

Trends in Spouses' Shared Time in the United States, 1965-2012

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Motivation

Major demographic changes over the last half century

- Rise in dual-earner couples
- Heightened parenting demands—mothers *and* fathers are spending *more* time with children
- Blurring of lines between work and family
- Increase in marital homogamy

Limited, dated, and conflicting knowledge about couples' shared time

- Lower *alone* time together in 2003 compared to 1975 (Dew 2009)
- Slight increase in time with a spouse (and others) between 1965 and 2003 (Voorpostel et al 2009)
- Leisure activities are more enjoyable with a spouse (Sullivan 1996)
- Dual-earner couples spend less time together than single earners (White 1983; Kingston and Nock 1987)
- Couples *feel* like they lack time for one another (Nomaguchi et al 2005)
- Couples try to coordinate their activities (Hamermesh 2002; Sullivan 1996)

Data & Methods

American Heritage Time Use Study (AHTUS)

- Harmonized US time diary data
- 1965, 1975, 2003, 2012

Outcomes

- Total time with a spouse (minutes/day)
- Time with a spouse only (minutes/day)
- Time with a spouse and resident child under 18 (minutes/day)
- **Excludes personal care activities and paid work activities

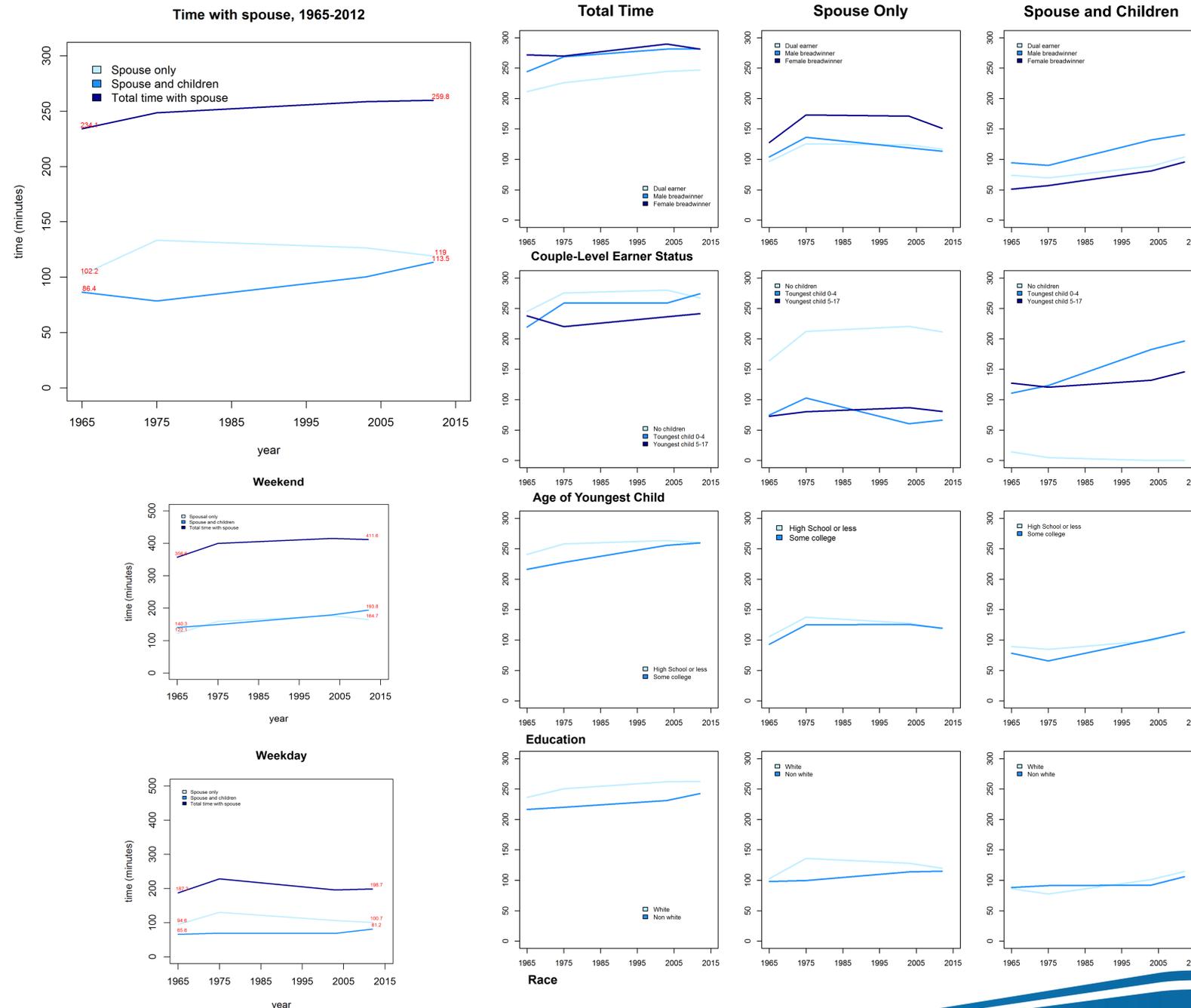
Controls

- Age, couple-level employment status, age of youngest children, education level, race, gender, day of week

Methods

- OLS regression (1965, 1975, 2003, 2012)
 - Assess whether observed differences over time are significant controlling for demographic characteristics
- Oaxaca Blinder Decomposition (1965 and 2012)
 - Assess how much change in spousal shared time can be attributed to changes in the demographic composition of the US population between 1965 and 2012

Time with a Spouse by Demographic Characteristics



Minutes per Day with Spouse

		Total time with spouse	Spouse only	Spouse and children	
OLS REGRESSION	Year	1965	-37.63***	-18.72***	-34.62***
		1975	11.99	14.27*	-14.10**
		2003	-3.502	3.544	-10.34***
		2012	--	--	--
	Employment	Dual earner	--	--	--
		Male breadwinner	36.31***	15.48***	16.29***
		Female breadwinner	38.82***	24.15***	13.57**
	Children	No children	--	--	--
		Youngest child 0-4	-28.67***	-149.6***	160.4***
		Youngest child 5-17	-38.96***	-127.5***	125.5***
Day of week	Weekday	--	--	--	
	Weekend	211.1***	64.57***	105.6***	
Constant		199.8***	181.1***	-11.34*	
N		16482	16482	16482	
R2		0.1968	0.2046	0.287	
OAXACA BLINDER DECOMPOSITION	Characteristics 1965 Total change	25.7	-33.0	9.0	
	2012 coefficients				
	Change due to different characteristics (explained)	-7.0	1.4	-10.8	
	Change due to different coefficients (unexplained)	32.6	-34.4	19.8	
	Characteristics 2013 Total change	25.7	-33.0	9.0	
1965 coefficients					
Change due to different characteristics (explained)	-20.7	-15.1	-5.4		
Change due to different coefficients (unexplained)	46.4	-18.0	14.4		

Conclusion

Unlike previous research, we find *increases* in total time with a spouse, time with a spouse only, and time with a spouse and child.

None of the changes between 1965 and 2012 are explained by the changing demographic composition of the US population.

Changing demographics actually yield larger differences over time (see negative "explained" results) when we apply coefficients from 1965 into 2013 equation (and vice versa)