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Father involvement in the UK: trends in the new millennium

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Abstract:

In many Western countries, father involvement in childcare has strongly increased during the second half of the 20th century. Policy changes should have arguably sustained the trends in the UK in the new millennium. This report examines recent changes in father involvement in the UK by analysing the 2000 and 2015 UK Time-Use surveys and compares the patterns with findings from similar analyses for France, Italy and Sweden. The analyses show that fathers in the UK spent more time doing childcare in 2015 compared to 2000 but they spent less total time together with their children. Compared to fathers in France and Sweden, the levels of father involvement in the UK were relatively low. The UK stands out from the other three countries by stronger educational gradients of father involvement on weekends, suggesting cumulative disadvantages of children who grow up in low-educated families.

Keywords: father involvement, childcare, time use, time with children, United Kingdom

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1. Aim of the report

This report contributes to the research into cross-national differences in father involvement by Tanturri and her co-authors (2016a, 2016b) by examining the new 2015 time-use data from the United Kingdom. It addresses two questions:

- 1) Has father involvement in the UK changed between 2000 and 2015?
- 2) How does father involvement for the UK compare to father involvement in France, Italy and Sweden around 2015?

2. Data

The findings are based on the newly released UK Time Use Survey 2014-2015 (HETUS 2015) (Gershuny and Sullivan 2017). The survey contains information about 4,733 UK households. All analyses by Tanturri and her co-authors are restricted to fathers who lived with a partner and at least one child aged 14 or younger. In addition they only include fathers in ‘nuclear’ households that do not include any adult members beyond the couple or any children aged 15 or older. In UK HETUS 2015 this definition leaves 653 fathers for analysis. Excluding cases with missing individual questionnaires or diaries, missing values on particular variables and the six fathers who never worked leaves 534 fathers for analysis. Nearly all of these fathers filled in both a weekday and a weekend-day diary. For this particular sample of fathers in the 2015 survey, the measures of father involvement can be constructed in a very similar way as with the UK HETUS 2000 survey. Therefore, comparisons between the two survey years should have high a level of validity. Because the distribution of the number of children and the age of the youngest child in UK HETUS 2015 differed considerably from other data sources for the same year (i.e. the Labour Force Survey), poststratification weights were calculated and applied in all analyses below.

3. Changing context of father involvement at the start of the new millennium

Past increases in fathers’ time with children have been conceived as part of a more general change of fathers’ role in many Western countries. The trend should have continued in the UK because of several policy changes that were designed to facilitate father involvement in childcare. This includes the introduction of two weeks of paid paternity leave in 2003, which was reimbursed at the statutory level (about €156/w in 2015), and in 2011 the introduction of

so-called additional paternity leave for up to 26 weeks. The latter was available once the mother had returned to work from statutory maternity leave or ended her entitlement and was paid at about €153 per week. Take-up of additional paternity leave was low. It has been replaced by Shared Parental Leave in 2015. In addition, several policies were introduced at the start of the millennium to make it easier for parents to combine work and parenting. In 2003 parents of young children were given the right to request flexible working. Since 2000, all 4-year olds have been entitled to a free, part-time early education place. This policy was extended to all 3-year olds in 2005 and the initial entitlement of 12.5 hours for 33 weeks per year has also increased. These latter policies might have affected fathers directly or indirectly through increasing mothers' labour-force participation since it tends to be associated with more equal sharing of childcare between the parents (Sullivan et al. 2009). The potential positive effects of policy changes might have been disrupted by the economic crisis of 2008 that arguably reduced men's willingness or scope to prioritize involvement in childcare.

4. Analysis

4.1 Trends in the new millennium in the UK

Table 1 gives the four main measures for fathers' time with children that formed the basis of deliverable D3.10 (Tanturri et al. 2016a): father's time doing childcare with and without the partner present, and other time that fathers spend with their children, with and without the partner being present. The four measures are shown separately for the 2000 and the 2015 surveys, for weekdays and weekend days and before and after applying weights. The data show two main changes in fathers' time with children. Firstly, in 2015 fathers have spent more time in childcare activities without the partner – on average 11 more minutes on weekdays and 17 minutes on weekend days. Secondly, fathers have spent less time together with a child and their partner without doing childcare; the time decreased by about half an hour on weekdays and weekend days. There were no significant changes in the two other measures.

The change in the total time that fathers spent with their children does not change significantly between the two years. However, it is worth noting that the 2015 figures change the relative position of the UK in the four-country comparison towards the lower-involved countries (cf. Figure 5 in D3.10); UK fathers' total weekday time with children of 238 minutes (243 minutes unweighted) is on a par with the time of Italian fathers and UK fathers'

total weekend time with children of 432 minutes (436 minutes unweighted) is the lowest among the four countries.

In 2015, a higher proportion of father's shared time with their children was spent alone with the child than in 2000: (82 min / 238 min =) 34% on weekdays and (114 / 432 =) 26% on weekend days (cf. Figures 6 & 7 in D3.10). Both percentages are similar to those for Sweden and France but higher than for Italian fathers.

Table 1: Changes in father's time with children: UK HETUS 2000 & UK HETUS 2015, minutes per day

		2000		2015		Difference 2000 - 2015
		unweighted	weighted	unweighted	weighted	weighted
Weekday	Childcare without partner present	23	24	35	35	***
	Childcare with partner present	25	25	27	26	n.s.
	Time with child & without partner, no childcare	50	50	50	47	n.s.
	Time with child and partner, no childcare	159	161	132	131	***
Weekend	Childcare without partner present	23	23	40	41	***
	Childcare with partner present	37	38	44	43	n.s.
	Time with child & without partner, no childcare	86	88	71	74	n.s.
	Time with child and partner, no childcare	307	308	281	274	*
Weekday	Total	257	261	243	238	n.s.
Weekend	Total	453	457	436	432	n.s.

Note: *** significant at 0.1% level, ** significant at 1% level, * significant at 5% level

UK fathers performed childcare activities for on average 61 minutes on weekdays (up from 49 in 2000) and 83 minutes on weekend days (up from 61 minutes). Figures 8 & 9 in D3.10 show the proportion of childcare that fathers did in the absence of their partner. In the UK, it rose on weekdays from 49% in 2000 to 57% in 2015 and on weekend days from 38% to 48%. Despite this increase the relative position of the UK compared to France, Italy and Sweden remains unchanged.

In summary, among fathers in the UK in 2015 the ‘most engaged’ form of child involvement increased between 2000 and 2015 and the ‘least engaged’ form decreased. This increase of intensive engagement but not of other forms of engagement might indicate that parenting values were the main drivers of the trend. If gender equality or partner’s employment had been the main drivers, one would expect also an increase in fathers’ time alone with their children. The similarity of the trends on weekdays and weekend days also suggests that employment issues were not the main drivers. The next section takes a closer look at which factors were associated with father involvement in the UK.

4.2 Father involvement by father and family characteristics

In order to investigate patterns of father involvement, we present the same models as Tanturri et al. (2016b). First we compare the estimated parameters from the UK HETUS 2000 and the UK HETUS 2015 surveys before addressing possible implications of the findings for the cross-national comparisons. Tanturri et al. (2016b) presented two models for exploring the association between father involvement and both partners’ employment. In the first set of models, the hours of employment are considered separately for each spouse whereas the second set of models applies a composite measure for couple employment. Tables 2 – 4 show estimates from the first model for the combined data from the UK HETUS 2000 and the UK HETUS 2015 as well as separate estimates from the two surveys. Any comments below about the significance of changes between the two survey years are based on further model estimates that included the interaction term with survey year. These additional models are not shown.

Table 2: Fathers' total time with children

	Weekday			Weekend day		
	(1) Both years	(2) UK HETUS 2000	(3) UK HETUS 2015	(4) Both years	(5) UK HETUS 2000	(6) UK HETUS 2015
High occup. position	-26.93	-7.925	-43.88	36.54	-4.480	68.18
Low occup. position	-42.28 ⁺	-33.28	-49.26	-14.65	-82.22 [*]	46.68
Low level of education	-1.094	3.710	2.565	-24.40 ⁺	-37.75	-25.49
High level of education	-9.701	6.500	-14.78	23.17	1.300	24.79
Works less than 35 h/w	43.34 ⁺	69.07 ⁺	24.66	4.633	69.93	-34.86
Works more than 45 h/w	-16.44	-11.10	-25.68	-6.196	9.442	-24.07
No Work	130.7 ^{***}	107.3 ^{**}	147.4 ^{***}	15.91	62.22	-22.12
Father below 35 years of age	10.20	23.29	-1.700	-37.44 ⁺	-40.15	-30.23
Father above 44 years of age	5.441	15.76	-5.395	-18.72	-61.67 ⁺	11.98
One boy, no girl	-35.43 [*]	-62.18 ^{**}	-15.13	-18.80	11.89	-55.28
One girl, no boy	-19.21	-57.10 [*]	22.10	-57.42 [*]	-83.24 ^{**}	-21.94
Two or more boys, no girl	-14.39	-36.75	1.755	14.81	-11.46	38.95
Two or more girls, no boy	-34.02 ⁺	-38.93	-26.08	-22.22	11.65	-54.17
Youngest child under age 3	23.99	12.16	37.24	30.98	-1.675	61.61 ⁺
Youngest child 6-14	-37.51 [*]	-66.46 ^{**}	-5.160	-83.96 ^{***}	-112.0 ^{***}	-62.43 ⁺
Partner works full time	18.67	-18.04	45.48 [*]	-0.603	-20.62	16.11
Partner works part time	20.74	23.79	12.03	37.99 [*]	59.31 [*]	13.33
Cohabiting couple	-17.22	-37.05	-11.36	-9.440	-49.52	14.68
Partner has university degree	28.53 ^{**}	24.71	30.20 ^{**}	40.09 ^{***}	26.99	43.82 ^{**}
(Paid) Domestic help	-33.66	-38.30	-34.94	-11.88	-32.22	6.922
2015 Survey	-41.21 ^{**}			-51.74 ^{**}		
Constant	296.5 ^{***}	312.3 ^{***}	240.2 ^{***}	495.4 ^{***}	573.9 ^{***}	383.0 ^{***}
Observations	1269	735	534	1268	735	533
Adjusted R ²	0.050	0.057	0.042	0.060	0.075	0.060

Note: + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 3: Fathers' total time alone with children

	Weekday			Weekend day		
	(1) Both years	(2) UK HETUS 2000	(3) UK HETUS 2015	(4) Both years	(5) UK HETUS 2000	(6) UK HETUS 2015
High occup. position	-18.13	-11.18	-27.36	27.55	38.11	18.57
Low occup. position	-27.28*	-34.72 ⁺	-22.21	-7.959	-15.19	2.067
Low level of education	2.201	23.80*	-4.581	-7.949	-19.35	-18.48 ⁺
High level of education	1.773	19.38	7.813	12.99 ⁺	-44.89*	27.31*
Works less than 35 h/w	29.13 ⁺	18.68	32.65	10.60	-1.158	13.34
Works more than 45 h/w	-2.314	-11.53	3.845	-7.964	1.159	-18.61
No Work	92.47 ^{***}	31.38	141.3 ^{***}	-0.813	18.71	-13.06
Father below 35 years of age	-13.29	-6.425	-17.74	-30.56*	-19.11	-44.49*
Father above 44 years of age	-10.25	3.799	-18.28	-10.30	-48.79 ^{**}	14.25
One boy, no girl	-18.33 ⁺	-40.38 ^{***}	-2.415	-34.18 ^{**}	-30.30	-36.25 ⁺
One girl, no boy	-11.80	-20.26	-0.176	-54.06 ^{***}	-48.02 ^{**}	-65.14 ^{**}
Two or more boys, no girl	-2.500	-17.30	9.104	-10.83	-21.52	-8.252
Two or more girls, no boy	-8.895	-8.249	-6.012	-26.05	-4.586	-49.05*
Youngest child under age 3	3.669	-5.363	11.25	11.49	-1.170	24.76
Youngest child 6-14	-26.93 ^{**}	-46.18 ^{***}	-10.41	-39.59 ^{**}	-38.86*	-42.52 ⁺
Partner works full time	44.91 ^{***}	26.00*	57.10 ^{***}	37.97 ^{**}	35.89*	39.18 ⁺
Partner works part time	40.45 ^{***}	46.44 ^{***}	31.01 ^{**}	42.89 ^{***}	61.76 ^{***}	24.99
Cohabiting	-10.03	-30.32*	-4.244	5.109	0.584	9.307
Partner degree	9.795*	-16.00	14.49 ^{**}	6.237	15.55	5.061
Domestic help	-4.884	-21.58	4.296	5.544	3.816	3.308
2015 survey	1.956			-7.224		
Constant	82.15 ^{***}	99.15 ^{***}	65.80 ^{**}	125.8 ^{***}	129.7 ^{***}	127.6 ^{***}
Observations	1269	735	534	1268	735	533
Adjusted R ²	0.055	0.047	0.096	0.055	0.053	0.070

⁺ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 4: Fathers' total time in childcare

	Weekday			Weekend day		
	(1) Both years	(2) UK HETUS 2000	(3) UK HETUS 2015	(4) Both years	(5) UK HETUS 2000	(6) UK HETUS 2015
High occup. position	-11.33	-14.62 ⁺	-7.682	0.316	-0.347	1.805
Low occup. position	-22.52 ^{**}	-26.84 ^{**}	-18.76	-17.43 [*]	-16.69 ⁺	-17.82
Low level of education	-1.381	3.729	-1.975	-8.754 [*]	-14.72 [*]	-11.95 [*]
High level of education	-2.495	0.997	-2.013	7.139	-14.30	11.20 ⁺
Works less than 35 h/w	23.40 [*]	16.61	28.17 [*]	1.936	3.663	2.520
Works more than 45 h/w	-1.177	-1.084	-1.696	-7.880	-2.848	-10.11
No Work	68.49 ^{***}	61.21 ^{***}	72.91 ^{***}	16.66	37.19 ^{**}	-2.583
Father below 35 years of age	1.764	4.055	-0.194	-13.15 ⁺	-11.71	-16.17
Father above 44 years of age	0.480	-0.0580	1.731	-13.21 [*]	-24.62 ^{***}	-2.650
One boy, no girl	-11.33 ⁺	-12.71 ⁺	-10.48	1.633	9.055	-3.947
One girl, no boy	-5.166	0.637	-9.349	-6.574	4.587	-20.63 ⁺
Two or more boys, no girl	-1.607	-3.210	-0.645	-3.428	1.090	-9.616
Two or more girls, no boy	-14.38 [*]	-10.32	-17.25 ⁺	-12.81 ⁺	-1.003	-26.09 [*]
Youngest child under age 3	19.72 ^{***}	23.43 ^{**}	18.10 [*]	47.10 ^{***}	37.62 ^{***}	57.73 ^{***}
Youngest child 6-14	-26.34 ^{***}	-19.74 ^{**}	-32.91 ^{***}	-45.03 ^{***}	-35.51 ^{***}	-56.03 ^{***}
Partner works full time	18.79 ^{***}	5.968	26.84 ^{***}	3.690	1.715	5.891
Partner works part time	17.88 ^{***}	15.45 [*]	17.48 ^{**}	15.32 [*]	17.63 [*]	13.25
Cohabiting	-0.553	-11.80	4.793	-2.145	-1.333	1.337
Partner degree	13.83 ^{***}	13.51	14.04 ^{**}	7.631 [*]	10.55	6.654
Domestic help	5.230	-1.823	8.601	26.19 [*]	22.29 [*]	27.60 ⁺
2015 Survey	1.911			11.81 [*]		
Constant	54.19 ^{***}	54.82 ^{***}	52.38 ^{***}	76.61 ^{***}	74.12 ^{***}	93.07 ^{***}
Observations	1269	735	534	1268	735	533
Adjusted R ²	0.146	0.114	0.156	0.220	0.177	0.230

⁺ p < 0.10, ^{*} p < 0.05, ^{**} p < 0.01, ^{***} p < 0.001

Table 2 shows the findings from model 1 for fathers' total time with children on weekdays and weekend days. In both years, fathers' total time with children on weekdays hardly varied with fathers' individual characteristics except from fathers who were not in paid work spending more time with their children. The composition of the children with regard to their number, sex and age mattered less for fathers' total time in 2015 than in 2000; none of the parameters was significant in 2015. In contrast to 2000, partners' full-time work and partners having a university degree were associated with more time with children.

On weekends, the class-specific pattern of fathers' total time with children has somewhat changed. Whereas in 2000, fathers in middle and high occupational positions spent significantly more time with their children than fathers in low occupational positions, the relationships changed significantly in 2015 when both fathers in high and in low occupational positions spent more time with their children than fathers in middle positions. These effects are however only statistically significant if father's level of education is not included in the model. The model for 2015 also suggests no significant differences in fathers' total time according to the number and sex of the children. The significance levels of some other parameters change in the 2015 model – for the youngest child being under age 3, the partner working part time and the partner having a university degree – but none of the changes is statistically significant.

Table 3 shows the corresponding models for fathers' total time alone with their children. On weekdays in 2015, there was no difference in the time alone with children by fathers' occupational position or level of education. Fathers who were not in paid work spent more time alone with their children than other fathers. The composition of children - their number, age and sex - is not associated with fathers' time alone with their children. A significant change is associated with partners' working hours, where partners working full time is associated with significantly more hours of fathers being alone with their children than in 2000. In addition, partners having a university degree is also associated with fathers spending more hours alone with their children on weekdays. In 2015 there is no longer any difference between father involvement in cohabiting and married couples on weekdays.

Fathers' total time alone with their children on weekends did not vary with their occupational position. However, highly educated fathers spend significantly more time alone with their children on weekends in 2015 than fathers with less education. The change compared to 2000 is significant. The finding from 2000 that older fathers spend less time alone with their

children on weekends does not hold any longer but there was no difference between fathers of different ages. There are no other significant changes in the estimated parameters.

Table 4 shows the analyses of the total time of fathers doing childcare. Fathers whose partners worked full time spent significantly more time in childcare on weekdays than if their partners were not in paid work. Otherwise the estimated effects using HETUS 2015 are not significantly different from those in the HETUS 2000 analyses although some parameters lost statistical significance like father's occupational position and some gained statistical significance like working less than 35 hours and the partners having a university degree.

Table 4 shows similar patterns of association between fathers' hours of childcare on weekend days in 2015 as in 2000. The only change was that fathers who were not in paid work provided similar hours of childcare in 2015 as other fathers, but the change is only significant at the 10% level of significance. The regression model for total childcare time in 2015 on weekend days stands out by a remarkably high adjusted R^2 -value of 0.23.

Tables 5 to 7 give the results from the second models where both partners' working hours are combined into a couple-level measure with categories "Neither in work", "Male breadwinner", "Male 1.5 breadwinner", "Dual earner" (reference category) and "Female breadwinner". The findings also point towards an increasing involvement of fathers whose partners work full time because the estimated effects of fathers in male breadwinner couples (full or 1.5 male breadwinners) tend to be negative, in contrast to the year 2000, but most of the differences are not significant. On weekdays, the difference between fathers in dual-earner couples and fathers in 1.5 male-breadwinner couples increased in 2015 compared to 2000 in favour of the first with regard to total time with children and total time alone with children. In 2015 fathers in female-breadwinner couples spent relatively more time alone with children and more time doing childcare on weekdays than fathers in dual-earner couples. There was no change in the patterns on the weekends.

Table 5: Total time with children: models with couple employment

	Weekday			Weekend day		
	(1) Both years	(2) UK HETUS 2000	(3) UK HETUS 2015	(4) Both years	(5) UK HETUS 2000	(6) UK HETUS 2015
High occup. position	-25.24	-13.35	-37.71	37.50	-11.43	75.51 ⁺
Low occup. position	-40.95 ⁺	-35.42	-50.22	-12.07	-84.32 [*]	52.19
Low level of education	1.537	5.576	6.995	-24.62 ⁺	-34.35	-19.97
High level of education	-9.013	12.93	-16.42	21.22	13.22	16.09
Father below 35 years of age	7.863	21.76	-8.356	-37.49 ⁺	-37.56	-35.31
Father above 44 years of age	6.246	21.71	-4.799	-22.09	-51.37	2.992
One boy, no girl	-37.89 [*]	-66.09 ^{**}	-17.02	-22.48	2.570	-55.99
One girl, no boy	-21.02	-57.82 [*]	19.53	-57.42 [*]	-84.40 ^{**}	-15.81
Two or more boys, no girl	-21.74	-43.61 ⁺	-7.577	3.685	-21.95	23.96
Two or more girls, no boy	-35.24 ⁺	-43.64 ⁺	-26.07	-29.78	9.374	-66.60 ⁺
Youngest child under age 3	25.39	11.80	41.01	27.92	-5.933	59.41 ⁺
Youngest child 6-14	-45.84 ^{**}	-74.90 ^{***}	-18.84	-92.60 ^{***}	-120.1 ^{***}	-77.27 [*]
Neither in work	135.9 ^{***}	157.5 ^{***}	115.6 [*]	23.18	80.52	-31.73
Male breadwinner	-15.46	8.176	-39.06	-16.40	4.220	-34.80
Male 1.5 breadwinner	5.722	35.39 ⁺	-24.19	38.87 ⁺	66.79 [*]	12.58
Female breadwinner	104.3 ^{**}	38.84	138.5 ^{**}	-0.705	-16.80	-1.256
Cohabiting	-21.28	-43.27 ⁺	-14.63	-13.69	-52.74	10.75
Partner degree	34.27 ⁺	30.82	33.29	45.14 [*]	35.33	64.33 [*]
Domestic help	-30.77	-36.81	-29.82	-3.361	-23.01	10.14
2015 survey	-37.48 ^{**}			-54.34 ^{**}		
Constant	308.5 ^{***}	306.1 ^{***}	275.2 ^{***}	503.9 ^{***}	579.0 ^{***}	383.6 ^{***}
Observations	1259	723	536	1258	723	535
Adjusted R^2	0.049	0.059	0.040	0.062	0.074	0.058

⁺ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 6: Total time with children: models with couple employment

	Weekday			Weekend day		
	(1) Both years	(2) UK HETUS 2000	(3) UK HETUS 2015	(4) Both years	(5) UK HETUS 2000	(6) UK HETUS 2015
High occup. position	-18.27	-14.61	-26.17	23.47	35.12	13.26
Low occup. position	-28.91*	-35.92*	-26.88	-13.23	-16.84	-7.835
Low level of education	4.933	23.21*	1.077	-7.526	-21.71	-16.23
High level of education	-0.620	16.34	2.053	12.80	-43.40*	24.61*
Father below 35 years of age	-12.26	-7.583	-15.76	-29.04*	-19.46	-42.13*
Father above 44 years of age	-9.890	7.977	-16.01	-7.108	-41.47*	15.00
One boy, no girl	-21.07*	-43.10***	-7.478	-33.35*	-31.30 ⁺	-34.18 ⁺
One girl, no boy	-13.16	-21.96	-3.955	-51.78***	-47.26**	-57.40***
Two or more boys, no girl	-3.746	-19.87	4.779	-9.886	-23.51	-3.391
Two or more girls, no boy	-14.50	-15.18	-12.70	-26.45 ⁺	-7.033	-44.36*
Youngest child under age 3	0.561	-4.868	7.034	11.58	1.171	23.33
Youngest child 6-14	-31.51**	-49.85***	-15.80	-43.48**	-42.84*	-46.81*
Neither in work	38.87 ⁺	27.59	50.28	-28.10	5.938	-55.11*
Male breadwinner	-37.45***	-35.21**	-39.13**	-49.18***	-42.98*	-50.49*
Male 1.5 breadwinner	3.130	17.29	-11.80	7.892	29.02	-10.07
Female breadwinner	102.8***	2.613	158.7***	-9.050	-36.61	13.75
Cohabiting	-9.585	-32.96*	-1.595	4.512	-2.848	7.295
Partner degree	14.14	-12.74	22.65 ⁺	4.217	16.96	1.417
Domestic help	1.864	-22.09	16.13	6.212	6.743	3.096
d2015	2.649			-7.009		
Constant	123.6***	130.6***	114.6***	166.0***	170.7***	166.8***
Observations	1259	723	536	1258	723	535
Adjusted R^2	0.059	0.051	0.104	0.060	0.064	0.068

⁺ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 7: Total time in childcare: models with couple employment

	Weekday			Weekend day		
	(1) Both years	(2) UK HETUS 2000	(3) UK HETUS 2015	(4) Both years	(5) UK HETUS 2000	(6) UK HETUS 2015
High occup. position	-11.32	-16.04 ⁺	-8.137	-1.256	0.0741	-0.392
Low occup. position	-21.37 ^{**}	-26.81 ^{**}	-18.15	-17.95 [*]	-15.23	-18.80
Low level of education	1.658	3.042	3.775	-8.046 [*]	-14.99 [*]	-10.39 ⁺
High level of education	-4.349	3.863	-7.187	6.920	-13.52	9.827
Father below 35 years of age	2.240	2.465	2.063	-13.73 [*]	-12.86 ⁺	-15.65
Father above 44 years of age	0.764	2.988	3.575	-12.38 [*]	-23.20 ^{**}	-2.731
One boy, no girl	-12.93 [*]	-14.78 [*]	-13.57	1.137	6.663	-2.454
One girl, no boy	-5.883	-0.0146	-9.990	-6.255	3.777	-16.49
Two or more boys, no girl	-1.858	-3.974	-1.525	-2.633	0.781	-7.279
Two or more girls, no boy	-15.57 ^{**}	-11.20	-19.20 [*]	-14.38 ⁺	-2.580	-26.23 [*]
Youngest child under age 3	19.28 ^{***}	24.80 ^{**}	17.23 [*]	48.26 ^{***}	39.75 ^{***}	57.97 ^{***}
Youngest child 6-14	-27.33 ^{***}	-21.26 ^{**}	-34.28 ^{***}	-45.80 ^{***}	-35.48 ^{***}	-57.14 ^{***}
Neither in work	56.45 ^{***}	78.68 ^{***}	34.17	20.36	43.73 [*]	-4.153
Male breadwinner	-18.57 ^{***}	-15.03 [*]	-20.91 ^{**}	-12.23 ⁺	-3.082	-19.09 ⁺
Male 1.5 breadwinner	0.394	5.576	-4.923	11.54 ⁺	16.56 [*]	8.492
Female breadwinner	46.21 ^{**}	-4.602	75.68 ^{***}	-0.162	19.34	-11.53
Cohabiting	0.00158	-14.86 ⁺	6.407	-2.509	-3.968	1.293
Partner degree	25.08 ^{**}	13.49	30.24 ^{***}	8.739	10.40	9.445
Domestic help	6.841	-2.546	13.21	26.91 ^{**}	24.27 [*]	26.72 ⁺
d2015	0.192			11.10 [*]		
Constant	70.18 ^{***}	68.24 ^{***}	68.61 ^{***}	80.41 ^{***}	74.88 ^{***}	97.62 ^{***}
Observations	1259	723	536	1258	723	535
Adjusted R^2	0.146	0.139	0.165	0.220	0.183	0.227

⁺ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Looking across these analyses, some consistent changes emerge in father involvement between the two surveys:

- a. The relationship between father involvement and their partners working full time has strengthened significantly for all three measures on weekdays;
- b. The relationship between fathers' time alone with children and mothers having a university degree has become positive on weekdays. In 2015 there is also a positive association between mothers having a degree and fathers' total time with children on weekends and with fathers' childcare time on weekdays but the changes compared to 2000 are not statistically significant.
- c. The analyses of the 2015 data suggest less involvement of fathers if they have at least two daughters and no son – they were less involved in childcare and spent less time alone with their children on weekends.
- d. In 2000, all three measures of father involvement indicated that older fathers were less involved on weekends. In 2015 there was no difference any more in the involvement of fathers aged 44 or above compared to the reference group of fathers aged 35 to 44 years of age.

4.3 The UK 2015 findings in a comparative perspective

The 2015 results for the UK suggest that father involvement in the UK on weekdays varies little with fathers' individual characteristics (class, education, age) except if fathers work few hours or not at all. Instead all measures of father involvement are associated with their partner's working hours and level of education. With regard to the importance of partner's working hours this brings Britain closer to the other three countries. However, the importance of partner's educational qualification for father involvement on weekdays stands out (except French fathers' provision of childcare).

The patterns of father involvement on weekends are similar to the other countries in many ways, especially in that child composition and partner's working hours are important for fathers spending time alone with the child. However, the UK stands out in displaying an educational gradient of the father in spending time alone with their children on weekends.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the UK, the total amount of time that fathers spend with their children has decreased between 2015 and 2000. At the same time, father involvement in the most intensive dimension of fathering – childcare – has increased. These apparently contradictory trends emphasize that father involvement is shaped by a number of different factors. The alternative explanation that the contradictory trends are artefacts from differences in survey design or implementation cannot be ruled out but the high consistency of all measures between the two surveys reduces its plausibility.

The model estimates show differences in the accommodation of mothers' work in the two survey years. In 2000, father involvement on weekdays was higher when mothers worked part time than if they worked full time. In a situation where high quality formal childcare was expensive and scarce, fathers could relieve mothers from looking after the children as long as mothers worked part time, for example through shift parenting. In 2015, fathers were equally or even more involved with bringing up their children when mothers worked full time compared to part time. This is an interesting change because mothers' behaviour in terms of working mostly part time has not changed much between the survey years (Henz 2016). More analyses are needed to understand the causes of these changes in father involvement.

Overall the UK differs from the other countries by stronger educational gradients of father involvement on weekends, both with regard to own and partner's education. It suggests that children in the UK grow up in unequal family environments that are not only characterised by financial and material differences but these differences align with further differences in fathering; children of well-educated parents do not just profit from material resources but also from greater father involvement compared to children from less educated backgrounds.

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