Daily Activities and Couples' Relationship Quality

by
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Abstract

This three-paper dissertation examines how daily family life has changed since 1975 and how these changes are associated with the relationship quality of married and cohabiting couples. In the first paper, I examine changes in shared family time since 1975 by analyzing data from two U.S. datasets: Time Use in Economic and Social Accounts (1975-1976) and the American Time Use Survey (2009-2012). For married individuals, time spent with a family member increased from 406 minutes in 1975 to 440 minutes in 2009-2012. Among singles, the amount of time spent with family on a typical day averaged 340 minutes in 2009-2012, up from 291 minutes in 1975. Despite increases in time spent together, participation in family meals declined modestly over the time period. Sixty-six percent of married adults shared evening meals with family in 1975 compared with 63 percent in 2009 to 2012.

The second paper examines how family routines are related to the quality of parents' relationships. I analyze data from a sample of married and cohabiting primary caregivers in the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS). Findings suggest that eating family dinners together is associated with higher-quality relationships along a number of dimensions, including willingness to compromise, expression of affection and encouragement. I find that an additional family meal per week is associated 1.14 higher odds of being "extremely happy" with one's relationship versus the cumulative odds of poorer relationship assessments.

In the third paper, I examine how distances regularly travelled by adults in married and cohabiting relationships are associated with the quality of their partnerships. Analysis of the L.A.FANS provides modest support for associations between long commutes to work and low-

quality relationships. However, travelling greater distances to some locations is positively associated with a number of relationship outcomes including willingness to compromise, expression of affection, and a global assessment of relationship quality. Compared to respondents travelling less than .5 miles to the place they spend the most time, individuals travelling 1-2 miles have 2.49 times the odds of reporting that they are “extremely happy” with their relationship versus the odds of lower relationship assessments.

Chapter 1

Introduction

> "Tonight has to be a real rushed dinner, because the kids are going ice-skating and they're getting picked up at 6:00, so there's a package of smoky links in the refrigerator and they're going to have that. And David will probably either have that, or—well, we had friends over last night, actually I did because, he was gone—and it was a potluck dinner, but I was lucky because since it was my house I got all the leftovers. So tonight—this isn't a good night to ask about, but—so the kids will—it'll be three different things."
>
> *-from Marjorie DeVault's Feeding the Family (1991, p. 81)*

Family sociologists have a long history of examining the ordinary activities that family members share. Through their ethnographic accounts, scholars have uncovered meanings that individuals ascribe to their family activities, and identified constraints and opportunities that give daily family life its shape and tempo. A number of sociologists have asserted that shared activities are fundamental to the maintenance of family relationships and to the cohesion of families. Bossard and Boll (1950) were among the first to suggest that family rituals—such as shared meals—provide a basis for creating and maintaining family culture, and for constructing a mutual understanding of the family as an integrated group. Similarly, DeVault (1991, p. 91)

argues that the activities which produce family mealtime are central to creating a meaningful notion of "family." She writes,

> "as [women] do the work of feeding, [they] draw from a discourse with history, which both reflects and organizes concepts of 'family'… Through day-to-day activities, each person produces a version of family in a particular local setting: adjusting, filling in, and repairing social relations to produce—quite literally—this form of household life."

Routine activities hold a central place in Giddens' *theory of structuration* as well. Giddens (1984) argues that time and space are not mere environments in which human societies exist; rather, they are constitutive of forms of social organization. Routine activities are the modes through which enduring social structures are reproduced over time and across space.

Sociologists have also examined the everyday situations that limit family members' time together. Because each day contains only 24 hours, time spent in one activity necessarily limits the time available for other activities. Paid work is a chief competitor to family members' time together and research in the work-family literature has illuminated the everyday situations that place limits on family time (for a review see Bianchi and Milkie 2010). Of course, family members have different individual obligations (e.g. to work, to school, to leisure pursuits), and the schedules of adult and child family members can constrain the time that entire families have to share. Geographer Torsten Hägerstrand called these individual aims "projects," and their divergences across the course of a day, "coupling constraints" (Carlstein, Parkes and Thrift 1978). The aggregation of individual "projects" across a family, then, shapes the opportunities that exist for family interaction and cohesion.

Work and other non-family activities may also compete with family time by orientating family members toward different goals. Individuals dedicate time to the aims on which they are focused, and conversely, they focus their aims on those things that are before them. As Hochschild (1997, p.45) puts it,

> "The social world that draws a person's allegiance also imparts a pattern to time. The more attached we are to the world of work, the more its deadlines, its cycles, its pauses and interruptions shape our lives and the more family time is forced to accommodate to the pressures of work."

Activity patterns simultaneously reflect the individual commitments of family members and shape the attachments they will have in the future.

While time, space and activity patterns are fairly well-developed themes in qualitative studies of the family, family researchers working with quantitative data have been slower to incorporate these ideas into their accounts of family relationships and stability (Daly 2003; Giddens 1979). This three-paper dissertation seeks to move the research literature closer toward that end by examining family relationships against the everyday moments and settings in which family life is experienced. Building on qualitative approaches linking time, place and social relationships, I explore married and cohabiting couples' relationships in the context of the daily routines and settings of which they are a part.

The first paper examines changes in shared family activities in the U.S. between 1975 and 2012, with a special focus on family meals. Using nationally representative time-dairy data, I explore the full range of activities and locations that family members share on a typical day. This analysis extends our knowledge of shared family time by defining the temporal and spatial boundaries within which shared family activities take place, and by providing a picture of

changes in the frequency, timing and location of shared activities over time. The second paper explores associations between family routines and the quality of married and cohabiting couples' relationships. Using data from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS), I examine how family meals and other regularized activities, such as bedtime and chores, are related to the quality of parents' relationships with each other. The second paper extends the research literature on family routines and children's welfare to include the well-being of adult family members. The final paper explores couples' relationships in the context of their daily travel routines. Unique data collected by the L.A.FANS document the distances that adults travel to select locations throughout a typical day, allowing for a rare glimpse into the spatial dimensions associated with couples' relationships. Together, these three papers provide a fresh view of family relationships in light of the day-to-day experiences of living in a family.

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Chapter 2

Changes in Family Mealtime: 1975 to 2012

Introduction

A large and growing body of research has documented associations between family mealtime and a range of outcomes in young people's health and well-being. Eating frequent family meals is related to physical and emotional health; to academic achievement, and to a range of pro-social behaviors of children and adolescents (Coley, Votruba-Drzal and Schindler 2008; Fulkerson et al. 2006; Hammons and Fiese 2011; Serpell et al. 2002). Public policy makers, journalists, clinicians, and scholars have zealously endorsed family mealtime, presuming that the relationship between family meals and child well-being is a causal one. New studies with more stringent tests of causality temper conclusions drawn from earlier studies, but most still conclude that family meals do indeed benefit young people along some dimensions of well-being (Eisenberg et al. 2008; Musick and Meier 2012; Sen 2010).

Survey research suggests that sharing family meals is the normative experience for families with children. Sixty percent of teenagers report having dinner with their families 5 times a week or more (CASA 2010). Despite the great deal of attention paid to family mealtime, relatively little is known about how the frequency of family meals may have changed over time, or how family mealtime may vary across family structures[i]. Considerable effort has been put into documenting activity patterns of individual family members, but examinations of shared family time has been limited almost exclusively to parent-child and partner pairs, rather than a broader

set of relationships that comprise todays' families (e.g., Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Hofferth and Sandberg 2001; Jacobs and Gerson 2001; but see Jacobs and Gerson 2004).

Time-use research does offer some clues about how family meals together may have changed over the past several decades. Some trends point to a possible decline in the frequency of family meals over time. Contemporary parents—and mothers in particular—spend more time outside the home compared with their counterparts in 1970, concurrent with the rise in women's labor force participation (Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Sayer 2005). With less time outside of working hours available to grocery shop and prepare meals, family meals together may have become more difficult and costly to organize over time. Indeed, time-use research indicates that mothers in 2000 spent significantly less time preparing and cleaning up after meals, compared with mothers in 1965 (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006). Similarly, in a cross-national study of mealtime practices, Warde and colleagues (2007) found that time spent preparing meals and eating at home has declined in many countries including the U.S.; however, there has been a simultaneous increase in the amount of time that people spend eating outside of the home.

There are also reasons to think that family meals may have become more frequent over time. Parents today spend more time with their children than did parents in 1970, despite time pressures imposed by the increased labor force participation of mothers. Time spent caring for, and playing with, children has increased among mothers and fathers, especially among those in two-parent families (Bianchi 2000; Gauthier, Smeeding and Furstenberg 2004; Sandberg and Hofferth 2005; Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004). This increase has been attributed to an "intensive parenting" norm in which parents are increasingly motivated by a desire to enhance their children's development by investing focused time and energy in parenting; a norm that has been found to be particularly salient among middle-class parents (Bianchi 2011; Daly 2001;

Lareau 2011). The increase in time spent with children may indicate that the frequency of family meals has also increased as parents' prioritize time with children over other activities. In short, there is good reason to believe that the frequency of family meals may have changed, but it is not clear whether more or fewer families eat meals together than families in past decades, or whether there has been an increase or decline in the amount of time dedicated to family mealtime.

Understanding changes in family mealtime can help us understand family well-being in the context of broader historical social changes. Similarly, knowing how the frequency of family meals varies across family structure can help us understand more about the ways in which contemporary families experience everyday family life, and the resulting variations in well-being that follow from their varied experiences. The current study examines changes in family meals since 1975, comparing groups of single, married and cohabiting parents. I first review the most recent research on the benefits of family mealtime. I then describe the changes in shared family time since the mid-1970s, focusing closely on the family meal.

Background and Significance

Linkages between family mealtime and well-being

Literature from the field of Public Health has shown that the physical health of children and adolescents is associated with family mealtime routines. Eating meals together as a family is related to better eating habits and healthier body weight for young children and adolescents (Anderson and Whitaker 2010; Fertig, Glomm and Tchernis 2009; Fulkerson et al. 2009; Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2003; Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2004; Neumark-Sztainer 2006; Videon and Manning 2003). Qualitative studies suggest that some families' weak mealtime routines and stressful environments can exist concurrently, lending themselves to unhealthy eating habits (Chan, Deave and Greenhalgh 2010; Devine et al. 2006). A recent meta-analysis of 17 studies

concluded that sharing frequent family meals is associated with a reduced risk of obesity in children and adolescents, and an increased likelihood of healthy diet and eating practices (Hammons and Fiese 2011).

Children and adolescents who frequently ate meals with their families also had better mental health than their peers who did not (Brody and Flor 1997; Coley, Votruba-Drzal and Schindler 2008; Crespo et al. 2011; Eisenberg et al. 2004; Fulkerson et al. 2006; Fulkerson et al. 2009; Hair et al. 2008; Loukas and Prelow 2004; Prelow, Loukas and Jordan-Green 2007; Videon and Manning 2003). And sharing family meals is related to better outcomes among children who experience difficult life circumstances. Among children who experience stressful life events—such as the chronic illness of a parent—those sharing frequent family meals are better able to adjust to their difficult circumstances than those whose families did not (Murphy et al. 2009).

Adolescents who regularly eat meals with their families experience fewer behavioral problems as well. Among adolescents, family meals are associated with a reduced risk of substance use and delinquency (Coley, Votruba-Drzal and Schindler 2008; Eisenberg et al. 2004; Eisenberg et al. 2008; Fisher et al. 2007; Fulkerson et al. 2006; Griffin et al. 2000; McLoyd, Toyokawa and Kaplan 2008; Prelow, Loukas and Jordan-Green 2007; Sen 2010). Adolescents in families with a regular mealtime routines exhibited higher academic achievement and a lower likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behavior than those whose families did not (Coley, Votruba-Drzal and Schindler 2009; Eisenberg et al. 2004; Roche and Leventhal 2009). Although much of the research on family meals focuses on adolescents, the beneficial effects of family meals appear to be significant for younger children as well. Grade-schoolers whose families maintained regular routines—including family meals—exhibited lower levels of anxiety than

their counterparts (Markson and Fiese 2000). And routines including family dinners, reading with parents, and scheduled homework were found to be jointly associated with the development of reading skills in young children (Serpell et al. 2002).

While many studies have documented strong and persistent associations between family meals and the well-being of young people, few studies have examined the mechanisms producing these associations in a rigorous way. Many papers have relied on cross-sectional research designs, and have been therefore ill-equipped to uncover the causal processes producing the observed associations. Some studies of family meals have relied on samples of convenience, making it difficult to gauge the weight of the evidence. Many earlier studies of family meals have incorporated endogeneity biases in the form of omitted variables into their analyses. Specifically, the research literature, until very recently, contained little information about family characteristics, such as income or educational attainment, which potentially impact both the frequency of family meals and the welfare outcome of interest. Without accounting for these broader family contexts, shared mealtime may serve as only a marker of other positive influences in the lives of the children studied.

A small number of recent studies examine the relationship between family meals and well-being with improved model specifications. Musick and Meier's (2012) paper is the most comprehensive study to-date on the impact of family meals on adolescent well-being, net of family characteristics. The authors examine three waves of data, and are therefore able to gain some leverage on the issue of causal direction. Their study finds that the benefits of family meals remain into adolescence, but do not persist into young adulthood. Other studies have come to similarly mitigated conclusions. Sen's (2010) examination of two waves of NLSY97 data found that some, but not all, of the impacts of family meals on adolescent behavior remained when

longitudinal methods were used. Other longitudinal studies have reported attenuated effects of the frequency of sharing family meals once reverse causality is controlled with prior measures as well (Eisenberg et al. 2008; Fulkerson et al. 2006). Only Miller and colleagues (2012) were unable to find a significant impact of family meals on academic or behavioral outcomes once earlier behaviors were taken into account in their analyses.

In sum, recent studies find that family meals appear to be significantly associated with fewer dimensions of child and adolescent well-being than previously reported. Conclusions drawn from earlier studies overestimate the impact of family meals by omitting family and individual characteristics that are associated with both the frequency of family meals and improved well-being, and by failing to account for reverse causality. However, more complex causal pathways linking family meals, family characteristics and child well-being may exist, and have yet to be fully researched.

Macrolevel factors shaping the shared time use of families

An important constraint on the time that families have available to spend together is the amount of time that family members—and parents in particular—spend working. Married couples have significantly increased their joint hours of paid work over the past several decades, restricting the amount of time that entire families can spend together (Bianchi and Raley 2005; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Jacobs and Gerson (2001) estimate that the joint work hours of couples increased from 52.5 hours per week in 1970 to 63.1 hours in 2000. They report that most of the increase can be attributed to an increased proportion of wives in paid employment, rather than a more general lengthening of the workday or workweek for all workers. [ii]

In 1975, 47 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 participated in the labor force, compared with 71 percent in 2012 (Parker and Wang 2013). Because mothers have historically specialized in household labor, changes in mothers' labor force participation may be a key dimension shaping changes in family routines and activities, including those related to family mealtime. Cross sectional research finds that maternal employment is associated with mothers' reductions in time spent grocery shopping and cooking, and with an increased likelihood of purchasing prepared foods (Cawley and Lui 2007). Between 1975 and 1998 women reduced the amount of time they spent doing "core" household work (e.g., cooking and cleaning) by 111 minutes per day, while over the same period, men have increased the amount of time they spent doing these tasks by 63 minutes. (Sayer 2005). While men have partially compensated for women's declines by increasing their share of household labor, the household average fell by a total of 48 minutes between the middle 1970s and late 1990s.

In addition to changes in women's labor force participation, other macro-level trends impact the allocation of family members' time in paid and unpaid labor. The Great Recession of 2007 to 2009 brought job losses for some, and fewer hours of work for others who remained employed throughout its duration (Goodman and Mance 2011; Kroll 2011). Sill other workers experienced an increase in work hours as employers saved costs and reduced risks by requiring more hours of work from their salaried employees (Kroll 2011). During the Great Recession, fathers increased their time spent in childcare activities and mothers increased their hours of non-standard work.(Sandler Morrill and Wulff Pabilonia 2012). One study reports that Americans increased the amount of time they spent in leisure activities during the recession, particularly the time they spent sleeping and watching television (Aguiar, Hurst and Karabarbounis 2012). The

same study finds that Americans increased their time spent in household labor only slightly during the recession as time spent working was reduced.

The growth of non-standard work is another important dimension of economic change impacting shared family time. Presser (2003) reports that nearly two-thirds of workers in the U.S. maintain nonstandard work hours, and about 20 percent spend more than half of their work hours outside of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (Presser 2003; Presser, Gornick and Parashar 2008). The increasing prevalence of nonstandard work schedules has been attributed to a number of economic and technological changes that have fostered a "24/7" service economy and created a higher demand for work around the clock (Presser 2007). While parents are not more likely to work nonstandard hours than non-parents, the high prevalence of nonstandard work among adults becomes an important constraint on all couples' time together (Presser 2003; Presser, Gornick and Parashar 2008). Wight and colleagues (2008) found that mothers who work nonstandard hours actually spent an average of 30 minutes more per day with their children, compared with mothers who worked standard daytime hours; however, women working nonstandard hours spent less time with their spouse than women who did not.

Several studies have documented the adverse impact of nonstandard work on a number of measures of family and individual well-being. Nonstandard work has been shown to negatively affect the quality of couples' relationships (Mills and Täht 2010; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2007; Presser 2000; Presser 2003; White and Keith 1990). Presser (2003) finds that rotating shifts and late night work increase marital instability among parents—who may have a difficult time getting sufficient sleep—and have little time to spend with their partners. However, Kalil and her colleagues (2010) find that nonstandard work hours increase the likelihood of divorce only among couples without children.

Nonstandard work has been found to impact the health and well-being of young people as well (Daniel et al. 2009; Han 2005; Odom, Vernon-Feagans and Crouter 2013; Roeters, van der Lippe and Kluwer 2010). Some studies have suggested that family activities such as healthy meal preparation and television watching may help explain the associations between maternal nonstandard work and obesity in children and adolescents (Miller and Han 2008). Similarly, Han and Fox (2011) find that maternal nonstandard work negatively impact cognitive outcomes in children through fewer family meals.

Family characteristics, living arrangements and family meals

Changes in U.S. family structure and living arrangements have likely played a role in altering the amount of time that families today have to prepare meals and eat together—compared with those in the mid-1970s. One notable change is the increase in single-parent families. In 1976, 17 percent of all children lived with an unmarried parent, compared with 28 percent in 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Single parents must manage both work and household obligations, often without the assistance of another adult in the household. Indeed, studies have found that single-parent families spend less time eating—and are less likely to eat meals together—compared with two-parent families (Bianchi 2011; Musick and Meier 2012).

Another related dimension of family change that may alter the ability of family members to eat meals together is the decreased likelihood that family members today all live in the same household, as compared with family members 40 years ago. With substantial proportions of families experiencing divorce and remarriage, and with an increased prevalence in nonmarital childbearing and multipartnered fertility, contemporary families members may experience daily family life in multiple locations, rather than having their shared activities anchored to a single household (for reviews of trends, see Carlson and Furstenberg Jr. 2006; Cherlin 2010; Smock

and Greenland 2010). The rising prevalence of cohabitation may impact the daily activities of families as well. Cohabitation has increased the likelihood that families with children will experience instability, particularly the end of a union and a subsequent change in households for at least some of the family members (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008; Manning, Smock and Majumdar 2004). The churn of family members in and out of a household may make it harder for families—or parts of families—to spend time together and to develop their own daily routines (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006). Consistent with this, Gershuny (2003) finds a great deal of stability in family members' use of time over the life course, until family transitions occur (e.g. the birth of a child, the dissolution of a union). Family transitions appear to set into motion changes in patterns of time use especially in the areas of paid and unpaid labor.

The changing meaning of the family may also play a role in altering the salience of shared family activities, including mealtimes. To the extent that the family meal is a institutionalized, normative family activity, cohabiting families and step-families may be less oriented toward prioritizing shared family meals, compared to biological two-parent families (Cherlin 2004). Similarly, the increasing complexity of family structure is associated with ambiguity in family membership; this ambiguity may serve to erode the significance of shared meals and other activities as valued uses of time, potentially reducing the desire of family members to organize and participate in these activities (Brown and Manning 2009).

Current Study

This study documents changes in shared family time between 1975 and 2012, with a focus on family mealtime. This research extends our knowledge of family time together and of family meals in three ways. First, substantial amount of time-use research has examined changes in the shared activities of spouses or parent-child pairs, but few studies have examined a family

universe larger than these two co-resident pairs alone. This is important since contemporary families can and do span multiple households, and comprise a range of complex relationships. Second, this study extends the limited research on changes in family mealtime by documenting differences in shared mealtime for single-, married- and cohabiting-parent families. Understanding how mealtime varies across these family structures can help us interpret the meaning of historical family change and its implications for the well-being of individual family members over time. And finally, this study extends past research on shared family time by documenting the full range of activities that family members share when they are together. This allows us to understand changes in shared meals in the context of other demands and preferences that give rise to activities that fill the 24-hour day.

Data and Measures

Data come from two nationally representative time-diary studies spanning the period 1975 to 2012. The studies were integrated as part of the American Heritage Time Use Study at the Centre for Time Use Research at the University of Oxford. The first study, Time Use in Economic and Social Accounts (TUESA), was conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan (Juster et al. 1984). Four waves of data collection occurred between the fall of 1975 and the fall of 1976 (hereafter "1975"). During the first wave, respondents age 18 and older were interviewed, in-person, on a range of social and demographic topics. Respondents were also asked to provide "yesterday" time-diaries in which they walked the interviewer through the previous day's activities, reporting when, where and with whom each activity took place. Time diary information was also conducted in subsequent waves of data collection, with interviews occurring mainly over the telephone. The response rate was 72

percent in the first wave of data collection, with 44.9 percent of the sample providing responses in all four waves of data collection. Data were collected from 1,519 respondents.

Data covering the more recent period, 2009 to 2012 (hereafter "2012"), come from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS). The ATUS is an on-going, nationally representative survey sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ATUS interviews a randomly selected individual age 15 and older from a subset of the households that have completed their final interview for the Current Population Survey (CPS). ATUS interviewing occurs continuously over the course of the year, and each ATUS respondent is interviewed once. As in the TUESA, ATUS respondents report on their activities that occurred on the day preceding the interview. The ATUS response rate in 2009 through 2012 ranged between 53.2 to 56.9 percent annually. The sample size of the ATUS averages 24,600 (annually) between 2009 and 2012.

The TUESA and ATUS have been used jointly in a number of scholarly publications tracking trends in time-use (e.g. Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Robinson and Godbey 1999). The decline in the response rates between the two surveys, from 72 percent in Wave 1 of the TUESA to 53.2 percent in the 2012 ATUS, reflect a general trend toward higher levels of non-response in surveys which stem from a number of social and technological changes that have occurred since 1970 (Brick and Williams 2013; Massey and Tourangeau 2013). Analysis of non-response in the ATUS indicates that people who are weakly integrated into their communities are more likely to be "missed" by the ATUS, because they are less likely to be contacted (Abraham, Maitland and Bianchi 2006). There is little evidence to suggest that busy people are less likely to respond to the ATUS than those who have more time to spare. Research suggests that the weighted estimates produced with ATUS analytic weights do not vary

considerably from those weighted with an additional non-response adjustment (Abraham, Maitland and Bianchi 2006). In the current paper, I use weights produced by the American Heritage Time Use Study for all analyses conducted.

Time diaries provide a representative sample of ‘‘person days’’ for groups of respondents. Although any given individual’s diary day may be unique and not typical for them, the accumulation of days across people provides a representative picture of how they spend their time, on average, and allows for comparisons of the differences in time use across groups. Time-diaries have been shown to be more accurate than traditional survey questions that ask people to report on their activities, without the continuous temporal ordering or the 24-hour restraint that diary methods employ (Chase and Goodbey 1983). Traditional survey questions asking respondents how much time they spend in specific activities have been found to result in inflated estimates exceeding the 168 hour week (Hawes, Talarzyk and Blackwell 1975; Robinson and Godbey 1999). Thus, researchers widely view time diary methods as the most reliable and valid methodologies currently available to measure time use.

The analytic sample is made up of adults living in households that had at least one child under the age of 18. Data from primary respondents in all four waves of the TUESA were included in the analysis.[iii] For consistency across time, ATUS respondents under the age of 18 and residents of Hawaii and Alaska, were excluded. This yielded an analytic sample size of 2,131 in 1975 and 21,261 in 2012. Analyses were conducted using analytic weights that adjusted for non-response and diary day. Additional weights were created for the purpose of conducting sensitivity analyses testing for different results when respondents from both time periods contributed equally to the analysis. Sample descriptive statistics are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Unweighted Sample Means

	Parents with children (age 0-17) in household	
	1975-76	2009-2012
Age	35.7	39.2
Sex (1=male)	41.3%	41.1%
Race		
White	87.0%	82.0%
Black	8.9%	10.8%
Other	4.1%	7.2%
Hispanic	NA	16.6%
Marital Status		
Married	80.0%	69%
Cohabiting	NA	4%
Single	20.0%	27%
N	2,131	21,261

Family status All respondents lived in a household with a child under the age of 18. Three types of families were analyzed. The activities of married and single respondents were analyzed in both time periods, and cohabiting respondents were analyzed in the 2012 period. Data identifying cohabitors was not collected by the TUESA.

Family activities. Respondents reported their activities in their own words, and coders later categorized them into activity categories describing the respondent's primary activity. An activity is considered to be a "family" activity if one or more close family members were present during the activity. Close family members may include a spouse, partner, child, parent, other relatives living in the household, or own non-household children. In the ATUS, respondents were not asked to report with whom they shared an activity when they were sleeping, grooming, or doing personal or private activities. For consistency, I excluded any of these activities that were reportedly shared with a close family member from the TUESA.

Evening meals were episodes of eating or drinking, lasting10 minutes or more, and during which a close family member was present. Evening meals began between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm. Similarly, shared breakfasts were defined as eating or drinking beginning between the hours of 6:00 am and 10:00 am. Breakfasts were also at least 10 minutes in duration and included one or more close family members. All other episodes of shared eating or drinking that took place during the diary day were included in an activity called "other eating". All shared family eating could take place at home or elsewhere, such as at a restaurant or bar.

Housework includes meal preparation and meal clean up, cleaning and laundry, home maintenance and repairs, shopping, and financial or government services (e.g. paying bills, filing tax returns).

Caregiving activities include the general and medical care of children, as well as child supervision, helping with homework, reading, talking and playing with children. Adult caregiving is also included in this activity group.

Civic activities include volunteering, and civic or political activities. *Religious activities* include attending services and participating in other religious acts. *Television* is leisure time spent watching television, DVDs or videos. Two additional leisure activity categories were constructed: *social leisure* and *other leisure*.

Social leisure captures activities in which social interaction is the primary activity reported. It includes attending parties or receptions and visiting with friends and family.

Other leisure may also be social in nature, but the primary activity was reported as having a different emphasis such as attending to a movie or sporting event, physical exercise, outdoor recreation, reading, doing crafts or hobbies, and listening to music or CDs.

Travel includes all time spent in transit for a range of activities such as shopping, commuting to work, childcare, education and leisure.

Location of activities. To gain a clearer picture of the experience of shared family time, I examined the amount of time spent in shared activities across different locations. Preliminary analyses revealed that the majority of family time was spent in the following locations: home, work, travel, and shopping. All other time spent with a close family member was recoded into a category called “other location”.

Results

Changes in shared family activities and meals

Table 2.2 shows the percentage of respondents who spent time with a close family member on an average day, as well as the average number of minutes spent in that activity among those who participated in it. In 1975, 83.2 percent of single parents spent some time with a close family member. That percentage did not change significantly between 1975 and 2012. Among single parents who spent some time with a family member, the average amount of time increased, from 291 minutes (4.9 hours) to 340 minutes (5.6 hours) in 2012. A similar picture emerges for married individuals. While there was a slight—but significant—decline in the percentage of married respondents who spent time with family between 1975 and 2012, from 98.4 percent to 97.1 percent, the amount of time spent with family increased significantly, from 406 minutes (6.8 hours) in 1975 to 440 minutes (7.3 hours) in 2012.

Table 2.2 Shared Family Activities, 1975-2012

	Percent of parents participating in activity with one or more close family members in typical day					Average minutes in activity, among parents participating in activity with one or more close family members				
	1975-1976 Single	2009-2012 Single	1975-1976 Married	2009-2012 Married	2009-2012 Cohabiting	1975-1976 Single	2009-2012 Single	1975-1976 Married	2009-2012 Married	2009-2012 Cohabiting
Breakfast	22.4%	13.9% a	40.8%	26.1% b	18.7% c	27.6	28.0	29.5	29.7	30.7
	(2.2%)	(0.5%)	(1.3%)	(0.4%)	(1.6%)	(3.0)	(0.8)	(1.0)	(0.4)	(1.8)
Evening meal	45.0%	39.3% a	66.1%	62.9% b	52.0% c	33.3	36.3 a	39.2	39.6	36.2 c
	(2.8%)	(0.8%)	(1.3%)	(0.5%)	(2.1%)	(1.3)	(0.5)	(0.8)	(0.3)	(1.3)
Other eating	28.8%	29.1%	52.3%	41.1% b	38.2%	33.7	35.8	38.8	41.1 b	36.0 c
	(2.5%)	(0.7%)	(1.4%)	(0.5%)	(2.0%)	(2.1)	(0.8)	(1.1)	(0.4)	(1.6)
Housework	53.5%	47.7% a	64.8%	65.5%	62.6% c	110.9	94.5 a	129.3	106.1 b	99.6
	(2.8%)	(0.8%)	(1.4%)	(0.5%)	(2.1%)	(7.5)	(2.1)	(3.5)	(1.2)	(5.2)
Caregiving	40.9%	49.1% a	50.6%	69.7% b	65.6% c	71.5	107.5 a	74.9	119.7 b	131.9
	(2.7%)	(0.8%)	(1.4%)	(0.4%)	(2.0%)	(5.9)	(2.6)	(2.6)	(1.4)	(7.0)
Civic activities	0.3%	1.3% a	1.5%	4.0% b	1.1% c	NA	129.4	107.0	119.5	170.0
	(0.3%)	(0.2%)	(0.3%)	(0.2%)	(0.5%)	(NA)	(14.8)	(14.4)	(4.8)	(51.7)
Religious activities	2.5%	3.5%	5.9%	6.8%	1.8% c	101.1	115.7	111.4	100.0	122.5
	(0.7%)	(0.2%)	(0.6%)	(0.2%)	(0.6%)	(18.3)	(5.3)	(6.9)	(2.5)	(23.2)
Television	40.9%	42.8%	63.0%	63.7%	67.7% c	136.3	149.8	135.5	138.8	164.9 c
	(2.7%)	(0.8%)	(1.3%)	(0.5%)	(2.0%)	(8.8)	(2.9)	(3.5)	(1.3)	(5.9)

	Percent of parents participating in activity with one or more close family members in typical day					Average minutes in activity, among parents participating in activity with one or more close family members				
	1975-1976 Single	2009-2012 Single	1975-1976 Married	2009-2012 Married	2009-2012 Cohabiting	1975-1976 Single	2009-2012 Single	1975-1976 Married	2009-2012 Married	2009-2012 Cohabiting
Social leisure	15.1%	20.2% a	24.1%	34.7% b	33.6%	107.6	119.0	106.9	102.1	122.2 c
	(1.8%)	(0.6%)	(1.1%)	(0.5%)	(2.0%)	(10.6)	(4.1)	(4.6)	(1.5)	(7.7)
Other leisure	25.7%	16.9% a	45.2%	31.9% b	24.9% c	88.7	103.4 a	96.4	101.9	114.9
	(2.4%)	(0.6%)	(1.4%)	(0.4%)	(1.8%)	(9.8)	(4.0)	(3.5)	(1.6)	(9.2)
Travel	36.4%	49.5% a	60.4%	63.4% b	57.9% c	47.2	49.7	61.3	62.3	57.7
	(2.6%)	(0.8%)	(1.4%)	(0.5%)	(2.1%)	(4.3)	(1.2)	(2.0)	(1.0)	(3.7)
Other activities*	12.2%	14.0%	33.4%	21.0% b	16.7% c	64.0	96.0 a	59.5	84.2 b	87.1
	(1.8%)	(0.6%)	(1.3%)	(0.4%)	(1.6%)	(11.0)	(5.6)	(3.6)	(2.4)	(10.9)
Total, All activities*	83.2%	81.1%	98.4%	97.1% b	94.2% c	290.6	339.9 a	406.4	440.0 b	446.3
	(2.1%)	(0.7%)	(0.4%)	(0.2%)	(1.0%)	(13.1)	(4.4)	(6.4)	(2.5)	(10.9)
N	431	5,735	1,700	14,675	851	431	5,735	1,700	14,675	851

*Note: Excludes time spent sleeping and in personal care. Standard errors are in parentheses.

a. Test of difference in single (1975-1976) and single (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p < .05$

b. Test of difference in married (1975-1976) and married (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$

c. Test of difference in married (2009-2012) and cohabiting (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$

Despite the relative stability over time in the proportion of parents spending time with family members, the percentage of those sharing family meals declined between 1975 and 2012. In 1975, 45.0 percent of all single parents shared an evening meal with family, by 2012, 39.3 percent ate an evening meal with family members on an average day. While a larger share of married parents shared evening meals with family on a typical day, that proportion declined as well. In 1975, 66.1 percent of married parents ate an evening meal with family, whereas 62.9 percent of all married parents did in 2012.

There were much large declines in the proportion of family members eating breakfast together over the time period. In 1975, 22.4 percent of single parents and 40.8 percent of married parents shared family breakfasts, by 2012 those percentages declined to 13.9 percent and 26.1 percent, respectively. While the proportion of individuals eating shared breakfast and evening meals has declined since 1975, among those who did eat together, the amount of time spent eating remained quite stable. Single parents increased the amount of time spent in shared family meals only slightly, and married parents had small increases in the amount of family time spent eating outside of breakfast and lunch, but all other time spent eating with family members remained the same. The picture of family meals that emerges, then, is one of declining participation in shared eating, but stability in the time invested in shared family meals, among those who participate.

Differences in shared families meals and activities by family type

I now focus on differences in family mealtime across single-, married- and cohabiting-parent families in the most recent period. Table 2.2 shows that in 2012, 63 percent of married parents share an evening meal on an average day, compared with 52 percent of cohabiting parents and 39 percent of single parents. Breakfast and other periods of shared eating follow this

pattern as well. Married parents are most likely to share breakfast with a close family member on an average day (26.1 percent), followed by cohabiting parents (18.7 percent). Single parents are least likely to share breakfast with a family member, with just 13.9 percent sharing breakfast on a typical day.

The amount of time that families spend eating together—among those who do eat together—is quite similar across married- cohabiting- and single parents, especially when it comes to the evening meal. Breakfasts last about 30 minutes, on average, and this does not differ significantly across family types. Dinners tend to be slightly longer than breakfasts, with married parents' dinnertime lasting 39 minutes, and single- and cohabiting- parents lasting 36 minutes.

The total amount of time that family members spend together in all activities varies across family types as well. Table 2.2 shows that, on an average day, single parents spent 339 minutes (5.7 hours) with family members, compared with 440 minutes (7.3 hours) by married parents and 446 minutes (7.4 hours) by cohabiting parents. In this study, cohabiting parents have younger children, on average, than married parents (tabulation not shown). This may help explain why cohabiting parents spend more time with family members than married couples. The amount of time that parents spend with their children is associated with their children's ages, with parents spending the most time with very young children (Hofferth and Sandberg 2001).

While cohabiting parents are similar to married parents across many shared family activities, cohabiting parents are different with respect to both social leisure and watching television. Cohabiting parents spent more time watching television with family—about 26 minutes more, on average—than married parents; they also spent more time in social leisure activities. Past research has also shown that cohabiting couples may place a higher value on leisure activities than married couples (Clarkberg, Stolzenberg and Waite 1995).

How does the investment in family meals compare to other activities that families share? Table 2.3 shows the distribution of shared family time across activities. Between 1975 and 2012 there were significant declines in shared mealtime for single and married parents alike. In 1975, 21.6 percent of single parents' family time was spent eating; by 2012, that percentage had dropped to 15.6 percent. The trend was similar for married parents. In 1975 19.8 percent of married parents' shared family time was spent during mealtime, compared with 14.4 percent in 2012. For single parents, the proportion of shared evening meals declined by a larger percentage than shared breakfasts; the reverse was true for married parents.

In 2012 the largest proportion of shared family time was spent watching television, followed by caregiving. This was true among single and married parents. The proportion of shared time spent watching television was similar across family types, with about 22 percent of all shared time spent watching television and 20 percent of shared time spent on caregiving. Since 1975, the proportion of shared time spent watching television together has not changed, but the proportion of shared time dedicated to caregiving has increased considerably (by 6.6 percentage points). Shared eating is comparable to housework in the proportion of shared time that is dedicated to it, by both single and married parents, with roughly 15 percent of all shared time spent doing housework together.

Table 2.3 Distribution of family time by marital status and activity

	Single				Married				Cohabiting		
	1975	2012	Change	Sig. change	1975	2012	Change	Sig. change	2012	Dif. from married	Sig. change
All shared eating	21.6% (1.8%)	15.6% (0.5%)	-6.0%	a	19.8% (0.6%)	14.4% (0.2%)	-5.4%	b	12.3% (0.7%)	-2.1%	c
Breakfast	4.3% (1.1%)	2.0% (0.2%)	-2.3%	a	4.3% (0.3%)	2.0% (0.1%)	-2.3%	b	1.2% (0.1%)	-0.8%	c
Evening meal	12.0% (1.5%)	8.3% (0.3%)	-3.7%	a	9.4% (0.4%)	8.3% (0.1%)	-1.0%	b	6.8% (0.5%)	-1.6%	c
Other eating	5.3% (0.8%)	5.4% (0.3%)	0.1%		6.2% (0.3%)	4.1% (0.1%)	-2.0%	b	4.3% (0.6%)	0.2%	
Housework	19.7% (1.3%)	14.5% (0.4%)	-5.2%	a	18.2% (0.6%)	14.3% (0.2%)	-3.9%	b	13.6% (0.7%)	-0.7%	
Caregiving	12.5% (1.2%)	19.2% (0.5%)	6.6%	a	8.9% (0.4%)	19.6% (0.2%)	10.7%	b	20.0% (1.0%)	0.3%	
Civic activities	0.1% (0.1%)	0.4% (0.1%)	0.4%	a	0.3% (0.1%)	0.9% (0.1%)	0.6%	b	0.2% (0.1%)	-0.7%	c
Religious activities	0.6% (0.2%)	1.1% (0.1%)	0.5%	a	1.3% (0.2%)	1.3% (0.1%)	0.0%		0.4% (0.2%)	-0.9%	c

	Single				Married				Cohabiting		
	1975	2012	Change	Sig. change	1975	2012	Change	Sig. change	2012	Dif. from married	Sig. change
Television	21.2%	21.5%	0.3%		22.2%	22.1%	-0.2%		27.7%	5.6%	c
	(2.0%)	(0.5%)			(0.7%)	(0.2%)			(1.1%)		
Social leisure	4.7%	7.6%	2.9%	a	5.0%	8.0%	3.0%	b	8.9%	0.9%	
	(0.8%)	(0.3%)			(0.3%)	(0.2%)			(0.7%)		
Other leisure	9.3%	5.3%	-3.9%	a	10.2%	6.9%	-3.3%	b	6.0%	-0.9%	
	(1.2%)	(0.3%)			(0.5%)	(0.1%)			(0.7%)		
Travel	6.3%	10.3%	4.0%	a	8.7%	8.6%	-0.1%		7.8%	-0.8%	
	(0.7%)	(0.3%)			(0.3%)	(0.1%)			(0.5%)		
All Other activities*	4.0%	4.4%	0.3%		5.3%	3.8%	-1.4%	b	3.1%	-0.7%	
	(0.9%)	(0.3%)			(0.4%)	(0.1%)			(0.4%)		
Total time with family* (minutes)	290.6	339.9		a	406.4	440.0		b	446.3		
N	431	5,735			3,033	24,679			1,715		

*Note: Excludes time spent sleeping and in personal care. Standard errors are in parentheses.

a. Test of difference in single (1975-1976) and single (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p < .05$

b. Test of difference in married (1975-1976) and married (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$

c. Test of difference in married (2009-2012) and cohabiting (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$

Changes in the location of family activities

Table 2.4 documents the places where shared family activities took place in 1975 and 2012. The vast majority of non-sleep time spent with family takes place at home. This is true across all three family types and in both time periods. There has been considerable stability in the amount of time that families spend together at home, while the amount of shared family time in other locations has increased. In 1975 single parents spent an average of 56 minutes a day away from home with family, by 2012 that time had increased by 33 minutes. Single and married parents both spend significantly more time with close family members in restaurants and in shopping locations in 2012, compared with 1975. Single parents in 2012 spend more time in transit than they did in 1975. The largest increase in non-home family time has been in "other" locations that could not be documented consistently across time periods. In the most recent period, cohabiting parents in 2012 are similar to married parents in the amount of time that they spend with close family at home; however, cohabiting parents spend significantly less time with family away from home than married parents—an average of 17 minutes less per day.

Table 2.4 Average time parents spent with one or more close family member by location (minutes)

	1975-1976 Single	2009-2012 Single		1975-1976 Married	2009-2012 Married		2009-2012 Cohabiting	
At home	186	187		293	291		301	
	(10)	(3)		(5)	(2)		(9)	
Away from home	56	89	a	107	137	b	120	c
	(6)	(2)		(4)	(2)		(7)	
Another home	18	20		20	22		27	
	(3)	(1)		(1)	(1)		(3)	
Work	0	2	a	3	3		2	
	(0)	(0)		(1)	(0)		(1)	
Shopping/ errands	7	10	a	12	16	b	15	
	(2)	(0)		(1)	(0)		(1)	
Restaurant	2	5	a	7	10	b	7	c
	(1)	(0)		(1)	(0)		(1)	
Travel	18	25	a	41	40		34	c
	(2)	(1)		(2)	(1)		(2)	
Other location	10	26	a	24	44	b	32	c
	(2)	(1)		(2)	(1)		(4)	

Note: Excludes all time spent sleeping and in personal care. Standard errors are in parentheses.
a. Test of difference in single (1975-1976) and single (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p < .05$
b. Test of difference in married (1975-1976) and married (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$
c. Test of difference in married (2009-2012) and cohabiting (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$

Table 2.5 shows the average time spent eating with family at home and away from home in 1975 and 2012. A typical single parent in 1975 spent 27 minutes in mealtime with family at home, by 2012, 22 minutes were shared eating with family in an average day. Among married parents, 47 minutes per day were spent eating with family in 1975, on average, compared with 37 minutes in 2012. Time spent eating family meals outside the home increased for both married and single parents; however, the increases were not large enough to offset the declines in eating

at home for either group. Cohabiting parents spent less time in shared eating than married parents both at home and away from home.

Table 2.5 Average time parents spent eating with one or more close family member by location (minutes)

	1975-1976 Single	2009-2012 Single		1975-1976 Married	2009-2012 Married		2009-2012 Cohabiting	
At home	26	22	a	47	37	b	29	c
	(2)	(0)		(1)	(0)		(1)	
Away from home	4	7	a	11	13	b	9	c
	(1)	(0)		(1)	(0)		(1)	
Restaurant	2	4	a	6	8	b	5	c
	(1)	(0)		(1)	(0)		(1)	
All shared eating	31	29		58	50	b	38	c
	(2)	(1)		(1)	(0)		(2)	

Note: Averages include values of 0 minutes for those who reported no shared eating on the diary day. Standard errors are in parentheses.
a. Test of difference in single (1975-1976) and single (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p < .05$
b. Test of difference in married (1975-1976) and married (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$
c. Test of difference in married (2009-2012) and cohabiting (2009-2012) means is statistically significant, $p. < .05$

Discussion

This research documents both change and stability in the everyday lives of American families since 1975. On an average day, a smaller proportion of contemporary families share mealtime compared with families 40 years ago. And while this proportion has declined, the total amount of time that parents share with family has increased by 49 minutes since 1975 for single parents, and 34 minutes for married parents. Consistent with past research, I find that parents'

shared family time is increasingly spent in caregiving activities (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Sandberg and Hofferth 2001). I also find that watching television continues to be a major component of shared family time; however, the proportion of families who watch television together—and the shared time that is dedicated to watching television—has remained stable over the time period examined.

Many shared family activities present opportunities for family members to interact with each other and interaction may be an important dimension of family members' subsequent well-being. Some researchers have suggested, for example, that the parent-child interaction that takes place during family meals may be an important mechanism linking shared mealtime and child and adolescent well-being (e.g. Fiese and Schwartz 2008; Musick and Meier 2012). The current research has documented opportunity spaces for family interaction that may promote the well-being of family members. It is important to note, however, that sharing the same space does not guarantee that interactions—or positive interactions—are taking place during the shared activities identified. In fact, many adolescents report that watching television during family meals is the norm for their families (Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2000). And qualitative reports of children's media use reveals that some parents encourage television-watching during family mealtime as a strategy to preempt family conflict that would otherwise occur (Hersey and Jordan 2007).

Interactions between family members may also be occurring when families are not co-located. While sharing the same space was once a prerequisite for social interaction, communication technologies have expanded opportunities for families across what was once a clearly delineated time-space divide. Indeed, a recent survey documents that a substantial share of couples use digital technologies to communicate with each other on a regular basis. Forty

seven percent of U.S. couples call each other once a day or more, 37 percent email their partners at least daily, and 21 percent of couples text each other every day (Kennedy et al. 2008).

While we can be certain that there is variation in the degree to which family members interact during shared activities, some activities are historically more socially-oriented than others. Among those studied here, mealtime, caregiving and social leisure seem particularly well-suited to provide opportunities for families to interact with each other. Of these "social" activities, participation in shared caregiving and social leisure has increased since 1975, while participation in family mealtime has declined. While I have documented a gain since 1975 in the total amount of time that parents spend with close family, this study cannot address whether the substitution of some activities (e.g. caregiving) for others (e.g. shared meals) represents a net loss or gain to the welfare of family members.

This study provides an initial look at the differences in everyday family life across single, married and cohabiting families. In 2012, single parents spent the least amount of time with family members, compared with both married and cohabiting parents. Single parents were also the least likely to eat family meals on a typical day, both of which may reflect time constraints placed on single parents by their work obligations. The increase in single parents' time spent with family members—especially in caregiving activities—has paralleled the increase among married parents. These findings are consistent with past research. Compared with married parents, single parents spend the least amount of time with their children—and feel the greatest sense of time inadequacy; however their time use patterns still privilege family time investments over other activities, despite the competing demands they face (Kendig and Bianchi 2008; Milkie et al. 2004).

Cohabiting parents exhibited family activity patterns that were unique when compared to both single and married parents. A smaller proportion of cohabiting parents shared family meals and participated in family caregiving than married parents. A larger proportion of cohabiting parents watched television with close family members—and they did so for longer periods of time—than their married counterparts. Cohabiting and married parents were similar in the proportion that spent shared time in social leisure activities, but cohabitors spent significantly more time in them. Future research is needed to determine whether single, married, and cohabiting parents vary in their orientations toward daily family activities or whether the differences observed here can be explained by other factors (e.g. age of children, employment status, education).

Conclusion

This study provides a first step toward understanding how shared daily family life has changed over time and how it varies across types of families. There are limitations to the current study that can be addressed by future research. My operationalization of shared family time should be expanded and alternative definitions should be explored further. The individual-level approach that I took has the advantage of allowing consistent comparisons over time; however, this approach does not allow us to discern whether the changes observed are driven by parents' time spent alone with children or whether other changes in family time use are occurring. In addition, future research should explore further how the changes documented here relate to historical changes in employment, work hours and family structure. Understanding these connections would shed new light on our knowledge of the interplay between large-scale social and economic changes, family change, and individual well-being.

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Chapter 3

Family Routines and Parents' Relationship Quality

Introduction

Research has demonstrated that daily life for American families has changed considerably over the past 50 years. While many families still eat, sleep and socialize together, the distribution of these activities across a typical day has shifted as new demands on family members' time have arisen (Bianchi 2011; Bianchi and Raley 2005; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006). A number of studies have documented changes in daily life for families over the past several decades, but little is known about how these changes may ultimately impact the well-being of family members and the stability of families (Bianchi 2006; Bianchi 2000; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Hochschild 1997; Jacobs and Gerson 2001; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Robinson and Godbey 1999; Schor 1991).

Two significant social trends have been particularly important in shaping the time-use patterns of contemporary families. The first trend is the substantial growth of mothers in the paid labor force (Jacobs and Gerson 2001). In 1975, just 47 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 participated in the labor force, compared with 71 percent in 2012 (Parker and Wang 2013). The contribution of mothers to the economic well-being of their families has become more significant over time as well. In 2011, 15 percent of married-couple families relied on mothers as the primary provider, up from just 4 percent in 1960 (Wang, Parker and Taylor 2013). These changes mean that the average mother today spends more time away from her

family and away from home than did mothers in the mid-20th century— a change which has had considerable impact on the daily activities of families (Bianchi and Raley 2005; Bianchi 2000; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Nomaguchi, Milkie and Bianchi 2005).

In addition to mothers' labor force participation, a number of changes in the family itself have likely altered how family members experience daily life. With substantial proportions of families experiencing divorce, remarriage and non-marital childbearing, contemporary families are increasingly likely to span multiple households (Cherlin 2010). In addition, the rising prevalence of cohabitation has increased the likelihood that families with children will experience family instability, particularly the end of a union and a subsequent change in households for at least some of the family members (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008; Manning, Smock and Majumdar 2004). These family changes have raised the likelihood that parents and children span multiple households—the space where family routines have historically taken place. The churn of family members in and out of a household may make it harder for families—or parts of families—to spend time together and to develop their own daily routines (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006).

Parents have adapted to the new realities of daily life by reprioritizing responsibilities and employing new strategies of time management. For example, today's parents spend more time working and less time doing housework than their counterparts did in the mid -20th century (Bianchi and Raley 2005; Bianchi 2000; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Somewhat surprisingly, mothers and fathers spend *more* time with their children now than they did in past decades (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004) Researchers have attributed this increase in parents' time with children to "intensive parenting" norms that oblige parents—especially middle-class parents—to prioritize time with

children above other activities (Daly 2001; Lareau 2011). Parents have also maximized scarce time resources by becoming expert multitaskers; regularly combining multiple activities such as childcare, housework, and leisure to manage the growing demands on a 24-hour day (Bianchi 2011; Bianchi and Raley 2005; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006).

While parents have increased their time commitment to their children and paid work, studies suggest that married parents have reduced the amount of time they spend with their spouses (Amato et al. 2007; Bianchi 2011; Bianchi 2000; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Bianchi and her colleagues (2006) estimate that married couples spent an average of 6 hours less with each other per week in 2000, as compared with 1975. The time married couples spent alone with each other dropped by 2.2 hours over that time period. To-date, no studies have examined how the amount of time cohabiting couples spend together may have changed over time.

A fair amount of research has documented changes in the daily activity patterns of families, but little is known about what less time together means for the quality and stability of contemporary parents' relationships. This study fills the gaps in our knowledge by analyzing how daily activities are associated with the quality of parents' relationships with each other. Further, it extends the research on the quality of married parents' relationships to cohabiting parents as well, reflecting a wider range of present-day family forms.

Background and Significance

Routine family activities

Family routines can serve to support positive interactions, cohesion, and to promote family stability. Ethnographic and historical research suggests that routine activities and rituals help families construct meaning, create family identity, and foster a sense of belonging (DeVault

1991; Fiese et al. 2002; Fiese 2006; Gillis 1996). While empirical studies have documented the amount of time married and cohabiting individuals spend in specific, daily activities (Clarkberg, Stolzenberg and Waite 1995; Davis, Greenstein and Gerteisen Marks 2007; Ono, Ono and Sander 2013; South and Spitze 1994), examinations of shared activities to-date have focused exclusively on married couples.

Scholars have speculated that couples' leisure time together may be important to build good relationships although few quantitative studies have examined the association (Orthner and Mancini 1990). Of the few that have, results have been inconclusive: samples have been limited and couples' likely self-selection into preferred leisure activities was not adequately controlled (e.g., Claxton and Perry-Jenkins 2008; Crawford et al. 2002). Despite the methodological limitations of these studies, findings suggest that there may be certain types of leisure activities that are more closely associated with good quality relationships than others. For example, leisure activities that involve face-to-face interaction appear to be more important than activities in which couples passively spend time together (Holman and Jacquart 1988; Kingston and Nock 1987; Orthner 1975). Additionally, partners' feelings about the activity and the tenor of the interactions taking place during the activity appear to moderate the relationship between leisure and relationship outcomes (Crawford et al. 2002). To-date, no studies have compared the association between routine activities and couples' relationship quality for cohabiting couples.

Below I review the research literature on the determinants of relationship quality, including research documenting cohabiting couples' relationships, where possible. I begin with a review of couples' shared time, family-level factors, economic and work factors, and finally, the cultural aspects that are associated with the quality of couples' relationships. I conclude my

review with a summary of the research comparing the quality and stability of cohabiting and married couples' relationships.

Couples' time together

In addition to shared routine activities, the amount of time that families spend together may also be associated with quality of their relationships. Couples with poor relationships may well choose to spend time apart from each other, but the reverse may also be important; spending time together may improve couples' relationships. Some researchers have theorized that the time couples spend together serves to strengthen attachment to each other—and even more fundamentally—to define the relationship itself (Daly 1996; Hill 1988; Kingston and Nock 1987; White 1983). The interactionist view of marriage, for example, suggests that repeated, daily interactions bind couples together by creating and re-creating shared meaning systems (Berger and Kellner 1964). Similarly, Giddens (1984) theory of structuration posits that that individuals enact social structures through repeated interactions. Hence, spending time together may undergird the cohesiveness of partnerships in a fundamental way.

In the 1980s, a handful of studies examined the time that married couples spend together with the aim of understanding whether female labor force participation caused marital instability. Cross-sectional studies from this period concluded that when couples spend time together they experienced improvements in marital quality, and conversely, marital happiness influences the amount of time that couples spend together (Booth et al. 1984; White 1983). White (1983) concluded that, while the casual arrow flowed in both directions, the latter—that couples with high quality relationships choose to spend time together—"explained" a greater proportion of the overall association. Longitudinal analysis from the same period found that spending time

together does indeed appear to improve marital quality and stability (Hill 1988; Kingston and Nock 1987).

Using data collected in the late 1980s and early 1990s, more recently published studies have confirmed that spending time together is associated with the quality of couples relationships, especially after the birth of a child (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Wilcox and Nock 2006). There is some evidence that couples' preferences about how they spend their time may moderate the impact of time spent together on relationship quality. When partners feel that they do not have enough time available to spend together and would like to spend more time together, their time apart has a negative impact on their relationship, but when they are satisfied with the amount of time they have together, the impact of time apart appears to be less important (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Gager and Sanchez 2003). Taken as a whole, the evidence from the 1980s suggests that causal direction between couples' time together and the quality of relationships flows both ways.

More current research examining associations between couples' time spent together and the quality of their relationships is scant. To-date, no studies have examined how spending time together is related to the quality of cohabiting couples' relationships. In addition, no recent research with data collected more recently than the early 1990s has examined associations between time use and relationships quality. The question of how couples' time is associated with the quality of their relationships is perhaps more relevant today than it was decades ago, since the amount of time that partners spend together has been declining over the past few decades (Amato et al. 2007; Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006; Dew 2009). Spousal time together may have also become more important over time, as the institution of marriage is increasingly based on emotional attachment rather than economic interdependency (Dew 2009). Furthermore, given

the prevalence of cohabiting unions today, it is increasingly important to understand how time spent together impacts the quality of partnerships for the growing number of couples in these relationships.

Relationship Duration and the Transition to Parenthood

On average, the duration of cohabiting unions are considerably shorter than marriages. According to recent estimates, the median length of a cohabiting relationship is just under two years. Forty percent of cohabiting couples marry within three years of forming, 27 percent dissolve, and 32 percent remain cohabiting (Copen, Daniels and Mosher 2013). In contrast, the lifetime dissolution rate of U.S. marriages is estimated at 40 to 50 percent, and 90 percent of marriages last at least 5 years (Cherlin 2010; Krieder and Ellis 2011).

Scholarly research examining changes in couples' relationships over the course of their unions has looked almost exclusively at married couples. Marital quality has been documented to change in a fairly predictable pattern over the duration of the marriage, especially during the early years of the union, and as couples transition into parenthood (Glenn 1990; Kluwer 2010; Spanier and Lewis 1980) Married couples tend to assess their relationships very positively when they are first married, and this "honeymoon period" is followed by a rather rapid decline in relationship quality, particularly after the birth of a child (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Dew 2007; Doss et al. 2009; Glenn and McLanahan 1982; Glenn 1998; Kluwer 2010; Orbuch et al. 1996; VanLaningham, Johnson and Amato 2001; Wiik, Keizer and Lappegard 2012; Willetts 2006).

As couples transition into parenthood, they take on new roles, priorities and responsibilities; and these can place considerable strain on new parents' partnerships. Empirical evidence shows that the birth of a child reduces couples' leisure time, as well as the amount of time that partners spend alone together (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Hill 1988; Keizer and Schenk

2012; Willetts 2006). Parenthood also increases the frequency of conflicts (Kluwer and Johnson 2007) and feelings that household work is not shared equitably by both partners; a view that mothers, in particular, are likely to hold (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Dew 2007). In one of the few studies examining changes in the relationship quality of cohabiting couples, Willets (2006) found that the decline in relationship quality for cohabiting and married couples is comparable; couples in both types of unions experienced declines in relationship quality after the birth of a child. It is also important to note that relationship quality decline in the early years of a partnership coincides with parenthood in many cases, but couples without children tend to experience declines in the quality of their relationships during their early years together as well (Keizer and Schenk 2012; Lavner and Bradbury 2010).

Research on changes in relationship quality in later marriage has come to varied conclusions. Some studies conclude that marital quality follows a distinct, curvilinear pattern (for reviews see Glenn 1990; Orbuch et al. 1996; Spanier and Lewis 1980). As children grow older and more independent, and as work demands lessen, couples are able to spend more time and energy on their relationships (Orbuch et al. 1996). Other studies have called into question whether marital satisfaction does indeed tend to increase again in late adulthood. VanLaningham and colleagues (2001) suggest that marital quality declines over the entire course of the relationship with a slight leveling off in the middle years. While declining relationship satisfaction describes the average experience of married couples, there appears to be a range of trajectories that couples may experience, including high marital satisfaction that remains stable over time for a fair share of husbands and wives (Lavner and Bradbury 2010).

Brown (2003) finds that cohabitors with plans for marriage experience similar relationship-quality trajectories as married couples. Both married couples and cohabitors

experience declines in happiness and interaction over the course of their unions. In addition, cohabitors who eventually marry experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction than couples who remain cohabiting, but both groups experience declines in some dimension of relationship quality over time (Brown 2004). In contrast, Tach and Halpern-Meekin (2009) find that couples that had cohabited prior to marriage experience lower marital quality than couples that had not, but the difference was driven by cohabiting couples with a nonmarital birth. Cohabiting couples that did not have a child prior to their marriage reported the same relationship quality as married couples who had not cohabited.

Economic resources, work and work schedules

Couples in cohabiting unions have, on average, fewer economic resources compared to their married counterparts (Manning and Brown 2006). There is substantial evidence that marriage is selective of individuals with greater economic resources—and selective of men with higher incomes, in particular—while cohabitation does not appear to be as selective in this way (Oppenheimer 2003; Sassler and Goldscheider 2004; Smock, Manning and Porter 2005; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). In fact, many cohabitors report that economic considerations play an important role in the decision to move in together (Rhoades, Stanley and Markman 2009; Sassler 2004), signaling possible selection of low-income individuals into cohabiting unions.

A number of studies have shown that low income, financial instability, and economic problems are associated with lower levels of relationship quality. Fewer economic resources are associated with more conflicts and greater relationship instability (Amato et al. 2007; Dakin and Wampler 2008; Rauer et al. 2008) and economic strain appears to lower relationship quality through its influence on couples' interactions and conflicts (Conger, Conger and Martin 2010; Conger and Elder 1994).

While numerous studies have examined how married couples' economic resources impact their relationships, very little research has examined whether economic factors affect the relationship quality of cohabiting couples as they do married couples. One recent paper found that, in general, difficult economic circumstances lowered the relationship quality of both cohabiting and married couples (Halliday Hardie and Lucas 2010). Furthermore, different dimensions of couples' economic circumstance (e.g., hardship, support from family, human capital) appear to impact different aspects couples' relationship quality (e.g. conflict, affection), but not others. Differences between married and cohabiting couples' relationship quality, then, is due in part to different levels of economic resources across the two types of unions.

Past research has shown that the amount of time that partners spend working outside the home is negatively associated with the quality of couples' relationships, especially among dual earner couples (Glorieux, Minnen and van Tienoven 2011; Kingston and Nock 1987; Orbuch et al. 1996). In addition, several studies have documented the adverse impact of non-standard work hours on the quality of couples' relationships (Mills and Täht 2010; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2007; Presser 2000; Presser 2003; White and Keith 1990). Presser (2003) finds that rotating shifts and late night work, in particular, decreases parents' marital quality. With non-standard work schedules, partners may have a difficult time getting sufficient sleep, and have less time to interact with their partners. However, Kalil and her colleagues (2010) find that nonstandard work hours increase the likelihood of divorce only among couples without children. While parents in the U.S. as well as other European countries are not significantly more likely to work nonstandard hours than non-parents, the high prevalence of nonstandard work among adults becomes an important constraint on all couples' time together (Presser 2003; Presser, Gornick and Parashar 2008). A recent study suggests that after workers reach young adulthood (i.e. age

24), there are only small gender and racial differences in the prevalence of non-standard work (Presser and Ward 2011).

Comparisons of cohabiting and married couples' relationships

Most recent studies comparing married couples and long-term cohabitors report little difference with respect to the quality of their relationships. Brown (2004) reports that the relationship quality of long-term cohabitors with plans to marry does not differ from their married counterparts with respect to relationship quality. Similarly, Brown and Booth (1996) find that cohabitors with plans to marry are comparable to married couples. And older cohabitors—who tend to have longer lasting relationships than their younger counterparts—have relationships that are very similar to older married couples on a number of relationship quality dimensions (Brown and Kawamura 2010). Willets (2006) finds that married couples and long-term cohabitors are comparable on a number of relationship dimensions including relationship satisfaction, frequency of conflict and perceptions of equity. Once cohabitors with lower levels of commitment to the relationship are excluded from analyses, the quality of cohabitors and married couples' relationships appears equivalent.

Research documenting the reasons that couples cohabit may provide further insight into how relationship quality varies among cohabitors. People cohabit for a variety of reasons—to spend more time together, to share expenses, and to test compatibility with their partner (Huang et al. 2011; Rhoades, Stanley and Markman 2009; Sassler 2004). Many couples move gradually into cohabitation without a conscious decision to do so, making them almost indistinguishable from singles (Manning and Smock 2005). Initial research has shown that the quality of cohabiting couples' relationships varies with the reasons they give for cohabiting. Rhoades and colleagues (2009) find that couples who live together to test their relationship are more likely to

have negative communication styles, lower dedication, and lower relationship adjustment than those who cohabit for other reasons.

A related literature examines the impact of cohabitation on subsequent marital quality and instability. Early studies reported that premarital cohabitation is associated with lower quality, higher-conflict marriages (Amato and Booth 1997; Booth and Johnson 1988; Dush, Cohan and Amato 2003; Thomson and Colella 1992), and cohabiting before marriage was found to be associated with a greater likelihood of divorce (Axinn and Thornton 1992; Schoen 1992; Teachman 2002; Thomson and Colella 1992). These patterns are believed to be explained by both causal and selection mechanisms. Couples were reportedly changed by the experience of cohabitation in a way that altered their later marriages, but they also represented a select group of individuals with characteristics that reduced the likelihood of having satisfying, stable marriages (Smock 2000). One study—using a sample of 40 year olds in the mid-2000s (NLSY97)—found that cohabitation lowered subsequent marital quality, but that the difference was appears to be driven by cohabitors with nonmarital births (Tach and Halpern-Meekin 2009).

Recent research suggests that the selection mechanisms may have weakened over time as premarital cohabitation has become the experience of the majority of recently married couples (Reinhold 2010). In addition, as childbearing has continued to be "decoupled" from marriage (Smock and Greenland 2010), cohabiting couples who have a child may be less likely to marry than in the past (Gibson-Davis 2011), which may further weaken the selection of cohabiting couples with low-quality unions into marriages. Most studies now find that the stability and quality of marriages that began with premarital cohabitation are no different than marriages that did not (Kroeger and Smock 2013; Manning and Cohen 2012; Skinner et al. 2002).

Additional influences on relationship quality: Race and Religion

Past research has shown that additional demographic and cultural influences—namely race and religiosity—are associated with the quality of couples' relationships. Research comparing couples' relationships by race has shown a consistent pattern in which African-Americans couples tend to have less satisfying, poorer-quality relationships than White couples (Bulanda and Brown 2007; Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007). The evidence is less conclusive about Latino couples. Some researchers have found that Latino couples are similar to White couples with respect to the quality of their relationships (Bulanda and Brown 2007), while others have found comparatively lower levels of relationship quality among Latinos (Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010).

Research on relationship stability—which is generally positively correlated with relationship quality (Bulanda and Brown 2007; Carlson, McLanahan and England 2004; Osborne 2005)—has demonstrated differences in stability by race for married and cohabiting couples. Osborne, Manning and Smock (2007) found that among parents with a recent birth, African-American cohabitors had the highest rate of instability, followed by White cohabiting couples. Cohabiting Latino couples had the lowest rate of instability following the birth of a child—compared with cohabitors of other races, with rates of instability similar to married African Americans. And married Latino couples and married White couples shared similar, low rates of marital instability following the birth of a child. A variety of demographic, economic, family and relationship quality measures account for a significant proportion—but not all—of the differences in union stability by race (Osborne, Manning and Smock 2007).

Researchers have shown that differential selection into cohabiting unions versus marriages has a racial patterning that likely has its roots in historical contexts (Clarkberg,

Stolzenberg and Waite 1995; Manning and Landale 1996; Sweeney and Phillips 2004; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007; Wildsmith and Raley 2006). For example, cohabitation has long operated as an alternative to marriage among Latinos, while it appears to be a step toward marriage among Whites (Manning and Landale 1996). These different rates of selection into marriage may account for some of the reported differences in relationship quality and stability by race.

Religiosity appears to be another important cultural factor influencing the quality of couples' relationships. In general, participation in religious activities and religious beliefs are associated with satisfying, low-conflict relationships (Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010; Mahoney 2010; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2008; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008). In the few studies comparing the impact of religion on the quality of cohabiting and married couples' relationships, the evidence suggests that religious participation has the same, positive impact on the relationship quality for couples in both types of unions (Wilcox and Wolfinger 2008; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008). Religion may support couples' relationships through a variety of mechanisms (Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010). Affiliation with a religious congregation may foster a wider network of social and economic supports that promote healthy relationships. The impact of religion on relationship quality may also be ideational. Many religions promote strong pro-family norms, attitudes and behaviors, which foster relationship satisfaction. In addition, religious beliefs may help couples ascribe meaning and significance to their relationship.

Like the association between race and union type, the association between religiosity and union type may also be selective in nature. Individuals appear to be selected into—and out of—cohabiting and marital unions in ways that vary systematically with their religious beliefs and behaviors. Past studies have found that participation in religious activities increases the

likelihood of forming a marital rather than a cohabiting union (Axinn and Thornton 1992; Clarkberg, Stolzenberg and Waite 1995; Eggebeen and Dew 2009; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007).

Ellison, Burdette and Wilcox (2010) report that religiosity is an important aspect of racial differences in relationship quality. The authors find large White-Latino and White-Black gaps in relationship quality; with Latino and Black couples experiencing significantly lower-quality partnerships than White couples. The authors find that differences by race widen when religiosity is taken into account, suggesting higher levels of religiosity among Latinos and African-American couples serves to improve the average relationship quality measures of those groups.

Current Study

While a fair amount of research has documented how daily life has changed for family members, little is known about what these changes mean. This paper aims at understanding how everyday life—including work and family routines—are associated with the quality of family relationships; and more specifically: the relationship quality of couples. This is an important question, because the relationship quality of parents has been found to affect a range of health and well-being outcomes in children and adults alike (e.g. Amato and Booth 2001; Burman and Margolin 1992; Carlson et al. 2011; Kiecolt-Glaser and Newton 2001; Uchino, Cacioppo and Kiecolt-Glaser 1996). Using data collected from residents of Los Angeles County, California in the 2000s, I examine multiple dimensions of everyday life is associated with the quality of couples' relationships.

This study extends existing research in two ways. First, I examine the daily routines of families to better understand how routines are associated with high-quality relationships. Few studies have examined how shared family activities are related to the quality of parents'

partnerships, and those that have are quite dated, using data from the early 1990s and earlier. Second, I include cohabiting parents in my analysis. The small number of studies that have examined associations between couples' time spent together have looked only at married parents' relationship; leaving out the experience of a large, and increasing, share of parents who are not married. While the majority of children born today are born to married couples, a substantial proportion of U.S. children—23 percent—are born into cohabiting families (Copen, Daniels and Mosher 2013; Smock and Greenland 2010). The number of children who *ever* experience cohabitation between birth and age 18 is considerably higher. A recent study estimates that up to 50 percent of all children born in 1990 are expected to have lived in a cohabiting-parent household at some point during their childhood years (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008). In short, the current research contributes to our understanding of how family time is related to the relationship quality of contemporary parents in their complex and changing family forms.

Data, Measures and Statistical Methods

Data

I address my research questions using data from the first wave of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS), a panel study of households in 65 neighborhoods in Los Angeles County, California. In the first wave of data collection (2000-2001) households were divided into two types: those with children under the age of 18 and those without children. In households with children, one child was randomly selected and interviewed, as was that child's primary caregiver. Of the primary caregivers, I analyze the relationship quality of the 1,026 female caregivers who were either married or cohabiting at the time of the interview and who provided complete information on relationship quality. A majority of the analytic sample were

the mothers of the reference child (96%). Primary caregivers who were not the biological or adoptive mother of the reference child were included in the analytic sample to preserve sample size. Unweighted sample descriptive statistics are reported in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Unweighted Sample Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	n
Relationship quality					
Compromise	2.54	0.55	1	3	1026
Affection	2.75	0.47	1	3	1026
Encourages	2.69	0.53	1	3	1026
Overall relationship quality	8.59	1.65	1	10	580
Routines					
Days/week breakfast at same time	5.47	1.82	1	7	1026
Days/week dinner at same time	5.56	1.62	1	7	1026
Days/week bed at same time	5.77	1.23	1	7	1026
Days/week dinner together	5.20	1.90	1	7	1026
Time spent away from home	2.74	0.96	1	6	474
Family and relationship characteristics					
Cohabiting	0.15	0.36	0	1	1026
Stepfamilies	0.08	0.27	0	1	1026
Age of youngest child (years)	5.76	4.74	0	17	1026
Relationship duration (years)	11.40	8.14	0	61	1026
Employment					
Employment status (1=working)	0.56	0.50	0	1	1026
Work hours	20.56	20.43	0	148	1026
Background characteristics					
Religiosity (Attends at least once/week)	0.15	0.35	0	1	1026
Latino	0.61	0.49	0	1	1026
White, not Latino	0.25	0.43	0	1	1026
Other race, not Latino	0.15	0.35	0	1	1026
Family income	$ 64,602	$ 75,040	0	$ 302,637	1026

Note: Income data topcoded at $302,637.

Los Angeles County is similar to the nation on a number of social and demographic dimensions, but it is distinct in a number of ways as well. In 2012, Los Angeles County's median income and age structure were quite similar to the U.S. average. However, Los Angeles county has a much higher proportion of foreign-born residents than the U.S. overall (36% and 13% respectively) and a much higher proportion of residents that are people of color (73% and 37%)—particularly those reporting Latino ethnicity (48% and 17%).

Measures

Four measures of relationship quality are examined. The first, *Overall relationship quality*, is a global measure of how the primary caregivers assess their relationships with their partners. Respondents were asked, "Taking all things together how would you describe your relationship with your spouse/partner?" Original response categories ranged from 1 to 10. Responses were recoded into three categories, with 1 through 5= *unhappy*, 6 through 9 = *happy*, and 10 = *extremely happy*. Responses were coded into these categories to ensure that a sufficient number of cases were contained in each category.

Three additional affective measures of relationship quality were analyzed. *Compromise* captures the frequency with which the respondent believes her partner is fair and willing to compromise when the couple has a disagreement. *Affection* captures the frequency with which the respondent's partner expresses love or affection for her. And *Encourages* reports the frequency with which a partner encourages or helps the respondent do things that are important to her. Response categories for all three outcomes are 1=*never*, 2=*sometimes*, 3=*always*.

For three relationship quality outcomes (*Compromise, Affection and Encourages*) the sample of primary caregivers with complete data was 1,011. Due to a survey routing error in the L.A.FANS, some primary caregivers did not receive a question on *Overall Relationship Quality*.

The sample of primary caregivers with data on *Overall relationship quality* is 575. Reduced models of *Overall relationship quality* were analyzed to account for the smaller sample size.

Time spent away from home is the number of hours in the past 24 hours that the respondent was away from home. It is measured as a six category variable where 1=*at home the entire time*, 2= *less than 5 hours*, 3=*5 to 9 hours*, 4=*10 to 19 hours*, 5=*20 or more hours*, or 6=*not home at all.* This measure serves as a proxy for the amount of time the respondent typically spends away from her partner. While this measure is not as precise as time diary measures or direct survey questions about time spent with partner would be, past research shows that most time that partners spend together takes place at home (Glorieux, Minnen and van Tienoven 2011).

Family Routines. Two dimensions of family routines are included. The first, *Dinner together*, captures a family routine that promotes interaction among family members. Respondents reported the number of days the whole family eats dinner together, ranging from 0 to 7 days a week. The second dimension of family routines captures the degree to which the family adheres to a patterned household schedule. Respondents reported the number of days each week the following activities were done at the same time: 1) the child eats breakfast 2) the family eats the evening meal 3) the household chores get done, and 4) the child goes to bed. Responses ranged from 0 to 7 days a week for each item. Two of these activities—eating breakfast and going to bed—relate to children's routines, but they are included in the analysis since they provide information about whether the family tends toward regular or irregular schedules.

Cohabiting was coded "1" if the respondent was cohabiting with an unmarried partner during the time of the interview and "0" if they were married.

Stepfamilies. A respondent was considered to belong to a stepfamily if any of the children in her family lived with fewer than two biological parents. Respondents in biological families were those in which all children were biological or adopted children of the respondent and her partner. *Stepfamilies* was coded "0" if the respondent lived in a biological family and "1" if the respondent was part of a stepfamily.

Relationship duration. For married primary caregivers, relationship duration was the number of years the respondent has been married to her current spouse. The L.A. Fans does not collect information about pre-marital cohabitation for those married more than two years, so years spent cohabiting with current spouse prior to marriage was not included in this measure for couples married longer than two years. For cohabiting mothers, relationship duration was measured as the number of years the respondent has been living with her current partner. For couples married less than two years and cohabiting couples event history calendars were used to collect the exact month and year that the couple moved in together. For couples married more than two years, the date of marriage was used to calculate relationship duration. In multivariate analyses, *Relationship duration* was top-coded at 24 years (the 95^{th} percentile of the distribution) to reduce in the influence of outliers.

Age of youngest child. The age of the youngest child refers to the youngest child in the respondent's family. The child's age is reported in years, ranging from 0 to 17.

Time Spent Working. Time spent working is the number of hours the respondent works in an average week. For each job held, respondents were asked, "How many hours per week on average do you work at this job?" The total number of hours worked per week from all jobs was summed and recoded into categories where "0" is not working, "1" includes 1 to 29 hours, and "3" includes those working 30 or more hours a week. These three categories were selected to

reflect the experiences of *no work outside the home*, *part-time work*, and *full-time work*, as well as to retain a sufficient number of cases in each group. Information about work schedules and non-standard work hours were not collected in the L.A. FANS and are therefore not included in this analysis.

Spouse/Partner's Time Spent Working Respondents were asked, "about how many hours a week on average does your spouse/partner work at [their] job when your spouse/partner is working?" Responses were recoded into three categories where "0" is not working, "1" is 1 to 49 hours and "2" is 50 or more hours a week. Like the categories chosen for the respondent's work hours, spouse/partner's work hour categories were selected to reflect the experiences of *no work outside the home*, *part-time work*, and *full-time work*, as well as to retain a sufficient number of cases in each group.

Family Income. Family income is the sum of all earnings from family members in the year preceding the interview. Income values were imputed by L.A.FANS for those families with incomplete information for some component(s) of family income (e.g., spouse's salary, transfer income). Thirty percent of the sample contains some component of family income that was imputed. In the multivariate analyses, family income is transformed into a logarithmic scale to linearize the relationship between income and the outcome variables.

Race. Self-reported racial and ethnic information collected by the L.A.FANS was collapsed into three categories: "White non-Latino", "Latino" and "Other race". The "Other race" category made up just 15 percent of the sample, and contained Black non-Hispanic, Asian non-Hispanic and Other race non-Hispanic respondents. The three-category grouping provided a sufficient sample size within each group to ensure the stability of the multivariate models.

Education. Two groups of educational attainment were analyzed. *0= High school diploma or less* and *1=Some college or more.* Preliminary analysis revealed that alternative specifications of educational attainment were not significant and did not improve the overall fit of the models, so the binary categories were included to preserve the stability of the multivariate models.

Regular religious service attendance. The regularity with which respondent attends religious services is measured by *regular religious service attendance*. Respondents were asked, "In the past 12 months, about how often have you attended a religious service, like church or synagogue service or mass?" Respondents reported the number using their own reference period. *Religiosity* was then recoded into common units of time and categorized as "0" if the respondent attended religious services *less than once a week* and "1" if she attended *once a week or more*. These categorizations were selected to correspond with existing research on religiosity and relationship quality (Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008).

Statistical Methods

The primary aim of this analysis is to test whether daily family activities are associated with the quality of married and cohabiting parents' relationships. Since this line of inquiry has not been well documented by past research, I first investigate and report a series of bivariate associations among the key variables in this analysis. This will help provide a general sense of how the associations manifest themselves in the study population.

To test whether daily family activities are associated with couples' relationship quality, net of other characteristics, I turn to a multivariate analysis framework. Preliminary analysis of the dependent variables revealed that most respondents report high levels of relationship satisfaction. This results in dependent variables with limited variability and a highly right skew.

Relationship quality is therefore analyzed using a series of ordinal logistic regression models in order to avoid losing information. Using ordinal logistic regression, I model the cumulative probability of reporting better relationship outcomes, while controlling for relationship type (married or cohabiting), family type (stepfamily or biological family), age of children, duration of the relationship, family income, race, educational attainment and religiosity. The proportional odds assumption held for all ordinal logistic models.

All analyses were conducted in Stata 13 using the SVY SET command to account for the stratification of the sample by the poverty status of the census tract in which the respondent lived (Sastry et al. 2006). Results were weighted by the parent-caregiver weights in the L.A. FANS. These weights account for over-sampling by strata, for the household selection probabilities by tract, and for the tract-specific rates of over-sampling of households with children and of household non-response. All analyses use two-tailed tests of significance.

The overall fit of the ordinal logistic regression models were evaluated using Wald tests of composite hypotheses (Long and Freese 2006). In models of *overall relationship quality* (for which there is a smaller sample size than other outcome models) likelihood ratio tests were used to compare full and reduced models. Variables that were not significant and did not improve the overall fit of the model were eliminated in the reduced models.

Bivariate Results

Table 3.2 shows the means of the dependent and independent variables used in this analysis by relationship status (married or cohabiting). The bivariate results show that cohabiting mothers' assessments of their relationships are comparable to married mothers' assessments of affection, encouragement and compromise. However, cohabiting mothers do report significantly lower quality relationships than married mothers when measured by a single, global assessment.

This difference may be attributable to differences in relationship characteristics across marital and cohabiting relationships, rather than reflecting a difference attributable to the type of relationship. This issue is investigated further in the multivariate analyses. The bivariate results also show that cohabiting and married caregivers vary significantly on a number of the other key measures in the analysis.

Table 3.2 Distribution of Dependent and Independent Variables by Relationship Status

	Married		Cohabiting	All
Relationship Quality				
Compromise	2.54		2.44	2.53
Affection	2.78		2.68	2.76
Encourages	2.69		2.62	2.68
Overall relationship quality	8.71	*	7.82	8.59
Routines				
Days/week breakfast at same time	5.55		5.39	5.53
Days/week dinner at same time	5.51		5.59	5.52
Days/week bed at same time	5.76		5.64	5.74
Days/week dinner together	5.19	*	5.64	5.25
Time spent away from home	2.72		2.63	2.71
Family and relationship characteristics				
Stepfamilies	0.05	*	0.23	0.08
Age of youngest child (years)	6.13	*	4.36	5.89
Relationship duration (years)	11.98	*	7.11	11.31
Employment				
Employment status (1=working)	0.59	*	0.43	0.57
Work hours per week	21	*	16	21
Background characteristics				
Religiosity (Attends at least once/week)	0.15	*	0.08	0.14
Latino	0.53	*	0.79	0.57
White, not Latino	0.30	*	0.14	0.28
Other race, not Latino	0.17	*	0.07	0.16
Family income	67,471	*	31,296	62,438
N	867		159	1,026

Note: Figures weighted by parent-caregiver weights for the L.A. FANS.
* Denotes significant difference between married and cohabiting respondents (p□.05).

Table 3.3 reports the bivariate relationships between the relationship quality measures and family routines and time use. Daily activity patterns appear to be associated with relationship quality across a number of dimensions. Caregivers whose families adhere to a regular breakfast routine report (e.g. breakfast at the same time 5 or more times a week) report higher levels of overall relationship quality than caregivers in families do not. Having a regular dinner schedule

(e.g. dinner at the same time 5 or more times a week) is associated with higher levels of compromise and overall relationship quality. Adhering to a regular bedtime for children (e.g. 5 or more times a week) is associated with higher levels of compromise and affection. Having dinner together 5 or more times a week is associated with significantly higher reports of compromise and overall relationship quality. And caregivers who spent more than 10 hours a day away from home on the day before they were interviewed, report significantly higher levels of affection in their partnerships, as well as higher levels of relationship quality overall, compared with caregivers who remained home for 10 hour or less. Caregivers who worked part-time reported higher levels of encouragement in their relationships with their partners, compared with caregivers who did not work. No significant differences in relationship quality were found between women who did not work and women who worked full-time.

Table 3.3 Mean Relationship Quality by Daily Routines

	Breakfast, same time			Dinner, same time			Bed, same time		
	<5 times/ wk	5+ times/ wk		<5 times/ wk	5+ times/ wk		<5 times/ wk	5+ times/ wk	
Compromise	2.46	2.55		2.42	2.55	**	2.34	2.55	***
Affection	2.73	2.77		2.70	2.78	*	2.66	2.77	*
Encourages	2.64	2.69		2.62	2.70		2.63	2.69	
Overall relationship quality	8.24	8.69	**	8.24	8.70	**	8.33	8.62	

	Dinner together			Time away from home			Work hours			
	<5 times/ wk	5+ times/ wk		>10hrs/ day	10+ hrs/ day		Not working	1-29 hours		30+ hours
Compromise	2.43	2.57	***	2.49	2.51		2.52	2.52		2.53
Affection	2.72	2.78	*	2.78	2.66	*	2.79	2.77		2.73
Encourages	2.58	2.73	***	2.69	2.65		2.69	2.84	***	2.64
Overall relationship quality	8.31	8.72	**	8.73	8.13	**	8.65	8.85		8.45

Note: Reference category for Work hours = Not working. Denotes significant difference *=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01)

Table 3.4 Ordered Logistic Regression Results For Relationship Quality Outcomes

	Compromise (Never, Sometimes, Always)			Affection (Never, Sometimes, Always)			Encourages (Never, Sometimes, Always)			Overall Relationship Quality (Unhappy, Happy, Very Happy)		
	Odds Ratio	p	SE	Odds Ratio	p	SE	Odds Ratio	p	SE	Odds Ratio	p	SE
Cohabiting (0=Married)	0.883		0.207	0.558	**	0.153	0.662		0.171	0.498	*	0.208
Stepfamilies (0=Biological families)	0.555	**	0.166	1.168		0.447	1.253		0.425	0.733		0.364
Age of youngest child (years)	1.059	***	0.023	1.017		0.025	0.998		0.023	0.995		0.029
Relationship duration (years)	1.074		0.052	0.956	***	0.016	0.986		0.015	1.011		0.019
Relationship duration (years^2)	0.996	**	0.002									
Breakfast same time	0.956		0.051	0.976		0.059	0.994		0.054			
Dinner same time	1.088		0.068	1.061		0.068	1.039		0.064			
Bed same time	1.158	**	0.087	1.055		0.088	0.995		0.076			
Dinner together	1.138	***	0.058	1.160	***	0.065	1.178	***	0.059	1.136	**	0.061
Log of family income	1.143	**	0.077	1.181	**	0.083	1.158	**	0.070	0.934		0.072
Latino (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.102		0.244	0.607	**	0.151	1.294		0.301	1.246		0.335
Other race (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.522		0.403	1.011		0.313	1.402		0.371	1.922	**	0.618
Education (0=High school graduate and lower)	1.114		0.223	0.710		0.163	0.891		0.201	1.029		0.272
Regular religious service attendance (0=Less than 1 time/week)	1.555	**	0.344	1.905	**	0.517	1.000		0.245	1.195		0.376
Wald χ (df)		***	3.53		***	2.76		**	1.77		**	2.21
Number of observations			1,011			1,011			1,011			575

Note: Denotes significant association *=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01). Intercepts are constrained to zero.

Multivariate Results

The primary aim of this analysis is to test whether the time couples spend together and their family routines are associated with the relationship quality of caregivers, and to test for differences between women who are married and cohabiting. The results of the multivariate analyses are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Along two dimensions of relationship quality—*compromise* and *encourages*—cohabiting relationships did not differ significantly from married relationships.

However, for cohabitors, the odds of reporting that one's partner "always" expresses love and affection versus "never" and "sometimes" expresses love and affection are .55 times lower than they are for married parent-caregivers. Similarly, the odds of reporting that one's relationship is "extremely happy" versus "happy" and "unhappy" are .66 times lower than are the odds for married respondents.

This analytic sample includes married and cohabiting caregivers in relationships of all durations. When the analysis is limited to women in long-term relationships (defined as lasting for 2 or more years), cohabiting and married women are comparable on all four measures of relationship quality (analysis not shown). This finding confirms prior research reporting that long-term married and cohabiting women report similar levels of relationship satisfaction (Brown 2004; Willetts 2006) and suggests that any differences relationship quality may be concentrated in the early years of the relationship where cohabitors are most heterogeneous.

These analyses provide only limited support for an association between the regularity of daily routines–having breakfast, dinner and children's bedtime at the same time each day—and the relationship quality of caregivers. No significant associations were found between having regularized meal routines (i.e., breakfast and dinner at the same time each day) and a relationship

quality outcome; however, a significant association between children's regular bedtime schedules and *compromise* was found. The model suggests that for an additional day of putting children to bed at a regular time each week, the odds of reporting that one's partner "always" versus "sometimes" and "never" compromises are 1.16 times greater, when all the other variables in the model are held constant.

While having family meals at the same time each day does not appear to be associated with the relationship quality outcomes modeled here, the frequency of shared family dinners was consistently associated with high-quality partnerships across all of the outcomes examined. Each additional day of sharing a family meal together raises the odds of reporting one's spouse or partner "always" compromises (versus "sometimes" and "never" compromises) by a factor of 1.14. Effects of similar magnitude were found among the other relationship outcome variables. The second model predicts that an additional day of shared family mealtime per week is associated with 1.16 greater odds of reporting one's partner "always" expresses love and affection as compared with the odds of reporting that one's spouse or partner "sometimes" and "never" expresses love and affection. An additional day of sharing family meals per week is associated with 1.18 greater odds of reporting that one's partner "always" expresses encouragement, versus "sometimes" and "never" expresses encouragement. Finally, an additional day of shared family meals is associated with 1.14 higher odds of reporting that one's partnership is "extremely happy" compared with "happy" and "unhappy."

A number of background characteristics exhibited significant associations in this model as well. The length of couples' relationships was significantly associated with *compromise* and *affection*. In the *compromise* model, *relationship duration* was best modeled as a quadratic term, with the odds of reporting that one's spouse or partner "always" compromised versus

"sometimes" and "never" first increasing, and then declining, over the duration of the relationship. *Relationship duration* was best modeled as a linear term in the *affection* model, with the odds of reporting that one's spouse or partner "always" expressed love and affection versus with the odds of "sometimes" and "never" doing so, declining over the course of the relationship. Scatterplots showing the bivariate association between relationship duration and the four relationship quality outcomes are included in Appendix. No association was found between *relationship duration* and *encourages* or *overall relationship quality,* net of the other variables in the models.

To test whether family dinners together were capturing some other dimensions of daily family life not included in the model, I examined a series of models that captured other time use dimensions. Additional variables included *work hours, time spent away from home* and *spouses'/partners' work hours*. I was unable to find an association between these measures and any relationship quality outcome. As a further test of the association between *Time spent away from home* and relationship quality, I fitted a generalized ordered logit model on a sample of adult respondents in the L.A. Fans who were married or cohabiting and for whom information about relationship quality was available (n=836). I did not find a significant relationship between *Overall relationship quality* and *Time spent away from home (*analysis not shown*).* Since past research has documented a relationship between time spent together and relationship quality, I believe that the measure of *Time spent away from home* lacks the precision for significant associations to be captured. It may also be true that the amount of time spent away from home does not adequately capture the amount of time a couple spends together. To preserve sample size *time spent away from home, work hours,* and *spouses'/partners' work hours* were excluded

from the analyses presented here. The other estimates in the model were comparable regardless of whether these additional time use variables were included.

Discussion

The current research extends our knowledge of contemporary couples' relationships in two ways. First, it confirms past findings that contemporary married and cohabiting couples experience similar levels of relationship quality, especially when long-term cohabiting relationships are examined. This sample of primary caregivers—the majority of whom are mothers and a substantial proportion of which is Latino—may comprise cohabiting couples with greater levels of commitment than a broader sample of cohabitors. Findings are consistent with past research that shows that long-term cohabiting couples report similar quality relationships as married couples (Brown 2004; Brown and Booth 1996; Willetts 2006).

Second, this research extends our knowledge about how daily life in contemporary families is associated with high-quality partnerships. While the regular timing of breakfast, dinner, and bedtime have little association with the quality of relationships, couples in families that frequently eat dinner together are more likely to experience high quality relationships than those who do not. Dinnertime may provide the spatial and temporal context for positive interactions to occur between spouses. It may also serve as the context for spouses to create shared meanings that undergird the quality of their relationships.

The observed association between family dinners and relationship quality may also be reflecting the reverse causal relationship. Women in positive, supportive relationships may be more likely to prioritize family meals because they want to spend more time with their partners and children. Women in good-quality relationships may also be more likely to have the skills and resources to organize regular family dinners. Additional research is needed to determine whether

frequent family dinners have a causal impact on couples' relationship quality. Past research has demonstrated the causal effect of family dinners and selected measures of adolescent well-being; however, when put to more stringent causal testing, not all measures of adolescent well-being exhibited persistent impacts over time, and some outcome measures did not appear to causally follow from family dinners at all (Musick and Meier 2012). No research to-date has examined family dinners and couples' relationship quality longitudinally, and so the specific nature of this association has yet to be determined.

An additional limitation of this study should be noted. The data analyzed here represent a special population: female primary-caregivers in the Los Angeles County, California. As such, results reported here may not be generalizable to other geographic areas, or to a broader group of cohabiting and married individuals. Because the sample comprises only women, the results may not accurately reflect men's assessments of their relationships. Past research on gender differences in reported relationship quality have produced varied results. Some findings suggest that spouses' evaluations of their marriages are only moderately correlated with each other (Carr and Boerner 2009; Gager and Sanchez 2003). In some studies, wives' marital satisfaction is significantly lower than their husbands' reports (Donoho, Crimmins and Seeman 2013; Helms et al. 2010; Stanik and Bryant 2012), while other research finds little difference in partners' reports of marital quality (Blair 1993; Cohen et al. 2012).

In this analysis, I did not find a significant association between work hours or time spent away from home and relationship quality outcomes. This may be a result of the nature of my sample or due to the fact that my measures may not have been sensitive enough to capture any associations that may exist. It should also be noted that nonstandard work hours could not be

included in the analysis, because information about work schedules were not collected in the L.A.FANS.

Conclusion

This research provides new insights into contemporary couples' everyday lives. I find that women whose families eat regular dinners together are more likely to be in supportive, happy relationships, than women whose families do not. Furthermore, women in cohabiting and married relationships experience comparable relationship quality, especially when long-term cohabitors are considered. Future research should further examine the casual direction between family dinners and relationship quality, and continue to include cohabiting couples, since these relationships are continuing to emerge as a substantial, contemporary family form.

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Chapter 4

The Spatial Dimensions of Coupledom: Is Daily Travel Associated with the Quality of Couples' Relationships?

Introduction

In recent decades, researchers and policymakers have increasingly focused their attention on the role that neighborhoods play in shaping the well-being of individuals (for reviews see DeLuca and Dayton 2009; Entwisle 2007; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000; Sampson, Morenoff and Gannon-Rowley 2002). While qualitative research on urban neighborhoods extends back to the Chicago School of the early twentieth century, quantitative research examining the linkages between neighborhood characteristics and individual outcomes is still relatively new, gathering steam over the past 20 years (Bulmer 1984; Entwisle 2007; Lutters and Ackerman 1996). Over this period, neighborhood research has been bolstered by surveys constructed to provide rich data to aide in the investigation of these multi-level associations.

Despite the availability of new data sources to study linkages between neighborhoods and families, few studies to-date have examined the associations between neighborhoods and the traditional menu of family demographic outcomes such as marriage, divorce, cohabitation and childbearing[iv] (but see Clarke and Wheaton 2005; South and Crowder 1999; South and Lloyd 1995; South 2001). The few studies that have examined neighborhood effects on family demographic outcomes have focused almost exclusively on the social and economic

characteristics of neighborhoods (e.g. neighborhood disadvantage, social networks, social norms, etc.), leaving the role of daily activity patterns in shaping family outcomes largely unknown.

In this paper I investigate the relationship between daily travel and the quality of married and cohabiting couples' relationships.

The role of travel in daily family life has been growing steadily over the past several decades. In 1969, U.S. household members travelled an average of 34 miles in total each day; by 2001 that number had increased to 58 miles daily (Santos et al. 2011). The increased demand for travel is coincident with an increase in women's employment, as well as a growth in suburban residential living, which tends to be less dense and more dependent on automobile travel than urban areas (Newman and Kenworthy 1999).These patterns are reflected in the substantial increases in daily travel for all purposes, including work, shopping, errands, and social travel (Santos et al. 2011). Past research has shown that feelings of time-scarcity are not uncommon in the U.S., particularly among parents. In 2000, 32 percent of married fathers and 40 percent of married mothers reported "always" feeling rushed (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006).

Using data from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS), I examine the distances frequently travelled by individuals in married and cohabiting unions—to the grocery store, to work, and to the place where they spent the most time—with the aim of understanding whether daily travel is associated with the relationship quality of couples. This research extends our knowledge of how family members traverse their neighborhoods, and how these daily travel patterns are associated with relationship well-being; an association that has received little research attention in the U.S. to-date. This paper also extends our understanding of cohabiting couples' relationships. Despite making up a substantial and growing share of today's parents, cohabiting couples' relationships have received less attention in the research literature

than marital relationships in the examination of relationship quality (Copen, Daniels and Mosher 2013). The current research includes and identifies the impact of being in a cohabiting union in all analyses.

Background and Significance

Time, Stress and Daily Travel

There is good reason to think that daily travel patterns may constrain or promote the quality of family relationships and the stability of families. Every individual, of course, has the same amount of time each day—24 hours—to get everything done that life demands. When family members must spend long amounts of time travelling for work or other purposes, time spent in other activities shrinks proportionately. Long commutes to work, for example, have been found to be associated with less time spent eating family meals together (Christian 2012). Long commute times have also been found to be associated with a decreased likelihood of daily social travel—to attend social activities, visit with friends and relatives, attend social recreational activities, and so forth (Besser, Marcus and Frumkin 2008).

If the time spent travelling is alone (and would otherwise be spent with family), then work commutes and other daily travel may have an impact on the quality of couples' relationships. A number of researchers have theorized that the time couples spend together serves to strengthen attachment to each other—and even more fundamentally—to define the relationship itself (Daly 1996; Hill 1988; Kingston and Nock 1987; White 1983). The interactionist view of marriage, for example, suggests that repeated, daily interactions bind couples together by creating and re-creating shared meaning systems (Berger and Kellner 1964). Giddens (1984) theory of structuration posits that that individuals enact social structures through repeated interactions. Similarly, Fiese (2006) suggests that the interactions that occur during

routine family activities produce and reinforce the shared meaning systems that bond family members together. Hence, spending time together may undergird the cohesiveness of partnerships in a fundamental way.

A small number of empirical studies have examined how the time that married couples spend together impacts their relationships. Cross-sectional studies suggest that couples who spend more time together have better marital quality, and conversely, marital happiness appears to impact the amount of time that couples spend together (Booth et al. 1984; White 1983). White (1983) uses a two-stage least-squares analysis of couples' relationship quality and their time spent together. She finds that the causality appears to flow in both directions, but couples with high quality relationships choosing to spend time together "explained" a greater proportion of the overall association. Longitudinal analyses found that spending time together does indeed appear to improve marital quality and stability (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Hill 1988; Kingston and Nock 1987; Wilcox and Nock 2006). Taken as a whole, the evidence suggests that causal direction between couples' time together and the quality of relationships flows both ways.

Of course, since the time that many of these studies were conducted, there have been a number of new developments in information and communication technologies that allow family members to bridge the time-space divide. Family members can now interact via email, text, telephone and live video with few spatial and temporal constraints. When surveyed, 47 percent of U.S. adults felt that the use of cell phones and the internet improved their own communications with close family members (Kennedy et al. 2008). However, there is still much to be learned about whether these technologies provide a substitute to face-to-face family interactions, or whether they introduce new stressors, such as the infringement of work demands on couples' time together (Hertlein 2012).

A few social geographic studies have examined the impact of daily travel on the relationship quality of couples and other social contacts. Sandow (2011) uses a "time-geographic" perspective that emphasizes the restricted set of activities that time and space impose on daily life. Under these restrictions, household members coordinate and negotiate joint "projects" (e.g., working, eating, taking care of children) in the time-space available to household members. Sandow's empirical findings indicate that long commutes are associated with an increased likelihood of separation and divorce among couples in Sweden. However, the choice to become a long distance commuter may reflect less investment in the relationships to begin with—a factor which was not incorporated into the analysis. Another similar study of European couples found only small differences in partnership satisfaction and conflict when long-distance commuters and non-commuters were compared. (Viry, Widmer and Kaufmann 2010). Finally, a study of Austrian residents found that commute time of greater than 30 minutes each way significantly decreased satisfaction with social contacts compared with respondents with shorter commute times (Delmelle, Haslauer and Prinz 2013).

A second way that couples' relationships may be impacted by daily travel patterns is through increased stress and fatigue that may be generated by the experience of daily travel (for a recent review see Novaco and Gonzalez 2009). Stress has been well-documented to have a negative impact on relationship quality (for a review see Bodenmann et al. 2005). And while studies focusing on the sources of relationship stressors have demonstrated that economic pressures and major stressful life events can be destructive to the quality and stability of relationships, the stresses of everyday life also can have detrimental consequences for relationships as well (Bodenmann and Cina 2006; Conger and Elder 1994; Karney, Story and Bradbury 2005).

A number of studies, set in the work-family literature, characterize "family-friendly" neighborhoods as those that reduce the stress generated by the competing demands of work and family life (Bookman 2004; Bowen, Richman and Bowen 2000; Mancini, Bowen and Martin 2005; Mannon and Brooks 2006; Michelson 1985; Voydanoff 2006). In these studies, neighborhoods are seen as promoting or constraining well-being by providing resources that allow families to meet the challenges of daily life and maximize scarce time resources. Neighborhoods with strong social networks and those in close proximity to amenities, jobs and childcare are identified as "family-friendly" communities. One series of studies assessed the "fit" of a community to families' life course positions, using working parents' subjective assessments of their communities to do so (Sweet, Swisher and Moen 2005; Swisher, Sweet and Moen 2004).

Cohabitation, Relationship Duration and Parenthood

One important dimension of contemporary unions is that a large and increasing share of individuals today experience nonmarital cohabitation. In 1995, 34 percent of women (age 15-44) reported that their first union was a cohabitation, by 2006-2010 that percentage had risen to 48 percent (Copen, Daniels and Mosher 2013). Scholars examining differences in relationship quality by type of union have found that long-term cohabiting couples and couples with plans to marry report similar levels of relationship satisfaction as married couples (Brown 2004; Brown and Booth 1996; Brown and Kawamura 2010; Willetts 2006).[v]

Another line of research inquiry has examined whether the experience of cohabitation prior to marriage lowers subsequent marital quality. While early studies found that cohabiting before marriage was indeed associated with lower marital quality and greater marital instability (e.g. Axinn and Thornton 1992; Booth and Johnson 1988; Thomson and Colella 1992), recent research suggests that the selection mechanisms underlying the relationship have weakened over

time as premarital cohabitation has become the experience of the majority of recently married couples (Reinhold 2010). Furthermore, as childbearing has continued to be "decoupled" from marriage cohabiting couples who have a child may be less likely to marry than in the past, which may further weaken the selection of cohabiting couples with low-quality unions into marriages (Gibson-Davis 2011; Smock and Greenland 2010). Most studies now find that the stability and quality of marriages that began with premarital cohabitation are no different than marriages that did not (Kroeger and Smock 2013; Manning and Cohen 2012; Skinner et al. 2002).

Research examining changes in couples' relationships over the course of their unions has looked almost exclusively at married couples. Marital quality has been documented to change in a fairly predictable pattern over the duration of the marriage, especially during the early years of the union, and as couples transition into parenthood (Glenn 1990; Kluwer 2010; Spanier and Lewis 1980) Married couples tend to assess their relationships very positively when they are first married, and this "honeymoon period" is followed by a rather rapid decline in relationship quality, particularly after the birth of a child (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Dew 2007; Doss et al. 2009; Glenn and McLanahan 1982; Glenn 1998; Kluwer 2010; Orbuch et al. 1996; VanLaningham, Johnson and Amato 2001; Wiik, Keizer and Lappegard 2012; Willetts 2006).

As couples transition into parenthood, they take on new roles, priorities and responsibilities; and these can place considerable strain on new parents' partnerships. Empirical evidence shows that the birth of a child reduces couples' leisure time, as well as the amount of time that partners spend alone together (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Hill 1988; Keizer and Schenk 2012; Willetts 2006). Parenthood also increases the frequency of conflicts and feelings that household work is not shared equitably by both partners—a view that mothers, in particular, are likely to hold (Dew and Wilcox 2011; Dew 2007; Kluwer 2010). In one of the few studies

examining changes in the relationship quality of cohabiting couples, Willets (2006) found that the decline in relationship quality for cohabiting and married couples is comparable; couples in both types of unions experienced declines in relationship quality after the birth of a child. While a decline in relationship quality in the early years of a partnership coincides with parenthood in many cases, couples without children tend to experience declines in the quality of their relationships during the early years of their unions as well (Keizer and Schenk 2012; Lavner and Bradbury 2010).

On average, the duration of cohabiting unions are considerably shorter than marriages. According to recent estimates, the median length of a cohabiting relationship is just under two years. Forty percent of cohabiting couples marry within three years of forming, 27 percent dissolve, and 32 percent remain cohabiting (Copen, Daniels and Mosher 2013). In contrast, the lifetime dissolution rate of U.S. marriages is estimated at 40 to 50 percent, and 90 percent of marriages last at least 5 years (Cherlin 2010; Krieder and Ellis 2011). Brown (2003) finds that cohabitors with plans for marriage experience similar relationship-quality trajectories as married couples. Both married couples and cohabitors experience declines in happiness and interaction over the course of their unions. In addition, cohabitors who eventually marry experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction than couples who remain cohabiting, but both groups experience declines in some dimension of relationship quality over time (Brown 2004). In contrast, Tach and Halpern-Meekin (2009) found that couples that had cohabited prior to marriage experience lower marital quality than couples who had not, but the difference was driven by cohabiting couples with a nonmarital birth. Cohabiting couples that did not have a child prior to their marriage reported the same relationship quality as married couples who had not cohabited.

Economic resources and work

A number of studies have shown that couples with fewer economic resources experience poorer quality relationships and greater relationship instability, compared with couples who are better situated economically (Amato et al. 2007; Dakin and Wampler 2008; Rauer et al. 2008). Economic strain has been found to increase the number of conflicts and erode the quality of interactions, resulting in couples' lowered assessments of their relationships overall (Conger, Conger and Martin 2010; Conger and Elder 1994).

Couples in cohabiting unions have, on average, fewer economic resources compared to their married counterparts (Manning and Brown 2006). There is substantial evidence that marriage is selective of individuals with more economic resources—and selective of men with higher incomes, in particular—while cohabitation does not appear to be as selective in this way (Oppenheimer 2003; Sassler and Goldscheider 2004; Smock, Manning and Porter 2005; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007). Many cohabitors report that economic considerations play an important role in the decision to move in together (Rhoades, Stanley and Markman 2009; Sassler 2004), signaling possible selection of low-income individuals into cohabiting unions.

While numerous studies have examined the impact of married couples' economic resources on the quality of their relationships, few studies have examined the impact of economic factors on the relationship quality of cohabiting couples. Halliday Hardie and Lucas (2010) find that the economic situations of couples impact the relationship quality of both cohabiting and married couples, with some distinctions. The authors find that affection is associated with human capital (measured by educational attainment) among married and cohabiting individuals, whereas other measures of economic resources, such as economic hardship and economic support from family members had little impact on affective dimensions

of relationship. In addition, economic hardship was associated with more conflicts among married couples (but not cohabitors), and economic support from family increases conflicts among cohabitors (but not married individuals). Differences between married and cohabiting couples' relationship quality, then, is due in part to different levels of economic resources across the two types of unions, but different dimensions of economic resources also appear to impact some dimensions of relationship quality and not others.

While economic resources tend to improve relationships, in general, the experience of work itself has been shown to exert a negative impact on relationships. Past research has shown that the number of hours spent working outside the home is negatively associated with the quality of couples' relationships, especially among dual earner couples (Glorieux, Minnen and van Tienoven 2011; Kingston and Nock 1987; Orbuch et al. 1996). In addition, several studies have documented the adverse impact of non-standard work hours on the quality of couples' relationships (Mills and Täht 2010; Perry-Jenkins et al. 2007; Presser 2000; Presser 2003; White and Keith 1990). With non-standard work schedules, partners may have a difficult time getting sufficient sleep, and have less time to interact with their partners. Presser (2003) finds that rotating shifts and late night work are particularly detrimental to parents' marital quality.

Other background factors: Race and religiosity

Research comparing couples' relationships by race has shown a consistent pattern in which African-Americans couples tend to have less satisfying, poorer-quality relationships than White couples (Bulanda and Brown 2007; Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007). The evidence is less conclusive about Latino couples. Some researchers have found that Latino couples are similar to White couples with respect to the quality of their

relationships (Bulanda and Brown 2007), while others have found comparatively lower levels of relationship quality among Latinos (Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010).

Research on relationship stability—which is generally positively correlated with relationship quality—has demonstrated that racial groups experience different rates of instability among married and cohabiting couples (Bulanda and Brown 2007; Carlson, McLanahan and England 2004; Osborne 2005). Osborne, Manning and Smock (2007) find that among parents with a recent birth, African-American cohabitors had the highest rate of instability, followed by White cohabiting couples. Cohabiting Latino couples had the lowest rate of instability following the birth of a child—compared with cohabitors of other races, with rates of instability similar to married African Americans. And married Latino couples and married White couples shared similar, low rates of marital instability following the birth of a child. A variety of demographic, economic, family and relationship quality measures account for a significant proportion—but not all—of the differences in union stability by race (Osborne, Manning and Smock 2007). Research has shown that differential selection into cohabiting unions versus marriages has a racial dimension with roots in historical contexts (Clarkberg, Stolzenberg and Waite 1995; Manning and Landale 1996; Sweeney and Phillips 2004; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007; Wildsmith and Raley 2006). Cohabitation has long operated as an alternative to marriage among Latinos, while it appears to be a step toward marriage among Whites (Manning and Landale 1996). The varied meanings of marriage and cohabitation across racial groups, then, may account for some of the observed differences in relationship quality and stability by race.

Religiosity appears to be another important cultural factor influencing the quality of couples' relationships. In general, participation in religious activities and religious beliefs are associated with satisfying, low-conflict relationships (Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox

2010; Mahoney 2010; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2008; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008). In the few studies comparing the impact of religion on the quality of cohabiting and married couples' relationships, the evidence suggests that religious participation has the same, positive impact on the relationship quality for couples in both types of unions (Wilcox and Wolfinger 2008; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008). Religion may support couples' relationships through a variety of mechanisms (Ellison, Burdette and Bradford Wilcox 2010). Affiliation with a religious congregation may foster a wider network of social and economic supports that promote healthy relationships. The impact of religion on relationship quality may also be ideational. Many religions promote strong pro-family norms, attitudes and behaviors, which foster relationship satisfaction. In addition, religious beliefs may help couples ascribe meaning and significance to their relationship. Like the association between race and union type, the association between religiosity and union type may also be selective in nature.

Individuals appear to be selected into—and out of—cohabiting and marital unions in ways that vary systematically with their religious beliefs and behaviors. Past studies have found that participation in religious activities increases the likelihood of forming a marital rather than a cohabiting union (Axinn and Thornton 1992; Clarkberg, Stolzenberg and Waite 1995; Eggebeen and Dew 2009; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007). Ellison, Burdette and Wilcox (2010) report that religiosity is an important aspect of racial differences in relationship quality. The authors find large White-Latino and White-Black gaps in relationship quality; with Latino and Black couples experiencing significantly lower-quality partnerships than White couples. They also find that differences by race widen when religiosity is taken into account, suggesting higher levels of religiosity among Latinos and African-American couples serves to improve the average relationship quality measures of those groups in the aggregate.

Current Study

In this paper, I first examine the characteristics of family members who report little travel, to gain a better understanding of how the spatial context of everyday life varies across types of families. Second, I explore whether couples' relationship quality has a spatial dimension. I ask, "Do couples who regularly travel long distances have poorer quality relationships than those who do not?" I expect that couples who travel shorter distances on a daily basis will experience better quality relationships than those living in neighborhoods that are located far from grocery stores, jobs, and other amenities needed to meet the demands of daily life. Throughout this research paper I focus on differences by married and cohabiting couples.

Data, Measures and Statistical Methods

Data

Data come from Wave 1 of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS), a stratified, multistage, clustered random-sample of households in 65 neighborhoods in Los Angeles County, California. Data collection occurred between April 2000 and December 2001. Census tracts with high concentrations of residents in poverty were oversampled, as were households within each tract with children under the age of 18 (for more information see Sastry et al. 2006). The L.A. FANS is well-suited to examining the association between the spatial contexts of everyday life and family outcomes because it contains individual measures of distances regularly travelled as well as multiple dimensions of relationship quality.

I analyze data from two subsamples of the L.A.FANS. The first comprises female primary caregivers (n=1,311)—primarily mothers—whose children were selected at random from the respondent household. The second subsample contains 1,538 men and women adult

respondents, 666 of whom are also included in the primary caregivers subsample. Respondents of both analytic samples were married or cohabiting at the time of the survey. The social and demographic characteristics of both analytic samples are given in Table 4.1. The distributions of key analytic variables are shown in Table 4.2.

As of the 2000 census, the population of Los Angeles County, California was home to 9.5 million residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Los Angeles is unique relative to other major metropolitan areas in the U.S. in that it has low residential density and no single employment center (Marlay and Gardner 2010). The area has an extensive freeway system and a relatively small share of residents who use public transportation compared to the other large U.S. metropolitan areas (McKenzie 2010). Despite the area's reputation for traffic congestion, the average commute length for Los Angeles residents was 29 minutes in 2012, ranking only the 6th longest of the 10 largest U.S. metropolitan areas

Table 4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics for Weighted L.AFANS Analytic Samples

	Married and cohabiting adults	Married and cohabiting primary caregivers
Variable	Mean or Percent	Mean or Percent
Sex		
Male	48%	0%
Female	52%	100%
Age	44.3	36.2
Race/Ethnicity		
Latino	39%	59%
White non-Hispanic	38%	26%
Other race	23%	15%
Education		
Less than high school graduate	45%	35%
High school graduate or higher	55%	65%
Religiosity		
Attends religious services once a week or more	10%	14%
Attends religious services less than once a week	90%	86%
Family income	$65,891	$59,480
Employment Status		
Employed	69%	55%
Not Employed	31%	45%
Average work hours per week (among those working)	41.5	36.3
Union type		
Cohabiting	17%	16%
Married	83%	84%
Union duration	15.6	11.5
Children in household		
Yes	45%	100%
No	55%	0%
Age of youngest child (years)	6.2	6.1
Number of observations	1,538	1,311

Note: Survey data are weighted by L.A.FANS (adult and primary caregiver) weights and tabulated using the SVY command in Stata

Table 4.2 Summary Statistics for Key Analytic Variables

	Married and cohabiting adults	Married and cohabiting primary caregivers
Variable	Mean or Percent	Mean or Percent
Relationship quality		
Overall relationship quality		
Unhappy (Responses 0-5)	6%	7%
Happy (Responses 6-9)	50%	58%
Extremely Happy (Response of 10)	44%	36%
Compromise		
Never	NA	4%
Sometimes	NA	40%
Often	NA	56%
Affection		
Never	NA	2%
Sometimes	NA	23%
Always	NA	75%
Distance to Work		
<2 miles	24%	28%
2 to <5 miles	21%	21%
5 to <10 miles	21%	19%
10 miles or more	34%	32%
Distance to grocery store		
<.5 mile	20%	22%
.5 to <1 mile	27%	26%
1 to <2 miles	34%	30%
2 miles or more	19%	22%
Distance to place spent most time		
< 1mile	23%	24%
1 to <2 miles	16%	17%
2 to < 5 miles	23%	23%
5 miles or more	38%	36%
Spent time in place other than work and home in past week		
Yes	69%	87%
No	31%	13%
Number of observations	1,538	1,311

Note: Survey data are weighted by L.A.FANS (adult and primary caregiver) weights and tabulated using the SVY command in STATA

Measures

Relationship quality. I examine three measures of relationship quality. *Overall relationship quality* is a global measure of how the primary caregivers assess their relationships with their partners. Respondents were asked, "Taking all things together how would you describe your relationship with your spouse/partner?" Responses ranged from 1 to 10, with 1=*extremely unhappy* and 10=*extremely happy*. Two additional affective measures of relationship quality are available in the subsample of primary caregivers only. *Compromise* captures the frequency with which the respondent's partner is fair and willing to compromise when the couple has a disagreement. *Affection* captures the frequency with which the respondent's partner expresses love or affection for her. Response categories for these two outcomes are 1=*never*, 2=*sometimes*, and 3=*always*.

Distances to regularly travelled locations. I concentrate on distances to three locations visited by adults with some regularity. These include *work*, the *grocery store* and the place where the respondent spent the *most time* in the week prior to the interview, aside from work or home. Respondents reported the name and address or major intersection of each of these locations. Euclidean distances from the respondent's residence to each location were computed and available in the L.A.FANS in four intervals. Categories capturing the distance to work include 1=*less than 2 miles*, 2=*2 miles to less than 5 miles*, 3=*5 miles to less than 10 miles*, 4=*10 or more miles*. If the respondent worked at home, the distance was coded as belonging to the smallest distance category. For respondents working at multiple locations, the distance to the location where the respondent worked most frequently is given. Distance categories for the *grocery store* and *most time* are coded by the L.A.FANS into the following intervals: 1=*less than .5 miles*, 2=*.5 miles to less than 1 miles*, 3=*1 miles to less than 2 miles*, 4=*2 or more miles*.

Cohabiting was coded "1" if the respondent was cohabiting with an unmarried partner during the time of the interview and "0" if the respondent was married and living with her spouse.

Stepfamilies. A respondent was considered to belong to a stepfamily if any of the children in her family lived with fewer than two biological parents. Respondents in biological families were those in which all children were biological or adopted children of the respondent and her partner. Stepfamilies were coded 0=*biological families* and 1=*stepfamilies*.

Children refers to whether there is a child under age 18 in the respondent's family. It was coded 0=*no children present* and 1=*1 or more child(ren) present*.

Age of youngest child. The age of the youngest child was included in analytic models for the primary caregiver sub-sample. The age refers to the youngest child in the respondent's family and recoded into three categories corresponding with life course stages: 0=*Less than 5 years*, 1=*5 to 12 years* and 2=*13 to 17 years*. These age groups are organized around three school-based groupings: preschool ages, grade and middle school ages, and high school ages, corresponding to distinct patterns of daily activity and levels of independence from parents (Hofferth and Sandberg 2001; Sandberg and Hofferth 2001; Sandberg and Hofferth 2005).

Relationship duration. For married respondents, relationship duration was the number of years the respondent had been married to their spouse at the time of the interview. The L.A.FANS collects information about nonmarital cohabitation only for those married less than two years, so information about premarital cohabitation was unavailable for couples that had been married longer than two years. For cohabitors, relationship duration was measured as the number of years the respondent had been living with her current partner. In the multivariate

analyses of parent-caregivers, *relationship duration* was top-coded at 24 years (the 95th percentile of the distribution) to reduce in the influence of outliers.

Employment. Respondents were considered employed if they were working for pay as a regular employee, working in a family farm or business, or self-employed at the time of the interview. Employment was coded "0" for those who were not working at the time of the interview and "1" for individuals who were working part-time or full-time.

Work hours. Average weekly work hours were summed across all current jobs and recoded into categories so that 0=*less than 30 hours per week* and 1=*30 hours or more per week*. Work hours were specified into two categories in models where the sample size was limited and additional categories risked creating unstable estimates. When possible, expanded categories for work hours were specified, where 0= *Less than 30 hours*, 1=*30 to 39 hours*, 2=*40 to 49 hours* and 3=*50 hours or more per week.*

Education. Two groups of educational attainment were analyzed. *0= High school diploma or less* and *1=Some college or higher.* Preliminary analysis revealed that alternative specifications of educational attainment were not significant and did not improve the fit of the models, so the binary categories were included to preserve the stability of the multivariate models.

Race. Self-reported racial and ethnic information collected by the L.A.FANS was collapsed into three categories: "White non-Latino", "Latino" and "Other race". The "Other race" category included Black non-Hispanic, Asian non-Hispanic and Other race non-Hispanic respondents, and made a small proportion of the study samples (15 percent of the parent-

caregiver sample, and 23 percent of the adult sample). The three-category grouping provided a sufficient sample size within each group to ensure the stability of the multivariate models.

Regular religious service attendance. The regularity with which respondent attends religious services is measured by *regular religious service attendance*. Respondents were asked, "In the past 12 months, about how often have you attended a religious service, like church or synagogue service or mass?" Respondents reported the number using their own reference period. *Religious service attendance* was then recoded into common units of time and categorized as "0" if the respondent attended religious services *less than once a week* and "1" if he or she attended *once a week or more*. These categorizations were selected to correspond with existing research on religiosity and relationship quality (Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007; Wolfinger and Wilcox 2008).

Family Income. Family income is the sum of all earnings from family members in the year preceding the interview. Income values were imputed by L.A.FANS for those families with incomplete information for some component(s) of family income (e.g., spouse's salary, transfer income). Thirty percent of the sample contains some component of family income that was imputed. In the multivariate analyses, family income is transformed into a logarithmic scale to linearize the relationship between income and the outcome variables.

Spatially-concentrated time. Respondents were asked to name the location of the place they spent the most time in the past week, with the exception of home or work. Those reporting going *nowhere* other than home or work were coded "1", and those who reported that they spent time away in any activity away from home were coded "0".

Statistical methods

The current research seeks to extend our knowledge about the daily mobility patterns of family members. First, I analyze data to determine which social, economic and family characteristics are associated with constrained daily mobility. Second, I ask whether there is a relationship between daily mobility and the quality of relationships that family members share. Specifically, I analyze data to understand whether the distances travelled to regularly visited destinations are associated with couples' relationship quality.

Since the first outcome of interest is binary, I use logistic regression models to uncover characteristics of family members with *spatially concentrated time* (where 0=time spent in a place other than work or home and 1=no time spent in place other than work or home). I run logistic models on three sub-samples: all married and cohabiting adults, unemployed married and cohabiting adults, and employed married and cohabiting adults, to account for any differences relating employment or non-employment characteristics including employment status, work hours, and distances travelled to work.

Next, I employ a series of regression models to determine whether distances regularly travelled by family members are associated with couples' relationship quality. Preliminary analysis of the dependent variables revealed that most respondents report high levels of relationship quality. This results in dependent variables with limited variability and a highly right skew. Relationship quality is therefore analyzed using a series of ordinal logistic regression models in order to avoid losing information. I first examine the multivariate associations between relationship quality outcomes (*affection* and *compromise*) and the distances travelled to everyday locations (to *work*, *the grocery store* and to the place where the *most time* was spent) using primary-caregiver sample data. Models including *distance to work* use data collected from

employed primary caregivers. Models including the distance to the place where the respondent spent the *most time* use data on primary caregivers who spent some time away from home or work in the past week. A final series of ordinal logistic regressions model the association between *overall relationship quality* and distances to the three "distance" measures. Data for this final series of models come from the L.A.FANS adult sample (including all randomly selected adults in the L.A.FANS, including but not limited to primary caregivers). This expanded sample provides a sufficient sample size to analyze associations between the three "distance" measures with *overall relationship quality*.

All analyses were conducted in Stata 13 using the SVY SET command to account for the stratification of the sample by the poverty status of the census tract in which the respondent lived (Sastry et al. 2006). Results were weighted by either the parent-caregiver weights or the adult weights in the L.A. FANS, depending on the sub-sample. All weights account for over-sampling by strata, for the household selection probabilities by tract, and for the tract-specific rates of over-sampling of households with children and of household non-response. All analyses use two-tailed tests of significance. The overall fit of the logistic regression models were evaluated using Pearson goodness-of-fit tests. The fit of the ordinal logistic regression models were evaluated using Wald tests of composite hypotheses (Long and Freese 2006).

Results

Spatial concentration: Staying close to home and work

I use logistic regression models to examine the characteristics of married and cohabiting adults who are *spatially-concentrated*; that is, adults who reported spending no time in a location other than home or work in the week preceding the interview. Thirty-one percent of married and

cohabiting adults fit this description. Table 4.3 presents the results, with separate regressions run for unemployed and employed individuals.

In all models, only some family- and union-level characteristics are associated with differential odds of being *spatially-concentrated*. The activity patterns of married and cohabiting individuals are not distinguishable from each other, when all other variables are taken into account. This finding is consistent with a growing body of research documenting the similarities between contemporary cohabiting and married couples along a number of dimensions, once other factors such as the duration of the relationship are held constant. Being part of a stepfamily is not associated with different odds of remaining home relative to biological families. And being a parent is not significantly associated with spatial concentration among parents who are not working; however for working adults, the presence of children is associated with greater mobility. Among employed adults, having a child under the age of 18 is associated with .39 times the odds of being spatially concentrated (versus not being spatially concentrated).

Economic characteristics appear to relate to spatial concentration to a greater degree than family- or couple-level characteristics. For example, in the model that includes all married and cohabiting respondents, employment increases the odds of having one's activities constrained to work and home by a factor of 1.6 versus those whose activities were not constrained to work and home. This may be driven by time constraints and a decreased desire to spend time away from home during non-work hours—or both. And indeed, in the third model examining employed adults, the impact of moving from the group working less than 30 hours of work per week to the group working 30 to 39 hours is a 3.0 factor increase in the odds of having spatially-concentrated time use patterns. Similarly, the effect of being part of a group regularly working 40 to 49 hours per week (compared with those working less than 30 hours per week) is associated with 2.2

times higher odds of being spatially concentrated. The distance travelled to work does alter the odds of being spatially-concentrated in this model.

Table 4.3 Logistic Models of Spending Time Primarily at Work and Home

	Married or cohabiting adults			Unemployed married or cohabiting adults			Employed married or cohabiting adults		
	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE
Cohabiting (0=Married)	1.159		0.299	0.800		0.408	1.442		0.564
Stepfamilies (0=Biological families)	0.796		0.253	0.832		0.554	0.549		0.238
Children under 18 (0=No)	0.620		0.219	0.865		0.619	0.390	**	0.187
Relationship duration (0≤2 years)									
2 to 5 years	1.205		0.481	0.863		0.532	1.830		1.119
6 to 9 years	1.683		0.674	0.807		0.486	2.467		1.486
15 or more years	2.171	*	0.879	1.260		0.772	2.901	*	1.761
Race (0=White)									
Latino	1.973	***	0.438	9.235	***	4.441	0.808		0.249
Other	1.809	**	0.516	4.455	**	2.978	1.179		0.428
Weekly religious service attendance (0=No)	0.523	**	0.172	0.970		0.482	0.522		0.270
Some college or more (0= H.S. graduate or less)	0.635	**	0.144	0.849		0.388	0.538	**	0.169
Log of family income	0.844	*	0.084	1.088		0.252	0.756	*	0.125
Employment status (0=Not employed)	1.558	**	0.327						
Spouse/partner's employment status (0=Not employed)				0.289	***	0.127			
Weekly work hours (0≤30)									
30 to 39 hours							3.021	*	1.769
40 to 49 hours							2.212	*	1.071
50 hours or more							1.936		1.029
Distance to work (0=Less than 10 miles)							0.895		0.240
χ (df)	4.2	***	(14)	2.63	***	(13)	1.98	**	(15)
Number of observations			1,430			372			711

Note: Figures weighted by adult weights for the L.A. FANS. Sex and age did not improve the fit of the model and were excluded.
*=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01)

Among respondents who were not working, *race* was the only factor that was significantly associated with spatially-concentrated time use. The magnitudes of the associations were quite large. Being a Latino was associated with 9.2 higher odds (compared with being White) of having spatially concentrated time use patterns. And those in the "Other race" category—primarily Asian and Black respondents—had 4.5 higher odds of being spatially concentrated compared with White respondents. The differences may reflect cultural factors that shape the decisions to remain close to home, or there may be other unmeasured sources of difference.

Relationship Quality of Caregivers

The next series of models examine associations between relationship quality outcomes and the distances regularly travelled by married and cohabiting individuals. I first use ordered logistic models to investigate associations between daily travel and two dimensions of relationship quality (*compromise* and *affection*) to analyze a sample of female primary caregivers. Table 4.4 includes a first measure of daily travel, the *distance to work*, for working primary caregivers. Net of other variables, the first model of *compromise* predicts that the odds of reporting that one's spouse or partner is "always" willing to compromise versus "sometimes" and "never" willing to compromise are .62 times the odds for those that commute 10 miles or more each day than those who commute less than 10 miles. Similarly, the odds of longer distances commuters reporting that one's spouse or partner "always" expresses love and affection versus "sometimes" or "never" are .65 times the odds for shorter-distance commuters.

These models suggests that long commute times may be associated with lower relationship quality outcomes; however, results should be interpreted with caution. The associations were only significant the $p<.10$ level.

Other associations estimated by this model are consistent with past research. For example, I find no significant difference between married and cohabiting individuals in odds of reporting high levels of *affection* or *compromise*, compared with the combined odds of reporting mid- and lower- levels. In both models, the association between relationship quality outcomes and *relationship duration* is substantively small, but statistically significant. The first model in table 4.4 suggests that the odds of reporting that one's partner is "always" willing to compromise versus "sometimes" and "never" declines each year the couple is together by a factor of .94. The second model suggests a non-linear relationship between *affection* and *relationship duration* exists. Net of the other variables in the model, affection first increases over the earlier years of the relationship (perhaps due to selection-effects), but it then declines slowly in the later years. Plots of the marginal associations between relationship duration and relationship quality are included in Appendix. Parents whose youngest child is between the ages of 13 and 17 have 2.8 higher odds of reporting that their spouse or partner is "always" willing to *compromise* versus "sometimes" and "never" compared with parents whose child is a preschoolers. Similarly, parents whose youngest child is a teen has 2.3 times the odds of reporting that their spouse or partner "always" expresses love and affections versus the odds of "sometimes" and "never" doing so.

Next, I examined the relationship between regular travel to the grocery store and relationship outcomes with a second series of ordered logit models. In these models, relationship quality was measured by *compromise* and *affection* and the analytic sample comprised female primary caregivers. The models did not provide a good fit of the data at a conventional level significance ($p<.10$), and no significant association between the distances travelled to the *grocery store* and either *compromise* or *affection* outcomes were found (Table 4.5).

Table 4.4 Ordered Logit Models of Relationship Quality Outcomes, Working Female Caregivers Only

	Compromise			Affection		
	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE
Cohabiting (0=Married)	1.065		0.366	0.891		0.352
Stepfamilies (0=Biological families)	0.321	**	0.157	0.693		0.424
Age of youngest child (0≤5 years)						
5-12 years	1.868	**	0.541	1.297		0.440
13-17 years	3.510	***	1.568	3.930	***	2.155
Relationship duration						
Years	0.939	***	0.023	1.067		0.081
Years^2				0.994	**	0.003
Some college or more (0= H.S. graduate or less)	0.980		0.334	0.579		0.192
Weekly religious service attendance (0=No)	1.277		0.404	1.476		0.532
Race						
Latino (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.243		0.370	0.434	***	0.139
Other race (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.485		0.517	1.179		0.465
Log of family income	1.617	***	0.286	1.414		0.235
Weekly work hours (0≤30 hours)	0.968		0.321	0.752		0.231
Distance to work (0<10 miles)	0.624	*	0.159	0.649	*	0.168
Adjusted Wald χ (df)	2.2	***	(12)	3.2	***	(13)
Number of observations			486			488

Note: *=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01). Intercepts are constrained to zero.

Table 4.5 Ordered Logit Models of Relationship Quality Outcomes, Female Caregivers Only

	Compromise			Affection		
	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE
Cohabiting (0=Married)	0.677		0.221	0.603		0.201
Stepfamilies (0=Biological families)	0.662		0.267	1.992		1.129
Age of youngest child (0≤5 years)						
5-12 years	1.521	*	0.385	0.624		0.185
13-17 years	1.915		0.867	0.971		0.502
Relationship duration						
Years	1.000		0.021	1.083		0.078
$Years^2$				0.997		0.003
Some college or more						
(0= H.S. graduate or less)	0.831		0.233	0.833		0.275
Weekly religious service attendance						
(0=No)	1.537		0.475	3.292	***	1.416
Race						
Latino (0=White non-Hispanic)	0.839		0.272	0.960		0.359
Other race (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.234		0.467	1.070		0.459
Log of family income	0.976		0.105	1.035		0.145
Distance to grocery store (0<2 miles)						
2 or more miles	0.788		0.214	1.115		0.334
Adjusted Wald χ (df)	1.14		(11)	1.25		(12)
Number of observations			508			512

Note: *=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01). Intercepts are constrained to zero.

In a final series of ordered logit models fit to the data from the primary caregiver sample, I examine the associations between relationship quality outcomes (*compromise* and *affection*) and the distances to the places where the respondent spent the *most time* other than home or work. **Error! Reference source not found.**shows that both models fit the data. Net of the other variables, the first model of *compromise* predicts that the odds of reporting that one's spouse or partner is "always" willing to compromise versus "sometimes" and "never" willing to compromise are 1.93 times the odds for those that travel longer distances (1 mile or more) compared with the odds of those who travel distances shorter than 1 mile to the place they spend most of their time. Similar results were found for the model of *affection*. The second model in

Table 4.6 suggests that there is positive association between *affection* and the distance to the *place where the respondent spent the most time*; however, the association was only significant at the p<.10 level in this model.

Table 4.6 Ordered Logit Models of Relationship Quality Outcomes, Caregivers Who Spent Some Time Away From Home and Work

	Compromise			Affection		
	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE
Cohabiting (0=Married)	0.40	**	0.17	0.72		0.33
Stepfamilies (0=Biological families)	1.25		0.60	2.01		1.74
Age of youngest child (0≤5 years)						
5-12 years	0.67		0.24	0.59		0.26
13-17 years	3.61	**	2.10	4.60	**	3.49
Relationship duration						
Years	1.19	**	0.11	1.20	*	0.13
Years^2	0.99	*	0.00	0.99	*	0.00
Some college or more (0= H.S. graduate or less)	0.49	*	0.20	0.42	**	0.19
Weekly religious service attendance (0=No)	1.60		0.69	5.49	**	4.03
Race						
Latino (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.32		0.58	0.81		0.44
Other race (0=White non-Hispanic)	1.42		0.65	1.32		0.76
Log of family income	0.87		0.13	1.02		0.19
Most time (0≤1 mile)	1.93	**	0.65	2.03	*	0.83
Adjusted Wald χ (df)	2.72	***	(12)	1.85	**	(12)
Number of observations			275			278

Note: *=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01). Intercepts are constrained to zero.

Relationship quality of married and cohabiting adults

I now examine a final series of models aimed at understanding the associations between relationship quality and distances regularly travelled. These final models analyze data from the expanded sample, including parent-caregivers and non-parent-caregivers, in order to examine associations between distances regularly travelled and a global assessment of relationship quality. Table 4.7 presents results from three models that were constructed. Each of the models provides a good overall fit for the data.

In the first model, I find that employed individuals who commute between 5 and 10 miles to work have .34 times the odds of describing their relationship as "extremely happy" versus the cumulative odds of describing it as "unhappy" and "happy," compared with those who commute less than 2 miles to work. In the second model, I examine whether an association between *overall relationship quality* and distances travelled to the place where the respondent spent the *most time*. I find a positive association between distances travelled to the place where the respondent spent the *most time.* For those who travel 1 to 2 miles to the place they spend the most time, the odds of reporting that they are "extremely happy" with their relationship versus "unhappy" and "happy" are 2.49 time greater than they are for those who travel less than 0.5 miles to the place they spent the most time. A similar effect is found for those who travel longer distances. The odds of reporting that they are "extremely happy" compared to all other responses for those travelling more than 2 miles are 2.54 times greater than the odds for those travelling less than .5 miles. No significant associations were found between relationship quality and distances travelled to the grocery store.

In two of the models presented in Table 4.7 there is a significant difference between the overall relationship quality of married and cohabiting couples. These differences remain even

when unions of short duration (e.g. less than two years) are excluded from the analysis (not shown). However, no difference is found across married and cohabiting relationships among those who are employed.

Table 4.7 Ordered Logit Models of Overall Relationship Quality, Cohabiting and Married Adults

	Employed			Adults who spent some time away from home/work			All		
	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE
Cohabiting (0=Married)	0.755		0.241	0.279	***	0.105	0.310	***	0.089
Children under 18 (0=no)	0.570		0.212	0.428	**	0.157	0.531	**	0.140
Relationship duration (0=Less than 2 years)									
2 to 5 years	0.358	*	0.206	0.311	**	0.162	0.336	***	0.134
6 to 9 years	0.180	***	0.110	0.273	***	0.142	0.270	***	0.110
10 to 14 years	0.304	**	0.181	0.297	**	0.169	0.342	***	0.139
15 to 19 years	0.243	**	0.149	0.396		0.255	0.298	***	0.127
20 years or more	0.180	***	0.109	0.196	***	0.105	0.192	***	0.076
Some college or more (0= H.S. graduate or less)	1.270		0.590	0.700		0.237	0.997		0.292
Sex (0=Male)	0.556	*	0.174	0.879		0.279	0.822		0.198
Race									
Latino	1.972	*	0.784	1.346		0.513	1.106		0.323
Other	1.670		0.647	0.765		0.357	0.925		0.293
Log of family income	1.143		0.263	0.905		0.160	0.957		0.123
Weekly religious service attendance (0=No)	0.758		0.323	1.583		0.619	0.987		0.324
Employment status (0=Not employed)				1.332		0.512	1.073		0.312
Weekly work hours (0=<30)	0.943		0.537						
Distance to work (0=<2 miles)									
2 to less than 5 miles	0.641		0.327						
5 to less than 10 miles	0.335	**	0.150						
10 miles or more	0.892		0.359						

	Employed			Adults who spent some time away from home/work			All		
	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE	Odds Ratio	Sig.	SE
Grocery store (0=<.5 miles)									
.5 to 1 miles							1.022		0.319
1 to 2 miles							1.146		0.329
2 or more miles							1.069		0.346
Distance to place spent most time (0≤.5 mile)									
.5 to 1 miles				1.222		0.619			
1 to 2 miles				2.489	**	1.078			
2 or more miles				2.535	***	0.870			
Model F-statistic (df)	2.5	***	(17)	3.1	***	(17)	2.3	***	(17)
Number of observations			387			382			743

Note: *=(p< .10) ** =(p< .05) ***=(p< .01). *Regular religious service attendance* and *Stepfamilies* were not included in the model because they did not improve the overall fit of the model and were not significant. Intercepts are constrained to zero.

Discussion

This paper is aimed at gaining a better understanding of the spatial contexts in which family relationships take shape. Among married and cohabiting adults, socioeconomic factors such as employment, income and education, are associated with differences in the range of activity spaces that family members traverse in the course of their every day lives. Employment and work hours are associated with constrained daily travel, while income and education are related to a broader range of activity spaces than home and work alone. The spatial contexts of everyday family life vary considerably across racial groups, with Latinos far more likely than Whites to experience daily life in their own homes.

The analyses presented here provide limited support for an association between distances regularly travelled and poorer relationship quality outcomes. I find a negative relationship between the distance travelled *to work* and *overall relationship quality* across some—but not all—comparison groups of commuters. Longer commutes to work among caregivers was associated with a lower levels of reported *compromise* and *affection*, but both associations were only marginally significant ($p<.10$).

One limitation of this research is that the direction of the causality between the key variables could not be determined. While long commutes may create stress and constrain time, negatively impacting the quality of relationships, other explanations are also possible. Couples in higher-quality relationships may be more likely to choose long commutes because they are in a better position—emotionally, socially, or financially—to incorporate long drive-times into their daily routines. It is also possible that prior residential and employment choices are creating the observed associations. Individuals who prioritize work over family relationships may be more

willing to choose to live in neighborhoods that are far from employment locations than those who value their relationship over work.

Contrary to my expectations at the outset of this research, some distances regularly travelled were positively associated with couples' relationship quality. Adults who travelled further distances to the place they spent the most time had higher odds of reporting being "extremely happy" with their relationship compared with lower levels of relationship satisfaction—and had higher odds of reporting that their relationships entailed more compromise and affection—compared with the odds for those travelling shorter distances. Upon further examination of the activities that were associated with the place where the most time was spent, I found that much of the travel reported was for leisure (e.g. eating, drinking, sports events) and that many of the activities were social in nature. This may indicate that the observed relationship reflects other individual characteristics such as social capital and health—or other relationship characteristics, such as autonomy and trust, that may also impact the relationship quality outcomes modeled here.

A third aim of this paper was to extend the literature on the relationship quality of cohabiting couples. Past research has found that cohabiting and married couples' relationships are comparable, once factors such as relationship duration and cohabitors' plans for marriage were taken into consideration (Brown 2003; Brown 2004). In comparing married and cohabiting couples' relationships, the current research has produced mixed results. Some of the models examined here exhibit no difference between the quality of cohabiting and married couples' relationships—while others do present significant differences. One limitation of this analysis is that I could not incorporate cohabitors' plans for marriage into the models, since this question

was not asked of the L.A.FANS respondents. Future research should continue to explicitly incorporate cohabiting couples in analyses that have been largely restricted to married couples.

This paper represents a first step in understanding the spatial dimensions of couples' relationship quality. The L.A. FANS data analyzed this represent a single, large, metropolitan county. As such, analytic results are specific to the Los Angeles area, and may not sufficiently capture patterns that are operating elsewhere. Despite its limitations, this research has important implications for future family research. The results highlight that family relationships have an underlying spatial dimension that provides a new lens through which to examine our current understandings of family functioning and stability. Future work examining family relationships should continue to examine the space-time-relationship nexus in order to fully understand the constraints and supports that are in operation.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

This dissertation incorporates information about everyday activities to further our understanding of the temporal and spatial dimensions that shape family relationships. Theories of social life assert that day-to-day activities are fundamental to the production and reproduction of social organizations such as families. The approach taken here builds on these theories, providing a new lens through which to view the well-being of family members.

The three papers in this dissertation build on previous research in the field of sociology and demography. The first chapter shows both change and stability in the shared activities of U.S. family members since 1975. Family members' time investment in shared activities has grown since 1975, but a smaller proportion of parents eat shared dinners on a typical day in 2012 compared with 1975. The second paper shows that sharing regular family meals is associated with better relationship quality among both married and cohabiting couples, but the regularity of other daily routines has little impact on couples' relationships. Finally, the third paper shows that longer commutes to work are associated with poorer quality relationships among married and cohabiting couples, but that driving long distances to other activities can be associated with higher quality relationships. Results from the third paper suggest that there are a range of mechanisms that link daily travel and couples' relationships, and a time-constraint perspective is not enough to fully describe the relationships observed.

While these papers present new findings about family relationships in the context of daily activities, some areas that this research began to explore could be further developed. The first study could be extended to include analyses using alternative specifications of shared "family time." The approach taken in the first chapter provides an initial look at the full experience of family activities, but it obscures potentially important differences between changes among family pairs and changes among larger groupings of family members. In the future, the line of inquiry begun in the second study of couples' relationship quality and family routines could be extended to include a wider range of adult activities, and include more detailed information about work schedules. Future research extending the third study on couples' relationships and daily travel could include additional measures that may help shed light on the mechanisms underlying the observed relationships.

In sum, these papers represent a first, quantitative look at the associations between everyday activities and the quality of couples' relationships. Despite the limitations of the research, the approach I've taken moves us towards a new understanding of family relationships and family stability. Future research examining day-to-day activities holds promise for furthering our knowledge of the factors that shape individual welfare, and may someday help inform our understanding of the interplay between large-scale social and economic changes and family change.

Appendix

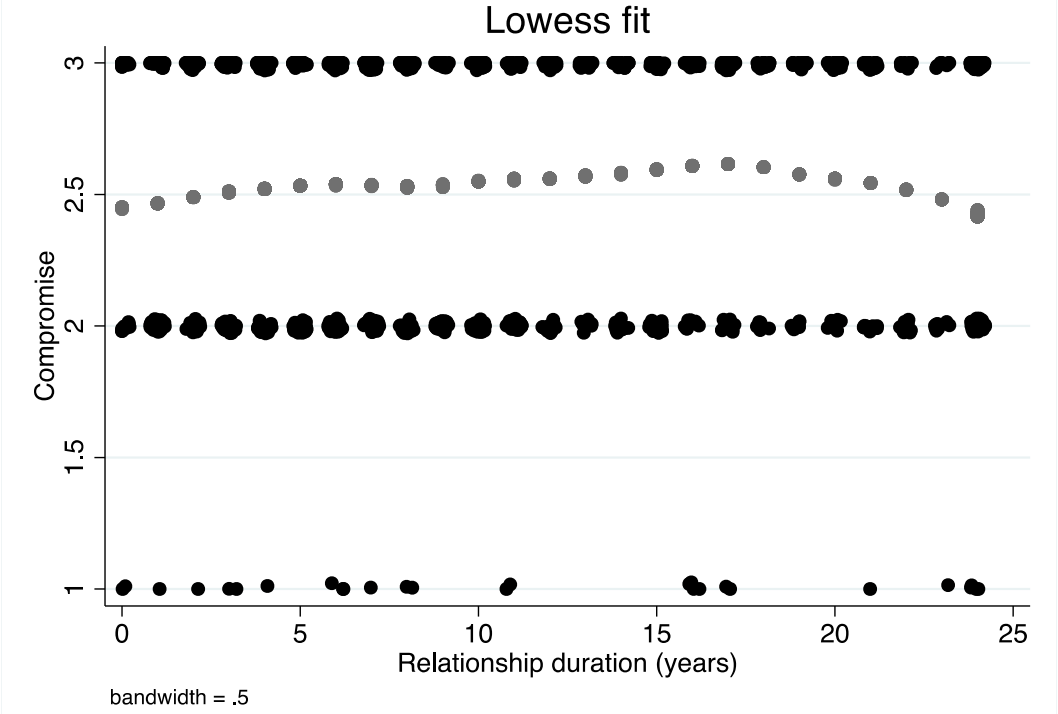

Figure 1 Scatterplot of Relationship Duration and Compromise

Sample: Cohabiting and married female caregivers

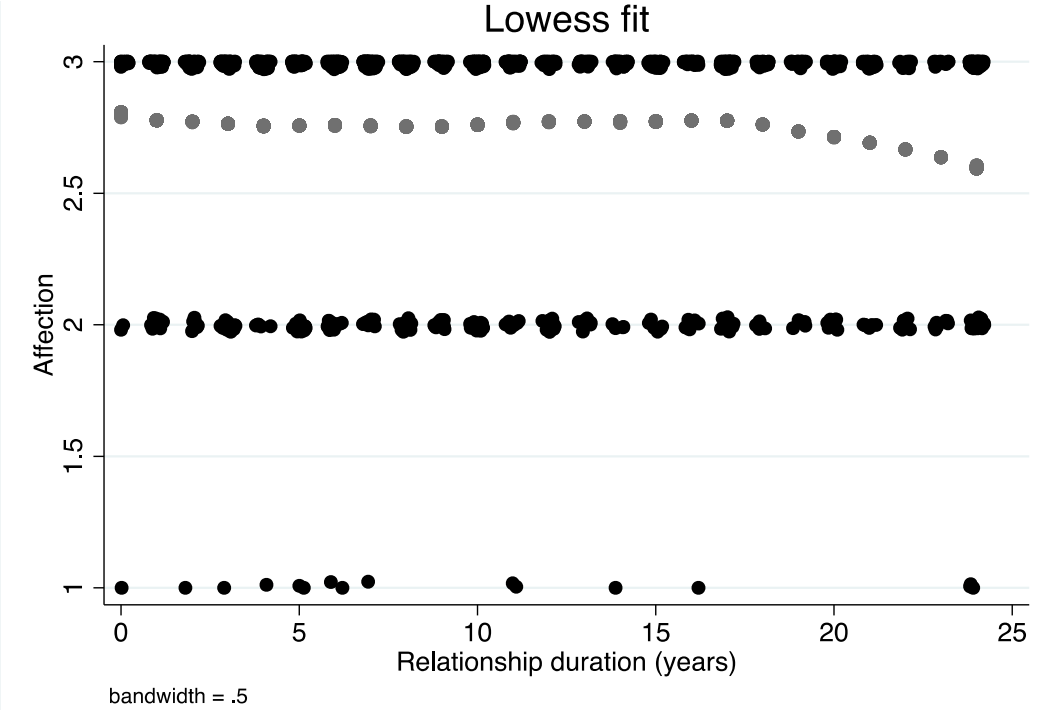

Figure 2 Scatterplot of Relationship Duration and Affection

Sample: Cohabiting and married female caregivers

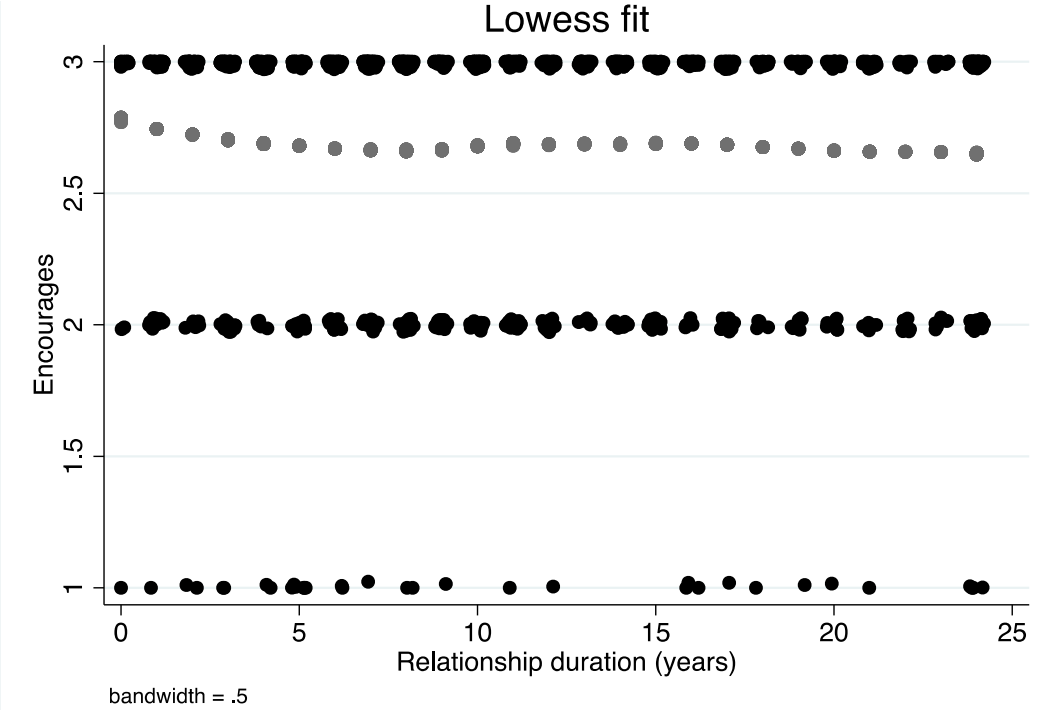

Figure 3 Scatterplot of Relationship Duration and Encourages

Sample: Cohabiting and married female caregivers

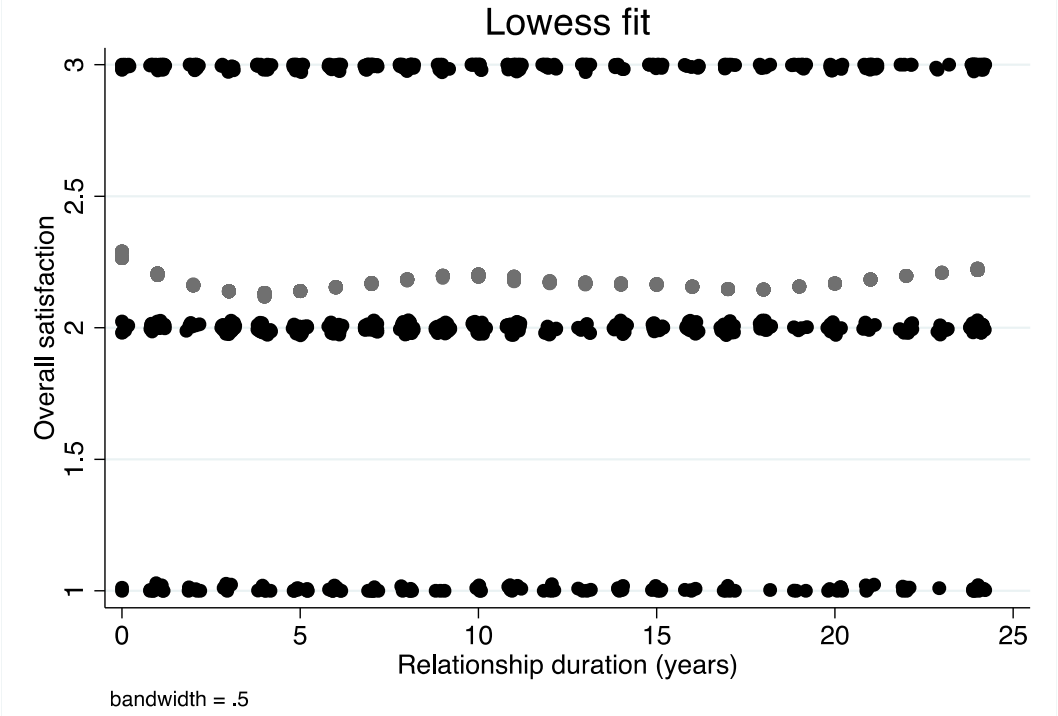

Figure 4 Scatterplot of Relationship Duration and Overall Relationship Satisfaction

Sample: Cohabiting and married female caregivers

[i] Only one study has measured how family mealtime has changed over time, however the results from that study are quire cursory. Bianchi and colleagues (2006) report that family meals have declined from an average of 5 days a week in 1975 to 4.6 days a week in 2000. It is unclear from their analysis, what makes a meal a "family" meal, and differences in the frequency of family meals by family type are not reported.

[ii] One research perspective suggests that Americans workers have increased their time spent in paid labor, and that this trend is—in part—attributable to the preferences of workers (Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1997. *The time bind: when work becomes home and home becomes work*. New York: Metropolitan Books, Schor, Juliet. 1991. *The overworked American: the unexpected decline of leisure*. [New York, N.Y.]: Basic Books. ibid.) However, Jacobs and Gerson (2001) point out that most of the increase in work hours can be attributed to an increased prevalence of continuous employment over the course of a full work year, rather than an increase in weekly hours.

[iii] Four waves of the 1975-1976 TUESA data were analyzed in order to increase sample size and maintain consistency with the ATUS which captures seasonal variations in activities. By analyzing follow-up data in the TUESA, I take advantage of the span of observations across the year. The danger is that longitudinal biases that may be introduced by using multiple observations from the same respondent.

[iv] There is a research literature aimed at understanding the impact of neighborhood context on teenage pregnancy and nonmarital fertility (Brooks-Gunn, J., G. J. Duncan, P. K. Klebanov, and N. Sealand. 1993. "Do Neighborhoods Influence Child And Adolescent Development?" *American Journal of Sociology* 99(2):353-95, Crane, J. 1991. "The Epidemic Theory Of Ghettos And Neighborhood Effects On Dropping Out And Teenage Childbearing." Ibid.96(5):1226-59, Harding, D. J. 2003. "Counterfactual models of neighborhood effects: The effect of neighborhood poverty on dropping out and teenage pregnancy." Ibid.109(3):676-719.); however, these studies have been primarily been aimed at understanding the associations from an individual well-being perspective, rather than a "family change" perspective. Of the studies that have looked at neighborhood effects on nonmarital fertility, some have found that neighborhood poverty increases the likelihood of nonmarital fertility Billy, J. O. G., and D. E. Moore. 1992. "A Multilevel Analysis Of Marital And Nonmarital Fertility In The United-States." *Social Forces* 70(4):977-1011, South, S. J., and K. D. Crowder. 1999. "Neighborhood effects on family formation: Concentrated poverty and beyond." *American Sociological Review* 64(1):113-32., while other studies have not found such effects Galster, George, Dave E. Marcotte, Marv Mandell, Hal Wolman, and Nancy Augustine. 2007. "The influence of neighborhood poverty during childhood on fertility, education, and earnings outcomes." *Housing Studies* 22(5):723-51, Ginther, D., R. Haveman, and B. Wolfe. 2000. "Neighborhood attributes as determinants of children's outcomes - How robust are the relationships?" *Journal of Human Resources* 35(4):603-42.. South and Crowder South, Scott J., and Kyle Crowder. 2010. "Neighborhood Poverty and Nonmarital Fertility: Spatial and Temporal Dimensions." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72(1):89-104. incorporated longitudinal data to examine the impact of exposure to neighborhood poverty over the life course and expanded the geographic scope of their analyses to include poverty in extra-local neighborhoods—those areas bordering respondents' own neighborhood. The authors found that the risk of nonmarital childbearing was impacted by long periods of exposure to neighborhood poverty, and that the risk was heightened when neighborhoods were surrounded by relatively more advantage than that found in the individuals' own neighborhood.

[v] Many studies comparing the relationship quality of married and cohabiting couples report that cohabitors have lower quality relationships than married couples Halliday Hardie, Jessica, and Amy Lucas. Ibid."Economic Factors and Relationship Quality Among Young Couples: Comparing Cohabitation and Marriage." (5):1141-54, Nock, Steven L. 1995. "A Comparison of Marriages and Cohabiting Relationships." *Journal of Family Issues* 16(1):53-76, Stanley, S. M., S. W. Whitton, and H. J. Markman. 2004. "Interpersonal commitment and premarital or nonmarital cohabitation." Ibid.25(4):496-519, Treas, J., and D. Giesen. 2000. "Sexual infidelity among married and cohabiting Americans." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62(1):48-60, Wiik, K. A., R. Keizer, and T. Lappegard. 2012. "Relationship Quality in Marital and Cohabiting Unions Across Europe." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(3):389-98.. However, this conclusion appears to be an artifact of treating cohabitors as if they were a single, homogenous group. Studies that compare married couples and specific subsets of cohabitors report little difference with respect to the quality of their relationships.