

Which fathers are involved in looking after their children? Investigating the relationship between paid work, attitudes and childcare

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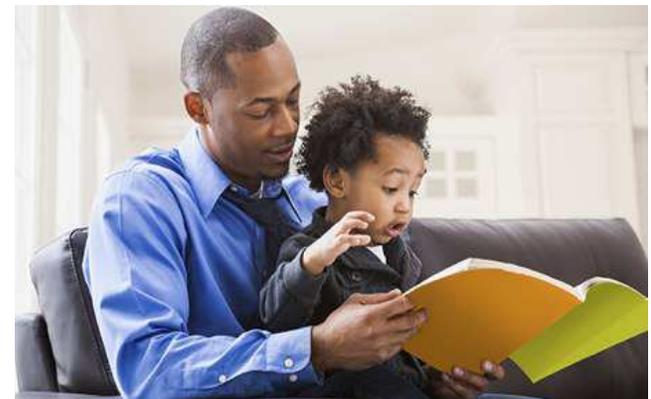
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Presentation outline

- The gender division of labour in the UK
- Theoretical framework
- Data and methods
- Results: which fathers are the most involved?
- Policy implications and next steps



The gender division of labour in the UK

- Men do more childcare and housework, but still much less than women.
- Normative ideas about what it is to be a 'good' father have shifted to include being involved in childcare, but being the (main) economic provider remains a central feature.
 - *95% of MCS (S1) fathers agreed they should be involved in a child's upbringing.*
- Women usually switch to part-time employment after having children.
 - *67% of mothers with dependent children (under 18) employed (2010); 37% = PT*
- Rare for mothers to work full-time if they have a pre-school child, more likely if she is a manager/senior professional
- This 'one-and-a-half earner' family model is perpetuated by public policy and normative beliefs that children suffer if their mothers are employed full-time.

Theoretical framework

Paternal involvement:

- Defined as a father who participates in the nurturing tasks involved in the 'taking care of' children.
- For this study, it is measured as roughly sharing childcare with a partner.

Amartya Sen's (1992) capabilities framework:

- Economic, social, demographic and cultural factors exert logistical pressures on how childcare and domestic work is arranged.
- Thus, fathers may strive to be involved parents but organisational policies, social norms, and household circumstances hinder or enable their capabilities to be involved.

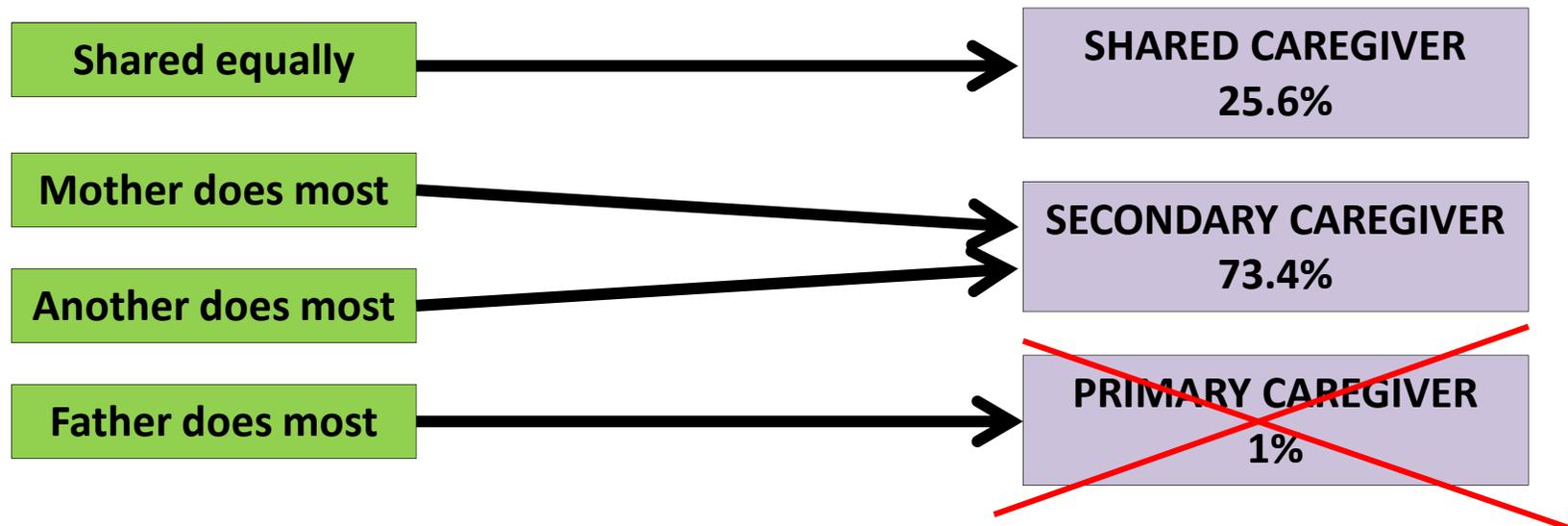
The Millennium Cohort Study

Sweep	Year	Age of child
1	2001-02	9 months
2	2004-5	3 years
3	2006	5 years
4	2008	7 years
5	2012	11 years

- For the analysis presented here, we use sweeps 1 and 2.
- Sample filtered to include: i) the same heterosexual couples, intact over both sweeps of data; ii) households in which fathers are employed at sweep one.
- Final sample = 9,189 households across the UK
- We are now progressing analysis using all five sweeps of data to explore paternal involvement in childcare from aged 9 months to 11 years old.

Method

- Method: Logistic regression
- Dependent variable:
 - *‘Who is mostly around and generally looks after the child (at age three)?’*



What predicts father involvement when the child is aged 9 months old?

Fathers are **more** involved in childcare when:

- They work short (part-time) hours (1-29 hours p/week);
- Their partner (the mother) works full-time (30+ hours p/week);
- They work regularly at weekends or at night;
- Their partner works regularly at weekends or in the evening;

Fathers are **less** involved in childcare when:

- They have traditional gender role attitudes.
- They are Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi;
- They have a girl

What predicts father involvement when the child is aged 3 years old?

- If fathers share childcare when the child is 9 months, are they more likely to share childcare at age 3?
- Do previous employment hours worked by the mother/ father 9 months after childbirth influence fathers to share childcare when the child is aged 3?
- Do fathers' and/or mothers' current employment hours influence fathers to share childcare at age 3?

Source: Fagan and Norman (2016); Norman, Elliot and Fagan (2014)

Fathers shared childcare when child is aged 9 months? <i>Reference Category: did not share</i>	3.9***
Fathers' employment hours when child is aged 9 months - Part-time (<30 hours p/week) - Full-time (30-40 hours p/week) - Full-time (41-48 hours p/week) <i>Reference Category: Long full-time (>48 hours p/week)</i>	1.5* 1.4*** 1.3***
Mother's employment hours when child is aged 9 months - Part-time (<20 hours p/week) - Long part-time (20-30 hours p/week) - Full-time (31-40 hours p/week) - Long full-time (>41 hours p/week) <i>Reference Category: Not in work</i>	1.0 1.5*** 2.4*** 2.7***
Father's occupational class (NS-SEC 5 classes) - Intermediate (clerical/service/technical/engineering) - Small employers & self-employed - Lower supervisory & technical / Semi-routine & routine <i>Reference Category: Managerial and Professional</i>	1.1 1.1 1.5***
Father attitude towards whether children suffer if mother works before they start school - Strongly agree/Agree - Neither - Strongly disagree/Disagree	.72*** .85*
Cohort child is a girl	.84**
Siblings (currently) in household when child is 9 months	1.3***
Other children (currently) outside household when child is 9 mths	.91
Father's age when child is aged 9 months 16-69	1.0

What makes fathers involved (i.e. share childcare) when child is 3 years old?

*p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

Fathers shared childcare when child is aged 9 months? <i>Reference Category: did not share</i>	3.8***
Fathers' employment hours when child is aged 3 years - Not in work - Part-time (<30 hours p/week) - Full-time (30-40 hours p/week) - Full-time (41-48 hours p/week) <i>Reference Category: Long full-time (>48 hours p/week)</i>	3.4*** 4.1*** 1.7*** 1.3**
Mother's employment hours when child is aged 3 years - Part-time (<20 hours p/week) - Long part-time (20-30 hours p/week) - Full-time (31-40 hours p/week) - Long full-time (>41 hours p/week) <i>Reference Category: Not in work</i>	1.8*** 3.3*** 6.5*** 7.2***
Father's occupational class (NS-SEC 5 classes) - Intermediate (clerical/service/technical/engineering) - Small employers & self-employed - Lower supervisory & technical / Semi routine/routine <i>Reference Category: Managerial and Professional</i>	1.1 1.1 1.5**
Cohort child is a girl	.84**
Siblings (currently) in household when child is 9 months	.97
Other children (currently) outside household when child is 9 mths	.88
Father's age when child is aged 9 months 16-69	1.01*

What makes fathers involved (i.e. share childcare) when child is 3 years old?

*p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

What makes fathers involved when the child is aged 3?

- Sharing childcare in the first year
- Previous employment hours of the father and mother (worked 9 months after the child's birth)
- Mothers' (full-time) employment hours when the child is aged 3
- Fathers' working short/standard full-time hours

Policy implications and next research steps

- Helping a father become involved in caregiving in the first year of a child's life shapes their subsequent caregiving involvement
 - Parental leave and 'Right to Request' flexible working hours
 - Limits on long full-time hours (45+)
- The mothers' hours and earnings also shape fathers' caregiving roles
 - Gender wage gaps
 - Affordable full-time childcare
- Extending the analysis to explore what influences paternal involvement from 9 months to 11 years old.

Which fathers are involved in looking after their children? Identifying the conditions associated with paternal involvement.

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- **Award holders:** Dr Helen Norman (PI), Professor Colette Fagan (Co-I), Professor Mark Elliot (Co-I), School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester. **Project partner:** Working Families (<http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/>).
- **Dates:** 1 February 2016 – 31 July 2017
- URL: <http://www.cmist.manchester.ac.uk/research/projects/which-fathers-are-looking-after-their-children/>



References

PUBLICATION THIS PRESENTATION IS BASED ON:

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