

Fathers and work-life balance: current challenges

Professor Margaret O'Brien

Men's Roles in a Gender Equality Perspective, International
Workshop

ICS Lisbon

19 November 2015

Fatherhood in flux

Fathers – 20th century transition
cultural scripts from ‘**father right**’
to ‘**father love**’

21st century agenda

How to care & work ?
Fathers’ “two worlds” of work and
family

**Father-sensitive work-family
research & policies**

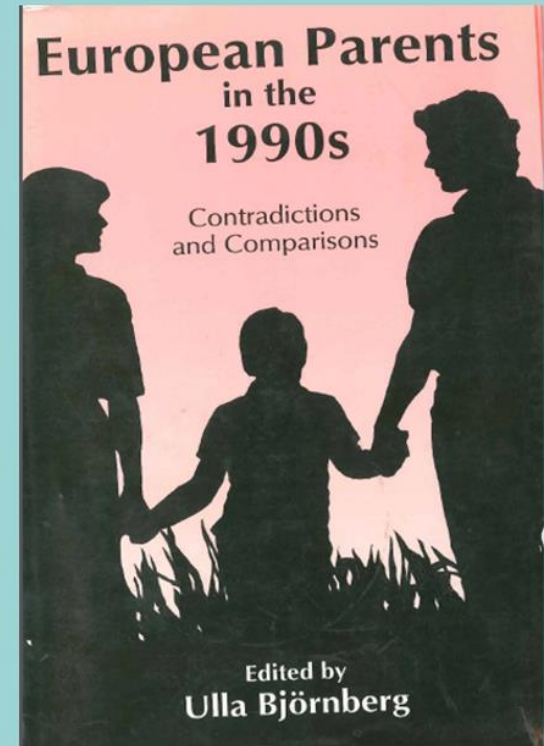
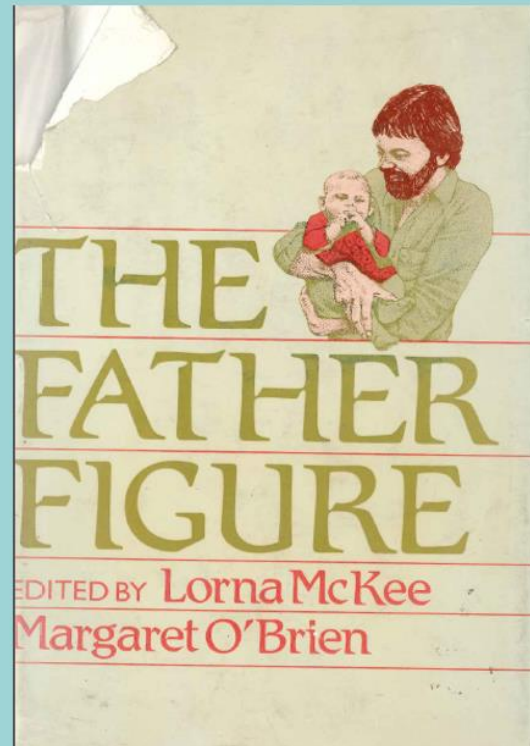
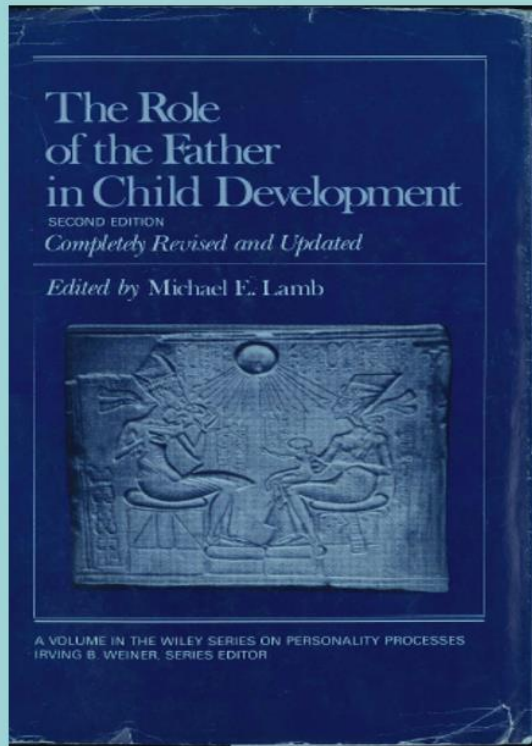


Father's advice to son

- “You’ve got to be ruthless. Journalism can take over people’s lives, and you’ve got to let that not happen to you or you’ll never settle down and have a family. You’ve got to be vigilant not to become too addicted to the career.”

Huffington Post feature on working fathers November 2015

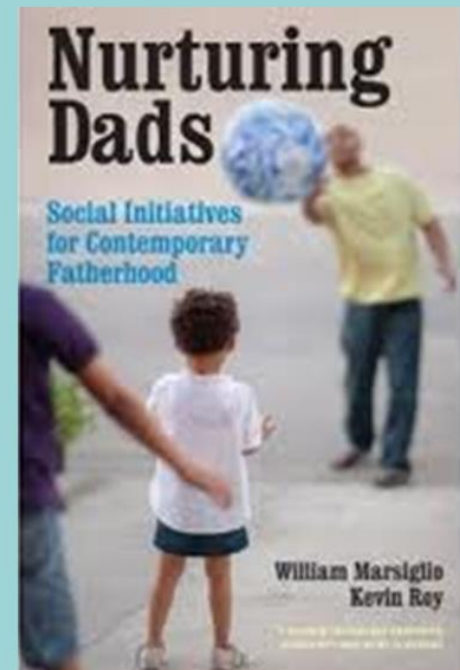
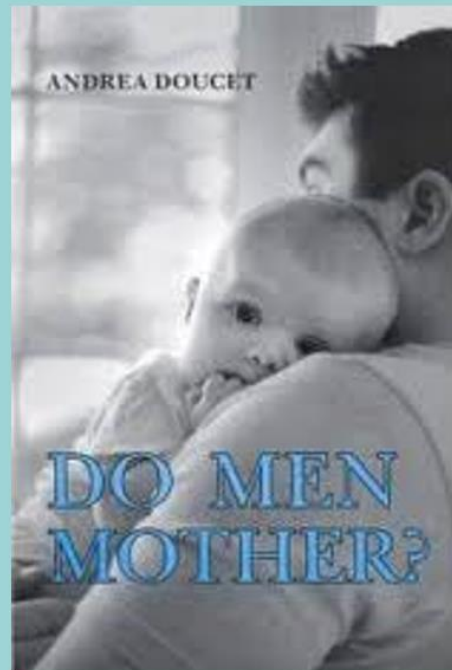
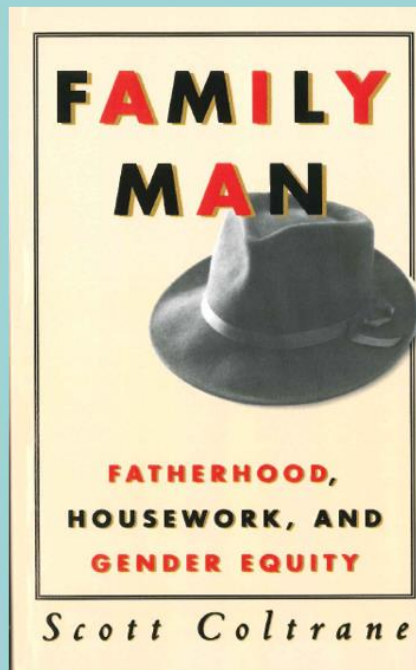
Research: 1970s, 1980s, 1990s



Critique of mother-focused paradigm

- Matri-centred social sciences - mothers and wives
- Exploration of fathers' and men's perceptions of the personal
- Re-evaluation of essentialist elements in concept of patriarchy
- “when men share housework & child care with women important mechanisms of patriarchy are threatened”
McKee & O'Brien, 1982

Fathers: partners, carers, involved, nurturers, intimate



Fathers, work and families in x

[www.modernfatherhood.org](#)

[Bing Maps](#)
[Download Windows Live](#)
[Homepage](#)
[Imported From IE](#)
[BBC News](#)
[Modern Fatherhood](#)
[Millennium Cohort Study](#)
[Dr Ursula Henz - Acad...](#)

modern fatherhood

FATHERS, WORK AND FAMILIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

[about](#)
[publications](#)
[events](#)
[media centre](#)


WHO ARE FATHERS?

FATHERS AND WORK

FATHERS AND FAMILIES

Modern Fatherhood is a place to examine the role of 21st century fathers at home and in the world of work. It's the result of research collaboration between **NatCen Social Research** and the **University of East Anglia** funded by the ESRC. Although principally focused on fathers in the UK, we also examine how the realities of fatherhood vary across Europe.


Over half of fathers who don't live with their children stay in touch at least once a week



who are fathers?

As the role of men in family life has changed, fatherhood had become increasingly complex. So what are fathers like today?


Two parent families are working more than in the past



fathers and work

Paid work has previously been a barrier to greater involvement in family life. Are fathers still working long hours or working in the evenings or at week-ends? What patterns do modern fathers work?

More mothers than fathers eat meals most days with their children



fathers and families

A father's presence has a huge impact on the development and wellbeing of their child. So how close are fathers and children? How do fathers share childcare with partners and other family members?

Start

2 Microsoft Office Outl...

3 Microsoft Office Pow...

Fathers, work and fa...

Search Desktop

11:31

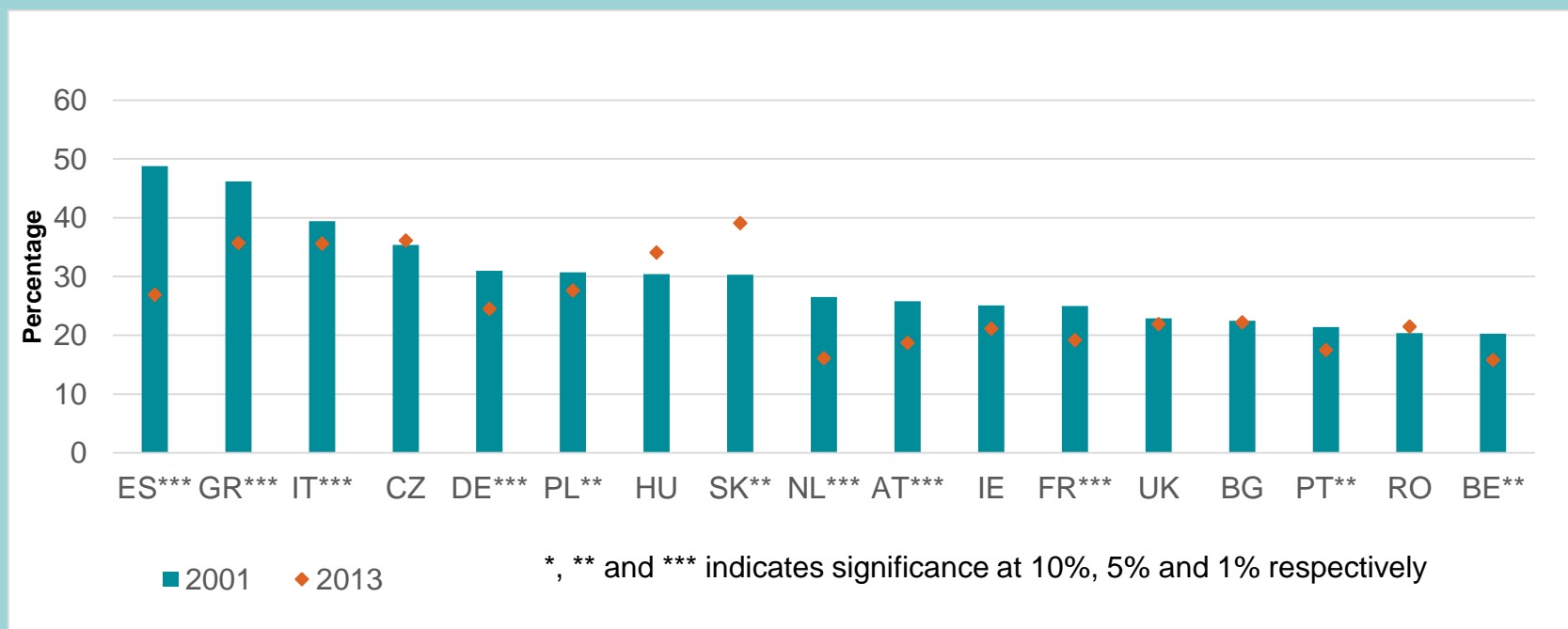
Aims of the study

1. To provide a **comprehensive profiling** of fathers in 21st century Britain in terms of their paid work and family life.
2. To explore **factors** associated with differences in fathers' paid work and family life.
3. To analyse **time trends** in fathers' working patterns to explore effects of policy changes.
4. To explore the role of **institutional factors**, by comparing the UK with other European countries.

Data

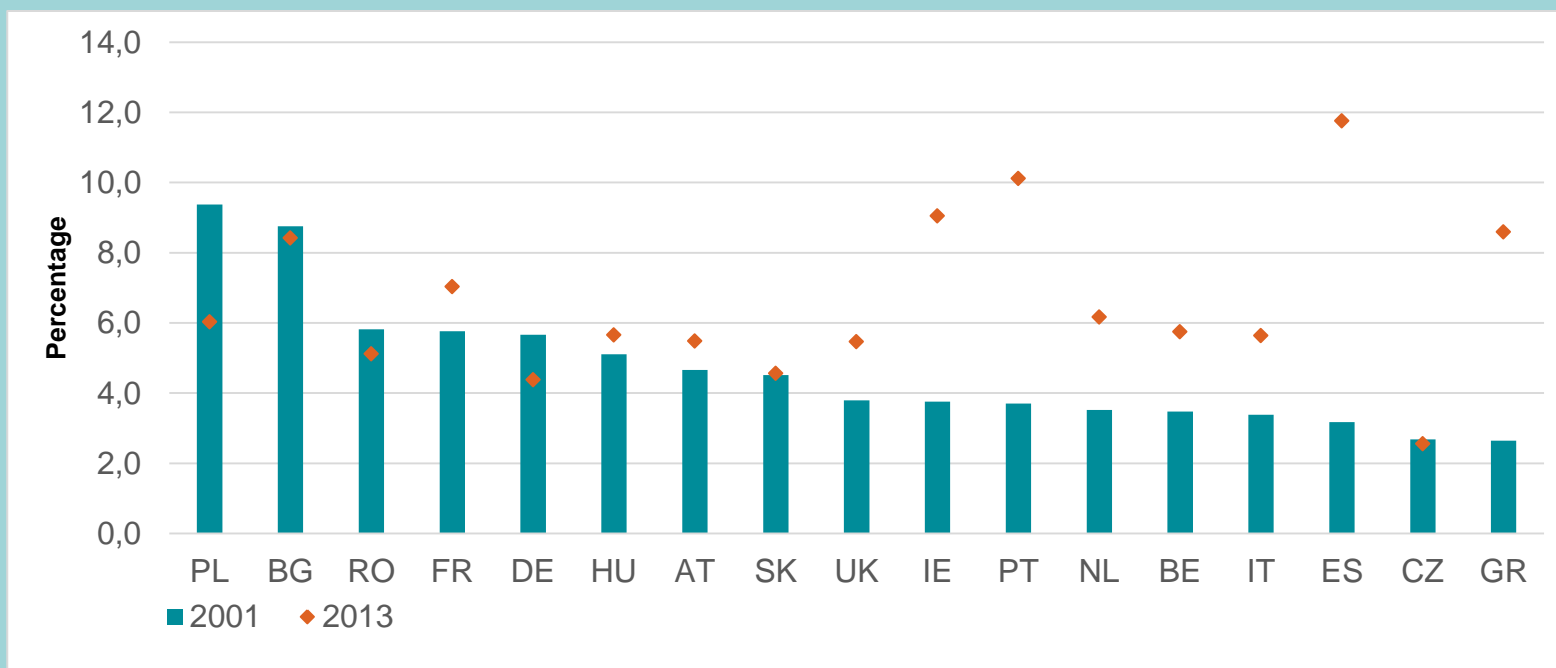
1. **Understanding society**, wave 1 (2009-10) and wave 2 (2010-11) follow on from ***British Household Panel Survey (1991)***
2. **EU Labour Force Survey** (2000-2013)
3. **European Social Survey**, round 2 (2004-05) and round 5 (2010-11)

Declining solo father earners “breadwinners”



Note: 2003 for CZ, DE, PL, SK, FR and RO; 2005 for IT, AT and BG; 2007 for IE

More mother lead earners



Note: 2003 for CZ, DE, PL, SK, FR and RO; 2005 for IT, AT and BG; 2007 for IE

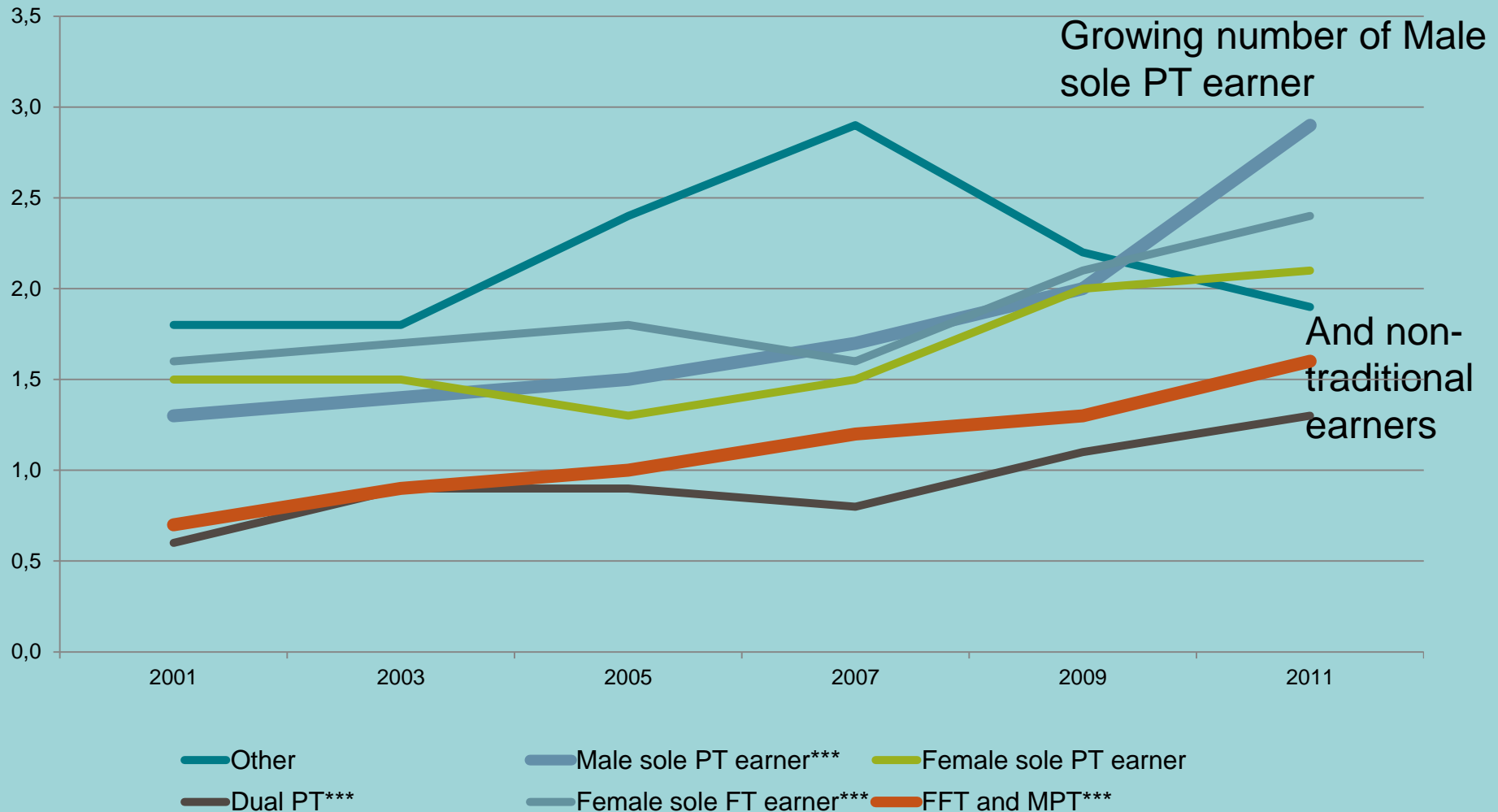
Includes households where the female is the lead worker – sole female FT or PT earner or FT in a 1.5 earner household.

Working patterns of couples dependent children

Type	Weekly working hours of male	Weekly working hours of female
<i>Dual FT earner MFT & FFT</i>	Greater than or equal to 30 hours	Greater than or equal to 30 hours
<i>1.5 earner MFT & FPT</i>	Greater than or equal to 30 hours	Less than 30 hours
<i>1.5 earner model MPT & FFT</i>	Less than 30 hours	Greater than or equal to 30
<i>Male breadwinner MFT</i>	Greater than or equal to 30 hours	Female not employed (unemployed or inactive)
<i>Female breadwinner FFT</i>	Male not employed (unemployed or inactive)	Greater than or equal to 30
<i>Dual PT earner MPT & FPT</i>	Greater than 0, less than 30 hours	Greater than 0, less than 30 hours
<i>Male sole PT earner MPT</i>	Greater than 0, less than 30 hours	Female not employed (unemployed or inactive)
<i>Female sole PT earner FPT</i>	Male not employed (unemployed or inactive)	Greater than 0, less than 30 hours
<i>Non-earner</i>	Male not employed (unemployed or inactive)	Female not employed (unemployed or inactive)
<i>Other</i>	(Either) Male works, but hours vary drastically	(Or) Female works, but hours vary drastically

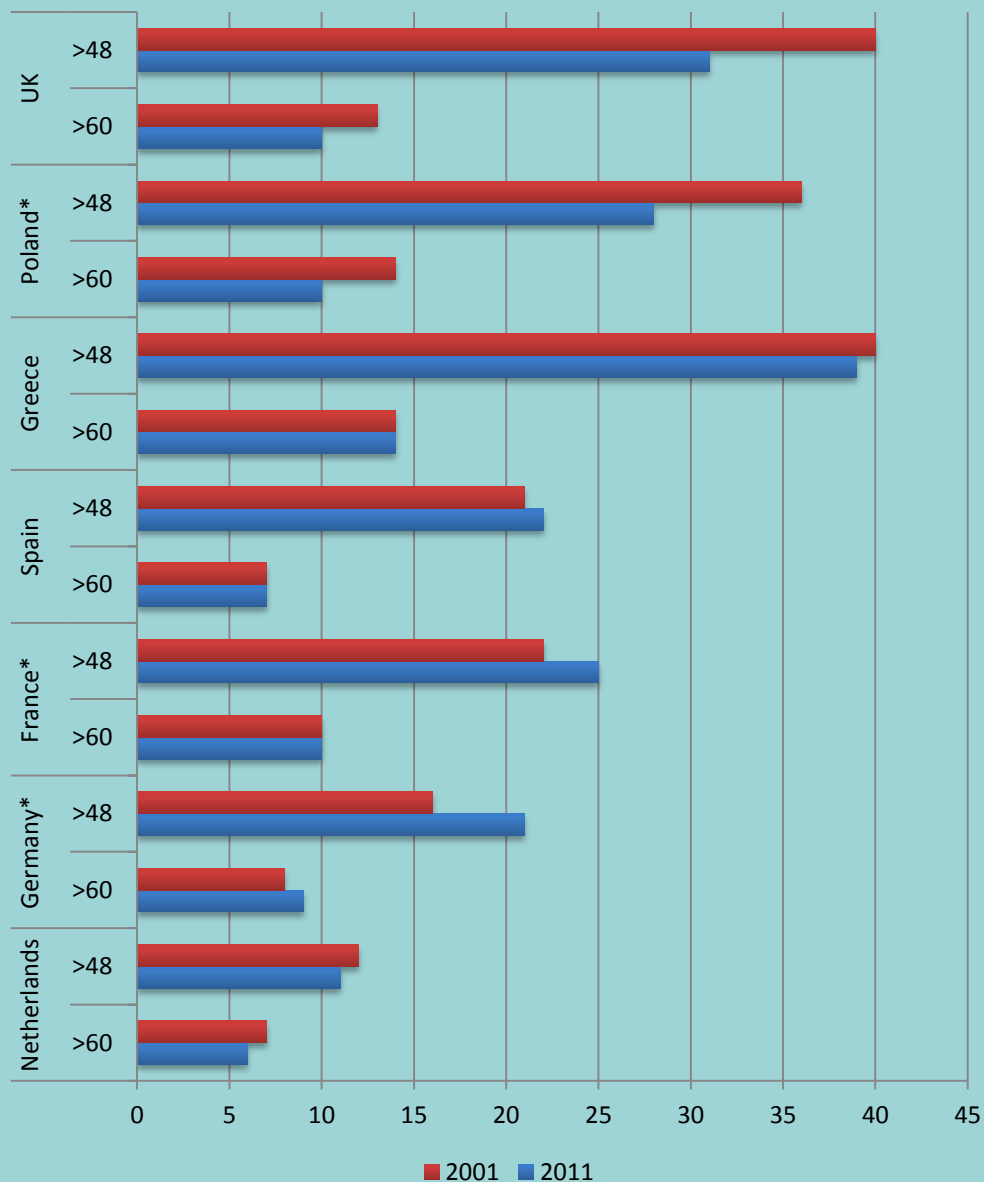


Trends in working patterns of couple households with dependent children – UK

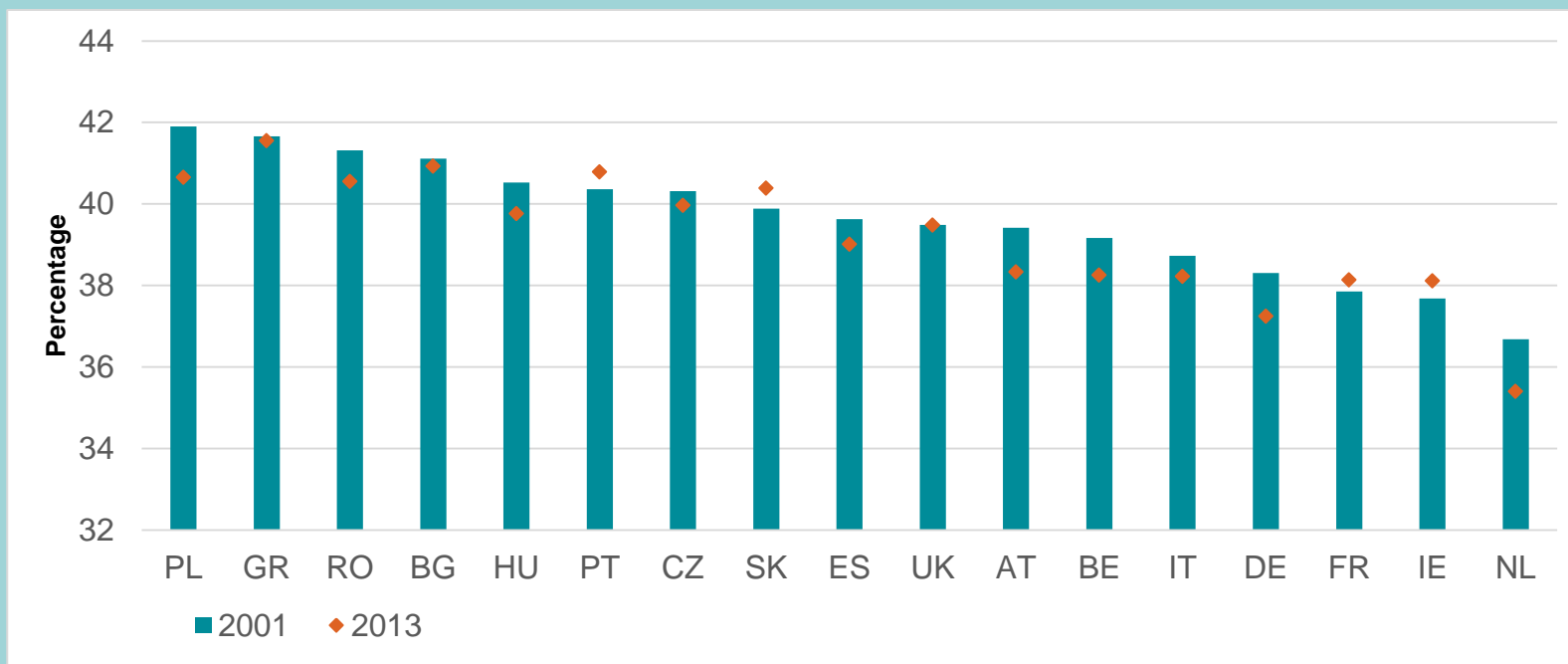


Rates of intensive working for fathers in full-time employment

Source: EULFS



Mothers' full-time working hours



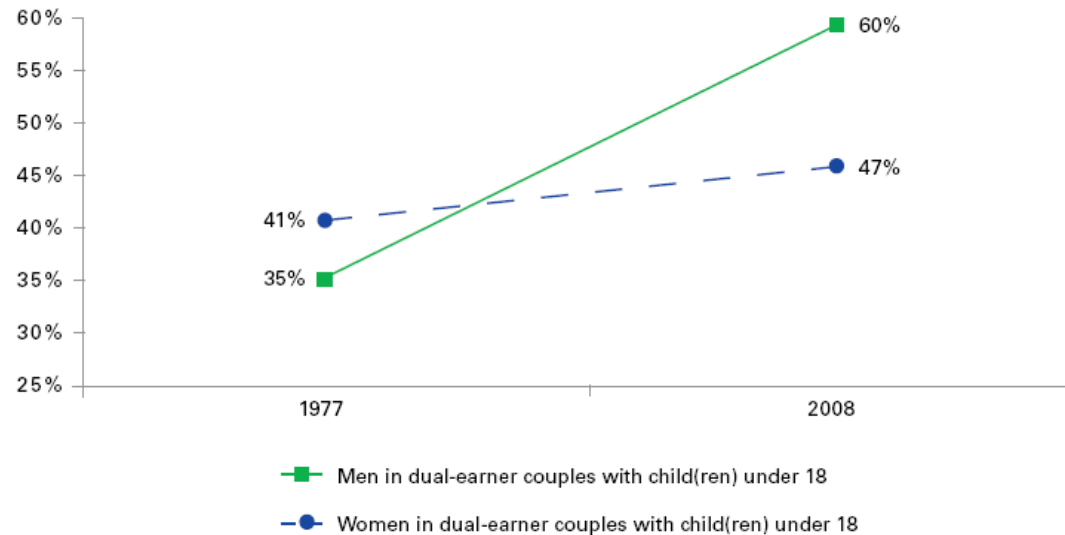
Note: 2003 for CZ, DE, PL, SK, FR and RO; 2005 for IT, AT and BG; 2007 for IE

- New diverse working patterns for British couples with dependent children –male sole breadwinner family now a minority
- Incidence of long working hours, intensive and unsocial working patterns declining for fathers.
- Transition from a traditional unitary model based on a male dominant economic actor towards a different provisioning logic with less specialization of roles

The new 'male mystique'

From Aumann K, Galinsky E & Matos K, 2011

Figure 1: Percentage of Fathers and Mothers in Dual-Earner Couples Reporting Work-Family Conflict (1977–2008)



Statistically significant differences between men and women in dual-earner couples with children under 18: 1977 not significant; 2008 $p < .01$; Statistically significant differences between 1977 and 2008: Men $p < .001$; women not significant. Sample size: 1977 $n = 283$; 2008 $n = 391$. Source: 2008 NSCW, FWI and 1977 QES, U.S. Department of Labor.

Modern fatherhood study

- Work-to-family conflict (WFC)
- Family-to-work conflict (FWC)
 - Problems of definition and measurement

Data

- European Social Survey
 - Round 2 (2004-2005)
 - Round 5 (2010-2011)
- **UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Poland**
- Fathers only: less affected by the selection effect than mothers
- Fathers in paid work, aged 20-64, in couples, with children aged 0-18
- Sample size: about 1,500 per survey year in total

Work-to-family conflict

- 2004 & 2010
 - Worrying about work problems when not working
 - Feeling too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home
 - Job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner and family
 - Partner or family gets fed up with the pressure of your job

Scale: from ‘Never’ to ‘Always’ (5-point scale)

WFC score

- Factor score (principal component analysis)
- Mean value is 0, SD is 1
- Higher values = higher WFC
- Cronbach's alpha = 0.73

Family-to-work conflict

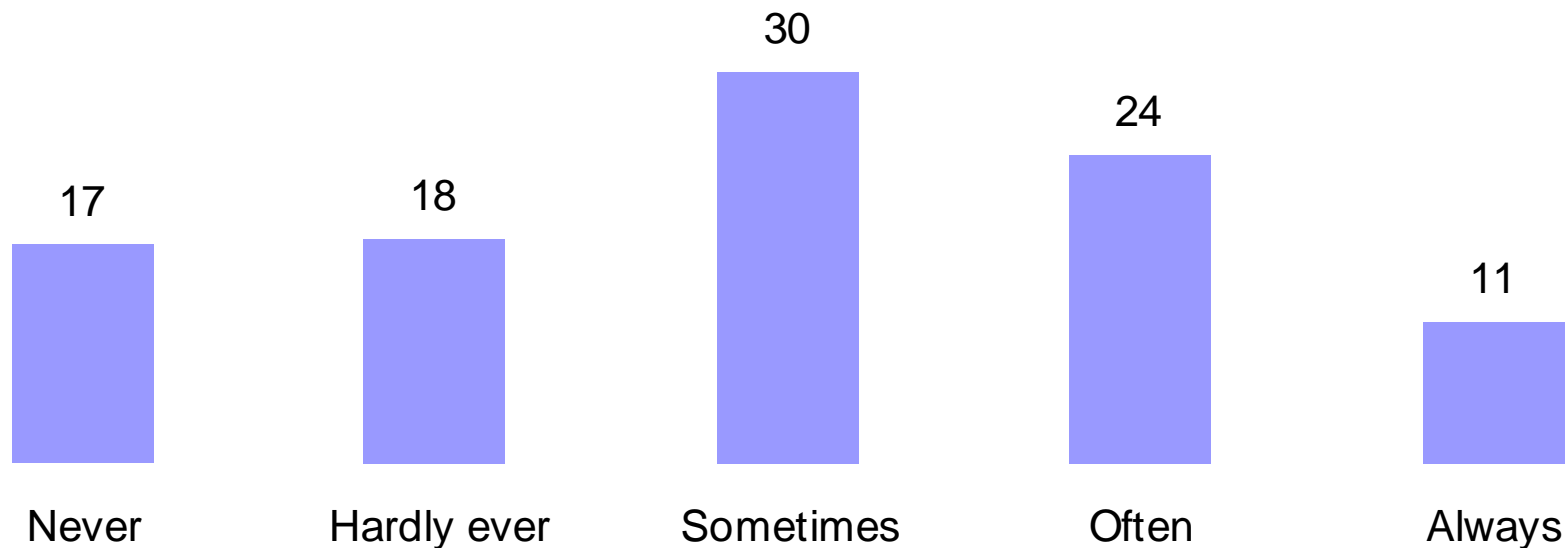


- 2004 & 2010
 - Difficult to concentrate on work because of family responsibilities
- 2010 only
 - Family responsibilities prevent you from giving the time you should to your job

Scale: from 'Never' to 'Always' (5-point scale)

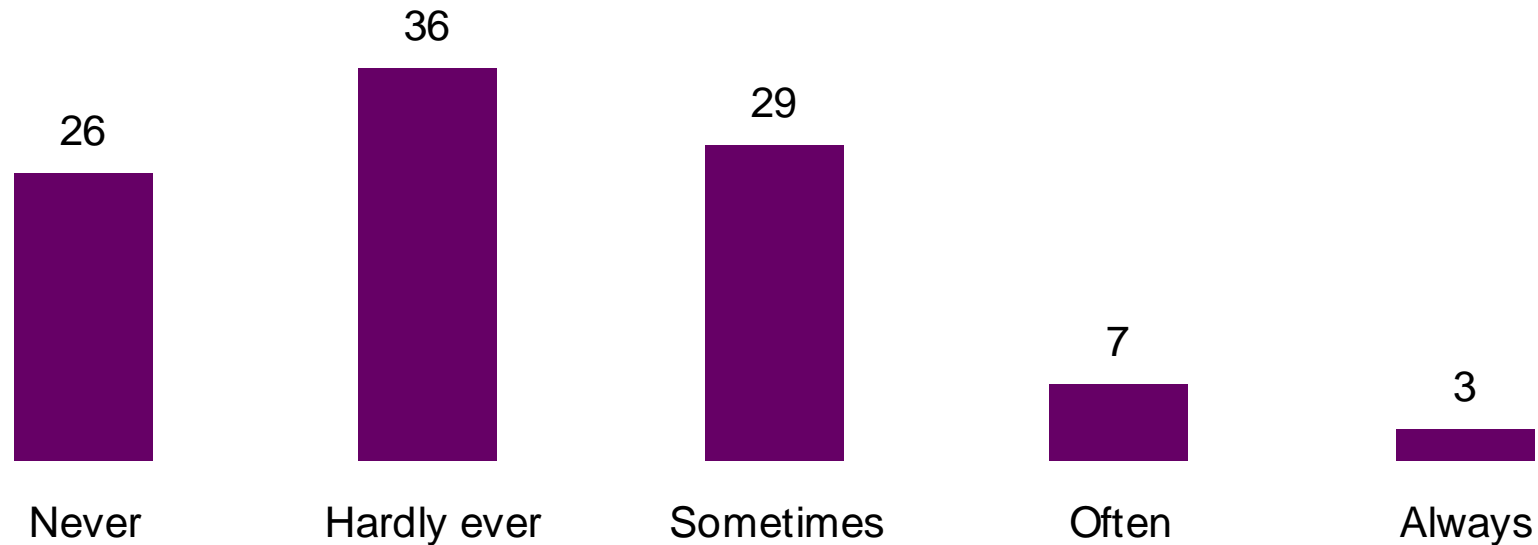
Worrying about work problems when not working

Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)



Family responsibilities prevent you from giving the time you should to your job

Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)

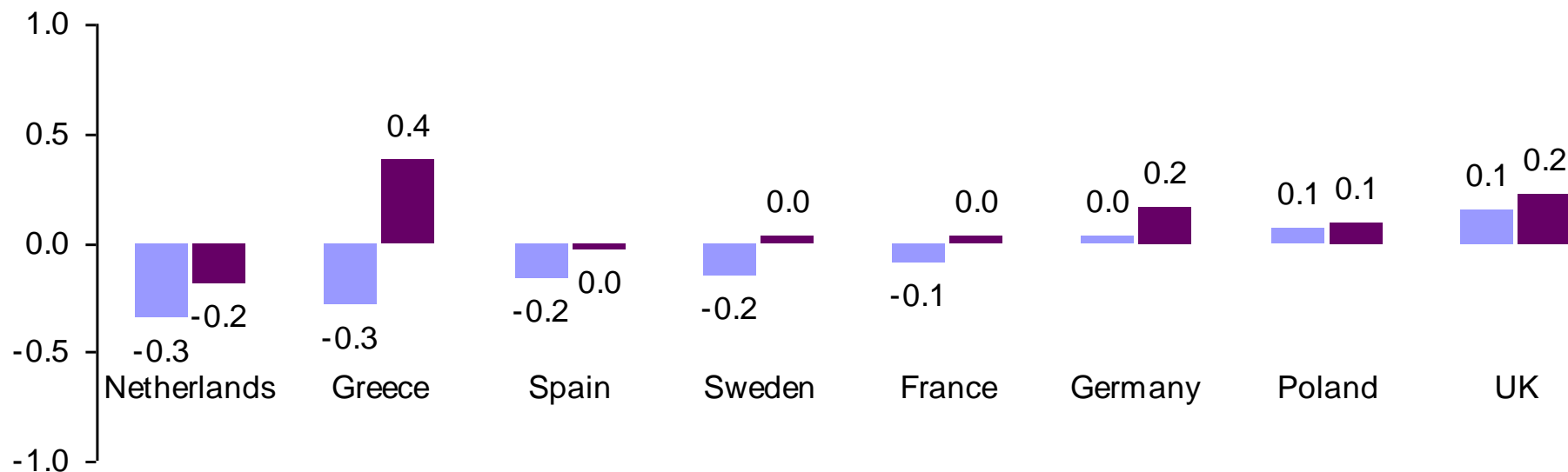


WFC score, by country and year

Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18

2004

2010



Developing father- inclusive work-family policies: maternal template, gender neutrality issues

Policies

- **“Raising the global floor”** for informal workers ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (no 183) and the ILO Workers with Family responsibilities Convention (no 156) – maternal template?
- **Parental leave architecture-** individual, non-transferable, high income substitution works for male take-up but costly
- **Working time** innovation e.g. The German Federal work-sharing programme *Kurzarbeit*, reduction in work time 21 hours (NEF)- all dependent on employer/ state subsidy

Concluding reflections

21st century agenda

How to care & work ?

“two worlds” of work and family

**Father care & mother earner activation
policies need to work in unison as do
scholars**

Concluding reflections: connecting the “two worlds” of parenthood

- How can paternal care ♥♥♥ be enhanced while ensuring continuing paternal financial investment in family life €€€
TOO EXPENSIVE?
- How can maternal earning €€€ be enhanced while ensuring continuing maternal care in family life ♥♥♥
- Father care & mother earner policies & programmes need to work in unison

The team

Dr Matt Aldrich (University of East Anglia) Matthew.Aldrich@uea.ac.uk

Professor Sara Connolly (University of East Anglia) Sara.Connolly@uea.ac.uk

Eloise Poole (NatCen) [Eloise.Poole @natcen.ac.uk](mailto:Eloise.Poole@natcen.ac.uk)

Dr Svetlana Speight (NatCen Social Research) Svetlana.Speight@natcen.ac.uk

Website

<http://www.modernfatherhood.org/>

Fathers, Work and Families in the 21st century

Thank you!

Professor Margaret O'Brien

• m.obrien@ioe.ac.uk