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Working at the Weekend: Fathers' Time with Family in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

Whereas most resident fathers are able to spend more time with their children on weekends than on weekdays, many fathers work on the weekends spending less time with their children on these days. There are conflicting findings about whether fathers are able to make up for lost weekend time on weekdays. Using unique features of the United Kingdom's National Survey of Time Use 2000 (UKTUS) I examine the impact of fathers' weekend work on the time fathers spend with their children, family, and partners (N = 595 fathers). I find that weekend work is common among fathers and is associated with less time with children, families, and partners. Fathers do not recover lost time with children on weekdays, largely because weekend work is a symptom of overwork. Findings also reveal that even if fathers had compensatory time, they are unlikely to recover lost time spent as a family or couple.

Keywords

Fathers; paid work; time use; child care; work hours

For most fathers, weekends are a time to spend with children and family. Resident fathers spend more time with children and do a greater share of childcare on weekends than on weekdays (Hook & Wolfe, 2012; Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001). Many fathers, however, work on the weekends (throughout I use the term work to refer to paid employment). Estimates indicate that approximately 25% of British parents and 28% of American parents work on the weekend (Presser, 2003). Estimates are even higher when occasional weekend work is included. Nearly 80% of British two-parent families with at least one employed adult have a parent who occasionally or regularly works at least one weekend day (Barnes & Bryson, 2004). Research shows that when fathers work weekends they spend less time with children on these days (Barnes, Bryson, & Smith, 2006; Bittman, 2005; Hook & Wolfe, 2012). Evidence is mixed as to whether fathers are able to "make up" this lost weekend time on weekdays (Barnes, et al., 2006; Baxter, 2009; Bittman, 2005; La Valle, Arthur, Millward, Scott, & Clayden, 2002; Presser, 2003).

There are competing hypotheses about whether fathers are able to recover lost weekend time on weekdays. From one perspective, time is a finite resource and normal rhythms of family life are impinged upon by irregular schedules. Even if fathers had compensating time off during the week, missed time on the weekends is unlikely to be recovered at other times during the week because of other family members' schedules (e.g., children's school schedules) (e.g., Bittman, 2005). From this perspective weekend work is highly problematic because it reduces fathers' time with children and families. I refer to this as the constraint

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perspective. From another perspective, parents are creative actors and work to preserve child and family time even in the face of work constraints (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). From this perspective, weekend work is less problematic. It may create scheduling difficulties and involve other sacrifices, but fathers are largely able to recover valuable child and family time at other times during the week. I refer to this as the preservation perspective. To be precise, I conceptualize “recovering” or “making up” time as one strategy parents may employ to preserve time with family when working the weekend.

These perspectives imply several empirical observations. The constraints perspective implies that fathers do make up lost time if two conditions are met. If fathers who work the weekend have compensating time off during other parts of the week and children and partners are available during this time, then lost weekend time would be recovered. Conversely if weekend work is a symptom of overwork (that is, if fathers working the weekend work more hours over the course of the week) then time would not be recovered. The preservation perspective implies that parents who are better able to exert control over their work will be better able to preserve time with children and family. Workers with greater autonomy and control should be better able to offset negative consequences of weekend work.

I examine these perspectives by addressing three research questions. Do fathers working weekends make up lost time with children, family, and partners on weekdays? If not, does overwork explain fathers’ inability to make up this time? Does fathers’ occupation moderate the association between working weekends and fathers’ time with children and family?

I examine fathers’ time with children, time alone with children, time on direct childcare, time spent as a family, and time spent as a couple. Although time with family can be source of stress and conflict (Daly, 2001; Hochschild, 1989) parents generally prioritize time with children over time for themselves or their partners (Daly, 2001), rank leisure time with their children more highly than other activities (Juster & Stafford, 1985), and report too little time with their children (Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Fathers’ time with children is positively associated with children’s well-being (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Fathers’ time alone with children, as a subset of this time, is positively correlated with a greater repertoire of activities with small children and higher rates of child response (Pedersen, 1983). Among older children, daughters who had more dyadic time with their fathers felt closer to their fathers (Crouter & Crowley, 1990). Direct childcare time, another subset of fathers’ time with children, is correlated with warmth, closeness, and monitoring, indicating a good measure of positive involvement (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). In addition to dyadic time with children, parents value family time (Daly, 2001). Family time allows children to simultaneously interact with both parents and observe their parents interact; parents may also experience less stress during family time (Folbre, Yoon, Finnoff, & Fuligni, 2005). Family time has been associated with less risky behaviors for adolescents (Crouter, Head, McHale, & Tucker, 2004). As parents prioritize time with children and as a family, time as a couple, which is implicated in relationship quality, may suffer (Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008; Dyck & Daly, 2006).

THEORY AND LITERATURE

There is little theorizing and research on weekend work. The vast majority of work on nonstandard schedules focuses on evening or night work (e.g., Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 1988; Rapoport & Le Bourdais, 2008; Wight, Raley, & Bianchi, 2008) or groups all types of nonstandard work together (Davis, Crouter, & McHale, 2006). The relatively small body of research on weekend work has produced contradictory findings supporting both

perspectives (Barnes, et al., 2006; Baxter, 2009; Bittman, 2005; La Valle, et al., 2002; Presser, 2003).

The preservation perspective emphasizes how parents strive to keep work from interfering with family time. The sanctity of time with children is enshrined in “intensive mothering” (Hays, 1996) and “involved fathering” (Coltrane, 1996). Parents’ efforts to safeguard time with children have been cited as an explanation for the observed increase in both mothers’ and fathers’ time on childcare observed over the last decades of the 20th century in both the U.K. and the U.S. (Bianchi, 2000; Fisher, McCulloch, & Gershuny, 1999; Sayer, et al., 2004). In explaining why there has not been a decline in mothers’ childcare time in spite of mothers’ increasing attachment to the labor force Bianchi (2000) posited, “we may have failed to appreciate how much working mothers do to protect investment in children” (p. 402).

Qualitative evidence lends support to this perspective, suggesting that fathers and families strive to adjust to fathers’ irregular hours. Hertz and Charlton (1989) interviewed 44 fathers in the U.S. working rotating evening and night shifts who typically worked weekends. Fathers felt guilty about missed time with children and family during “normal” family times, reducing and adjusting their sleep schedule to preserve time with their families and being the primary caregiver while their wives worked so they could recoup time with children. Wives also reported complex accommodation strategies shifting their own work, their children’s schedules, and meal times to preserve time together as a family (Hertz & Charlton, 1989).

Some quantitative evidence also supports the finding that weekend work may not greatly reduce fathers’ time with children. With older children (ages 5 to 13) in the U.S., Presser (2003) found a slightly lower frequency of leisure activity away from home and working with a child on projects when fathers worked weekends, but no difference in the frequency of private talks or help with homework. With younger children (infants and 4–5 year olds) in Australia, Baxter (2009) found that fathers who worked weekends at least every 2 to 3 weeks spent less time with children on weekends, but spent more time on weekdays. The only statistically significant weekday recovery she found, however, was between working weekends weekly and time with 4 to 5 year olds. Among dual-earner families, Brayfield (1995) observed that American fathers’ weekend work was associated with no change in father care of the youngest child. In all three studies, reported models controlled for fathers’ hours of work per week.

Research, however, suggests that parents’ abilities to preserve time with family may vary by occupation. Not only are lower-educated and lower-income workers in the U.K. more likely to work weekends (Barnes & Bryson, 2004), but the consequences of weekend work may be greater for these fathers. LaValle and colleagues (2002) found that fathers in professional occupations were more likely to report work schedules that fit their needs, whereas fathers in lower level occupations were more likely to feel compelled to work nonstandard schedules and perceived few other options. Professional workers were more likely to have control over when and where they work (e.g., working from home after children go to bed), whereas retail, service, and manufacturing workers were likely to be working a full shift at the worksite (La Valle, et al., 2002). Parents in particular professional occupations, however, may be more constrained than non-professionals (see Shows & Gerstel, 2009 for a comparison of fathering among physicians and emergency medical technicians). *Hypothesis 1: Fathers working the weekend who are employed in professional occupations will be better able to preserve time with children and family than fathers who are employed in non-professional occupations.*

From the constraint perspective preserving family time is unlikely. Bittman (2005) argued that “unsocialable” hours of work, particularly Sunday work, create insurmountable barriers to child and family time because employees are working at times when their significant others are available for social interaction. He found that Sunday work reduced both family leisure and time with children by two hours and that there was no compensation for this lost time on a weekday. Similarly, Barnes and colleagues (2006) argued that although parents sacrifice sleep, leisure, and other activities to preserve time with children, parents working atypical hours are more constrained than other parents by children’s typical schedules (e.g., sleep). They found that fathers who worked Saturday or Sunday spent less time with children on weekends. Findings for whether fathers are able to make up this time during the week were inconclusive (Barnes, et al., 2006). LaValle and colleagues (2002) found that mothers perceived that father’s Sunday work disrupted all family activities. None of these studies controlled for fathers’ weekly hours of employment.

One reason that fathers may not be able to recoup lost time is that weekend work may be a symptom of overwork. In the U.K. it is more likely among those working longer hours and working other irregular shifts (Barnes & Bryson, 2004). It is not surprising then that studies that statistically control for overwork support a preservation hypothesis, whereas studies that do not statistically control for overwork support a constraints hypothesis. That is, if weekend work is only about shifting work from weekdays to weekends, families may be able to preserve time together through various accommodation strategies. However, if weekend work is a symptom of overwork then preservation becomes more difficult. *Hypothesis 2: In models that do not control for fathers’ hours of work, fathers working the weekend will not appear to make up lost weekend time on weekdays. Controlling for fathers’ hours of work fathers working the weekend will appear to make up lost weekend time on weekdays.*

I control for several characteristics that may influence fathers’ time with family. Mother’s employment, particularly part-time employment, is positively associated with father’s time with children (Casper & O’Connell, 1998; Pleck & Stueve, 2001). Mother’s employment also influences women’s availability to schedule family time with fathers and children. The younger the children and the more children in the household, the greater the demands are on fathers. The relationship between fathers work schedule and time with children may vary over children’s developmental stages and as children’s availability changes (Presser, 2003; Robinson & Bianchi, 1997). I do not include interactions between weekend work and children’s age because I am limited by the sample size (e.g., less than 40 fathers worked the weekend and had a child aged 10 to 14). Age may tap energy and interpersonal resources (Yeung, et al., 2001).

METHOD

Data

I utilized the United Kingdom’s National Survey of Time Use 2000 (UKTUS). It is unique in providing detailed information from all household members over the age of 14 including a seven-day worksheet covering time spent on employment and full-time education, time diaries for two days including a weekday and weekend day, and individual and household-level surveys collected via Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). For daily dairies, respondents recorded their main and secondary activities in 144 ten minute time slots per day, the location of the activities, and who they were with in five pre-determined check boxes. Staff then coded the activities using an activity lexicon (Ipsos-RSL and Office for National Statistics, 2003).

Respondents were assigned two diary days. Seven-day worksheets were started on the first diary day. Roughly half of the respondents began their dairies on a Saturday or Sunday and

completed their second diary on a subsequent weekday, so we can conceptualize this as time to “make up” whereas for the other half the weekday preceded the weekend, so we can conceptualize this time as “make up” to the extent that respondents anticipated weekend work (which is likely for those who regularly perform weekend work). There is concern that estimates may underestimate makeup for the half of respondents that reported their weekday first. To test this, I created a dummy variable indicating that the respondent completed the weekday diary first. There was no change to the results.

The data contain information from 6,414 private (non-institutional) households in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, collected between June 2000 and September 2001. The response rate was 44.4%. I used the ungrossed worksheet weight which compensates for the ways in which the data may not be representative, including nonresponse. Nonresponse was calculated from three models predicting (a) the household contact rate, (b) the household cooperation rate, and (c) the diary response rate. Answertree was used to predict each component of response. Auxiliary data were obtained from the Census and a large marketing company. Variables included items such as population density, household income, household type, tenure, and number of children. The weight was then calibrated to represent the U.K. population according to the 2001 Census. Although weighting accounts for many correlates of nonresponse, weighting is unlikely to remove all bias. To the extent that refusals are related to “lack of time” to complete the survey and diary not accounted for by other variables, results will be biased (Ipsos-RSL and Office for National Statistics, 2003). Thus, it is likely that estimates exclude fathers who are under the most time constraints, suggesting downward bias.

I restricted the sample to heterosexually partnered and employed fathers residing with children under the age of fifteen and no additional adults ($n = 703$ fathers, $n = 680$ weekday diaries, $n = 658$ weekend diaries). These are social, not necessarily biological, fathers. I excluded households containing children over the age of 14 or additional adults because of data limitations. Time spent with a partner was used to construct several dependent variables, but the dataset included time spent with a partner in the same category as time spent with “other household members” (children over the age of 14 and other adults).

I further restricted the sample to fathers who completed the seven day worksheet and who completed at least one quality diary (no more than 90 minutes of missing activity) as advised by ONS. Overall, 609 fathers (86.6%) completed a 7-day worksheet and had at least one quality diary, yielding 600 weekday diaries (88.2%) and 581 weekend diaries (88.3%). There was very little missing data on individual variables. One father was missing partner’s employment status, and 13 were missing occupation (2.3% of eligible fathers). I used listwise deletion for reported analysis, yielding 595 fathers with 587 weekday diaries and 568 weekend diaries.

Because the final sample contains only 84.5% of eligible fathers, I used multiple imputation to examine the sensitivity of results to missing data. I used multivariate normal regression which uses an iterative Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) method to impute missing values, imputing at least one of 4 variables (partner’s employment status ($n=2$), professional occupation ($n=28$), worked the weekend ($n=174$) and total work hours calculated ($n=174$)). Values were imputed based on father’s age, the youngest child’s age, the number of children, whether a child was a boy, whether the father had the diary day off, and values on all five dependent variables. The estimates are the average estimates from 50 imputed datasets ($n = 703$ fathers). Results (available in Table A1 of the online supplement) were consistent with listwise deletion. I present listwise results because the missing data are largely from the independent variables of primary interest and the imputed results include 51 diaries of questionable quality.

Measures

Dependent variables were created from fathers' diary accounts of their primary activities and who was present during their activities. *Time with children* measures the time that the father is physically co-present with at least one household child. *Time alone with children* is the time that the father is the only adult physically co-present with a child. *Childcare time* is the time that the father is directly interacting with a child, including both physical care, such as feeding, supervising, transporting, and accompanying a child, and interactive care, such as talking, reading, and playing. The three variables measuring time with children were moderately and positively correlated, ranging from .36 to .41. Correlations are not higher because parents may spend time alone with children without performing direct childcare, and vice versa. *Family time* is the time that the father, his partner, and a child are co-present. Family time was positively and highly correlated with time with children (.83), weakly correlated with childcare time (.23), and negatively correlated with time alone with children (−.12). *Couple time* measures the time that the father and his partner are co-present. It was negatively correlated with time with children (−.30), time alone with children (−.10), childcare time (−.03), and family time (−.25).

Covariates of interest are *weekend work*, *weekly hours of work*, and *professional occupation*. *Weekend work* was created from the seven-day diary and is coded to one if the respondent indicated any employment time on Saturday or Sunday. *Weekly hours of work* was also created from the seven-day diary and is the sum of all employment time reported. In descriptive statistics I also present self-reported work hours, which are higher than diary estimates.

Professional occupation was classified using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). The NS-SEC has been used in all official statistics and surveys in the U.K. since 2001. It was developed from the Goldthorpe Schema (Goldthorpe, 1980/1987), and adopted because it is internationally accepted, conceptually clear, and validated as a good predictor of outcomes, such as health. The NS-SEC used information on occupation, employment status (i.e., employer, self-employed, or employee), organization size, and supervisory status to classify workers according to "labor market situation" (income, economic security, prospects for advancement) and "work situation" (authority, control, and autonomy). Distinctions were made between employers (by firm size), the self-employed, and employees. Employees were further distinguished by employment regulation: 1) service relationship where employees receive immediate compensation for services (e.g., salary) and long-term rewards (e.g., security), 2) labor contract where employees perform specific labor in exchange for a wage based on the amount or time worked, and 3) intermediate where both aspects of a service relationship and a labor contract exist (Office for National Statistics, 2005).

I collapsed the three category version of the NS-SEC, distinguishing between managerial and professional occupations as compared to intermediate and routine occupations. Managerial and professional workers encompass employers with 25 or more employees, higher and lower managers and professionals, and higher technical and supervisory occupations (Office for National Statistics, 2005). Results did not differ substantively with alternate classifications.

I included controls for *partner's employment*, the *number children*, the *age of the youngest child*, and *father's age*. Partner's employment status was measured by a respondent's report of their partner's employment status. I included dummy variables for *partner is full-time* and *part-time employed*; the reference category is partner not employed. The number of children was measured with two dummy variables indicating households with *two children* and households with *three or more children*; the reference category is one child. I included

dummy variables to indicate if the youngest household child is *under the age of 6* or *age 10 to 14*; the reference category is age 6 to 9. *Father's age* was measured continuously.

Analysis

Most time use variables have a significant amount of zeros, creating an irregular distribution. These zeros arise from either a mismatch between the observation window (one day) and the period of interest (routine time use) or from respondents never engaging in an activity (Stewart, 2009). I assume that zeros arise from this mismatch and not from a group of resident fathers who never interact with their children.

Because of the frequency of zeros, researchers are concerned that OLS estimates will be biased because models violate normality assumptions and use Tobit or two-part models instead. Recent empirical work, however, demonstrates that OLS is preferred over Tobit and two-part models. Stewart (2009) found that marginal effects from Tobit models are biased, increasingly so as the proportion of zeros increases. A two-part model performed similarly to OLS, but OLS was preferred if a covariate predicts performance and time spent. Stewart concluded that OLS estimates are unbiased and robust under a number of assumptions about the probability of doing an activity. I used OLS for the multivariate analysis.

The data are cross-sectional snapshots of father's time, and thus, I do not conclude that relationships are causal. For example, although father's work hours may predict time with children, father's time with children may predict father's work hours. The contribution of this research is to explore associations between father's uses of time.

RESULTS

Weekend work is very common among fathers in the sample. Forty-five percent (44.9%) of employed fathers reported working Saturday or Sunday. More non-professionals worked on weekends, with 51.1% of non-professionals working compared to 37.8% of professionals. Table 1 shows that non-professionals working the weekend were most likely to be working six or seven days per week and working the longest work weeks. On average, non-professional fathers working the weekend spent 6.4 hours working on Saturday and 4.3 hours on Sunday. Professional fathers worked fewer hours on Saturday at 4.9 hours and about the same amount of time on Sunday at 4.4 hours. Weekly work hours, calculated from the seven day diary, show that among fathers working the weekend non-professional fathers spent the most time working at 47.8 hours compared to 45.0 hours for professional fathers. Among fathers not working the weekend, non-professionals spent 36.7 hours and professionals spent 38.1 hours. Self-reported usual weekly work hours were higher than diary reports, ranging from 44.3 to 50.8. Table 1 also shows that long work weeks were common among fathers working weekends. Among fathers working one weekend day, 70% of non-professionals and 57% of professionals reported working six or more days a week. One-fifth of non-professionals working the weekend reported working all seven days, as did 16% of professionals.

Table 2 shows that weekends are generally a time for fathers to spend more time with their children, family, and partners, than they do on weekdays. For example, non-professionally employed fathers not working on the weekend spent eight hours with their children on a weekend day compared to a little over three-and-a-half hours on a weekday.

Table 2 also shows that on weekends, fathers who worked the weekend spent less time with their children, family, and partner, than did fathers who did not work the weekend, regardless of occupation. Whereas non-professional fathers who did not work the weekend spent eight hours with their children on a weekend day, non-professional fathers who

worked the weekend spent only five hours and twenty minutes. This finding is repeated for professional fathers, although the magnitude is less extreme. Professional fathers who did not work the weekend spent nine hours with their children on a weekend day, whereas professional fathers who worked the weekend spent seven hours. Table 2 suggests that fathers working the weekend did not make up for this lost weekend time on weekdays. On weekdays, there were no statistically significant differences in the mean time with children, family, or partners comparing fathers who did and did not work the weekend.

I began the multivariate analysis by examining if employment time on one 24-hour day had a different impact on time with children, family, and partners if that day was a weekday or a weekend day (available in Table A2 of the online supplement). Overall, whether a father worked on a weekday or a weekend, working in one 24-hour period decreased the time a father spent with children, family, and as a couple. Effect sizes were similar, with exception of family time where time spent working on the weekend was associated with a larger reduction in time (40% versus 22%). So, if fathers who worked weekends worked the same number of hours as fathers who did not, there would be little reason for concern that weekend workers were missing out on time with children and partners to a greater extent than weekday workers, with the exception of time as a family.

Using a 7-day work diary and two diary days per father -one weekend and one weekday - allows us to examine the impact of weekend work on father's time use across the week. Table 3 shows results from four OLS models predicting father's time with children and family separately for weekends and weekdays. Model 1 includes all variables except weekly hours of work (full results including control variables are available in Table A3 of the online supplement). Model 2 adds weekly hours of work to explore how controlling for weekend workers' patterns of overwork change the association between working the weekend and father's time.

On weekends, Model 1 shows that fathers working the weekend spent less time with children, alone with children, on childcare, as a family, and as a couple. Model 2 shows that even when controlling for weekly hours of work, fathers working the weekend spent less time; effect sizes were similar. Both models also show that professionally employed fathers spent more time with children, alone with children, and on childcare. They may also have spent more time as a family ($p = .06$). In a test of Hypothesis 1 that professional fathers working the weekend would be better able to preserve time with children and family, I find no interaction between working the weekend and professional status (available in Table A4 of the online supplement). That is, working the weekend does not have a stronger or weaker association with child, family, or couple time contingent on professional status.

On weekdays, Model 1 shows that fathers working the weekend did not make up for time lost on weekends. Model 2 shows that when controlling for weekly hours of work, fathers did make up for lost time with children, particularly time alone with children and childcare. There was no recovery, however, of family or couple time in either model. Thus, there is mixed support for Hypothesis 2. Controlling for overwork does explain discrepancies between preservation and constraint perspectives for time with children, but not for time as a family or couple. Both models show that professionally employed fathers spent more time with children and on childcare. Again, there is no interaction between working the weekend and professional status.

CONCLUSION

Although weekends are generally seen as family time, weekend work is common among British fathers. Almost half (45%) of fathers reported working on Saturday or Sunday. On

weekends, fathers working the weekend spend considerably less time with children, family, and as a couple than fathers not working weekend. Results indicate that fathers are unable to re-coup lost time with children on weekdays, largely because working weekends is part of an overall pattern of overwork. For weekend work to not interfere with fathers' time with children, time spent working on weekends would need to be compensated with time off during the week. Compensatory time, however, may be problematic for some fathers. One-third of non-professional fathers working the weekend report receiving paid overtime. Even with compensatory time, however, family and couple time are not likely to be recovered.

The findings offer some support for both preservation and constraints perspectives. Consistent with the preservation perspective, once a control for hours of work is entered into the model, fathers do appear to make up time with children on weekdays. This is consistent with the idea that parents value time with children above most other activities and that many resident fathers strive to be involved fathers (Coltrane, 1996; Hertz & Charlton, 1989; La Valle, et al., 2002) and studies that control for hours of work (Baxter, 2009; Brayfield, 1995; Presser, 2003).

Consistent with the constraints perspective and previous studies (Barnes, et al., 2006; Bittman, 2005), without a control for hours of work, fathers do not appear to make up time with children on weekdays. Even controlling for hours of work, fathers do not appear to make up lost time spent as a family or as couple. It may be that fathers either more highly value time with children or are better able to coordinate with children than with another adult. The results offer an explanation for the contradictory findings of previous studies of weekend work; it is important to compare models that control for weekly hours of work and models that do not.

I hypothesized that professionally-employed fathers would be better able to preserve time for children, family, and partners when working the weekend than non-professionally employed fathers. There is no evidence that the effect of weekend work varies by fathers' occupational status. There are differences by occupational status, however. Non-professionals are at heightened risk for weekend work (51% versus 38%), overwork (48 versus 45 hours), and have less time with children and family to begin with, but lose a similar amount of time.

Although it is unknown whether results are generalizable to the U.S., weekend work and overwork are not isolated to the U.K. Weekend work and overwork are as common for American parents as they are for British parents (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Both the U.K. and the U.S. are relatively lax about prohibitions or premiums for weekend work. The U.K. also allows workers to "voluntarily" opt out of the 48-hour weekly work limit set by the EU Working Time Directive. About half of companies had employees working above the limit, circa 2000 (Temperton & Jolivet, 2001). The U.S. is at a further extreme in not regulating maximum work hours or prohibiting mandatory overtime (Gornick & Meyers, 2003).

This analysis reconciles previous inconsistent findings and clearly documents the limits to fathers' ability to preserve time with their children and family when managing weekend work schedules and overwork. If fathers are to enact involved fathering, the results support calls from scholars that families must be better buffered from the demands of the marketplace. One policy option to preserve father-child time is to enact stronger regulations on maximum working time (Gornick and Meyers 2003, La Valle et al. 2002), although the results indicate that this would not address lost time spent as a family or as a couple. In order to preserve time for families, restrictions on Saturday and Sunday operating hours or employer disincentives for weekend work (such as high wage premiums) may be necessary.

These policy options have been advocated by a number of scholars concerned about buffering families from the effects of nonstandard work (Gornick and Meyers 2003, La Valle et al. 2002, Bittman 2005).

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics by occupation and work schedule, weighted (N = 595 fathers)

	Non-professional				Professional			
	Worked on the weekend							
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Work characteristics</i>								
Hour of work								
On Saturday (%)	.00	(.00)	6.39	(.31)	.00	(.00)	4.88	(.43)
On Sunday (%)	.00	(.00)	4.33	(.37)	.00	(.00)	4.39	(.46)
Weekly (worksheet)	36.69	(1.02)	47.75	(1.39)	38.13	(.87)	44.95	(1.36)
Weekly (self-report)	44.33	(1.16)	50.80	(1.48)	48.08	(.90)	50.77	(2.13)
Days of work (%)								
5 days or less	1.00	(.00)	.30	(.04)	1.00	(.00)	.43	(.05)
6 days	.00	(.00)	.50	(.04)	.00	(.00)	.41	(.05)
7 days	.00	(.00)	.20	(.03)	.00	(.00)	.16	(.04)
Paid overtime								
Percent	.28	(.04)	.32	(.04)	.18	(.03)	.23	(.05)
Hours among participants	8.38	(1.09)	8.66	(1.27)	8.61	(1.78)	12.79	(4.21)
<i>Family characteristics</i>								
Partner's employment (%)								
Not employed	.33	(.04)	.39	(.04)	.31	(.04)	.27	(.05)
Part-time	.45	(.04)	.38	(.04)	.47	(.04)	.46	(.05)
Full-time	.22	(.03)	.22	(.03)	.21	(.03)	.27	(.05)
Youngest child (%)								
0-5	.63	(.04)	.65	(.04)	.57	(.04)	.66	(.05)
6-9	.22	(.04)	.17	(.03)	.27	(.03)	.20	(.04)
10-14	.15	(.03)	.18	(.03)	.16	(.03)	.14	(.03)
Number of children (%)								
One	.44	(.04)	.39	(.04)	.42	(.04)	.34	(.05)
Two	.43	(.04)	.42	(.04)	.45	(.04)	.50	(.05)
Three +	.12	(.03)	.20	(.03)	.13	(.03)	.17	(.04)

Hook

	Non-professional				Professional			
	Worked on the weekend							
	No		Yes		No		Yes	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Father's age	36.28	(.64)	35.72	(.53)	38.02	(.44)	37.40	(.94)
N (individuals, unweighted)	156		170		168		101	

Hours and minutes spent with children and family by day of the week, occupation and work schedule, weighted (N = 568 weekend diaries and N = 587 weekday diaries)

Table 2

	WEEKEND DAY				WEEKDAY			
	Non-professional		Professional		Non-professional		Professional	
	Worked on the weekend		Worked on the weekend		Worked on the weekend		Worked on the weekend	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Time with children	8:02	5:20 *	9:06	7:21 *	3:37	3:28	3:53	4:31
Alone with children	1:11	:55	2:06	1:34	:39	:46	:49	1:15
Childcare time	:59	:47	1:16	:59	:36	:38	:44	1:02
Family time	6:08	4:08 *	6:40	5:21 *	2:39	2:33	2:54	2:58
Couple time	2:27	1:32 *	2:12	1:23 *	1:17	1:11	1:08	1:04
N (diaries, unweighted)	148	160	165	95	152	165	169	101

Note:

* indicates that the difference between fathers who worked a weekend day and fathers who did not is statistically significant (p<.05).

OLS predicting father's time with children and family time by day of the week, weighted (N = 568 weekend diaries and N = 587 weekday diaries)

Table 3

	Weekend				Weekday			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Time with children</i>								
Worked weekend	-139.7	24.8***	-124.6	25.8***	12.5	16.0	49.0	16.6**
Professional	86.2	25.0***	86.1	24.9***	32.4	15.9*	32.0	15.2*
Hours of work	-	-	-1.7	1.0	-	-	-4.4	.7***
R ²	.12		.12		.08		.16	
<i>Time alone with children</i>								
Worked weekend	-27.2	12.3*	-30.3	13.5*	14.8	10.1	28.1	11.1*
Professional	47.3	12.9***	47.3	12.9***	12.9	9.1	12.8	8.9
Hours of work	-	-	.3	.4	-	-	-1.6	.4***
R ²	.07		.07		.08		.12	
<i>Childcare time</i>								
Worked weekend	-16.6	6.6*	-15.7	7.0*	10.4	6.4	17.3	7.0*
Professional	16.7	6.7*	16.7	6.7*	11.3	5.3*	11.2	5.2*
Hours of work	-	-	-1	.2	-	-	-8	.2***
R ²	.16		.16		.14		.17	
<i>Family time</i>								
Worked weekend	-98.8	24.7***	-86.2	25.8***	.0	13.7	19.8	14.7
Professional	46.7	24.7	46.6	24.6	20.7	14.0	20.5	13.8
Hours of work	-	-	-1.4	1.0	-	-	-2.4	.6***
R ²	.06		.07		.05		.08	
<i>Couple time</i>								
Worked weekend	-47.4	13.4***	-42.3	14.3**	-1.9	8.6	3.0	8.3
Professional	-14.5	14.7	-14.5	14.6	-8.4	8.8	-8.4	8.8
Hours of work	-	-	-.6	.6	-	-	-.6	.4

	Weekend			Weekday		
	Model 1		Model 2	Model 1		Model 2
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
R ²	.07		.07		.08	
N (unweighted)	568				587	

Note:

* p < .05,

** p < .01

*** p < .001. Models include partner's employment status, number of children, age of the youngest child, and father's age.