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Debate para un nuevo consenso en torno al bienestar”.***

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**Fathers’ Intensive Schedule in Spain: an Analysis with  
the Spanish Time Use Survey**

**Fernández Lozano, Irina**

Dpto. Sociología II. Irina.fernandez@poli.uned.es

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**Abstract**

Why do fathers of young children work such long hours, even if they live in dual earner couples? Is the male long hours' culture challenged in any circumstances? This paper examines Spanish fathers' work hours and how they are distributed along the day, as well as its recent changes, using a sample drawn from a diary based survey, the Spanish Time Use Survey (STUS) 2002 and 2009. A special focus is put on fathers' use of the intensive schedule (a work day concentrated in the core hours when children are usually at childcare centres or school) as a desirable model to fit work and school schedules and a more equitable model for dual earner couples. Finally, several regression models are applied to try to understand which variables contribute to explain fathers' long work hours.

## 1. Introduction

We know little about fathers' schedules apart from the fact that they are longer than the standard work-week (Allard, Haas & Philip Hwang, 2007), and that they respond to the availability of work-life balance measures (e.g. reduced work hours) to a much smaller extent than women do. This is true even if some of these measures or policies (particularly, some degree of schedule control) are available for a majority of men, especially in higher occupational status (Allard, Haas & Philip Hwang, 2007; Gasser, 2015; Lott & Chung, 2016). We also know that first-time fathers also show concerns about the need they will eventually have to adapt their work patterns to the requirements of their coming offspring (Abril et al., 2015) either through formal or informal means. In dual earner couples, work life balance seems difficult to attain where both parents work more than 40 hours a week. However, still nowadays, work-life balance for dual earner couples with childcare responsibilities is usually achieved thanks to the 'one-and-a-half earner model' (Hook & Wolfe, 2013) where the mother is forced to reduce her participation in the labour market. In a context of a growing presence of this model of families, some questions arise: are fathers' schedules responding to an increasing demand for better and more equitable work-life balance, and if so, where, when and why?

In this research we will examine fathers' schedules, drawing on the assumption that the prevalence of the 'ideal (male) employee' model, what can also be referred to as the 'work devotion schema' (Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013) lies behind the still limited fathers' engagement in childcare (Gasser, 2015) and the consequence reduction of mothers' work participation and time constraints.

Why are fathers' schedules generally so long? Though the direction of causality between work schedules and family-level characteristics may not be easy to establish, one can at least point at two different hypotheses about the relationship between fatherhood and longer schedules: either men's long schedules are not an obstacle for couples taking the decision to have a child (and having long work hours may in fact be related to other factors that enhance that decision) or fathers tend to shift jobs or modify working conditions at the arrival of the child, so that they strengthen their attachment to paid work when they marry or become fathers (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

One main assumption is that schedules are deeply embedded in our culture and in our social structure, which inevitably shape individuals' apparently free decisions. Work time is particularly determined by the individuals' position in two different dimensions of inequality: gender and occupational status. The fact that most workers have a schedule fixed by the employer (for example, the standard 40 hours in Spain) does not mean that they have zero degrees of freedom over the choice

of working hours: preferred work hours may inspire the choice of job in the first place (Carriero, Ghysels & Van Klaveren, 2009).

Spain represents an interesting setting to study fathers' schedules. The current debate on rationalisation of work schedules and work-life balance (with a recent proposal made to the Congress by the Employment Minister to officially establish a working day that ends at 6 p.m., among other measures) is settled in a context in which more than a half of male workers (and about a third of female) work more than 40 hours a week (Spanish Time Use Survey, 2009).

This research focus is double. On the one hand, examining how the use of what has been called the 'intensive schedule' is distributed in Spain, from a mainly descriptive perspective. On the other hand, trying to disentangle the factors that could explain men's and women's effective work time. The research has been divided in five sections. After this introduction, the relationship between fatherhood and work hours will be set in context. Then, data and measures used will be described. Next, the results section is presented. Finally, the main conclusions will be presented in a discussion and conclusions sections.

## **2. Fathers schedules: a case for change?**

Parents are expected to be highly motivated to engage in family activities, which play a critical role in promoting family solidarity and relations (Bianchi et al., 2006; Dew, 2009 cited in Kalmijn & Gracia (Kalmijn & Gracia, 2016)) and therefore may want to limit their work hours. We therefore hypothesize that mothers, and increasingly fathers, may be motivated to be available in their afternoons or evenings to spend quality time with their children. They also need to, because of the limitations of externally provided care. Qualitative studies and daily experience show that one of the main time constraints that childcare imposes are school or pre-school childcare centres schedules, so that women tend to be those that make use of more or less formalized flexibility measures to be able to take and pick up children to or from school. We therefore propose that parents are interested in working with an *intensive schedule*, that is, performing most of their work between the core hours when children are usually at childcare centres or at school (i.e between 9 and 17), especially, but not only, if their partner is not available.

As a consequence of the economic crisis, changes in the employment structure and cultural changes, different phenomena are may be pointing to the end of the 'male breadwinner model':

- An intense growth of dual-earner couples and of 'female breadwinners' (Ajenjo Cosp & García Román, 2014). As both men's and women's time devoted to unpaid and care tasks is affected by their partner work schedule men are responding to a growing participation of women in paid-work.

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

- Gaps between men's and women's time devoted to domestic 'routine tasks' is decreasing even for more 'traditional' models of couples (e.g. with low education or where the woman has lower incomes) suggesting the effect of a generalized cultural change (Ajenjo Cosp & García Román, 2014).
- Changing patterns in the presence of men in the labour market may be increasing fathers' time devoted to 'solo care', such as unemployment or non-standard schedules (Hook & Wolfe, 2013; Weinshenker, 2016) though this effect is still highly dependent on partner's schedule and on the national contexts.

As Lewis points out 'full-time and part-time work are social constructions' (Lewis, 2010) that allocate people into two different sets of opportunities and constraints, many of them determined by labelling processes rather than material differences. However, as social constructions, it is plausible that they are eventually challenged, if a sufficient social consensus is achieved. If 'involved fathers' and 'committed working mothers' demands gain more visibility, why shouldn't the 'one-and-a-half' earner model (Hook & Wolfe, 2013) be replaced for a more equitable one? It is difficult to envisage exactly how it would look like, but probably not a one-one earner model, which seems unsustainable even in the better scenario in terms of childcare provision availability.

### **3. Data and sample**

#### **3.1. Data: the STUS**

The data used in this research have been drawn from the Spanish Time Use Survey (STUS) in its two editions: 2002 and 2009. The original databases include data, respectively, for 20,603 and 9,541 households. The STUS is a diary based survey that recollects activities performed by all individuals in the household (aged 10 years or older) during 24 hours and, in the case of paid work time, during a whole week. Diary-based surveys are especially indicated for measures related to the domestic sphere (e.g. unpaid work) and how this may interact with workplace related activities. Also, in the case of the STUS (but not necessarily in all time use surveys) all members in the household fill the survey, so it is a particularly adequate instrument to measure the interrelation between different allocations of time of members of the family. This feature allows to study a rich variety of variables: parents' schedule coordination (Carriero, Ghysels & Van Klaveren, 2009), simultaneous engagement in leisure activities (Gershuny & Sullivan, 1998), or the effect of partners' characteristics in individual's allocation of time (Domínguez-Folgueras, 2015; Hook & Wolfe, 2013). This is particularly relevant according to the bargaining-resources theories, which posit that inside the household, each member resources (e.g. income) matter to determine how much and in which forms they contribute to the household functioning (Amigot-Loache, Botía-Morillas & Jurado-Guerrero,

2015; Bittman et al., 2003; Presser, 1994; Sevilla-Sanz, Giménez-Nadal & Fernández, 2010). That includes the distribution of paid and unpaid work time.

In the particular case of work time, the advantages of the STUS are based on its accounting for the *real* schedule (limiting therefore the perception bias of stylized estimations, where respondents answer how much time they usually spend on work) and would be therefore sensitive to nuances in work hours and /or their distribution as well as informal arrangements<sup>1</sup>. Work time as reported by employees may be overestimating those people working the standard schedule (40 hours in Spain). For example, according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in 2009, 11 per cent of all people employed worked over 50 hours per week, while according to the STUS the percentage was of 16 for the same year. Also, while average work hours for those men who worked were 42.6 according to the STUS, reported average work hours for men according to the LFS 2009 were 37.5. Diary based surveys are probably the only instruments that allows for a nuanced classification of work schedules (combining several dimensions such as *how much* and *when* people work).

### 3.2. Measures

#### 3.2.1. Effective work hours: long and short term estimators using diary data

Regarding the variable ‘effective work time’, derived from a work diary questionnaire for a whole week (Monday-Sunday), one methodological specification can be made. Behavioural indicators (such as time allocation to an activity) are often more informative if they reflect long-term patterns. Therefore, for the measure of effective work hours, researchers usually seek for estimators for a long-run variable rather than exceptional situations. In the case of self-reported work hours, this is achieved by asking respondents about their *usual* work schedule- what has the drawback that it may introduce a perception bias.

Diary based surveys, on the contrary, avoid the latter inconvenient but provide a good proxy for long-run time use only as long as an activity occurs with a high degree of regularity between different time lapses, i.e. days or weeks (Frazis & Stewart, 2012). In the case of paid work, respondents have to report their work schedule for a whole week, which seems a reasonable proxy for long-term schedule related indicators excepting the incidence of ‘rotating shifts’ (which is out of the scope of this work). Time diary based analyses use person-day or person-week (as in this case) rather than mere individuals as their analysis units. To make this estimator of men’s long-run schedules more accurate,

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<sup>1</sup> Different studies show that informally arranged flexible work arrangement are widely spread (Ladge et al., 2015) and that they may matter even more than formally established policies to determine work to family conflict (Allard, Haas & Philip Hwang, 2007).

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

those people reporting an 'unusual week' in terms of work hours have been excluded from the analysis.

### 3.2.2. A typology of schedules

A second main variable refers to how this work time is distributed, and particularly, what has been called an 'intensive schedule'. In order to obtain a broader view on father's work time, a theoretical classification of work schedules is proposed. The criteria to define these schedules has been double: *how much* and *when* along the day work is performed. Regarding the second one, we have followed Hook and other authors' criteria classifying schedules according to *when most work time* happens, considering substantially relevant time lapses (e.g. between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m for 'morning workers' vs 4 p.m. to midnight for 'evening workers') (Hook & Wolfe, 2013). However, a more nuanced classification has been made, trying to reflect situations in which people, at least sometimes, work in non-standard hours. One main classification distinguishes between standard schedules (work weeks in which most work time is performed between 8 a.m and 5 p.m on weekdays and a maximum of 6 hours is performed between 11 p.m and 5 a.m.) and non-standard schedules (for people who perform most of their work between 5 p.m and 8 a.m or in the weekends, or who work at least 5 hours between 11 p.m and 5 a.m.). Bearing in mind the generalized long hours' culture in Spanish workplaces, the relatively high presence of the split-shift schedule (Kalmijn & Gracia, 2016) and the general time lag comparing other countries, the 'intensive schedule' has been defined in a broad way. It would be one standard schedule comprising between 30 and 40 hours in which most work time is performed either between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. or between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., with no work performed on the weekend. People who work less than 30 hours and more than 40 have been excluded from this category, as the 'intensive schedule' aims at representing somehow an 'ideal' form of distributing work time more equitably among men and women, especially those who are parents- thus excluding extreme cases of 'too much' or 'too little' work. As in all taxonomies, the operationalization of this one may be establishing arbitrary frontiers (e.g. one employee may be classified as having a 'night schedule' if he was working exceptionally for a whole night). However, the fact that only 'usual work weeks' are analysed make this possibility residual.

The schedule typology has resulted as follows:

(1) **Standard schedules:** people who work most of their time between 8 a.m and 5 p.m on weekdays and they work a maximum of 6 hours between 11 p.m and 5 a.m.

(a) Standard hours, short schedule (0-29 hours).

- (b) Intensive schedule, people who work: 30-40 hours a week (included); 100% between core hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., or, alternatively, from 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., and no work is performed on weekends.
  - (c) Other standard, non-intensive schedules (30-40 hours).
  - (d) Standard schedule, some overtime (41-44 hours)
  - (e) Long schedule (45-50 hours)
  - (f) Very long schedule (more than 50 hours)
- (2) **Non-standard schedules.** People who work most of their time between 5p.m and 8 a.m. or in the weekends, or they work at least 6 hours during the night (between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.).
- (a) Afternoon /evening: they only work between 1 p.m. and 11 p.m., but most of their time after 17 or on weekends.
  - (b) Night: they work at least 6 hours a week between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.
  - (c) Other non-standard schedules. People who work most of their time on the weekend or, alternatively, work some hours after 10 p.m. but less than 6 hours at night (e.g. Monday to Friday, from 6 p.m. to 12 p.m.).

### 3.2.3. Other independent variables

The following variables have been considered relevant to explain fathers' distribution of work hours have been the following. In the first place, the economic sector. In this sense, those people working in the *public, education or health sector*<sup>2</sup> are supposed to have better work-life balance conditions than their counterparts working in the private sector. With respect to the occupational status, the survey provided the code for the National Classification of Occupations (CNO -94). The one-digit categories (ten groups), which coincide with the ISCO-08 (International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008) nomenclature, have been used. Schedule flexibility is a variable derived from a self-reported question (*Do you have a flexible schedule?*) and it is compatible with any of the types of schedule of the previous typology. Unfortunately, this measure does not allow to distinguish the degree of this flexibility (e.g. flexitime vs total schedule control). In the regression model, a variable has been introduced for people whose partner has a long schedule (working more than 45 hours a week) which is also derived from the work diary questionnaire for that member of the household.

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<sup>2</sup> The survey does not allow to distinguish if people working in the health or education sectors do so in public or private organization; though in Spain the majority of employment in these sectors are provided by a public-run organization.

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

Parental<sup>3</sup> status is derived from a self-reported question regarding the relationship of the individual with every other member of the household.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Introduction: changes in women's and men's work time and the 'intensive schedule'

#### 4.1.1. The (slow) end of the 'male-breadwinner' model?

Previous analysis on work time in Spain for the period 2002-2009 using the STUS point to a very slow convergence between women's and men's paid work time: while the former have increased their participation, the latter have decreased it (Giménez-Nadal & Sevilla, 2014). However, their analysis is focused on what can be referred to as the 'social time' (Durán Heras & Rogero García, 2009) devoted to an activity (its measurement includes also people who devote no time to it, that is, unemployed people). Therefore, the decrease in men's paid work time is due, to a considerable extent, to the effect of the increase of male unemployment after 2008.

However, for those who work, week schedules seem to be also slightly shorter in 2009 (see Table 1). Though differences between 2002 and 2009 are very subtle, and may not be significant, the data seem to point to this convergence between men's and women's work hours. Men still work more than 40 hours, especially in more masculinized occupations and, what is more surprising, if they have small children.

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<sup>3</sup> For purposes of comparability, the category 'non-parents' refers to women or men aged 30-50 years who live with no child under 18; otherwise the comparison between people who live with a child under 13 years old and those who do not would be very conditioned by generational effects.

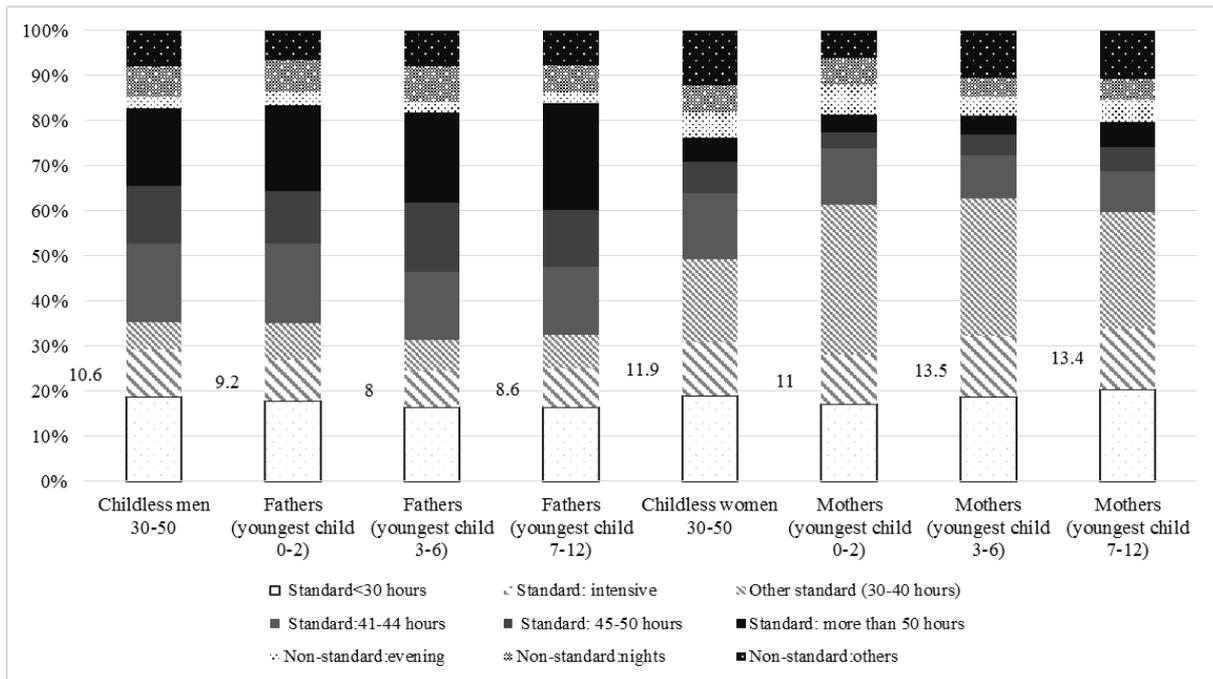
**Table 1 Average weekly work hours in Spain (all individuals), 2002-2009**

	2009			2002		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Youngest child at home</b>						
0-2 years	44.4	33.2	40.2	44	33.2	40.4
3-6 years	43.7	33.3	39.3	45.6	33.3	41.2
7-12 years	45.4	34	40.2	44.8	34.4	40.8
13-17 years	42.7	35.6	39.4	45	35.8	41.6
Other household types	42.4	38.1	40.5	43.9	37.1	41.3
<b>Sector</b>						
Public admin, education and health	35.8	33.3	34.4	37.2	32.2	34.6
Other private	44.6	37.1	41.6	45.3	37	42.4
<b>Occupational status</b>						
Armed Forces	38.1	..	39.3	38.3	..	38.6
Managers	49.6	42.8	47.5	51.5	45.9	50
Professionals	38.2	34.4	36.4	39.3	33.6	36.6
Technicians and Associate Professionals	39.7	34.9	37.7	41.2	35.6	38.8
Clerical Support Workers	39.8	34.6	36.5	40.1	35.1	37.2
Services And Sales Workers	45.5	37.3	40.5	46.7	38.9	42.1
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	51.4	38.1	48	50.2	33	46.3
Craft and Related Trades Workers	43.6	39	43.2	44.8	38.2	44.1
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	46.5	39.2	45.5	45.6	39.2	44.7
Elementary Occupations	41.2	35	37.5	42.1	31.1	36.6
<b>Total</b>	43.3	36.1	40.2	44.3	35.9	41.2

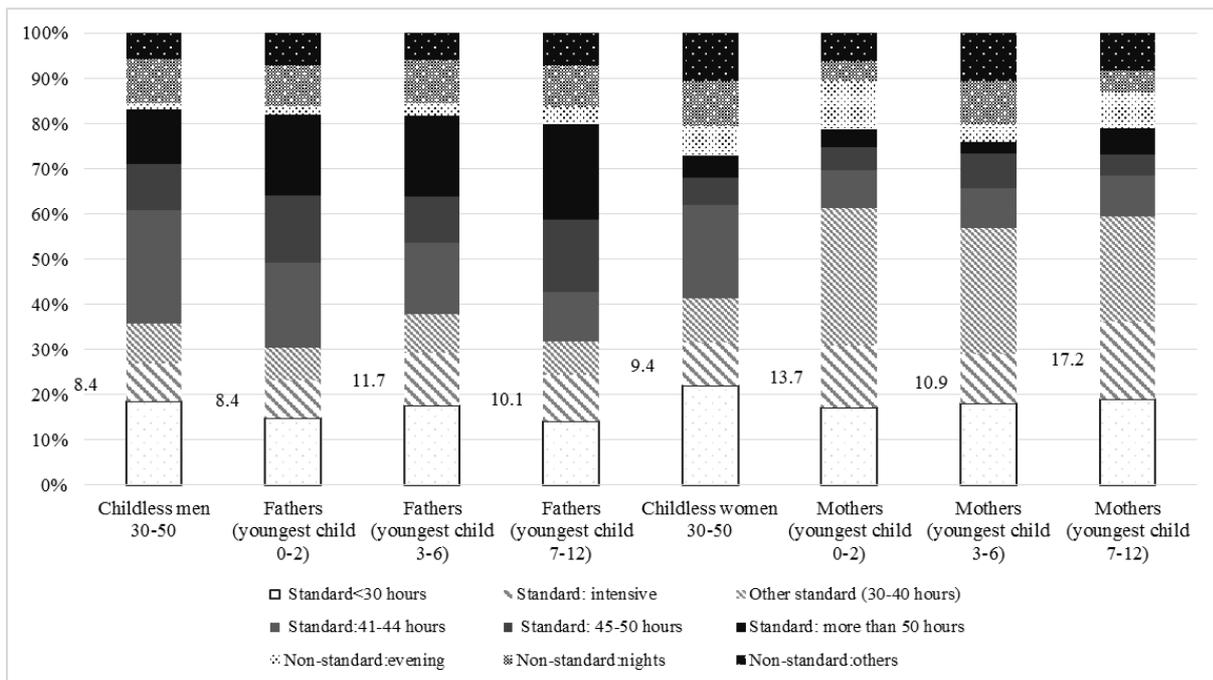
Graph 1 and Graph 2 show that, with respect to parental status and gender, those people who are more likely to have an intensive schedule are mothers of a child between 7 and 12 years old in 2009 (17,2 per cent). For parents, in 2002 they were less likely than non-fathers to have an intensive schedule, while in 2009 the trend has reversed, what may point to a growing use of this schema as a resource to achieve a better work-life balance and spend time on childcare.

Mothers' schedules distribution is not so different to non-mothers, excepting for the fact that mothers are less likely to work more than 40 hours and to have a non-standard schedule. Regarding the latter, this finding is consistent with evidence for other countries (Wight, Raley & Bianchi, 2008). Mothers are also less likely to work more than 40 hours. For fathers, however, the distribution remains fairly unchanged (and, in any case, fathers seem to work more hours than non-fathers). While short schedules (less than 30 hours) are not as gendered as it may be expected, long schedules are predominantly male.

## Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.



Graph 1: Schedule type by parental status, 2002 (% of intensive schedule indicated)



Graph 2: Schedule type by parental status, 2009 (% of intensive schedule indicated)

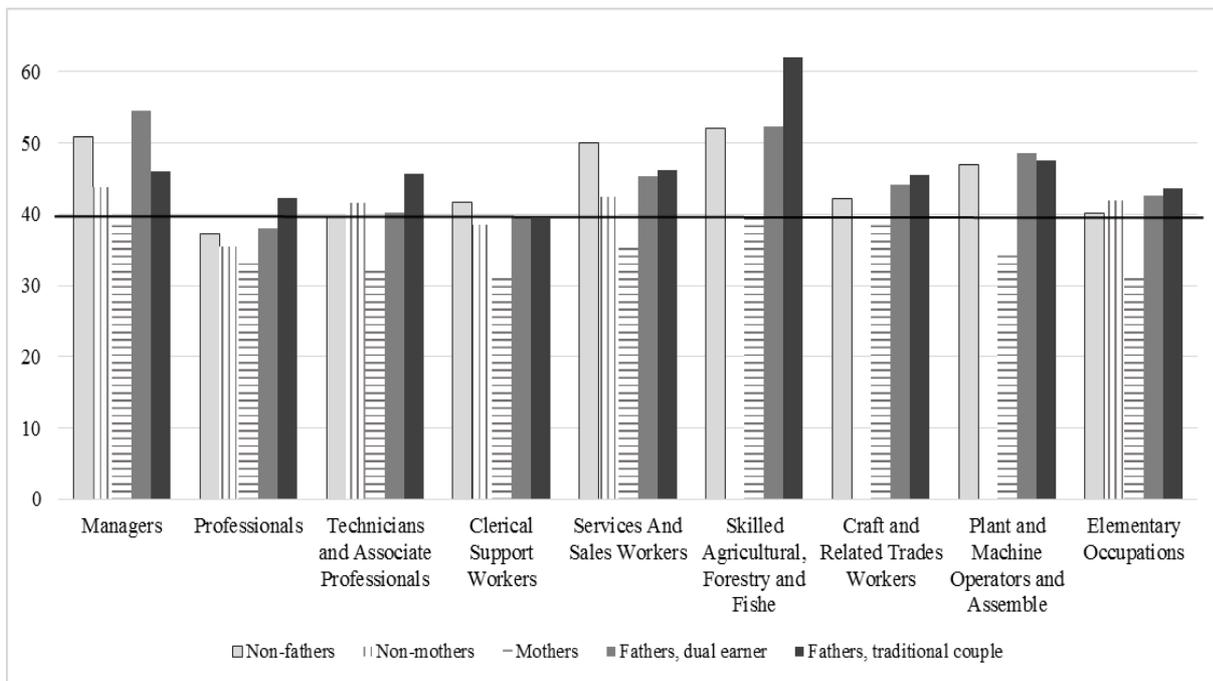
#### **4.1.2. Occupational status and fatherhood: a (relatively) unstressed middle class?**

Fathers work more than 40 hours excepting if they work in the public, health or education sectors and if they are professionals or clerical support workers. Contrary to expectations, employees in services and sales (usually less qualified than the former and more subject to heteronomous flexibility) do not have short schedules. Fathers do also work more hours than their childless counterparts in most occupations. It seems that, in the services sector, those who hold middle-level jobs have relatively better conditions to achieve work life balance.

In the case of women, the bigger differences do not seem to be introduced by the occupation but by maternal status. In fact, childless female technicians and associate professionals work more hours than their male counterparts –while the general pattern is that, even if a large part of the difference between women’s and men’s work time can be explained by maternal status (Boeckmann, Misra & Budig, 2014), it can’t account for the whole of it.

There is a particular hypothesis that can be partially addressed with these data- that of the ‘higher stress hypothesis’ (Moen et al., 2013; Schieman, Whitestone & Van Gundy, 2006); that is, that those holding the upper positions in term of status or economic resources (such as leadership (Gasser, 2015) seem to be ‘underprivileged’ in terms of time availability or work-family conflict (Allard, Haas & Philip Hwang, 2007). According to these data, at the upper levels of the occupational scale, there seems to be a frontier between highly demanding jobs (managers at the private sector) and other qualified positions (which would include professionals or technicians). At the same time, the ‘maternity gap’ (the difference in work hours between mothers and both childless women and fathers) is smaller for professionals than for any other occupational status, suggesting that these occupations are less driven by gendered patterns, both at the workplace and the family level.

## Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.



Graph 3: Work hours by occupation and parental status, 2009 (n<10 excluded)

#### **4.1.3. Fathers with an ‘intensive schedule’**

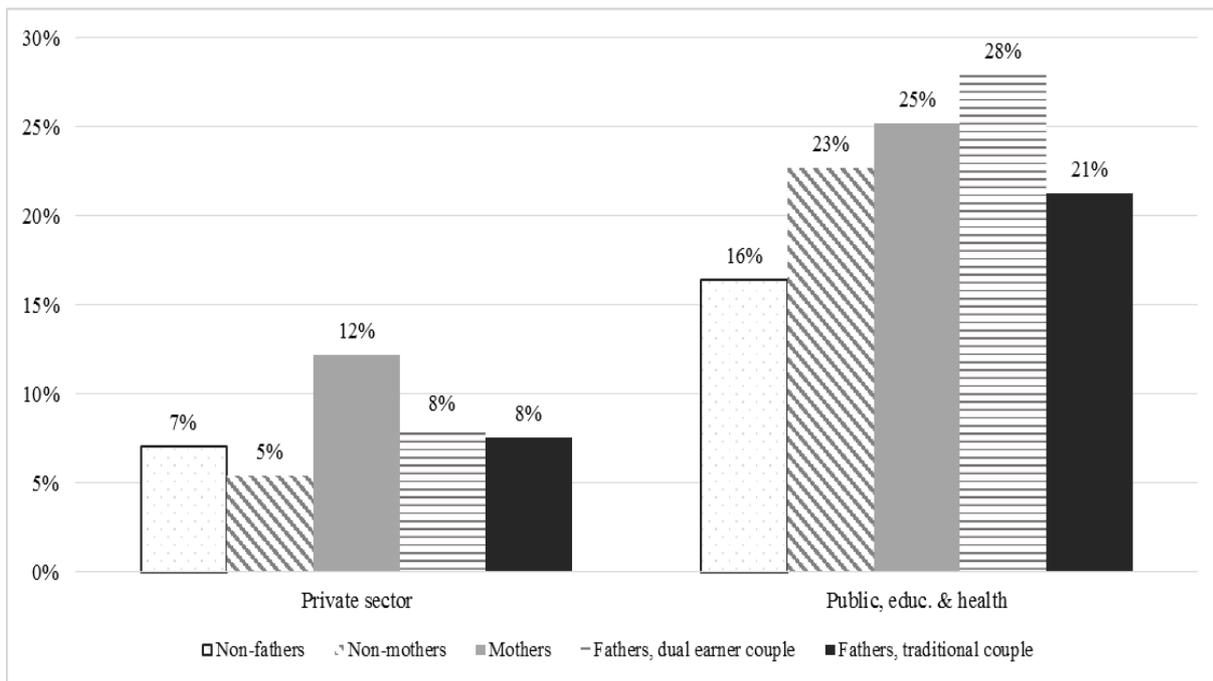
Around one out of four working fathers work on average more than 50 hours a week. Looking at occupational status (Graph 6 and Graph 7) it seems quite clear that the ‘long hours’ culture’ is a ‘male culture’: managers, and those working in the primary sector and in the industry are those who have the greatest probability to work more than 45 hours a week. One may hypothesize that the male breadwinner model is starting to fade precisely in the services sector –excepting those who are at the top of it.

In Spain, fathers who work with an intensive schedule are relatively rare: 10 per cent (vs 7,8 per cent for childless men, 9 per cent for childless women and 14 per cent in the case of mothers of children under 13). This fact somehow contrasts with the data of use of the reduced schedule schema among mothers and fathers: in 2010, according to the Spanish Labour Force Survey, about 4.1 % of fathers of at least one child under eight years old who were employed had ever used this measure, while in the case of mothers, this percentage rose to 25.8 per cent. This may be due in part to the fact that cross-sectional data referring only to one particular year tend to underestimate the use of this measure as it can take place many years after the childbirth (Lapuerta, 2012). In any case these data suggests that these two measures (reduced schedule vs intensive schedule) may be relatively unrelated, which points to the fact that adopting a ‘reduced schedule’ schema does not necessarily mean passing from a non-intensive schedule to an intensive schedule as it has been defined here. In some cases, adopting a reduced schedule helps mothers just to have an ‘alibi’ to not do overtime (González & Jurado-Guerrero, 2015).

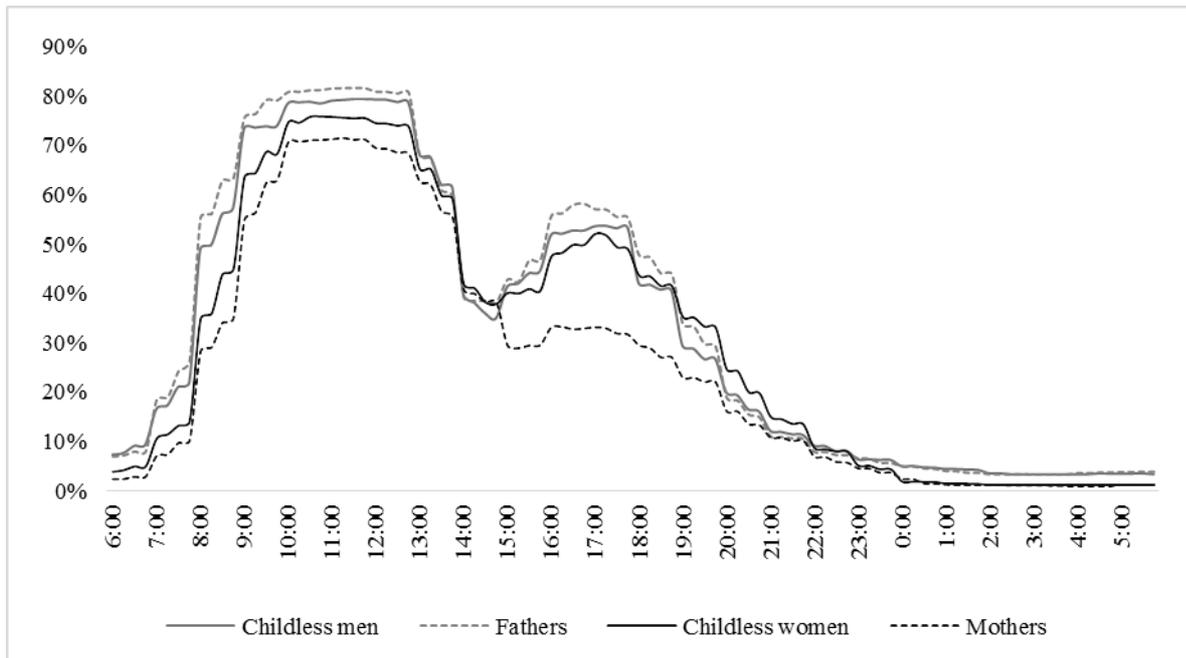
The intensive schedule may be a resource for fathers to adapt their working hours to childcare needs, as for all occupations excepting two (“plan and machine operators and assemblers” and “elementary occupations”) fathers enjoy an intensive schedule in a bigger proportion than non-fathers do. The difference is, however, slight in any case with the exception of clerical support workers. This is an interesting result as this may be due in part to the nature of the occupation (lower career orientation and time demands). However, data point to the fact that having an intensive schedule depends, more than on the occupation *per se*, or even on gender, on the economic sector one works in (see Graph 4). Figures on the use of the intensive schedule among fathers in the public sector, especially for those partnered with a working woman, suggest that, when they have the opportunity to do so, fathers are willing to adapt their working conditions to childcare needs.

In any case, mothers significantly reduce their presence in the workplace from 3 p.m., while about one third for fathers are still working at 8 p.m. (see Graph 5).

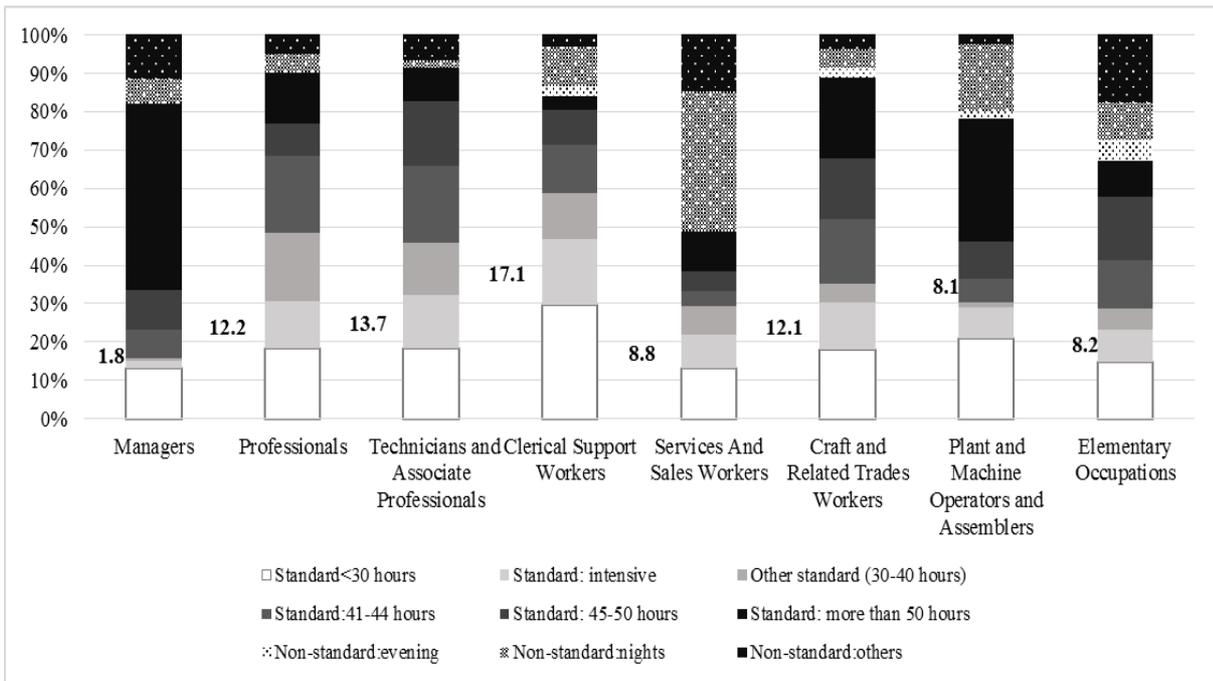
## Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.



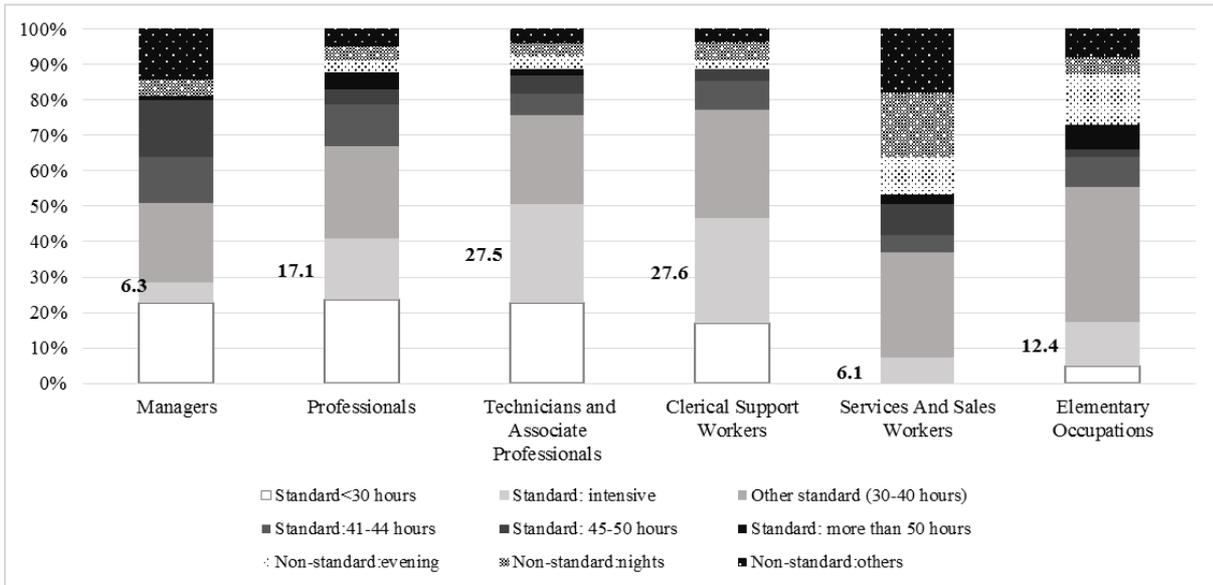
Graph 4: Percentage of people with an intensive schedule, 2009.



Graph 5: Percentage of working people performing paid work at a particular time (Monday to Friday), 2009



Graph 6: Schedule type by occupation. Fathers (% of intensive schedule indicated) (n<20 excluded)



Graph 7: Schedule type by occupation. Mothers (% of intensive schedule indicated) (n<20 excluded)

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

#### **4.1.4. Flexibility for fathers: a longer work day?**

The public debate on the need to 'rationalise' work schedules<sup>4</sup> is somehow contradictory with the discourse on the need to provide employees with schedule control, that is, the capacity to decide when and where to perform their work. Flexibility at the workplace can affect, particularly, the 'space' and 'time' in which workers do their work, and can be determined by the employer ('heteronomous flexibility') or by the employee ('autonomous flexibility'). However, even in the case of the latter one, the effect of time flexibility in work-life balance and work hours is not clear<sup>5</sup>. In any case, childcare requires this capacity to adapt to unforeseen necessities, and therefore the 'accepted politics of time' should assume that parents require some autonomy to allocate a certain amount of time according to their particular (unforeseen or not) needs. *Flexleave* – or the opportunity to take breaks during the workday to address personal issues- 'is extraordinarily important to individual employees especially when emergencies arise' (Galinsky et al. cited in Allard (Allard, Haas & Philip Hwang, 2007).

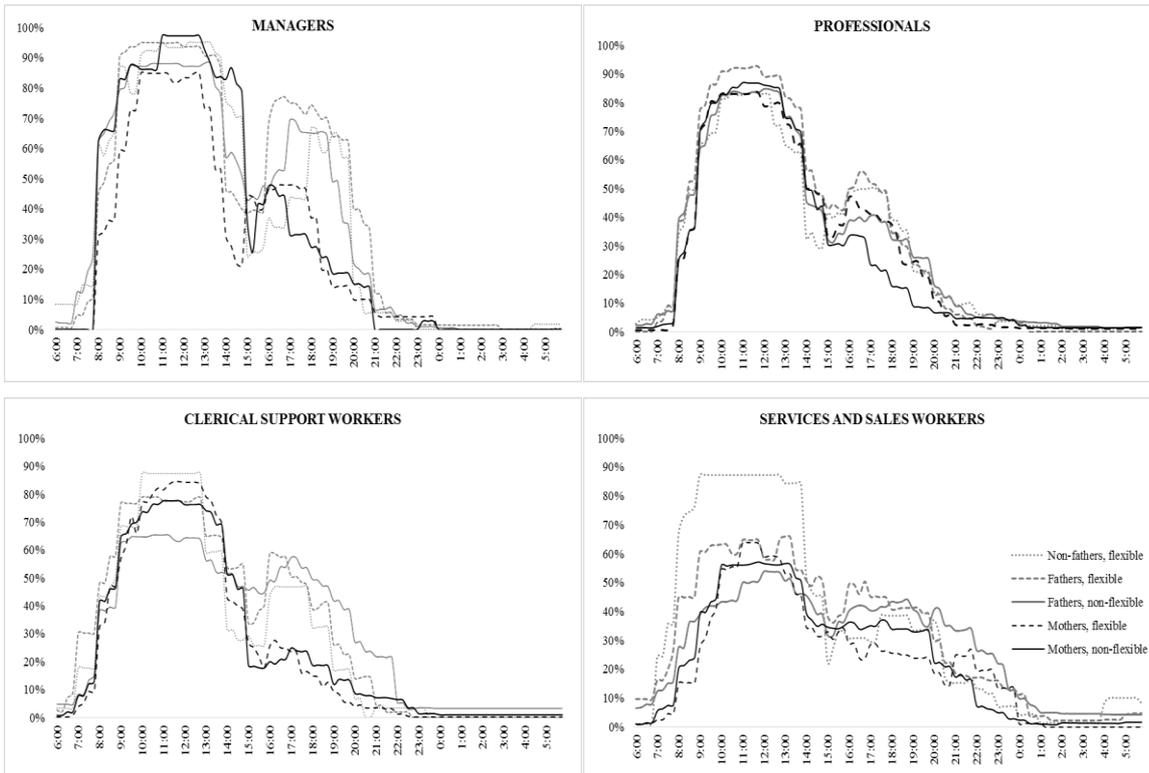
Schedule control may in fact deepen behavioural differences among individuals. Previous research has found that schedule flexibility can have strongly gendered outcomes (Lott & Chung, 2016), as it may be linked to overtime only in the case of men. The freedom to choose when or where to work contributes to establish a new employment contract with qualified employees: a 'service contract' based on mutual confidence, freedom and responsibility rather than on fixed schedules subject to strict control. Therefore, choosing where or when to work does not necessarily imply working less for many employees- in fact the opposite may be true.

As Graph 8 show, the outcomes of flexibility are highly determined by occupation and gender. For managers and professionals it is clearer that people, especially men, use flexibility precisely to extend their work schedule beyond 6 p.m. Professionals seem, however, to show less gendered patterns in the timing of their work.

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<sup>4</sup> There is a specific organization promoting legislative and cultural changes in this direction, the Commission to rationalise Spanish work schedules (ARHOE) <http://www.horariosen espana.com/>.

<sup>5</sup> As Lott & Chung warn (Lott & Chung, 2016) autonomous time flexibility can present different degrees, so that a certain control of the start and end time of the working day (i.e. flexitime) may have very different outcomes of those of full control over work time (working-time autonomy). As formulated in the STUS questionnaire, the question does not allow to differentiate between these different forms.



Graph 8: People (%) working at a particular time, weekdays, by occupation, 2009

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

## 4.2. Can we explain fathers' long schedules?

### 4.2.1. Hypotheses proposed

These descriptive results presented above lead to a final question: is fatherhood positively linked to working more hours? What other variables can counteract, or reinforce, this effect?

Drawing from the descriptive analyses carried out, a linear regression model to explain women's and men's work hours is proposed, with the aim to test the following four hypotheses:

**H1.** *Parental status is related to shorter work hours only in the case of women (Hypothesis of women as main carers).*

**H2.** *Men in service middle level occupations work fewer hours than those in other positions (Hypothesis of the 'unstressed middle class'<sup>6</sup>).*

**H3.** *Men working in the public, education or health sectors work less than their counterparts in the private sector (Hypothesis of the exposure to the market).*

**H4.** *Men whose partner has a long schedule (>45 hours) works fewer hours, especially if they are fathers (Hypothesis of the resource-bargaining processes).*

Although the focus of this research is put on men, for comparability purposes three linear regression models have been implemented: one for whole sample, and two others replicating the same model for men and women respectively.

#### **Sample and measures.**

The sample chosen has restricted the original databases have been in several ways. First of all, only people who have completed the work time diary have been included (8445 people in 2009). From that sample, people who had reported less than one hour of paid work or to have had an 'unusual' week in terms of work time had also been excluded, to obtain a better estimator of long-run work schedules. The final sample included 1879 individuals.

The independent variables<sup>7</sup> included gender, parental status (youngest child up to 12 years old), economic sector (public vs private), occupational status (managers, professionals, technicians, clerical workers and service and sales occupations) and a *dummy* variable for those partnered with

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<sup>6</sup> This hypothesis would be a reformulation of the aforementioned 'higher status stress hypothesis', and therefore the use of the term 'unstressed', which may not be, however, the one that best fits the fact that service workers in middle level occupations work *relatively* few hours (in comparison with people in the highest and lowest positions). It is important to point out that only in *relative* terms can we conclude that these occupational status lead to work few hours in Spain. Furthermore, these models do not test in fact any variable related to the actual stress experimented by individuals, but only their work time.

<sup>7</sup> See section 3.2 for a more detailed explanation on how the variables have been operationalized.

someone who has a long schedule (more than 45 hours a week). Interactions of the main variables have been included, when they were necessary to test the hypotheses or when they gave result to significant coefficients<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 2** *Descriptive statistics (regression sample)*

	Men	Women	Total
Managers	10.5%	6.5%	8.8%
Professionals	13.1%	16.7%	14.7%
Technicians	11.9%	11.2%	11.6%
Clerical workers	6.8%	15.2%	10.5%
Services & sales workers	11.9%	23.9%	17.1%
Other occupational status	45.8%	26.4%	37.4%
Couple works >45 hours	16.2%	41.5%	27.8%
Parent (child<12).	40.4%	38.0%	39.4%
Public, educ, health sectors	14.6%	24.7%	19.0%
Total	43.4%	56.6%	100.0%

#### 4.2.2. Results

Table 3 shows the results of the regression model. For the whole sample, it can be seen that gender, and particularly, motherhood reduces work hours to a great extent. It has to be pointed out that only people who had performed any paid work have been included in the analysis, so these results are not influenced by the effect of non-working mothers. Surprisingly, working in the public, education or health sectors is not significantly related to working fewer hours, probably because its effect is absorbed by that of gender (a high proportion of women work in the public sector) and occupation (professionals, technicians and clerical workers are relatively common occupations in the public sector). Comparing the models for men and women provides differences worth pointing out.

While the occupational status is significant to explain the difference in men's work hours, it is not so for women (excepting if they are managers), for whom the main factor determining how much they work would be motherhood. Hypothesis 1 and 2 could be therefore confirmed. We can't confirm Hypothesis 3 regarding the effect of working in the public sector, but, however, this conclusion may be taken prudently, as it is very likely that the effect of this variable is absorbed by the occupational status as it has been mentioned before.

Regarding the effect of having a partner how works long hours, it is worth noting that the effect is not as expected: people whose couple works long hours are significantly more likely to work more hours. It can be derived, therefore, that couples do not trade one member's work time for the other's, in order to meet domestic or care responsibilities or for other reasons, such as to achieve sufficient

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<sup>8</sup> Schedule flexibility was also introduced as a dependent variable, but did not provide significant results, and was not included in the final model.

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

income<sup>9</sup>. However, it is interesting to note that, when women work in the public sector, they are more likely to work less if their partner works long hours, while the same is not true for men.

In conclusion, two of the four hypotheses proposed can be confirmed: men in middle level occupations tend to work fewer hours (H2), while parental status seems to limit work hours only in the case of women (H1). Explanatory variables for men's and women's work time seem to be still of a very different nature, as the two respective models suggest. Variables at the household level are much more decisive for women's schedule than for men's, confirming the influence of the traditional 'male breadwinner –female carer' model. While mothers seem to work when 'they can', men still work when they 'have to'.

**Table 3** *Factors explaining women's and men's effective work hours*

	All sample		Men		Women	
	$\beta$	s.e	$\beta$	s.e	$\beta$	s.e
Parent (child<12).	<b>1.98</b>	1.12 *	2.78	1.22	<b>-5.83</b>	1.15 ***
Women	<b>-3.97</b>	1.38 ***				
Public, educ, health sectors	-2.57	1.79	-3.66	2.98	-0.98	2.27
Women*parent	<b>-6.87</b>	1.53 ***				
Parent*public	-0.76	1.92	-3.76	3.17	2.23	2.34
Managers	<b>6.07</b>	1.10 ***	<b>5.73</b>	1.44 ***	6.61	1.73 ***
Professionals	-1.27	0.96	<b>-3.09</b>	1.29 **	1.23	1.44
Technicians	-1.00	0.98	<b>-2.36</b>	1.37 *	1.52	1.41
Clerical	<b>-2.28</b>	1.06 **	<b>-4.14</b>	1.93 **	-0.15	1.33
Services	-0.68	0.96	-0.17	1.56	1.27	1.29
Couple works long hours	<b>4.54</b>	0.71 ***	<b>6.57</b>	1.37 ***	<b>5.18</b>	0.95 ***
Public*Couple works long hours			-4.30	3.51	<b>-4.119</b>	1.8831 **
Cons.	<b>41.51</b>	1.11 ***	<b>41.99</b>	1.25 ***	35.72	1.34 ***
Adj.R2	<b>0.18</b>		<b>0.12</b>			<b>0.07</b>
n	<b>1879</b>		<b>937</b>			<b>942</b>

\*p < .1, \*\*p < .05, \*\*\*p < .01

<sup>9</sup> This holds true also for parents, as the interaction of the two variables (parent\*couple works long hours) was introduced.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The discourse of work-life balance for men and women should address its structural roots: the ‘long hours’ culture, which is still predominantly male. Fathers of young children in Spain (<13 years) have an average work week of near 45 effective hours. The ‘male breadwinner model’, the ‘work devotion schema’, or the ‘ideal worker model’, they all refer to a set of cultural assumptions, still embedded in today’s organizations, based on the idea that male workers have neither domestic nor childcare responsibilities, that work is their first priority in life and that they are ‘ever available’ for the company (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). However, this is not a model adapted to many fathers’ needs and willingness to adopt a more involved role in the family nowadays.

The fact that we can talk about ‘gendered schedules’ does not mean however that gender and culture are sufficient to explain how much people work: fathers do not only spend long hours at the company because, as males, they ‘should to’ but also because of economic reasons. One proof of that is that men in the public sector work substantially less than in the private one and are more prone to adopt an ‘intensive schedule’ if they are fathers. Unemployment, work insecurity, and workers’ limited bargaining power do not help to put the subject of work-life balance and work time rationalization seriously on the debate. In this context, it is finally mothers who manage or are forced to work fewer hours by any formal or informal means or are directly expelled from the labour market. In a ‘societal context of high unemployment and temporary employment’, the ‘power of Spanish employers’ to impose their requirement of greater ‘freedom in the management of working time has predominated over any other consideration’ (Caprile and Krüger argue, cited in Peper et al (Peper, van Doorne-Huiskes & den Dulk, 2005).

This work has tried to provide a better understanding on how men really distribute their work hours on a regular basis (assuming that the statutory 40 hours work only as a normative reference in many occupational and organizational contexts). Two features in particular have been analysed: *how many hours* and *when along the day* Spanish fathers work. We propose that both characteristics are paramount to assess the ‘family-friendliness’ of a job. The first one, because time is an irreplaceable resource for fathers and mothers –parents need time, and need it on a regular basis. The second one, because fathers and mothers are constrained by the available hours of externally provided childcare services, so the specific time when people have to perform their work does matter. We propose that an intensive schedule, where work is concentrated in the core hours when children are usually at school or at childcare centres (i.e. about 9 a.m.-5 p.m.), with clear boundaries between *work time* and *family time*, may be an equitable model for today’s diverse workforce and dual-earner families, at least in many services sectors. However, in Spain, this is far from being a common scheme: only about one out of ten fathers have this schedule. The figure is quite smaller for those working in

Fathers' intensive schedule in Spain.

masculinized occupations (e.g. industry or managerial jobs). Those holding service middle level occupations, however, could be the drivers for social change, as they show the smallest gaps between women and men work hours. The fact that people holding managerial positions (who should be particularly those who act as 'role models' for other members of organizations (Gasser, 2015) show such gendered patterns in terms of work time is a question that is worth being explored further.

Finally, and related to that, the paradigm of flexibility at the workplace (employees, especially in particular services sectors, are growingly able to decide where and when to work) adds new challenges to work life balance and the distribution of paid and unpaid work time between men and women. This shift (from a common norm to more or less free choices) opens then the door to a stronger effect of all the elements that can model people's decisions: from preferences to more or less explicit external constraints. Schedule control, as it may deepen behavioural differences among individuals, can have strongly gendered outcomes. Though it is a necessary resource for parents (because they need to adapt to the commonly unforeseen requirements of childcare) we postulate that it is not sufficient to provide a better work-life balance scenario, especially in private organizations - deeper cultural and structural changes are needed to adapt work schedules to 'new fathers', as well as 'old fathers' to new, more equitable family and workplace models.

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Irina Fernandez-Lozano

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