

# NatCen

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## Time use and parental enjoyment of domestic work and childcare in the UK

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# Societal context: competing demands on parents' time

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- Cultural shift towards more time-intensive, child-centred parenting (e.g. Hays 1996, Sullivan 1997, O'Brien et al 2015)
- Increases in maternal labour market participation
  - Maternal employment rates increased from 61.9% in 1996 to 73.7% in 2017 (ONS 2017)
- More egalitarian gender-role attitudes towards paid work and domestic work (e.g. Working Families 2017; Scott and Clery 2013)
- Normative expectations around 'a participative father' (O'Brien et al 2015)

**How are parents faring in light of these competing demands?**

# Parental wellbeing

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- Parenthood negatively associated with subjective wellbeing in developed countries (e.g. Nomaguchi and Milike 2003; Kahneman et al. 2004; Deaton and Stone 2013)
  - UK parents 8% less happy than their non-parent counterparts (Glass et al. 2016)
- Wellbeing gap commonly theorized to be due to increased exposure to stressors (e.g. Perlman 1989) as a result of parenthood
  - Financial strain (e.g. Nelson et al. 2014)
  - Work-family conflict (e.g. Nomaguchi et al. 2005)
  - **Increased demands on time and energy** (e.g. Nelson et al. 2014)

# Research questions

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1. How do parents feel about the childcare and domestic activities they carry out? And how does this vary by personal and household characteristics?
2. What is the association between fragmentation and multitasking and parental enjoyment?
3. How does the context around time use influence how parents experience domestic and childcare tasks?

# Hypotheses (1)

H1: Parents of young children and fathers experience greater enjoyment in relation to time spent on domestic and childcare tasks

- Mothers experience childcare time as more stressful than fathers (Roeters and Gracia 2016; Musick, Meier and Flood 2016)
- Parental wellbeing tends to be higher among parents of young children (Meier et al. 2018; Pollmann-Schult 2014; Nomaguchi 2012)

H2: Fragmentation and multitasking detract from parents' enjoyment of domestic and childcare activities

- Multitasking (particularly at home) is perceived as a negative experience, esp. for mothers (Offer and Schneider 2011)
- Although Sullivan and Gershuny (2017) do not find an association between feeling rushed and multitasking and fragmentation.

# Hypotheses (2)

H3: Partner presence serves as a mediating factor, making domestic and childcare activities more enjoyable

- Partner presence may provide both logistical and emotional support, insulating parents from exposure to stressors
- Fathers find childcare more stressful solo-parenting (Musick, Meier and Flood 2016 ) and less stressful when co-parent is present (Roeters and Gracia 2016)
- Multitasking with a spouse perceived as positive experience (Offer and Schneider 2011)

# Data: UK Time Use Survey 2014/15

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- Nationally representative household survey
- Sample: 1,732 parents with a child aged 16 or younger in household
  - 1,014 mothers and 718 fathers
- Outcome measure: Enjoyment of current activity
  - “How much did you enjoy this time on a scale of 1 to 7?”
  - Measure of “instant utility” (Kahneman 2004), which may accumulate over time to contribute to wellbeing
  - Measure tied to activity minimizes “filter of memory” (Kahneman 2006)
  - Likely more responsive to contextual factors than global wellbeing measures

# Average enjoyment and time allocation

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Enjoyment (sd)	Min. per day (sd)	Enjoyment (sd)	Min. per day (sd)
<b>Core housework</b>	4.7* (1.1)	154 (88)	4.9 (1.0)	68 (67)
<b>Non-routine housework</b>	5.1* (1.1)	72 (70)	4.9 (1.1)	76 (88)
<b>Physical childcare</b>	5.4 (1.0)	62 (81)	5.4 (1.0)	27 (46)
<b>Interactive child care</b>	6.1 (0.9)	28 (41)	6.1 (0.9)	25 (46)
<b>Other childcare</b>	5.3 (1.2)	17 (28)	5.3 (1.1)	10 (26)
<b>Leisure</b>	5.9* (0.8)	142 (104)	5.8 (0.8)	153 (119)
<b>Paid Work</b>	4.8* (1.2)	81 (120)	4.6 (1.2)	172 (177)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>5.4 (0.8)</b>		<b>5.3 (0.8)</b>	
<b>N</b>	1014		718	

\* Mothers' characteristics significantly differ ( $p < 0.05$ ) from fathers'



# Model specification – Base model

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Enjoyment}_{edp} = & \beta_{000} + \beta_1 \gamma_{edp} + \beta_2 \chi_{edp} + \beta_3 \delta_{0dp} + \beta_4 \lambda_{0dp} \\ & + \beta_4 \rho_{00p} + \beta_5 \varphi_{00p} + \nu_{0dp} + \nu_{00p} + \varepsilon_{edp} \end{aligned}$$

## Episode-level variables ( $e$ ):

$\gamma$  = whether activity is a domestic activity (and which type)

$\chi$  = contextual factors (who with, whether multitasked)

## Day-level variables ( $d$ ):

$\delta$  = multitasking and fragmentation

$\lambda$  = time spent in restorative activities and paid work

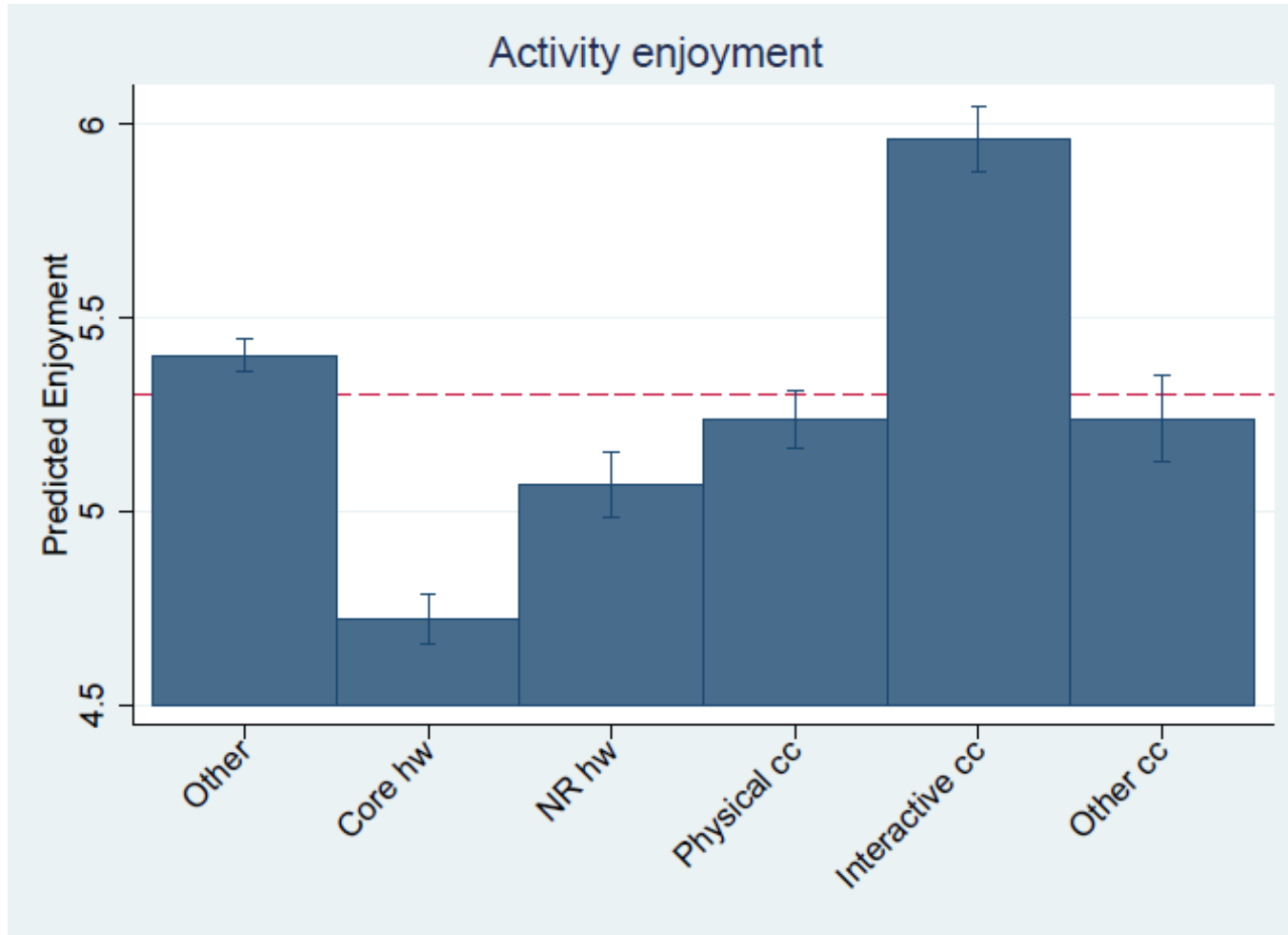
$\psi$  = whether weekend or weekday

## Person-level variables ( $p$ ):

$\rho$  = socio-demographic characteristics

$\varphi$  = household composition characteristics

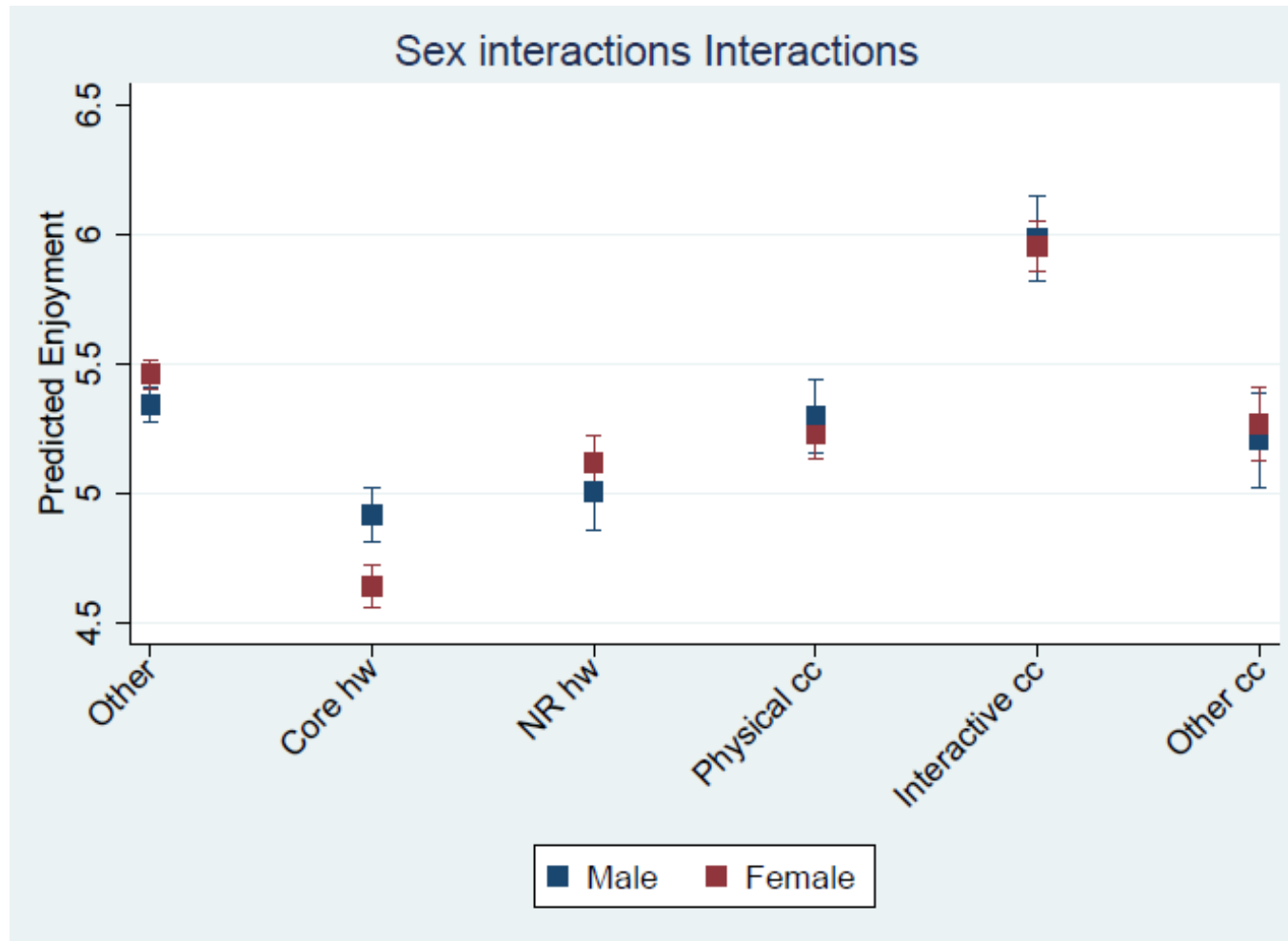
# Base model results: activity enjoyment



# Base model: Individual-level factors

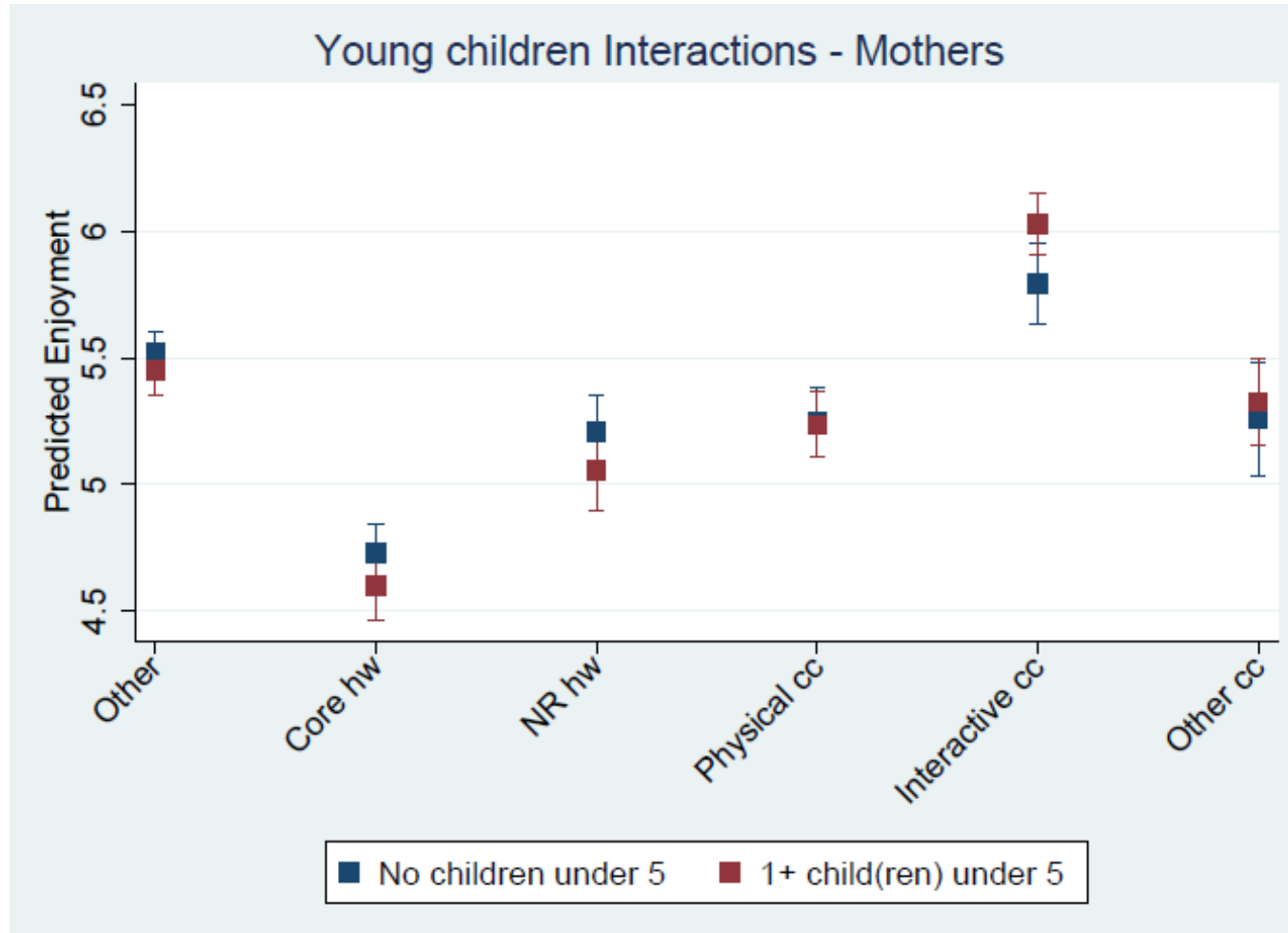
Enjoyment 1 = not at all; 7 = very much	Pooled		Mothers		Fathers	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Mother	0.04	0.04	-	-	-	-
Age	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.02
Age squared	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>University degree</b>	<b>-0.17***</b>	0.05	<b>-0.14*</b>	0.07	<b>-0.21**</b>	0.07
Professional occ. (base = Routine)	-0.07	0.05	-0.10	0.07	-0.04	0.08
Intermediate occ. (base = Routine)	-0.02	0.05	-0.06	0.07	0.03	0.08
<b>Single (not married or cohabitating)</b>	<b>0.18**</b>	0.07	<b>0.19**</b>	0.07	-0.04	0.23
1+ children under 5	-0.06	0.05	-0.07	0.07	-0.04	0.08
Number of children	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04
Constant	5.50***	0.40	5.65***	0.60	5.25***	0.61
N. of cases	90704		56401		34303	

# Sex interactions



- Mothers enjoy core domestic housework 0.3 points less than fathers
- Mothers also enjoy physical childcare less than fathers but magnitude is negligible

# Children under 5 interactions (mothers)

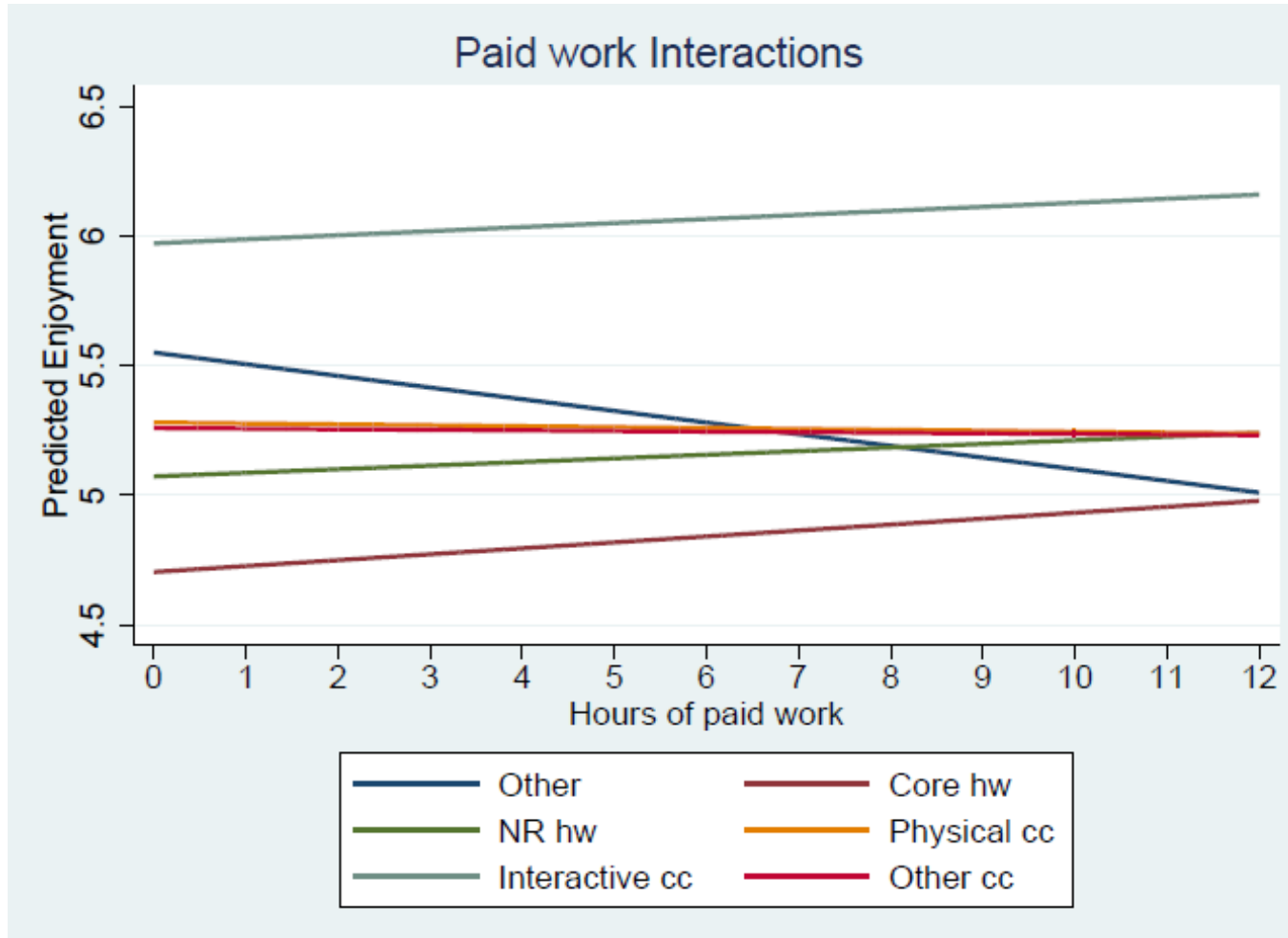


- Mothers with young children enjoy interactive childcare 0.2 points more than mothers of older children
- No similar boost for fathers observed

# Base model: Day-level factors

Enjoyment 1 = not at all; 7 = very much	Pooled		Mothers		Fathers	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Hrs on paid work	<b>-0.03***</b>	0.01	<b>-0.03***</b>	0.01	<b>-0.03***</b>	0.01
Hrs on sleep	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02
Hrs on leisure	<b>0.03***</b>	0.01	<b>0.03**</b>	0.01	<b>0.04**</b>	0.01
Num. episodes	<b>-0.01*</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.00
% of day multitasked	-0.01	0.08	0.09	0.09	-0.13	0.14
Weekday	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.08	0.04
Constant	<b>5.50***</b>	0.40	<b>5.65***</b>	0.60	<b>5.25***</b>	0.61
N. of cases	90704		56401		34303	

# Paid work interactions



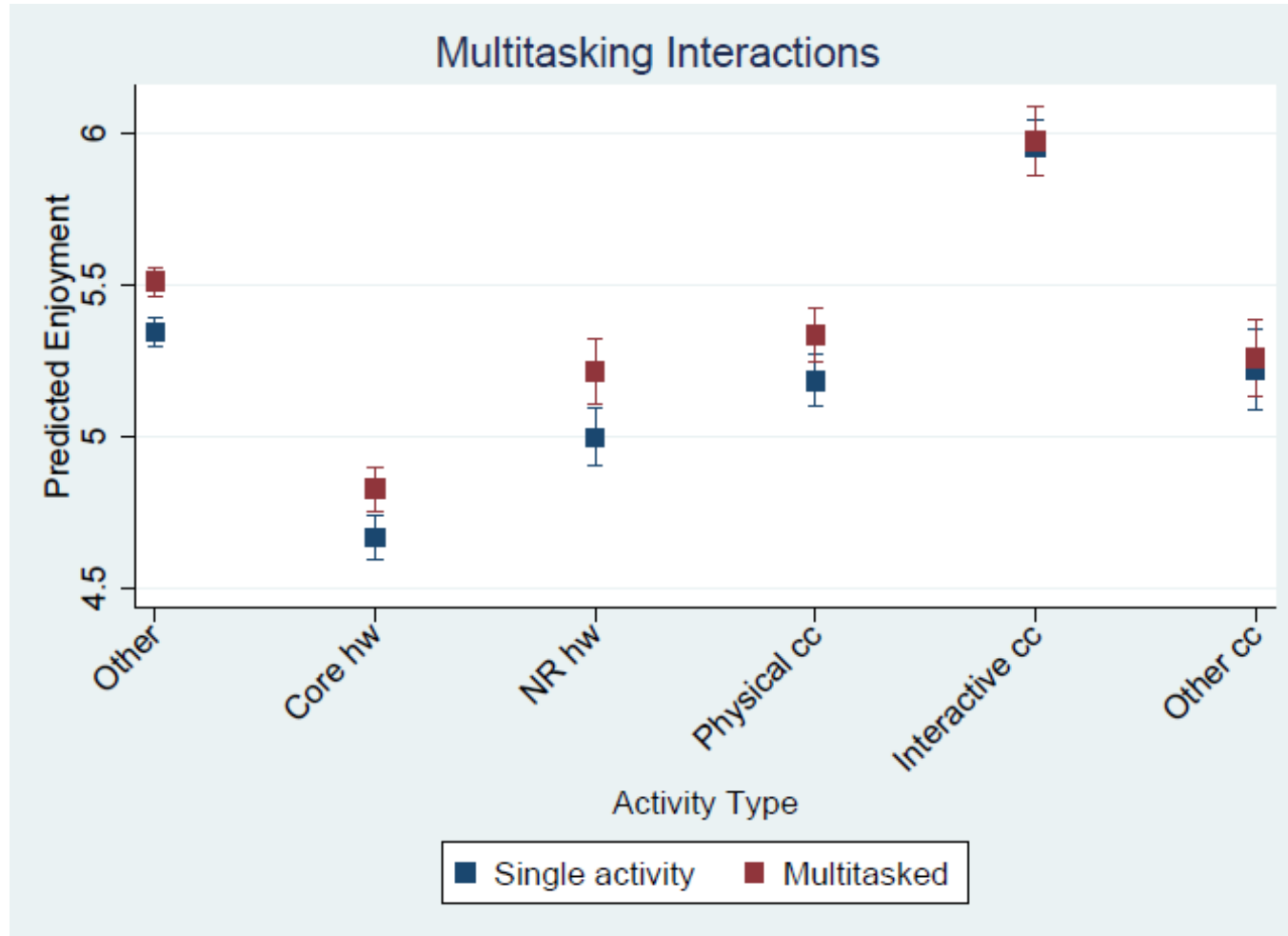
- Paid work positively associated with enjoyment of core and non-routine housework and interactive childcare
- Magnitude of effects small – between 0.1 and 0.2 per 8-hr day

# Base model: Episode-level factors

Enjoyment 1 = not at all; 7 = very much	Pooled		Mothers		Fathers	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Alone	<b>-0.27***</b>	0.04	<b>-0.30***</b>	0.04	<b>-0.24***</b>	0.07
<b>With Partner</b>	<b>0.24***</b>	0.03	<b>0.19***</b>	0.04	<b>0.26***</b>	0.05
With Child	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.12	0.07
<b>Multitasking</b>	<b>0.16***</b>	0.02	<b>0.15***</b>	0.02	<b>0.18***</b>	0.03
Constant	5.50***	0.40	5.65***	0.60	5.25***	0.61
N. of cases	90704		56401		34303	

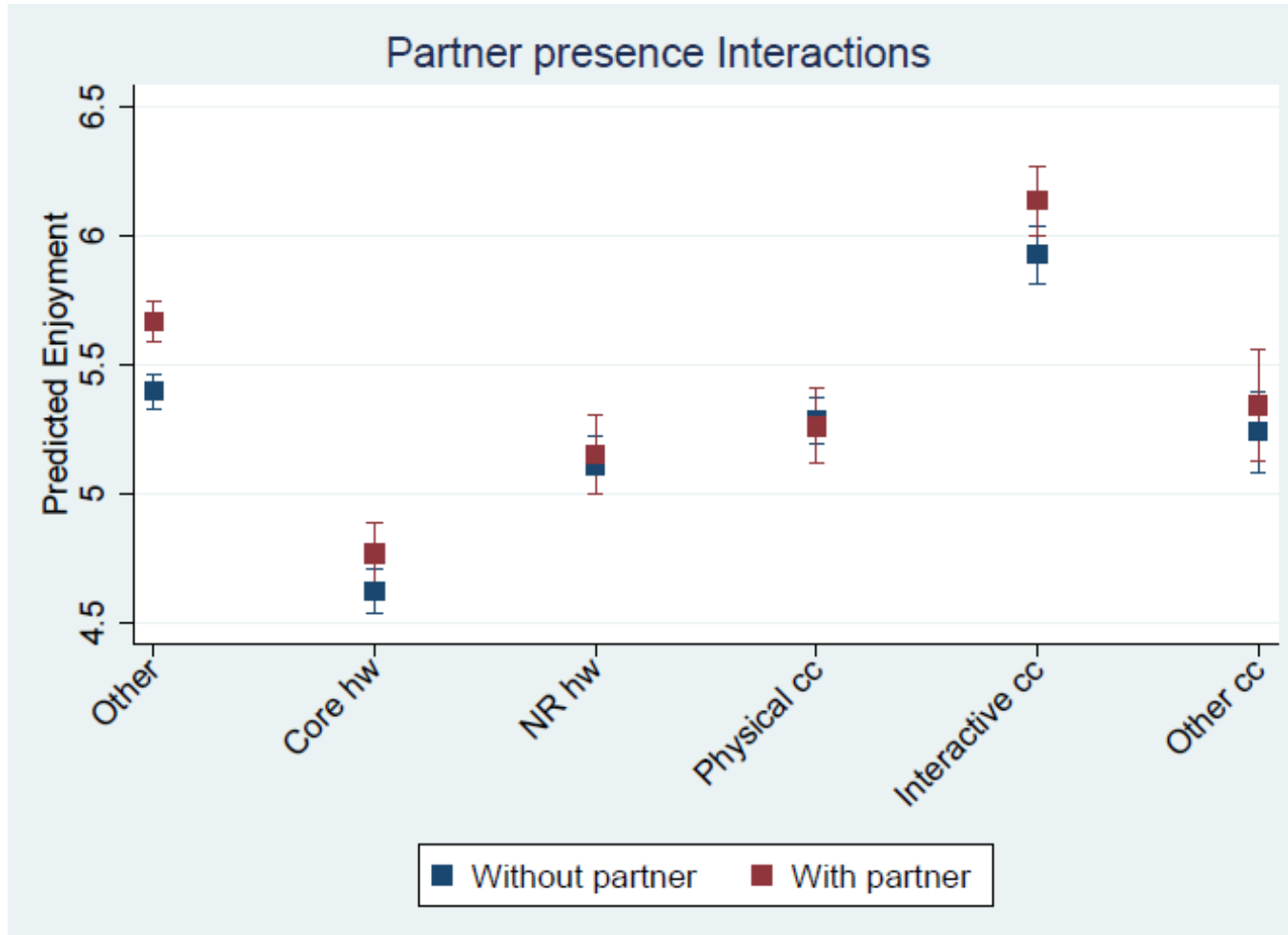


# Multitasking interactions



- Multitasking boosts parental enjoyment of most activities, domestic or not, by 0.2 points
- Interactive childcare is the exception where multitasking has negligible gains

# Partner presence interactions



- Partner presence associated with increased enjoyment of non-domestic activities by 0.3 points
- Among domestic activities it boosts enjoyment of core housework (0.2 points) and interactive childcare (0.1 points) only

# Key findings (1)

## Episode-level

- Multitasking and partner presence can be mediating factors
  - Contrary to expectations, multitasking boosts enjoyment of all activities **except** interactive childcare
  - Partner co-presence boosts enjoyment of core housework and interactive childcare

## Day-level

- The greater amount of time spent in paid work improves enjoyment housework and interactive childcare
  - Effect sizes small

# Key findings (2)

## Individual-level

- Having a young child in the house did not affect how parents experienced domestic tasks relative to parents of older children
  - With exception of mothers, who enjoyed interactive childcare more when they had a child under the age of 5 in the household.

# Next steps

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- Within-couple analysis to explore the role of partner characteristics (as discussed in Sullivan 1996) and shares of time spent in domestic tasks
- Within-couple analysis of spousal co-presence vs shared activities
- Detailed examination of multitasking effects and whether results differ by the types of activities multitasked

# Contact

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# Appendix slides



# Variance components and ICC

<b>Base models</b>	<b>Pooled</b>		<b>Mothers</b>		<b>Fathers</b>	
	<b>Est.</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Est.</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Est.</b>	<b>SE</b>
Constant	5.50***	0.40	5.65***	0.60	5.25***	0.61
Individual-level variance	0.41	0.02	0.43	0.03	0.40	0.04
Day-level variance	0.17	0.02	0.16	0.02	0.18	0.03
Episode-level variance	1.37	0.03	1.41	0.04	1.30	0.06
Individual-level $\rho$	0.21	0.01	0.21	0.01	0.21	0.02
Day-level $\rho$	0.30	0.01	0.30	0.01	0.31	0.02
N. of cases	90704		56401		34303	



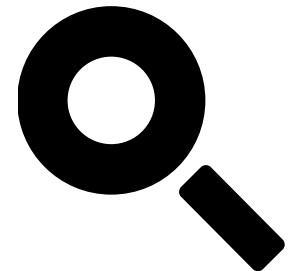
# Policy developments in UK

## “Time to care”:

- Maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave
- Flexible working

## “Time to work”:

- Expansion of formal childcare
  - 15 hours per week over 38 weeks for 3-4 year olds
  - 15 hours per week for 2 year olds from low income families
  - Additional 15 hours for working families (‘30 hours’)
  - Support with childcare costs through tax credits



# Analysis sample

	<b>Mothers</b>	<b>Fathers</b>
<b>Higher degree (%)</b>	34.9	30.8
<b>Employed (%)</b>	70.7	91.7
<b>Occupational class (%)</b>		
<i>Professional</i>	30.7	32.9
<i>Intermediate</i>	29.7	26.9
<i>Routine</i>	39.5	40.2
<b>Married/ cohabitating</b>	80.9	96.8
<b>Number of children (mean)</b>	1.7	1.8
<b>Children under 5 in the hh (%)</b>	44.6	45.6
<b>Age (mean)</b>	38.3	41.1
<b>Total (%)</b>	44.9	55.1
<b>N</b>	1014	718

# Why study the UK context?

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- Most recent evidence regarding parental time use and wellbeing focuses on the US
- Parental wellbeing is linked to policy and contextual factors
  - E.g. Institutional support for parenthood (subsidised childcare, paid time off) can reduce the happiness gap between parents and non-parents (Glass, Andersson and Simon 2016)

# Project

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- National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)
  - Dr Svetlana Speight (PI), Allison Dunatchik (Co-I), Robert Wishart
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- Working Families
- Funded by Economic and Social Research Council (Secondary Data Analysis Initiative)
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