

# Contemporary Motherhood

The impact of children on adult time

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# Research issue

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- ◆ Raising children is expensive in both money and time
  - ❖ Since separation of work and home, care is discrete dedicated activity
  - ❖ While care was done as a by-product of home based (female) labour, it was invisible
- ◆ Social and personal consequences of time cost of caring are becoming apparent
  - ❖ Delayed childbearing
  - ❖ Lower fertility (ageing population)
  - ❖ Time stress/work-family strain
  - ❖ Effects on children
  - ❖ Lifetime financial losses for mothers
  - ❖ Loss of female contribution to workforce (lower productivity)

# Whose problem?

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But time demand of care obscure, at least partly because it is not clear whose problem it is

- ◆ Parents'? (private pleasure, exercising basic human capability, revealed preference?)
  - ❖ Mothers'? (good of family unit, fixed preference?)
  
- ◆ Everybody's? (children public good, care work important contribution to economy/society?)
  - ❖ If so, policy challenge of how to distribute cost

# Research aim

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- ◆ Explore the time impacts of parenthood, and their distribution by
  - ❖ Sex
    - ❖ Employment status
    - ❖ Family structure (sole parenthood)
    - ❖ Education
    - ❖ Use of non-parental care
    - ❖ Policy environment (country)

## ◆ ***ABS Time Use Survey 1997:***

- ❖ Cross-sectional survey. Random sample of over 4000 households. All household members aged over 15 record all daily activities in five minute intervals over two diary days. Data on quantity of time spent in each activity (“what were you doing?”), simultaneous activities (“what else were you doing?”), and company present (“who was with you?”) time stress (“how often do you feel rushed or pressed for time?”)

## ◆ ***Multinational Time Use Study:***

- ❖ Harmonised cross-national dataset of time use studies from 30 countries. Subsample: Canada, USA, Australia, Germany, Italy, Finland, Norway. Data on quantity of time spent in each activity.

# Dependent variables

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- ◆ Total work and its subsets
  - ❖ Paid work
  - ❖ Unpaid work
    - ❖ Childcare
      - ❖ Types of childcare (talk-based care, physical care, travel, supervising children)
- ◆ All time with children, and its subset time alone with children
- ◆ Childfree recreation
- ◆ Time stress

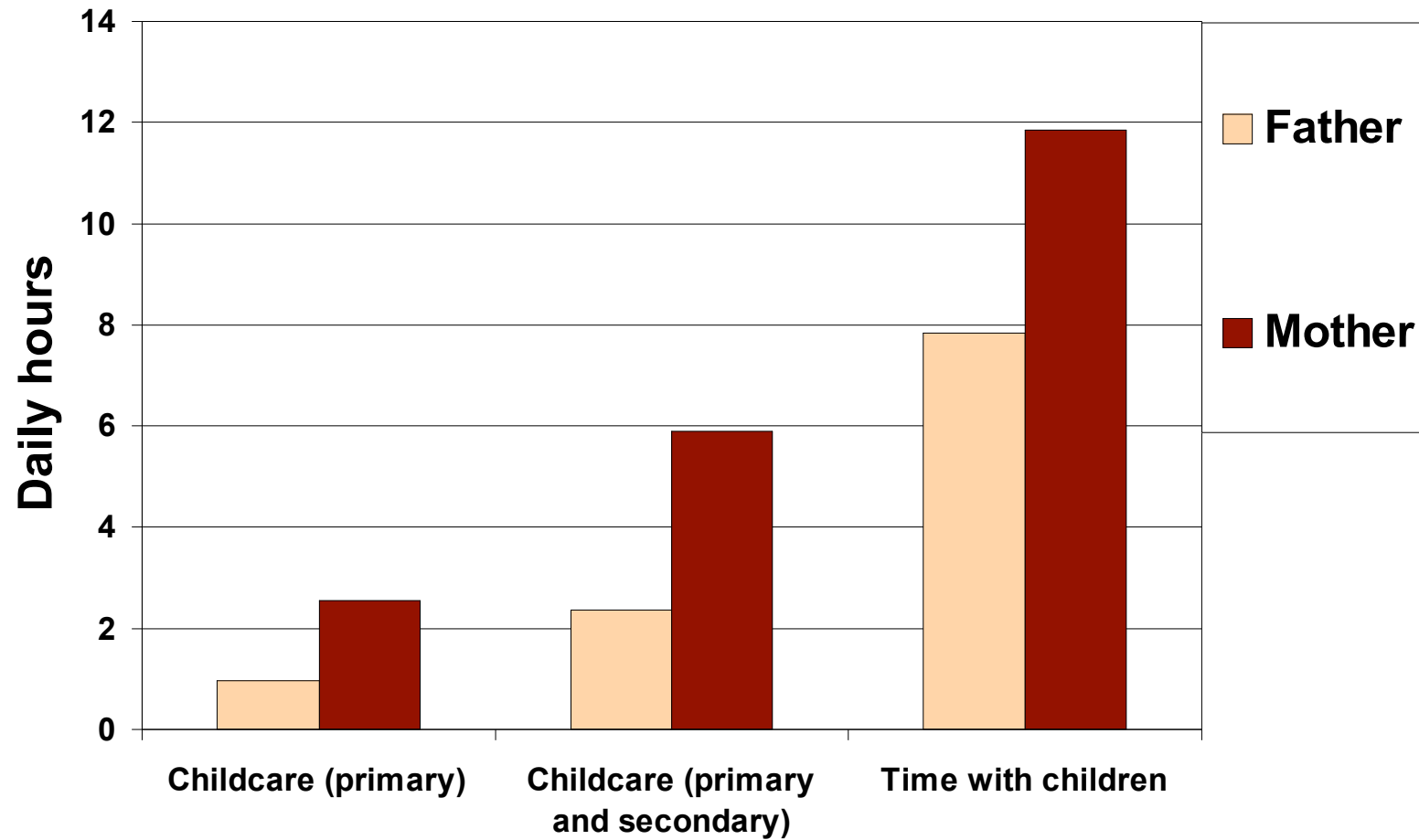
## **Dependent variables: childcare measures**

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- ◆ Childcare as a primary (main) activity
- ◆ Childcare as either a primary or secondary activity
- ◆ Time in the company of children

# Measuring child time

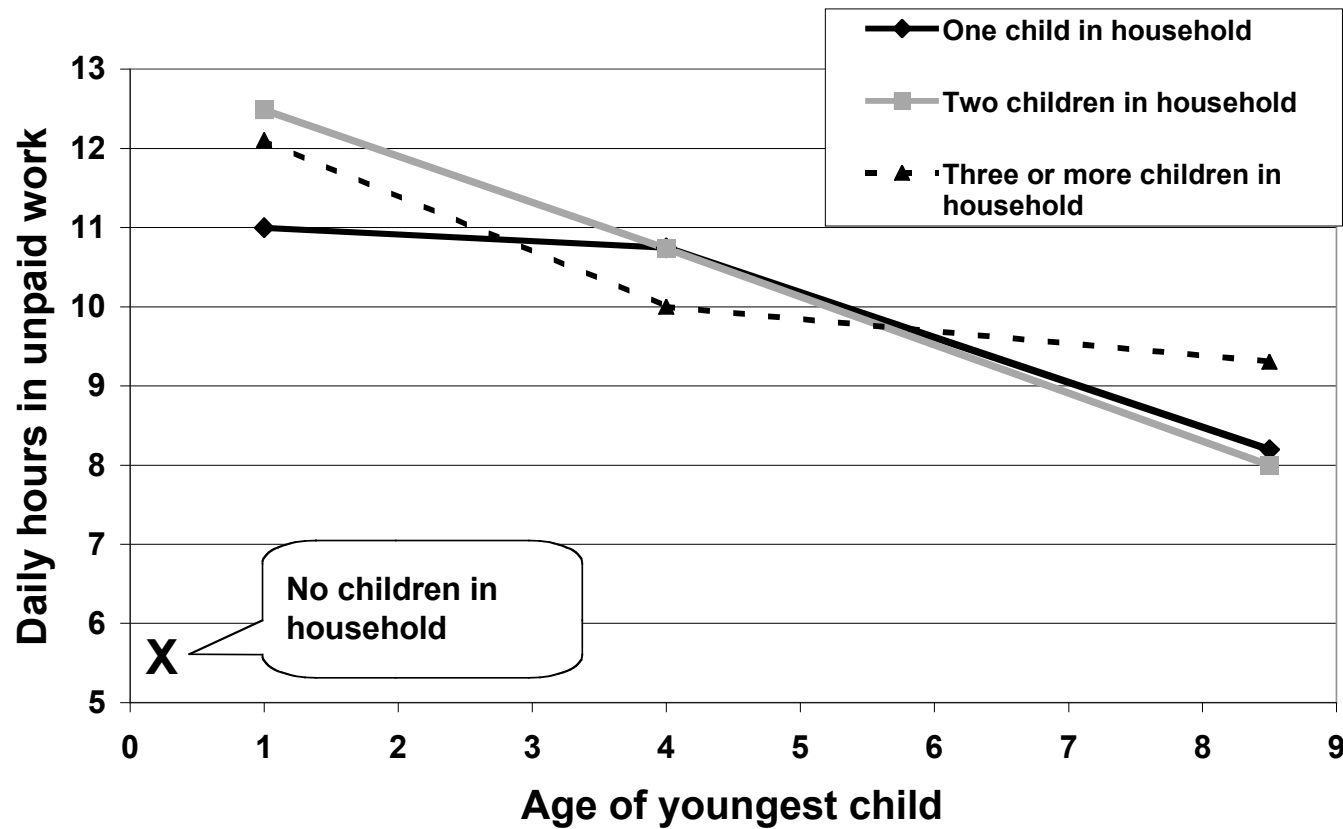


## Dependent variables: types of childcare task

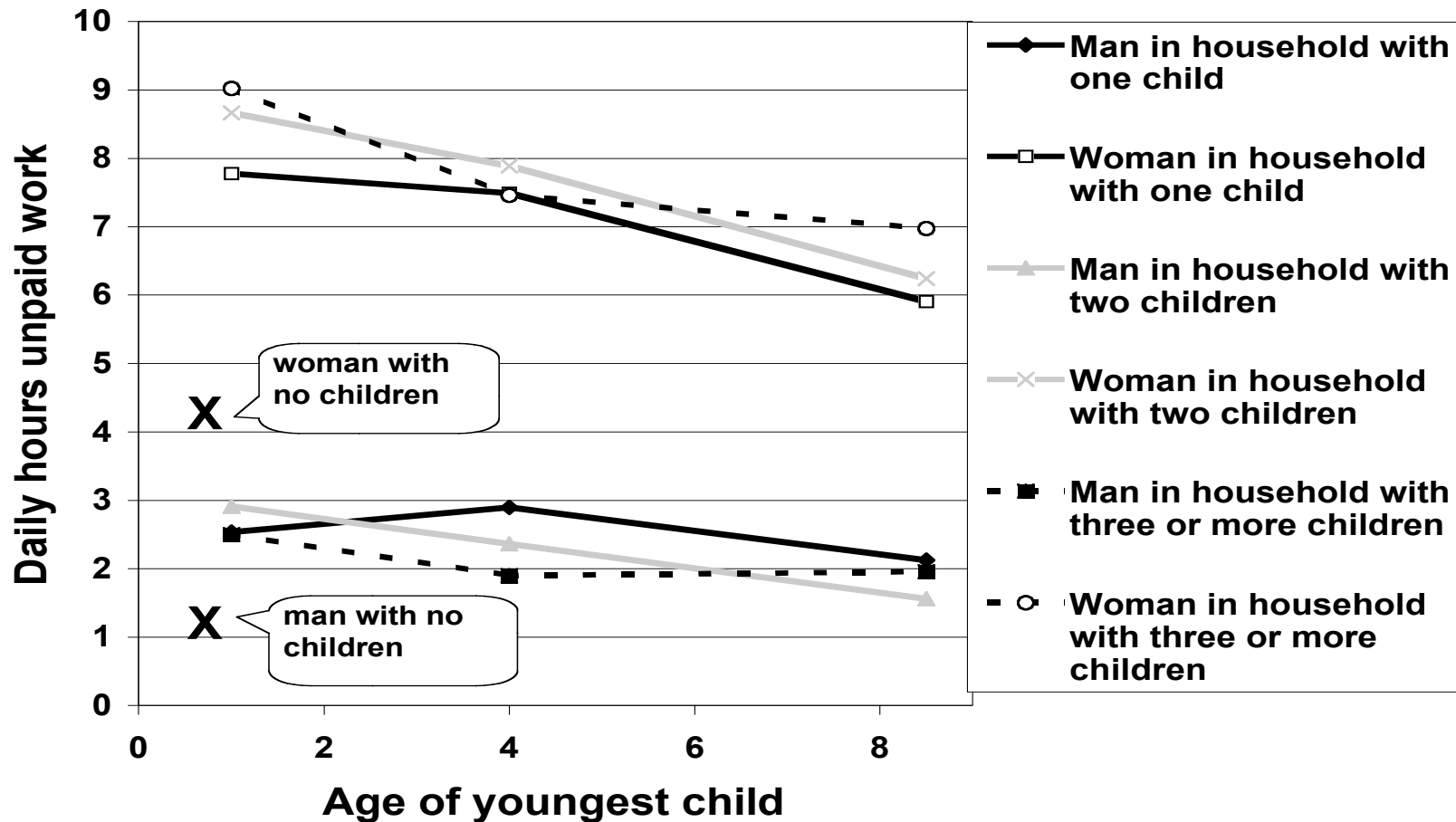
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- ◆ **Talk-based care:** reading, playing, teaching, talking, listening
- ◆ **Physical care:** bathing, dressing, feeding, holding, changing, putting to bed
- ◆ **Travel:** taking children to school, sports, childcare
- ◆ **Passive care:** supervising without active involvement (usually while doing something else at the same time)

# Unpaid work by age and number of children (household)



# Unpaid work by age and number of children, by sex



## Sources of time with children by sex

- ◆ Hours a day in employment, sleep/personal care and recreation by sex, parental status and age of children

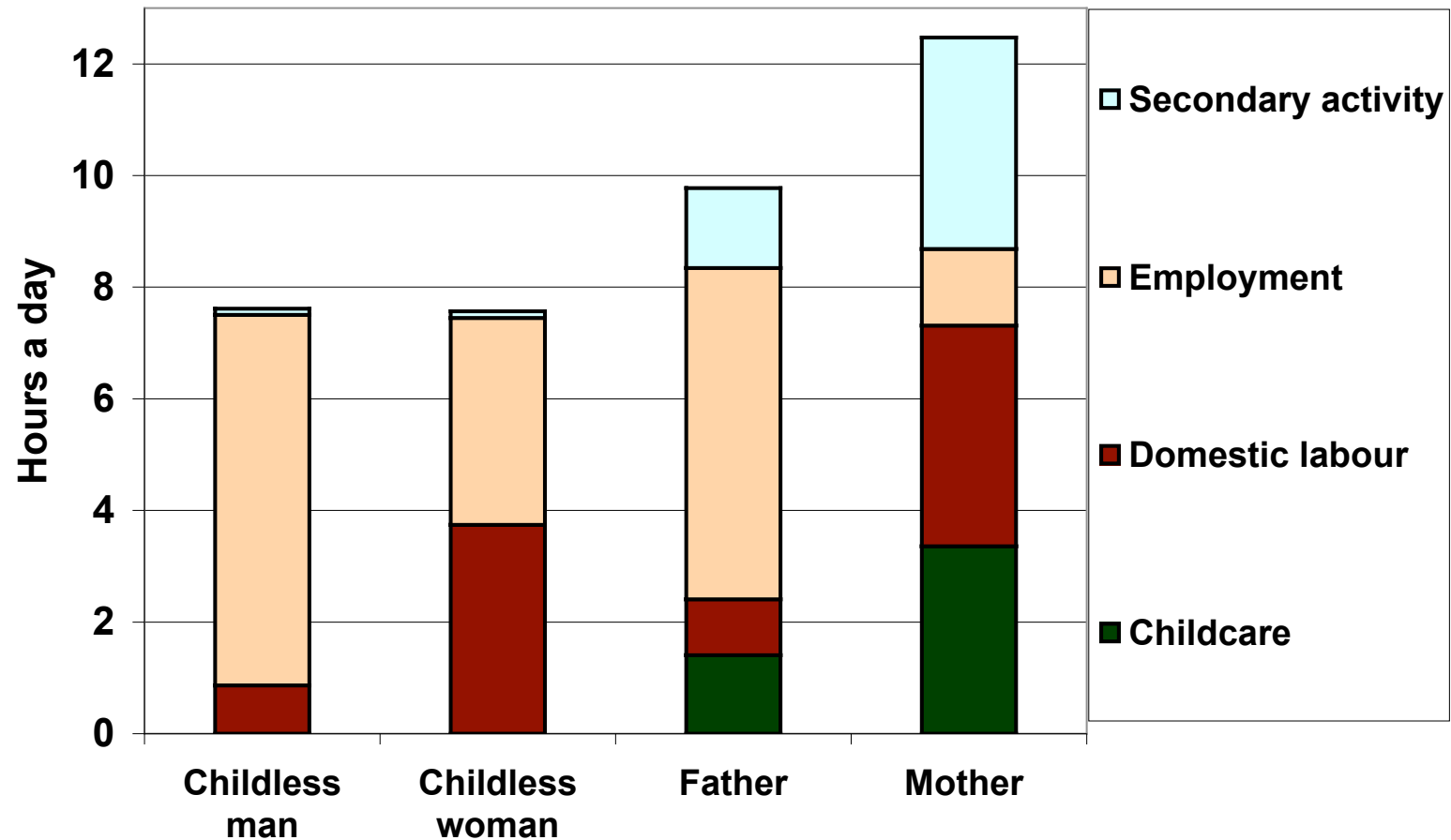
	Employment		Sleep/Personal Care		Recreation	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>No children</b>	<b>5.83***</b>	<b>3.50***</b>	<b>10.89***</b>	<b>11.58***</b>	<b>3.53***</b>	<b>3.56***</b>
<b>Two children</b>						
<b>Youngest 0-2</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>-3.18***</b>	<b>-0.61***</b>	<b>-1.35***</b>	<b>-1.01**</b>	<b>-1.42***</b>
<b>Youngest 3-4</b>	<b>-0.35</b>	<b>-3.25***</b>	<b>-0.53**</b>	<b>-1.12***</b>	<b>-0.74**</b>	<b>-1.19***</b>
<b>Youngest 5-11</b>	<b>0.86**</b>	<b>-1.78***</b>	<b>-0.77***</b>	<b>-0.88***</b>	<b>-0.45**</b>	<b>-0.63***</b>

Source ABS Time Use Survey 1997

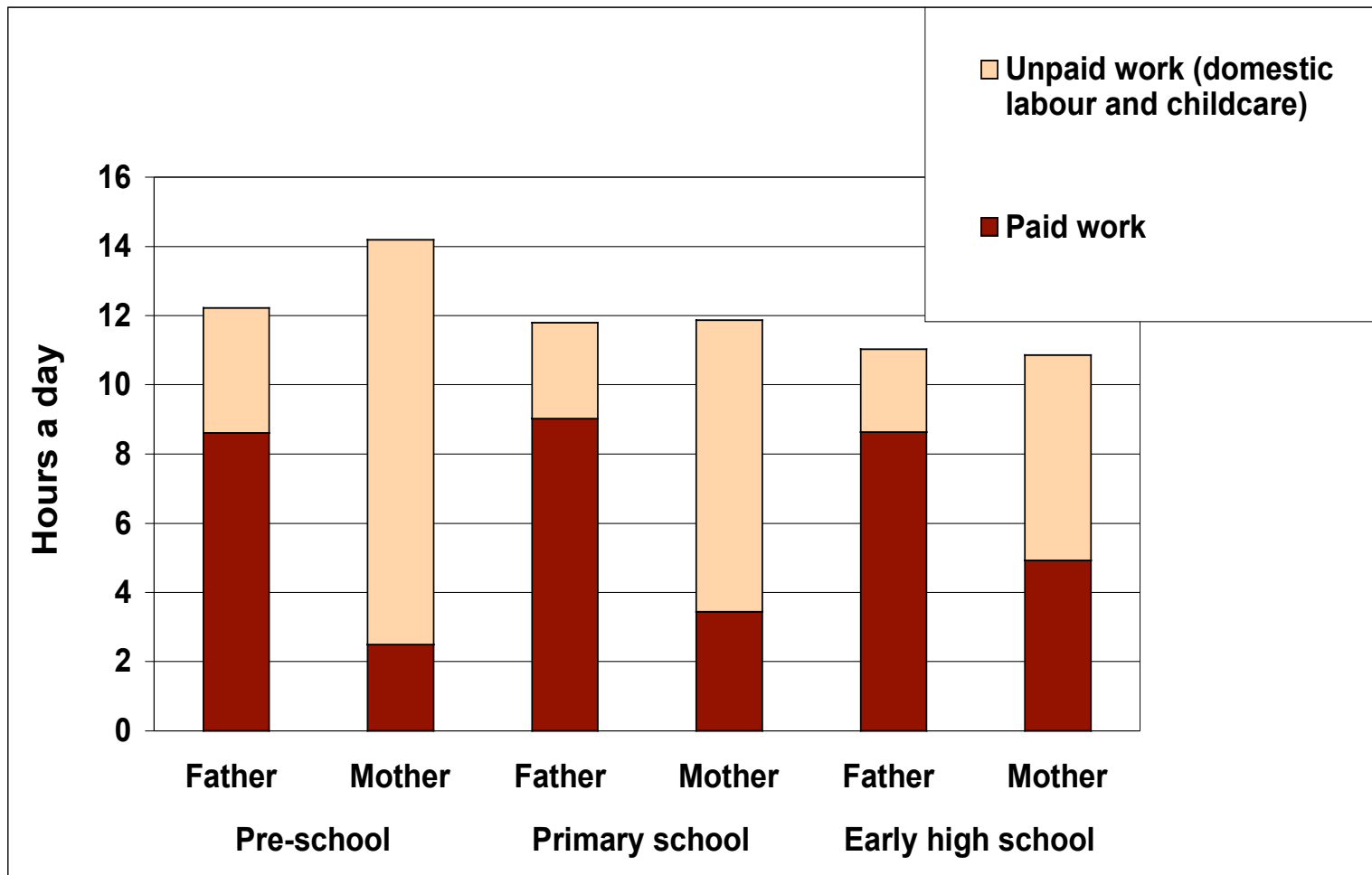
\* P-value<0.05 \*\* P-value<0.01 \*\*\*P-value<0.001

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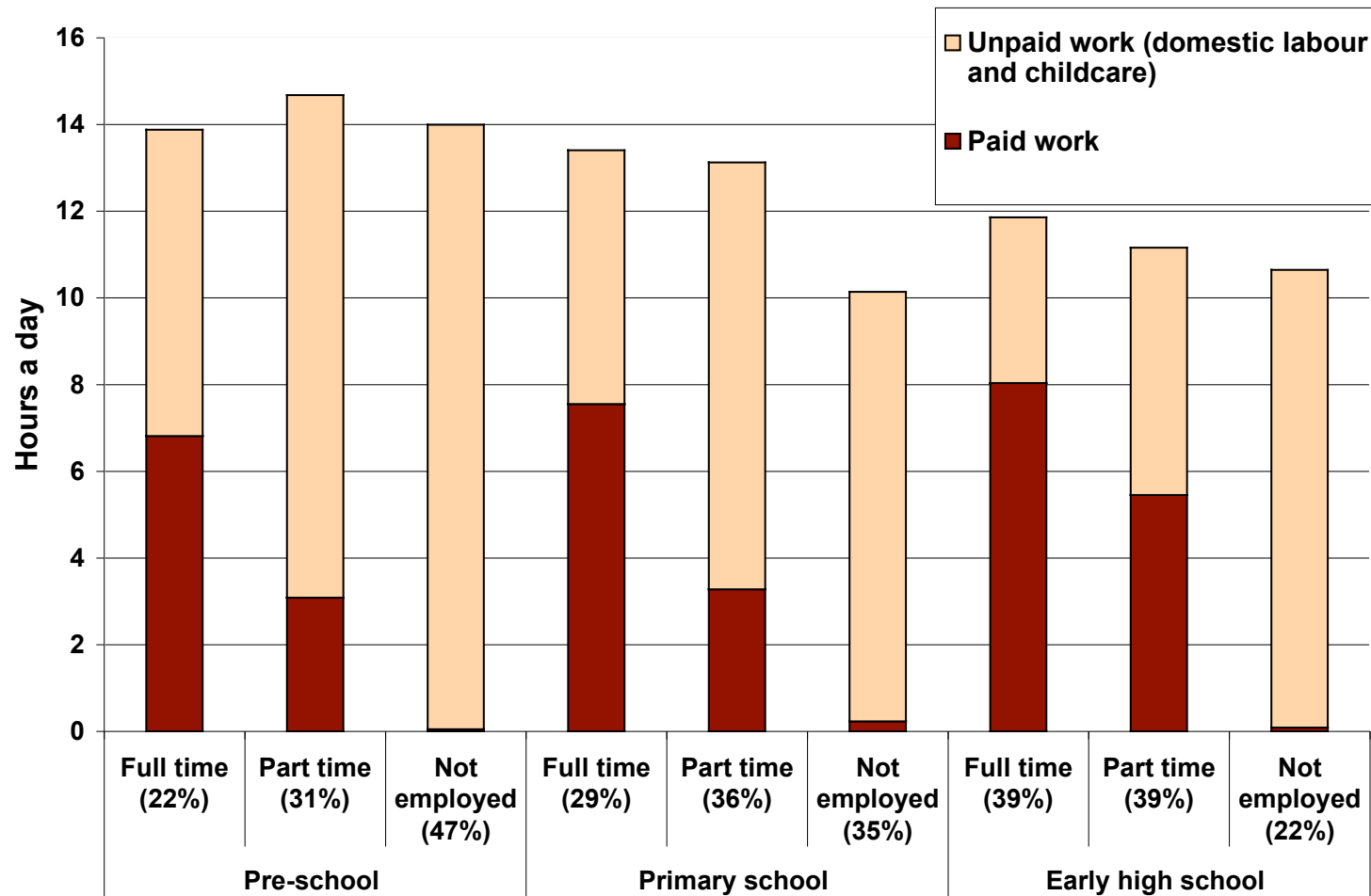
# Total paid and unpaid work time by sex and parenthood



# Parents' time in paid and unpaid work by school stage of youngest child



# Mothers' time in paid and unpaid work by employment status and school stage of youngest child

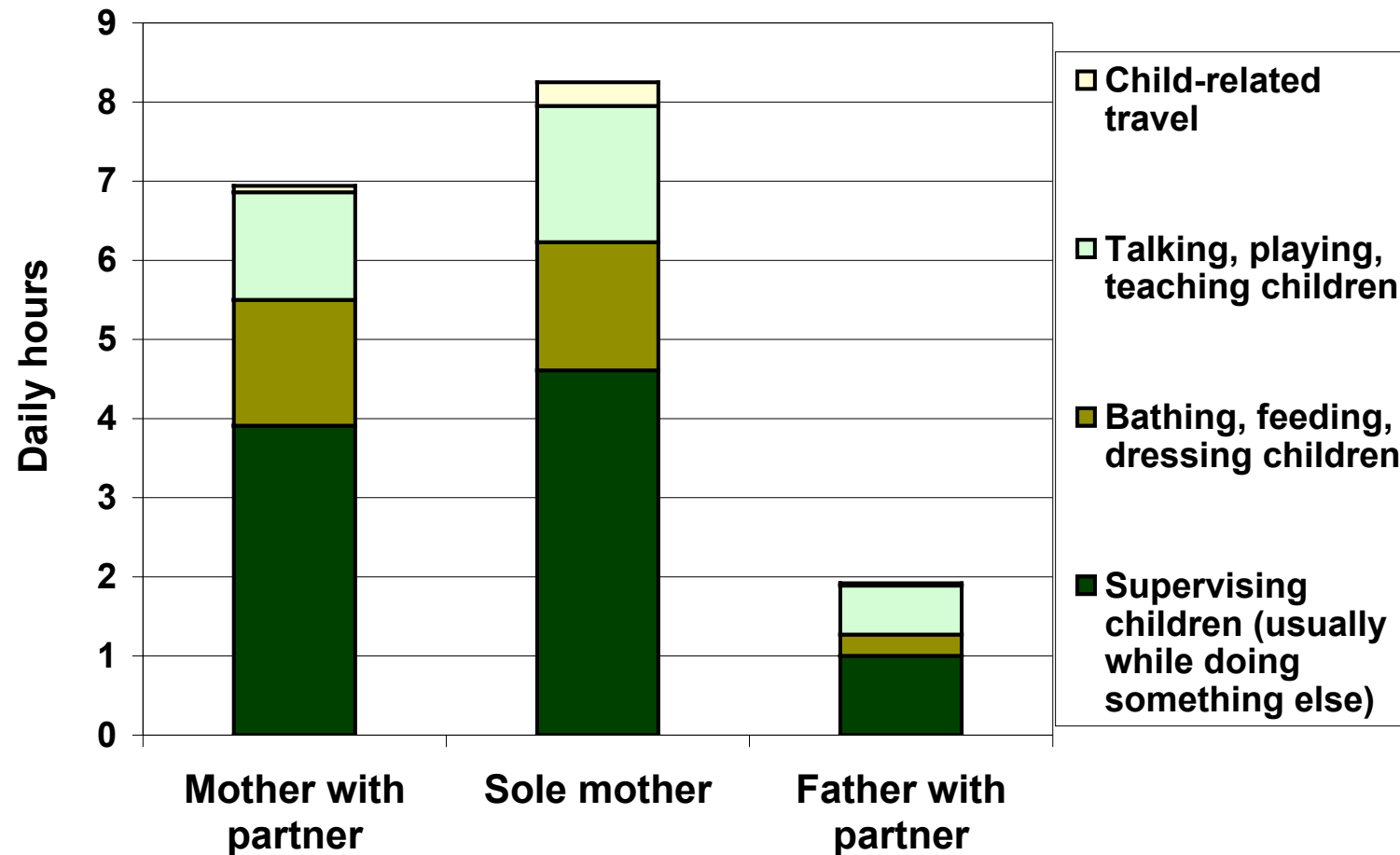


## Percentage who “always” or “often” feel rushed or pressed for time by sex, employment status and school stage of youngest child

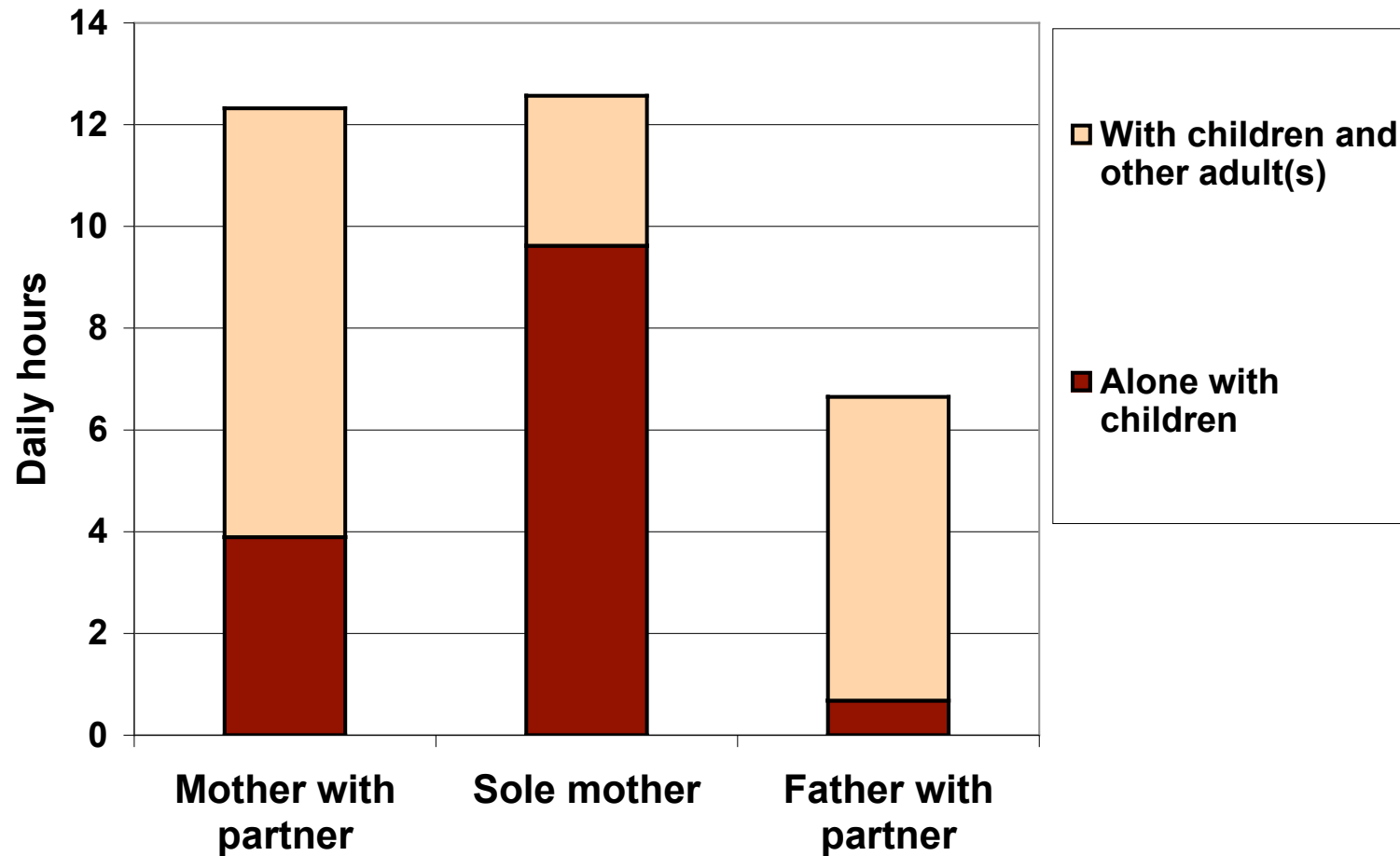


School stage of youngest child	Employment status			
	Male	Female		
	Full time	Full time	Part time	Not employed
N/A (no children)	39	50	33	15
Pre-school	53	71	73	54
Primary school	63	70	72	48
Early high school	51	72	52	21

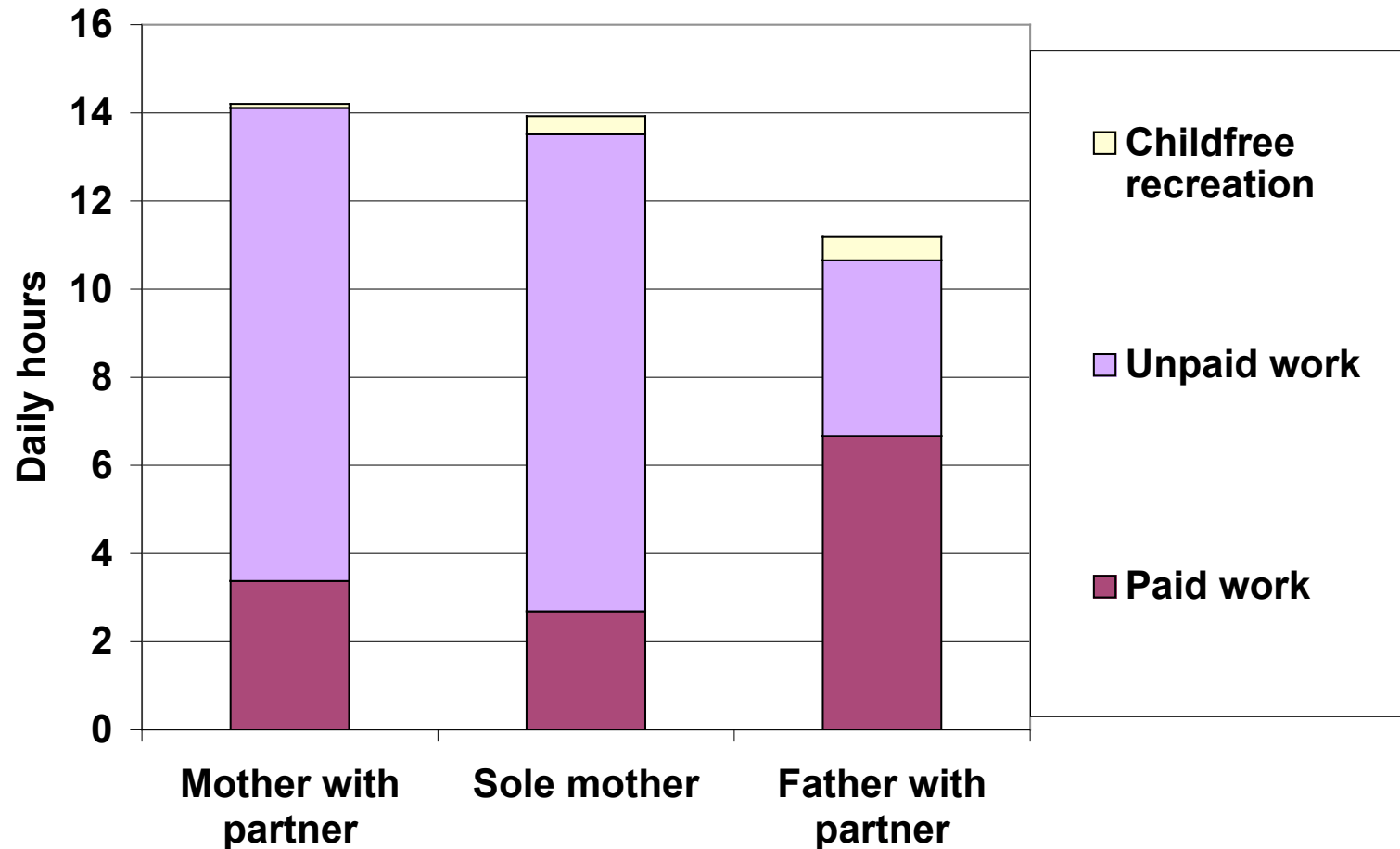
# Daily hours in childcare tasks by sex and family structure



# Daily hours with children by sex and family structure



# Daily hours total work and childfree recreation by sex and family structure



## Marginal differences in daily hours in childcare, unpaid work and paid work by qualifications by sex

	Childcare		Housework		Paid work	
	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers
Constant term (no post-school qualifications)	2.07	3.68	1.81	3.38	5.84	1.47
Qualifications						
Basic vocational	0.97	0.91	-0.37	-0.04	0.66	0.48
Skilled vocational	0.29	0.76	0.16	-0.01	0.59	0.51
University diploma	0.31	1.78	0.07	-0.21	0.16	0.01
Bachelor degree	1.38	1.55	0.13	-0.51	-0.22	0.76
Postgraduate	1.45	1.23	-0.05	-0.52	-0.07	1.13

# Marginal differences in daily hours in childcare tasks by qualifications



	Physical care		Talk-based care		Travel		Passive care	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Constant term (no post-school qual'fns)	0.10	0.35	0.44	1.38	0.11	0.42	0.49	1.67
Qualifications								
Basic vocational	0.16	0.61	0.02	-0.01	-0.13	-0.20	0.51	0.86
Skilled vocational	0.02	0.38	0.01	0.03	0.00	-0.09	0.39	0.59
University diploma	0.09	0.38	0.12	0.05	-0.02	0.00	0.48	1.46
Bachelor degree	0.25	0.37	0.36	0.44	0.04	0.03	1.15	0.89
Postgraduate	0.10	0.49	0.27	0.51	0.05	-0.07	1.25	-0.57

# Non-parental care – summary of findings

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Parental childcare is reduced by far less than an hour for every hour the mother works or uses non-parental childcare

Parents use non-parental childcare to make adjustments in other forms of time use and to shift the times when they are together with their children

Employed mothers

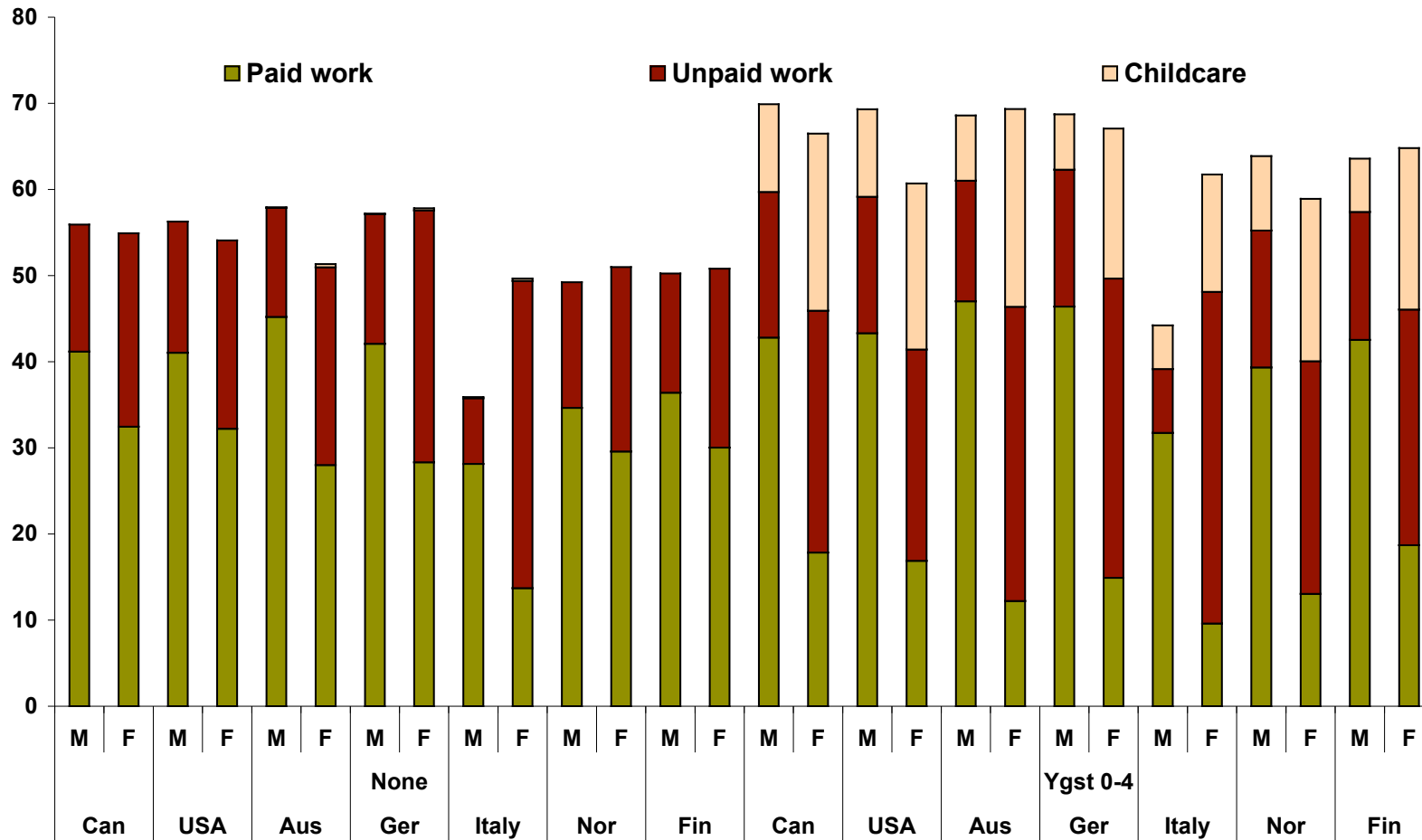
- ❖ Average less time than non-employed mothers in
  - ❖ Housework and shopping
  - ❖ Personal care
  - ❖ Child-free recreation
- ❖ Schedule childcare activities to earlier in the morning, and/or later at night

# Work-care regimes

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- ◆ “Families and employment are interrelated, socially constructed, phenomena via which the division of labour between men and women is organized, and social production and reproduction achieved” (Crompton 2006)
  
- ◆ (Esping-Andersen) Korpi, Leibfried, Arts & Gelissen, Gornick & Meyers
  - ❖ Dual earner (Scandinavian: e.g. Norway, Finland)
  - ❖ General family support (West European: e.g. Germany)
    - ❖ Extreme reliance on family resources (South European: e.g. Italy)
  - ❖ Market oriented (Anglo: e.g. Australia, US, Canada)

# Total work hours by country, parenthood status and sex



# Summary (1)

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- ◆ Time constraint is a major consequence of having children
  
- ◆ Time impacts of children are highly gendered:
  - ❖ Fathers and mothers parent differently, both in how much time they spend with children, and in how they spend that time.
  
  - ❖ Implication:
    - For meaningful gender equity fathers would need to both spend much more time giving care, and to care more like mothers

# Summary (2)

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- ◆ Women's market work opportunities are limited by motherhood
  - ❖ Australian women largely withdraw from workforce when they become mothers
  - ❖ However, they return as their children grow (but associated time stress)
  
- ◆ Implication:
  - Women's work-care preferences are dynamic over life course (though not easy to manage doing both)

# Summary (3)

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- ◆ Sole mothers largely compensate in parenting time for the absence of a resident partner (despite high poverty rates).

- ◆ Implication:

Sole mothers regard caring for children as a first order obligation

- ◆ Mothers who use non-parental care do not reduce their time in childcare on an hour for hour basis. They cut back on leisure, personal care

- ◆ Implication:

Working mothers place high value on giving care

## Summary (4)

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- ◆ Educated women (who have children) spend more time in childcare than other mothers
  - ❖ Implication:
    - Even mothers who have potentially more market opportunities, domestic bargaining power, place high value on giving care
  
- ◆ Some relationship between policy regime and gendered time impacts of parenthood
  - ❖ Implication:
    - Policy can be (somewhat) useful

# Conclusion

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- ◆ Work high order moral and practical obligation
- ◆ Care high order moral and practical obligation
- ◆ Work and care separate (except for privileged few)
- ◆ So whose problem? – currently mainly mothers
  
- ◆ Institutional arrangements not created by individuals, and cannot be solved by individuals
  - ❖ Need willing carers, so short-sighted (and unfair) to ignore care responsibilities, overwork or permanently sideline

# Some suggestions

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- ◆ Reduce care penalties through (e.g.)
  - ❖ Part time work with pro rata conditions
  - ❖ Affordable, accessible and high quality substitute care
  - ❖ Reducing institutional inconsistency (e.g. labour market structures vs school hours/holidays)
  - ❖ Worker controlled flexibility
  - ❖ No tax disincentives to mothers' work force participation
  - ❖ Maintaining carers' superannuation
  - ❖ Parental leave (re-entry at same level and conditions, daddy component)
  - ❖ Reasonable working hours for all (@40pw max)

# More radical suggestions

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- ◆ Redistribute care
  - ❖ Care as a social contribution, e.g.
    - ❖ Universal basic income (UBI) payable as right of citizenship
    - ❖ Transitional labour markets (TLMS) – time banking over life course
  - ❖ Care as a social obligation, e.g.
    - ❖ *Carefair* – compulsory paternal leave
    - ❖ Minimum lifetime care contribution as a pre-requisite to getting full tax benefits on super