



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Couples' Gender Differences in Subjective Wellbeing during Parenting Time

Marina Zannella & Alessandra De Rose

13th NTA GLOBAL MEETING ON POPULATION AND THE GENERATIONAL ECONOMY

August, 3-7 2020

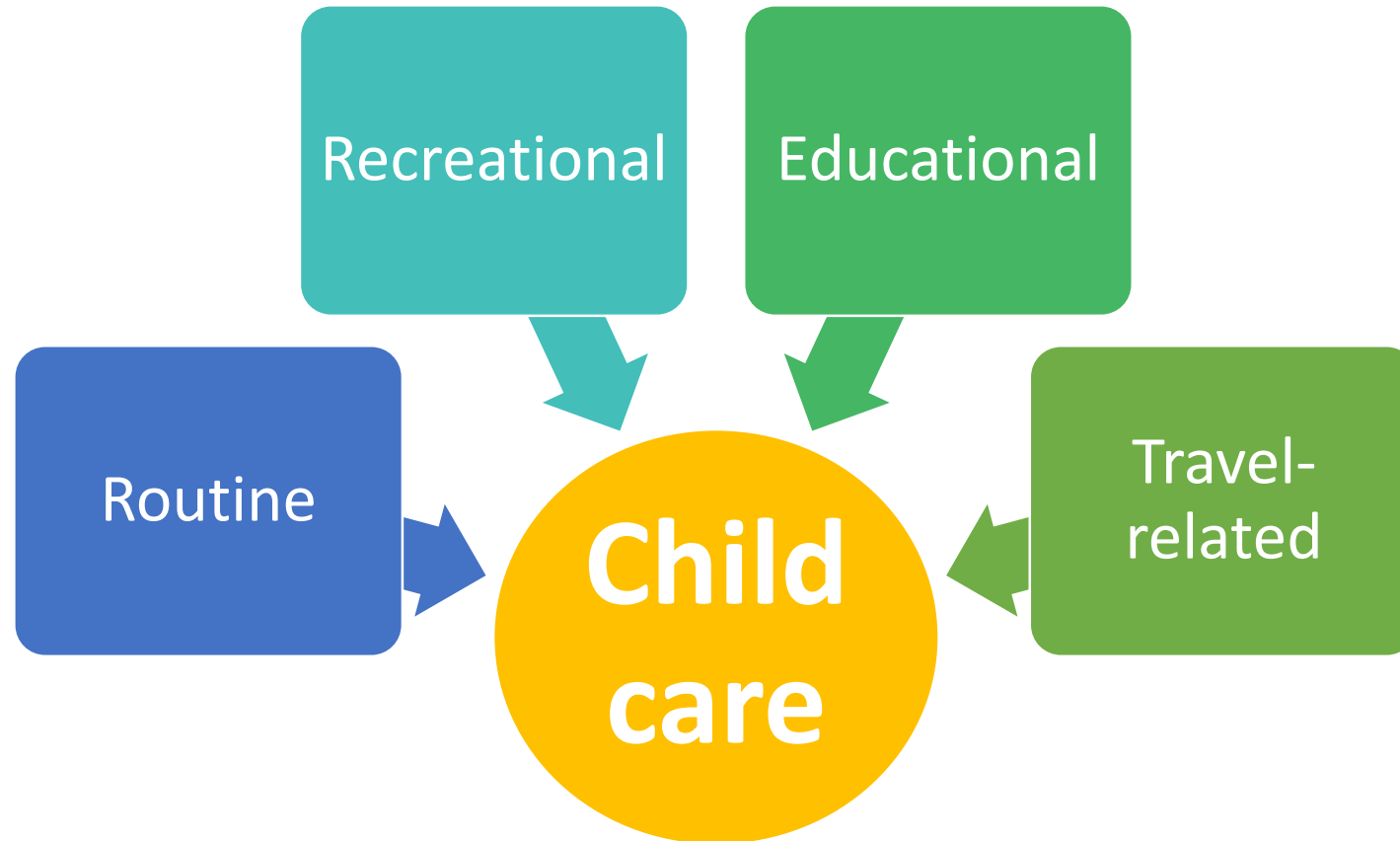
Background

- Emergence of **intensive parenting** (Craig et al. 2014)
- Intensive childrearing is positively associated to the healthy development of children (Laureau 2002), while the effects on the **wellbeing of parents** are less clear
- Substantial body of work shows lower levels of subjective wellbeing (SWB) among parents compared to childless people (e.g. Aassve et al. 2012)
- Fewer studies examine the **links between doing childcare activities and parents' SWB** with mixed conclusions

- The suggestion that women enjoy child caregiving more than men has been offered as a partial explanation for the slowdown in the gender revolution (e.g. Coontz 2013)
- By contrast, a number of time use study found that fathers enjoy their time spent in child caregiving more than mothers (Connelly and Kimmel 2014; Musick et al. 2016)

Aim

Analyse gender differences in levels of SWB associated to childcare activities in Italian couples



Data: Italian Time Use Survey 2013



Ten-minutes intervals	PRIMARY ACTIVITY	SECONDARY ACTIVITY	WHERE	WITH WHOM?							HOW PLEASANT WAS THE MOMENT? From -3 (very unpleasant) to 3 (very pleasant)								
				Alone	With other household members					With other people	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3		
					Mother	Father	Spouse or Partner	Son or Daughter	Brother or sister									Other	
07.00 - 07.10	<i>Sleeping</i>		<i>At home</i>																
07.10 - 07.20	<i>Washing</i>			X									X						
07.20 - 07.30	<i>Washing</i>	<i>Listening to the radio</i>		X										X					
07.30 - 07.40	<i>Washing</i>	<i>Listening to the radio</i>		X										X					
07.40 - 07.50	<i>Preparing breakfast</i>												X						
07.50 - 08.00	<i>Eating</i>	<i>Talking</i>		X			X										X		
07.50 - 08.00	<i>Eating</i>	<i>Talking</i>		X			X										X		
08.00 - 08.10	<i>Dressing</i>												X						

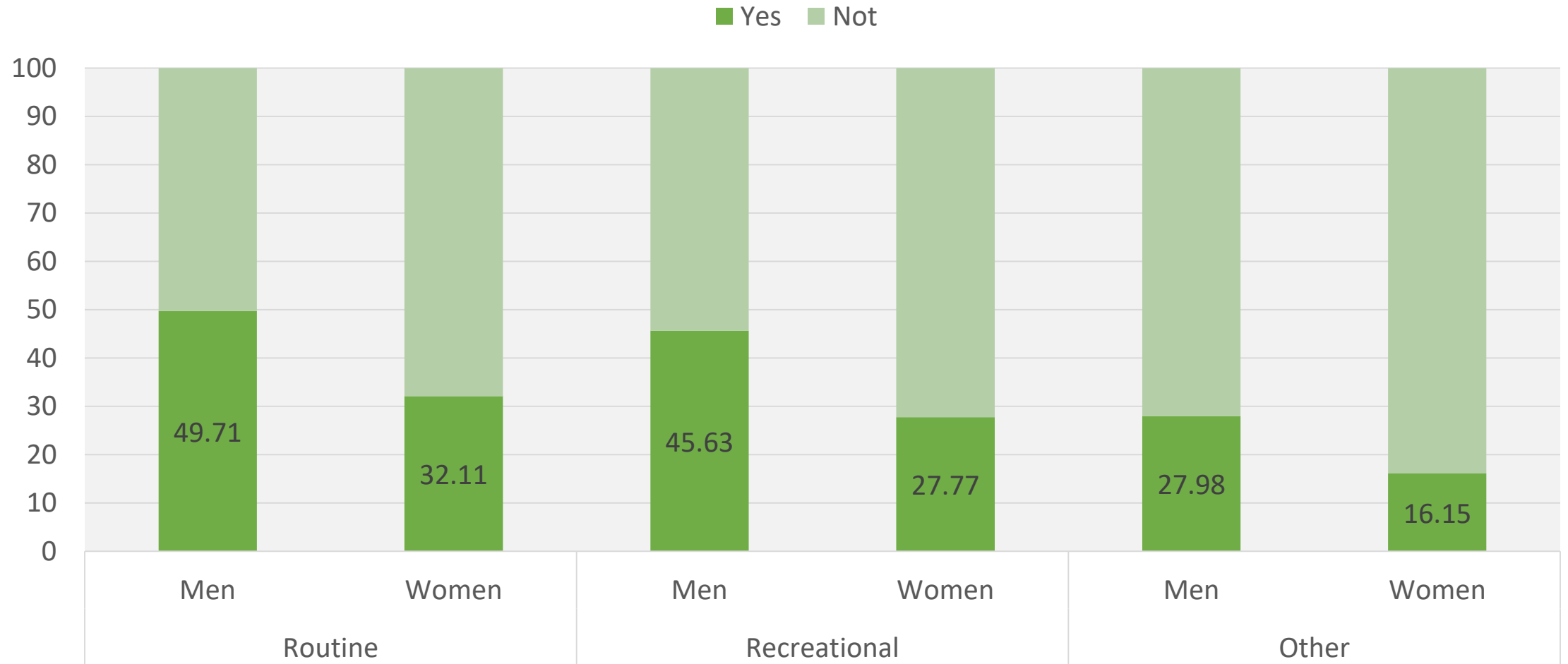
Sample

- ❑ **3,261** heterosexual couples/**6,522** fathers and mothers of children aged 0-14 years
- ❑ **21,298** childcare episodes identified relying on HETUS classification
 - The great majority of which performed by **mothers (70%)**

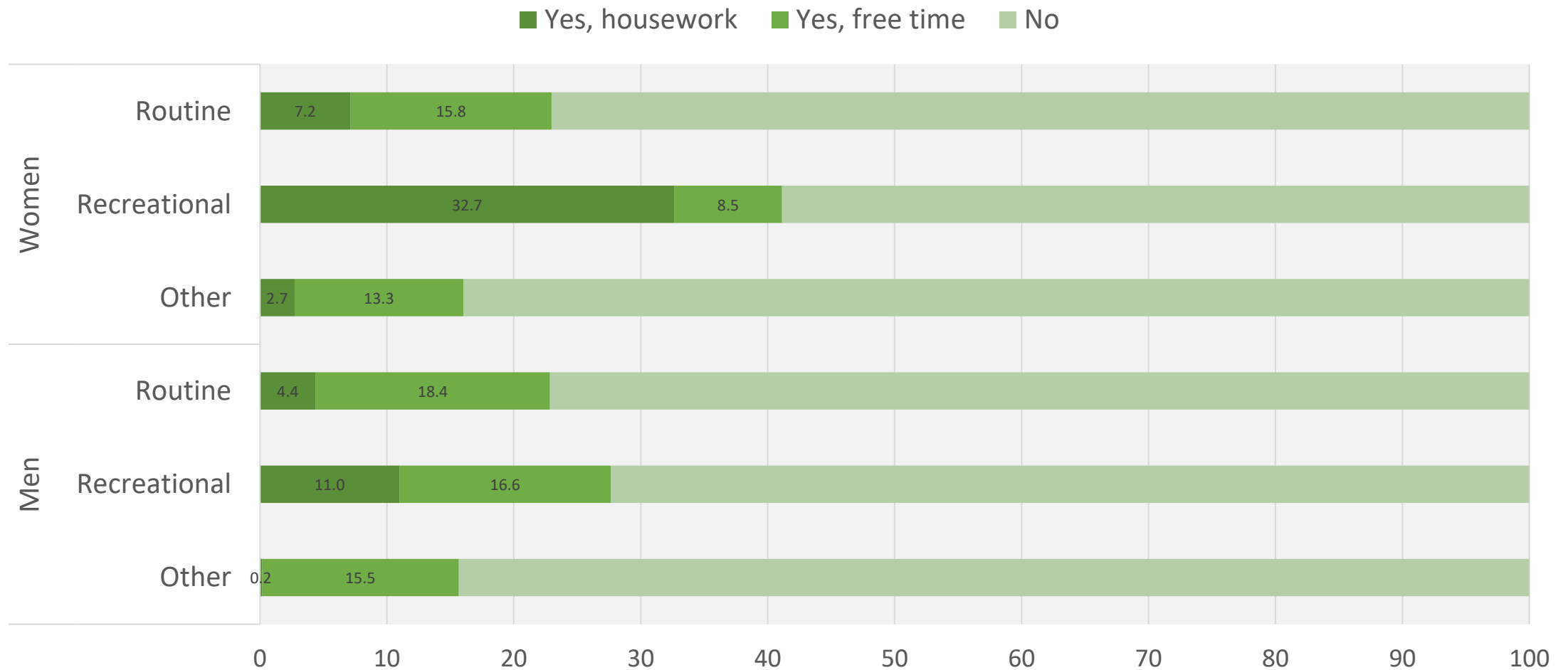
Detailed composition of childcare episodes

Childcare activities	N		%	
	M	W	M	W
Routine	1,712	6,013	27.2	40.1
Recreational	2,586	5,031	41.1	33.5
Educational	213	654	3.4	4.4
Travel-related	1,781	3,308	28.3	22.0
Total	6,292	15,006	100.0	100.0

Partner co-presence



Presence of a parallel activity



Method

- ✓ Dependent variable: Unpleasantness indicator or **U-index** (e.g. Kahneman and Krueger 2006)
- ✓ Logistic regression, one separate model for each activity

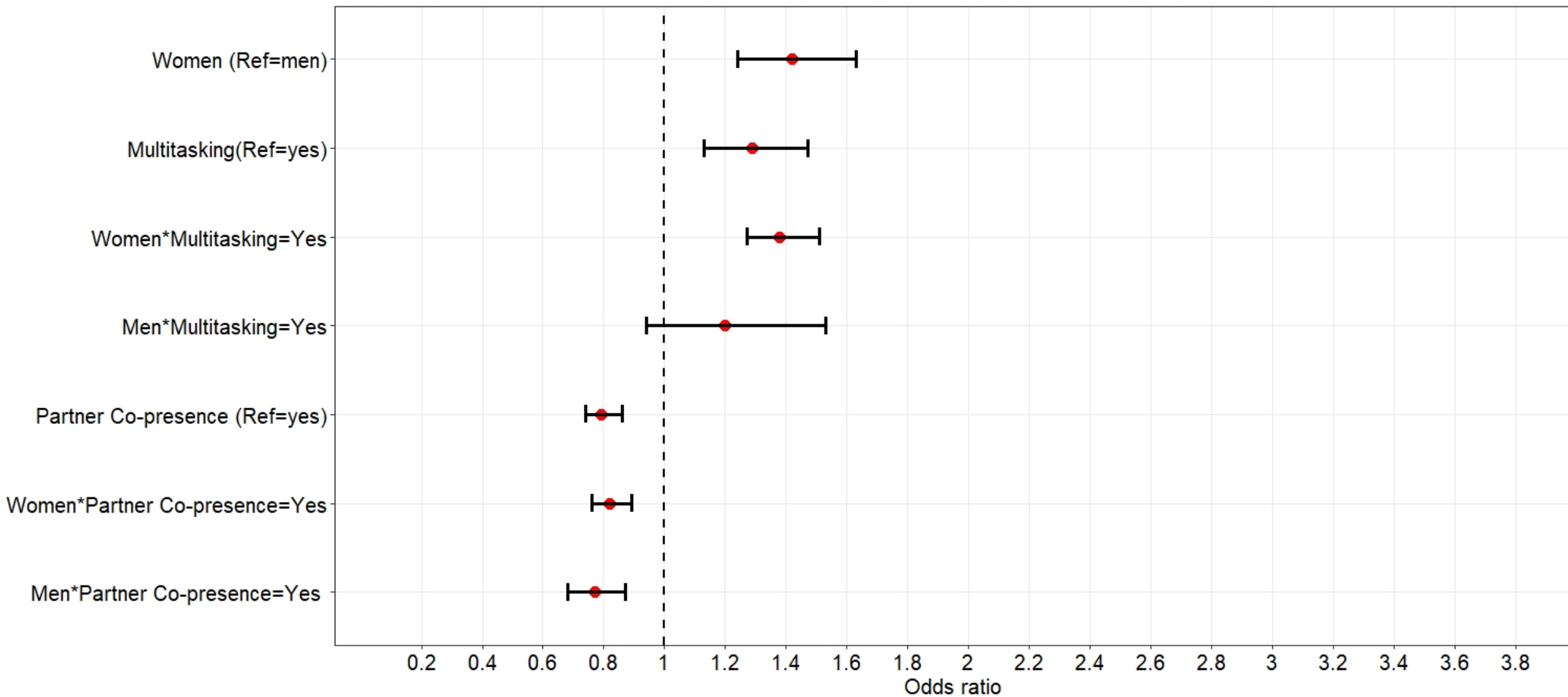
Explicative variables: gender, multitasking, partner co-presence, gender*multitasking, gender*partner co-presence

! Definition of MULTITASKING: Consistent with the approach adopted by Bianchi and colleagues (2006), we exclude all free-time activities from our multitasking measure. Thus, our definition of multitasking includes only **unpaid domestic work**

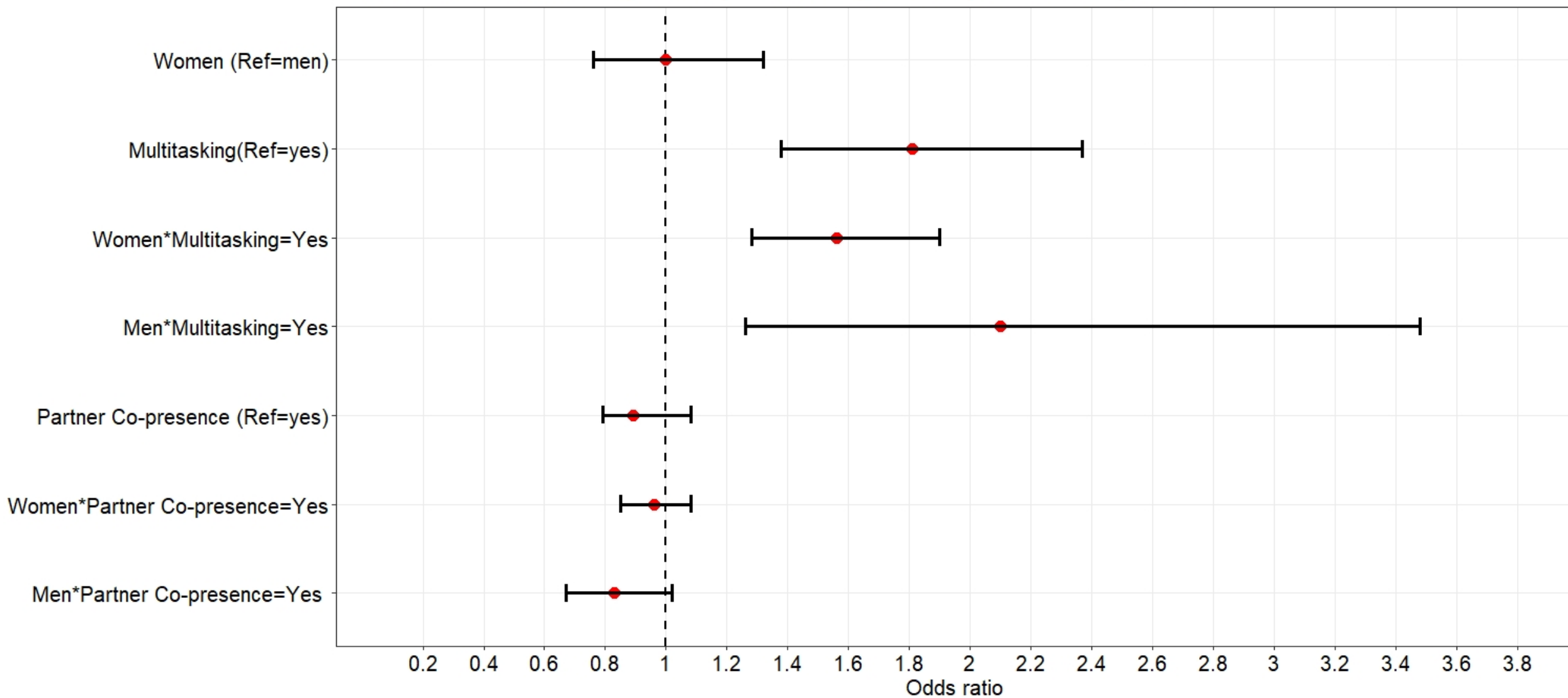
Controls:

- **Episode:** episode duration, hour of start, day of the week
- **Individual:** age group, education, employment status, life satisfaction, daily minutes devoted to childcare, survey's month
- **Household:** number of children, age of the youngest child

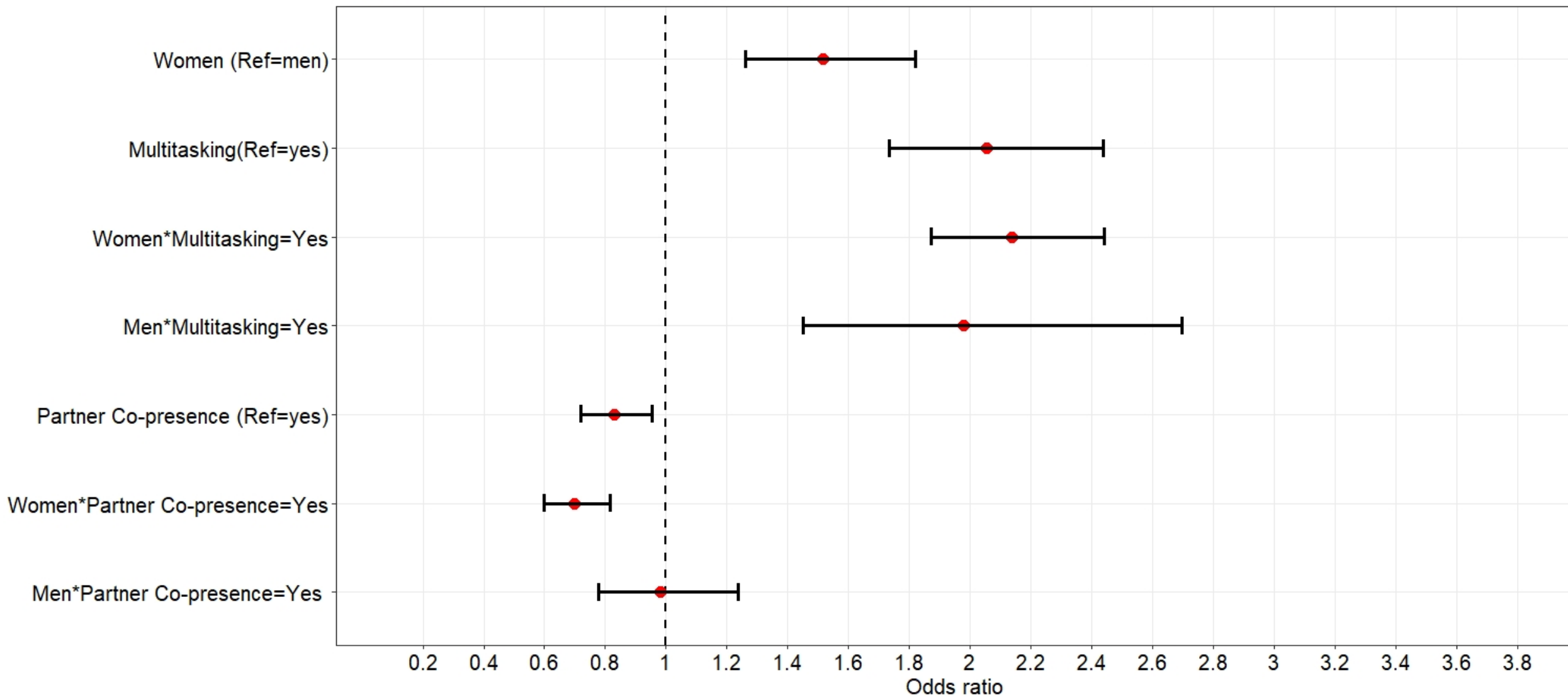
OVERALL CHILDCARE TIME - Outcome: Probability of experiencing an unpleasant episode



ROUTINE CHILDCARE ACTIVITIES - Outcome: Probability of experiencing an unpleasant episode



RECREATIONAL CHILDCARE ACTIVITIES – Outcome: Probability of experiencing an unpleasant episode



Concluding remarks

- Compared to fathering, mothering involves not only more overall time commitment but more **multitasking**, more **physical labor**, more **time alone with children**, and more overall **responsibility** for managing care (Craig 2006)
- These differences in the **quantity** as well as in the **nature of care** are reflected in the **subjective experience** of parenting time of men and women, with mothers reporting lower levels of enjoyment of overall childcare time compared to fathers

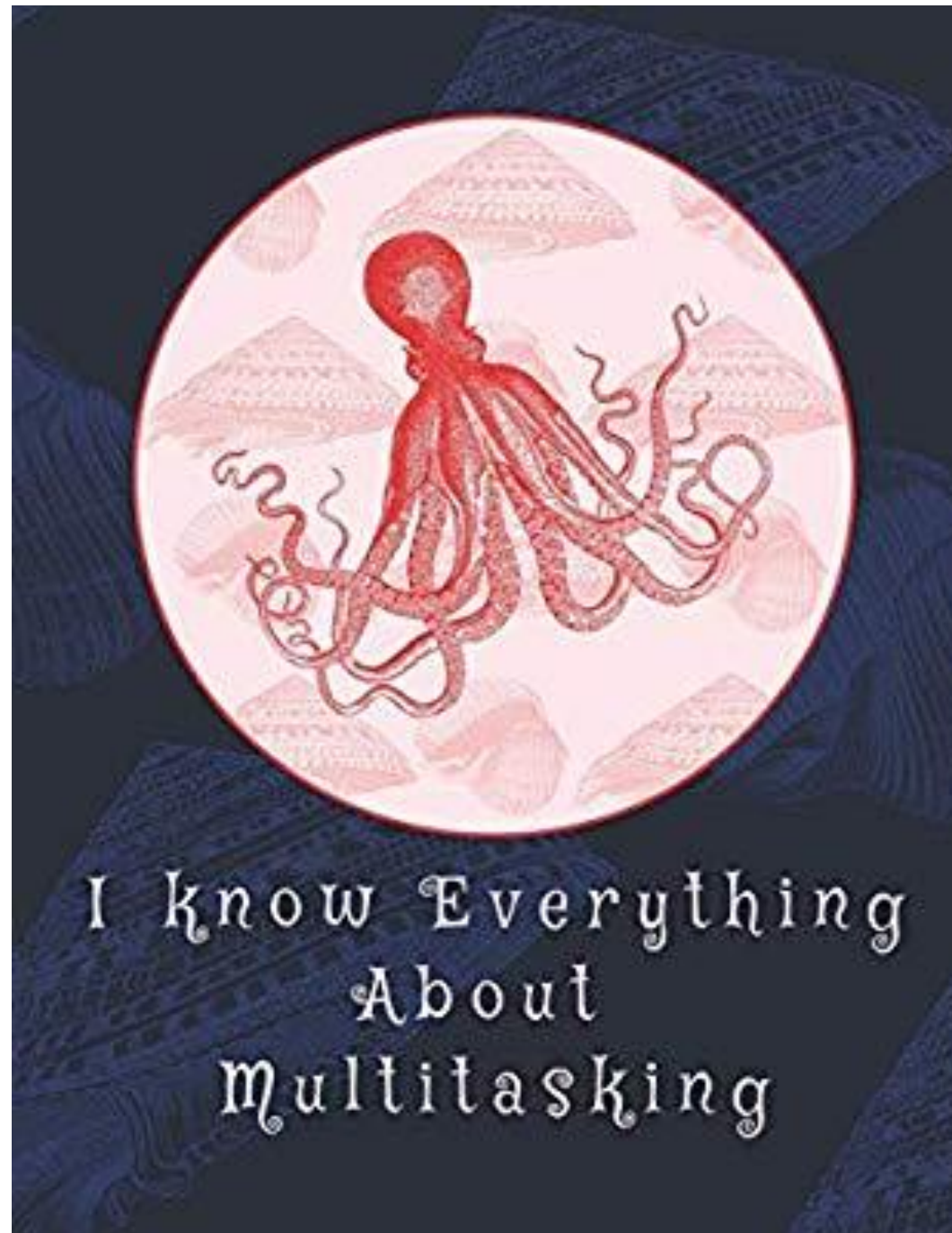
- Contrary to our expectations, performing routine tasks does not significantly affect gender differences in levels of subjective wellbeing associated with childcare episodes. Indeed, **gender differences in levels of enjoyment of parenting time were found only in relation to recreational childcare activities**
- **Multitasking** significantly increases the probability of experiencing an unpleasant childcare episode for both parents
- In line with Dunatchik and Speight (2020), our results show mothers to report greater enjoyment of recreational childcare time with a **partner present**; however, this association did not extend to physical care. Fathers' enjoyment of routine and recreational childcare activities did not vary by partner co-presence
- **Next steps:** i) experiments **alternative definitions** of multitasking as well as of childcare activities; ii) try **measures of gender differences** in SWB during childcare time **inside the couple**

References

- Aassve, A., Goisis, A., & Sironi, M. (2012). Happiness and childbearing across Europe. *Social indicators Research*, 108(1), 65-86.
- Bianchi, S. M., Robinson J.P., and Milkie, M.A. (2006). *The Changing Rhythm of American Family Life*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Craig L. (2006). Does father care mean fathers share? A comparison of how mothers and fathers in intact families spend time with children. *Gender & Society*, 20(2), 259-281.
- Connelly, R., & Kimmel, J. (2015). If you're happy and you know it: How do mothers and fathers in the US really feel about caring for their children?. *Feminist Economics*, 21(1), 1-34.
- Coonts, S. (2013). Why Gender Equality Stalled. *New York Times*, February 17
- Craig L., & Mullan, K. (2011). How mothers and fathers share childcare: A cross-national time-use comparison. *American Sociological Review*, 76(6), 834-861.
- Dunatchik A. and Speight S. (2020). Re-examining How Partner Co-presence and Multitasking Affect Parents' Enjoyment of Childcare and Housework. *Sociological Science* 7: 268-290.
- Krueger, A. B., Kahneman, D., Fischler, C., Schkade, D., Schwarz, N. and Stone, A. A. (2009). "Time Use and Subjective Well-Being in France and the US." *Social Indicators Research* 93(1):7–18.
- Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in black families and white families. *American Sociological Review*, 67, 747–776.
- Musick, K., Meier, A., & Flood, S. (2016). How parents fare: Mothers' and fathers' subjective well-being in time with children. *American Sociological Review*, 81(5), 1069-1095.
- Offer, S., & Schneider, B. (2011). Revisiting the gender gap in time-use patterns: Multitasking and well-being among mothers and fathers in dual-earner families. *American Sociological Review*, 76(6), 809-833.

Thank you for your
... *TIME!*

marina.zannella@uniroma1.it



Appendix

Average childcare daily hours – sample estimates

Age of the youngest child	Childcare activity			
	Overall	Routine	Recreational	Other
MEN				
0-2 years	3.17	1.33	1.46	0.38
3-5 years	2.33	0.7	1.02	0.61
6-10 years	2.1	0.37	0.47	1.26
11-14 years	1.85	0.1	0.22	1.53
All	2.56	0.81	0.98	0.77
WOMEN				
0-2 years	4.28	2.9	0.98	0.4
3-5 years	2.95	1.3	0.69	0.95
6-10 years	2.43	0.63	0.34	1.46
11-14 years	1.71	0.22	0.18	1.31
All	3.24	1.68	0.67	0.89

Note: time is expressed in decimal hours

Enjoyment scores – sample estimates

Childcare activity	Mean	SE	P25
Routine	1.74	0.01	1
Recreational	2.07	0.01	1
Other	1.63	0.02	1
Overall	1.83	0.01	1

Models estimates

CHILDCARE TIME	MODEL 1: OVERALL			MODEL 2: ROUTINE			MODEL 3: RECREATIONAL		
Effect	Odds ratio	SE	Pr > ChiSq	Odds ratio	SE	Pr > ChiSq	Odds ratio	SE	Pr > ChiSq
Women vs Men	1.422	0.099	<.0001	0.998	0.142	0.987	1.515	0.142	<.0001
Multitasking Yes vs Not	1.288	0.085	<.0001	1.808	0.251	<.0001	2.056	0.179	<.0001
Multitasking Yes vs Not in gender=Women	1.384	0.063	<.0001	1.560	0.155	<.0001	2.138	0.145	<.0001
Multitasking Yes vs Not in gender=Men	1.198	0.148	0.145	2.097	0.543	0.004	1.978	0.313	<.0001
With partner vs without	0.795	0.030	<.0001	0.890	0.057	0.067	0.828	0.059	0.008
With partner vs without in gender= Women	0.821	0.034	<.0001	0.959	0.060	0.503	0.700	0.055	<.0001
With partner vs without in gender= Men	0.770	0.047	<.0001	0.827	0.090	0.082	0.981	0.116	0.868