Does Marital Quality Predict Togetherness? Couples' Shared Time and Happiness During Encore Adulthood

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Abstract:

We use data from the 2009 and 2013 Supplements on Disability and Use of Time to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to examine the relationship between marital quality and couples' shared time and happiness in a new "encore adult" life course stage around the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Our research addresses a major limitation of previous research by considering how marital quality is associated with time with a spouse; we tap into the quality of togetherness by differentiating between face-to-face time with a spouse and passive time when couples are in the same location. Using Ordinary Least Squares regression models, we find that marital support (strain) is associated with more (less) face-to-face time and less (more) passive time. We also estimate Actor Partner Interdependence models and find that husbands' and wives' reports of face-to-face time are higher when wives report higher marital support, but only each partner's own perceptions of marital support predict their lower passive time. We also find individuals are happier when they are with their spouse versus not and momentary happiness is higher (lower) when marital support (strain) is higher. Results underscore the importance of studying couples both as a unit and as individuals.

Married couples represent what Charles Horton Cooley (1909) called primary groups: "characterized by intimate, face-to-face relationships of association and cooperation" (p. 25). They are fundamental to the social organization of society, key to both biological and social reproduction, to be sure, yet also serving as a source of support, a protective factor promoting individual health and well-being (Carr and Springer 2010). It is the subjective quality of couples' relationships that matter for health outcomes. A sense of marital strain accelerates health declines in later adulthood (Umberson et al. 2006), while higher marital quality is associated with greater general life satisfaction (Carr et al. 2014).

But there is also the more objective nature of couples' relationships, what Cooley (1909) termed "face-to-face" aspects. A growing body of work has established a link between couples' time together and well-being (e.g., Daly 2001; Gager and Sanchez 2003; Milkie and Peltola 1999; Sullivan 1996; Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek, Flood, and Moen 2017). The evidence shows that subjective feelings of well-being are enhanced when individuals are with their spouses (Sullivan 1996; Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek et al. 2017), and couples who spend time together have higher quality marriages (Daly 2001; Gager and Sanchez 2003; Milkie and Peltola 1999). While research has examined the sociodemographic correlates of shared time (Dew 2009; Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek, Flood, and Garcia 2016; Genadek et al. 2017), consideration of if and how the quality of the marital relationship impacts the amount of "face-to-face" time is absent in the literature. While there is some evidence that being with a spouse enhances well-being, research has not examined whether this is conditional on the quality of the marital relationship.

Jessie Bernard (1992) famously said that each marriage is really two marriages: "his" and "hers." Thus "marital quality" may be very much in the eyes of the beholder (Stokes 2017).

While couples may diverge in each partners' assessment of the quality of their relationship, their more "objective" reports of the time they spend together are arguably more similar. Evidence shows that couple time together is a result of marital quality, but what matters most, his or her marital quality, or both?

Moreover, our life course approach to couple relationships underscores the fact that most evidence to date is of couples across the age spectrum. Here we consider the special case of older couples who arguably have more discretion in their use of time. Older couples have fewer time constraints (in the form of child care or paid work), and thus have more discretion on how and with whom they spend their time (Moen and Flood 2013). And, in contrast to younger couples, older couples spend more time together on a daily basis, on average (Genadek et al. 2017). Is this because of the quality of their relationships, or the fact they are in what is arguably an incipient life stage in their 50s, 60s, or 70s, defined less by age than being without the demands of family- and career-building, on the one end, and without the frailties associated with old age, on the other? The aging of the large boomer cohort (born 1946-64) together with medical advances and lifestyle changes extending life expectancy mean that unprecedented numbers of couples are in this "encore" stage of adulthood. They are not young but neither are they old in terms of either their subjective identities or the infirmities of old age (Moen 2016). These couples are navigating the uncharted terrain of encore adulthood without roadmaps but with the possibility of extended days and years spent in one another's company. And, absent children in the home or paid work, the marital relationship can take on added significance as a source of support, strain, and shaper of the rhythms of daily life.

This paper draws on new couple-level time use data now included in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID-DUST) to begin to (1) map out how couples in the encore years

experience the linkages between marital quality and togetherness in the form of both face-to-face time and passive time when partners are in the same general location but not actually together, and (2) how his and her sense of marital quality in this new encore adult stage may enhance or diminish emotional feelings of well-being.

BACKGROUND

Drawing on the life course theme of linked lives (Elder 1995), we theorize a recursive relationship between couples' marital support/strain and time spouses' share together. A linked lives perspective emphasizes the social embeddedness of individuals in relationships (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003) such as marriages. Previous research has shown that time with a spouse is positively associated with marital well-being (e.g., Amato et al. 2007; Crawford et al. 2002). To date, research on couples' shared time has assumed that more shared time is better and has shown that couples are happier together and enjoy time with a spouse more than time not spent with their partner (Flood and Genadek 2016; Sullivan 1996),

Time diary data do not typically include marital quality measures, though the life course concept of couple strategies of adaptation (Moen and Wethington 1992) suggests a relationship between marital quality and couples' shared time. Adaptive strategies are the ways in which individuals manage the experiences of family life. Couples experiencing marital strain are likely to strategize to spend less face-to-face time, even when they are in the same home. By contrast, couples who see their marriages as high in quality can be expected to spend more time together, which may lead to feelings of happiness when together. We focus here on individuals in marital relationships and how they respond to their experiences in those relationships. We think about relationship experiences as summarized by individuals in their reports of marital quality; these reports represent a summation of the marital experience across weeks, months, and years. We

reason that, based on these experiences, individuals and couples make choices about how they will spend their time together; short-run time use can be thought of as an adaptive strategy in response to the perceptions of the quality of the marriage. Accordingly, we focus on how marital quality, based on long-run experiences, informs short-run time use rather than the obverse (Frazis and Stewart 2012).

Our theoretical framing is in contrast to much of the extant research which considers marital quality as an outcome, with mixed findings about marital quality during older adulthood. Cross-sectional research shows that marital quality is higher following middle adulthood (e.g., Glenn 1989; Huston, McHale, and Crouter 1986). Longitudinal research, on the other hand, finds marital quality, including both marital happiness and divorce proneness, declines with marital duration (e.g., VanLaningham, Johnson, and Amato 2001; Booth, Johnson, and Edwards 1983; Umberson et al., 2005). Our focus is not on changes in marital quality over the life course but rather on the relationship between marital quality and togetherness—the face-to-face component of primary groups.

The positive link between marital quality and togetherness is well-established in research assessing time together in terms of self-reported frequency of interaction, sometimes in certain types of activities, over a specified period of time (typically a week or month). Research finds a positive relationship between self-reported measures of frequency of shared time and marital stability (Booth et al. 1985, 1986; Hil, 1988; Johnson et al. 1992), marital happiness (White 1983; Zuo 1992; Kirchler 1989), and marital satisfaction (Amato et al. 2007; Crawford et al. 2002). However, White (1983) questioned the assumption in the literature regarding the direction of the relationship between marital interaction and marital quality. While much research suggests that more shared time increases marital quality, White (1983) shows that marital happiness is the

most important determinant of marital interaction (a scale based on how often respondents and their spouses shared five types of activities).

We draw on and extend White's (1983) scholarship, by moving beyond his scale based on responses to five stylized questions (where response categories were almost always, usually, occasionally, and never) to use a time-diary based measure (as did Hill 1988) where respondents report the activities they engaged in the day before, and with whom they do them. Evidence suggests that time diary data are a better instrument for capturing information on time spent with a spouse (Hamermesh 2002; 2005). There is only a limited body of research using this type of data to examine marital interaction (Hill 1988; Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek et al. 2017).

Neither the summary activity frequency measure nor the time-diary based measure of marital interaction indicates the quality and nature of time. What couples are doing together, however, may be less important than that they are simply together. Or perhaps how they are together matters; for example, being actively engaged with a spouse face-to-face may be more meaningful than simply being home together but in separate rooms. We theorize the quality and nature of shared time is contingent on the quality of the marriage. It may be that marital support (or strain) is associated with increases (or decreases) in the time couples spend together. These factors could also influence *how* couples spend time together—as a sort of adaptive strategy (Moen and Wethington 1992)—actively engaged with one another versus simply in the same house or location more generally. For example, limited evidence shows that happy couples spend seven hours per day together, on average, compared to five hours per day among moderately unhappy couples (Kirchler 1989).

The PSID-DUST data are unique in allowing us to examine both face-to-face time with a spouse (active time) and time simply in the same general location (passive time). Such a

distinction is not made in the time use surveys which have been the primary data sources for previous time-diary based measures of married individuals' shared time. A limited body of time-diary based research has attempted to make quality distinctions in married individuals' shared time by focusing on certain types of activities, such as leisure (e.g. Barnet-Verzat, Pailhé, and Solaz 2010; Voorpostel, van der Lippe, and Gershuny 2009) or time alone with their spouse (Dew 2009; Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek, Flood, and Garcia Roman 2016; Genadek, Flood and Moen 2017). But couple-level data and the distinction between face-to-face time and passive time (in the same location but not together) provide a unique and, we argue, potentially generative lens for capturing both the quantity and quality of time with a spouse. Research in other domains such as leisure (e.g., Hill 1988) and parenting (e.g., Craig 2006; Kotila, Schoppe-Sullivan, and Kamp Dush 2013) also makes distinctions between active versus passive engagement, though couples' active shared time versus simply being in the same general space has not previously been analyzed. Note that while passive time in the same location is not strictly speaking *with* a spouse, it is time that couples could conceivably have spent together, but they didn't.

The extant time-diary based literature on marital interaction has also been limited by a lack of information on marital quality. No research examining married individuals' time shared with a spouse (Barnet-Verzat, Pailhé, and Solaz,2010; Voorpostel, van der Lippe, and Gershuny 2009; Dew 2009; Kingston and Nock 1987; Mansour and McKinnish 2014; Wight et al. 2008; Bianchi et al. 2006; Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek et al. 2016) to date has been able to assess the effects of marital quality on marital togetherness. Yet, the previous literature on the relationship between marital quality and marital interaction and White's (1983) seminal work in particular suggest there is good reason to expect that marital quality will have some bearing on

how much time an individual spends with a spouse. Accordingly, we hypothesize that for those in their 50s, 60s, and early 70s:

Hypothesis 1a: Married individuals reporting higher marital support spend more face-to-face time together per day.

Hypothesis 1b: Married individuals reporting higher marital strain have less face-to-face togetherness per day.

Hypothesis 2a: Individuals with higher marital support will spend less passive time in the same location.

Hypothesis 2b: Individuals with higher marital strain will spend more passive time in the same location.

Our linked lives framing also highlights the embeddedness of individuals in relationships beyond simply spending time together. The concept of linked lives suggests, as did Bernard (1992), that partners may rate the quality of their marriage differently, but that both the individual's *and* the spouse's assessments of the quality of the marriage may well matter for time spent together. Couples' lives are linked, with spouses influencing one another's lives in myriad ways, for example, in terms of their retirement timing (e.g., Kim and Moen 2002). We are unaware of any studies that have analyzed effects of both respondent's and their spouse's marital quality on reports of togetherness. Because we are looking at face-to-face time and passive time, we argue that how both members of the couple rate the quality of their marriage likely contributes to the nature and quantity of shared time. We test this relationship empirically. We expect that for those in their 50s, 60s, and early 70s:

Hypothesis 3: Individuals and spouses with higher marital support (strain) spend more (less) face-to-face time and less (more) passive time in the same location but not together.

The quality of the relationship—from both his and her perspectives—may also influence how individuals feel when with a spouse. Recent research has gone beyond global measures of well-being (e.g., overall life satisfaction, marital satisfaction) to capture more contextual, momentary feelings of well-being at different times over the course of a day (e.g., Carr and Springer 2010; Carr et al. 2014; Freedman, Cornman, and Carr 2014; Flood and Genadek 2016). These momentary assessments are more reliable indicators of experienced well-being than summary global measures (Kahneman and Krueger 2006). The evidence shows that time with a spouse is associated with more happiness and enjoyment than time apart from a spouse (Flood and Genadek 2016; Sullivan 1996), thus suggesting that more time with a spouse promotes a better quality of life. Carr and colleagues (2014) find that marital quality enhances momentary happiness (as well as life satisfaction, a more general measure of well-being). However, for individuals in relationships where marital quality is low, more time with a spouse may actually be detrimental to individual well-being. Higher marital strain is associated with more experienced momentary frustration and, among women, more sadness and worry (Carr et al. 2014). Accordingly, we extend this body of existing research to examine if and how both the respondent's *and* their spouse's sense of marital quality enhance feelings of momentary well-being when they are together, focusing specifically on these assessments during the encore adult years. We also consider the effects of disability on time together and well-being outcomes. We theorize that the encore adult stage is relatively disability free and explore whether having severe disabilities is related to couples' time together.

To investigate marital quality, togetherness, and individual well-being, we leverage data from the rich PSID-DUST to make at least three key contributions to understanding couples now navigating the new encore adult life course stage. First, we analyze the quality of time with a

spouse by differentiating between active face-to-face time and passive co-location time. Then we begin to address a key void in the literature by examining how marital quality (support and strain) is associated with couples' shared time, and whether one's own sense of marital quality, one's husband's marital quality, or both that predicts time together, positing that married people strategize to spend more or less time face-to-face depending on how they view the quality of their marriages. Finally, we consider whether the associations between his and her marital quality predicts actual feelings of happiness when the couple is together.

DATA AND METHODS

We use 2009 and 2013 data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) Supplement on Disability and Use of Time (DUST) (Freedman and Cornman 2012, 2015). The DUST data are a supplement to the PSID, which is a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of US individuals and their families. The DUST data were collected via computer-assisted telephone interview. Respondents completed up to two time diaries each, starting at 4:00 am on the previous day through 4:00 am on the interview day, reporting what they were doing, how long the activity lasted, where they were, who they were doing the activity with and who else was there. For up to three randomly selected activities, respondents also reported their momentary well-being during the activity.

The 2009 DUST sample included couples in which both spouses were 50 or older and at least one member of the couple was 60 or older by the start of 2009. The 2013 wave of DUST included both single, partnered, and married individuals 60 or older and their spouses/partners. Partnered respondents were interviewed separately about the same two randomly selected days (one weekend and weekday each). The 2009 sample was 755 individuals (1,506 diaries) and the 2013 sample was 1,776 individuals (3,505 diaries). Nearly all respondents completed two diaries

(99%). A major strength of these data over the American Time Use Survey, for example, is that time diaries are available for both members of the couple, which we leverage to understand the influence of both individual and spouse reports of marital quality on reports of shared time and momentary well-being.

Our analytic sample is reduced from the full sample as follows. First, we include in our sample only married individuals and their spouses (N=1,964). We then exclude 35 individuals who are missing information about marital quality and 24 individuals for whom education is missing. Restricting our sample to respondents and spouses ages 50 to 75, our final sample size is 1,407 individuals and 2,800 daily time diaries. For our couple-level analyses of respondent and spouse marital quality assessments on shared time, we use 1,283 respondent-spouse matched time diaries from 646 couples. Note that in matching respondent and spouse time diaries, we lose 234 time diaries (2,800 - 1,283 [respondent] – 1,283 [spouse] = 234) from respondents and their spouses because either the husband or the wife did not complete a time diary on one (or both) of the two sampled diary days. For our couple-level analyses of happiness, we use 2013 respondent-spouse matched data from 552 couples, 1,068 paired diary days, and 2,862 activities (recall that happiness is assessed during up to three randomly selected activities throughout the diary day). *Dependent Variables*. Our individual level analysis is of time together and passive time. *Time together* is minutes per day spent performing activities that were done with one's spouse and could also include traveling together. This measure is based on responses to the question "who was doing the activity with you?" *Passive time* in the same general location includes time spent in the house together or at the same location, but not doing the activity together. After respondents report who did the activity with them, used for our time together measure, they are also asked to indicate who else was at the same location as they were. The same location could

have been "home", for example. Therefore, our measures of time together and passive time are distinguished by being with someone during the activity versus simply being at the same location.

The dependent variables in our couple-level analysis are time face-to-face and passive time as just described as well as feelings of happiness. For three randomly selected activities (one each from the morning, afternoon, and evening) respondents report their feelings of momentary well-being during the activity. Happiness was assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all happy) to 6 (very happy). In addition, as part of the survey respondents answered questions about marital strain and support. Having up to three measures of well-being per person on a given diary day allows us to compare momentary well-being during activities performed with a spouse versus passive with a spouse (in the same place but not together) versus not with a spouse at all.

Independent Variables. All models will include the following key variables. We differentiate between individuals who are employed or not, and we account for the presence of an own child under 18 in the home, presuming both will detract from couples' face-to-face time. We control for demographic characteristics such as race (white vs. non-white [reference]), college degree or more versus less than a college degree (reference), self-reported health (good or better versus fair or poor), disability (any difficulty hearing, seeing, remembering, walking or climbing stairs, dressing or bathing, or running errands), a scale indicating severity of the disability (as indicated by how often in the last 7 days respondents were affected by common problems [see Freedman et al. 2014]), and day of the week. We create two marital quality scales in light of the multidimensionality of marital quality (VanLaningham et al. 2001). The first marital support scale combines three items reflecting spousal support. *Marital support* is a scale with the

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following components: how much "you can open up to our spouse if you need to talk about your worries," "your spouse appreciates you," and "your spouse understands the way you feel about things." *Marital strain* is an average based on three questions about how much your spouse "makes you feel tense," "argues with you," and "gets on your nerves." Response categories range from 1 to 4 where 1 means "not at all" and 4 means "a lot". Positive marital support and negative marital strain are correlated (R= -.56) but not simply the obverse of one another.

Analytic Strategy

We first estimate averages for couples' time face-to-face and passive time in the same place, as well as his and her measures of marital quality. Descriptive analyses are followed by regression estimates of the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics, marital quality, and shared time from random effects models estimated using Stata's xtreg command. We use the xtreg command to account for clustering within person (up to two diaries per year) and within family (both respondent and spouse diaries).

After establishing the relationship between individual characteristics, assessments of marital quality, and shared time, we then estimate actor-partner interdependence models (APIM) (Cook and Kenney 2005) using seemingly unrelated regression models. Our interest is in the effect of the respondent's and the spouse's marital quality assessments on individual reports of shared time and momentary well-being. Respondent assessments of marital quality are referred to as actor effects and spouse assessments are referred to as partner effects. In contrast to an OLS model where one would simply control for spouse assessments, APIM models allow us to account for the non-independence of husbands' and wives' evaluations of marital quality and assess whether the respondent's (actor) and spouse's (partner) assessments of marital quality affect the respondent's (actor) reports of shared time and happiness.

Descriptive Results

Sample Characteristics. Our sample consists of married men and women who are an average of 64 years old (see Table 1). The vast majority of respondents are ages 60-74, though 19% of wives are still in their 50s. Very few have children (or grandchildren) under 18 at home (3.5%). Half (50%) of men are working at the time of the survey, compared to only 40% of women. Just over half of men (52%) and four in ten women (39.75%) graduated from college. The majority of the sample is white and in good or better health. While over one-third of the sample has some difficulty seeing, hearing, remembering, walking, dressing/bathing, running errands, one-half of respondents either have no disability or have low severity, while 25% have a moderately severe disability, and 25% have a severe disability. In terms of marital quality, marital support is high, with men reporting more support from their wives than women report from their husbands; marital strain is much lower than support, with women reporting more strain in their marital relationship than men.

<Table 1 about here>

Shared Time. In line with our viewing of assessments of time together yesterday as more "objective" than subjective, men's and women's average daily reports of shared time are largely consistent, with each partner assessing about five hours per day spent together (317 minutes reported by men and 294 by women). Men's and women's reports of passive time are slightly more divergent with men reporting 199 minutes and women reporting 239 minutes. However, the fact that men perceive more of their couple time as face-to-face while women recount more passive time—typically at home but not face-to-face—is suggestive of a gendered interpretation of togetherness. Women also tend to report less marital support and more marital strain than men, on average (see Table 1).

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<Figure 1 about here>

<Figure 2 about here>

Marital Quality and Shared Time. The relationship between marital support and face-to-face time and passive time is in Figure 1. Individuals who perceive more marital support (higher values indicate more support) spend more face-to-face time and less passive time with both in the house but not in the same room, than individuals who perceive low marital support. Couples with low marital support spend about 195 minutes in face-to-face time per day, on average, compared to individuals who report high marital support (325 minutes). Passive time is higher among individuals with low marital support compared to high marital support (359 and 196 minutes, respectively). Figure 2 shows the relationship between marital strain, face-to-face time, and passive time. Among those individuals who report the lowest strain, they report an average of 322 minutes time together per day, while passive time is only 169 minutes. The gap between face-to-face time and passive time decreases as marital strain increases.

<center>*Analytic Results*</center>

Face-to-Face Time Together. Marital quality matters in ways that we expected for time spent face-to-face with a spouse. We find a positive relationship between marital support (b=46.925) and time with a spouse and an inverse relationship between marital strain and time with a spouse (b=-19.223) in support of hypotheses 1a and 1b, respectively. And as our encore adult characterization of discretionary time suggests, those respondents who are still employed spend about one hour less per day with their spouse, even as those still having a co-resident child under 18 spend about 1.5 fewer hours with their spouse (100 minutes) than those without co-resident children. Women report about 30 minutes less per day with their spouse than men.

<Table 2 about here>

Passive Time. We theorized a negative association between marital support and passive time (hypothesis 2a), which is what we found (b=-35.093). This finding indicates that individuals who feel more support from their spouses spend less time simply in the same place but not face-to-face. In support of hypothesis 2b, we find individuals with higher marital strain spend more passive time with their spouses (b=22.764). Employment is also negatively associated with passive time, with employed individuals spending 52 fewer minutes in the same place with their spouse but in different rooms. Women report more passive time than do men (34 minutes per day).

Gendered Actor and Partner Assessments of Marital Quality and Shared Time. The results in Tables 3 and 4 go beyond examining the relationship between individual assessments of marital quality and shared time to leverage the couple-level data available in the PSID and to more accurately understand how couples' lives are linked. Table 3 shows results from APIM models in which we estimate, for husbands and wives, the effects of both respondent and spouse assessments of marital quality on the amount of face-to-face time spent with a spouse. APIM models account for the dependencies across the actor and partner models (actors and partners are members of the same couple, so one wouldn't expect the errors from these models to be independent). We hypothesized (hypothesis 3) that individuals and spouses with higher marital support (strain) will spend more (less) face-to-face time together and more (less) passive time together. While our results are in the expected direction, they are not always significant. Moreover, we find unexpected gender differences.

The top panel of Table 3 shows the effects of the actor's and partner's assessments of marital support on reports of face-to-face time together and passive time. In the husband models, the actor is the husband and the partner is the wife; in the wife models, the actor is the wife and

the partner is the husband. A more positive assessment of marital support from the wife (as actor) is associated with more face-to-face time (b=53.36); but it is his wife's report of marital support that is associated with more shared time in the husband model (b=38.59). Men's and women's own assessments of marital support are negatively associated with passive time; no spouse effects are significant.

<Table 3 about here>

The bottom panel of Table 3 shows how respondent and spouse assessments of marital strain are associated with time together and passive time. While none of the relationships reach conventional levels of statistical significance, the passive time models are suggestive of higher assessments of marital strain among husbands (as actors in husband models and as partners in wife models) are associated with more time spent in the same place, but not in the same room..

Gendered Actor/ Partner Assessments of Marital Quality and Momentary Happiness. In Table 4, we examine whether the respondent's and spouse's marital quality assessments impact feelings of momentary happiness and whether high marital support or low strain in marriages are associated with more happiness when the respondent is spending time with one's spouse. The first marital support model (top panel of Table 4) shows that both husbands and wives are happier when they are with their partners compared to not with them (b=.23; b=22), and husbands' and wives' own marital support is associated with their feelings of happiness (b=.26; b=.45). To test whether there is a boost in happiness during time with a spouse if marital quality (respondent only in Model 2) is high, we include an interaction term in Model 2. We find no boost in happiness during time with a spouse based on marital support: being together predicts feelings of happiness, as does one's own sense of marital support, but the combination of the two does not predict even higher feelings of happiness.

<Table 4 about here>

The lower panel of Table 4 shows the effects of marital strain on momentary happiness. As in the case of marital support, we find greater happiness when with a spouse. Marital strain is negatively associated with momentary happiness. Specifically, when husbands feel more strain, they are less happy (b=-0.20). There is also suggestive evidence that this is also the case for wives, and results suggest that their husbands' marital strain predicts wives' lower happiness. For wives, we also find a small but statistically significant interaction between being with their husbands (face-to-face) and marital strain on momentary happiness; when marital strain is high, being with husbands is associated with lower feelings of happiness than when apart from him.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The marital dyad may be a universal arrangement, but it varies at different points in the life course as well as at different points in history. Given a combination of multiple social forces—extended life expectancy, reduced fertility, aging boomers, changing gender roles, ambiguous career and retirement paths—the nature of marriage in later adulthood in the United States is changing, even as, we argue, there is an incipient new encore adult stage in the space opening up between conventional family- and career-building years and the frailties of old age. Because they are no longer focusing on building families or careers, couples in this encore stage can expect to spend more time—each day, each week and for more years—together as a couple. What we don't know is whether couple togetherness is simply the default, in the absence of raising children or working for pay, or if being together reflects choices based on the quality of the relationship, with people spending more time with their partners because they feel supported by them and/or experience low levels of strain in the marriage. This is important, because marriage can become the central role as other roles fall by the wayside, and because the marital

relationship can be a key resource for individuals and couples undergoing the many transitions of this stage of life.

Accordingly, we set out to examine the time couples spend together during the encore adult years, theorizing that, while older couples may be together in the home, their choice of being face-to-face in the same room would be a strategic choice, depending on their views of quality of their marriages. Even time in the same place but not together—at home, shopping, etc.—could be based on decisions related to marital quality. At this life stage, married men and women are freer to vote with their feet, or the car, in how much "togetherness" they want. Following Jessie Bernard, we also recognized that the life-course concept of linked lives need not mean similar assessments of marital support or marital strain by husbands and wives, and wanted to test the effects of both his and her assessments on time together. Finally, we investigated how more general assessments of marital quality as well as spending time face-to-face are associated with happiness for women and men. We find that individuals who feel supported by their spouses and who feel low strain in their marriages spend more time face-to-face on a randomly selected day. Time in the same house but not in the same room—what we call passive time—is higher among those who report *less* support and *more* strain in their relationship. These findings lend support for the idea that how couples do togetherness may reflect their adaptive strategies, avoiding one another when the marriage seems not supportive and more strained.

Our research goes beyond prior work on couples' shared time that documented variation in shared time by demographic characteristics using the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) on individuals, not couples (Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek et al. 2017). Analyses (not shown) indicate that estimates of time with a spouse from the PSID DUST and ATUS data are very

similar for the older adult population, increasing our confidence that, despite question differences, we are measuring the same concept. Using the PSID rather than the ATUS, we are able to show that how much time couples spend together per day, on average, is related to the support and strain individuals feel in their marriages. That is, rather than assuming that more shared time is better, we are able to show that face-to-face time is higher among husbands and wives who report greater support and less strain in their marriages, and passive time is higher among those who perceive less support and more strain in their marriages. For this encore older adult population, we find that higher quality marriages are associated with more face-to-face time together.

Second, we go beyond the individual-level analysis possible with the ATUS and leverage the couple-level data in the PSID DUST to more fully explore the life-course theme of linked lives and assess whether both individual and spousal support and strain impact shared time. Our couple-level models underscore the importance of gender in combination with marital quality for understanding individual reports of shared time. In couples where the wife feels more support from her husband (as either actor or partner), both husbands and wives report more fact-to-face time, suggesting that being together in the same room is more driven by the wife than the husband. By contrast, when husbands report more marital strain (as either actor or partner), we find suggestive evidence that passive time is higher.

Our third contribution is the ability to link respondent and spouse reports of marital quality to experienced well-being. While previous research has shown that individuals have enhanced well-being when they are with their spouse versus not (Flood and Genadek 2016; Genadek et al. 2017; Sullivan 1996), this evidence has been limited by a focus on individuals, as well as the absence of measures of marital quality. Using APIM models, we show that

controlling for marital support/strain, both husbands and wives feel happier when they are face-to-face with their partners compared to in the house but not actively engaged with them or not with them at all. We also find evidence that husbands and wives experience higher momentary happiness if marital support (strain) is higher (lower).

Our analysis is novel in that we theorize marital quality as a predictor, not an outcome, and one that has tangible effects on how couples spend their time. Although much of the related research considers marital quality as an outcome, we examine the effects of overall marital quality on daily shared time because so little is known about the amount and type of togetherness couples in later adulthood experience. Our novelty is also a limitation. There is an inherent mismatch between the reference period of the data (one day) and the reference period of marital quality assessments, presumably result of cumulative experiences over years of marriage. This guided our direction of focus on time together as the dependent variable. The relationship between time use and marital quality is likely bidirectional; with these data we cannot ascertain causal ordering in the marital quality-shared time relationship, since a long-term outcome of interest such as marital quality is not accurately predicted by a one-day diary observation (Frazis and Stewart, 2012), even though we presume that spending more time together, especially in shared activities, likely enhances the marital relationship. Future data collection efforts should consider study designs that will allow researchers to better understand these processes.

We also find gendered patterns that require further exploration. Women report less face-to-face time with their husbands and more passive time than do husbands. This is consistent with previous work on married working-age individuals (Flood and Genadek 2016) and couples in the 2009 DUST (Freedman et al., 2012). The explanations for these gender differences, however, are less clear. Freedman and colleagues (2012) offer no explanations of gender differences in the

reporting of shared time, but encourage future research in this area. Flood and Genadek (2016) offer the gendered interpretation of time as an explanation. Perhaps part of the explanation lies in the spouse's perception of marital support. Wives' greater reports of marital support are associated with more face-to-face time reported by husbands. The fact that gender patterns continue to persist across age groups and data sources calls for additional research investigating how men and women interpret time with a spouse and whether the amount and type of time reflect gender strategies.

While the evidence indicates that there are differences in couples' shared time by marital quality, with these cross-sectional data we are not able to understand how time with a spouse changes as individual's age and navigate new expectations or challenges with different constraints on their time. Similarly, marital quality is dynamic and the result of days, weeks, and years of experiences; we capture shared time at different points in each couples' cumulative experiences. Repeated measures of marital quality and time with a spouse would allow us to more fully consider the potentially dynamic and recursive processes of the marital relationship.

Our contribution here is to capture marital interaction in real time—and to differentiate between time face-to-face with one's spouse and passive time with a spouse somewhere in the vicinity—and to more thoroughly understand linkages between time with a spouse and well-being. We show that both face-to-face and passive time are reflective of marital quality in expected ways, with higher martial support being associated with more face-to-face time together and higher marital strain being associated with more passive time. Encore adults' decisions to spend time together appear to be joint decisions, tied especially to women's sense of marital support. And face-to-face time predicts enhanced momentary well-being—greater

feelings of happiness when with a spouse—for both husbands and wives, even net of marital strain or marital quality.

A major limitation of this study is that we cannot test for causal relationships. However, it makes sense that global assessments of marital quality occur prior to decisions about time use yesterday, and time use decisions are logically prior to momentary feelings of happiness.

Marital relationships make take on added significance in the incipient encore years of adulthood. We see this life stage as prior to old age frailties, but find no effect of even high levels of disability on time spent with one's partner. The strong positive relationship between marital support and time together suggests the importance of theorizing and studying couples both as a unit as well as individual actors. It also supports the link between appraisals and actual behavior. As Simmel (1950) pointed out years ago, dyads are the most vulnerable form of association, in that either individual can dissolve the unit. Similarly, both members of the couple influence the couples' degree of sociability, in terms of whether they spend more or less time engaged with one another versus just in the same general vicinity. Being together in the same house may be less of a choice as other roles and responsibilities fade. Indeed, the negative effect of employment on both active and passive time use reinforces the idea that those who are no longer working may be more or less thrown together, in at least a passive way. By contrast, spending time face-to-face with one another (or not) is more discretionary. We have shown it is tied both to general marital quality and to momentary feelings of happiness, suggesting choosing to spend time together promotes quality of life for those in this transitionary phase of the life course.

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Table 1. Sample demographic and relationship characteristics by gender, 2009 and 2013 (N=1,409).

	Full Sample	Husbands		Wives
Number of Respondents	1407	665		742
Demographic Characteristics				
Age (in years)	64.34	65.15	*	63.61
	(4.9)	(4.43)		(5.17)
Age Groups				
50-59	12.48	4.65	*	19.47
60-64	41.11	43.54		38.94
65-69	29.11	32.09		26.45
70-74	17.29	19.71		15.13
Has Co-Resident Own Child Under 18	3.48	3.79		3.20
Employed	44.88	49.89	*	40.41
College Degree	45.46	51.84	*	39.75
White	90.46	90.50		90.43
General Health Status				
Good (or Better)	82.47	84.35		80.79
Fair	12.46	11.07		13.69
Poor	5.07	4.58		5.51
Any Difficulty	36.77	40.03	*	33.86
Disability Severity				
Low	47.06	51.68	*	42.92
Medium	25.24	24.90		25.54
High	27.70	23.42	*	31.54
Region				
Northeast	18.52	17.69		19.27
North Central	27.99	28.32		27.70
South	31.80	32.26		31.38
West	20.50	20.56		20.44
Alaska, Hawaii	1.19	1.17		1.21
Weekend (Ref=Weekday)	49.86	49.56		50.14
Year				
2009	47.56	46.90		48.15
2013	52.44	53.10		51.85
Contributed two time diaries	99.55	99.30		99.79
Marital Characteristics				
Times Married				
Once	68.39	68.15		68.60
Twice	23.68	22.48		24.75
Three or more	7.93	9.36		6.65
Marital Duration (Years)	35.72	35.39		36.02

	(12.61)	(12.2)		(12.95)
Marital Support Scale (1-4)	3.51	3.59	*	3.44
	(.61)	(.56)		(.63)
Marital Strain Scale (1-4)	2.15	2.04	*	2.24
	(.69)	(.67)		(.69)

Notes. All means/percentages are weighted. *=Men's characteristics significantly different than women's characteristics (p<.05).

Table 2A. Minutes of Face-to-Face Time with a Spouse Per Day by Work, Family, Demographic, and Marital Characteristics.

	Face-to-Face Time		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Female (Ref=Male)	-32.715***	-25.527***	-29.222***
	(6.963)	(7.059)	(6.993)
Employed	-51.935***	-52.385***	-51.970***
	(10.641)	(10.489)	(10.625)
Has Co-Resident Own Child Under 18	-100.537***	-95.160***	-95.775***
	(21.130)	(20.653)	(20.746)
Age Categories (Ref=70-74)			
50-59	-15.211	-10.193	-14.934
	(18.898)	(18.500)	(18.814)
60-64	-24.016	-20.961	-23.733
	(15.669)	(15.690)	(15.712)
65-69	1.443	1.461	0.858
	(15.488)	(15.499)	(15.570)
Educational Attainment (Ref=College Degree)			
College Degree	-0.412	-0.755	1.294
	(11.428)	(11.263)	(11.459)
Race (Ref=Non-White)			
White	72.128***	66.995***	69.790***
	(15.229)	(14.893)	(15.205)
General Health Status (Ref=Good+)			
Fair	7.818	13.056	9.379
	(15.394)	(15.271)	(15.379)
Poor	-23.667	-15.782	-20.151
	(23.468)	(22.203)	(23.043)
Weekend (Ref=Weekday)	89.847***	89.853***	89.873***
	(8.264)	(8.269)	(8.267)
Any Difficulty	-1.473	1.174	0.360
	(11.521)	(11.442)	(11.491)
Disability Severity (Ref=Low)			
Medium	9.485	12.220	11.866
	(11.828)	(11.708)	(11.843)
High	7.218	13.516	10.737
	(14.389)	(14.308)	(14.478)
Marital Characteristics			
Marital Support Scale (1-4)		46.925***	
		(8.397)	
Marital Strain Scale (1-4)			-19.223*
			(8.024)
Constant	240.105***	71.140	277.857***

	(25.062)	(39.050)	(29.846)
Sigma_u	128.8	125.8	128.3
Sigma_e	173.6	173.6	173.6
Rho	0.355	0.344	0.353

Notes: Number of diaries (N=2800), number of people (N=1407). Models control for year of the diary and region. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$.

Table 2B. Minutes of Passive Time by Work, Family, Demographic, and Marital Characteristics.

	Passive Time		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Female (Ref=Male)	34.373***	28.999***	30.238***
	(7.089)	(7.250)	(7.289)
Employed	-52.818***	-52.486***	-52.778***
	(9.626)	(9.597)	(9.610)
Has Co-Resident Own Child Under 18	52.648	48.620	47.007
	(31.982)	(31.887)	(31.941)
Age Categories (Ref=70-74)			
50-59	-45.421**	-49.156**	-45.744**
	(17.062)	(17.111)	(17.059)
60-64	-30.520*	-32.822*	-30.861*
	(14.421)	(14.550)	(14.508)
65-69	-8.302	-8.330	-7.615
	(13.986)	(14.131)	(14.070)
Educational Attainment (Ref=College Degree)			
College Degree	7.480	7.742	5.463
	(9.554)	(9.452)	(9.567)
Race (Ref=Non-White)			
White	-28.166	-24.345	-25.398
	(15.666)	(15.469)	(15.621)
General Health Status (Ref=Good+)			
Fair	-14.199	-18.136	-16.052
	(13.232)	(13.054)	(13.155)
Poor	24.814	18.947	20.668
	(25.527)	(24.573)	(24.966)
Weekend (Ref=Weekday)	27.108***	27.094***	27.074***
	(7.194)	(7.199)	(7.198)
Any Difficulty	-1.601	-3.559	-3.766
	(11.000)	(10.980)	(11.077)
Disability Severity (Ref=Low)			
Medium	-3.189	-5.234	-6.009
	(10.570)	(10.696)	(10.632)
High	23.779	19.062	19.610
	(12.536)	(12.524)	(12.536)
Marital Characteristics			
Marital Support Scale (1-4)		-35.093***	
		(8.838)	
Marital Strain Scale (1-4)			22.764**
			(7.496)
Constant	271.873***	398.250***	227.169***

	(23.052)	(40.263)	(26.952)
Sigma_u	113.1	111.2	112.2
Sigma_e	163.9	163.9	163.9
Rho	0.323	0.315	0.319

Notes: Number of diaries (N=2800), number of people (N=1407). Models control for year of the diary and region. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.

Table 3. Weighted Seemingly Unrelated Regression Models Predicting Face-to-Face Time and Passive Time, by Own and Spouse's Marital Support and Strain Assessments, Among Husbands and Wives in the PSID-DUST.

Marital Support	Face-to-Face Time		Passive Time[1]	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Actor	30.83	53.36***	-37.76*	-38.65**
	(19.391)	(13.269)	(15.614)	(11.908)
Partner	38.59**	6.86	-10.30	11.13
	(13.491)	(18.668)	(12.518)	(15.333)
Actor-specific intercept	66.73	125.42+	362.25***	335.20***
	(79.742)	(73.356)	(75.090)	(74.932)
ρ	.72 (.02)		.45 (.03)	

Marital Strain	Face-to-Face Time		Passive Time[1]	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Actor	-13.75	-17.76	21.04+	2.81
	(15.499)	(12.759)	(12.139)	(12.528)
Partner	-14.84	-3.98	3.93	21.10+
	(14.067)	(14.553)	(11.852)	(11.992)
Actor-specific intercept	371.96***	384.04***	141.14***	191.53***
	(50.384)	(49.575)	(42.285)	(46.807)
ρ	.72 (.02)		.45 (.04)	

Note: All models include the full set of controls shown in Table 2. [1]Includes time in the same location as the spouse but not with the spouse.

Table 4. Weighted Seemingly Unrelated Regression Models Predicting Momentary Happiness, by Own and Spouse's Marital Support and Strain Assessments and the Presence of a Spouse, Among Husbands and Wives in the PSID-DUST.

	Momentary Happiness			
Marital Support	Model 1		Model 2	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Actor MQ	0.26**	0.45***	0.19+	0.41***
	(0.092)	(0.073)	(0.101)	(0.084)
Partner MQ	-0.01	-0.12	-0.01	-0.12
	(0.071)	(0.083)	(0.070)	(0.083)
With Spouse	0.23**	0.22**	-0.48	-0.23
	(0.076)	(0.068)	(0.464)	(0.385)
Same Location as Spouse[1]	0.04	-0.08	0.04	-0.08
	(0.090)	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.089)
Actor MQ X With Spouse			0.20	0.13
			(0.129)	(0.105)
Actor-specific intercept	4.46***	4.27***	4.72***	4.40***
	(0.343)	(0.375)	(0.353)	(0.402)
ρ	.09 (.03)		.09 (.03)	

	Momentary Happiness			
Marital Strain	Model 1		Model 2	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Actor MQ	-0.20**	-0.14+	-0.18*	-0.05
	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.085)	(0.082)
Partner MQ	-0.07	-0.15+	-0.08	-0.16+
	(0.068)	(0.080)	(0.068)	(0.080)
With Spouse	0.24***	0.21**	0.36+	0.75***
	(0.073)	(0.071)	(0.208)	(0.207)
Same Location as Spouse[1]	0.02	-0.09	0.02	-0.10
	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)
Actor MQ X With Spouse			-0.05	-0.24*
			(0.104)	(0.096)
Actor-specific intercept	5.91***	5.92***	5.87***	5.75***
	(0.225)	(0.230)	(0.241)	(0.247)
ρ	.08 (.03)		.08 (.03)	

Note: Base models include only actor and partner reports of marital quality and indicators for whether the respondent is actively or passively engaged with the spouse versus not with the spouse. Fully controlled models also include the full set of controls shown in Table 2.
[1]Indicates "passive" time in the same location as the spouse but not with the spouse.

Figure 1. Face-to-Face Time and Passive Time with a Spouse (Minutes per Day) by Marital Support
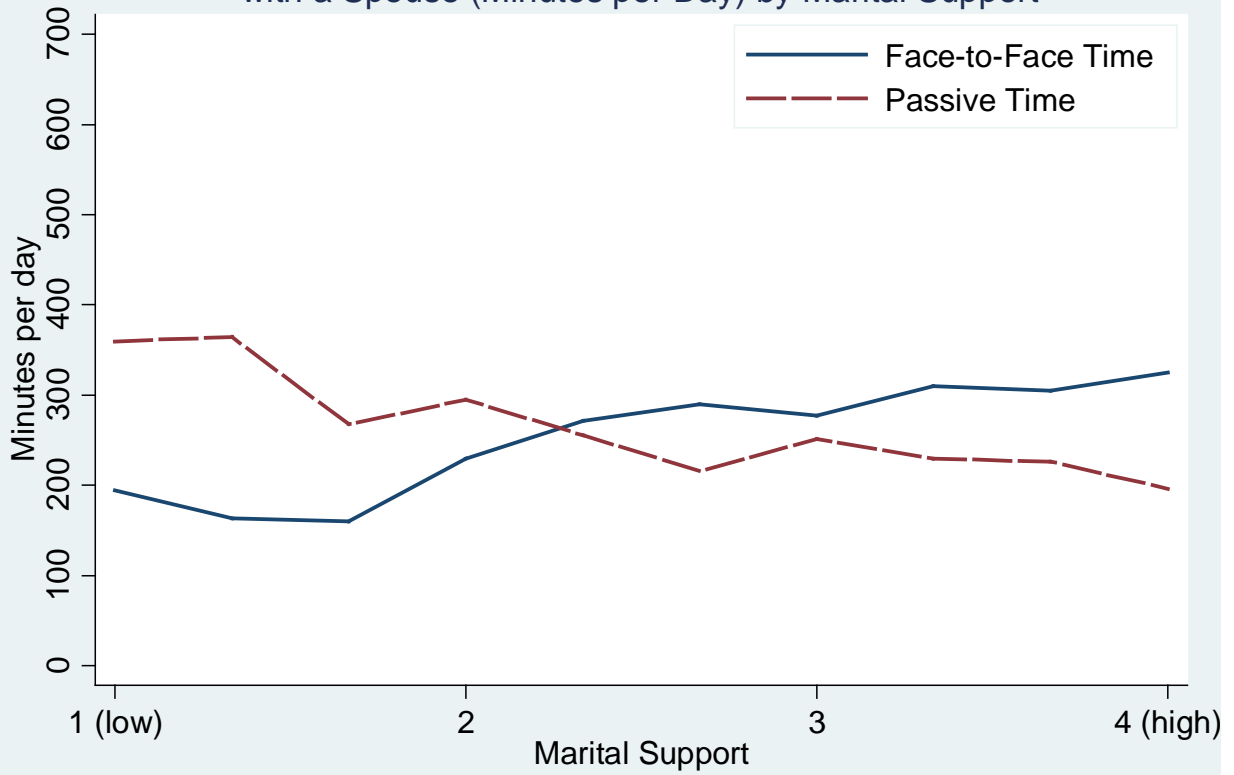
Figure 2. Face-to-Face Time and Passive Time with a Spouse (Minutes per Day) by Marital Strain