require much more time and attention than high school aged children. For couple-time, we expect parents to be particularly squeezed for time alone together. This should decrease as children age. Yet, we should see substantial differences compared to non-parents because some time with one's spouse for parents should also include children, though less so as children become more independent.

Data

We use integrated American Time Use Survey (ATUS) data for our analyses (Abraham et al. 2008). The ATUS is a time diary study of a nationally representative sample of Americans. ATUS data are collected using a computer assisted telephone interview (CATI), and respondents

report the activities they engaged in over a 24-hour period from 4:00 a.m. of a specified day until 4:00 a.m. of the following day, as well as where, when, and with whom activities were done. Data are collected all days of the week, and weekends are oversampled. Sample weights correct for the survey design such that aggregating across different days of the week results in a representative picture of average time use among the population. Our results are based on pooled cross-sections from 2003 to 2008.

ATUS sample members are invited to complete the survey following exit from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a household survey of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population. One individual aged 15 or older per former CPS participating household was randomly selected to report their activities over one 24 hour period as part of the ATUS during the two to five months following their exit from the CPS. ATUS response rates were over 50% for each of the five years (Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Fatigue is the most common reason for ATUS nonresponse, which is a result of using CPS as the sampling frame (O'Neill and Sincavage 2004). Nonresponse bias in the ATUS is not problematic except in the case of volunteering in which estimates are inflated because volunteers are more likely to respond to the survey (Abraham, Helms, and Presser 2009).

The 2003 to 2008 ATUS data include daily diary entries of a nationally representative sample of 85,645 civilians age 15 and older. Though the data may not typify respondents' daily activities, aggregations of the data are representative of the American population. We restrict our sample to married respondents with a spouse in the household at the time of the ATUS interview (N=44,500) who were age 25 to 64 (N=37,682) and who were in single- or dual-earner relationships (N=35,644). In addition, we draw on linked CPS data to incorporate socio-demographic variables for ATUS respondents' spouses including race and education.

Analyses of time diary data typically focus on the total amount of time individuals spend in a given activity (e.g. work, leisure, sleep). The richness of the ATUS data extends beyond what people do, however, and can give us insight into patterns of social interaction, including marital interaction. Like other time use research, our study examines heterogeneity in how people spend time, but we focus on *with whom* people spend their uncommitted time (i.e. non-work, non-sleep, and non-personal care time). After first examining patterns of marital interaction by earner status and life stage, we consider descriptively the types of activities that couples do together.

Measures

Dependent variables. *Spouse time* is the minutes per day respondents spend with their spouses during non-work, non-sleep, and non-personal care activities. *Couple time* is a continuous measure of the total minutes per day spent during any activity in which *only* the spouse accompanied the respondent. In both cases we include time spent during activities in which a spouse was present. For example, if a respondent reported doing the dishes with his or her spouse, the number of minutes spend during the activity is included in our estimate. For spouse time, the only condition that must be met for the duration of an activity to be included in our estimate is that a spouse is present during the activity. Couple time, on the other hand, requires that only a spouse be present. The distinction between spouse and couple time is the presence of other people during the activity. The only activities we did not include in the estimate are working, sleeping, grooming, or personal care because with whom information is not collected for these activities in the ATUS.

Independent variables. *Couple-level work status* is a dichotomous variable: dual-earner couples are those in which both work for pay and single-earner couples are those in which either the

husband or wife works for pay, which is the omitted variable in the regression analyses. Because

the time couples have to spend together should vary by whether one member worked on their

diary day, *workday* indicates whether the ATUS respondent reported engaging in any paid work

on his or her diary day, and the reference category in the model is no paid work on the diary day.

We include life stage variables to capture variation in the time demands children require of

parents based on age of children. *Age of youngest child* is coded into nine dichotomous variables

based on the age of the respondent's youngest own child in the household. For those without

children in the home, we differentiate between couples in which the wife is age 45 or younger

and those in which the wife is over 45. Categories include: no children and wife 45 or under

(reference group in regression analyses), no children and wife over 45, youngest child in the

household age 1 and under, age 2, ages 3-5, ages 6-9, ages 10-13, ages 14-17, and 18 or older.

Control variables. *Female* distinguishes between male and female respondents. *Age* is coded into

eight dichotomous variables each of which represents one five-year age group between 25 and

64. The reference category for the regression analyses is 25 to 29 year olds. *Race* is coded as four

dichotomous variables: white, non-Hispanic; black, non-Hispanic; other, non-Hispanic; and

Hispanic, where the reference group is white, non-Hispanic. Asians comprise 71% of the other,

non-Hispanic category in our sample. *Education* is coded into dichotomous variables, each

indicating: less than high school (reference in regression analyses), high school degree, some

college, and college degree or more. Race and education are available for both respondents and

spouses.

We also include in our regression models controls for whether the diary day was a

weekend or weekday (reference), holiday or non-holiday (reference); and the year of ATUS

participation as binary variables for 2003 (reference) to 2008. Table 1 contains the means for all of the measures used in this analysis.

Analytic Strategy

Restricting our sample to respondents ages 25 to 64 in single- or dual-earner couples, we first examine the time spent with one's spouse across the 24-hour diary day. We use ordinary least squares regression to estimate the relationship between demographic characteristics and the amount of time individuals spend with their spouses, both spouse time and couple time, contrasting single- and dual-earners and individuals at different life stages. We also test for interactions between dual-earner status and workday effects. We also discuss models run separately for weekdays and weekends because of the way in which the typical work week structures daily life.

Results

Figure 1 shows the mean number of minutes individuals ages 25 to 64 who are members of single or dual-earner couples spend, on average, with their spouses by the age of the youngest child in the household and, if no children are in the household, the wife's age. Bars in the figure represent the total number of minutes spent with spouses. Spouses' time together shows a u-shaped pattern with total time together decreasing as children age and at a low as children reach school age (ages 6-9 and 10-13) after which time together begins to increase, which coincides with children's greater independence during the teenage years. Couples in which the wife is 45 or under spend similar amounts of time together overall compared to new parents. Parents of three to five year olds spend 23 minutes less together than parents of two year olds, on average (t=3.28, p<.001). Time with a spouse drops off by 13 minutes, on average, when children reach ages six to nine (t=2.6, p<.01). By the time children are 18 and older, parents are recouping some

of their time together, as indicated by a 21 minute increase compared to parents of 14 to 17 year olds (t=-3.0, p<.01). Couples in which the wife is over 45 spend nearly 21 minutes more with their spouses than parents of adult children, on average (t=-3.19, p<.001).

The figure also shows average amounts of couple and family time by life stage as indicated by the lines in the figure. Couple time represents the time spent with the spouse only and family time represents time spent with the spouse and children (as well as others as long as the spouse and children were also both present). Family time declines steadily as children age (differences in the means between all adjacent categories are significant at the .05 level) and is accompanied by only a modest increase in couple time beginning with parents of six to nine year olds compared to three to five year olds (differences in the means between these adjacent categories are significant at the .05 level). By the time children are 18 and older, family time is only 27 percent that of new parents (59 vs. 212 minutes, respectively). At the same time, couple time is lowest among parents of young children—about 38 percent less than couples living with adult children (61 vs. 161 minutes, respectively). Couples without co-resident children have nearly identical patterns of overall time together and couple time.

Weekend and weekday patterns of spousal interaction (not shown) show generally similar results to those presented in figure 1. As one would expect, the time spouses spend together on weekends is substantially higher compared to weekdays by a factor of nearly two for total time together, about 1.5 times higher on weekends versus weekdays for couple time, and about 2.5 times higher on weekends versus weekdays for family time for couples at all life stages.

Figures 2 and 3 show the time non-parents and parents in dual- and single-earner couples spend with a spouse in general (Figure 2) and with a spouse only (Figure 3) by the age of respondents. Patterns regarding the time couples spend together (either couple time or time with

the spouse and others) are evident in Figure 2. First, dual-earner couples, both parents and non-parents, spend substantially less time together than single-earner couples at all ages between 25 and 64. Differences between single and dual-earner non-parents ages 45 and older are significant and average 43 minutes. The gaps between single and dual-earner parents are significant among all parents except those ages 60 to 64, and the differences average 42 minutes. Second, single-earner parents time together maps quite closely with dual-earner non-parents time together at all ages. Finally, contrasting single-earner non-parents and dual-earner parents, who spend the most and least time together, respectively, at each specific age, we see that single-earner non-parents spend, on average, 74 minutes more together than dual-earner parents.

Weekday-specific patterns for Figure 2 (not shown) largely mirror aggregated patterns just discussed, though mean amounts of time are more compact, reflecting similarities in the actual time available to spend together once income earners are finished with paid work. Average differences in the time couples spend together among single and dual-earner non-parents are significant for 45 to 54 year olds. Differences between dual and single-earner parents are significant among all groups except for 30 to 34 and 40 to 44 year olds. Weekend patterns stray more from the aggregate pattern, revealing more variability around the time couples spend with their spouses on weekend days. We find no significant differences in the mean amounts of time single and dual-earner non-parent couples spend together on weekends. Among parents, we find that single-earner parent couples spend more time together than dual-earner couples except among those in their early 40s, early 50s, and early 60s.

Figure 3 shows the extent of differences in couple time by earner and parental statuses. Among non-parents, single-earners have slightly more couple time (33 minutes on average) over the life course, though differences are marginal and not significant among those in their 20s and

early 30s and early 40s. In addition, couple time is fairly level among both single and dual-earner non-parents. Parents have substantially less couple time than non-parents, and differences are especially pronounced through the 40s. Parents ages 50 and older have more couple time than younger parents and look increasingly similar to non-parents. Among parents, differences between single and dual-earners parents are marginal in the 20s, 30s, and 40s, though single-earner couples ages 35 to 39 and 40 to 44 have more couple time than dual-earner parents (9 and 16 minutes, respectively). Single-earner couples ages 50 and older spend significantly more time together than dual-earner couples, with the gap at 24 minutes among those age 50 to 54 and increasing to 51 minutes among 60 to 64 year olds.

Both weekday and weekend-specific patterns are largely similar to those in Figure 3. Except among 40 to 44 year olds, single-earner non-parents have significantly more couple time on weekdays than dual-earner couples, on the order of 35 minutes on average. Single-earner parents also tend to have more couple time than dual-earner parents, though differences are not significant among 30 to 34 year olds, 40 to 44 year olds, or those over age 55. Differences in couple time on weekdays between single and dual-earner parents are more modest, ranging from 4 to 57 minutes more for single-earner couples. On weekends, couple time maps substantially more closely for single and dual-earner parents and non-parents compared to weekdays, and significant differences are not substantial.

Table 2 shows the mean time spent with spouse in general and with spouse alone by dual and single-earner status, and the life stage categories on weekdays, weekends, and all days. Single-earner couples spend more time together, on average, than dual-earner couples overall and on both weekends and weekdays. Single-earner couples also have more couple time than dual-earners, though differences in couple time on weekends are marginal (~3 minutes). In

general, time spent with spouses and couple time both show evidence of a u-shaped curve by life stage, though the low point and the extent of the dip in the curve varies.

Predicting Time with Spouses

Table 3 shows ordinary least squares regression estimates of the effects of couple earner status, engaging in paid work on the diary day, and life stage on time spent with a spouse, controlling for respondent's demographic and human capital characteristics, spouse's human capital, and additional diary day characteristics. Model 1 estimates exclude whether the respondent worked on the diary day, and Model 2 shows estimates with the respondent's workday status included. In Model 1, both couple earner status and life stage show significant associations with the time spouses spend together. Controlling for whether the respondent engaged in any paid work on the diary day (Model 2), the effect of being in a dual-earner relationship compared to a single-earner relationship is reduced by nearly 90 percent and is no longer significant. As a result, we test for the interaction between earner status and working on the ATUS diary day in Model 3. We find that individuals who are members of dual-earner couples and report on days in which they engaged in paid work spend two hours less (124 minutes) with their spouses than single-earner couples on non-workdays, on average, controlling for other variables in the model. Dual-earner couples who report on non-workdays, however, spend 14 minutes more together, on average, than single-earners on non-workdays, suggesting a possible compensation effect among dual-earner couples when at least one member of the couple is less strapped for time (i.e. on a non-workday).

Life stage also has strong effects on spousal time together, and the u-shaped curve suggested in our descriptive statistics (Figure 1) is supported in our multivariate models; parents spend less time together than non-parents (both those couples in which the wife is 45 or under

and over 45), particularly when their children are preschool and school age, though differences between parents and non-parents reduce as children become more independent (see Model 3 in Table 3). Testing for differences between adjacent life stage categories, we find a decline in spouses' time together for parents of children under age one, age two, and ages three to five. Yet, the time together between parents of school age children (6 to 9, 10 to 13, and 14 to 17) are not significantly different from one another, suggesting parents of children of these ages allocate similar amounts of time to their spouses. Parents of adult children, however, do spend more time with their spouses than parents of school age children (6 to 17). In short, spouses spend less time together overall at each life stage until children reach school age where time together does not increase until children reach age 18.

In addition to our key independent variables, other independent variables significantly affect the time spouses spend together; we describe coefficients from Model 3 of Table 3. Respondents in their 40s and 50s spend substantially less time together than 25 to 29 year olds (on the order of 14 to 22 minutes). Black and other non-Hispanic respondents spend less time with their spouses compared to white non-Hispanics, and differences are on the order of 17 minutes less for other, non-Hispanic respondents and twice as high for black, non-Hispanic respondents compared to whites (34 minutes less). We also find that couples are substantially more likely to spend time together on weekends and holidays as one might expect.

Because we still see large differences between time allocation on weekends and weekdays, we duplicate models 2 and 3 for weekends and weekdays, which we show in Table 4. We test for interactions between earner status and workday in the separate weekend and weekday models and find that it is significant on weekdays but not on weekends. Discussing first the weekday model with the interaction (Model 2 in Table 4), we find that compared to single-earner

couples who report on non-workdays, both single and dual-earner couples spend less time together on workdays (81 and 104 minutes, respectively). As in the full model where we test for this interaction (Model 3 in Table 3), we again find support for the idea that dual-earner couples spend time together when they can—on weekdays when they do not work for pay, dual-earner couples spend 28 minutes more together, on average, compared to single-earner couples on non-workdays. Life stage patterns are largely similar to those in the full model for weekends and weekdays, though differences between parents of adult children and couples in which the wife is 45 or under are not significant on weekdays even if they are in the expected direction. However, unlike in the models in Table 3, differences between adjacent life stage categories are more modest. The number of minutes couples with children spend together on weekdays is not significantly different from couples with children in varying age categories, except for among parents of adult children. Rather than a strong life stage effect, we see that parents more generally spend less time together than non-parents.

The interaction between dual-earner status and workday is not supported in our weekend models. Accordingly, we discuss the main effects weekend model (Model 3 in Table 4). We find that working on a weekend day reduces the time couples spend together by 157 minutes compared to not working on a weekend day, and the effect of having a dual-earner arrangement is not significant. Children reduce the time couples spend together, except among new parents— those with children one and under. Parents of children ages two and three to five spend less time together than new parents, but time together on weekends for parents of school aged children levels off rather than increasing again as in our descriptive statistics.

Table 5 shows the OLS estimates of couple time. Comparing models 1 and 2 in Table 5, couple time is less sensitive to whether the diary day was a workday than spouse time more

generally (see models 1 and 2 in Table 3). Couple time is 25 minutes lower for dual-earner couples compared to single-earner couples in Model 1, on average, net of other factors. When we include workday in Model 2, the effect of being in a dual-earner arrangement is reduced by nearly three-quarters to seven minutes, though the difference is still significant. Workday has a much larger effect than dual-earner status, reducing couple time by 58 minutes, on average, for dual-earner couples compared to single-earner couples, on average. We find a significant interaction between dual-earner status and workday in Model 3. Both dual and single-earner couples reporting on workdays have less couple time (63 and 48 minutes, respectively) than single-earner couples reporting on non-workdays. Differences between dual and single-earners on non-workdays are not significant. Life stage effects show some differences relative to previously discussed models. Couple time is lowest among new parents and parents of children under two, but couple time begins to increase for parents whose youngest children are older. All of the time parents of older children gain relative to parents in adjacent categories with younger children are significant at p<.05 except for differences between new parents and parents of two year olds. Still, the gap in couple time between non-parents in which the wife is under 45 and parents of adult children is 67 minutes. Even older couples (wife over 45) without children spend an average of 14 minutes less in couple-time than couples in which the wife is 45 or under.

Models in Table 6 show estimates of couple time by weekday and weekend separately. Similar to spouse time more generally, the interaction between dual-earner status and workday is significant on weekdays, but not on weekends. Highlighting first the effects of our independent variables on couple time on weekdays, we find that for both single and dual-earners, couple time is lower on workdays compared to non-workdays for single-earners (42 and 57 minutes, respectively). Differences between dual and single-earners on non-workdays are not significant,

though dual-earners spend about six minutes more together, on average. Parents have less couple time on weekdays, and the gap between parents and non-parents decreases as children age, though not at each life stage. Parents of preschool age children (five and under) spend the same amount of time together alone regardless of age of youngest child, but they have more than two hours less couple time than non-parents where the wife is under 45. Parents of children 6 to 9 and 10 to 13 spend more time together alone than pre-school age parents by about 15 to 25 minutes on average. Parents of teenage and adult children have substantially more time together relative to parents of school age children by about 21 and 65 minutes on average.

The interaction term is not significant in the weekend model (Model 4 in Table 6), so we discuss the weekend model without the interaction (Model 3). We find no significant difference between dual and single-earner couples on weekends. Working on a weekend decreases couple time by about one hour (62 minutes), on average, compared to not working. As in the previous models, children reduce the couple time parents have compared to non-parents. Compared to the weekday model, on weekends differences between parents at adjacent life stages are not significant until children are ages 10 to 13 when parents have 20 minutes more time together, on average, compared to parents of 6 to 9 year olds. Time together increases more substantially at each subsequent life stage; parents of teenage children (14 to 17) have over 45 minute more together than parents of 10 to 13 year olds, and parents of adult children one hour more than parents of teenagers.

Discussion

We set out to examine the effects of earner status and life stage on the time spouses spend together in general and alone using new, nationally representative time diary data from the American Time Use Survey. We found that overall dual-earner couples have less time together

than single-earner couples, which is consistent with previous research (Voorpostel et al. 2009; Kingston and Nock 1987). We extend this research by showing that differences depended on whether paid work was also done on the diary day and whether the survey day was a weekend or weekday. The results show that dual-earner couples have less time together on weekdays and certainly on days that they work. However, differences between single and dual-earner couples are not significant on weekends, and on weekdays when dual-earners do not engage in paid work, they spend more time together than single-earners on non-workdays. Couple time patterns are largely similar, though the actual differences in the numbers of minutes spent together are smaller because couple time is lower than spouse time more generally. Differences between single and dual-earner couples on non-workday weekdays are not significant, which may result from the spouses of dual-earner couple respondents working on ATUS diary days. Where we do see differences between single and dual-earner couples time together, they likely stem from a difference in the amount of time available to spend together. Dual-earner couples face more barriers to time together as they coordinate two work schedules that may or may not overlap.

Regarding life stage, we found across the board that children reduce the time couples spend together, especially the time they spend alone. By distinguishing between children of different ages, we were able to show how parents with children of different ages are affected by their parental demands overall and on both weekends and weekdays. New parents spend less time with their spouses as do parents with older children. Parents' spouse time in weekday and weekend combined models and weekend only models shows evidence of a u-shaped curve that is lowest among parents of school age children (6 to 17) which then increases for parents of co-resident adult children. Weekdays show slightly different patterns with parents of children under

18 having consistently less time together than non-parents, though the variation between parents is marginal and not significant, except among the parents of adult children.

While time with one's spouse and anyone else is lowest among parents of school age children in the full model and weekend only model, time alone with one's spouse is lowest among the parents of young children. We find in our weekday and weekend combined models that parents of children under two have the least amount of couple time of parents and non-parents. In weekday and weekend specific models, our results show that until children reach the teenage years (14 to 17) parents of young children have substantially less couple time than non-parents and parents of teenage children.

The generally u-shaped patterns in time with a spouse overall and time with a spouse alone are consistent with research that finds a u-shaped curve in couples' joint time over the duration of their marriage (Kalmijn and Bernasco 2001). Unfortunately we do not have data on the duration of marriages to make direct comparisons to this earlier research, but using the age of children as a proxy for marital duration, we see similar patterns in our models establishing a baseline of time together with one's spouse. Our findings regarding the effects of children on couple time are also consistent with previous research that shows the strong negative effect of children on the time spouses spend together alone (Dew 2009; Kalmijn and Bernasco 2001). We provide additional information on how children differentially affect parents' time alone by looking at children of different ages; we find that parents of children ages 0 to 13 have similar amounts of time alone, and the amount of time alone is substantially lower than non-parents. Parents of increasingly independent children recoup some time together alone, though even parents of adult children are spending less time alone with their spouses than non-parents.

Additional analyses examining couples' engagement in specific types of activities by earner status and life stage reveal where differences are most pronounced. Regarding differences in specific activities for single and dual-earner couples, we find that the largest gap is in shared leisure time, particularly among 50 to 64 year olds, where single-earner couples have between 20 and 30 minutes more together on an average day than dual-earner couples.

Examination of the minutes spent in specific types of activities by life stage yields findings that reflect the u-shaped pattern overall. That is, we see evidence of u-shaped curves in the time couples spend alone together in particular types of activities, especially leisure, household activities, eating and drinking, shopping, and traveling, where doing these activities alone as a couple increases as children become more independent, generally by ages 10 to 13 and 14 to 17. As in the descriptive statistics we show in Figure 1, the amount of time couples spend together more generally shows a more modest decline and rebound as children age compared to time spent alone with one's spouse. The u-shape is most pronounced in leisure and in eating and drinking alone with one's spouse by life stage, though shared leisure is the primary activity in which parents have substantially less time together compared to non-parents.

This research is not without limitations. The American Time Use Survey data are cross-sectional, so the differences we observe between parents of children of different ages suggest that parents may spend more time together as their children age, though longitudinal data would be necessary to provide a better test of changes in time allocation as children age. At the same time, both cross-sectional data and studies with a longitudinal design face issues of marital survivorship. Parents of older children that we observe are those who have survived the early years of parenthood, assuming they have not divorced and remarried when we observe them. To

the extent that couples stay together because they spend time together and vice versa, selection is

an issue that must be considered.

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Table 1. Weighted Means/Percentages of couple-level, respondent and spouse demographic, and diary day characteristics

	Couple-level Characteristics	
Work Status		
Dual Earner	0.645	
Single Earner	0.355	
Life Stage		
No children, wife<45	0.113	
Youngest child 1 or under	0.104	
Youngest child age 2	0.044	
Youngest child age 3-5	0.103	
Youngest child age 6-9	0.111	
Youngest child age 10-13	0.096	
Youngest child age 14-17	0.086	
Youngest child age 18+	0.110	
No children, wife>45	0.233	
	Demographic Characteristics	
	Respondent	Spouse
Age	43.783	44.055
Education		
Less than High school	0.093	0.096
GED/HS Degree	0.295	0.278
Some College	0.257	0.263
College/Advanced Degree	0.355	0.357
Race		
White, non-Hispanic	0.743	0.745
Black, non-Hispanic	0.070	0.066
Other, non-Hispanic	0.054	0.054
Hispanic	0.133	0.135
	Diary Day Characteristics	
Workday	0.593	
Weekend	0.284	
Holiday	0.017	
Number of Observations	35,644	

Source: Authors' caluculations from ATUS data from 2003-2008 obtained from ATUS-X (Abraham et al. 2003). Sample includes all married respondents between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least one spouse working.

Table 2. Minutes Spent with Spouse

	Weighted Average of Minutes of Total time on Diary Day			Weighted Average of Minutes of Couple time in Diary Day		
	Weekday	Weekend	All Days	Weekday	Weekend	All Days
Couple-level Work Status						
Dual Earner	181.32	397.41	242.97	105.99	185.61	128.70
Single Earner	226.51	430.84	283.83	125.02	188.54	142.84
Life Stage						
No children, wife<45	212.70	458.20	282.46	179.07	332.07	222.55
Youngest child 1 or under	210.54	458.71	279.97	53.85	77.97	60.59
Youngest child age 2	194.72	429.58	266.24	54.13	78.62	61.59
Youngest child age 3-5	181.47	393.15	243.47	57.55	80.10	64.15
Youngest child age 6-9	173.75	376.10	230.97	62.45	89.36	70.06
Youngest child age 10-13	174.27	373.33	230.42	67.71	107.76	79.00
Youngest child age 14-17	176.94	373.49	232.90	89.66	154.80	108.21
Youngest child age 18+	202.45	372.61	253.92	136.91	218.09	161.46
No children, wife>45	217.34	429.68	274.40	180.59	315.62	216.87
Number of Observations	17,656	17,988	35,644	17,656	17,988	35,644

Source: Authors' caluculations from ATUS data from 2003-2008 obtained from ATUS-X (Abraham et al. 2003). Sample includes all married respondents between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least one spouse working.

Table 3. OLS Models Predicting Spouse's Time Together, Minutes per Day

	Model 1 Base		Model 2 Workday		Model 3 Interaction	
	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B
Key Independent Variables						
Dual Earner	-41.74 ***	2.89	-4.34	3.00	13.71 **	4.89
Workday	--	--	-123.37 ***	3.60	-102.45 ***	4.82
Dual Earner X Workday	--	--	--	--	-34.96 ***	5.97
Life Stage						
Youngest child 1 or under	-16.41 **	5.87	-22.33 ***	5.73	-22.91 ***	5.72
Youngest child age 2	-33.58 ***	6.88	-38.43 ***	6.72	-38.23 ***	6.71
Youngest child age 3-5	-49.93 ***	5.57	-51.67 ***	5.40	-51.97 ***	5.40
Youngest child age 6-9	-53.64 ***	5.57	-55.25 ***	5.36	-55.34 ***	5.36
Youngest child age 10-13	-48.24 ***	6.03	-51.04 ***	5.77	-51.05 ***	5.77
Youngest child age 14-17	-43.04 ***	6.58	-45.61 ***	6.33	-45.52 ***	6.33
Youngest child age 18+	-26.13 **	8.22	-27.71 ***	7.81	-27.98 ***	7.80
No children, wife>45	-1.91	7.28	-2.43	6.93	-2.51	6.93
Respondent's Characteristics						
Female	-10.91 ***	2.62	-2.43	6.93	-32.31 ***	2.71
Age						
30-34	-0.93	5.66	-34.66 ***	2.69	-1.77	5.50
35-39	-2.05	5.52	-1.88	5.51	-2.69	5.35
40-44	-13.07 *	5.89	-2.71	5.36	-13.96 *	5.69
45-49	-18.64 **	6.56	-13.75 *	5.69	-17.29 **	6.29
50-54	-21.10 **	7.45	-17.16 **	6.30	-18.76 **	7.13
55-59	-20.81 *	8.31	-19.00 **	7.14	-21.80 **	7.97
60-64	-7.93	9.07	-21.47 **	7.98	-10.81	8.73
Education						
GED/HS Degree	6.36	6.11	-11.35	8.74	9.62	5.90
Some College	3.25	6.23	10.37	5.91	8.37	6.05
College/Advanced Degree	-3.85	6.36	9.33	6.06	9.07	6.18
Race						
Black, non-Hispanic	-28.98 *	12.73	10.73	6.20	-34.37 **	11.58
Other, non-Hispanic	-17.83 *	7.05	-35.00 **	11.70	-17.15 *	7.01
Hispanic	0.01	6.53	-17.30 *	7.00	2.08	6.30
Spouse's Characteristics						
Education						
GED/HS Degree	1.09	6.09	1.98	6.32	-3.62	5.87
Some College	-2.72	6.27	-4.40	5.88	-8.24	6.04
College/Advanced Degree	10.60	6.40	-9.25	6.04	3.43	6.19
Race						
Black, non-Hispanic	-29.24 *	13.07	1.58	6.19	-25.64 *	11.78
Other, non-Hispanic	9.61	7.15	-24.89 *	11.91	10.74	7.03
Hispanic	-6.48	6.77	10.70	7.04	-7.91	6.52
Diary Day Characteristics						
Weekend	211.94 ***	2.80	158.33 ***	3.30	155.70 ***	3.35
Holiday	243.54 ***	14.26	200.57 ***	13.31	199.21 ***	13.25
2004	-10.87 **	3.82	-11.07 **	3.67	-10.97 **	3.66
2005	-2.72	4.19	-2.14	4.03	-2.11	4.03
2006	-10.90 **	4.10	-10.30 *	3.99	-10.07 *	3.98
2007	2.04	4.21	2.87	4.03	3.02	4.03
2008	-7.18	4.34	-6.98	4.20	-6.74	4.19
Constant	268.16 ***	9.14	345.25 ***	9.32	336.52 ***	9.47
R-square	0.22		0.27		0.27	

Notes: N = 35,643 in all models and includes married respondents between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least one spouse working.
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 4. OLS Models Predicting Spouse's Time Together on Weekdays and Weekends, Minutes per Day

	Model 1 Weekday Base		Model 2 Weekday Interaction		Model 3 Weekend Base		Model 4 Weekend Interaction	
	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B
Key Independent Variables								
Dual Earner	-6.09	3.81	28.33 **	8.39	-9.51	4.90	-9.29	5.74
Workday	-107.05 ***	4.92	-81.06 ***	5.92	-157.04 ***	4.75	-156.36 ***	8.91
Dual Earner X Workday	--	--	-52.23 ***	9.23	--	--	-0.94	10.35
Life Stage								
Youngest child 1 or under	-23.07 **	6.90	-24.54 ***	6.88	-17.33	9.92	-17.33	9.92
Youngest child age 2	-36.92 ***	8.09	-37.13 ***	8.06	-41.07 ***	11.79	-41.06 ***	11.79
Youngest child age 3-5	-45.01 ***	6.46	-45.77 ***	6.47	-66.15 ***	9.64	-66.14 ***	9.65
Youngest child age 6-9	-46.21 ***	6.37	-46.56 ***	6.36	-76.46 ***	9.72	-76.45 ***	9.72
Youngest child age 10-13	-43.17 ***	6.84	-43.42 ***	6.85	-69.17 ***	10.59	-69.16 ***	10.59
Youngest child age 14-17	-38.02 ***	7.52	-37.96 ***	7.51	-62.21 ***	11.47	-62.20 ***	11.47
Youngest child age 18+	-12.67	9.49	-13.28	9.46	-62.31 ***	13.21	-62.31 ***	13.21
No children, wife>45	0.95	8.25	0.91	8.23	-10.26	12.45	-10.25	12.45
Respondent's Characteristics								
Female	-30.63 ***	3.30	-27.32 ***	3.32	-39.98 ***	4.64	-39.94 ***	4.66
Age								
30-34	-3.98	6.66	-3.93	6.64	2.44	9.38	2.43	9.38
35-39	-1.40	6.41	-1.65	6.38	-6.55	9.47	-6.55	9.47
40-44	-11.33	6.82	-12.07	6.81	-19.66 *	9.98	-19.65 *	9.98
45-49	-9.79	7.56	-10.50	7.55	-37.07 **	10.98	-37.07 **	10.98
50-54	-14.06	8.56	-14.03	8.54	-31.15 *	12.50	-31.15 *	12.50
55-59	-16.01	9.60	-17.19	9.58	-34.80 *	13.96	-34.80 *	13.96
60-64	-9.68	10.41	-9.93	10.39	-14.06	15.70	-14.04	15.70
Education								
GED/HS Degree	12.18	7.02	11.25	6.98	5.60	10.54	5.59	10.54
Some College	10.42	7.18	8.97	7.16	6.87	10.87	6.84	10.87
College/Advanced Degree	8.75	7.31	6.43	7.28	13.70	11.25	13.67	11.26
Race								
Black, non-Hispanic	-42.58 **	13.11	-41.41 **	12.85	-7.15	23.20	-7.16	23.20
Other, non-Hispanic	-15.11	8.12	-14.96	8.15	-22.55	13.05	-22.55	13.05
Hispanic	1.50	7.58	1.85	7.54	2.89	11.13	2.89	11.13
Spouse's Characteristics								
Education								
GED/HS Degree	-4.62	7.18	-3.26	7.16	-2.13	9.80	-2.12	9.80
Some College	-5.82	7.36	-4.07	7.36	-15.26	10.21	-15.25	10.21
College/Advanced Degree	-1.96	7.54	1.00	7.54	13.84	10.44	13.87	10.44
Race								
Black, non-Hispanic	-2.94	13.40	-4.15	13.09	-86.71 ***	23.25	-86.71 ***	23.25
Other, non-Hispanic	4.54	8.10	4.27	8.11	27.70 *	13.42	27.71 *	13.42
Hispanic	-8.77	7.91	-9.13	7.88	-4.22	11.24	-4.21	11.24
Diary Day Characteristics								
Weekend	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Holiday	248.54 ***	18.12	243.58 ***	18.01	112.03 ***	15.11	112.04 ***	15.10
2004	-8.37	4.39	-8.00	4.38	-16.47 *	6.56	-16.47 *	6.56
2005	1.78	4.90	1.72	4.89	-8.16	6.83	-8.15	6.83
2006	-10.19 *	4.73	-9.70 *	4.72	-7.19	7.28	-7.19	7.28
2007	2.51	4.81	2.84	4.79	6.10	7.28	6.09	7.28
2008	-4.92	5.11	-4.47	5.10	-9.82	7.15	-9.82	7.15
Constant	321.93 ***	11.24	308.26 ***	11.42	540.50 ***	15.57	540.34 ***	15.70
R-square	0.13		0.14		0.13		0.14	

Notes: N = 17,656 in weekday models and N=17,988 in weekend models. All include married respondents between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least one spouse working.
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 5. OLS Models Predicting Couple-Only Time, Minutes per Day

	Model 1 Base		Model 2 Workday		Model 3 Interaction	
	B	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*SE B*
Key Independent Variables						
Dual Earner	-24.29 ***	2.27	-6.84 **	2.38	1.79	3.88
Workday	--	--	-57.59 ***	2.82	-47.59 ***	3.85
Dual Earner X Workday	--	--	--	--	-16.71 ***	4.78
Life Stage						
Youngest child 1 or under	-167.06 ***	4.63	-169.82 ***	4.60	-170.10 ***	4.60
Youngest child age 2	-167.13 ***	4.98	-169.40 ***	4.92	-169.31 ***	4.92
Youngest child age 3-5	-162.06 ***	4.56	-162.86 ***	4.50	-163.01 ***	4.50
Youngest child age 6-9	-153.47 ***	4.64	-154.23 ***	4.58	-154.27 ***	4.58
Youngest child age 10-13	-143.52 ***	4.92	-144.83 ***	4.83	-144.83 ***	4.83
Youngest child age 14-17	-115.12 ***	5.40	-116.31 ***	5.32	-116.27 ***	5.32
Youngest child age 18+	-66.69 ***	6.79	-67.42 ***	6.67	-67.55 ***	6.68
No children, wife>45	-14.17 *	6.28	-14.42 *	6.15	-14.46 *	6.15
Respondent's Characteristics						
Female	-8.74 ***	2.08	-14.42 *	6.15	-18.70 ***	2.21
Age						
30-34	0.34	4.06	-19.83 ***	2.18	-0.05	4.02
35-39	0.10	3.97	-0.10	4.02	-0.20	3.91
40-44	-2.18	4.48	-0.20	3.91	-2.60	4.39
45-49	-4.31	4.99	-2.50	4.39	-3.68	4.89
50-54	-1.38	5.87	-3.61	4.89	-0.28	5.75
55-59	3.27	6.67	-0.40	5.75	2.80	6.53
60-64	12.79	7.52	2.96	6.53	11.45	7.40
Education						
GED/HS Degree	7.31	4.71	11.19	7.40	8.82	4.68
Some College	10.11 *	4.85	9.18	4.69	12.49 *	4.82
College/Advanced Degree	1.43	5.02	12.94 **	4.82	7.44	4.99
Race						
Black, non-Hispanic	-7.26	8.40	8.23	4.99	-9.77	8.59
Other, non-Hispanic	-11.62 *	5.46	-10.07	8.57	-11.30 *	5.46
Hispanic	-5.47	4.78	-11.38 *	5.45	-4.51	4.71
Spouse's Characteristics						
Education						
GED/HS Degree	3.04	4.62	-4.55	4.71	0.84	4.57
Some College	2.16	4.84	0.47	4.57	-0.40	4.77
College/Advanced Degree	8.96	5.01	-0.88	4.77	5.63	4.95
Race						
Black, non-Hispanic	-13.64	8.45	4.74	4.95	-11.97	8.70
Other, non-Hispanic	3.01	5.84	-11.61	8.66	3.54	5.82
Hispanic	-11.83 *	4.92	3.52	5.81	-12.50 *	4.84
Diary Day Characteristics						
Weekend	75.57 ***	2.21	50.54 ***	2.59	49.29 ***	2.64
Holiday	38.20 **	11.27	18.14	11.10	17.49	11.09
2004	-6.30 *	2.93	-6.39 *	2.88	-6.34 *	2.88
2005	-3.75	3.22	-3.48	3.17	-3.46	3.17
2006	-13.33 ***	3.20	-13.05 ***	3.16	-12.94 ***	3.16
2007	1.31	3.41	1.69	3.36	1.76	3.35
2008	-6.50	3.46	-6.40	3.40	-6.29	3.40
Constant	223.44 ***	7.43	259.42 ***	7.73	255.25 ***	7.83
R-square	0.21		0.23		0.23	

Notes: N = 35,643 in all models and includes married respondents between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least one spouse working.
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 6. OLS Models Predicting Couple-Only Time on Weekdays and Weekends, Minutes per Day

	Model 1 Weekday Base		Model 2 Weekday Interaction		Model 3 Weekend Base		Model 4 Weekend Interaction	
	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B	B	SE B
Key Independent Variables								
Dual Earner	-7.83 **	2.99	6.25	6.54	-6.17	3.94	-6.08	4.67
Workday	-52.82 ***	3.84	-42.20 ***	4.72	-62.39 ***	3.74	-62.08 ***	6.94
Dual Earner X Workday	--	--	-21.36 **	7.26	--	--	-0.42	8.10
Life Stage								
Youngest child 1 or under	-135.28 ***	5.43	-135.88 ***	5.44	-256.48 ***	8.10	-256.47 ***	8.10
Youngest child age 2	-133.91 ***	5.85	-134.00 ***	5.85	-253.61 ***	8.56	-253.60 ***	8.56
Youngest child age 3-5	-127.43 ***	5.31	-127.74 ***	5.31	-249.33 ***	7.95	-249.33 ***	7.95
Youngest child age 6-9	-119.51 ***	5.39	-119.65 ***	5.39	-241.28 ***	8.08	-241.27 ***	8.08
Youngest child age 10-13	-113.92 ***	5.69	-114.02 ***	5.69	-221.94 ***	8.69	-221.94 ***	8.70
Youngest child age 14-17	-92.53 ***	6.26	-92.51 ***	6.26	-174.62 ***	9.68	-174.61 ***	9.68
Youngest child age 18+	-48.62 ***	8.01	-48.86 ***	8.03	-114.14 ***	11.62	-114.14 ***	11.62
No children, wife>45	-8.89	7.25	-8.91	7.25	-23.42 *	11.12	-23.41 *	11.12
Respondent's Characteristics								
Female	-17.60 ***	2.67	-16.25 ***	2.69	-22.82 ***	3.74	-22.80 ***	3.78
Age								
30-34	-1.38	4.78	-1.35	4.77	2.29	6.95	2.29	6.95
35-39	-2.73	4.60	-2.84	4.60	4.73	7.00	4.73	7.00
40-44	-4.24	5.21	-4.55	5.22	0.24	7.70	0.24	7.70
45-49	-5.06	5.85	-5.35	5.85	-1.50	8.57	-1.49	8.57
50-54	-0.47	6.82	-0.46	6.82	-2.16	10.27	-2.16	10.27
55-59	4.19	7.81	3.71	7.82	-2.55	11.55	-2.54	11.55
60-64	5.04	8.68	4.94	8.69	25.93	13.62	25.94	13.62
Education								
GED/HS Degree	13.22 *	5.43	12.84 *	5.42	0.09	8.60	0.08	8.60
Some College	16.72 **	5.60	16.12 **	5.61	4.69	8.81	4.68	8.81
College/Advanced Degree	10.93	5.81	9.98	5.81	1.84	9.10	1.83	9.09
Race								
Black, non-Hispanic	-13.06	9.93	-12.59	10.02	-5.69	15.04	-5.69	15.04
Other, non-Hispanic	-9.06	6.38	-9.00	6.41	-14.70	9.97	-14.70	9.97
Hispanic	0.42	5.68	0.56	5.66	-16.93 *	7.93	-16.93 *	7.93
Spouse's Characteristics								
Education								
GED/HS Degree	-0.58	5.41	-0.02	5.40	6.97	8.14	6.98	8.14
Some College	1.38	5.69	2.10	5.69	-5.83	8.42	-5.82	8.43
College/Advanced Degree	5.23	5.90	6.44	5.90	4.56	8.64	4.58	8.64
Race								
Black, non-Hispanic	-1.75	10.16	-2.24	10.27	-34.94 *	14.92	-34.93 *	14.92
Other, non-Hispanic	-1.92	6.70	-2.03	6.72	15.16	10.84	15.17	10.84
Hispanic	-9.78	5.84	-9.93	5.83	-17.18 *	8.05	-17.17 *	8.05
Diary Day Characteristics								
Weekend	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Holiday	33.87 *	15.26	31.84 *	15.25	-10.86	11.89	-10.86	11.89
2004	-5.08	3.45	-4.93	3.45	-9.13	5.00	-9.13	5.00
2005	-1.95	3.80	-1.98	3.80	-5.66	5.53	-5.66	5.53
2006	-12.45 **	3.74	-12.25 **	3.73	-11.10	5.66	-11.10	5.66
2007	0.28	3.97	0.42	3.96	5.06	6.06	5.06	6.06
2008	-5.05	4.16	-4.86	4.15	-9.46	5.65	-9.46	5.65
Constant	230.21 ***	9.09	224.62 ***	9.13	372.85 ***	13.37	372.78 ***	13.55
R-square	0.19		0.19		0.25		0.25	

Notes: N = 17,656 in weekday models and N=17,988 in weekend models. All include married respondents between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least one spouse working.
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001
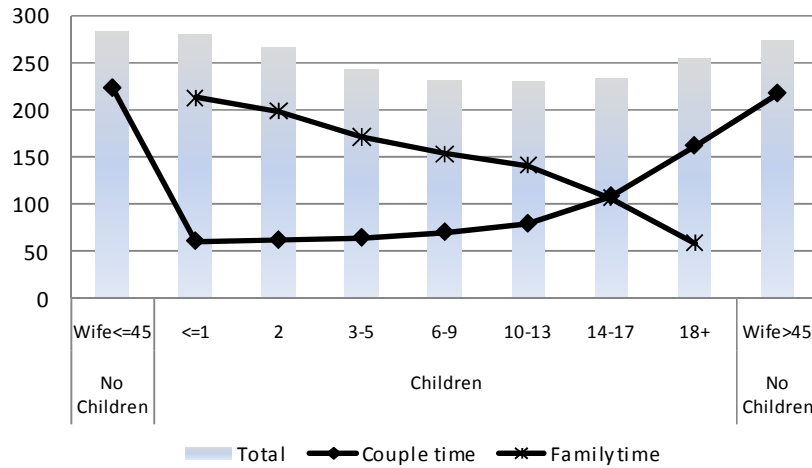
Figure 1: Time with spouse by life stage

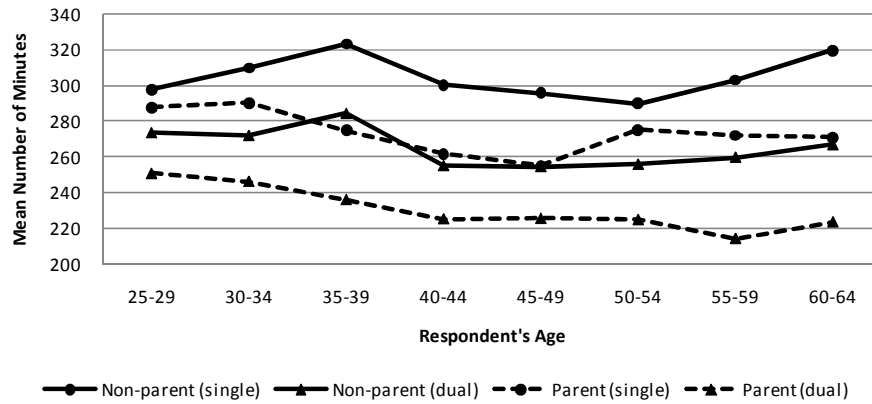## Figure 2: Any time with spouse by parental and earner statuses

Figure 3: Couple Time by parental and earner statuses