**The effect of dual-earner couples´ generalization on family time in Spain.**

Marc Ajenjo Cosp
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
majenjo@ced.uab.es


Joan García Román
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics
jgarcia@ced.uab.es

The aim of this paper is to analyze the impact of dual-earner couples' increase in family time using data from the Spanish Time Use Survey 2009-2010. Based on one of the questions from the Time Use Dairy, which asks 'with whom' the activity is done, we estimated the mean time devoted to 4 different kinds of family time for every couple: conjugal time (time when spouses are together without children), parents-child time (time when spouses are together and with children) and father/mother time (time when the father/mother is alone with children). The mean time spent in each of 7 different activities of daily life and the total amount spent in all of them were calculated for each type of family time.

Results are presented in a descriptive way by comparing the mean for each family time spent in every daily life activity. Moreover, differences according to some couples´ characteristics are analyzed. The main attribute to be studied is the employment status of the couple members, but other variables like the type of union (cohabitation or marriage), household´s income, age or educational attainment are used in the comparison. A measure of the synchronization of both couple members work schedule is calculated when both members are employed. This measure is the quotient between the time when only one member of the couple is at work and the time when at least one member is at work. General Linear models are calculated to test the net effect of each variable in the different types of familiar times.

Preliminary results show that in dual earner-couples familiar time is lower. Another evidence from the descriptive results is that mother-time is higher than father-time, a clear evidence of inequality within the couple. More desynchronization supposes less time spent with the couple, but more father-time and mother-time.

# The effect of dual-earner couples´ generalization on family time in Spain.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In the last decades female labor force participation has undergone a dramatic increase in all the countries. The proportion of dual earner-couples, where both members are employed, has risen considerably and nowadays this group represents the most common type of couple. In Spain, where the traditional breadwinner model was the most common until the end of the last century, half of the couples where both members are younger than 65 are dual-earner.

One of the consequences of these changes is observed in its effects on family time, especially in time with children. Time with partner and children is considered important in contemporary family (Lesnard, 2008) and empirical researches show that time with children has not decreased in spite of the increase in the female activity rates (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie, 2006). This topic has generally been studied taking into account childcare activities (Gutièrrez-Domenech, 2010; Hallberg and Klevmarken, 2003; Kalenkovski and Foster, 2008; Sandberg and Hofferth, 2001). According to previous studies time with children is lower when both parents are employed and there is an important gap between time spent by mothers and fathers in the sense that mothers spend much more time with children than fathers. Both differences are lower when only quality care (activities such as reading to the child, teaching, etc) are considered.

Another aspect to be analyzed is the synchronization/desynchronization of the couple's work schedules. Dual earner couples used to be highly desynchronized (Chenu and Robinson, 2002) and it is associated with lower time together for spouses. Two hypotheses can be considered about the level of desynchonization: couples are desynchronized in order to conciliate family and work (Presser, 1984) or couples are synchronized to spend more time together (Hammermesh, 2002).

Another measure of the family time has been estimated using the question 'with whom' that is collected in the time use diaries (Kingston and Nock, 1987, Kingston and Nock, 1988; Lesnard, 2008). With this information 4 different kinds of familiar time can be designed:

- Conjugal time (time when spouses are together without children),
- parents-child time (time when spouses are together and with children) and
- father/mother time (time when father/mother is alone with children).

DATA AND METHODS

The data used was provided by the new Spanish Time Use survey that the INE carried out in 2009-2010. In the survey all members of the household older than 10 years old filled a diary where all the activities done during 24 hours were collected in intervals of 10 minutes. Couples are the unit of analysis of the study so the information of both members has been matched. A final sample size is 2,574 couples.

We used the question 'with whom' the activity is done to estimate family time according to the classification presented in the previous section. Mean time (in minutes) in 7 different activities of the daily life (non paid work, travels, meals, leisure, media means, care, semi-leisure) and a total amount are calculated for each family time (see table 1).

In a second step, some characteristics of the couple are analyzed in order to find differences between the four kinds of family time (see table 2). The main characteristic to be studied is the employment status of the couple members, but other variables like the type of union (cohabitation or marriage), wages of the household, age or educational attainment are used in the comparison. A measure of the synchronization of both couple members is calculated when both are employed. This measure is the quotient between the time when only one member of the couple is at work and the time when at least one member is at work. Couples are classified according to the employment status of their members and in the case of dual-earner couples we also classified them according to their level of synchronization.

General Linear Models are calculated to test the net effect of each variable on the different family times. For all the couples the calculated model is ANOVA, where the time spent with the partner (in this case only time with the spouse is comparable) is the dependent variable and the type of couple according to the employment status, type of union, wages, number of children, educational attainment and age are the factors. For all the dual-earner couples another ANOVA is built with the same variables (except type of couples) and with 2 covariates related with the total amount of work of the couple and the time of desynchronized work. In the case of the couples with children the same models are estimated, but in this case the dependent variables are composed by 4 familiar times. Models are built according to a MANOVA.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the paper is to test the effect of the employment in family time and the differences generated in each time analyzed. Another objective is to evaluate the main activities carried out in each time. It is also interesting to test how desynchronized schedules affect family time and what is the effect of the other factors included in the models.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Preliminary results show that meals, care and non-paid work are the main activities done in presence of partner and children. Descriptive results also reveals that mother-time is higher than father-time in almost all the couples, a clear sign that equality in the couple is far from arriving. The gap is much bigger in couples where the man is the only provider of the family than in couples where the mother is almost exclusively responsible of children care.

Regarding the employment status, descriptive results also demonstrate that in dual-earner couples family time is lower than in those families where none or only one member is employed. Desynchronization of couples' work schedules reduces time with the partner but has an opposite effect on father and mother time spent with children.

More educated couples spend more time with partner and children, while in cohabitating couples the difference between father and mother time is smaller. Time with the partner is not different between couples with and without children.

REFERENCES

Bianchi, S. M.; Robinson, J. P.; Milkie, M. A. (2006) *Changing the Rhythms of American Family Life.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Chenu, A.; Robinson, J. P. (2002) "Sinchronicity in the work schedules of working couples". *Monthly Labour Review*, 125: 55-63.

Gutièrrez-Domènech, M., (2010). "Parental Employment and Time with Children in Spain". *Review of Economics of the household, 8 (3): 371-391*.

Hallberg, D.; Klevmarken. A. (2003) "Time for Children: A Study of Parent's Time Allocation." *Journal of Population Economics,* 16: 205-226.

Hamermesh, D. (2002) "Timing, togetherness and time windfalls," *Journal of Population Economics*, 15(4): 601-623.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011) *Encuesta de Empleo del tiempo 2009-2010. Metodología.* http://www.ine.es/metodologia/t25/t25304471.pdf

Kalenkoski, C.,; Foster, G. (2008). "The quality of time spent with children in Australian households". *Review of Economics of the Household*, 6(3): 243–266.

Kingston, P. W; Nock, S. L. (1987) "Time together among Dual-earner Couples", *American Sociological Review,* 52 (3): 391-400.

Lesnard, L. (2008) "Off-Scheduling within Dual-Earner Couples: An Unequal and Negative Externality for Family Time", *American Journal of Sociology*, 114 (2): 447-490.

Nock, S.L; Kingston, P. W. (1988) "Time with children: the impact of couples' work time-time commitments", Social Forces, 67 (1): 59-85.

Presser, H. B. (1984) "Job characteristics of spouses and their work shift", *Demography*, 21 (4): 575-589.

Sandberg, J. F., Hofferth, S. L., 2001. "Changes in Children's Time with Parents: United States, 1981-1997". *Demography,* 38 (3): 423-436.

Table 1 Family type for all couples, by activity. Mean time in minutes

| | Couples with children | | | | | Without children |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conjugal | Parents-child | With partner* | Father-child | Mother-child | With partner** |
| Non paid work | 14,4 | 22,4 | 36,7 | 5,9 | 50,3 | 37,4 |
| Travels | 5,7 | 11,8 | 17,5 | 11,8 | 30,2 | 19,2 |
| Meals | 18,4 | 43,5 | 61,9 | 5,4 | 19,1 | 72,5 |
| Leisure | 10,1 | 24,8 | 34,9 | 7,1 | 16,4 | 39,9 |
| Media means | 33,1 | 27,8 | 60,9 | 9,0 | 11,2 | 90,9 |
| Care | 3,2 | 40,3 | 43,5 | 30,9 | 96,3 | 3,3 |
| Semi-leisure | 5,9 | 5,1 | 11,0 | 1,8 | 7,5 | 15,5 |
| Total | 90,8 | 175,7 | 266,4 | 72,0 | 230,9 | 278,6 |

SOURCE: Encuesta de Empleo 2009-2010, INE
* Sum of conjugal and parents-child time
** It is conjugal time, but it is named in order to compare with couples with children

Table 2 Family time according to different characteristics of the couple (Mean time in minutes)

| | Couple with children | | | | | | Without children | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | Conjugal | Parents-child | With partner* | Father-child | Mother-child | n | With partner |
| Type of couples according employment status | | | | | | | | |
| All dual-earner couples | 551 | 76.6 | 151.5 | 228.1 | 80.9 | 183.6 | 687 | 232.2 |
|    Other dual-earner couples | 127 | 102.4 | 276.5 | 378.9 | 83.8 | 238.2 | 160 | 381.2 |
|    Synchronization <0.33 | 122 | 43.4 | 84.0 | 127.4 | 122.2 | 188.9 | 135 | 110.4 |
|    Synchronization 0.33-0.66 | 222 | 76.0 | 115.1 | 191.1 | 66.3 | 182.6 | 226 | 179.6 |
|    Synchronization >0.66 | 79 | 88.0 | 157.9 | 245.9 | 53.8 | 91.1 | 166 | 259.7 |
| Only man is employed | 312 | 89.0 | 178.5 | 267.5 | 19.0 | 373.8 | 402 | 258.1 |
| Only woman is employed | 87 | 113.2 | 181.4 | 294.6 | 208.3 | 95.4 | 182 | 291.3 |
| None is employed | 99 | 155.6 | 296.0 | 451.6 | 70.1 | 163.8 | 254 | 427.7 |
| Wages | | | | | | | | |
| <1200 | 183 | 101.3 | 207.9 | 309.2 | 92.5 | 260.7 | 259 | 348.5 |
| 1201-3000 | 568 | 90.5 | 173.3 | 263.8 | 65.1 | 237.6 | 756 | 273.7 |
| >3000 | 168 | 84.0 | 144.2 | 228.2 | 84.5 | 177.5 | 221 | 258.8 |
| NS/NC | 130 | 85.8 | 181.3 | 267.1 | 57.3 | 228.6 | 290 | 244.1 |
| Type of union | | | | | | | | |
| Cohabitant | 130 | 61.7 | 180.5 | 242.2 | 118.6 | 226.4 | 178 | 265.9 |
| Married | 919 | 95.0 | 175.0 | 270.0 | 65.3 | 231.6 | 1348 | 280.3 |
| Woman's educational attainment | | | | | | | | |
| Primery or less | 153 | 92.8 | 172.3 | 265.1 | 68.4 | 222.7 | 420 | 301.0 |
| Secondary or professional | 592 | 89.9 | 174.5 | 264.4 | 71.5 | 248.8 | 815 | 275.4 |
| Tertiary | 304 | 91.3 | 182.1 | 273.4 | 77.1 | 189.4 | 291 | 255.5 |
| Woman's age | | | | | | | | |
| 15-35 | 475 | 85.2 | 194.1 | 279.3 | 80.7 | 246.0 | 251 | 288.8 |
| 36-50 | 554 | 95.0 | 160.1 | 255.1 | 65.6 | 221.8 | 715 | 246.2 |
| 51-65 | 19 | 109.3 | 167.7 | 277.0 | 43.6 | 120.2 | 560 | 315.5 |
| Total | 1049 | 90.8 | 175.7 | 266.4 | 72.0 | 230.9 | 1525 | 278.6 |

SOURCE: Encuesta de Empleo 2009-2010, INE
* Sum of conjugal and parents-child time
** It is conjugal time, but it is named in order to compare with couples with children