

# Work-family conflict: how do UK fathers compare to other European fathers?

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*Note: The findings in this presentation are preliminary – please do not quote without authors' permission*

# Outline

- Policy context
- Theoretical background & research questions
- Data & measures
- Findings
- Discussion

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# Policy and research context

- Work-family policy development: main focus on women and mothers, *but...*
- Acceleration of father-targeted policies since mid-1990s
- ‘Fatherhood regimes’ emerging
  - Fatherhood rights and obligations regulated by policy (e.g. paternity leave and pay)
  - Promotion of a participative father

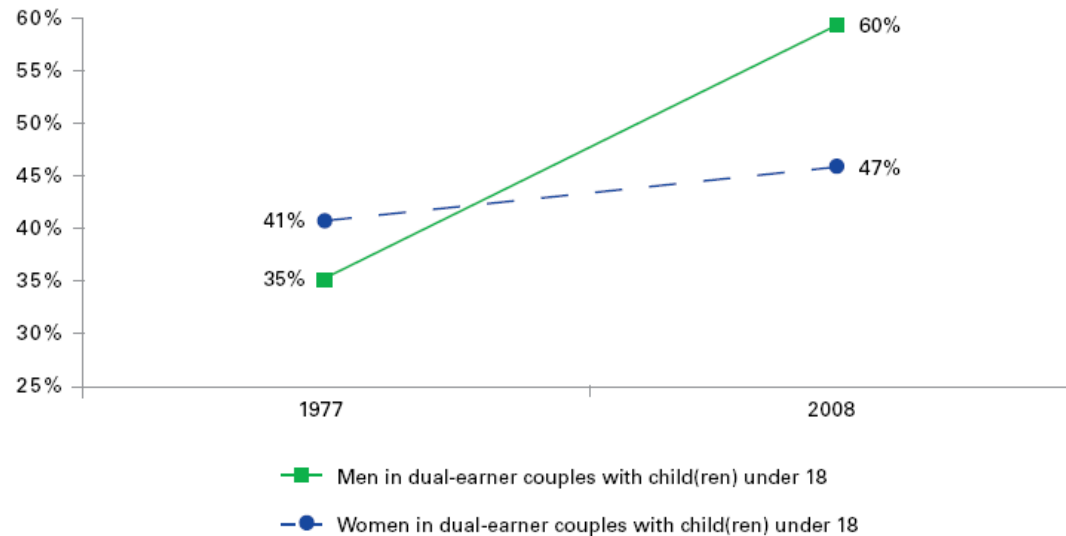
# Wider context

- Employment and working conditions
  - Intensification, flexibilisation, increase in job insecurity, economic crisis
- Female/maternal employment rates
- Gender roles at home
  - Housework and childcare
- ‘The incomplete revolution’ (Esping-Andersen, 2009)

# The new 'male mystique'

From Aumann K, Galinsky E & Matos K, 2011:

Figure 1: Percentage of Fathers and Mothers in Dual-Earner Couples Reporting Work-Family Conflict (1977–2008)



Statistically significant differences between men and women in dual-earner couples with children under 18: 1977 not significant; 2008  $p < .01$ ; Statistically significant differences between 1977 and 2008: Men  $p < .001$ ; women not significant. Sample size: 1977  $n = 283$ ; 2008  $n = 391$ . Source: 2008 NSCW, FWI and 1977 QES, U.S. Department of Labor.

# Theoretical background & research questions

# Concepts

- Work-to-family conflict (WFC)
- Family-to-work conflict (FWC)
- Work-life balance (WLB)
  - Problems of definition and measurement

# Theoretical background

- Role theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985)
- Ecological systems theory
- Demands and resources approach (Voydanoff, 2005)
- The stress of higher status hypothesis (Schieman et al. 2006, 2009)



# Societal-level factors

- Type of production regime
  - Coordinated v liberal market economy
  - Labour rights standards
- Welfare regime: support for dual earner/dual carer model
  - ‘time to care’ and ‘time to work’ policies (Lewis, 2012): leave policies, flexible working, formal childcare provision
  - Support for father care
- Gender culture / gender system
  - Gender division of labour (paid and unpaid), power relations, cultural definitions of gender roles, informal childcare practices
- Post-2008 economic crisis

# Research questions

- What are the levels of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict experienced by fathers?
- What are the factors affecting the levels of these types of conflict?
- How do fathers compare between the UK and seven other EU countries?
- What do these cross-national differences tell us about the importance of different societal-level factors in facilitating successful work-family reconciliation?

# Data & measures

# Data

- European Social Survey
  - Round 2 (2004-2005)
  - Round 5 (2010-2011)
- **UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Poland**
- Fathers in paid work, aged 20-64, in couples, with children aged 0-18
- Sample size: about 1,500 per survey year in total

# Work-to-family conflict

- 2004 & 2010
  - Worrying about work problems when not working
  - Feeling too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home
  - Job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner and family
  - Partner or family gets fed up with the pressure of your job

*Scale: from 'Never' to 'Always' (5-point scale)*

# Family-to-work conflict

- 2004 & 2010
  - Difficult to concentrate on work because of family responsibilities
- 2010 only
  - Family responsibilities prevent you from giving the time you should to your job

*Scale: from 'Never' to 'Always' (5-point scale)*

# Explanatory variables – paid work

- Working hours
- Unsocial hours (weekends, evenings and unpredictable overtime)
- Occupational class
- Employee v self-employed

# Explanatory variables – family circumstances

- Number of children
- Age of the youngest child
- Partner's employment status / working hours
- Partner working unsocial hours
- Housework
- Household income (subjective)



# Explanatory variables – gender-role attitudes

- Composite measure of egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes:
  - A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family
  - When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women(5-point agree/disagree scale)

# Control variables

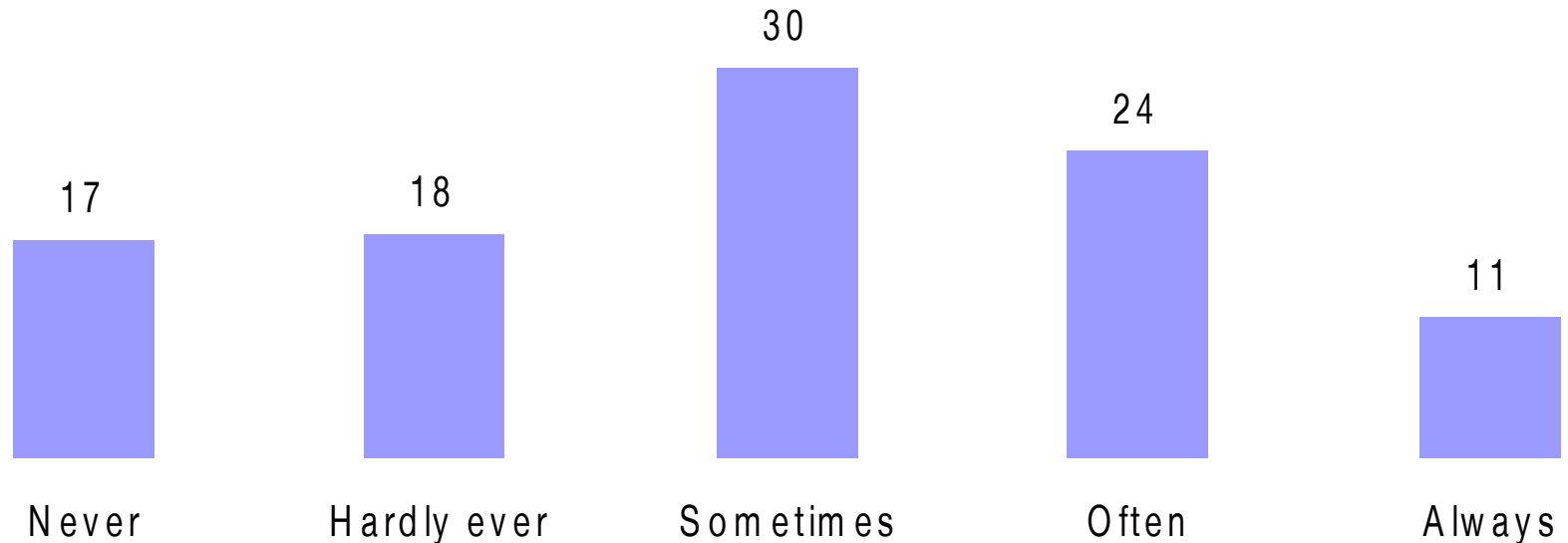
- Age
- Education

# Findings

(work in progress)

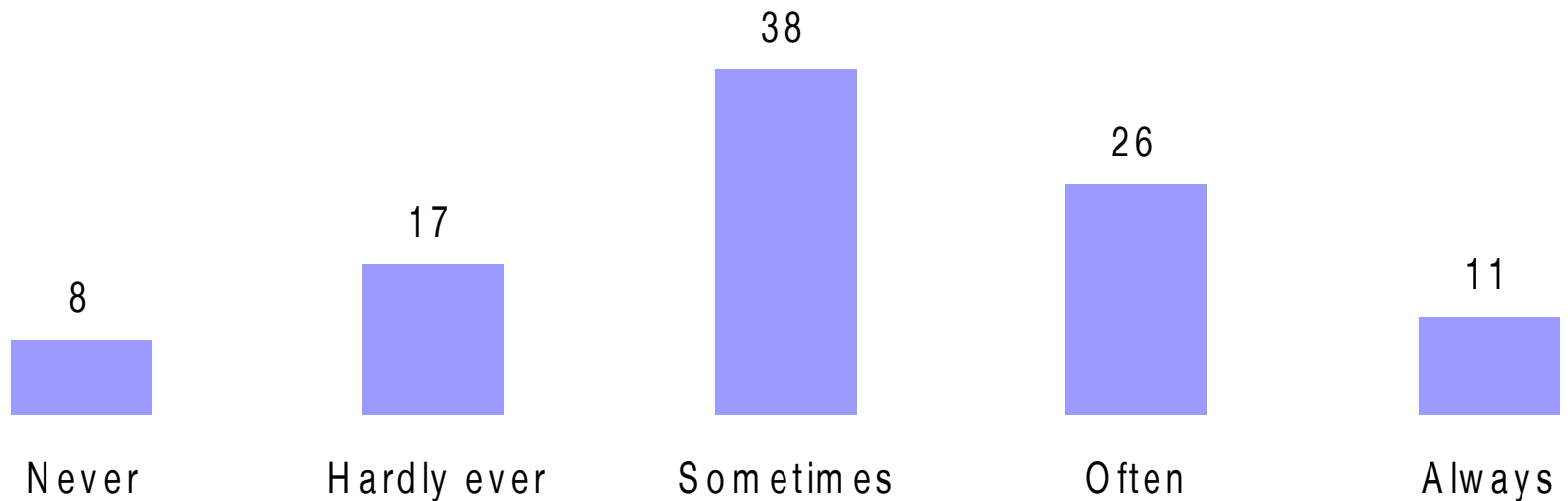
# Worrying about work problems when not working

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)*



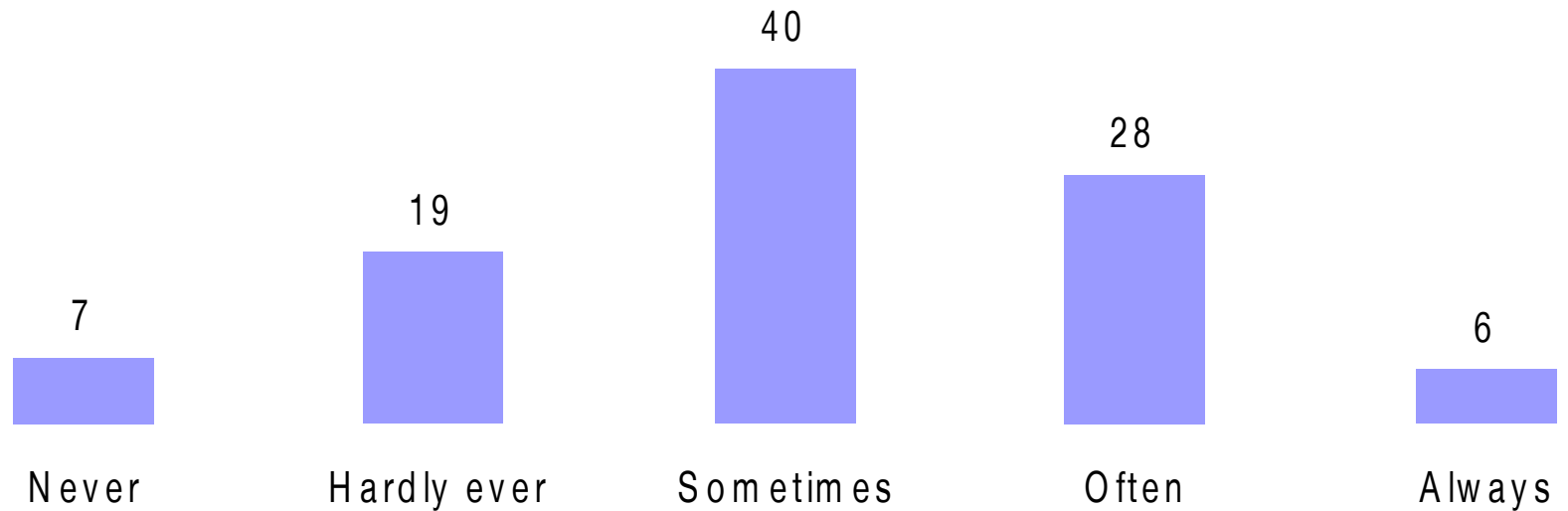
# Feeling too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)*



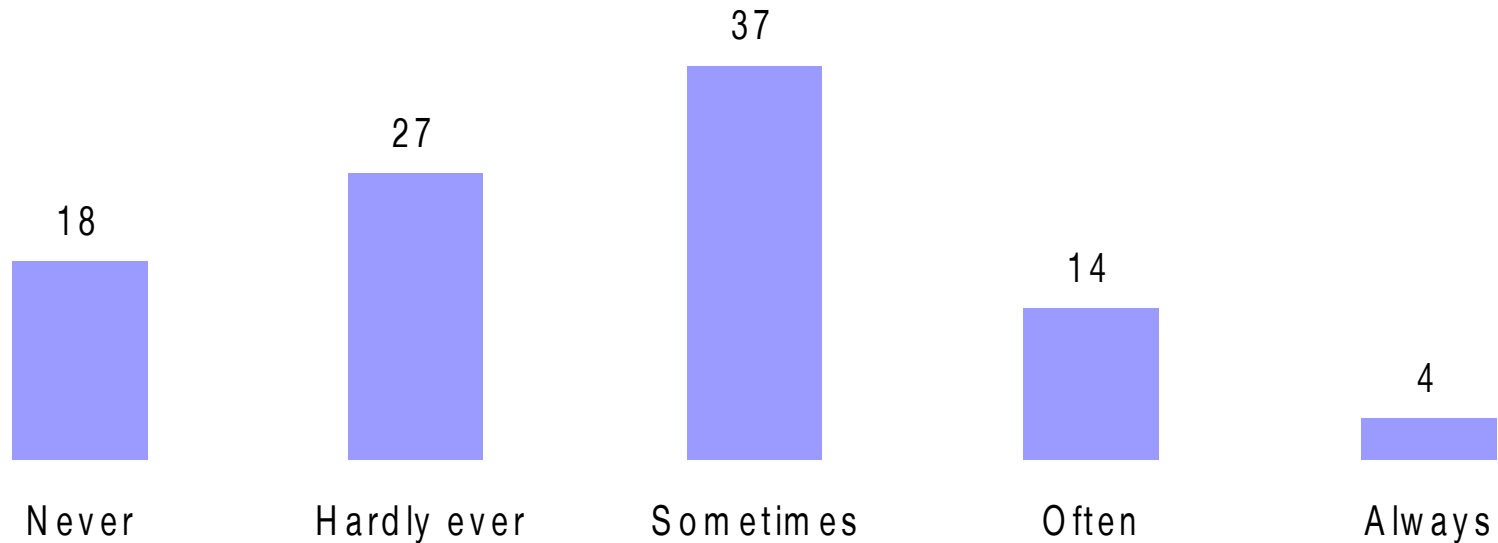
# Job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner or family

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)*



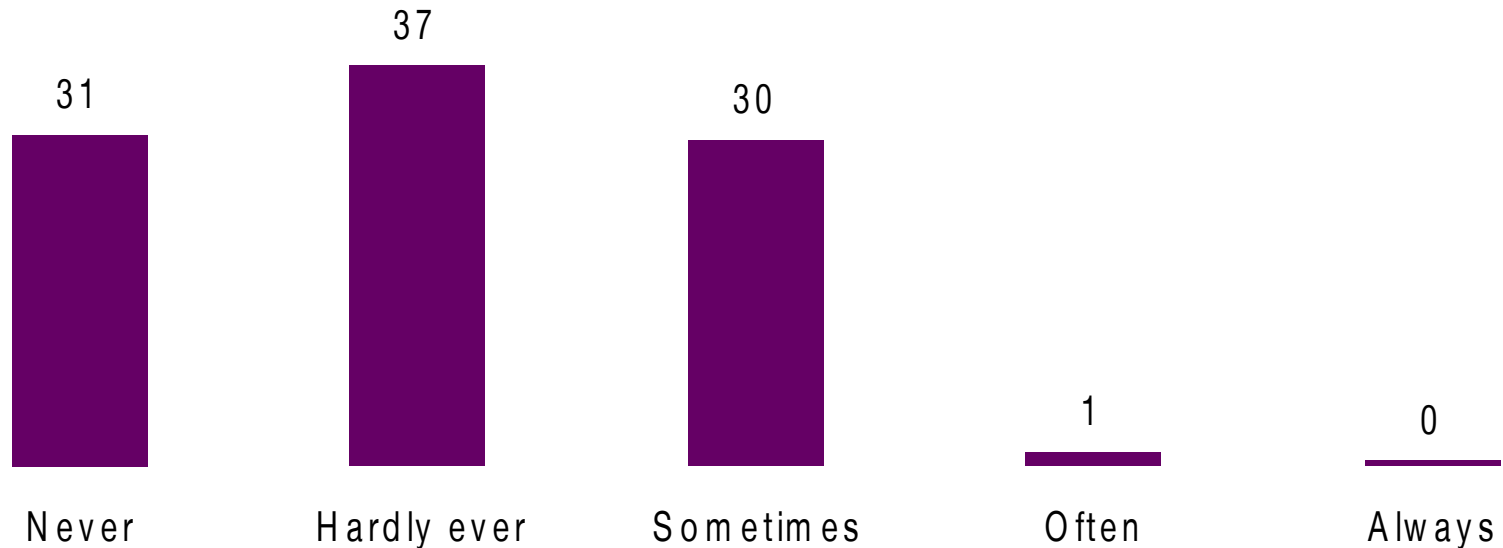
# Partner or family gets feds up with the pressure of your job

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)*



# Difficult to concentrate on work because of family responsibilities

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)*





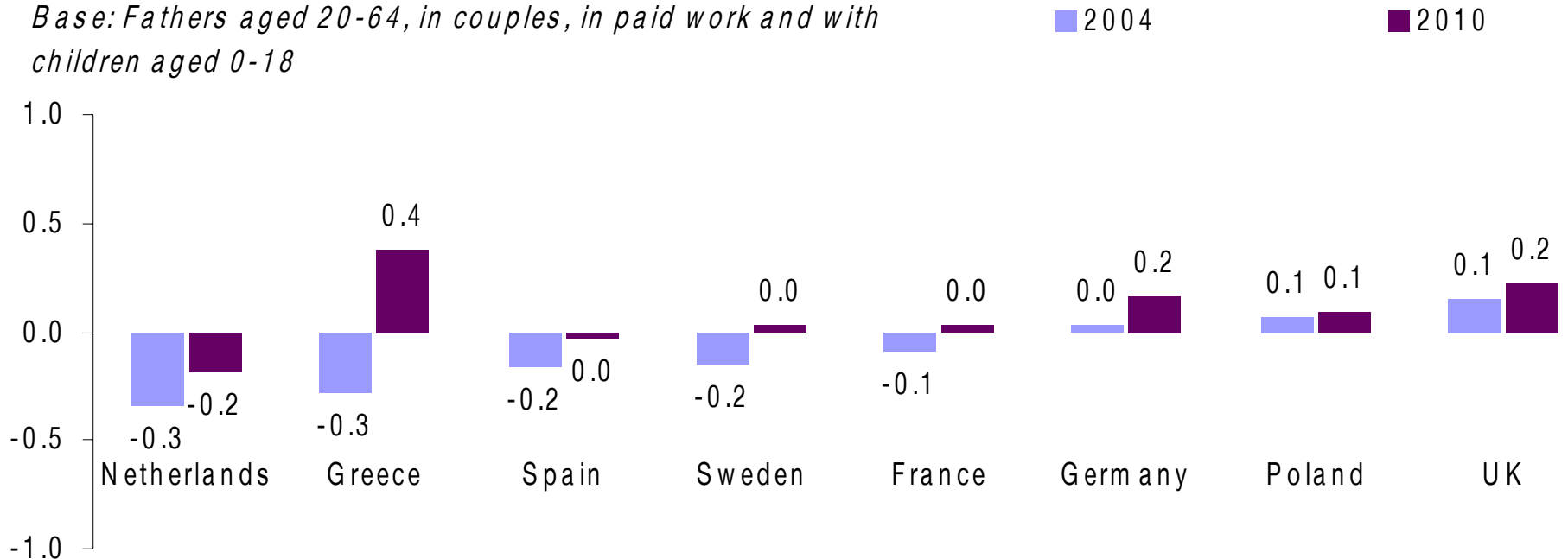
# Family responsibilities prevent you from giving the time you should to your job

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (UK, 2010)*



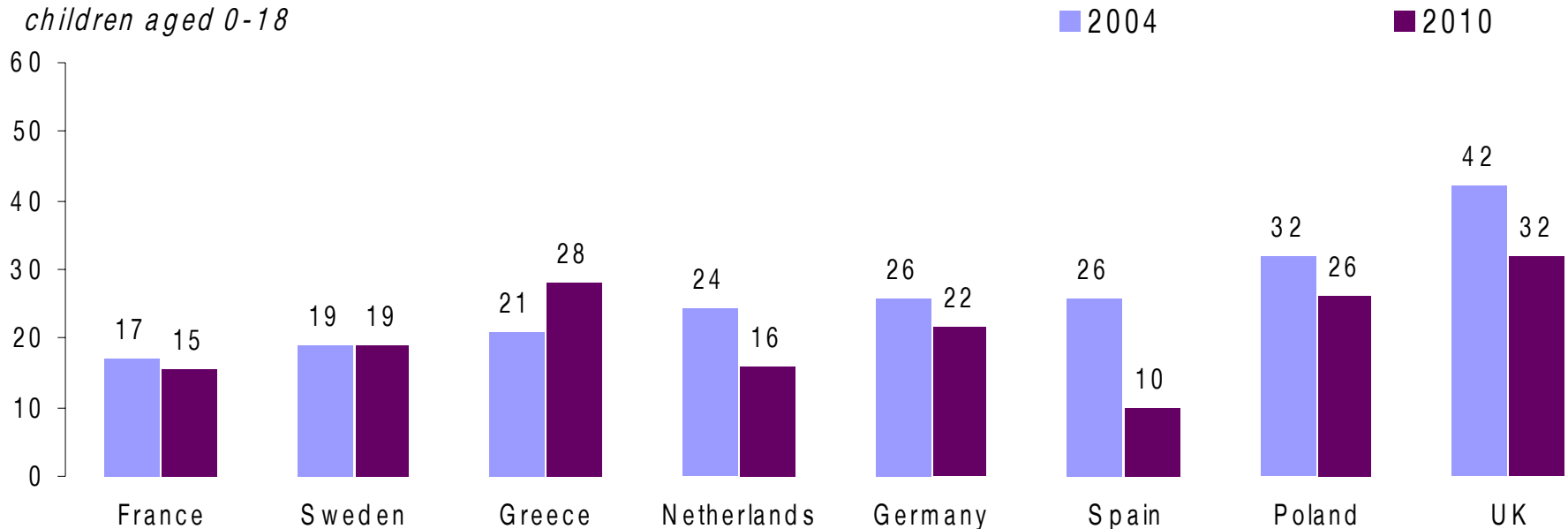
# WFC score, by country and year

Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18



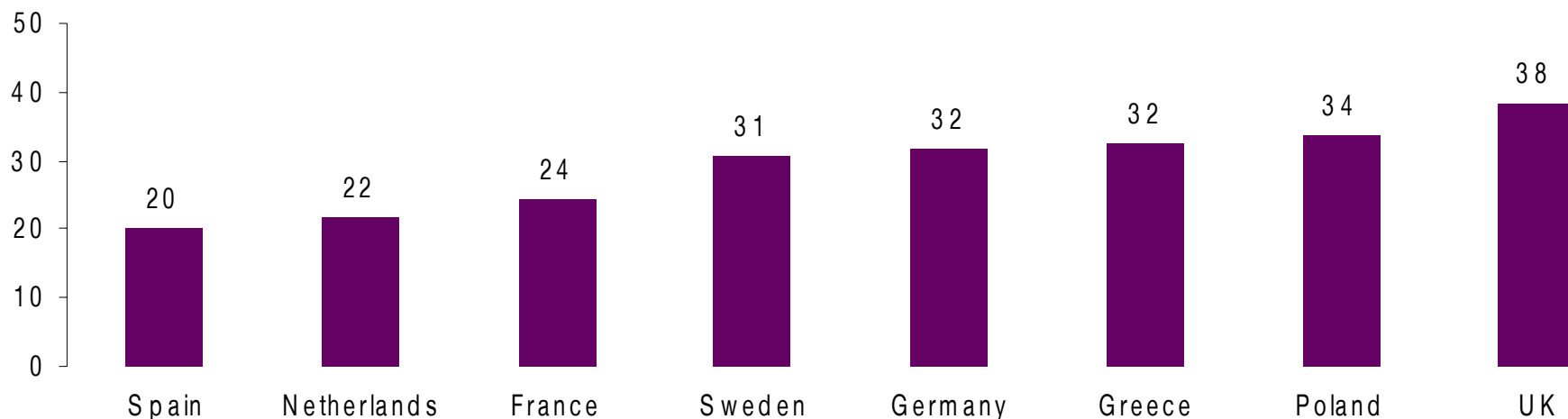
# Difficult to concentrate on work because of family, by country and year (%)

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18*



# Family responsibilities prevent you from giving the time you should to your job, by country (%)

*Base: Fathers aged 20-64, in couples, in paid work and with children aged 0-18 (2010)*



# Work-to-family conflict: multivariate analysis

- Work

(*significant*): working hours, occupational group, self-employment, working unsocial hours

- Family

(*significant*): housework share and income

(*not significant*): number and age of children, partner's employment status and hours, partner's unsocial hours

- Gender-role attitudes

# Work-to-family conflict: cross-national differences after controls

- 2004:
  - UK fathers reported highest WFC
  - Fathers in Greece and Netherlands reported lowest WFC
- 2010:
  - Fathers in UK, Greece and France reported highest levels
  - Fathers in Netherlands reported lowest levels

# Family-to-work conflict: multivariate analyses

- Work

*(significant)*: occupational group (time q. only), working unsocial hours

*(not significant)*: working hours, self-employment

- Family

*(significant)*: partner's employment status and hours and partner's unsocial hours (concentration q. only), housework share (time q. only) and income

*(not significant)*: number and age of children

- Gender-role attitudes

# Family-to-work conflict: cross-national differences after controls

- UK fathers reported the highest levels of FWC, on both measures in both years
- Lowest levels were in:
  - 2004: Greece, France, Sweden (concentration question)
  - 2010: Spain and France (both questions)



# Discussion

# Discussion: cross-national comparisons

- UK - the highest WFC and FWC
- Netherlands – the lowest WFC
- France (and Spain) – the lowest FWC
- Greece – the most dramatic change between 2004 and 2010, both WFC & FWC going up

# Thank you

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