

SSSN Seminar

Working Fathers in Western Europe: Earning and Caring

Alison Smith

University of Edinburgh

alison.j.smith@ed.ac.uk

Either Financial Provider Or Active Carer?

- There are various models of co-residential parenthood and fatherhood
- Looking beyond the simplistic dichotomy of fathers who provide versus fathers who care
- Do some fathers actually manage to do both?

Study Aims and Methods

- To compare labour market outcomes of groups of fathers (ranked by childcare level), pre-fathers and non-fathers
- Uses the European Community Household Panel, 1994-2001, 14 countries
- Data are longitudinal and comparative
- Fixed effects modelling

Measuring Time Use

- One way to assess a parent's commitment to caring is to consider the quantity of time they spend looking after their children
- Data on time: Time use studies using time diaries, retrospective survey questions included in regular household surveys

Substantial Paternal Time

- While mothers across Europe still spend more time caring than fathers, there are considerable cross-national differences in father's participation in childcare
- There are considerable gender gaps in the amount of time parents spend looking after their children

Figure 1.
The percentage of all fathers who spend
substantial child care time:

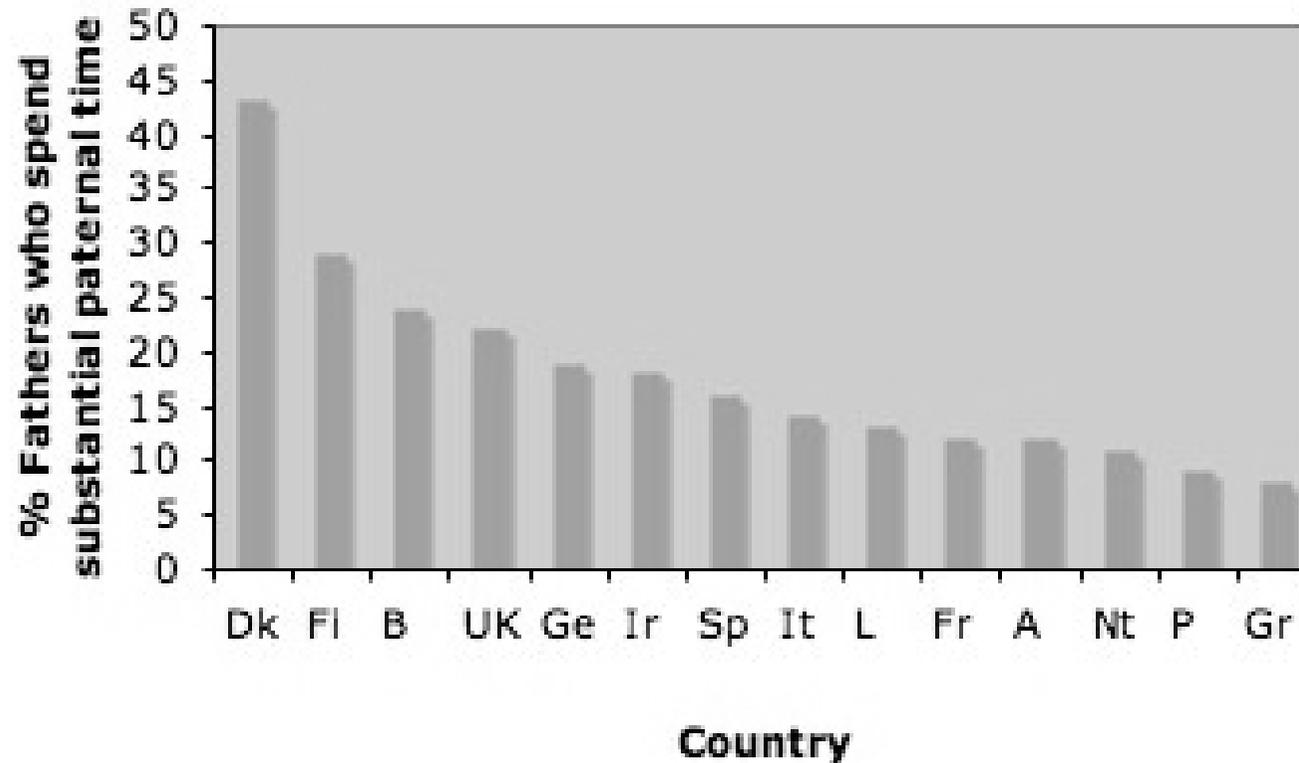
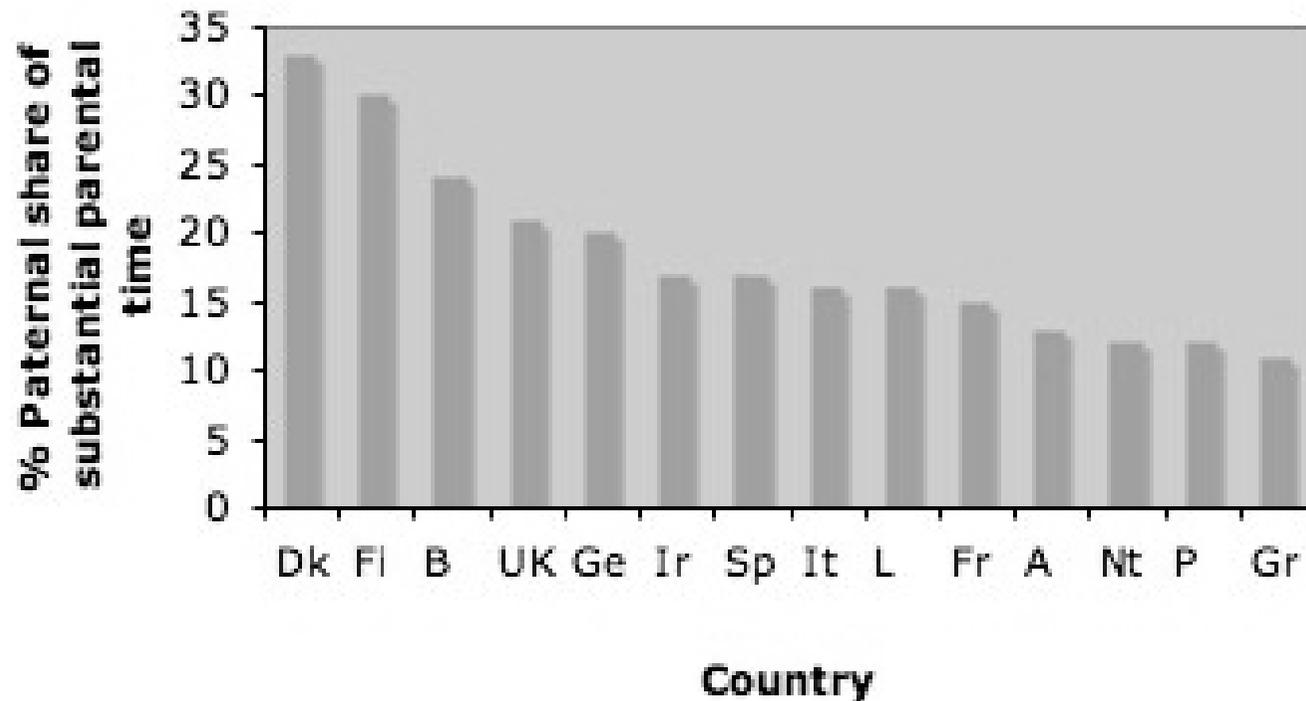


Figure 2.
The percentage of substantial child care time done by fathers (as opposed to mothers): by country



Fathers and Earnings

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \mathit{nonfather}_{it} + \beta_2 \mathit{prefather}_{it} + X_{it} \beta_n + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

On average, fathers across Europe earn more per hour than non-fathers, but they do not work longer hours.

Saving for Parenthood?

In the couple of years prior to becoming fathers, fathers-to-be are already earning more per hour than other non-fathers.

Caring and Working

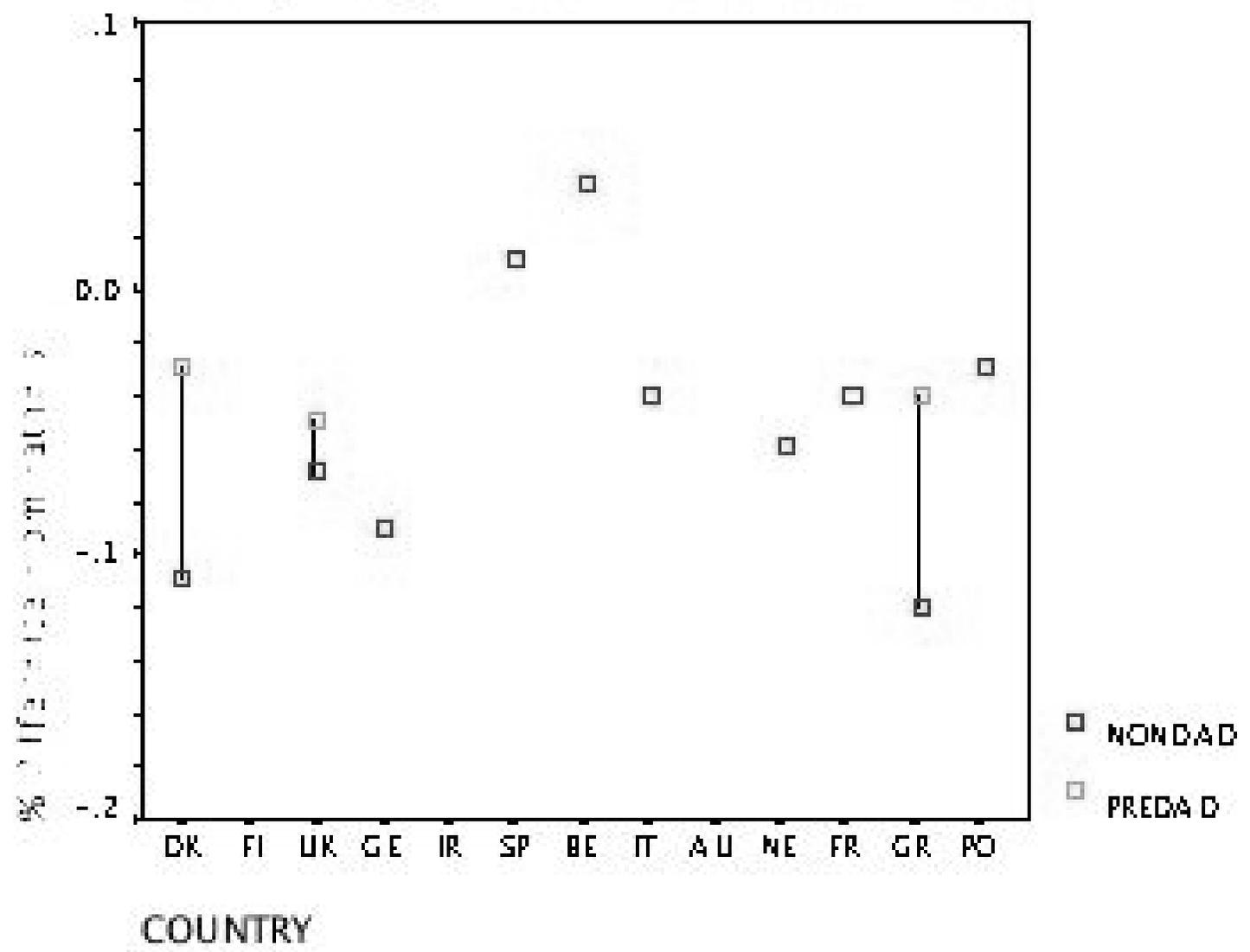
$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{prefather}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{fathernocare}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{fatherlowcare}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{fathermedcare}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{fatherhighcare}_{it} + X_{it} \beta_n + \varepsilon_{it}$$

(2)

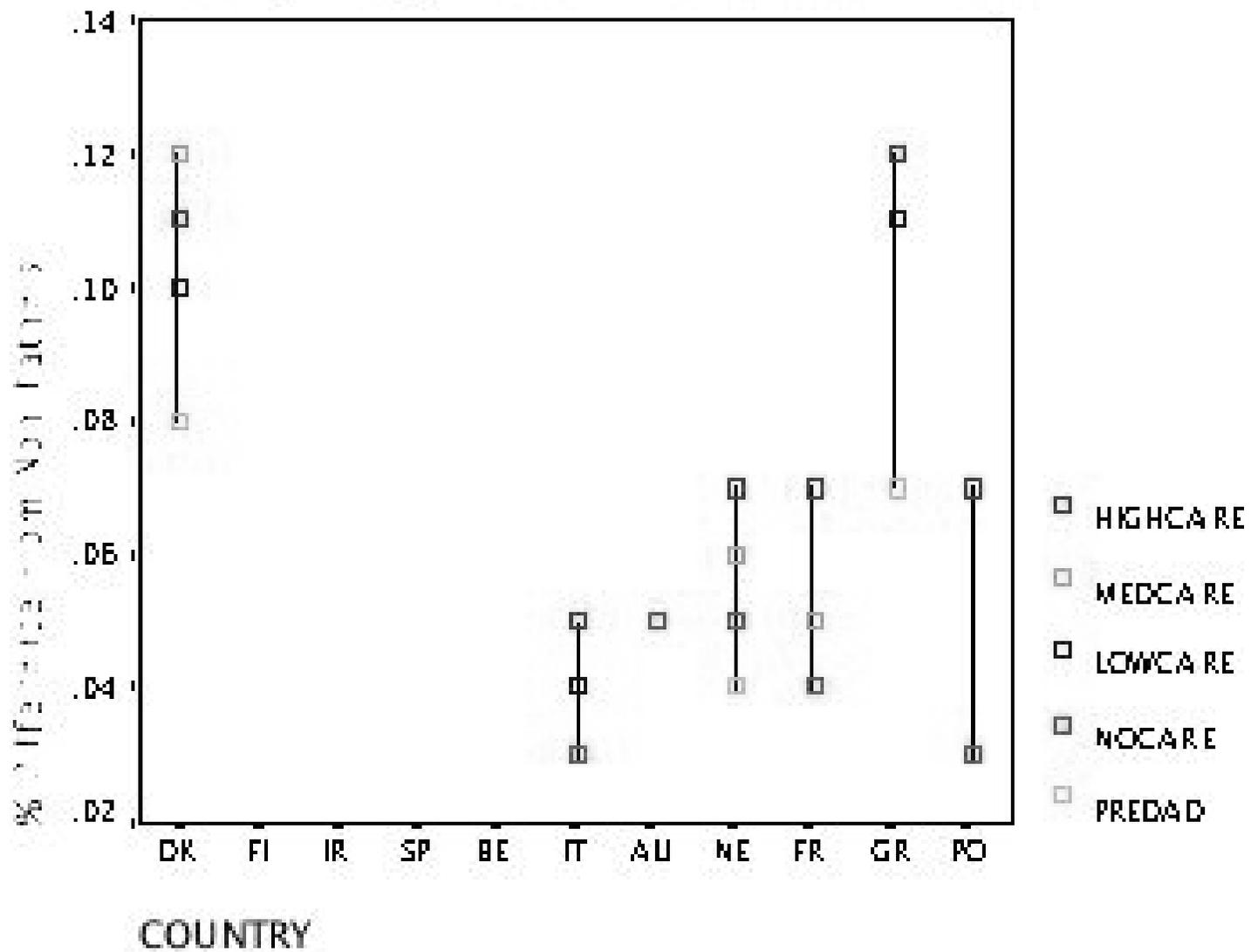
Caring and Earning

- On average, fathers who spend more time with their children also earn more per hour and work fewer hours than those fathers who spend less time with their children

Hourly Wage Rate Differences: Model 1B



Hourly Wage Rate Differences: Model 2B



Social Inequality and the Capacity for Family Life

- Categorisation of resident fathers as either good providers or active carers fails to describe modern fatherhood
- The “super-dad” is a father simultaneously involved in the labour market and as a carer
- The “ordinary-dad” is a father less involved in the labour market and also as a carer

If governments strive to increase fathers' time with children:

- Fathers should have greater access to leave from employment
- There should be high wage compensation for leave
- Fathers should be able to work flexibly
- Increased state child maintenance payments and state funded child care provision