



## Family Change and Time Allocation in American Families

*Suzanne M. Bianchi, UCLA*

### Abstract

In this paper, I briefly discuss family demographic changes. Then I use the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) and the historical time diary studies in the U.S. to document trends in parents' time spent in paid work, housework and childcare. I also describe the activities parents forego in order to meet work and family demands. Finally, I discuss time devoted to adult care and help given to adult children, elderly parents, and friends later in the life course.

### Introduction

A question one might ask about U.S. families at the close of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is: what happens after a revolution? For nothing short of a revolution has occurred in family life. In 1950, women provided the bulk of unpaid care in families but were supported in this effort by the "good" job and "family wage" of the men they married. They tended to marry at young ages, have all their children with the same man, and stay married to him throughout life. Life was not perfect – especially for women. Betty Friedan's (1963) book, *The Feminine Mystique*, described the frustrations of a generation of educated, middle-class mothers– an unfulfilled life centered around chores and children, where all the rushing about felt like it was unappreciated and amounted to little.

In 2010, American mothers are still rushing about but in families that are far more complex and where women's labor force participation is arguably as important as men's participation to the economic well-being of their families. A new problem has arisen for many parents – mothers and fathers – the overload of a "second" shift of caregiving that must increasingly be tacked onto the "first" shift of paid work. The tension between the time needed for paid work and the time needed for family caregiving becomes more apparent when a nation's unpaid caregivers -- women -- join the paid workforce in great numbers. This is one reason "work-family flexibility" has become such an important policy focus in Europe and increasingly in the U.S.

Today, equal labor market opportunities for men and women has become a widely shared goal in developed economies and, increasingly, in the developing world as well. Even for those who wish for a return to a more gender-specialized division of labor organized around childbearing and rearing, sole economic support by a male breadwinner is not always forthcoming or feasible for many families. Finally, the ties that bind family members to one another are

both more fragile, given the increase in family instability, and yet also more enduring as the population ages and family obligations must be sustained over longer and longer lifespans.

In this paper, I chart what we know about unpaid care, the juggling of paid work and unpaid caregiving, and the costs for those who do both. Much of the evidence comes from time diary data collected in the U.S. over the past 40 years. The evidence is richest for (married) parents raising young children but intergenerational caregiving for aging parents and the assistance needed by children in young adulthood are also emerging as important areas of research and public policy focus. The paper is organized as follows. First, I discuss some of the broad demographic changes in the family. Then I review what we have learned from time diary evidence about mothers' and fathers' care of (young) children. I also discuss the seeming intensification of investment in young children, at least among the middle class, and the "slow" transition into adulthood among older children today. I describe the evidence on what parents "give up," at least temporarily, to afford time for paid work and childrearing. Finally, I comment on what we know about caregiving for adults and close kin who usually live outside the immediate family household – parents, adult children, and grandchildren.

## How Has the Demography of Families Changed?

Several key changes in the family occurred in developed countries in the latter half of the 20th century, setting the stage for more diverse family forms in the 21st century. These include changes in marriage and childbearing, the increase in women's labor force participation, particularly among mothers, and the aging of the population.

### Marriage and Childbearing

There has been a dramatic delay in entering into (legal) marriage and a rise in unmarried (heterosexual and same sex) cohabitation. For example, the median age at first marriage has risen to 28 years for men and 26 years for women in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) – and it is even higher in a number of European countries. Despite the increasingly late start, most Americans eventually marry but those marriages frequently end in divorce or separation. Andrew Cherlin (2009), in his book *The Marriage Go-Round*, argues that the U.S. is exceptional among developed countries for its high rates of marrying and divorcing, and its pattern of cohabitation. Whereas in Europe, cohabitations are often "marriage-like," lasting for years, in the U.S. cohabitations tend to be short-lived. Ten percent of U.S. women have had three or more partners (either husbands or cohabiting partners) by the time they reach age 35, more than twice the percentage for countries in Europe with the highest rates of union dissolution (Cherlin, 2009: 19).

These high rates of partnering and repartnering make for a much more turbulent family system in the U.S. than elsewhere, especially if one takes the perspective of children. Children in the U.S. frequently do not live with both biological parents throughout childhood and women also spend more time as lone mothers, rearing children without a father present, than in most of the European countries (Cherlin, 2009: 18).

Fertility is also distinctive in the U.S. because it remains high (at replacement level) compared with many European countries where levels have dropped to a little over 1 child per women.<sup>1</sup> However, this tends to mask important variation by social class in the U.S. Among the highly educated, children are postponed but most are born to two

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<sup>1</sup> Indications in Europe are that fertility levels may have reached their lowest and are now rebounding somewhat. In all countries except Moldova, levels are now above 1.3 (Goldstein et al., 2009).

married parents. A sizable proportion of highly educated women in recent cohorts have remained childless and highly educated women, as a group, tend to have fewer children than they say they want earlier in life. In the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, women were asked how many children they wanted to have. The actual total fertility rate for college-educated women was lower (by about one half a child, averaged over the group) than their stated intentions at the beginning of their childrearing years, suggesting that these women either had difficulty realizing their preferences for motherhood or their preferences changed as they grew older (Morgan, 2011).

Some observers have suggested that the rapid decline in fertility to very low levels in Southern and Eastern Europe and some countries in Asia, most notably Japan, is due to a lack of change in the family role expectations for women in these countries (McDonald, 2000). In countries where women's labor market opportunities expand but women are still expected to do most of the housework and childcare with little assistance from men, many women exercise the only choice available; they remain childless when work and family roles are too difficult to reconcile. Perhaps even in the U.S., motherhood may be foregone as women devote time to careers and face the difficulty of "fitting it all" in when jobs are both fulfilling but also demanding of time and energy. Currently in the U.S., among women age 40 to 44, 20 percent have never had a child, double the percentage 30 years ago, and this percentage rises to 27 percent for those with graduate or professional degrees (Dye, 2007).

Among less educated women in the U.S. (those with a high school education or less), marriage is delayed or foregone but children are not, resulting in a large proportion of births to unmarried women. Partly due to the fertility of this group, Americans have children at an earlier average age than mothers in many other developed countries. Less educated women end up with family sizes that exceed (by about 0.5 births per women, on average) what they say they want earlier in life (Morgan, 2011).

Currently, 40 percent of U.S. births are to women who are not married at the time of the birth (Hamilton et al, 2009). In many of these cases, the father lives with the mother at the time of birth but these families are quite fragile. Among unmarried mothers at the time of their child's birth, only 36 percent are still living with the child's father when the child is 5 years old (17% have married and 19% continue to live together) (Carlson & McLanahan, 2010). Even among unmarried mothers who are cohabiting with the baby's father at the time of the birth, only a little over half are still together by the time the child is 5 years old.

Many of the children born to unmarried mothers will have weak ties to their fathers and paternal grandparents, a situation that is partially offset by stronger ties to maternal kin, particularly their maternal grandmothers (Nelson, 2006; Bianchi, 2006). Because divorce and unmarried childbearing tend to distance fathers from their children, children may not feel a strong obligation to care for their older fathers when they become ill or frail (Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1990). Later-life divorce appears to disrupt parent-adult child contact more often for older divorced fathers than for mothers (Shapiro, 2003).

### Maternal Employment

Changes in marriage and fertility have gone hand in hand with the increase in women's employment outside the home, especially among mothers. In the U.S., the employment of mothers with children under age 18 increased from 45 to 78 percent between 1965 and 2000 with the increase in full-year employment (50+ weeks) rising from 19 to 57 percent during the same period (Bianchi & Raley, 2005: Table 2.2). Mothers' employment rates seemed to plateau in the late 1990s, causing some to argue that a slowdown or even retrenchment in the trend toward gender equality might be

underway in the U.S. (Cotter et al. 2004; Sayer, Cohen, & Casper, 2004). This also fueled a debate about whether mothers were increasingly “opting out” of the paid work force (Belkin, 2003; Boushey, 2005; Hoffman, 2009; Stone, 2007). The current widespread recession has ended the slight increase in “stay-at-home” mothers; the number of mothers who did not work outside the home declined from 5.6 million in 2006 to 5.3 million in 2008. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Nevertheless, many mothers curtail employment to rear young children full-time whereas fathers seldom do so. In 2007, 24 percent of couples with children under age 15 had a mother who was out of the labor force for an entire year, presumably to care for children (Kreider & Elliott, 2009). “Stay-at-home” fathers accounted for only 3 percent of families with children under age 15 in 2007.

The increase in women’s labor force participation over the last half of the twentieth century has had a significant impact on provision of unpaid family care. (Casper & Bianchi, 2002). Mothers (and daughters) are still on the front lines of caregiving to children and older parents but the time they allocate to paid and unpaid pursuits has shifted dramatically in recent decades. More children have employed mothers and more families have all adults in the workforce. When older parents require assistance, it is increasingly common that their adult daughters and daughters-in-law, as well as their sons and sons-in-law, are employed outside the home. This intensifies the juggling that has to take place between hours of paid work and unpaid family caregiving throughout the life course.

### Population Aging

A final trend altering family life in the U.S. and other developed countries is population aging, a result of both the decline in fertility and the increase in life expectancy. In the United States, the fraction of the population aged 65 and over is projected to increase from the current 12 percent to 20 percent in 2030 (He et al., 2005). Future generations of elderly are likely to have fewer biological children on whom they can rely for care: In the United States the Baby Boom generation, now reaching retirement age, had much smaller families than the ones they were born into – averaging two children per family rather than three or four children of their parents’ generation (Uhlenberg, 2005). On the other hand, the number of step-children an older parent has is expanding due to high levels of union disruption and repartnering. However, it is not clear that norms of obligation to assist family members are as strong among step-kin as among biological kin (Coleman & Ganong, 2008).

Older people are healthier than in the past, with declining rates of disability. Partially because they are healthier, older adults are also working longer. During the past 15 years, the labor force rates for those in their sixties and seventies have risen (Gendell, 2008).

To summarize, women’s participation in paid employment has grown substantially, reducing the number of hours that women – the primary caregivers in the past - have available to provide unpaid care to family members. Delayed marriage and childbearing heighten the likelihood that the greatest childrearing demands come at the same time that job and career demands are great – particularly among the well-educated. Delayed childbearing also increases the likelihood that one’s parents may begin to suffer ill health and need assistance before one’s children are fully launched. Difficulty with balancing work and family demands may also be contributing to the increase in childlessness. There are also more single parents trying to both support and provide time to children without the help of a partner. Work-family balance may be particularly elusive for this group, a group that may rely heavily on support from their own parents. Those parents are increasingly likely to be employed, at least part-time, as older adults remain in the labor

force longer than in the past. Broadly construed, given this complex picture, many Americans will experience multiple periods during their working lives when caregiving demands will push up against work demands and vice versa. The most intense period will likely remain the years of rearing young children. However, the later years of the life course also may entail a complex mix of obligations to elderly parents, a spouse who may face a health crisis, or the needs of adult children and grandchildren.

## Time (Re-) Allocation in American Families with (Young) Children

I now turn to the period of the life course when work and family tensions are arguably the greatest – the years when parents are rearing young children. Time diary evidence can be used to track changes in unpaid and paid work of mothers and fathers since the 1960s in the U.S. Similar trend data are available for a number of other countries in Europe, Canada and Australia, though often not for such a long time period. Trends in these countries tend to parallel those in the U.S. Time diaries suggest three important conclusions.

- 1) **Mothers.** As U.S. mothers increased their labor force participation, they shed hours of housework but protected to the extent possible their hours devoted to childrearing.
- 2) **Fathers.** Father's time in childcare also increased over the last two or three decades. For fathers, more childcare hours were added to long work hours, especially for married fathers who average more than 40 hours of work per week (regardless of the age of their children).
- 3) **Children.** At the very time that families increased the likelihood that all adults were in the paid workforce (i.e., dual earning and single parenting increased), childrearing, at least in the middle class, seemingly took on an intensive form. Also, launching children to independence was taking longer than in the past.

I turn to the evidence for each of these points.

## Time Allocation of Mothers

Currently, the time mothers spend in direct or primary childrearing activities is as high or higher as during the 1960s when a far higher proportion of mothers were in the home full-time. The idea that mothers' paid labor might not greatly reduce child care time – or at least not reduce it hour for hour – has been in the time diary literature for some time. For example, Keith Bryant's (1996) analysis of historical time diary data from the 1920s through the 1960s suggested reasons why maternal time with children might be steady or increasing. He argued that trends such as the upgrading in educational attainment of parents, the movement off farms and into urban areas, and the reduction in family size resulted in more maternal time spent directly in family care versus other activities. Indeed, early time diary studies showed that more highly educated mothers not only spent more time on average with children, but they also tended to do more intellectually stimulating things with their children (Leibowitz, 1977; Hill & Stafford, 1974).

Time diary data for the 1965 – 2000 period show that maternal time in primary child care activities dipped between 1965 and 1975 but rose thereafter (Bianchi, 2000; Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Time use data from European countries show similar patterns of increases in parental time in primary child care across a number of developed countries (Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004). Heather Joshi (1998) showed that the available multinational time use data suggested no deterioration in mothers' average time in primary childcare despite rapid increases in women's labor force participation in virtually all European economies.

A number of qualitative studies suggest why this might be the case. Sharon Hays (1996) labels this the cultural contradiction of modern motherhood: mothers assume the co-provider role but still feel compelled to be “all giving” and “ever available” to their children and act accordingly. Mary Blair-Loy (2004) discusses a schema of “devotion to family” that competes with “devotion to work” even among high income, professional mothers who are most heavily invested in their jobs.

In *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life* (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006), I and colleagues John Robinson and Melissa Milkie use the historical time use data collections in the U.S., as well as two collections we undertook at the University of Maryland in 1998-1999 and 2000, to document changes in maternal employment, housework, and childcare in families with children under age 18. In this paper, I extend this series using the American Time Use Survey Data (ATUS) through 2008.<sup>2</sup>

To briefly summarize, the trend data across all parents show that as mothers increased market work they reduced their time in housework but not childcare. Table 1 shows the hours of market work reported by mothers more than doubled (from 8 to 19 hours per week, on average) between 1965 and 1985, continued to rise (to an average of 23 hours in 1995) and then leveled off and fluctuated between 21 and 23 hours over the 2003-08 period.

**Table 1: Time Use Trends of Mothers (hours per week), 1965-2008 (old App. Table 5.1)**

	All Mothers											
Activity	1965	1975	1985	1995	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2003-2008
<b>TOTAL PAID WORK</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>23.2</b>
Work	8.4	14.9	18.8	23.4	22.8	20.6	22.5	20.8	21.2	22.2	22.6	21.6
Commute	0.9	1.2	2.1	2.3	2.5	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.5
<b>FAMILY CARE</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>38.9</b>
Housework	31.9	23.6	20.4	18.9	18.6	18.2	18.0	18.1	18.2	17.5	17.4	17.9
Childcare	10.2	8.6	8.4	9.6	12.6	14.1	13.8	13.9	13.5	14.1	13.9	13.9
Shopping/Services	7.4	5.6	7.3	7.5	8.6	7.1	7.5	7.4	7.5	6.8	6.5	7.1
<b>PERSONAL CARE</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>76.3</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>71.3</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>75.2</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Sleep	55.4	58.4	56.3	57.8	54.7	59.6	58.9	59.8	60.5	59.8	59.1	59.6
Meal	8.9	8.7	6.4	4.9	7.3	7.0	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.1	7.0
Grooming	10.1	9.2	12.2	9.0	9.3	8.4	8.2	8.1	8.0	8.2	8.4	8.2
<b>TOTAL FREE</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>31.0</b>
Education	0.7	1.2	1.5	2.8	2.3	1.8	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.0
Religion	1.1	2.3	1.7	0.7	1.3	1.1	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.0
Organizations	1.4	1.9	1.0	0.7	0.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5
Event	1.2	0.5	0.4	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.9
Visiting	9.0	7.1	6.6	7.5	7.3	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1
Fitness	0.6	0.8	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.2
Hobby	2.8	2.9	2.4	1.2	1.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.8
TV	10.3	14.1	13.7	12.5	11.5	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.2	13.4	14.2	13.5
Reading	3.4	2.6	2.3	2.1	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.5
Stereo	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Communication	4.0	3.9	4.6	4.1	3.2	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.5
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.2</b>	<b>168.0</b>						
N	(417)	(369)	(903)	(307)	(999)	(4,542)	(2,925)	(3,088)	(3,104)	(2,786)	(2,825)	(19,270)

Source: Authors' calculations from the 1965-66 Americans' Use of Time Study; the 1975-76 Time Use in Economic and Social Accounts; 1985 Americans' Use of Time; the 1994-95 Environmental Protection Agency National Time Use Survey; the combined file of the 1998-99 Family Interaction, Social Capital and Trends in Time Use Study and the 2000 National Survey of Parents; and the 2003 American Time Use Survey.

Note: Age of selected sample ranges from 18 to 64 years.

<sup>2</sup> The seven time use data collections we analyze are described in the Appendix.

Where did mothers find the time for increased paid work? Housework hours for mothers declined from an average of 32 hours per week (reported in 1965 time diaries) to just under 19 hours (reported in 2000), a decline of 13 hours, on average. This could be viewed as close to an equal trade: mothers averaged 14 more hours of market work in 2000 than in 1965 as they shed 13 hours of housework. During the 2003-2008 period, mothers' housework hours stood at an average of 17-18 hours per week, a decline of 14 hours (from 1965) and this "matches" the increase in market work. Most of the change in mothers' housework was in "core housework" tasks: mothers almost halved the time they spent in cooking and meal cleanup and doing laundry and cut their housecleaning time by more than one third (data not shown).

Mothers' primary childcare time followed a different pattern from housework. As market work rose, mothers' time in childcare activities declined from 10 to 8 and 1/2 hours per week between 1965 and 1975. After 1985, however, primary childcare time of mothers rose to almost 12.6 hours per week by 2000 and has fluctuated around 14 hours per week during the 2003-2008 period.<sup>3</sup> The average of 13.9 hours per week over the 2003-08 period is the highest estimate of primary childcare time for mothers of any time point. Routine caregiving -- (e.g., feeding, clothing, bathing, taking to the doctor) -- the bulk of childcare, generally remained steady: it dipped between 1965 and 1985 and returned to (and slightly exceeded) 1965 levels by 2000. The more interactive childcare activities (e.g., playing with, reading to, etc.), however, almost tripled from 1.5 hours per week in 1965 to 4.0 hours per week reported in the ATUS (Bianchi, Raley, & Wight, 2005).

Although trends seem to suggest that the increase in market work of mothers was largely "financed" by a decrease in housework -- and not childcare, employment still takes a toll on mother's provision of childcare. That is, these trend data do not mean that employed mothers spend just as much time in childcare as non-employed mothers. They do not.<sup>4</sup> What has happened is that the allocation of time to children has ratcheted upward for both employed and non-employed mothers -- at the same time as the proportion of mothers who are employed has grown larger. Analysis of the 1975 time use study done at the University of Michigan, a low point in maternal primary childcare time, and the 2000 Sloan-sponsored time diary collection at the University of Maryland, shows that employed mothers average fewer hours per week in child care than non-employed mothers at both time points (4.6 fewer hours in 1975, 6.6 fewer hours in 2000). However, by 2000, the employed mother was recording as much primary childcare in her diary as the nonemployed mother recorded in 1975 (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). That is, at the very time when mothers in some sense could least afford to increase their time tending to children's needs -- because they were working more hours outside the home -- that is exactly what they did do. They increased the hours they devoted to caring for their children.

## Time Allocation of (Married) Fathers

As mothers increased their market work and shed housework, how did fathers respond? Fathers more than doubled their housework hours between 1965 and 1985, from 4 to 10 hours per week and then housework time for fathers leveled out. Fathers' primary childcare time was stable at about 2 and 1/2 hours per week in the 1965 through 1985

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<sup>3</sup> Note that this is not the total time mothers spend with their children which is much higher. It is the time they devote to meeting the child's needs and directly engaged in taking care of the child or interacting with the child in activities such as play or reading to/with the child.

<sup>4</sup> For one thing, mothers who take time out of the labor force in any given year have younger children than those who are employed and young children require more hours of care.

diaries but then increased substantially. By 2000, fathers had nearly tripled their primary childcare time, reporting almost 7 hours per week of childcare and in the 2008 ATUS, fathers were averaging almost 8 hours per week in childcare. (See Table 2)

**Table 2. Time Use Trends of Fathers (hours per week): 1965-2008 (old App. Table 5.2)**

Activity	All Fathers											
	1965	1975	1985	1995	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2003-2008
<b>TOTAL PAID WORK</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>39.5</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>42.6</b>
Work	42.0	41.4	35.7	35.1	37.0	39.5	38.2	38.4	39.1	40.1	39.5	39.1
Commute	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.4	4.8	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.4
<b>FAMILY CARE</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>21.2</b>
Housework	4.4	6.0	10.2	10.2	10.0	9.6	9.5	9.2	9.7	9.5	9.5	9.5
Childcare	2.5	2.6	2.6	4.2	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.9	7.8	7.0
Shopping/Services	5.1	3.7	5.0	4.3	5.1	5.1	4.8	4.9	5.0	4.7	4.2	4.8
<b>PERSONAL CARE</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>71.9</b>
Sleep	55.7	56.7	55.1	53.0	53.8	56.9	56.8	57.7	57.3	56.6	57.0	57.1
Meal	10.5	10.5	6.9	6.5	7.8	7.5	7.9	8.2	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.8
Grooming	8.5	7.6	11.4	7.5	7.6	6.8	7.3	7.2	6.9	6.6	7.0	7.0
<b>TOTAL FREE</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>32.3</b>
Education	1.2	1.2	1.6	2.2	3.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.4
Religion	1.2	1.3	0.8	0.5	1.5	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.8
Organizations	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.9	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4
Event	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9
Visiting	8.4	6.8	6.5	8.0	5.6	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.4
Fitness	1.3	2.0	2.9	7.1	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.1
Hobby	1.2	2.4	2.3	3.9	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.2
TV	13.4	14.7	15.0	15.0	14.5	14.7	15.6	15.1	15.1	15.5	16.3	15.4
Reading	4.2	2.7	2.2	1.8	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.2
Stereo	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
Communication	2.0	2.5	3.5	2.9	3.4	5.1	4.1	4.6	4.1	4.2	3.7	4.3
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.0</b>	<b>168.1</b>	<b>168.0</b>						
N	(343)	(251)	(693)	(180)	(632)	(3,082)	(2,071)	(2,072)	(2,052)	(1,938)	(1,980)	(13,195)

Source: Authors' calculations from the 1965-66 Americans' Use of Time Study; the 1975-76 Time Use in Economic and Social Accounts; 1985 Americans' Use of Time; the 1994-95 Environmental Protection Agency National Time Use Survey; the combined file of the 1998-99 Family Interaction, Social Capital and Trends in Time Use Study and the 2000 National Survey of Parents; and the 2003 American Time Use Survey.

Note: Age of selected sample ranges from 18 to 64 years.

The overall time fathers report doing primary child care - an average of over an hour a day - is only about one quarter of the amount of time a father reports being with children on the diary day (about 5 hours a day for those with a child under age 13). The same is true for mothers - the majority of the time they are with their children, their primary activity is not a caregiving activity. Rather children are "with them" as they do the myriad of daily activities. Even more so, children may constrain their movement because parents need to be nearby or "on call" in case children need them.

Early time use research by Nock and Kingston (1988) found that long work weeks were associated with reductions in time with children, but that parents curtailed activities in which children were only peripherally involved, instead of activities where children were the center of attention. The number of work hours also does not appear to diminish parents' knowledge of their children's daily experiences. For example, in a small local sample of predominantly dual-earner, two-parent families, mothers who worked longer hours knew as much about their children's daily

experiences as did mothers who worked fewer hours (Crouter, Helms-Erikson, Updegraff, & McHale, 1999; Crouter & McHale, 2005).

Mothers' longer work hours are associated with increased father involvement in children's lives. Husbands who were part of an intact, dual-earner family and who were married to women with longer work hours had more "parental knowledge" than husbands whose wives worked fewer hours (Crouter et al., 1999). This point parallels findings on nonstandard work hours. Fathers in dual-earner couples in which the wife works a nonstandard shift are more likely to participate in childcare, compared to other dual-earner couples (Casper & O'Connell, 1998; Presser, 1988).

To summarize, fathers appear to be "picking up some of the slack" induced by increasing paid work of mothers. Yet fathers continue to be more likely than mothers to work long hours and may or may not feel they have a choice about working those hours. At the same time, fathers' long paid work hours may be part of the reason why mothers in some families feel they must curtail their hours of employment. Someone must focus on family caregiving—and that someone remains, more often than not, the mother.

## A Note on Single Mothers

With the high rates of divorce and increase in non-marital childbearing, children are increasingly likely to reside in households headed by a single parent, usually their mother. In 1970, 6 percent of family households with children were maintained by a single mother, and 1 percent by a single father. By 2007, these figures were 23 and 5 percent respectively. Excluding cohabiting parents from the count of single parent households, current estimates are that single parents account for about one quarter of U.S. households with children under the age of 18 (Krieder & Elliott, 2009).

Gender differences in single parenting is one reason mothers do so much more childcare than fathers. Although the number of co-resident single-fathers has increased since the 1970s, accounting for about 15 percent of all single parents in 2007 (Kreider & Elliott, 2009), single mothers are still overrepresented among single parents at 85 percent. Parents who do not coreside with children spend far less time caring for their children than co-resident parents – and the great majority of parents who do not co-reside with their children are fathers. This is somewhat compensated by the fact that men often are the "step" or "social" fathers to other men's children – when they remarry. King (1999) estimates that 32 percent of women's total adult years (including the childless in the calculations) will entail co-residence with biological children under age 18. The comparable percentage for men is 20 percent. On the other hand, men will spend 8 percent of their adult years living with stepchildren or other children compared with about 3 percent for women. However, the quantity – and perhaps also the quality – of time spent parenting is lower for step- than biological co-resident fathers (Hofferth et al., 2002).

Researchers and policymakers have focused on the economic constraints that single mothers experience in rearing their children but single mothers also face severe time shortages (Himmelweit, Bergmann, Green, Albeda, & Koren, 2004; Presser, 1989; Vickery, 1977). Single mothers may have as many demands on their time as married-parents when children are present but half as many adults to meet those demands. Without a partner, it is difficult for single mothers to provide the time and attention that children receive in two-parent homes – especially as involvement with children increases for both mothers and fathers in two-parent families.

Both married and single mothers' child care time has increased over the past several decades, perhaps allaying fears about time shortages in single-mother households (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Yet single mothers spend less time in child care than married mothers; less total child care, less routine care, less time playing with and interacting with their children, and less total time with children (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008). (Cohabiting "single" mothers do not differ from married mothers in the time they spend with their children.)<sup>5</sup>

Yet one can exaggerate the differences between single and married mothers. Married mothers do more primary child care (2.4 hours vs. 2.0 hours per day) and spend more total time with their children (7.2 hours vs. 6.5 hours per day) than single mothers. Thus, single mothers spend almost three fewer hours per week in direct care of their children and almost five fewer hours per week in the presence of their children than married mothers. Still, single mothers average 83 to 90 percent (depending on the measure and subgroup of single mothers) as much time with their children as married mothers. In some sense, we can "explain" single mothers' lower time investments in their children by observed differences in their social structural location: Single mothers have higher rates of employment and tend to be less educated, both of which are associated with reduced child care time.

One thing that limits the quantity and perhaps also the quality of the time single mothers have for their children are their much greater need for (long) hours of employment to support their children than among married mothers. Most single mothers do not have the flexibility to drop out of the labor force or reduce their hours in response to the needs of very young children – unless their extended families or the government steps in. As far as public support in the U.S., since the mid-1990s the effort has been to encourage employment of poor single mothers rather than long term reliance on welfare support.

Never-married single mothers are disadvantaged relative to divorced single mothers and married mothers who tend to be older and better educated. Children of never-married single mothers have less than one-fourth the family income than children in two-parent families, although the average incomes of families headed by divorced mothers is also less than half that of two-parents. Part of the economic inequality between never-married single mothers and divorced single mothers is due to the father's propensity to contribute child support. Mothers who never marry the father of their children are less likely to receive child support (with about 20% reporting receiving it regularly) than are divorced or separated mothers (with about 60% reporting receiving some support) (Casper & Bianchi, 2000).

## Intensive Parenting of Children

A number of studies suggest that American parents, at least middle class parents, are engaged in an ever more intensive form of childrearing. Middle class children participate in a large number of extra-curricular activities, many of which require active parental involvement and require parents to transport children to and from activities (Lareau & Wieninger, 2007). Sayer, Bianchi, and Robinson (2004) suggest at least three possible factors that increase the time parents spend (or feel they must spend) engaged with children in their activities. First, smaller families later in life selects for parents who want to spend time with children, especially in a context where contraception allows people to opt out of parenting and where it is acceptable to make this choice. Second, parents fear for children's safety when they are not supervised. More children live in urban areas where they cannot walk unaccompanied to school or activities

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<sup>5</sup> Countervailing characteristics tend to equalize the time inputs of married and cohabiting mothers: Cohabiting mothers are less-educated and have lower incomes but they also have younger children who increase time demands.

and where parents supervise children on playgrounds or in public spaces. More working parents also mean neighborhoods are not full of adults who might look after children who are unaccompanied by an adult. Finally, an increased amount of time is required merely to transport children to daily activities in suburban spaces with traffic congestion.

Other researchers suggest an additional motivation for the high level of parental investment, at least in the middle class. Some argue that parents are increasingly concerned with giving their children a wide range of opportunities with the hope that this will ensure children's later life educational success (Ramey & Ramey, 2010). Annette Lareau (2004) labels this type of parenting "concerted cultivation." Parents feel this type of investment in young children is required to achieve their children's later educational and career success. Her follow up interviews with children as young adults suggest parents may be right (Lareau, 2011).

Despite parents' heavy involvement in childrearing, the majority of mothers and fathers still say they have "too little time" with their children (Bianchi, Robinson & Milkie, 2006). This may reflect the hurried nature of modern family life – when time together is often spent rushing to the next activity or commitment. The feeling that one has too little time with one's children is much more prevalent among employed than non-employed mothers. As shown in Table 3, approximately 18% of non-employed mothers report they have too little time with their children, while this sentiment is shared by nearly one-third of part-time employed mothers, over half of full-time employed mothers, and a little more than two-fifths of mothers in long work-hours couples (couples where both work 50 hours a week or more, a very small percentage (3 %) of couples (Bianchi & Wight, 2010). Fathers are even more likely than mothers to feel they have too little time with their children, largely because they work so many hours. Milkie et al. (2004) show that gender differences in a perceived time shortage with children disappear once the longer work hours of fathers are controlled, suggesting that this measure may be picking up something about the "subjective cost" of spending more time away from home and family among the employed.

**Table 3. Married Mothers' and Fathers' Subjective Time Use Experiences by Employment: 2000**

	All Parents	Nonemployed Mothers/ Wives with a Full-Time Employed Spouse	Employed Mothers with a Full- Time Employed Spouse	Dual- Earner Couple with Part- Time Employed Mother	Dual- Earner Couple where Both Work Full Time (35+ Hours)	Dual- Earner Couple where Both Work 50+ Hours
<b>Mothers</b>						
Percent Who Have "Too Little Time" for						
Youngest (Only) Child	36.3	17.8	44.0	30.9	52.3	43.7
Spouse	69.7	61.9	72.9	79.2	68.8	79.5
Oneself	72.2	67.0	74.3	71.5	76.0	82.0
Days Per Week Family Eats Main Meal Together	4.6	5.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.2
Percent Who "Always" Feel Rushed	42.5	30.5	47.4	39.5	52.5	52.1
Percent Who Multitask "Most of the Time"	65.6	57.2	69.1	63.5	72.8	85.9
N	420	113	307	130	177	18
<b>Fathers</b>						
Percent Who Have "Too Little Time" for						
Youngest (Only) Child	58.5	59.5	58.1	57.9	58.2	40.3
Spouse	60.1	55.9	61.8	49.1	67.9	84.1
Oneself	61.3	69.1	57.9	57.6	58.1	55.1
Days Per Week Family Eats Main Meal Together	4.7	5.1	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5
Percent Who "Always" Feel Rushed	34.4	33.1	35.0	31.3	36.7	47.7
Percent Who Multitask "Most of the Time"	39.3	41.9	38.3	32.2	41.1	59.1
N	346	93	253	78	175	21

Source: Authors' calculations from the 2000 National Survey of Parents.

Note: Universe is married mothers with a full-time employed spouse and full-time employed married fathers aged 25-54.

Raising children in the contemporary United States also takes a long time and requires substantial financial investment by parents, as young adults delay the transition to adulthood and as parents often “backstop” children financially who are having trouble securing a foothold in the job market. Using multiple data sets, Schoeni and Ross (2005) show that there was a 10 percent rise in the likelihood of young adults, 18-34 years old, living with parents between 1970 and 1990. They estimate that this resulted in a 13 percent increase in the assistance young adults received from parents. Indeed, the vast majority of those in their early 20s—regardless of whether they are enrolled in school—receive some sort of economic assistance from their parents (Shoeni & Ross, 2004). Furstenberg (2010) argues that as the transition to adulthood lengthens in the U.S., parents bear a greater burden of supporting adult children relative to their European counterparts where governmental programs invest more heavily in the education, health care, and job prospects of their young people. The lack of government investment in the U.S. also makes for greater diversity and more inequality in young adult outcomes, reflecting inequality in the economic resources parents have to assist adult children.

### What do parents give up to devote time to work and family?

Time is finite and a dramatic reallocation of women’s time raises questions about changes in other spheres. In the words of Gauthier, Smeeding, and Furstenberg (2004), what “financed” increased market work of mothers? Parents represent a group that might be particularly concerned about long paid work hours “crowding out” other uses of time because they have an important alternative use of their time—rearing their children. When long work hours become commonplace, jobs may strain a mother’s and a father’s ability to spend adequate time with their children, with each

other, or in family activities. According to the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce, about one-quarter to one-third of workers report feeling that they do not have enough time for themselves or their family because of their jobs (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). In addition, many parents say that they would prefer to work fewer hours per week and fewer weeks during the year (Christensen, 2005; Reynolds, 2005). The trend toward desiring fewer hours has been increasing among mothers over the last decade. According to a 2007 report by the Pew Research Center, about 21% of mothers report that full-time work is the ideal situation for them (down from 32% in 1997), whereas 60% of mothers today prefer parttime work (up from 48% in 1997) (Taylor, Funk, & Clark, 2007). Research indicates that the desire to reduce work hours stems from a number of factors reflecting both job demands and personal and family life considerations (Reynolds, 2005).

The tension between work and family may be especially pronounced in the U.S. because American workers dedicate more hours to paid work than do their European counterparts (Gornick & Meyers, 2003). American parents vacation less, work the longest annual hours, and have the highest percentage of dual-earner couples who work long workweeks compared with parents in other countries (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Jobs requiring long hours may exacerbate tendencies toward gender specialization in the home, with the result that women lose out in terms of market equality. But men suffer losses as well. They may end up with more distant relationships with their children, and the sense later in life that they “over-invested” in market work to the detriment of important relationships in their lives.

Time tends to be a “zero-sum game,” with time devoted to any one activity increasing only if another activity suffers an equal loss—unless individuals engage in large-scale multitasking, a stressful proposition. So as more and more families have all members employed – but also strive to keep time with children high – “what gives”?

The accumulated evidence suggests a number of things:

- 1) Mothers continue to scale back work hours when childrearing demands are highest and when they are able to do so financially. However, this has long term negative consequences for their own income security later in life or in the event that their marriages dissolve and tends to retard progress toward gender equality in occupational attainment and earnings.
- 2) Time diary evidence suggests a reduction in the time spouses spend together – both the total amount of time and time alone as a couple. In addition, large percentages of both husbands and wives report they have “too little time” for themselves.
- 3) Working mothers in particular give up leisure time and sleep (compared with mothers not in the labor force) to meet demands of children and jobs. Large percentages of mothers, no matter their labor force status, report they “are always rushed,” are “multitasking most of the time,” and that they have “too little time for themselves.”

## Reduced Employment and Pay Penalties for Women

On average, in couples with children, time diary studies suggest that total workloads of mothers and fathers are similar but remain gender specialized. Mothers average about half the paid work hours that fathers do (23 hours per week versus 43, averaged over all couples with children under age 18 and over the 2003-08 ATUS data collections). Conversely, fathers contribute about half as much unpaid work in the home, or family care, as their wives do. (That is, mothers average 39 hours a week compared with 21 hours for fathers.)

Ample evidence suggests that women incur a wage penalty for the time they devote to childrearing (Budig & England, 2001; Crittenden, 2001; Joshi, 2002; Waldfogel, 1997), yet mothers continue to curtail market work despite the economic disadvantages of discontinuous labor market participation. The majority (54%) of married women ages 25–54 with preschoolage children in the home do not work full time, year round (Cohen & Bianchi, 1999) and mothers' employment hours remain highly responsive to the age of the youngest child (Bianchi & Raley, 2005). Only 46 percent of married mothers with a child under age 1 report any paid work hours compared with 73 percent of those whose children are all over the age of 6 (Bianchi & Raley, 2005: Table 4). Some mothers exit the labor force for the first year or few years of their children's lives, while others reduce their labor force status to part time (Klerman & Liebowitz, 1999). When mothers return to (full-time) employment, they may structure their employment hours so as to overlap as much as possible with children's school schedules (Crouter & McHale, 2005). These strategies tend to narrow the gap in childcare time between employed and non-employed mothers—particularly when children are young.

Betsy Thorn (2010) has recently calculated the time “reallocation” that comes with the birth of a first child, using the 2003-2009 ATUS samples. Comparing the diary days of new mothers, those with only one child who is under the age of one year, to a comparable group of childless young women (aged 23-34), she shows that mothers' days are filled with almost 3 and one half more hours of family care and housework (compared to the childless women). Where does this time come from? Mothers, on average, spend a half hour less in personal care, an hour less in leisure activities, and almost two hours less per day in paid work.

Obviously there are benefits to women's families and children of curtailing market work. Many women may consider more time with children or perhaps less harried lifestyles worth the economic risk of time out of the labor force. Cross-sectional time use data do not allow us to sort out causality on this issue but they do allow us to describe hours foregone in other activities when more hours are spent in market work. The picture of “nonmarket costs” when mothers work outside the home (discussed below) is that some child care time and sleep but also a great many hours of free time and housework go by the wayside.

Relatively few mothers work extremely long hours, particularly when their children are young and a sizable percentage of married mothers (more than one-third) are employed no hours, and an additional 20% of mothers work part-time hours. Without knowledge of parents' preferences, it is not entirely clear how to interpret these facts. On the one hand, mothers who are *not* putting in long hours may be doing so because they feel they must preserve sufficient time for the family. Full-time hours may be difficult to reconcile with family caregiving. At the same time, these mothers may be foregoing the best jobs in the economy.

Mothers who are working no hours may or may not be doing so out of choice. A sizable fraction of these mothers have only a high school education or less, and the costs of employment (e.g., childcare) may outweigh the economic benefit. Another issue for all mothers (and fathers) is whether they can afford to “outsource” tasks such as housework, and whether they are able and comfortable with “outsourcing” the care of their children and the other tasks of family caregiving. Recent findings reported by the Pew Research Center suggest that working mothers are less likely to find full-time employment ideal and are more likely to find part-time employment ideal today than 10 years ago. Furthermore, the percentage of non-employed mothers who say they would prefer not to work outside the home has increased over the last 10 years from 39 to 48% (Taylor et al., 2007).

## A Note on Nonstandard Work Hours

Both long work hours in jobs with standard schedules as well as jobs with irregular or nonstandard schedules can spill over into parts of the day often reserved for family time (e.g., evenings), and restrict parents' traditional "downtime" activities that provide rest and relaxation. Evidence from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) on those who on their diary day worked most of their hours outside the 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. standard daytime schedule suggests that parents who work nonstandard hours experience losses in time for themselves, with their spouse, and with their children (Wight, Raley, & Bianchi, 2008). Mothers who work most of their hours in the evening spend less time in routine childcare activities, such as bathing children and providing medical care, relative to mothers who work most of their hours during the day. Mothers with nonstandard work hours also are less likely to read to their children. Fathers who work evenings or nights actually spend more time in routine childcare than their counterparts who work daytime hours. Although those who work in the evening are more likely to eat breakfast with their children, evening work schedules reduce the likelihood of being present at the dinner table. Nonstandard workers, regardless of whether they work most of their hours in the evening or night, spend significantly less time than their standard daytime counterparts with a spouse, and less time watching television and sleeping (Wight et al., 2008).

These results underscore an obvious point: when work hours intersect with culturally sanctioned "non-work" periods of the day, whether as a result of nonstandard work schedules or long standard daytime schedules, the ability to engage in non-work activities with other family members is limited. In short, long hours of employment that bleed into non-work segments of the day may disrupt other activities, much as they do for workers with nonstandard work schedules.

## Spouse's Time Together and Marital Quality

A second area that seems to take a "hit" as families try to raise children and also work outside the home is a couple's time together (Milkie, Raley & Bianchi, 2009). Analysis of time diary data on "with whom" time is spent suggest that time with a spouse is lower in households where both parents are employed than in those where someone, almost always the wife, has stopped working for pay.

Some research indicates that increases in both individual work hours and the combined work hours of a couple are associated with declines in marital quality (Barnett, 2004). Similarly, feelings of role overload or not having enough time for oneself are associated with lower levels of marital quality (Crouter et al., 2001). Among a sample of White, married, middle-class professionals, an increase in work hours was associated with higher reports of family-role difficulty and higher levels of marital tension (Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992). In a sample of 190 dual-earning families, the more hours a husband worked, the less time he spent with his wife (Crouter et al., 2001).

The effect of employment on a couple's marital relationship may be patterned along gender stereotypic lines with longer work hours among wives, rather than husbands, associated more strongly with divorce. Using panel data from the 1991–1993 Survey of Income and Program Participation, Johnson (2004) provides descriptive evidence that the incidence of divorce is greater when both spouses are employed. Furthermore, women's hours of employment are more highly correlated with divorce than the work hours of men. Among parents, an additional hour of employment by a father is linked to a lower probability of divorce, whereas an additional hour worked by a mother is associated with a

higher risk of divorce (Johnson, 2004). Lower marital quality and a heightened likelihood of divorce are also found to be associated with certain nonstandard work schedules (e.g., working nights) (Presser, 2000, 2003).

## Sleep, Leisure, the Family Dinner and a Sense of Well-Being

Do employed mothers get less sleep? The answer is yes. Because time is finite, they also have much less free time, including less of the most relaxing of free time—what might be called “pure” free time that is not spent in charge of children or combined with some unpaid domestic activity like folding laundry. Feelings of “time pressure” may also be heightened when long work hours curtail time for rest and relaxation (Bianchi et al. 2006; Nomaguchi, Milkie, and Bianchi 2005).

Vanessa Wight and I use the ATUS to compare the time allocations of mothers by employment status (and husbands by the wife’s employment status). As shown in Table 4, not only do employed mothers do less childcare (eight hours less), less housework (ten hours less), and a little less shopping (one hour less) per week, they also get a little less sleep (three hours less), and have substantially less free time (nine hours less). In percentage terms (column 4), 32% of the difference is attributable to less housework, 29% to less free time, 25% to less childcare, 10% to less sleep, and 4% to less shopping.

**Table 4. Average Hours per Week Mothers Engage in Selected Activities by Employment Status and the Percentage Change in Daily Activities Associated with Maternal Employment, 2003-2006**

	Nonemployed Mothers with a Full-Time Employed Spouse <sup>a</sup> (Single-Earner Couple)	Employed Mothers with a Full-Time Employed Spouse (Dual-Earner Couple)	Employed versus Nonemployed Mothers	
			Difference	Percentage Change in Daily Activities Associated with Maternal Employment
Paid Work	0.8	32.7	31.9	100.0
Childcare	20.1	12.0	-8.0	25.1
Housework	26.5	16.4	-10.1	31.6
Shopping/Services	8.7	7.4	-1.3	4.1
Sleep	60.6	57.3	-3.2	10.2
Eating & Grooming	15.4	15.5	0.1	-0.3
Free Time	35.9	26.6	-9.3	29.3
N	2595	5292		

Source: Authors' calculations from the 2003-2006 ATUS.

Note: Universe is married mothers with a full-time employed spouse and full-time employed married fathers aged 25-54. Percentage distributions are weighted; sample sizes are not.

<sup>a</sup> Includes 76 mothers who are nonemployed at the time of the ATUS but who report doing work activities on their diary day, such as looking for work, interviewing, and engaging in other income generating activities that are not considered part of a main job.

As shown in Table 5, compared with part-time employed mothers, full-time employed mothers do less childcare (five hours less), less housework (five hours less), do slightly less shopping (one hour less), get a little less sleep (almost one hour less), and have less free time (about six hours less). In terms of percentages (column 5), 29% of the difference is attributable to less childcare, 26% to less housework, 7% to less shopping, 4% to less sleep and 32% to less free time.

**Table 5. Average Hours per Week Married Mothers and Fathers Engage in Selected Activities by Employment Hours and the Percentage Change in Daily Activities Associated with Long Work Hours, 2003-2006**

	Dual-Earner Couple with Part-Time Employed Mother	Dual-Earner Couple where Both Work 35+ Hours	Dual-Earner Couple where Both Work 50+ Hours	Both Work 35+ Hours vs. Couple with Part-Time Employed Mother	Both Work 50+ Hours vs. Couple where Both Work 35+ Hours		
				Difference	% Change in Activities Associated with Both Working 35+ Hours	Difference	% Change in Activities Associated with Both Working 50+ Hours
<b>Mothers</b>							
Paid Work	21.3	39.0	47.5	17.7	100.0	8.5	100.0
Childcare	15.4	10.2	9.8	-5.1	29.1	-0.4	5.1
Housework	19.5	14.7	14.2	-4.8	26.8	-0.5	6.2
Shopping/Services	8.3	7.0	6.0	-1.3	7.3	-1.0	11.8
Sleep	57.8	57.1	53.9	-0.7	4.1	-3.1	37.1
Eating & Grooming	15.7	15.5	15.5	-0.2	1.2	0.1	-1.0
Free Time	30.2	24.6	21.1	-5.6	31.5	-3.5	40.9
N	2012	3480	251				
<b>Fathers</b>							
Paid Work	46.8	45.2	55.5	-1.7	100.0	10.3	100.0
Childcare	7.1	6.6	6.2	-0.5	-30.9	-0.4	3.8
Housework	8.9	9.9	8.7	1.0	60.7	-1.2	12.0
Shopping/Services	4.5	4.9	4.1	0.4	27.1	-0.8	8.2
Sleep	55.3	56.5	52.9	1.2	70.2	-3.5	34.3
Eating & Grooming	15.1	14.5	14.7	-0.5	-32.8	0.2	-1.7
Free Time	30.4	30.5	26.0	0.1	5.8	-4.5	43.4
N	1535	3147	230				

Source: Authors' calculations from the 2003-2006 ATUS.

Note: Universe is married mothers with a full-time employed spouse and full-time employed married fathers aged 25-54. Percentage distributions are weighted; sample sizes are not.

The difference in fathers' paid work hours across families is much less pronounced. Fathers in couples where both spouses work 35 or more hours per week average about two hours *less* of paid work than their counterparts in couples with a part-time employed wife. Otherwise, fathers' time allocations are actually quite similar in households where wives work full or part-time.

The number of nights the family has dinner together also differs between couples with a non-employed versus an employed mother/wife, which suggests that this family activity is also a little more difficult for dual-earner couples than for families where the mother/wife is not employed. Couples with a non-employed wife eat together

approximately 5.1 nights a week. (See Table 3.) Among part- and full-time employed mothers, this number drops to about 4.4 nights per week (Bianchi 2009).

Thus, the evidence suggests that parents have been managing to do both “work and family” – and with a somewhat more egalitarian division of labor than in the past. However, women still do far more of the unpaid, caregiving hours in the home and men do more of the paid hours in the labor market. And the total hours (paid+unpaid) add up to high average work loads per week for mothers and fathers when there are young children in the home and high levels of expressed stress over time pressures. Activities that “give” to meet family demands include mothers’ paid work hours, spouses’ time together, the family dinner, and mothers’ rest and relaxation.

## Beyond the Couple and the Family: Socializing and Civic Engagement

A final question is what happens to parents’ connections to extended kin and a wider circle of friends and organizations when lives are overwhelmed with work and childrearing demands? A set of activities that receives attention from social scientists of various disciplines, particularly in light of its political ramifications, are civic leisure pursuits (Putman, 2000). Most recent accounts indicate employment reduces a woman’s time available for volunteering, although trends over time are unclear (see Bianchi, 2000, for a review).

When we examine a category of leisure activities that Sayer (2001) labels “civic leisure” - organizational activities such as PTA meetings and the like - estimates of weekly hours in this type of activity are relatively low. Employed mothers do about 1.3 hours of this type of activity compared with 2.8 hours by non-employed mothers. The adjusted difference is 1.8 fewer hours of this type of engaged leisure on the part of employed mothers and no difference for fathers in the two types of households (Bianchi 2009).

We have also examined activities that have to do with the “glue” of relationships—activities that Sayer (2001) includes in a category labeled “social leisure”—socializing, attending events with others, and doing hobbies with others (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). Overall, all groups report a significant number of hours in such activities—as many as 20 hours per week for non-employed mothers. Employed mothers engage in four fewer hours of social leisure than non-employed mothers. There is a parallel difference among fathers, with those married to employed wives spending about 4 hours less per week in social pursuits than those married to a mother at home full time (Bianchi, 2009).

An alternative estimate is the time the respondent reports in the time diary that he or she spends with friends and relatives. Here there is no significant difference between mothers or fathers depending on a mother’s employment status. However, single mothers participate less in this type of socializing over time, suggesting that their lives have become busier with less time for the adult company and interaction that may sustain them in their role as lone parent.

## Obligations to Extended Kin

As noted at the outset, one of the major changes affecting the demography of family life is the aging of the population. Given the portrait I have just painted of busy working parents of children with limits on time left over after paid work and family caregiving, is there any time to meet the demands of aging parents or extended kin? The good news is that given the lengthening of *healthy* life expectancy, most adults do not face serious caregiving demands from their parents until their own children are older and less demanding of day to day care. That is, only a small proportion

are “sandwiched” with care both for parents and young children (Pierret, 2006), though these individuals face a substantial burden. When elder care needs do arise, they often result from an unexpected health crisis like a fall, and hence are difficult to anticipate. Thus, in later years, adults may need a different kind of flexibility to meet family emergencies.

As shown in Table 6, at older ages, women continue to do more family care within their own households than men do. As men reduce paid work in their sixties, they take on a bit more family care but never do as much as women do.

**Table 6. Time Use Trends of Women ages 35 to 70 and over: 2003-2007(minutes per day)**

<b>Women</b>					
Activity	Age 35 to 54	Age 55 to 59	Age 60 to 64	Age 65 to 69	Age 70 plus
<b>TOTAL PAID WORK</b>	<b>241.4</b>	<b>214.8</b>	<b>152.0</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>17.3</b>
Work	224.5	199.9	142.0	59.1	16.4
Commute	16.9	14.9	10.0	4.0	0.9
<b>FAMILY CARE</b>	<b>267.6</b>	<b>242.7</b>	<b>257.2</b>	<b>270.5</b>	<b>237.2</b>
Housework	150.9	156.3	169.1	186.7	176.3
W/in HH Care	55.3	19.5	22.0	18.7	7.7
Shopping/Services	61.4	66.9	66.1	65.1	53.1
<b>TOTAL WORK</b>	<b>509.0</b>	<b>457.5</b>	<b>409.2</b>	<b>333.6</b>	<b>254.5</b>
N	(17,028)	(3,086)	(2,507)	(2,134)	(5,591)

  

<b>Men</b>					
Activity	Age 35 to 54	Age 55 to 59	Age 60 to 64	Age 65 to 69	Age 70 plus
<b>TOTAL PAID WORK</b>	<b>351.6</b>	<b>295.0</b>	<b>217.3</b>	<b>105.4</b>	<b>41.8</b>
Work	324.3	272.4	202.3	97.8	39.0
Commute	27.2	22.6	15.0	7.6	2.8
<b>FAMILY CARE</b>	<b>156.7</b>	<b>159.0</b>	<b>171.4</b>	<b>187.9</b>	<b>174.9</b>
Housework	88.0	109.0	111.6	121.0	119.1
W/in HH Care	28.9	8.8	11.2	8.9	6.1
Shopping/Services	39.9	41.3	48.7	57.9	49.7
<b>TOTAL WORK</b>	<b>508.3</b>	<b>454.0</b>	<b>388.7</b>	<b>293.3</b>	<b>216.7</b>
N	(14,001)	(2,457)	(1,880)	(1,571)	(3,163)

  

<b>RATIO W/M TOTAL</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>1.17</b>
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Source: Authors' calculations from the 2003-2007 American Time Use Study

A number of data sets provide estimates of care and help given to older and disabled adults. The ATUS also asks specifically about care for adults who do not live in the same household. The estimates shown in Table 7 suggest the following. Between 13 and 17 percent of those over the age of 35 report providing some adult care on their diary day.<sup>6</sup> When adult care is provided, estimates are that individuals spend close to an hour and a half providing this care on their diary day. Gender differences in reports of providing care to adults are small, especially in comparison to care of children where women do much more of the day to day childrearing than men. There may be a number of reasons for this. Help that others need may be the types of things men typically do – help with yardwork or household repairs. One important activity is helping with transportation, and men and women appear to do this about equally.

<sup>6</sup> Note that not all of this is for elderly parents. It can also be for adult children, especially those who still live in the parents' household.

**Table 7. Percent reporting doing any adult care and average minutes**

WOMEN		
Age Categories	% Reporting Adult Care	Average Minutes
Age 35 to 55	14.4	81.2
Age 50 plus	14.9	95.6
Age 50 to 54	16.9	85.3
Age 55 to 59	16.8	98.3
Age 60 to 64	16.3	109.0
Age 65 to 69	15.7	87.2
Age 70 plus	11.7	99.7

  

MEN		
Age Categories	% Reporting Adult Care	Average Minutes
Age 35 to 55	12.5	89.1
Age 50 plus	13.8	98.8
Age 50 to 54	14.0	96.3
Age 55 to 59	13.0	88.6
Age 60 to 64	14.0	99.8
Age 65 to 69	14.4	98.8
Age 70 plus	14.0	98.8

Source: Authors' calculations from the 2003-2007 American Time Use Study

With Joan Kahn and Brittany McGill, I have also used reports from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study to investigate the help that older adults (in their fifties and sixties) report giving to adult children, elderly parents and friends and neighbors (Kahn, McGill & Bianchi, forthcoming). As shown in Table 8, we find that women still dominate in providing emotional support – to parents, adult children and friends and neighbors. They also are more likely than men to assist elderly parents, usually mothers. But men are very much involved in providing help around the house to adult children and parents – again, in part because the help needed is in those tasks that men typically do. We also find that as men transition from their fifties to their sixties, and as many of them retire from the labor force, they become increasingly involved in the care of their grandchildren and the gender gap in providing childcare assistance to adult children narrows significantly. This suggests an active network of exchanges among family members and across generations that extends across the life course.

**Table 8. Provision of Help (%) by Gender and Year, Married WLS Graduates**

	1993		2004		Gender Gap (Women - Men)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	1993	2004
<i>SAMPLE: All married respondents (n=4044)</i>						
Any Help to Anyone	98.0	94.6	95.2	92.3	3.4	2.9
Any Transportation/Errands	71.1	65.0	64.0	59.5	6.1	4.5
Any Housework/Repairs	42.8	53.4	33.9	50.6	-10.6	-16.7
Any Emotional Support	93.6	85.3	88.4	78.2	8.3	10.2
Any Childcare/Baby-sitting	52.8	32.3	55.3	49.6	20.5	5.7
Has a Parent Alive?	63.0	64.3	24.8	25.0	-1.3	-0.2
Has an Adult Child?	95.7	93.5	97.1	96.6	2.2	0.5
<b>Help to Parents</b>						
<i>SAMPLE: Those with a living parent in both 1993 and 2004 (n=1007)</i>						
Any Help to Parents	62.3	51.7	64.5	55.3	10.6	9.2
Transp/Errands for Parent	40.8	31.4	48.8	38.0	9.4	10.8
Housework/Repairs for Parent	22.2	29.5	28.2	23.1	-7.3	5.1
Emotional Support to Parent	43.9	29.4	44.3	35.0	14.5	9.3
<b>Help to Adult Children</b>						
<i>SAMPLE: Those with an adult child in each year</i>						
	(n=3826)		(n=3917)			
Any Help to Adult Child	82.7	73.8	80.7	77.0	8.9	3.7
Transp/Errands for Child	35.0	34.9	28.0	30.6	0.1	-2.6
Housework/Repairs for Child	19.6	19.4	19.0	26.3	0.2	-7.3
Emotional Support to Child	67.9	58.5	62.4	54.4	9.4	8.0
Childcare/Babysitting for Child	46.4	28.3	54.6	49.8	18.1	4.8
<b>Help to Nonkin</b>						
<i>SAMPLE: All married respondents (n=4044)</i>						
Any Help to Nonkin	68.0	67.9	57.2	54.4	0.1	2.8
Transp/Errands for Nonkin	28.3	29.6	24.5	24.7	-1.3	-0.2
Housework/Repairs for Nonkin	10.3	23.4	8.8	23.2	-13.1	-14.4
Emotional Support to Nonkin	60.8	52.8	49.0	37.1	8.0	11.9

Source: Authors' calculations from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

## Discussion and Conclusion

The U.S., like Australia, Canada, Great Britain and many countries in Europe, has witnessed monumental economic, social, cultural and demographic changes since the 1960s that have altered family forms in the 21st century. Like these other countries, the United States has experienced a postponing of marriage; declines in marriage among some subgroups; increases in divorce, non-marital childbearing and cohabitation; a decline in fertility; the aging of the population; and increases in women's labor force participation, resulting in a shift in the household division of labor. Unlike these countries, the U.S. appears to be unique in American families and children experience much more instability in family forms than families in other countries, with Americans churning in and out of marriage and cohabitation.

These differences feed into the unique policy and political climate in the United States. In the 1960s when good jobs were plentiful for men, most households with children included two parents, and most mothers were full-time homemakers, the family could support and rear children for the public good. Increasing economic inequality, diversity in family forms, and family instability have raised questions about children's well-being and the ability of families to fulfill this role. In the U.S. compared with Europe, government is much less often viewed as having the responsibility to fill the void when families are not strong, stable or economically secure enough to ensure children's well-being. In the first decade of the 21st Century, U.S. policy was to encourage and support the formation and maintenance of healthy marriages. The current deep recession makes clear that many families, even stable two-parent families, can become vulnerable to economic loss and unforeseen circumstances and merely promoting family stability is probably not sufficient to sustain the healthy and happy families we all desire.

Analyses over the past decade based on time diary data and other sources shed light on why, some 40 years after the gender revolution—and despite increased educational, occupational, and early career opportunities for women—once children arrive, mothers reduce market employment in favor of more time in the home. Although attitudes toward maternal employment have become more accepting and many couples espouse an ideal of gender egalitarianism in work and family life (Casper & Bianchi, 2002), this ideal has proven quite difficult to realize. The continued high rate of temporary labor-force exits by mothers when children are young and the reduction in women's labor market hours throughout the childrearing years partially explain why it has been difficult for women, even highly educated women, to achieve labor market parity with men. Despite rapid increases in maternal employment, mothers' investment in childrearing remains high and meeting children's needs remains paramount for mothers (and fathers).

We have had far more empirical work on what happens to women economically when they take time out of the labor force than research on what happens inside the home when they do not. Time diary evidence has enabled us to fill in this gap. There are costs to increased maternal employment – especially in the U.S. context, where public policy support for combining paid work with family caregiving remains weak in comparison to Europe. For children, the cost of their mothers working outside the home may come in the form of somewhat less time with their mothers than children of non-employed mothers, dirtier homes, fewer family dinners, and perhaps more strain between their parents. For employed parents, especially mothers, the costs are less rest and relaxation and heavy workloads. For those who cannot manage this “work and family” burden without cutting back on paid work to alleviate strains, there are both short term economic consequences and longer term risks to caregivers should marriages end or husbands lose a job or become ill or disabled.

Good jobs in the U.S. economy come with long work hours. Husbands in jobs with long hours induce mothers to shorten their hours, presumably because they decide this is best for the family. The current recession, with the increased attention to women's breadwinning roles, suggests that shortening fathers' hours or curbing long hours in good jobs may just pressure mothers to increase their paid work hours. This may be good for gender equality in the family, but it may not do much to ensure adequate time for family caregiving or the other activities of daily life that contribute to balance, health, and well-being. Finding the right mix of policy incentives and private initiatives to support workers when caregiving demands are overwhelming is the challenge we face in the U.S. if we want productive workers but also strong families to support those workers.

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## Appendix A Data

This paper uses seven national time-diary studies conducted between 1965 and 2008. Each of the surveys uses the general approach of collecting time diary information over a 24 hour period by asking the respondent what they were doing and for how long, who was with them, and their location at the time of each activity. Across time interviewing moved from personal to telephone interview and from "tomorrow" diaries to "yesterday" diaries.

Time use estimates are based on primary activities on the diary day, multiplied by seven to obtain estimates of weekly hours in activities. Weights are used for each time point to correct for nonresponse and, in the ATUS, to adjust for the over sampling of weekend days. The ATUS coding scheme is more detailed and somewhat different than the coding schemes used in the historical time use data sets, so we recoded ATUS data to conform to the coding schemes used in earlier studies.

### 1965 U.S. Time Use Study

In 1965, as part of a multinational time use study, the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, surveyed 1,244 adult respondents, aged 19 to 65, who kept a single-day diary of activities, mainly in the Fall of that year. Respondents in the 1965 survey completed "tomorrow" diaries, i.e. respondents were visited by an interviewer who explained and left the diary to be filled out for the following day and then the interviewer returned on the day after the "diary day" to pick up the completed diary. Respondents living in rural areas and those living in households where no one was employed were excluded (Robinson, 1977). Given the sample restrictions in 1965, we compared the 1965 parent characteristics with parent characteristics from the March 1965 Current Population Survey. The weighted 1965 time diary sample of parents closely approximates U.S. parent population characteristics (Sayer, Bianchi, and Robinson 2004).

### 1975 U.S. Time Use Survey

In 1975, the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, surveyed 1,519 adult respondents, aged 18 and over, who kept diaries for a single day in the Fall of that year (Robinson 1976); in addition, diaries were obtained from 887 spouses of these designated respondents. In 1975, respondents were initially contacted by personal interview and a “yesterday” diary was completed during the interview. These respondents became part of a panel, who were subsequently reinterviewed in the Winter, Spring, and Summer months of 1976. About 1,500 of the original 2,406 respondents remained in this four-wave panel. Some 677 of these respondents were reinterviewed in 1981, again across all four seasons of the year. Because of the difference in activities between those who stayed or dropped out of the panel, we make use only of the original sample of respondents interviewed in the fall of 1975 for most of our trend analysis. For comparability with other years, we exclude the spouse diaries from our analysis.

### 1985 U.S. Time Use Survey

In 1985, the Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland conducted a study in which single-day diaries were collected from more than 5,300 respondents aged 12 and over. The main data for the 1985 study were collected by a mail-back method from a sample of Americans who were first contacted by telephone using the random-digit-dial (RDD) method of selecting telephone numbers. If the respondent agreed, diaries were then mailed out for each member of the participating household, aged 12 or over, to complete for a particular day for the subsequent week. After respondents had completed their time diaries, they then mailed all the completed forms back for coding and analysis. Some 3,340 diaries from 997 households were returned using this mail-out procedure during the 12 months of 1985. The other 1985 data included parallel diary data from 808 additional respondents interviewed in a separate personal interview sample in the summer and fall of 1985, and from an additional 1,210 “yesterday” diaries obtained by telephone as part of the initial contact for the mail-back diaries. The mail-back, personal interview, and telephone samples are combined in the 1985 estimates.

### U.S. Time Diary Collections in the mid-1990s

Two time-diary studies were conducted by the University of Maryland’s Survey Research Center by national random digit dial (RDD) telephone procedures between September 1992 and December 1995 using the retrospective diary (or “yesterday”) method, in which one respondent per household reported his or her activities for the previous day. We use only the second phase collected between January and December in 1995, with 1,200 respondents aged 18 and above because pivotal questions about family status and income were not asked in the first phase. The second phase of the study was conducted for the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). The response rate for the second phase of the study was 65 percent.

### 2000 Time point: the combined file of the 1998-1999 Family Interaction, Social Capital, and Trends in Time Use Study (FISCT) and the 2000-01 National Survey of Parents (NSP)

The sample of parents from the 1998–99 NSF study is combined with the Sloan sample of 1,200 parents to augment the sample sizes on which the diary estimates for the most recent time point are based. In 1998-99, the University of Maryland Survey Research Center conducted a national study of adults, age 18 and over, in which 1,151 adults were interviewed. Respondents were interviewed by telephone and completed a one-day, yesterday diary. The overall response rate was 56 percent. The study conducted with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) (and

supplementary funding from the National Institute on Aging for interviews with the population age 65 and older), was designed to be comparable to earlier national time-diary data collections.

In 2000-2001, with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's Working Families Program, the University of Maryland Survey Research Center interviewed a national probability sample of 1,200 parents living with children under age 18. Parents were asked an array of attitudinal questions about their activities with children and their feelings about the time they spent with their children, spouse, and on themselves. Embedded in the study was a one-day, yesterday diary of time expenditures. The data were collected in computer assisted telephone interviews, with a 64 percent response rate.

### 2003-current American Time Use Survey (ATUS)

The American Time Use Survey, which is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, is the first federally administered survey on time use in the United States. Data collection for the ATUS began in January 2003. The sample of ATUS respondents was derived from randomly selected individuals age 15 or older who were from a subset of households completing their eighth and final month of the Current Population Survey. Using computer assisted telephone interviews, ATUS respondents were interviewed one time and asked to provide a detailed account of what they were doing between 4 a.m. the previous day and 4 a.m. the interview day. For each activity reported, the respondent was asked how long the activity took place, where they were, and who was with them. In 2003 approximately 21,000 individuals were interviewed (57 percent response rate). The sample was reduced to around 14,000 individuals in subsequent years (for budgetary reasons) and response rates have hovered in the 55-57% range.