**Creating Versus Negating Togetherness:
Perceptual and Emotional Differences in Parent-Teenager Reported Time**

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ABSTRACT

Time together is central to family life, and the question of how much time parents spend with children is vital to scholars. Although parents' reports of time with children are taken as standard and reliable, assessing different family actors' perspectives on time together may challenge this notion. Using the American Time Use Survey (2003-2018), we provide a unique window into parent-adolescent time, via a novel examination of precise questions about co-presence and emotions during daily activities. Comparing parents' and teenagers' reports of the amount and emotional valence of time spent together, we reveal considerable perceptual gaps – reflecting “ambiguous” rather than “objective” togetherness. Mothers report 24 hours per week of co-presence (“in the room with”) compared to adolescents' 15 hours – a gap greater than an entire school day; father-teenager discrepancies are comparable. Discrepancies vary by parents' employment status, with larger discrepancies between stay-at-home parent and adolescent reports. Though the perceptual gap is sizeable, the emotional one is not: both generations experience reported time together as more meaningful, happier and less stressful than time apart, partly due to the nature of activities and presence of other people. Employed parents and the more educated receive more of a well-being boost from adolescent co-presence compared to their counterparts. Ultimately, generational position and social statuses shape perceptions of co-presence, in the form of “creating” versus “negating” classifications of togetherness.

INTRODUCTION

Time is fundamental to experiences of family life. Being together, creating meaningful connections, and experiencing the emotional highs and lows of family time are quintessential components of daily life. Indeed, the ways family members connect through shared presence are significant to both adolescent and parental well-being (Desha, Nicholson, & Ziviani, 2011; Milkie, Nomaguchi, & Schieman, 2019; Musick & Meier, 2012; Offer, 2013, 2014). Both the type or quality of parent-child activities (Hsin & Felfe, 2014) and the amount of time parents spend with adolescents are relevant to offspring well-being (Fomby & Musick, 2018; Hsin & Felfe, 2014). Moreover, the meaning of time in the current era takes on added weight given that technologies may have altered how family members interact (Carvalho, Francisco, & Relvas, 2015; Mullan & Chatzitheochari, 2019; Storch & Ortiz Juarez-Paz, 2019). Thus, understanding the contours of time mothers and fathers spend together with teenagers is of great significance.

How we measure time together is crucial for understanding family relations. Time diary data are considered highly reliable and are taken as the gold standard for measuring time parents spend with children (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). Research examining parental time with children relies heavily on parents' reports. Yet, the perception and meaning of "togetherness" may vary given different generational vantage points, calling into question ostensibly objective parental reports (Ashbourne & Daly, 2012; Larson & Richards, 1994). Mothers and fathers view spending time with children as part of being a good, involved parent, whereas for adolescents, spending time with parents becomes less salient as outside opportunities beckon in the development toward young adulthood (Ashbourne & Daly, 2012; Elder, 1999; Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2013; Meier, Musick, Fischer, & Flood, 2018). Beyond perceptions of time spent together, emotional aspects of shared time may diverge as well. Parents

generally benefit emotionally from being with adolescents (Meier et al., 2018; Offer, 2014). However, it is unclear to what extent high school students receive an emotional boost from co-presence with parents, given that being with parents can be frustrating or boring (Ashbourne & Daly, 2010; 2012; Offer, 2013; Zuzanek & Hilbrecht, 2018).

In a novel analysis comparing across generational status, we ask: do adolescents and parents report and experience their time together in similar ways? Using data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), we contrast the reported time together and the emotional valence of that time from the perspective of mothers and fathers living with 15- to 17-year-old children with the reports of 15- to 17-year-olds who live with a mother or father. Contrasting parental versus adolescents' perspectives of co-presence, and examining how this varies by key social and economic statuses, provides a unique window into processes of family time. Moreover, assessing potential gaps in the emotional tenor of time together, relative to time apart, provides evidence about the relationship of adolescents and their parents in the current era.

BACKGROUND

Parents' Time with Adolescents

There is considerable scholarly and public concern about parents' time with their children, especially given that time together affects teenagers' well-being (Fomby & Musick, 2018; Hsin & Felfe, 2014). Yet, we do not know nearly as much about parents' time with adolescents as we do about their time taking care of younger children. Most studies of parent-child time focus on those younger than high school age or examine parental time in child care only, a category of activities suited mainly to understanding time with younger children (Meier et al., 2018). Parents spend comparatively less time with adolescents, and this time is centered

around leisure activities, eating meals, and talking together (Larson & Richards, 1994; Offer, 2014).

Parents' reports about time with children are taken as ostensibly objective, and are used to measure and assess family life (Bianchi et al., 2006). Yet, the question of how much time mothers and fathers spend with teenagers is not necessarily straightforward. To extend knowledge on family time based on time diary research, examining how family members' different positions link to assessments of time spent together is illuminating (Ashbourne & Daly, 2012; Larson & Richards, 1994). The question of being "with" someone, asked in most time diary surveys, seems simple. However, family members may have different sensitivities to and understandings of meaningful presence and connections, as well as divergent views as to whether they spend enough time together (Galinsky, 1999). This can transform ambiguous situations into ones that actors may include or exclude within the definition of "being together," depending on their vantage point in the life course (Ashbourne & Daly, 2012; Elder, 1999; Goffman, 1971). Thus, parents and high-school-aged teenagers may construct priorities linked to family time quite differently, which may be reflected in reports about with whom one is sharing space and time.

On the one hand, parents' reports of being with children might not be a neutral or objective observation. Parents, in contrast to teenagers, are tasked with "creating family" through opportunities for parent-offspring interactions and shared family time. According to Snyder (2007), parents share core beliefs that encourage bias toward exaggerating time together: spending time with their teenage children is not only a key priority in their family life, but time together is viewed as being beneficial for adolescents. Given that parents appear to long for time together more so than offspring (Galinsky 1999) and want to be understood as good parents, they may be more inclined to frame and define ambiguous situations as time together, such as when

teenagers are nearby but not in the same room. Parents also may act as appreciative observers or audience to their teenagers, who are otherwise engaged with peers on the basketball court or friends in the basement (Ashbourne & Daly, 2012) – still framing this with a family lens and marking their teenager as being “with” them.

On the other hand, adolescents, nearing a turning point in their life course of becoming adults and potentially leaving a family household, spending time with parents may not be a neutral endeavor either. Not only might spending time with a parent be laden with mixed emotions (Ashbourne & Daily, 2012; Larson & Richards, 1994; Nelson, 2010), the very classifications of being together with parents could be at issue (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008), given that adolescents are developmentally tasked with differentiating themselves from these significant others at this stage of the life course (Longmore et al., 2013). For example, using qualitative data in a study of connectedness among young adolescents and their parents in 55 middle-class, two-parent families in the Midwest in the 1980s, youth were considerably less likely to report parents’ presence during an activity than parents were (Larson & Richards, 1994). Parents are perhaps even viewed as excessively present in adolescents’ lives (McElhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare, 2009), and time apart may serve as an important way to repair conflicts (Ashbourne & Daly, 2010). Thus, high school students on the verge of adulthood are likely to view their space and activities with adults differently than parents view similar arrangements and activities.

Social and Economic Factors in Discrepancies

Discrepant reports can provide evidence of the subjectivity of reported time together, but divergences in reported time together are also important sociologically if the size of the perceptual and emotional gaps are socially patterned. Gender may shape parental gaps, with

mothers potentially over-reporting to a greater extent than fathers. Mothers are culturally tasked with being there for children and for ensuring their well-being (Christopher, 2012; Hays, 1996). However, recent research suggests that fathers and mothers are increasingly similar in their experiences of emotions linked to parenting (Meier et al., 2018). Teenagers' perspectives on togetherness may also be shaped by parents' gender. Adolescents spend more time with their mothers than their fathers (Hosley & Montemayor, 1997) and feel closer to mothers (Larson & Richards, 1994; Laursen, Noack, Wilder, & Williams, 2000), which may be linked with more closely matched perceptions and emotional experiences of togetherness with mothers.

Parental employment significantly structures the daily rhythms and organization of family life. Stay-at-home mothers' role may encourage them to view offspring as being with them in ambiguous situations, given that their main job is creating the practical and emotional aspects of home and family for others (Orgad, 2019) and given that they may be at the center of intensive mothering cultures. In contrast, intensive parenting norms may be less salient for stay-at-home fathers, a small minority, which could limit their incentives to emphasize their co-presence with adolescent children. Research documents men's tenuous embrace of full-time care work and the continued salience of breadwinning for masculine identities, even for stay-at-home fathers (Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Gerson, 2010). For employed mothers, their workplace identities and experiences of extensive mothering – which involve shared responsibilities for raising children – suggest they may be less likely to over-report the presence of an adolescent (Christopher, 2012; Dow, 2019).

Finally, social class may shape views on the importance of parent-child time (Lareau, 2003). Highly-educated parents may be more inclined to see their role in intensively cultivating the child and developing their future, and to find this meaningful both for its present value and

for the future payoff in terms of successfully launching their child down a path to college (Lareau, 2003). Thus, they may be more likely to over-report compared to less-educated parents. For example, Hofferth (2006) found that highly-educated mothers exaggerated their amount of time reading with children more so than less-educated mothers.

Parent-Adolescent Time Together and Subjective Well-Being

Parents experience greater subjective well-being when with children compared to when they are not with them, and rate time with children to be among their most enjoyable activities (Musick, Meier, & Flood, 2016). Compared to time apart from children, parents' time in the presence of children under 18 is felt as happier, more meaningful as well as less stressful and fatiguing, with fathers receiving more of a boost emotionally than mothers (Musick et al., 2016). However, parents' time with younger children is felt a bit more positively than their time with children aged 13 to 17 (Meier et al., 2018).

Research indicates that contemporary U.S. parents spend relatively more time with offspring than did earlier generations (Bianchi, 2011). Yet, many parents indicate they want more time with offspring, even more so with adolescents than with younger children, presumably because adolescents are less available. Because teenagers gain some control over their time and are often busy with school, friends, and jobs, parents may wish for more time with them. This lack of time is emotion-laden: employed parents who report that they do not have enough time with children experience more distress, anger and disturbed sleep (Milkie et al., 2019). In all, then, research indicates that when considering the brief but important stage of parenting high-school-aged offspring, we expect parental levels of meaning and happiness to be higher and stress lower when with offspring compared to when apart from them.

Adolescents' relationships with parents are still of great significance to them (Ashbourne & Daly, 2010; Mullan & Chatzitheochari, 2019). But given their developmental task of individuating as they approach adulthood (Longmore et al., 2013), it is possible that the emotional boost from the presence of parents is small. For example, certain activities – like meals or spending time with the entire family – may be meaningful for the parental generation but less so for teenagers; or perhaps co-presence more generally is a relatively more positive time for parents than for offspring.

Finally, we consider that subjective well-being in time together may also be patterned by social and economic statuses. For example, Meier and colleagues (2016) find that employed mothers received more of an emotional boost from being with children compared to non-employed mothers. More highly-educated parents, especially mothers, are at the center of an intensive parenting culture in which the work of parenting may have a meaningful payoff in high-school-aged children who are close to launching successfully into university life (Nelson, 2010).

SUMMARY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has conceptual and methodological aims in extending knowledge about family time. With an innovative approach, we first assess the quantity of parent-teenager time from two vantage points, including the type of activities each generation reports doing with the other present. We also examine whether any gaps in perceptions of co-presence vary based on parents' social and economic characteristics. Second, we focus on the emotional experience of time. We assess whether emotions are more positive in time spent together with the other generation, whether parents and teenagers report different emotional experiences, and how subjective well-being in activities are socially patterned. We ask the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are mothers' and fathers' reports of the amount of time spent with their adolescent different from adolescents' reports of being with parents? How do parent-teen discrepancies vary by parental employment status and social class?
- 2) Are there parent-adolescent differences in subjective well-being in time together versus time apart? How do these vary based on parental employment and social class?

DATA AND METHODS

Data and Sample

The data come from pooled cross-sectional files of the 2003-2018 American Time Use Survey, including supplemental data from the Well-Being Module in 2010, 2012, and 2013 (Hofferth, Flood, & Sobek, 2018). The ATUS is a time diary survey based on a nationally representative sample of Americans age 15 and older drawn from households in the Current Population Survey (CPS). One individual per household reports information on their primary activities over a 24-hour period from 4:00 a.m. of the specified interview day until 4:00 a.m. the following day: the type, location, time, and duration of these activities, as well as who was "with them in the room" or "accompanied them" during each activity (excluding activities such as sleeping or grooming). The Well-Being Module administered in 2010, 2012, and 2013 additionally records respondents' emotions during three randomly selected activities lasting at least five minutes (excluding sleeping, grooming, personal activities, and activities where the respondent refused to report what they were doing).

Using the multi-year files from 2003-2018, we create two parent samples and two teenager samples. There are 8,431 mothers and 6,080 fathers living with at least one own child aged 15 to 17 years old in the same household. To avoid inflating parental reports of time for those with more than one child in this age range, we calculate the time the parent spent with one

randomly selected teenager per household. Additionally, we exclude parents over 65 years old (112 respondents) and those who are in same-sex relationships (18 mothers and 3 fathers). There are 8,490 respondents between 15 and 17 years old in our data. Teenagers can live with both a mother and father, so some of them are represented in both teenage samples: 7,769 living with mothers and 5,937 with fathers. We apply the same age restrictions to the teenage samples (96 teenagers with mothers and 175 with fathers over 65 were dropped). We drop those with same-sex parents (10 teens with mothers and 2 teens with fathers), and those with missing values on key variables (19 teens with mothers and 89 teens with fathers). Our final analytic samples consist of 8,394 mothers and 5,984 fathers aged 30-64 years old, and 7,647 teenagers with mothers and 5,846 with fathers.

We construct four additional samples limited to the Well-Being Modules fielded in 2010, 2012, and 2013 to examine subjective well-being during activities: mothers (N individual=1,410; N activity=4,166); fathers (N individual=977; N activity=2,876); teenagers living with a mother (N individual=1,279; N activity=3,789) and teenagers living with a father (N individual=962; N activity=2,852).

Dependent Variables

Time together with the other generation. The central variable of interest is the total daily minutes that mothers and fathers report being with the household teenager, and the minutes teenagers report being with their household mother or father. This measure is calculated using the time respondents spend in activities where they report that the other generation was “in the room with” or “accompanied” them, excluding activities where this was not asked (e.g., sleeping, grooming). We do not limit time together to exclusive time, so this could include others present such as younger children/siblings, a spouse/other parent, or friends. In addition, we examine time

together in several main activity categories: housework, leisure, market work, shopping and services, meals, education, care for adults, and child care.

Emotions in activities. The Well-Being Module asks about six dimensions of subjective well-being: happiness, meaning, stress, sadness, tiredness, and pain (Lee et al., 2016; Stone, Schneider, Krueger, Schwartz, & Deaton, 2018). We present three outcomes most salient for parent-teenager interactions: happiness, meaning, and stress. Results for fatigue and sadness are similar to the outcomes shown. For each of three randomly selected activities, ATUS respondents were asked the following: 1) How happy did you feel during this time? 2) How meaningful did you consider what you were doing? 3) How stressed did you feel during this time? Response options ranged from 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very*).

Covariates

Focal independent variables. We examine possible heterogeneity in reported co-presence across parental employment status groups and educational attainment, as a measure of social class. Employment status is measured as full-time employment (35+hours, reference category), part-time employment (<35 hours), and non-employment (unemployed or not in labor force). We distinguish between parents with less than high school (= reference category), high school graduates, those with some college, and college graduates.

Contextual features of activities. We assess the context of time that parents and teenagers spend together. This includes the type of activity and the presence of other people. For example, a considerable amount of time spent together may be leisure time or mealtime, whereas time apart may be school or/work time. In addition, time together may include other family members – and thus subjective well-being levels may vary due to their presence.

Controls. In addition to these covariates, we include controls that may influence both perceptions and emotions related to time together (e.g., Musick et al., 2016): household income (less than \$25,000, reference category; \$25,000 to \$75,000; more than \$75,000); parent’s race (white, reference category; black; Hispanic; other); if the household is a two-parent household (single-parent household, reference category); the number of other household children; and parents’ age. In all models, we control for whether data was collected on a school day (during the summer, weekend, or public holiday = reference category); survey year; the number of activities reported on the diary day; and the percentage of activities that took place at home. For activity-level models, we also control for the duration of activities (minutes) and time of day (morning: 4 a.m.-12 p.m., reference category; afternoon: 12-5 p.m.; evening: 5-9 p.m.; night: 9 p.m.-4 a.m.).

Although these parents and teenagers do not live in the same households, samples are nationally representative and, as such, should yield representative estimates of the time U.S. teenagers and parents spend together. Table 1 describes the sociodemographic characteristics of the 2003-2018 samples of parents and teenagers (Appendix Table A1 describes the sociodemographic characteristics for the Well-Being Module samples in 2010, 2012, and 2013). The information about parents’ social and economic characteristics (e.g. education, employment status) is taken from the CPS. The CPS collects data on all household members aged 15 and over, generally from a “knowledgeable adult” in the household (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). There are few significant differences between samples of teenagers and parents (e.g., father’s education). We control for these characteristics in multivariate models.

Table 1. *Sociodemographic Characteristics of Parent and Teenager Samples, 2003-2018 ATUS*

	Mothers (N=8,394)	Teenagers with Mothers (N=7,647)	Fathers (N=5,984)	Teenagers with Fathers (N=5,846)
Parent’s age	43.81	44.53	46.01	47.07
Parent’s race				
White	.61	.60	.67	.66
Black	.13	.13	.09	.09

	Mothers (N=8,394)	Teenagers with Mothers (N=7,647)	Fathers (N=5,984)	Teenagers with Fathers (N=5,846)
Hispanic	.20	.21	.19	.20
Other	.06	.06	.05	.06
Two-parent household+	.77	.77	.93	.95
Number of other HH children*+	.98	1.46	1.02	1.48
Parent's education+				
Less than high school	.12	.13	.12	.14
High school graduate	.28	.24	.31	.26
Some college	.29	.31	.23	.24
College graduate	.31	.33	.33	.37
Parent's employment status+				
Employed, full-time	.55	.55	.87	.87
Employed, part-time	.17	.18	.03	.04
Non-employed	.28	.27	.10	.09
Family income				
<\$25,000	.17	.16	.10	.09
\$25,000-\$75,000	.41	.40	.41	.39
\$75,000+	.36	.39	.44	.46
Missing	.06	.06	.06	.06
Number of activities on diary day	22.83	18.47	18.71	18.62
% of diary day activities at home	.41	.32	.35	.33
% of respondents who reported no time together	.16	.23	.24	.32

Note: 2003-2018 ATUS. Parents with a household child aged 15-17 years old and teenagers aged 15-17 years old with a household parent. Means are weighted. HH = household. Statistically significant at $p < 0.01$: * Mothers vs. teenagers with mothers. + Fathers vs. teenagers with fathers.

Analytic Strategy

We first examine whether parents and teenagers have differing perceptions of time spent together. We estimate the mean time parents and teenagers report spending with the other generation, to see if there is a gap in time, and examine how this time is distributed across main activity categories. These analyses are weighted using weights provided for the multi-year sample. Next, we estimate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models for mothers, fathers, and the two teenager samples separately to examine whether sociodemographic characteristics may account for any gaps in the time reported by each generation. Furthermore, to analyze whether gaps in reported time between the generations are socially patterned, we estimate the predicted daily minutes together across parent's employment status and education for mothers, fathers, and teenagers, setting all other covariates in the model to the mean.

We then ask whether parents and teenagers report different levels of subjective well-being when together with the other generation compared to being apart. Well-Being Module data are measured at the activity-level, with activities nested in individuals. We estimate random effects models, which produce both within- and between-individual estimates and allow the estimation of person-specific, time-invariant variables (Allison 2009). Hausman tests indicate that random-effects models are appropriate, except for models for mothers with the outcome of happiness. We test the robustness of our findings using fixed-effects models (estimated using *xtreg, robust fe* in Stata), which produce within-individual estimates that control for observed and unobserved differences between individuals (Allison 2009). Both random and fixed effects models produce the same substantive results (with minor differences); as such, we present the findings from the random-effects models.

We estimate models separately for mothers, fathers, and the two teenager samples to examine whether and how the presence of the other generation is associated with a “boost” in subjective well-being compared to time reported spent apart from the other generation. We do this in four steps: Model 1 adjusts for control variables for activities and individuals. Models 2 and 3 alternatively adjust for variables that may explain the differences in emotions of time with the other generation: the type of activity (Model 2) or the presence of others (Model 3) in addition to control variables. Model 4 includes all variables. For ease of interpretation, we present average marginal effects to examine whether parents experience boosts in well-being based on the presence of their teenaged child differently across education level and employment status, net of covariates and controls.

Finally, we test whether the presence of the other generation is associated with well-being differently for parents and teenagers, and we examine factors that may explain gaps in reported

well-being. We repeat the stepwise procedure described above, but with samples pooled across generations for mothers and for fathers. We include an interaction between a dummy variable capturing the presence of the other generation and another dummy capturing the generation of the respondent (mother/father versus teenager).

RESULTS

Differences in Parents' and Teenagers' Reports of Time Together

Table 2 shows the average daily minutes that parents and teenagers reported spending in the room with or accompanying the other generation during the diary day, in total and by primary activity category (not including sleep or grooming time). Although theoretically the total time parents and teenagers reported spending together should be the same, we find considerable discrepancies. Parents perceived significantly more of their time as spent in the room with or accompanying teenagers, compared to the teenager generation's reports. Mothers reported about 205 minutes per day or 24 hours per week together with their high-schoolers. Yet teenagers reported spending only 132 daily minutes or 15 hours per week with their mothers. The gap was proportionately equivalent in reports of time from fathers and teenaged children: fathers reported about 164 minutes daily or 19 hours per week together, whereas teenagers only reported 110 minutes daily or 13 hours per week together. These discrepant reports corroborate our initial expectations. The size of the gaps was surprisingly large: about one-third of the time parents reported being co-present with a household teenager was not reported by adolescents.

Table 2. *Mean Daily Minutes with the Other Generation, Total Time and Major Activity Categories*

	Total Time	Leisure	Meals	Housework	Shopping/ Services	Child Care	Other*
Mothers	204.60	82.23	30.10	37.48	15.76	31.97	7.07
Teens with mother	132.01	68.35	26.45	10.07	12.99	2.38	11.76
Fathers	163.81	85.77	28.33	17.44	8.79	16.45	7.03
Teens with father	109.97	60.60	24.11	8.00	6.56	1.43	9.26

Note: 2003-2018 ATUS. Parents with a household child aged 15-17 years old and teenagers aged 15-17 years old with a household parent. Means are weighted. “Other” includes education, adult care, market work (“with whom” question not asked until 2010), personal care and missing activity codes.

This gap between parents’ and teenagers’ reported time together remained virtually unchanged when we adjusted for relevant sociodemographic characteristics in multiple OLS regression models (Appendix Table A2). Mothers and fathers both reported significantly more time with teenagers. Mothers reported a predicted 202 daily minutes with teenagers, whereas teenagers reported 134 daily minutes with mothers. Fathers reported 164 minutes with teenagers, whereas teenagers reported 110 minutes with fathers.

Examining how this time was distributed across types of activities enhances our understanding of togetherness. Overall, parents and teenagers spent the bulk of their time together in leisure activities such as watching television. One category that is notable for its similarity across generations is meals. Mealtimes were most likely subject to less discrepant interpretations of who was there compared to other activities. Eating a meal together is typically communal, and this activity often ends at the same time when family members physically leave the shared table or room. It is important to note that for most specific activities, time gaps were to be expected: respondents report being in the same room as the other generation but engaged in different activities. This is most clearly illustrated by the large gaps in reported time between parents and teenagers in housework, education, and child care. For example, a father might have been washing dishes, coded as housework, while the teenager was sitting at the kitchen table doing homework, categorized as education. Similarly, helping or teaching children may have been reported by parents as child care but as education or leisure from the teenager’s perspective. Yet, the total minutes per day should match very closely. However, we found considerable gaps between parents and teenagers in the total reported time together.

How Are Perceptual Gaps in Time Together Socially Patterned?

These gaps in reported time together between parents and teenagers were not only sizable, but also socially patterned. We estimated the predicted daily minutes together, net of all covariates, across parent's employment status (Figure 1) and education (Figure 2) for mothers, fathers, and teenagers (full models available in Appendix Table A2). Without exception, parents reported significantly more time with teenagers than teenagers with parents across employment status and level of education. Although parents' reports of time varied across social and economic statuses, teenagers' reports were more consistent.

FIGURE 1. PREDICTED TOTAL DAILY MINUTES WITH THE OTHER GENERATION FOR PARENTS AND TEENAGERS, BY PARENT'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS, FOR MOTHERS (PANEL A) AND FATHERS (PANEL B)

Note: 2003-2018 ATUS. FT = full-time, PT = part-time. Predicted values with 95% confidence intervals, calculated using OLS models with all covariates included and set to means (Appendix Table A2). Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level when comparing: ^a Parents and teens, within employment status. ^b Parents, versus full-time employment. ^c Teenagers, versus full-time employment.

We found the biggest gaps in reported time together between parents and teenagers when parents are not employed fulltime (Figure 1). When all else was held constant, the predicted gap between full-time employed mothers' reports and teenagers' reports was 56 minutes per day or about 6.5 hours per week (Panel A). In contrast, the gap grew to 95 minutes per day or about 11 hours per week for non-employed mothers, mainly because these mothers reported more time

rather than teenagers reporting less time. Non-employed fathers similarly reported larger gaps than their employed counterparts (Panel B). Finally, both part-time employed mothers and fathers reported significantly more time with teenagers than their full-time employed counterparts.

At the same time, perceptual gaps in time did not appear to be patterned by education (Figure 2). When all else was held constant, there were no significant differences by parents' level of education in the gaps between mothers' or fathers' and teenagers' reports of time with the other generation. Although social class links to certain parenting behaviors (Lareau, 2003) and time in child care (Ramey & Ramey, 2010), overall we found that it did not significantly affect the quantity of time parents and teenagers reported spending together, nor the size of the gap between their reports.

FIGURE 2. PREDICTED TOTAL DAILY MINUTES WITH THE OTHER GENERATION FOR PARENTS AND TEENAGERS, BY PARENT'S EDUCATION, FOR MOTHERS (PANEL A) AND FATHERS (PANEL B)

Note: 2003-2018 ATUS. HS = high school. Predicted values with 95% confidence intervals, calculated using OLS models with all covariates included and set to means (Appendix Table A2). Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level when comparing: ^a Parents and teens, within education. ^b Parents, versus less than high school. ^c Teenagers, versus less than high school.

Subjective Well-Being During Time Spent Together

Given that parents and teenagers consistently reported such discrepant amounts of time spent with the other generation, we might also expect differences in how they experience time together. We examined how the presence of the other generation was associated with reported emotional responses, and whether the presence of the other generation shaped the experiences of time spent together differently for parents and teenagers. We estimated four sets of models for each sample and well-being outcome: meaning (Table 3), happiness (Table 4), and stress (Table 5). Model 1 estimates the impact of the presence of the other generation on well-being adjusted for controls. Model 2 and Model 3 alternatively add sets of variables for the type of activity and the presence of others, and Model 4 shows estimates adjusted for all variables.

Model 1 in Tables 3 to 5 shows that the presence of the other generation, captured by the dummy variables “Parent present” or “Teenager present,” was consistently associated with parents’ and teenagers’ positive experiences along all dimensions of measured subjective well-being. Parents and teenagers found time together more meaningful and reported feeling happier and less stressed, net of activity and personal characteristics.

Furthermore, in Models 2 to 4 we found that this boost in well-being derived from the presence of the other generation could be partially accounted for by the types of activities and the presence of others during this time together. For the reported boost in *meaning* (Table 3), both the type of activity (Model 2) and the presence of others (Model 3) reduced the coefficient for the presence of the other generation for both parents and teenagers. However, even after adjusting for both of these contextual features in Model 4, there was still a significant boost in meaning for parents (mothers: .25, $p < 0.001$; fathers: .37, $p < 0.001$) and teenagers (with mothers: .18, $p < 0.05$; with fathers: .40, $p < 0.001$) associated with the presence of the other generation.

The factors that accounted for the boost in *happiness* (Table 4) differed depending on generation: the coefficient for the presence of the other generation for parents was reduced more by the presence of others (Model 3). In contrast, the coefficient for teenagers changed more due to the type of activities (Model 2). Once all controls and covariates were added in (Model 4), there was no longer any addition to happiness for teenagers due to the presence of their parents – but there was still a significant boost for mothers (mothers: .12, $p < 0.05$). Finally, for teenagers and fathers, lower levels of reported *stress* due to the presence of the other generation (Table 5) could be partially explained by the *type of activities* done in the presence of the other generation (Model 2). However, for mothers, the *presence of others* beyond the teenager played a bigger role than the type of activities (Model 3). Model 4 shows that the controls and covariates fully accounted for the significant decrease in stress for parents and teenagers in each other's presence, as shown by the non-significant coefficient for the presence of adolescents or parents.

Next, we examined whether *emotional* differences in time spent together were similarly patterned by parental employment and education (full models available in Appendix Tables A3-A5). Figures 3 and 4 show the average marginal effects of the presence of adolescents, net of all covariates and controls, by parent's employment status (Figure 3) and by parents' education (Figure 4) among mothers (Panel A) and fathers (Panel B). Meaning was consistently patterned by both employment status and education for mothers and for fathers. There were also key differences by education for all three outcomes for mothers. However, there were no other differences by education for fathers, nor were there any differences in happiness or stress by employment status for parents overall.

Table 3. *Random Effect Models Estimating Boosts in Meaning due to the Presence of Teenagers or Parents*

	Mothers				Teens with Mothers				Fathers				Teens with Fathers			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Parent present					0.30***	0.26***	0.20*	0.18*					0.45***	0.42***	0.41***	0.40***
Teen present	0.48***	0.36***	0.32***	0.25***					0.58***	0.50***	0.42***	0.37***				
Type of activity (ref. = meals)																
Housework		-0.43***		-0.37***		-0.21		-0.16		0.00		0.08		-0.24		-0.20
Child Care		0.10		0.14		-0.05		-0.00		0.62***		0.74***		0.03		0.09
Shopping/Services		-0.85***		-0.77***		-0.42**		-0.32*		-0.47**		-0.40**		-0.40*		-0.31
Leisure		-0.22**		-0.22**		-0.28***		-0.25**		-0.17		-0.13		-0.22*		-0.20*
Other activities		-0.29**		-0.25*		-0.15		-0.06		-0.20		-0.12		-0.10		-0.01
Other parent present			0.21**	0.17*			0.37***	0.36***			0.26**	0.34***			0.17	0.17
Adult family member present			0.11	0.11			0.19	0.19			-0.02	0.01			0.36*	0.34*
Child family member present			0.34***	0.24**			0.00	-0.00			0.18	0.06			-0.10	-0.12
Friend present			0.55***	0.51***			0.25**	0.26**			0.31	0.31			0.31**	0.32**
Other person present			0.26**	0.22*			0.23*	0.23*			0.22	0.24*			0.31**	0.31**
Constant	-54.95	-55.78	-46.71	-48.56	-71.99	-67.58	-69.92	-65.75	-81.62	-82.35	-92.11	-93.56	-34.47	-30.58	-33.92	-30.45
sigma_u	1.154	1.145	1.149	1.142	1.256	1.259	1.258	1.260	1.139	1.135	1.136	1.129	1.206	1.210	1.202	1.204
sigma_e	1.397	1.378	1.389	1.374	1.501	1.496	1.495	1.490	1.386	1.373	1.382	1.369	1.487	1.482	1.482	1.478
rho	0.406	0.409	0.406	0.409	0.412	0.415	0.415	0.417	0.403	0.406	0.403	0.405	0.397	0.400	0.397	0.399

Table 4. *Random Effect Models Estimating Boosts in Happiness due to the Presence of Teenagers or Parents*

	Mothers				Teens with Mothers				Fathers				Teens with Fathers			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Parent present					0.12*	0.06	0.13	0.08					0.15*	0.09	0.15	0.11
Teen present	0.31***	0.23***	0.16**	0.12*					0.34***	0.24***	0.16*	0.10				
Type of activity (ref. = meals)																
Housework		-0.52***		-0.45***		-0.48***		-0.43***		-0.13		-0.09		-0.50***		-0.46***
Child Care		-0.26**		-0.22**		-0.22		-0.17		0.29**		0.29**		-0.02		0.03
Shopping/Services		-0.45***		-0.37***		-0.39***		-0.30**		-0.44***		-0.43***		-0.41***		-0.31**
Leisure		-0.19**		-0.18**		-0.01		0.00		0.07		0.09		0.04		0.05
Other activities		-0.43***		-0.38***		-0.86***		-0.77***		-0.32***		-0.28***		-0.83***		-0.75***
Other parent present			0.26***	0.18**			0.09	0.05			0.14*	0.14*			0.09	0.05
Adult family member present			0.21*	0.19*			0.26**	0.22*			0.16	0.15			0.26*	0.23*
Child family member present			0.26***	0.23***			0.09	0.01			0.27***	0.21*			0.05	-0.04
Friend present			0.45***	0.41**			0.63***	0.47***			0.14	0.07			0.63***	0.45***
Other person present			0.21**	0.19*			0.14	0.08			-0.09	-0.08			0.16	0.07
Constant	-120.28*	-119.29*	-112.60*	-112.53*	-93.02	-93.38	-96.97	-96.42	-79.85	-77.24	-89.47	-85.83	-112.40	-107.89	-115.44*	-110.33
sigma_u	1.086	1.080	1.081	1.076	0.938	0.941	0.940	0.942	1.113	1.106	1.114	1.107	0.932	0.937	0.935	0.938
sigma_e	1.120	1.109	1.110	1.103	1.161	1.121	1.141	1.110	1.001	0.987	0.997	0.984	1.148	1.103	1.129	1.094
rho	0.485	0.487	0.487	0.488	0.395	0.413	0.404	0.419	0.553	0.557	0.555	0.559	0.398	0.419	0.407	0.424

Table 5. *Random Effect Models Estimating Boosts in Stress due to the Presence of Teenagers or Parents*

	Mothers				Teens with Mothers				Fathers				Teens with Fathers			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Parent present					-0.14**	-0.06	-0.08	-0.02					-0.19**	-0.10	-0.16*	-0.10
Teen present	-0.13*	-0.11	-0.09	-0.08					-0.15*	-0.09	-0.11	-0.06				
Type of activity (ref. = meals)																
Housework		0.15		0.14		0.36***		0.34***		0.01		-0.01		0.27**		0.26**
Child Care		0.33***		0.32**		0.18		0.17		0.02		-0.01		-0.02		-0.02
Shopping/Services		0.34***		0.32***		0.25*		0.22*		0.34**		0.33**		0.32**		0.30*
Leisure		-0.04		-0.04		0.04		0.03		-0.01		-0.02		0.09		0.09
Other activities		0.41***		0.40***		0.84***		0.81***		0.42***		0.39***		0.90***		0.89***
Other parent present			-0.09	-0.02			-0.15*	-0.10			-0.14*	-0.12			-0.06	0.01
Adult family member present			-0.17	-0.16			-0.18	-0.15			0.02	0.02			-0.15	-0.11
Child family member present			-0.02	-0.03			-0.13*	-0.05			-0.00	0.02			-0.09	-0.00
Friend present			-0.30*	-0.22			-0.23***	-0.07			-0.25	-0.17			-0.25**	-0.07
Other person present			-0.01	-0.01			-0.16*	-0.10			0.21*	0.21*			-0.16*	-0.08
Constant	122.71	121.53	119.57	119.30	76.83	76.21	78.45	77.23	93.94	95.40	100.66	100.59	18.89	14.45	19.85	14.59
sigma_u	1.339	1.332	1.340	1.334	1.014	1.018	1.016	1.020	1.145	1.129	1.147	1.132	1.034	1.035	1.032	1.033
sigma_e	1.248	1.242	1.247	1.242	1.071	1.035	1.067	1.035	1.063	1.058	1.062	1.056	1.077	1.039	1.075	1.040
rho	0.535	0.535	0.536	0.536	0.473	0.492	0.476	0.493	0.537	0.533	0.538	0.534	0.480	0.498	0.479	0.497

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013 data. Mothers: N activity = 4,166; N individual = 1,410. Teenagers with mothers: N activity = 3,789; N individual = 1,279. Fathers: N activity = 2,876; N individual = 977. Teenagers with fathers: N = 2,852; N individual = 962. All models include individual-level controls for parent's education, parent's employment status, family income, parent's race, parent's age, whether the diary day is a school day, year of diary, total number of activities, number of household children, two-parent household; all models include activity-level controls for location, duration, and time of activity.

Table 6. *Random Effects Models with Interaction Terms for Subjective Well-Being for Mothers and Teens with Mothers*

	Meaning				Happiness				Stress			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Teenager (ref. = mother)	-1.04***	-1.08***	-1.06***	-1.08***	-0.09	-0.17**	-0.16**	-0.22***	-0.50***	-0.45***	-0.48***	-0.44***
Other generation present	0.48***	0.39***	0.35 ***	0.29***	0.33***	0.23***	0.21***	0.15**	-0.13*	-0.07	-0.06	-0.04
Teenager X Other generation present	-0.19*	-0.13	-0.16	-0.10	-0.21**	-0.18*	-0.14*	-0.12	-0.03	-0.03	-0.05	-0.04
Activity type (ref. = meals)												
Housework		-0.34***		-0.28***		-0.48***		-0.43***		0.22***		0.20***
Child Care		0.11		0.18*		-0.26***		-0.21**		0.35***		0.33***
Shopping/Services		-0.69***		-0.60***		-0.46***		-0.37***		0.34***		0.31***
Leisure		-0.26***		-0.24***		-0.09*		-0.08		0.00		-0.00
Other activities		-0.21**		-0.14		-0.67***		-0.59***		0.66***		0.64***
Other parent present			0.27***	0.25***			0.19***	0.12*			-0.12*	-0.05
Adult family member present			0.15	0.15			0.23**	0.21**			-0.18*	-0.16*

Child family member present			0.19**	0.13*			0.18***	0.13**			-0.06	-0.04
Friend present			0.35***	0.32***			0.60***	0.50***			-0.26***	-0.13*
Other person present			0.22**	0.19**			0.17**	0.15**			-0.10	-0.09
Constant	-54.78	-52.79	-52.04	-50.40	-100.48**	-98.29**	-98.71**	-97.24*	104.10*	102.28*	103.15*	102.03*
sigma_u	1.207	1.207	1.206	1.206	1.020	1.019	1.017	1.017	1.199	1.195	1.199	1.196
sigma_e	1.450	1.438	1.443	1.433	1.140	1.119	1.126	1.110	1.168	1.151	1.165	1.150
Rho	0.409	0.413	0.411	0.414	0.445	0.453	0.449	0.457	0.513	0.519	0.514	0.519

Table 7. *Random Effects Models with Interaction Terms for Subjective Well-Being for Fathers and Teens with Fathers*

	Meaning				Happiness				Stress			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Teenager (ref. = father)	-0.88***	-0.87***	-0.92***	-0.90***	-0.08	-0.15*	-0.16**	-0.21***	-0.11	-0.06	-0.07	-0.04
Other generation present	0.61***	0.54***	0.50***	0.46***	0.38***	0.23***	0.26***	0.16*	-0.16**	-0.04	-0.09	-0.02
Teenager X Other generation present	-0.19	-0.14	-0.15	-0.13	-0.26**	-0.15	-0.18*	-0.10	-0.03	-0.09	-0.06	-0.10
Activity type (ref. = meals)												
Housework		-0.07		-0.02		-0.27***		-0.24***		0.11		0.10
Child Care		0.47***		0.59***		0.17*		0.22**		0.05		0.03
Shopping/Services		-0.46***		-0.37***		-0.47***		-0.40***		0.36***		0.34***
Leisure		-0.18**		-0.15*		0.07		0.08		0.04		0.03
Other activities		-0.14		-0.05		-0.58***		-0.51***		0.67***		0.64***
Other parent present			0.22***	0.26***			0.11*	0.09			-0.11*	-0.06
Adult family member present			0.20	0.19			0.20*	0.18*			-0.08	-0.06
Child family member present			0.02	-0.04			0.15*	0.08			-0.05	0.01
Friend present			0.36***	0.35***			0.56***	0.43***			-0.27***	-0.14*
Other person present			0.22**	0.21**			0.03	-0.01			0.00	0.03
Constant	-54.95	-53.54	-61.32	-59.77	-83.04	-79.38	-91.25*	-85.74*	57.65	56.56	62.33	59.06
sigma_u	1.177	1.177	1.172	1.170	1.029	1.026	1.028	1.026	1.098	1.091	1.099	1.092
sigma_e	1.443	1.435	1.439	1.431	1.080	1.053	1.069	1.047	1.072	1.052	1.070	1.052
Rho	0.399	0.402	0.399	0.401	0.476	0.487	0.481	0.490	0.512	0.518	0.513	0.519

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013 data. All models include individual-level controls for parent's education, parent's employment status, family income, parent's race, parent's age, whether the diary day is a school day, year of diary, total number of activities, number of household children, two-parent household; all models include activity-level controls for location, duration, and time of activity.

FIGURE 3. AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS OF THE PRESENCE OF ADOLESCENTS ON MOTHERS' (PANEL A) AND FATHERS' (PANEL B) MEANING, HAPPINESS, AND STRESS, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013. Average marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, calculated using random-effects models with an interaction between presence of the other generation and employment status, and with all individual- and activity-level controls (Appendix Tables A3-A5). Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level when comparing: ^a Full-time vs. part-time employed. ^b Full-time vs. non-employed. ^c Part-time vs. non-employed.

For meaning (Figure 3), only employed mothers (Panel A) and fathers (Panel B) reported a significant boost due to the presence of their teenager, compared to not being with them, holding all else constant. Compared to non-employed mothers (Figure 3, Panel A), full- and part-time employed mothers experienced a significantly larger boost in meaning due to the presence of their teenager. Full-time employed fathers (Figure 3, Panel B) reported a significantly larger boost than their part-time employed counterparts, but there is no difference between non-employed and other fathers.

Though reports of teen presence were not patterned by education, the emotional experience of time with teenagers was (Figure 4), particularly for mothers (Panel A). College-educated mothers differed from mothers with a high school education or less, garnering the largest boost in meaning when their adolescent was present. For happiness, mothers with at least some college education experienced a larger boost than high school graduate mothers.

For stress, high school graduates and mothers with some college benefited from the presence of a teenager more so, compared to mothers who never graduated from high school. College graduate fathers (Panel B) reported a significantly larger boosts in meaning compared to high school graduates.

FIGURE 4. AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS OF THE PRESENCE OF ADOLESCENTS ON MOTHERS' (PANEL A) AND FATHERS' (PANEL B) MEANING, HAPPINESS, AND STRESS, BY PARENTAL EDUCATION.

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013. HS = high school. Average marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, calculated using random-effects models with an interaction between presence of the other generation and education, and with all individual- and activity-level controls (Appendix Tables A3-A5). Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level when comparing: ^a <HS vs. HS grad. ^b <HS vs. some college. ^c <HS vs. college grad. ^d HS grad vs. some college. ^e HS grad vs. college grad. ^f Some college vs. college grad.

Finally, we examined whether the benefits of co-presence differed by generation. The models in Table 6 examine this for mothers and Table 7 for fathers by testing an interaction between the presence of the other generation and the generation of the respondent. Model 1 shows estimates adjusted for controls; Model 2 and Model 3 add variables for the type of activity and the presence of others, respectively; and Model 4 shows estimates adjusted for all variables.

The negative coefficient for the interaction term between age group (mother or teenager) and presence of the other generation (Tables 6 and 7, Model 1) shows that teenagers experienced a smaller boost than do mothers in meaning and happiness, and fathers in happiness, during co-

present activities. This generational difference for mothers was explained by the types of activities (Model 2) and the presence of others (Model 3) in time spent together compared to time spent apart. There was no generational difference in reports in the experiences of stress.

DISCUSSION

Objectively, when together in a shared space, parents and adolescents should report being with each other for the same amount of time, despite sometimes being engaged in different activities. This is especially the case when a narrow definition (e.g., “who was in the room with you” or “who accompanied you”) is provided by the interviewer. Instead, family togetherness, as we document with nationally representative samples, encompasses a great deal of ambiguity for American teenagers and their parents. The fluidity of what it means to be “with” family members -- called “ambiguous togetherness” by Ashbourne and Daly (2012) – is strongly evident. We extend this concept by arguing that these divergent reports of time together are not merely ambiguous – they represent “creating” versus “negating” togetherness – based on generational positions and social and economic statuses.

How much time, then, do U.S. mothers spend with high-school-aged children, if we consider co-presence in a very precise way? Researchers using representative samples of mothers, would state 24 hours per week; alternatively, scholars examining teenagers alone would argue that it is 15 hours. The 9-hour per week mismatch is quite sizable – more than an entire school or work day of “misperceived” time.” Fathers too appear to significantly create time together which goes unrecognized by teenagers. What makes these discrepancies even more remarkable is that in a typical week, parents and teenagers’ available time together is constrained. About one-third of respondents’ time was spent sleeping, which is not an activity for which co-presence was recorded and so mismatches were not even possible. Moreover, a good

deal of teenagers' time is otherwise taken up by school (on most days, most of the year) and parents' time by paid work, where neither party would regularly report the other present – again shortening the potentially available time window for parent-child mismatches.

The magnitude of the overall gap indicates that adolescents could be underreporting time with mothers and fathers due to less awareness, motivation, or desire. Ambiguity translates into the exclusion of others from counting as co-present in what we call *negating togetherness*. For example, it is possible that adolescents might not notice a parent's nearby presence while doing homework or engaging in their own leisure, especially if they are multitasking using technology like a smartphone or tablet (Mullan & Chatzitheochari, 2019). Developmentally, adolescents are inclined to see themselves as independent and ignore or downplay their parents' presence – to exclude being and feeling “with” parents under ambiguous conditions. Moreover, unlike parents, they are not responsible for creating family time through noticing and including other family members at this stage of their lives.

Alternatively, mothers and fathers could be vigilantly (over)observing time together with their adolescents each week, rendering ambiguities to a “creation of togetherness.” Mothers and fathers have more at stake in reporting to others (and perhaps to themselves) that they are spending time with children, because it is socially desirable and demonstrates that they are responsible parents (Collett & Childs, 2009). For example, it is likely that parents who report a leisure activity such as watching television when a teenager is nearby may want to count their presence – even if the teenager simply walked through the room once to ask a question. Teenagers may be motivated to discount short interactions altogether, whereas parents may extend the momentary presence of teenagers for the entire activity spell. Overall, parents may “see” their child through marking them present, perhaps feeling responsibility for a teenager who

is not technically present, or feeling appreciation for their child who is elsewhere and doing neutral, positive or productive activities (Ashbourne & Daly, 2012). Future research with third-party observers could elucidate the drivers of these parent-teenager gaps in reported time together.

There was notable variation in the discrepancy size based on the educational attainment and employment statuses of parents. Stay-at-home parents and their teenagers perceive each other's presence more differently than other groups. First, in families where parents do not work full-time, there are likely longer spells of time where togetherness is ambiguous, providing greater opportunity for mismatches. Imagine a mother cooking in the kitchen, while children are in a separated living room. The mother feels her children are *with* her (even though by definition they are not in the same room) and she is providing a meal *for* them, but in this example, her report is technically and objectively inaccurate. She perceives or "creates" togetherness, but the teenager "negates" it, excluding the mother cognitively and emotionally from being present in their activity – which is technically and objectively accurate. The greater match between full-time employed parents' and teenagers' reports of time suggests that proportionately more of their time in each other's company may be in less ambiguous activities (e.g. meals, joint leisure activities). Second, stay-at-home mothers' extensive over-reporting, relative to other groups, is plausible given their role is ostensibly wholly in the care work of other family members, who they may be especially attuned and motivated to see and read their needs (Collett & Childs, 2009; Folbre & Yoon, 2007; Folbre, 2009; Longmore et al., 2013; Orgad, 2019).

The study extends the study of family time theoretically with an innovative approach, showing how reports indicate family actors' active creation or negation of togetherness dependent on social position. In the same way, people negotiate who they are "with" and "not

with” in public (Goffman, 1971), among intimates, a negotiated togetherness – with individuals differently sensitive to co-presence in order to “create” versus “receive” family time – is evident. We build on the concept of ambiguous togetherness to denote a patterned directionality in people’s reports about time together – a “creating” versus “negating” togetherness in family time. Parents’ role motivates meaning-making surrounding the idea and emotions of family togetherness, even if more so within their own perspective. Teenagers see and report time together differently, negating ambiguous situations as being together with parents. On the brink of adulthood, teenagers individuate away from parents temporally, perceptually, seeing their world differently (Longmore et al., 2013).

Through a novel analysis of perspectives, this study also identifies important methodological issues for the study of family time through illustrating the relatively large and socially patterned discrepancies in parental versus teenagers’ reports. Although time diary data is regarded as a highly reliable way to estimate activities at a population level, parents’ reports of child care or co-present time with children may be influenced by the meanings about the importance of togetherness. Changes over time in reported child care time and its divergence by social statuses (e.g., Ramey & Ramey, 2010) should be cautiously interpreted. Shifting parenting norms and understandings of parental roles as intensive (Hays, 1996; Lareau, 2003) intersect with social and economic statuses. These, in turn, may make certain types of parents “see” children’s co-presence more often in ambiguous situations (Hofferth 2006). Importantly, the reliability of the “with” measure may be lower than the reliability of reports of the activities themselves, even when surveys use very precise definitions of co-presence. Quantitative family researchers use parental reports of time for the vast majority of analyses, though there are some

available data from children or adolescents who report activities and co-presence in time diaries (e.g. ATUS, UK Time Use Survey, Canadian General Social Survey).

When it comes to the emotional valence of families' activities together, the results paint a somewhat different picture -- more matched and positive. For both parents and adolescents in U.S. families, activities where the other generation is reported as present are viewed as more meaningful and are experienced as happier and less stressful. Especially for a sense of meaning, even once we account for the social context of the time together -- the type of activity and the presence of other people beyond the parent-teen dyad -- there is a boost in meaning from the contact between parent and high schooler. In general though, there is evidence that the presence of additional family members is part of what makes the time together more positive than time apart, for teenagers but perhaps even more so for parents -- i.e. a "family" time versus a parent-child time.

A key caveat to note, and in line with the findings on mismatched perceptions, is that offspring are not getting emotional boosts from co-presence that they do not "see" under conditions of negated togetherness identified in this study. Parents -- especially mothers -- are tasked with, and motivated toward the creation of togetherness for the family unit, and likely feel responsible for regularly pushing teenagers into family time (Collett & Childs, 2009; Damaske, 2011). Meanwhile, the fact that U.S. teenagers do not feel they are with their parents necessarily means they won't get a boost from a presence they do not see. Perhaps emotions give rise to orientation, too, it could be that in general, adolescents' less positive orientations towards parents (relative to parents' motivated emotionality) may "blind" them to seeing parents as part of their physical space.

The average teenager is reporting that time with a parent is emotionally better than time reported away from them. However, it is important to acknowledge that teenagers' experiences surely vary. At least some teenagers are in difficult home situations and will experience co-presence with a parent who is conflictual, or abusive. In these cases, the teenager is unlikely to experience positive emotions in the presence of a parent relative to times apart.

We also show that the ways parent-adolescent togetherness is experienced emotionally is patterned by social status, for parents at least. The more limited time employed parents and their teenagers spend together provides greater meaning "returns" to parents, perhaps because they perceive it as a more special or rare experience. Better emotional returns in subjective meaning for highly-educated mothers may be linked to the way their social resources have allowed them to successfully prepare and launch their almost-grown child to college (Milkie & Warner, 2014; Nelson, 2010). These status variations point back to the ambiguity inherent in when co-presence is perceived, how it is defined, and to how emotional valence may be linked with cognition.

There are limitations to note. Although we use nationally representative samples of adolescents and parents, it would be ideal to have reports from different generations in the same household. Future research using parents and teenagers from the same household, such as beeper studies (e.g., Larson & Richards, 1994) or with time use studies with multiple respondents (e.g., UK Time Use Survey), could more precisely pinpoint the sources of mismatches in co-presence. However, ATUS is the data source with the most precise measure of togetherness ("in the room with"), allowing us to assess ambiguous togetherness more accurately. Second, findings here on the emotional valence of reported time together indicate positive family relations in America, with time together experienced more positively than time apart for both generations. However, the sample is restricted to those parents who live in the same household with offspring. There are

sizable minorities of U.S. parents who do not reside with their teenagers and teenagers who do not live with one parent, especially fathers. Adolescents' time with non-residential parents may be experienced differently and perhaps not as positively or with more emotional mismatch. This is an area ripe for future research. Finally, there are additional important social statuses that may be shape the meaning of family time, such as race/ethnicity (Dow, 2019), but which are beyond the scope of this study.

Future research on the perception of time and perceptual and emotional mismatches across family members is likely to become more important. Given dramatic changes in interpersonal communication enabled by new technologies, the question of what being present or “with” someone will continue to be of concern to scholars, public policy makers, teachers, and family members (Gergen, 2002; Mullan & Chatzitheochari, 2019). Even before the widespread adoption of major technological advances such as smartphones which altered connectivity and presence, Larson & Richards (1994:135) wrote that for their respondents in the same space, “[...] the question of whether they were [truly] together may be ambiguous, as is the case of a mother who reported driving five hours without exchanging a word with her headphone-clad sixth-grade daughter.” This scenario is likely reoccurring in some form or other much more often now compared to the 1980s when their data were collected. Future research should focus on the role of technology in the processes of creating and negating psychological and emotional togetherness and how these are socially patterned.

In conclusion, we show that U.S. mothers and fathers report being co-present with their high-school-aged offspring many more hours than teenagers report being together with their parents – the gap equivalent to more than an entire school day per week. This indicates that definitions of time, and what togetherness means is negotiated, and perhaps contested. The

ambiguity of family members' experiences can be rendered as "togetherness" or negated from consideration as meaningful interaction. And yet for both generations, time reported as together feels happier, more meaningful, and less stressful than time apart. Parents' social and economic characteristics matter for experiences with family members – with employed parents most realistic in assessments of the quantity of time and reporting more positive emotions with teenagers than stay-at-home parents. Scholars who wish to describe how American parents spend time with children should also consider the reports of offspring, actors in their own right. These provide a clearer picture of the amount of time spent together and extend knowledge about the meanings and motivations of togetherness. How we define being with family members proximate to us – creating or negating co-presence -- is based distinctly on role-related vantage points and is shaped by social and economic status dimensions.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Parent and Teenager Samples, ATUS Well-Being Module (2010, 2012, 2013)

	Mothers	Teenagers with Mothers	Fathers	Teenagers with Fathers
Parent's age	43.78	44.69	46.46	47.47
Parent's race				
White	.63	.59	.68	.66
Black	.11	.12	.08	.06
Hispanic	.21	.23	.19	.22
Other	.05	.07	.06	.06
Two-parent household	.75	.77	.93	.94
Number of other HH children	.99	1.40	.99	1.44
Parent's education				
Less than high school	.13	.14	.12	.14
High school graduate	.27	.24	.35	.24
Some college	.30	.29	.21	.24
College graduate	.30	.33	.32	.37
Parent's employment status				
Employed, full-time	.51	.54	.85	.82
Employed, part-time	.18	.19	.05	.06
Non-employed	.31	.28	.11	.12
Family income				
<\$25,000	.18	.15	.12	.08
\$25,000-\$75,000	.44	.45	.41	.45
\$75,000+	.36	.40	.46	.46
Missing	.02	.01	.01	.01
% of selected activities reported present*				
Other parent	.21	.12	.26	.29
Adult family member	.07	.08	.06	.07
Child family member	.20	.16	.16	.16
Friend	.06	.18	.04	.17
Other person	.22	.12	.29	.13
Location of selected activities				
Home	.53	.43	.44	.45
Work/School	.22	.25	.32	.25
Travel	.09	.09	.10	.09
Other	.16	.23	.14	.22
Time of selected activities				
Morning (4 a.m.-12 p.m.)	.41	.36	.42	.34

	Mothers	Teenagers with Mothers	Fathers	Teenagers with Fathers
Afternoon (12-5 p.m.)	.32	.33	.32	.34
Evening (5-9 p.m.)	.22	.23	.22	.23
Night (9 p.m.-4 a.m.)	.05	.08	.04	.09
Number of activities on diary day	22.31	18.25	18.39	18.48
Activity <i>N</i>	4,166	3,789	2,876	2,852
Respondent <i>N</i>	1,410	1,279	977	962

Note: 2010, 2012, 2013 ATUS with Well-Being Module supplement files. Parents with a household child aged 15-17 years old and teenagers aged 15-17 years old with a household parent. Means are weighted. HH = household. Selected activities are those randomly selected (up to 3) for Well-Being Module questions. *Presence of another person is not mutually exclusive.

Table A2: OLS Models for Total Daily Minutes with the Other Generation

	Mothers (N=8,394)	Teenagers with Mothers (N=7,647)	Fathers (N=5,984)	Teenagers with Fathers (N=5,846)
Parents' education (ref. = Less than high school)				
High school graduate	-19.79 (11.943)	4.28 (8.844)	-11.39 (11.400)	2.93 (9.188)
Some college	-27.82* (11.709)	0.97 (8.964)	-7.44 (11.651)	13.52 (9.366)
College graduate	-9.10 (12.076)	4.20 (9.215)	-3.44 (11.932)	14.39 (9.820)
Parent's employment status (ref. = full-time)				
Part-time	32.10*** (6.699)	-0.45 (5.835)	51.34* (22.575)	-7.13 (12.013)
Non-employed	62.71*** (7.044)	23.32*** (5.732)	22.95* (11.446)	11.56 (9.033)
Family income (ref. = <\$25,000)				
\$25,000-\$75,000	-7.52 (8.857)	-6.77 (7.697)	4.24 (12.058)	4.53 (9.481)
\$75,000+	-26.10** (9.646)	-7.02 (8.903)	-7.54 (12.483)	1.38 (10.165)
Missing	-20.46 (12.243)	-18.74 (9.678)	-9.57 (15.092)	5.14 (11.837)
Race of parent (ref. = white)				
Black	-38.23*** (8.336)	-36.07*** (7.350)	-25.52* (10.990)	-43.61*** (8.607)
Hispanic	15.02 (8.339)	-3.94 (6.915)	27.47** (8.588)	-0.80 (7.578)
Other	-11.52 (10.132)	-22.83** (8.764)	13.76 (12.851)	-26.32** (8.929)
Age of parent	-1.51** (0.518)	-0.86* (0.377)	-0.94 (0.497)	-0.44 (0.359)
Other children in household	16.38*** (3.055)	-0.00 (2.028)	14.16*** (2.882)	3.81 (2.334)
Two-parent household (ref. = single-parent)	9.87 (6.982)	7.63 (5.785)	-5.94 (10.374)	-5.75 (9.069)
Diary day is school day	-98.11*** (5.365)	-74.67*** (4.800)	-96.07** (5.86)	-72.77** (4.90)
Year of diary	0.05 (0.598)	3.10*** (0.523)	0.80 (0.605)	3.14*** (0.570)
Number of activities	-0.43	0.43	-0.06	-0.99*

	Mothers (N=8,394)	Teenagers with Mothers (N=7,647)	Fathers (N=5,984)	Teenagers with Fathers (N=5,846)
	(0.277)	(0.375)	(0.375)	(0.387)
% of activities at home	53.98**	67.89***	116.12***	39.20*
	(16.616)	(14.527)	(18.018)	(15.935)
Constant	204.51	-6,044.30***	-1,399.22	-6,140.91***
	(1,197.130)	(1,049.360)	(1,213.496)	(1,139.130)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed tests)

Note: 2003-2018 ATUS. Parents with a household child aged 15-17 years old and teenagers aged 15-17 years old with a household parent.

Table A3: Random Effects Models for Meaning by Employment and Educational Attainment, Mothers and Fathers

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Employment	Education	Employment	Education
Other generation present	0.40***	0.01	0.34***	0.13
Employment				
Parent's employment status (ref. = full-time)				
Part-time	0.02	0.01	0.17	0.33*
Non-employed	0.25*	0.11	0.04	0.05
Employment status X Other gen present				
Part-time X Present	-0.06		0.61*	
Non-employed X Present	-0.42***		0.04	
Education				
Parent's education (ref. = less than high school)				
High school graduate	0.10	0.10	0.11	-0.04
Some college	-0.09	-0.18	0.11	0.06
College graduate	-0.29	-0.43*	-0.07	-0.10
Parent's education X Other gen present				
High school graduate X Present		-0.02		0.61
Some college X Present		0.26		0.19
College graduate X Present		0.45**		0.11
Covariates				
Type of activity (ref. = meals)				
Housework	-0.37***	-0.37***	0.08	0.08
Child Care	0.14	0.13	0.75***	0.74***
Shopping/Services	-0.78***	-0.78***	-0.39**	-0.40**
Leisure	-0.22**	-0.22**	-0.13	-0.12
Other activities	-0.23*	-0.25*	-0.11	-0.11
Other parent present	0.17*	0.16*	0.34***	0.34***
Adult family member present	0.11	0.13	-0.00	-0.00
Child family member present	0.25**	0.24**	0.05	0.06
Friend present	0.51***	0.50***	0.31	0.32
Other person present	0.23*	0.22*	0.24*	0.23*
Constant	-49.07	-45.59	-95.19	-94.13
sigma_u	1.137	1.138	1.128	1.122
sigma_e	1.373	1.373	1.369	1.369
rho	0.407	0.407	0.404	0.402

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013 data. All models include individual-level controls for parent's education, parent's employment status, family income, parent's race, parent's age, whether the diary day is a school day, year of diary, total number of activities, number of household children, two-parent household; all models include activity-level controls for location, duration, and time of activity.

Table A4: Random Effects Models for Happiness by Employment and Educational Attainment, Mothers and Fathers

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Employment	Education	Employment	Education
Other generation present	0.15*	0.11	0.07	-0.03
Employment				
Parent's employment status (ref. = full-time)				
Part-time	-0.15	-0.18*	0.25	0.31*
Non-employed	-0.12	-0.13	-0.38*	-0.32*
Employment status X Other gen present				
Part-time X Present	-0.11			
Non-employed X Present	-0.04			
Education				
Parent's education (ref. = less than high school)				
High school graduate	-0.14	-0.07	0.02	-0.05
Some college	-0.31*	-0.34*	0.10	0.06
College graduate	-0.40**	-0.42**	-0.03	-0.06
Parent's education X Other gen present				
High school graduate X Present		-0.22		0.27
Some college X Present		0.08		0.13
College graduate X Present		0.08		0.08
Covariates				
Type of activity (ref. = meals)				
Housework	-0.45***	-0.45***	-0.09	-0.08
Child Care	-0.22**	-0.23**	0.29**	0.29**
Shopping/Services	-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.43***	-0.43***
Leisure	-0.18**	-0.18**	0.09	0.09
Other activities	-0.38***	-0.39***	-0.28***	-0.28***
Other parent present	0.18**	0.17**	0.14*	0.14*
Adult family member present	0.19*	0.20*	0.15	0.15
Child family member present	0.23***	0.22***	0.21*	0.21*
Friend present	0.41**	0.41**	0.07	0.07
Other person present	0.19*	0.19*	-0.08	-0.09
Constant	-112.70*	-110.39*	-88.25	-86.10
sigma_u	1.077	1.073	1.108	1.107
sigma_e	1.103	1.102	0.984	0.985
rho	0.488	0.486	0.559	0.558

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013 data. All models include individual-level controls for parent's education, parent's employment status, family income, parent's race, parent's age, whether the diary day is a school day, year of diary, total number of activities, number of household children, two-parent household; all models include activity-level controls for location, duration, and time of activity.

Table A5: Random Effects Models for Stress by Employment and Educational Attainment, Mothers and Fathers

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Employment	Education	Employment	Education
Other generation present	-0.10	-0.45*	-0.10	0.03
Employment				
Parent's employment status (ref. = full-time)				
Part-time	0.01	0.05	-0.27	-0.21
Non-employed	-0.01	-0.01	0.52**	0.58**
Employment status X Other gen present				
Part-time X Present	0.11		0.19	
Non-employed X Present	-0.02		0.20	
Education				
Parent's education (ref. = less than high school)				
High school graduate	-0.22	-0.42*	-0.09	-0.06
Some college	-0.12	-0.26	-0.04	-0.01
College graduate	-0.11	-0.23	0.26	0.30
Parent's education X Other gen present				
High school graduate X Present		0.59**		-0.10
Some college X Present		0.40*		-0.12
College graduate X Present		0.32		-0.11
Covariates				
Type of activity (ref. = meals)				
Housework	0.14	0.13	-0.01	-0.01
Child Care	0.32**	0.32**	-0.02	-0.02
Shopping/Services	0.33***	0.33***	0.33**	0.33**
Leisure	-0.04	-0.04	-0.02	-0.02
Other activities	0.41***	0.41***	0.38***	0.39***
Other parent present	-0.02	-0.01	-0.12	-0.12
Adult family member present	-0.15	-0.16	0.02	0.02
Child family member present	-0.03	-0.02	0.02	0.02
Friend present	-0.22	-0.22	-0.17	-0.18
Other person present	-0.01	-0.00	0.21*	0.21*
Constant				
sigma_u				
sigma_e				
rho				

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Note: ATUS Well-Being Module 2010, 2012, 2013 data. All models include individual-level controls for parent's education, parent's employment status, family income, parent's race, parent's age, whether the diary day is a school day, year of diary, total number of activities, number of household children, two-parent household; all models include activity-level controls for location, duration, and time of activity.