



Men as Fathers

*Interdisciplinary perspectives on
fatherhood in the context of the family*

JACOBS FOUNDATION CONFERENCE 2014
MARBACH CASTLE, 7–9 MAY 2014

Jacobs Foundation Conference 2014

Conference Program

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014

- Arrival
- 16.45 – 17.00 **Welcome and Opening remarks**
Simon Sommer, Lieselotte Ahnert & Michael E. Lamb
- 17.00 – 19.00 **Session 1: Evolution: The big picture**
Papers by: MELVIN KONNER and HARALD EULER
Discussion initiated by: Markus Zöttl and Chris von Rueden
Discussion moderated by: Michael E. Lamb
- 19.30 Dinner

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2014

- 8.30 – 10.30 **Session 2: Insights from other species**
Papers by: CHARLES SNOWDEN and TIM CLUTTON-BROCK
Discussion initiated by: Adam Boyette
Discussion moderated by: Michael E. Lamb
- 10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 – 13.00 **Session 3: Insights from other cultures**
Papers by: BARRY HEWLETT and CAROL WORTHMAN
Discussion initiated by: Matt Stevenson and Quiong Yu
Discussion moderated by: Michael E. Lamb
- 13.00 – 14.30 Lunch break
- 14.30 – 16.30 **Session 4: Biological correlates of fathers' behaviour**
Papers by: PETER GRAY and ULRIKE EHLERT
Discussion initiated by: Tanya Broesch
Discussion moderated by: Lieselotte Ahnert
- 16.30 – 17.00 Coffee break
- 17.00 – 19.00 **Session 5: The demography of contemporary fatherhood**
Papers by: PAUL AMATO and SANFORD BRAVER
Discussion initiated by: Laurenz Meier and Lucy Blake
Discussion moderated by: Michael E. Lamb
- 19.30 Barbecue

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2014

- 8.30 – 10.30 **Session 6: Negotiating parenthood in modern families**
 Papers by: PETRA KLUMB, KATJA NOWACKI and CAROLYN COWAN
 Discussion initiated by: Eva Telzer and Maria Wängqvist
 Discussion moderated by: Lieselotte Ahnert
- 10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 – 13.00 **Session 7: Impact on children**
 Papers by: JULIUS KUHL, PHIL COWAN and SUSAN GOLOMBOK
 Discussion initiated by: Katherine Twamley
 Discussion moderated by: Lieselotte Ahnert
- 13.00 – 15.00 Lunch break
- 15.00 – 17.00 **Session 8: Family policies and practices**
 Papers by: MARGARET O'BRIEN and PHILIP HWANG
 Discussion initiated by: Kate Ellis-Davies
 Discussion moderated by: Lieselotte Ahnert
- 17.00 – 17.30 **Where to go from here? Wrap-up, Summary, Research Challenges**
 Discussion moderated by: Simon Sommer
- 19.00 Apéro
- 19.30 Dinner

SATURDAY, 10 MAY, 2014

Departure

SESSION 1

EVOLUTION: THE BIG PICTURE

PAPERS BY

Melvin Konner and Harald Euler

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Markus Zöttl and Chris von Rueden

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Michael E. Lamb

TIME

May 7, 17.00 – 19.00

Fittingly, we aim to place fatherhood in its broadest context in this opening session. The featured scholars have drawn attention, here and in their previous scholarship, to the varying roles that human fathers do play in contemporary cultures and have played historically. That variability will be a key issue in many of the discussions taking place at this conference, but in this initial session, we want to ask more specifically whether we can learn anything about this variability by focusing on evolutionary processes and, more particularly, on the evolutionary history of our species. Relatedly, the group might consider how we can sensibly study evolution and its implications for contemporary society, especially when it is so easy to spin popular ‘just so’ stories!

The evolutionary anthropology of fatherhood: A broad overview

Melvin Konner

I will try to sketch some theoretical and research traditions relevant to the evolution of fatherhood. “Why males?” is a challenging question in biology, since life began with asexual organisms, most males offer no paternal care, and some species do without males today. Males may have evolved from genetic exchange processes among like organisms, and the resulting variation enhanced defense against parasites and provided a richer substrate for natural selection. The advantage is clear, since almost all species have sexual reproduction.

But males became a kind of parasite, devoting up to half or more of a species’ biomass to a sterile caste. This paradox was resolved in various ways: the male as a nourishing meal during or after sex (some mantises and spiders); as a small sperm-supplying appendage to a much larger female (some fishes); as a huge, burdensome, dangerous, dominant bully (elephant seals); as a wastefully decorated and vain show-off (peacocks, Irish elk); and as fathers that invest in the care of the young, which occur in some insects, many fish, some frogs, thousands of species of birds, and a few mammals.

Fatherhood in the comparative range tends to be associated with pair bonding, less variable male reproductive success, less sexual dimorphism, and less conflict, although these associations may not be as strong as once thought. The existence of such a covarying cluster still begs the question of why it evolved in some species but not others. Proposed pathways to fatherhood involve patchy distribution of resources, mate guarding to protect paternity and prevent infanticide, territorial pairs, isolated female-offspring units, and other starting points or transitional states. In most species with paternal care, some males care for the genetic offspring of other males, and for females the optimal number of fathers is often more than one. However, in some comparative studies paternity certainty predicts direct paternal care.

In voles, paternal behavior and pair bonding are dependent on the distribution of brain vasopressin receptors, requiring only a small genetic change, but the extent to which this is true of mammals generally is unclear. Perhaps because they need more parental care, primates have more species with devoted fathers than average mammals (14 vs. 3–5 percent), but most of these are marmosets and tamarins, which diverged from Old World monkeys and apes ~25 million years ago. In many species, males exploit infants and juveniles in agonistic buffering, courtship, recruitment to harems, and other ways that complicate the definition of care.

The lesser apes have some paternal behavior, but the great apes do not, so human ancestors probably evolved it as a derived trait. The earliest hominin fossil in or close to the human line is *Ardipithecus afarensis*, which has low levels of sexual dimorphism in body and canine size, leading some to infer pair bonding and paternal care. Some later australopithecines, however, were less dimorphic, making fatherhood less likely.

Modern humans are somewhat dimorphic compared to average mammals, consistent with substantial pair bonding. But direct paternal care is highly variable among human populations, although there is no culture in which males do as much as 50 percent of the care, and the proportion is much less in infancy. Indirect care through subsistence support is more important. Cooperative breeding is a derived feature of human childcare, with unique levels of provisioning to support and supplement lactation, but in this grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, and others may substitute for fathers.

Variation is great: Polygynous cultures have less paternal care than monogamous ones, while polyandrous ones have more. Among some cultures of the Amazon Basin, the biological concept of partible paternity formalizes the role of multiple matings and multiple fathers in each child’s life. Cultures with frequent wars have less direct paternal care, except after boys are old enough to be initiated into combat training.

In the whole cross-cultural range, based on quantitative studies with reasonable matching of definitions, the frequency distribution of direct father involvement with infants overlaps very little with that of mothers, and in early childhood the comparison still greatly favors mothers. Fathers are more involved where mothers work more, although other factors (such as polygyny or warfare) may disrupt this association, and where women contribute less to subsistence. An increase in reproductive opportunity for fathers (divorce, extramarital affairs, multiple wives) generally means less fathering.

Hunter-gatherer data suggest that in the human environments of evolutionary adaptation there was more father involvement than later in history, but this did not approach maternal levels. The Aka studied by Hewlett are widely recognized to have the most involved fathers among all traditional cultures; still, the highest number reported is the percentage of all holding done by the father for infants up to 4 months of age: 22 percent, while the mother does 51 percent. On bush trips, mothers hold infants about 90 percent of the time; while in camp, the paternal/maternal ratio was .43 in the first 4 months, .25 from 8–12 months (the period of growing attachment), and .45 from 13–18 months. Attachment behaviors directed at the father are about a quarter of those directed at the mother from 8–12 months, but 60 percent of her rate in the second year.

Some hunter-gatherers have little father involvement. In the Efe, the father is one among many non-maternal caregivers. In the Hadza, paternal provisioning is important, but direct care declines when either grandmothers or young eligible women are around. In the Ache, fathers and other men play a large role in subsistence but less in direct care. In the Agta, where women do a great deal of hunting, father involvement is still less. The !Kung whom I studied had an overall rate of father involvement in 13.7 percent of interactions in infancy, high in the whole cross-cultural range.

Clearly human fathering is a facultative adaptation, although higher among hunter-gatherers. Psychologists find many things that fathers appear to add behaviorally, but that does not make them necessary for development. The steep rise in single-mother families has not produced the psychopathology epidemic some predicted. Children with two mothers do not differ much except that they are less homophobic. However, the same is true of children raised by two men, and about 10 percent of single parents are men; these facts, along with the success of father education programs and the general rise of fathering in the 21st-century West, strongly suggest that fathers can be good primary caregivers and attachment figures. This is also suggested by experimental research with macaques, which do not display paternal care in the wild. Overall, paternal care may be sufficient but not necessary for normal development. To the extent that it complements maternal care, it may or may not offer something important that other caregivers do not. But in a world where breast-feeding is advisable but not indispensable, fathers can be very good caregivers.

The evolutionary psychology of stepfathering

Harald A. Euler

Peter Gray recently (2013) modified the famous Dobzhansky quote into “Nothing in psychology makes sense except in the light of evolution”. The big picture of the evolution is best outlined by Mel Konner whose monumental and comprehensive book (2010) on childhood dwarfs evolutionary psychologists from Continental Europe, where even in standard treatises of developmental psychology life history theory plays at best a peripheral role.

In evolutionary approaches to human behavior, stepfathering entered the focus with the findings of Daly and Wilson (e.g. 1980, 1988) which came to be known as the Cinderella effect (1998): stepchildren had a greatly increased risk of maltreatment, especially lethal beatings. As stepchildren counted all children who lived with at least one stepparent, which most often is a stepfather. The Cinderella effect has not remained undisputed (Gelles & Harrop, 1991; Malkin & Lamb, 1994; Temrin et al., 2000), but after examining various potential confounds (reporting bias; socio-economic factors; differences in age, family size, and father's personality) and scrutinizing the work of the critics, Daly and Wilson (2001) maintained that the effect remained unshaken.

Daly and Wilson's data relied on police records of criminal offenses liable to public prosecution. The question thus arises whether differences between biological fathers and stepfathers can be shown below the line of criminal offenses, for example, in the amount of paternal investment and involvement. Daly & Wilson (1988) suggested such differences on the basis of evolutionary considerations.

Human paternal investment is highly facultative. If it pays reproductively, it appears and is maintained. More than women, men are faced with a trade-off between two life efforts: parental effort or mating effort. To what extent is the stepfather a father or the mother's boy-friend? Various anthropological data show (e.g. Anderson et al., 1999; Anderson, 2000) that at least for some men, or for many men to some extent, raising stepchildren serves as a form of mating effort. If a man who chooses or marries a woman with a child, the child comes as a cost for the stepfather which detracts from resources to invest in joint biological children with the mother. The mother is equally related to all her children, but the stepfather is biologically unrelated to the stepchild.

Biological relatedness has been repeatedly shown to be correlated with emotional closeness and a host of behavioral variables. Are, therefore, stepfathers—all else equal—less involved fathers than biological fathers? A study by Hofferth and Anderson (2003), a sociologist and an evolutionary anthropologist, comes to a Solomonic conclusion: “Biology”¹ is less important, if “sociological” and selection factors are considered, but not negligible. Recently, however, Hofferth et al. (2013) reported that the surface differences between stepfather and biological fathers with respect to warmth and engagement in activities disappeared if differences between the various family constellation factors were controlled. Both these studies were from participants who volunteered in a large-scale national study. Hofferth et al. (2013) reported stepfathers to be less likely to provide information than biological fathers. Therefore, sampling differences might be one cause for the discrepancies with the findings of Daly and Wilson, who relied on police records.

To the extent that paternal behavior is functionally mating effort, the mate value of the mother, relative to the mate value of the stepfather, becomes a determining factor. Mate value can be defined and operationalized as mate replaceability. A man who considers himself having hit the jackpot with his partner might be a more involved stepfather than a man with other available and better mating opportunities.

Opting for mating effort instead of paternal effort does not depend on ecological conditions, but can for humans also be assumed to depend on the attitude towards extra-pair copulations. In evolutionary psychology, this attitude is assessed by the socio-sexuality index (sot).

Assumedly, one of the proximate causes of the inclination towards mating effort can be assumed to be found in longer-term physiology, particularly testosterone level.

In sum, these are some of the main evolutionary aspects and determining of the behavior of stepfathers. The determining factors mentioned, and a few more, are investigated in the CENOF study as much as a limited and selected sample (Austrian volunteers) can provide sound conclusions.

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¹ Scare quotes added because the level of causation (Konner, 2010, pp. 27–29) would be more appropriate than the obsolete juxtaposition of biology vs sociology

SESSION 2

INSIGHTS FROM OTHER SPECIES

PAPERS BY

Charles Snowden and Tim Clutton-Brock

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Adam Boyette

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Michael E. Lamb

TIME

May 8, 8.30 – 10.30

In this session, we continue asking about the contexts in which contemporary human fatherhood can best be understood, and shift attention to the possible lessons we can learn in this regard by examining the behavior of male (and female) parents in other species. Clutton-Brock focuses on the variability among species in this regard, drawing attention to factors associated with (perhaps accounting for?) that variability, while Snowden focuses on species in which fathers are actively and intensively involved in care of the offspring, often at considerable cost to themselves. Taken together, these findings may help elucidate and explain variations in paternal behavior among humans, and the session will be devoted to an examination and evaluation of those possible lessons for students of contemporary human behavior.

Eight propositions about fathers derived from nonhuman primates

Charles Snowden

1. Fathers add value and may be essential for survival.

Fathers (especially in biparental and cooperatively breeding species) may make significant contributions to female reproductive success and to their own success (Lukas & Clutton-Brock, 2013). In cooperatively breeding tamarins there is a direct relationship between number of helpers, including fathers and infant survival (Garber et al, 1984; Savage et al, 1996) and even in captivity, we found that infants survival reached 100% only with five caregivers (Snowdon, 1996). In detailed studies of caregiving in tamarins, fathers carried infants more than other helpers (Zahed et al. 2010). In human societies few studies show that fathers are essential for survival (Sear & Mace, 2008), but human fathers may contribute to offspring reproductive success in many other ways.

2. Fatherhood is costly.

Taking care of infants is costly. Two studies of captive tamarins have shown that fathers can lose up to 10% of their body weight during the period of infant carrying (Sanchez et al, 1999; Achenbach & Snowdon, 2002). If this much weight is lost in captivity where travel costs are minimal and food abundant, then the potential costs for wild animals must be much greater.

3. Pairbonds with mothers are important and maintained by nonconceptive sex and grooming.

Even though behavioral ecology theorizes different reproductive interests in males and females these differences in sexual strategy may lead to a confluence of interests. Prior to investing in reproduction, females need some confidence that the father will remain to help take care of infants after they are born and fathers need to be relatively confident that the infants they care for at great cost will be their own. Thus both intrasexual and intersexual selection should apply to both sexes when making mate choice decisions and indeed, as do women, female tamarins develop secondary sex characteristics at puberty (scent glands, French et al., 1984) and scents can function both to indicate ovulation (Ziegler et al., 1993) and to suppress ovulation in daughters (Savage et al 1988, Barrett et al, 1990).

A strong bond between parents is important in serving the reproductive interests of both sexes and their offspring. Tamarins defend their relationship from intruders of both sexes (French & Snowdon, 1980), show distress when separated from their mate for as little as 30 minutes and respond to reunion with increased sociosexual behavior (Porter, 1994). The presence of a mate or even its vocalizations can mitigate the cortisol stress response to separation (Smith & French, 1997; Ruckstalis &

French, 2005). Pairs copulate throughout the cycle suggesting concealed ovulation (Porter & Snowdon 1997). However, pairs also increase sociosexual behavior when presented with odors of a novel ovulating female versus the same female at other times in her cycle suggesting ovulation is concealed only to scientists and not to tamarins (Ziegler et al., 1993).

We have hypothesized that the function of mating throughout the cycle and increasing sociosexual behavior when relationships are perturbed is a mechanism for maintaining and restoring relationships. We have found a direct correlation between oxytocin and vasopressin levels and amounts of sociosexual behavior in both males and females (Snowdon et al, 2010; Snowdon & Ziegler in review) with variation in male oxytocin being explained best by the amount of sex they have and in females by the amount of huddling and grooming they receive. Experimental manipulations of oxytocin also increase pair bonding behavior in marmosets (Smith et al, 2010). Marmosets can be sexually conditioned to arbitrary odors suggesting that these monkeys may learn cues relating to specific partners through copulation and grooming. Close pairbonds are maintained by nonconceptive sex and grooming.

4. Practice makes perfect.

Tamarins (and to a lesser degree marmosets) require the experience of caring for infants prior to becoming reproductively active. Several studies have found very low rates of infant survival if one or both parents had no prior experience caring for infants (Epple, 1978, Tardif et al 1984). Although helpers are often related to the infants they care for and benefit through kinship, they may also benefit from learning infant care skills though helping others. Even with extensive experience as helpers first time parents have higher infant mortality than with subsequent births and first-time fathers are not responsive to the cues of pregnancy (next section)

5. Fathers show couvade.

Fathers increase body weight during their mate's pregnancy (Ziegler et al. 2006) and also undergo significant neurohormonal changes that parallel changes in pregnant females with increased levels of testosterone, estradiol, and prolactin (Ziegler & Snowdon 2000; Ziegler et al 2004). Experienced fathers have higher basal prolactin levels than first-time fathers (Ziegler et al., 1996) and demonstrate hormonal changes earlier in pregnancy than first-time fathers (Ziegler et al. 2004). The fetal adrenal becomes active at mid-pregnancy and mothers show an increased excretion of glucocorticoids in urine. Within a week of this increase experienced fathers begin to show increased steroid and peptide hormones (Ziegler et al 2004), suggesting that urinary glucocorticoids may be a signal to males of their mate's pregnancy.

6. Fatherhood changes a male's brain and behavior.

Being father changes males' brains and behavior. Paternal experience induces brain neuroplasticity as reflected in an increase in the density of dendritic spines on pyramidal neurons in the prefrontal cortex as it does in mothers (Kozorovitskiy et al., 2006). There is also an increase in brain receptors for arginine vasopressin, a hormone that has been shown to play a role in male parental care in other species. As parents become less and less involved in parental care with infant independence, these changes disappear.

Fathers are more responsive to infant vocal cues, more readily crossing a bridge to retrieve a crying infant (or even reacting to vocal playback of infant cries (Zahed et al, 2008). Fatherhood leads to greater fidelity. Whereas paired and single males show a rapid increase in testosterone and erections to odors of unfamiliar ovulating females, fathers were unresponsive (Ziegler et al, 1995). Fathers, but not other males, react to the odors of infants by decreasing serum levels of testosterone within 20 minutes of smelling (Prudom et al 2008). Fathers respond most to odors of their own infants and are indifferent to odors of other infants (Ziegler et al., 2011) but this occurs only when the infants are dependent on paternal care.

7. Mothers must allow father to become involved.

One of the reasons for reproductive failure is that first-time mothers are less likely to allow others to care for offspring than experienced mothers (Savage et al, 1996). In order for fathers to become involved with infant care, mothers must permit fathers to become active with infants.

8. Male primates (regardless of breeding system) have the potential for paternal care.

Even males in species where paternal care is rarely, if ever, seen in the wild have the capacity to become good fathers. This is evident through observations of adoptions in wild primates (Boesch et al, 2010; Thierry & Anderson, 1986) and through captive studies where male macaques spontaneously care for infants when tested in the absence of females but avoid infants when females are present (e.g. Gibber and Goy, 1985). Perhaps all primate males have the capacity for paternal care but are unable to express it.

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Some insights into the evolution of parental care

Tim Clutton-Brock

Parental care evolves where benefits to propagule survival exceed costs to fecundity. In heterothermic animals, both uniparental male care and uniparental female care are common but biparental care is unusual. Among homeotherms, females typically invest more than males and biparental care is again unusual except among birds, where it is the norm. Members of whichever sex is most heavily involved in care usually have higher potential rates of reproduction (PRR) and compete more intensely for access to the opposite sex. In many species, they have also developed elaborate weaponry and ornamentation which contributes to their breeding success.

In most mammals, females are the principal care-giver though males are commonly involved in care in species that live in stable, mixed sex groups. In several polygynous species, males play an active role in guarding their offspring against predators and against infanticidal attacks by other males but seldom contribute to carrying or feeding young.

Among mammals, extensive carrying or feeding of young by males is largely confined to socially monogamous species, where males often contribute as much (or, in some cases, more) than females. Though it has been suggested that selection for male care leads to the evolution of monogamy, recent comparative studies show that the evolution of male care typically occurs after (or at the same time as) the evolution of monogamy, suggesting that monogamy facilitates the evolution of male care, not vice versa.

Individual differences in male care are often negatively associated with variation in testosterone and positively with variation in prolactin, cortisol, oxytocin and vasopressin. The causal mechanisms involved are not yet clear.

Variation in maternal phenotype or physiology can have long lasting effects on the development and fitness of offspring ('maternal effects'). Contrasts in paternal care may have similar effects though these have not been as extensively explored. Whether either maternal or paternal effects are usually adaptive and increase the fitness of offspring or their parents or whether they are non-adaptive by-products of resource availability or other environmental conditions is not yet clear.

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SESSION 3

INSIGHTS FROM OTHER CULTURES

PAPERS BY

Barry Hewlett and Carol Worthman

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Matt Stevenson and Quiong Yu

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Michael E. Lamb

TIME

May 8, 11.00 – 13.00

In this session, we continue our search to understand the factors that explain variability in the behaviour and involvement of paternal involvement by examining the factors that are correlated with, and may perhaps explain, variability among contemporary cultures. The focus in this session will largely be on non-industrial cultures that have been the focus of considerable research, conducted by anthropologists in particular, who have in the last several decades paid increasing amounts of attention to maternal and allo-maternal behaviour. Questions about fatherhood in these cultures are important in their own right and are also central to scholarly efforts to understand better the factors that may account for variability among industrial or, in Hewlett's terms, the WEIRD cultures from which all the conference participants hail.

A cross-cultural view of fathers' roles in child development

Barry Hewlett

As a cultural anthropologist I am interested in explaining how culture influences human behavior. Culture can be defined as socially transmitted and acquired information shared by a group. Culture is not limited to ethnic groups (French culture) or particular domains (ideologies or kinship systems). Culture is both in our heads (cultural models, ideas, values) and “out there” (cultural institutions, social structures of gender or economic inequality). From my perspective, human behavior, father-child relations in this case, can best be understood as products of interactions between culture, biology (e.g., evolved psychology, genetic predispositions), and natural and social ecologies. Much of the “ecology” that humans try to adapt to is culturally constructed (e.g., most elements in Bronfenbrenner’s concentric circles).

My own research on fathers focused primarily on testing whether vigorous play was the way by which infants became attached to fathers among the Aka hunter-gatherers in central Africa. I was also interested in examining whether evidence existed among the Aka for other Western conceptions of fathers’ roles: do fathers extrinsically value and mothers intrinsically value parenting (LaRossa and LaRossa 1981), is father’s playful style of interaction the first means by which infants develop social competence or “bridges to the outside world” (Ely et al. 1995), and are fathers roles in the family instrumental and mothers roles expressive (Parsons and Bales 1955)? Behavioral data indicated that Aka infants were attached to their fathers but fathers did not engage in more vigorous play with their infants than did mothers, and qualitative data and observations questioned the other Western conceptions of fathers’ roles in the family (Hewlett 1991).

This brief talk utilizes cross-cultural studies and personal experiences to explore and critique other Western conceptions of fathers’ roles. Living and growing up in a WEIRD culture (Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, Democratic), but spending much of my adult life conducting research with small-scale hunting-gathering and farming cultures, has provided me a rich appreciation of how culture influences what we see, what we measure, and what we leave out in our research projects.

1. How important is father’s direct care and nurturance by comparison to the other forms of fathers’ investment?

Aka hunter-gatherers have one of the highest recorded rates of paternal involvement while fathers among their farming neighbors, the Ngandu, and several other farming and agro-pastoral peoples in central Africa rarely participate in any form of direct care or warmth and responsiveness with infants, but children in both groups appear to be more self-assured, secure, and socially competent than children of comparable ages in the US and other developed countries. Why?

Also, fathers in many parts of the developing world (and for most of human history) fathers contribute to their children in several different and significant ways that are rare or limited in WEIRD cultures—they are primary contributors to the transmission of essential skills and knowledge, protectors and deterrents from aggressive others or predators, and contributors to the child’s social networks (children often live in the neighborhoods of extended family). Father’s role as protectors was likely a prime factor that lead to or had a major role in the evolution of cooperation in humans (Sterelny 2010). Fathers’ roles as educators have been highly underestimated, both in human history and today. Children acquire the culture necessary to adapt to the world from those who are around them. Mothers and fathers are often around during the day and cosleep with children at night. Cross-cultural studies indicate that when adults or children in many rural or small-scale cultures are asked about how they learned particular skills or knowledge, they consistently mention mothers and fathers, not grandmothers, aunts or older brothers and sisters. Children often learn basic skills and knowledge in infancy and early childhood from parents (often know most subsistence skills by age 10 and names of plants and animals by age 5). In middle childhood and adolescence they often learn from non-parental adults. The “other” adults are parents of other children so they continue to contribute substantially to social learning of children. Children learn from many “others” but early experiences and regular proximity of parents contribute to the important role parents play in children’s acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Early definitions of father’s role emphasized the importance of their economic contributions, while contemporary definitions (Lamb et al. 1985; Pleck 2010) emphasize father involvement, which is operationalized as the amount of positive engagement time with children, warmth and responsiveness, and responsibility for children’s activities.

Research agendas and policy issues emerge from issues and concerns in WEIRD cultures. The academic literature and policies and programs in the US and other developed nations (e.g., Japan, China) often focus on or promote the increase in father's care and nurturance of infants and young children. The focus on father involvement also exists in cross-cultural research, in part, because Western researchers conduct the studies. My own ethnographic research evaluated the impact of direct care on attachment and many cross-cultural studies try to understand the factors that contribute to high versus low father involvement.

Cross-cultural studies have identified several factors associated with high levels of father involvement: low population density, lack of warfare and violence, lack of wealth accumulation (land, cattle), near equal contribution to the diet by males and females. Most of these factors are more common in hunter-gatherer cultures and consequently fathers in these groups generally have higher levels of involvement by comparison to fathers engaged in other modes of production. It is worthwhile to try and understand factors that contribute to higher levels of father involvement, but the studies give the impression that involvement is more desirable than other types of investment and that physical and emotional proximity are central to understanding fathers' roles. While seldom discussed in the studies themselves, the cross-cultural research demonstrates the sorts of investment trade-offs fathers face in particular environments. For instance, when fathers provide more resources (calories to diet or land) or are busy at war or defending the family compound or village from raids that they invest less time in direct care. It is also worth pointing out that several of these factors are adaptations to culturally constructed environments, such as subsistence, marriage, political, and economic systems.

Research and policy emphasis on father involvement may be particularly important in contexts where the nuclear family is isolated from extended family and husband-wife cooperation is pronounced. Research in WEIRD cultures shows that increased father involvement enhances a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Lamb 2010, Pleck 2010). The cross-cultural research indicates that higher father involvement contributes to several outcomes valued in WEIRD cultures: decreases in aggression and violence and increases in gender equality. But research with WEIRD cultures also indicates that father's occupation and financial contributions are important because they are associated with child morbidity and mortality, i.e., higher SES occupation contributes to lower child morbidity (overview in Geary 2005).

2. How important is father's role?

In her recent book Hrdy (2009: 161-2) argues that human fathering "is extremely facultative, that is, situation dependent and *expressed only under certain conditions*. This generalization holds true whether we consider provisioning or the observable intimacies between father and child ... mating with a man hardwired to help rear young, even when the young is almost certainly his, is *not a trait human mothers can realistically count on* [*italics mine*]." Fathers' roles are facultative, but how different is this from the facultative nature of human mothers' investment in infants, which Hrdy describes in several of her earlier books (Hrdy 2000, 2005)? The quote gives the impression father's investment occurs only in certain circumstances, that mothers cannot count on father's investment, and that it may not be necessary for child survival. These ideas build upon the work of Hawkes et al. (1998) who suggest that men's hunting is mating effort rather than parenting effort and that grandmothers are more important than fathers for young children's survival. I agree with the Hawkes et al. proposal that under some circumstances (e.g., among Hadza where females, including grandmothers, contribute most calories to diet) individuals other than father may be particularly important to child survival and well-being.

Like many of us, Hrdy's cultural lens colors her views of fathers. Most of her book focuses on direct care, but this quote also mentions provisioning. As mentioned above, this is a limited view of human paternal investment. But even with these limitations, data from small-scale cultures as well as WEIRD cultures indicate that father's investment can increase child survival and quality, both of which are conditions under which paternal investment are likely to occur. In many small-scale cultures an infant dies or suffers from increased morbidity if a father is not identified; sometimes the infant is killed (e.g., infanticide in some South American groups) or benignly neglected by the mother (e.g., less frequent breastfeeding) and eventually dies, or she is given to another family for care. The data mentioned in the previous section demonstrate that increases in father involvement and father provisioning in WEIRD cultures contributes to increases in child survival and social, emotional, and cognitive abilities (quality of offspring). But it is true, and maybe this is what Hrdy is trying to address, that in WEIRD settings of poverty fathers may not invest because the nation state can support, educate, and protect their children.

3. The need for a comprehensive view of father's role in child development.

Fathers around the world can and do contribute in many diverse ways and we have to be cautious with the moral authority that emerges from scientific research and policy. An evolutionary approach to parental investment may be useful because it: a) identifies many forms of investment, b) considers the trade-offs of the various forms of investment, and c) emphasizes the importance flexibility in parental investment. A limitation of this perspective is that seldom does it address the nature and power of culture. Other issues to discuss if time allows:

- a) Few studies exist on father's roles in the evening and during the night. Fathers in many cultures cosleep (from bedsharing to being on same mat) with their children for many years beyond infancy. The communication and intimacy may provide insight into cultures where fathers are not involved in care during the day.
- b) Flexibility of gender roles. A sexual division of labor exists in all cultures, but one thing we have learned from hunter-gatherers is that pronounced flexibility in gender roles enables them to adapt rapidly to variable natural and social environments.
- c) Cultural drift or culture history explains much of the variance and diversity in father investment (care, providing, education, protection).
- c) Cross-cultural research does not seem to impact Western theories or conceptions of fathers' roles. Data are used to demonstrate the diverse contexts of father-child relations, but they seldom contribute to new definitions, conceptions, or theoretical developments.

Fragile fatherhoods: Insights from other cultures

Carol M. Worthman

Paternity depends on genetics, but fatherhood is mediated through culture. As evolutionary biologists point out, difficulty in assigning paternity with full confidence lends inherent uncertainty to fatherhood. Detailed studies of subsistence and childcare in traditional societies have found that human reproduction is a cooperative multi-person (mother, father, alloparents), three-generation (children, adults, seniors) enterprise that supports high fertility and child survivorship among humans through lifetime networks of both kin-based and generalized reciprocity. (Kaplan et al., 2010) These transgenerational systems of reciprocity link production with reproduction, and are vital to welfare and survival of individuals and groups. The consistent observation that reproductive outcomes vary much more for men than women has led to the expectation that males will prioritize mating opportunities over parenting, or paternity over fatherhood. (Henrich et al., 2012)

This adaptationist view presumes individuals are free agents and underplays the cultural contingencies in men's lives that create inequalities in access to and support for fatherhood. Culture and social dynamics regulate reproductive careers through practices and norms surrounding partnering/marriage and parenting/fatherhood. Fatherhood stakes a claim on the future and on a particular social space; rules governing marriage regulate access to that space. Being a father, though variably defined across cultures, is a status tightly linked to constructions of personhood and cultural models of the life course. Attainment of fatherhood, even more than marriage, securely opens gateways to valued social resources such as kinship networks, social status, prestige, mutual obligation, and power. Systems of reciprocity produce the flow of material and social resources through households and fuel circles of domesticity in which children are nurtured. Definitions of and access to fatherhood define relations of men to these circles of domesticity and related resource flows that support material, social, and psychological well being.

Thus, fatherhood commonly appears to be good for men, as is marriage. In addition to the aforementioned benefits, there also are physical and behavioral health advantages. In virtually every culture and setting where it has been tracked, young unmarried men exhibit increased rates of risk-taking behaviors inimical to health and survival in the short or longer term. Indeed, wherever the sexes are treated equally, mortality of males exceeds that of females as nearly all ages. Marriage, and particularly birth of a child, tends to "settle" men down (Brown et al., 2009) to responsibilities and expectations of mature manhood that include putting many such behaviors aside (Hill & Hurtado, 1996; Waite & Gallagher, 2000). As other papers in this conference will review, recent neuroendocrine studies (e.g., Gettler, Rilling) show that fatherhood, and particularly involved fatherhood, tempers levels of physiologically "expensive" androgens and stress hormones while stimulating affiliative oxytocin and central reward centers.

Given such benefits, fatherhood may be eagerly sought by men, but cultural factors can make it difficult to win or sustain. Social controls over access to a reproductive partner (which we call marriage but may take many forms) often are tied to criteria for fatherhood, in terms of access to material and social resources, skills, personal qualities, social connections and status, health, or other valued social goods. Particularly where resources can be accumulated and controlled, societies become stratified and so does opportunity for marriage and fatherhood, squeezing numbers of men outside the domestic circle. Although polygyny was widely permitted in societies recorded by the ethnographic record (85%), a comparative analysis of 145 egalitarian forager societies found that the modal percentage of polygynous marriages was 0–4%. (Binford 2001 cited in (Kaplan, et al., 2010) By contrast, socially stratified, subordinate men in economically inequitable societies may be shunted from the breeding populations by many routes (homicide, warfare, accident, ineligibility for marriage, outbidding by other men,

asceticism, incarceration) that preclude or restrict fatherhood. (Dickemann, 1979) Practices of son preference and selective early mortality of females also can severely limit availability of marriageable women and result in large proportions of unmarried men. Marriage/fatherhood squeezes are not only known among historic and traditional populations (Boone, 1988) but also pressing issues today, perhaps most vividly exemplified in the projection that over a quarter of Chinese men will remain unmarried in their late thirties by 2030, thanks to skewed birth ratios from China's one-child policy (120 boys to 100 girls).

If access and pathways to fatherhood vary widely, so do cultural expectations of their behavior as dads. An extensive anthropological literature documents broad diversity in the degree and nature of fathers' involvements in their children's lives. Fathers may or may not reside or sleep with the child and its mother. (Worthman, 1996) The effects of father absence have been widely explored and range from effects on gender attitudes and treatment of women among sons (Herdt, 1989) to rates of maturation and mating strategies among daughters. (Belsky et al., 1991) Overall, degree of father-child intimacy varies widely among societies, often reflecting not only gendered roles but also gendered socialization of affect and relationships. The proportion of direct child care that fathers contribute is variable but generally small (<1–15.8%, 9 societies), which is unsurprising because new fathers have little previous experience of childcare for siblings (1.1–14% vs. 10.2–33% proportion total direct care from brothers vs. sisters) (Kramer, 2010). Rather, fathers in most recorded societies play key productive roles that sustain dependent children. Cultivation of social capital by fathers also is a common contribution that fathers make to the welfare and life chances of their children. Lastly, note that men who are not biological fathers not uncommonly play what we would consider to be a father's roles. Mother's brother very commonly stands in at rites of passage, marriage negotiations, or supply of critical resources. Famously, children of some South American foraging societies commonly have multiple fathers based on distinct culturally recognized claims to paternity that distributes child support and draws men in to the circle of domesticity and reciprocity.

To conclude, fatherhood holds a central place in human life history and reproduction that is variably configured yet widely valued. Nevertheless, cultural controls, social inequalities, and risky environments make attainment of parenthood and results from reproductive careers less certain and more variable for men than for women. Global shifts in demographics and economic opportunity that challenge construction of meaningful lives for men also threaten fatherhood and thus, the fabric of human reproduction. (Worthman, 2011) As such, configurations of, pathways to and supports for fatherhood require our urgent attention.

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SESSION 4

BIOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF FATHERS' BEHAVIOR

PAPERS BY

Peter Gray and Ulrike Ehlert

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Tanya Broesch

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Lieselotte Ahnert

TIME

May 8, 14.30 – 16.30

Using a background of ultimate as well as proximate evolutionary perspectives, this session will raise our awareness about the relationship between paternal involvement and mating effort, and how those relations are linked to reproductive indicators in men. Although fatherhood on its own might reflect inconsistent links to male sex hormones (most prominent of which is testosterone), we are going to learn about the valid connections between the conditions of fatherhood and fatherhood biology. Here we will inquire the paternal relationship to the child's mother, to the child itself, to the entire family, and to specific personality traits of the father. Eventually, we will aim to examine those links from theoretical perspectives as well as current empirical evidences.

Biological correlates of fathers' behavior

Peter B. Gray

Involved fathering is a derived feature of human life history, with most scenarios suggesting it arose in mosaic fashion within the past two million years of hominin evolution. Some broad patterns in the evolution of human paternal behavior suggest that it has entailed a reduction in mating effort in concert with elements of both indirect (e.g., provisioning and protection) and direct (e.g., attending to) paternal care. Most work suggests that the evolutionary formation of long-term bonds was a necessary but insufficient precursor to paternal care.

Across societies, from small-scale foraging societies to large nations today, human paternal behavior is sensitive to a variety of factors. The importance of many of these is consistent with evolutionary theory and wider phylogenetic considerations, while other considerations are specific to humans. Human paternal behavior, for example, is contingent upon economic factors (e.g., subsistence mode, nature of work), the importance of male-male coalitions (which can trade off against involvement in intimate family life, particularly when males are involved in war), the nature of the relationship with a sociosexual partner, paternity and paternity certainty.

Since 2000, a growing body of research has addressed proximate mechanisms associated with fathers' behavior. A few brain imaging studies reveal neural activity when fathers of young children look at photographs or hear infant cries, helping shed light on the attentional and motivational aspects of human fathering. Endocrine research has shown that men involved in family relationships, including involved fathering, tend to have lower testosterone levels. Other studies have investigated links between prolactin, oxytocin and cortisol with fathering. This body of research also has an international scope to it, helping shed light on fathering in variable cultural contexts.

To illustrate the correlates of paternal behavior with a particular case study, I present preliminary analyses from research on Jamaican fathers. These are data drawing upon a 2011 sample of approximately 3400 fathers of newborns, and a 2013 sample of approximately 375 fathers of 18–24-month old children. The family context of paternal care is quite variable, ranging from visiting to common law to marital unions. Several of fathers' outcomes are predicted by the quality of their relationship with a child's mother. I also present 2013 data testing whether paternal outcomes differ between step- and biological fathers, and predictors of men's testosterone levels in that same sample.

Psychobiology of fatherhood: What we know and what we don't

Ulrike Ehlert

Recent studies show that fatherhood can affect levels of male sex hormones, most prominently testosterone (T) and stress hormones such as cortisol (C). We and other research groups have found significant decreases of T prior to birth and shortly afterwards. We have also examined individual stress responses due to fatherhood by measuring C, e.g. in fathers joining their partner during child delivery or postpartum during baby exposure. Few attempts have been made to study additional hormonal reactions to fatherhood, for instance by assessing prolactin, oxytocin, and autonomous stress parameters (heart rate and blood pressure). These studies have taken place under different conditions and have produced inconsistent results.

The state-of-the-art in psychobiological fatherhood research can be summarized as follows: Most studies deal with expectant or first-time fathers of babies and/or toddlers. Besides baseline assessments of hormonal profiles in fathers, a number of hormonal implications of specific behavioral test situations, such as exposure to auditory, visual, and olfactory cues from newborn infants, holding the baby, father-child play, comparisons between days spent with or without child, have been examined. Pharmacological provocation procedures are based mainly on the intranasal application of oxytocin. Prospective longitudinal studies on T or C changes from transition to fatherhood up to fatherhood of pubescent children are missing. Nearly nothing is known about the physiological and behavioral mechanisms of adaption in fathers of adolescent children or first-time fathers at higher age (50+). Finally, psychobiological phenomena in stepfathers or social (non-biological) fathers remain to be investigated.

Interestingly, research on paternal hormonal patterns rarely includes psychological variables, such as personality traits (e.g., sensation seeking, attachment), socio-economic variables, or the quality of relationship between father and children's mother. While some physiological assessment procedures used in fatherhood research are well established (heart-rate, blood pressure, salivary T, salivary C), the informational value of other assessment procedures is still poorly understood. For instance, we know quite little about the representation of brain active oxytocin levels from peripheral levels of oxytocin identified on the basis of saliva, plasma or urine samples. Finally, there is hardly any research on the impact of progesterone or estrogen secretion on paternal behavior and/or romantic relationship quality.

To conclude, future research should, as a priority, address psychobiological phenomena associated with:

- fatherhood at an advanced age
- non-biological fatherhood
- risk- and resilience concerning paternal health in fathers with older children

In addition, research should aim at broader characterization of relevant sex-, bonding-, and stress-hormones.

As a first step towards better understanding of complex interactions between psychological and hormonal parameters, a bio-behavioral synchrony model will be provided. This model includes sex-, stress-, and bonding hormones. Such a model will help us to better understand the effects of fatherhood on hormones, and vice versa.



SESSION 5

THE DEMOGRAPHY OF CONTEMPORARY FATHERHOOD

PAPERS BY

Paul Amato and Sanford Braver

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Laurenz Meier and Lucy Blake

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Michael E. Lamb

TIME

May 8, 17.00 – 19.00

In this session, we look closely at variations in the behaviour of fathers in contemporary industrial countries, with attention paid to the men who live with their children as well as those who do not co-reside most of the time. What personal, socioeconomic, and cultural factors are associated with variations in the extent to which men invest in and maintain relationships with their partners and children over time? How have these patterns changed over time, what do these changes suggest about the future, and what might they tell us about the factors affecting what fathers do and how they might also influence their children's development?

The demography of contemporary fatherhood

Paul R. Amato

Half of a century ago, “good” fathers were expected to provide financially for their families and provide role models of hard work and achievement for their children. Since then, however, most wives and mothers have entered the labor force, the marriage rate has declined, divorce has become more common, more children are born outside of marriage, and the supply of well-paying jobs for men (especially men without university degrees) has evaporated. Due to these changes, the role of fathers has become less clear.

Placing fatherhood in a demographic perspective is complicated by two factors. First, most demographic research is based on women, for the simple reason that women tend to report demographic information more accurately than do men. In particular, men tend to underreport children, especially children from previous relationships. Second, although data sets are available for the United States and most European societies, these data sources vary in quality, and few have been “harmonized” to allow comparable results and conclusions.

Despite these challenges, my presentation will focus on well-established demographic trends in the U.S. with respect to men and fatherhood, including recent analyses of the American Community Survey. I then will turn to European sources of data, drawing on published research, statistics compiled by the European Commission (Eurostats), and new data analyses. Similar trends appear to be occurring in the United States and in many European countries, although these trends are more pronounced in the U.S.

1. The percentage of men who become fathers has declined.
2. Men are having children at older ages and are having fewer children.
3. Due to divorce and nonmarital births, fatherhood is practiced less often in marriage, and fathers and children are increasingly likely to live apart from one another.
4. Nonresident fathers, single resident fathers, and stepfathers are more common. Shared parenting also is increasing.
5. Men are increasingly likely to exhibit multiple partner fertility, that is, have children with more than one mother.
6. The economic wellbeing of men without university education has declined.
7. Fatherhood is becoming increasingly differentiated by social class, with well-educated fathers tending to live with their children in stable homes and poorly-educated fathers tending to live apart from their children in the context of multiple partner fertility.

Do fathers matter?

Sanford Braver

I would like to focus my talk on the “silly” question of whether or not fathers matter? Of course fathers matter for procreation. But after a human child is born, do fathers make much difference? Perhaps the lack of any intensive research attention to fathering in the last half century (except perhaps for the last decade) is because of the implicit—or even correct—idea that fathers don’t in fact count for much, that the heavy lifting is all done by mothers. Perhaps that’s why research purportedly about “parenting” almost always in the end ends up being about “mothering”.

Of the various possible meanings of the word “matter”, I’d like to focus on the perceptions of children that they (the children) matter to their parents. By this I mean do the children feel they are *noticed*, are an *object of concern*, and are *important*, and that their existence and needs *register* on their parents? I’ll present findings that show that this sense that they matter can be measured in children and that children have rather firm ideas about this. And I’ll point out that children can and do distinguish between how much they matter to their mother versus their father. Then we’ll turn the question around: does how much the children feel they matter to their fathers matter (or make any difference) to the children?

I will present some data about this, primarily derived from a longitudinal study of about 400 families with 7th graders in AZ and CA. The “mattering” scale we devised (based on earlier work by Marshall, 2001; Marshall, 2004; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), had the following 7 (strongly agree to strongly disagree) items, and had excellent psychometric properties:

1. My (target parent) really cares about me.
2. I believe I really matter to my (target parent).
3. I think my (target parent) cares about other people more than me.
4. I’m not that important to my (target parent).
5. There are a lot of things in my (target parent)’s life that matter more to him/her than I do.
6. I know my (target parent) loves me.
7. I am one of the most important things in the world to my (target parent).

In one study we showed that how the children responded to these items did indeed relate highly to the children's well-being, as measured by standardized psychological scales. In another, we distinguished "types" of fathers: resident fathers in intact families, step-fathers, and non-resident fathers in step-father families. We found that, while the mean mattering to mothers score is a bit higher than that of the mattering to resident father in intact families score, it was a great deal higher than the mattering to step-fathers scale or to the scale for mattering to non-resident father in step-families. But here was the most interesting thing: despite that finding, how much they mattered to their fathers in intact families correlated more highly with their well-being outcomes than how much they thought they mattered to their mothers. It appears that in this respect, fathers actually *do* matter, even somewhat more than mothers do.

A final study looked for differences among ethnic groups; specifically, half of our sample was Mexican American, the other half Euro-Anglo. We found that the mattering to fathers score was higher for Euro-Anglos than for the Mexican American sample. We explored potential reasons why this might be, with our eventual conclusion being that Mexican-American fathers were simply less likely to behave in ways that solidly convey that their child mattered to them. Among these behaviors were: "doing things to show you that he loves you"; "not ignoring or forgetting about you"; "telling you he loves you".

A different data set and set of findings deals with the question of whether non-resident fathers matter in a different way. Do they visit or keep contact with their children? Much of the older literature, for example, Furstenburg's (1983) work, said too many simply disappeared. However, a number of features of those datasets lead to the suspicion that they overstate the case. In our study, we explored the influence of some of these features on paternal visitation after dissolution and found quite striking differences. Among the most important was whether the two households were in the same locale (which we defined as within 60 miles, about an hour's drive away). When they were, between 67 and 83% of fathers continue to see their children at least weekly three years after the divorce.

SESSION 6

NEGOTIATING PARENTHOOD IN MODERN FAMILIES

PAPERS BY

Petra Klumb, Katja Nowacki and Carolyn Cowan

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Eva Telzer and Maria Wängqvist

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Lieselotte Ahnert

TIME

May 9, 8.30 – 10.30

This session will be dealing with a great variety of patterns of shared parenting. This is where fatherhood is shaped by conflicts of interest and negotiations between the parents in concert with other significant persons from the inner and outer family environment. Noteworthy are also spill-over effects from parents' work conditions. Concerns about parenthood that might be shadowed by declining marital satisfaction and unresolved conflicts, specifically during the early times of child rearing, will lead us to discuss the risks as well as protective factors for parenthood. Analyses on the distinctive patterns of fatherhood in broken-home, low-income, working and middle-class families are important to understand why a focus on the family system is effective to explore fatherhood.

Parenthood in modern families

Petra L. Klumb

In comparison to older father cohorts, one can discern a recent increase in fathers who are present and involved in family life in central Europe (e.g., Nave-Herz, 2004). These “new” fathers want to be actively involved in child care and have in common with their spouses the ideal of shared parenting (BMFSF, 2001). Still, there are discrepancies regarding attitude and behavior for both mothers and fathers.

Generally, father engagement has been shown to be a function of facilitating and hindering conditions in different domains of which the work domain is very influential. Prolonged and intensified work demands can be observed in many industrialized societies since the nineteen-nineties (Klumb & Gemmiti, 2011). Raised workload conflicts with temporal obligations in the family and may also lead to increased strain and, hence, both time- and strain-based work-family conflict. Moreover, work demands may be more or less compatible with sensitive parenting, entailing behavior-based conflict.

Simultaneously raised expectations of fathers themselves, their spouses, and their larger environment with regard to active parenting and providing children ideal starting positions for their lives may increase the experience of conflicts. Our research has shown, however, that fathers perceive their contributions to family work as more highly appreciated than do mothers (Klumb, Hoppmann, & Staats, 2006b). At the same time, their spouse's concrete contributions to household work was more important for their relationship satisfaction than receiving appreciation for their own contributions. This may be seen as an indicator of the continuing negotiations characteristic of contemporary households.

At the societal level, parenting-support policies have been developed to incite mothers and also fathers to take leave from the workplace, but there are enormous differences across countries regarding these policies (and within countries regarding their utilization). In some European countries such as Switzerland, no financial support for parental leaves is known, in other countries such as Austria and Germany, there are longer traditions of supporting parents up to three years.

Complementary to these support policies, there are resources in the family and at the workplace that play a role with regard to parent-child relationships. Our research has shown that exerting control strategies can reduce the effect of high quantitative work demands on family goal progress (Hoppmann & Klumb, 2012), but only up to a certain point. Additionally, intimacy and support from a partner can buffer the negative effect of work stressors (Ditzen, Hoppmann, & Klumb, 2008). These buffering processes seem important because psychological and physiological strain, particularly irritation, spill over into the private sphere and cross over to other family members (Klumb, Hoppmann, & Staats, 2006a; Klumb, Völkle, & Siegler, in prep.). While reciprocation of negative behaviors seems to depend e.g., upon characteristics of attachment to family members, the resulting aggression and hostility has generally been shown to interfere with the development of positive family relationships.

Particularly in the area of beneficial workplace factors, there is a need for more evidence to fully understand the underlying processes (this is the focus of CENOF project II). A well-investigated factor is social support through supervisors and coworkers that can reduce exposure to and perception of work stressors as well as buffer reactivity to stressors (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999) and boost energy that may be used for child-related activities after work. A related but less investigated concept is the work resource “appreciation” through supervisors, colleagues, and clients and its effects on family processes and outcomes. Likewise, not enough evidence exists on the effects of positive emotions at work such as pride that can help people previously under stress to recover faster to their physiological baseline (Fredrickson et al., 2000) and is likely to spill over into the private domain. Finally, the association between behaviors that are required at work and those performed in the father-child relationship has not received sufficient attention in previous research, it may therefore be a target of future research to investigate the effects of specific work behaviors that have been shown to be relevant for professional success on (proximal and distal) family outcomes. These associations may be dependent on interindividual differences in specific types of protective factors.

Couples group interventions: Impact on fathers and the co-parenting couple

Carolyn Pape Cowan

Given that there are slow but systematic declines in the quality and satisfaction of the couple relationship during the child-rearing years, I briefly describe 5 randomized clinical trials of a *couples group intervention* in 3 populations: (i) working-class and middle-class couples making the transition to parenthood or (ii) having a first child make the transition to school, and (iii) low-income families with at least one child from birth to age 11.

Changes in fathers and mothers during and following the transition to parenthood are experienced in 5 family domains that constitute risk or protective factors for the well-being or distress of fathers, mothers, and children. These are the focus of our couples group intervention:

- each parent's sense of self and symptoms of mental health as an individual
- relationship quality in each parent's family of origin
- the quality of each parent's relationship with the child
- stresses and social supports from individuals and institutions outside the family
- the quality of relationship between the co-parents (including division of family labor, co-parenting style, and satisfaction with the couple relationship)

Correlational studies have shown that when parents experience high unresolved conflict—either of the angry, aggressive type or the withdrawn, frozen, silent type—their children are more likely to have difficulties in their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

These facts led us to develop a preventive intervention in the form of a couples group led by clinically trained male-female co-leaders. In 3 longitudinal studies using Randomized clinical trials, we have been evaluating groups that use a curriculum focusing on the 5 risk/protective aspects of family life listed above.

Becoming a Family. In a study of 96 middle-class and working-class couples, participants were followed up at regular intervals but not offered a couples group intervention – while others, randomly chosen, met weekly in small couples groups for 24 weeks from mid-pregnancy until 3 months postpartum. Follow-ups 5 years later when the children had made the transition to kindergarten revealed that participation in the couples groups prevented the normative slide in marital satisfaction, and marital quality was related to children's emotional, social, and academic success.

Schoolchildren and their Families. In a study of 100 working-class and middle-class couples, participants met in couples groups for 16 weeks before their children made the transition to elementary school. A low-dose control condition (one meeting a year for the couple with a staff couple in the pre-k, kindergarten, and 1st grade year) was contrasted with two variations of a 16-week ongoing couples group, in which, *in the open-ended less structured part of each week*, the co-leaders focused more on issues in the parent-child relationship OR on issues in the couple/co-parenting relationship; the curriculum for the rest of each weekly meeting was identical in both ongoing groups.

Follow-ups 1, 2, 4, and 10 years later indicated that:

- Ongoing group parents' marital satisfaction remained stable
- Groups *with the parenting emphasis* showed positive effects on mothers' structuring and fathers' warmth as observed in assessments at baseline, kindergarten, and 1st grade, but no effects on observed marital quality.
- Groups *with the couple relationship emphasis* showed positive effects on parenting and positive effects on couple relationship quality.

Supporting Father Involvement. Three trials of the couples group approach were conducted with low-income co-parents in 5 counties who were married (66%), cohabiting (29%), or living separately but co-parenting a young child (5%). Trial 1: 279 couples were assigned to (i) a single information session, (ii) a 16-week fathers only group, or (iii) a 16-week couples group. Re-assessed 18 months after baseline, results revealed that:

- Couples in the one-session control meeting remained stable or got worse over 18 months (relationship satisfaction declined; children's problem behaviors increased)
- In the fathers only groups, fathers became more involved in caring for their child, but both parents' satisfaction with their couple relationship declined.
- In the couples group, fathers were more involved in caring for their child, parenting stress declined for both parents, and satisfaction with their couple relationship remained stable.

A second trial of 239 couples group participants produced very similar results. In Trials 1 and 2, couples who had recently been referred to the Child Welfare System because of domestic violence or child abuse were referred elsewhere. In Trial 3, half of the 153 couples were referred by their Child Welfare worker and all couples were randomly assigned to an immediate or 6-months-delay couples group. Compared to the parents in the delayed condition, those in the immediate group showed an increase in father involvement and household income, and a decline in violent problem-solving, parenting stress, and a measure of child abuse potential.

Conclusions. The normative decline in couple relationship quality and satisfaction over the early childrearing years is a cause for concern, since it affects the parents and the children (Phil Cowan will discuss the effects on the children). A couples group intervention shows promise of maintaining couple relationship quality in both middle- and low-income families. The couples focus has a more positive impact on family relationships than the parenting focus. While interventions to promote fathers' involvement with their children have generally recruited men to participate in groups with male leaders, we have shown that a couples group approach may be more effective in promoting father involvement, fostering more effective co-parenting, and enhancing the relationship between the parents.

Parenthood in at-risk families: What roles do fathers play?

Katja Nowacki

What kind of challenges do families face who are so called "at risk", meeting some of the criteria like low educational level, low income, psychological problems, early and/or single parenthood and parents where at least one of the partners has broken-home experiences including maltreatment? With the focus especially on the fathers the following questions might matter most:

- How is the behavior of fathers with broken-home experiences in partnership and parenthood?
- What kind of problems do the parents and especially the fathers face?
- What kind of help for the families should be implemented and in what ways should the fathers be especially addressed?

The family background of the fathers influences their way of investing into their own new family and might lead to a transmission of their own experiences (Cowan & Cowan, 1992; van IJzendoorn, 1992). So fathers, who experienced difficult family situations in their childhood, where the probability of maltreatment and a lack of sufficient attachment figures are higher than on average, might transfer these experiences involuntarily into their new relationships. Based on these assumptions the following aspects should be discussed in more detail:

Early adverse experiences, Attachment patterns, and Psychopathology. Coming from families with diverse problems might lead to insecure inner working models of attachment (Bretherton, 2008), especially when confronted with insufficient early care and a lack of exclusive attachment figures (Dozier & Rutter, 2008). Especially when being placed in out-of-home care like foster families or group homes the percentage of non-secure attachment representations is especially high in the group placed in non-family structured placements (Nowacki &

Schölmerich, 2010). The resulting inner working models might influence the way of being a partner and/or a parent. First the correlation with insecure and disorganized behavior of their children is very high (van IJzendoorn, 1995) resulting in a higher risk of social and emotional problems because of a lack of buffering factors (Rutter, 1990) of the fathers as well as their children. So the risk of psychopathology is higher, especially when taking trauma related disorders directly into account (Hüther, Korittko, Wolfrum & Besser, 2010). The other effects especially on unstable partnerships are discussed below.

Transmission of violent behavior. Having experiences of domestic violence might lead to violent behavior of the fathers towards their children and partner. As Truscott (1992) found out there is an association between violent behavior in adolescence and experienced paternal violence. So the risk of a transmission of violent behavior has to be considered in intervention programs having to build up trust with the fathers (see strategies below) to be able to address the problem.

Peer-groups. Peers become important during the adolescence in terms of role models and social support (Oerter & Dreher, 2002). But they can also be problematic in terms of deviant and delinquent behavior (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999). Terri Moffitt (1993) distinguishes between permanent and juvenile delinquency stressing the danger for the second group to be drawn into deviant behavior by the first group. So in terms of the fathers from high-risk groups peers might be in some cases more of a risk than a protective figure.

Low education level. In Germany, coming from low-income families with low education correlates highly with an educational underachievement (Baumert & Schümer, 2001, 2002), which hasn't changed in 2013 (PISA study, not yet published). This is partly due to the German school system which differentiates early between students who are educated in various forms of secondary schools. Also the whole day school education is not so common as in other countries, so the influence and encouragement of the families is an important factor on school achievement, including the ability of paying for extra special school tutoring. Low education level of course increases the risk of low paid jobs along with self-esteem and other psychological problems.

Unstable relationships. Stable parental relationships are important for the development of a child (Lamb, 2010). But there are several aspects increasing the likelihood of instable relationships between the parents of at-risk families. One is that there might be an increased wish for early parenthood, especially when being confronted with an insufficient offer of attachment figures in their own childhood, resulting in early pregnancy and parenthood. Adding to this, especially when coming from less desirable social and economic conditions, including family instability and low social control, there is a tendency to have early sexual contacts (Hofferth & Goldscheider, 2010). The problem directly connected is, that young parents tend to have unstable

partnership relationships (Manning, Smock, & Majumdar, 2004). Another essential aspect is that the inner working model of attachment (Bretherton, 2008) is highly influenced by childhood experiences and now intermediates the way the partners interact. Assuming that having experienced unstable relationships in their childhood, the fathers might enter their partnership with insecure or unresolved attachment representations which might lead to more partnership problems.

Lack of parental abilities. Because of their own insufficient experiences with caregivers, parents might lack sensitive and supportive behavior towards their own children. Also traumatizing experiences might lead to dissociative parental behavior in the context of childcare also resulting in a lack of sufficient child care. This is already an aspect addressed in many intervention programs (e.g. Dozier et al., 2009), but the question is how fathers and especially at-risk fathers can get more involved.

Ressources. Looking at the above mentioned problems arising from difficult family experiences including maltreatment, one could indeed see these fathers simply as a threat for their spouses and children. Brown et al. (2008) state, that fathers are often not considered relevant or reduced to being a threat for their families taken away as a relevant resource. Also Skårstad Storhaug & Øien (2012) found out, that fathers in the context of high-risk families are often reduced to being potential aggressors (“fathers as a threat”). But protective factors and motivation have to be taken into account. For example Tamis-LeMonda and McFadden (2010) argue, that the negative experiences in their families of origin might lead fathers being determined of trying to do the opposite of their parent’s behavior. This is an important motivation and has to be enhanced since it might be an essential foundation for an intervention program. Also one can assume that no parent deliberately becomes a bad parent but in most cases wants the best for his or her child. But what can be done to help involving fathers from at-risk families more in their roles as a parent?

Approaches of Intervention. Approaches of intervention should be looked upon on the level of practical implementation and the contents of programs themselves but also on the level of policy which will be mentioned briefly here.

There are already a number of programs for parents trying to enhance parental abilities and lowering their psychological stress (Tschöpe-Scheffler, 2005). There are two main problems that have to be addressed. First, mostly the mothers are still seen and feel responsible for the upbringing of their children. So the percentage of female participants is very high in the courses. Second, only a few programs specialize on families with low educational backgrounds. One of the exceptions is the “Eltern-AG” (www.eltern-ag.de) in Germany, which focusses on low-income families and families with lower educational backgrounds. But even in this program the percentage of fathers participating is around 3.5% (Böhm & Schneider, 2012). So the question is how these fathers can be motivated to participate in these kinds of programs?

One important thing that has to be changed is the role of men as fathers in the general society so that it is seen as “normal” and “manly” for men being involved in child upbringing. In the last decades, that has changed already but still a lot has to be done (paternal leave policy etc.). Then one should think about incentives the fathers might get for participating in the intervention programs. This can be monetary or other benefits around work/education or housing for example. Also the way the fathers are approached should be a pronounced appreciating of them participating and a non-judgemental knowledge and understanding of their life situations. Also important persons, apart from the mother or partner, of the fathers should be able to join an intervention group, too. This might be a friend or grandparent as well as a sibling of the father.

Contents of a program should be on the one hand easily understood and close to the daily life these fathers experience with elements easily implemented in family life. Also topics like the couple situation are vital, too. As mentioned above, marital satisfaction or at least an ongoing friendship between the biological parents predicts a lot of the involvement of the fathers with their children, too. Shouldn’t couple counselling be a part of an intervention program aiming to increase the involvement of the biological fathers with their children? As in some parenting programs like SAFE® (undated) traumatic experiences of the parents should be addressed in therapeutic offers. That might be quite difficult especially with fathers with low educational backgrounds. So their fundamental needs and negative self-image (Grawe, 1995) have to be addressed directly by the people dealing with the fathers in the context of child care.

On the level of policy one has to think of providing money for special programs and even incentive systems. There is the new child care law in Germany from 2012 (Bundeskinderschutzgesetz), which states the necessity of early help in families. This includes programs of specialized midwives visiting every family with a new born child. The effectiveness on child care should be considered and alternative programs taken into account as well.

On the level of prevention, there should be consideration of the school system in general in Germany and of special support for children in need in schools. Also the understanding of trauma and learning should be more spread in the education of teachers. So that children from low-income families with low educational levels have a better chance of succeeding in school.

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SESSION 7

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

PAPERS BY

Julius Kuhl, Phil Cowan and Susan Golombok

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Katherine Twamley

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Lieselotte Ahnert

TIME

May 9, 11.00 – 13.00

This session is based on three very interesting but quite controversial proposals. Kuhl's research aims to understand and examine the special contribution by fathers, specifically on child personality development, and Cowan's insights into paternal interventions might serve well to elucidate further developmental consequences of paternal involvement, however, with a focus on the nature of the couple relationship. And interestingly, Golombok's studies did not reveal any differences in child development with regards to the varying couple constellations, for example, in contexts where the child was raised by single mothers vs. lesbian or gay couples. The provocative results might help to draw our attention to the theoretical and/or methodological approaches, which produced these findings. Thus, the session will serve the purpose of initiating controversial perspectives of research on fatherhood, as well as elucidate pathways for future empirical research on fatherhood.

Couples group interventions: Impact on children

Philip A. Cowan

The major justification for interventions to bolster father involvement and couple relationships is that strengthening family relationships will have benefits for the children. To date, only a handful of studies that have evaluated interventions for fathers or couples actually assess their impact on children. Carolyn Cowan has described a number of clinical trials of a couples group intervention that we have created over the last 30 years and described their effects on the parents. In this paper I examine the impact of these interventions on the children. I then discuss correlational data in the form of path models to illustrate our theory of how these interventions produce benefits for the children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

In the first two studies, children's outcomes were assessed with teachers' ratings of the target child as well as ratings of his or her classmates. The teachers did not know which child was in our study. Academic outcomes were assessed by members of our research team with individually administered achievement tests.

Becoming a Family. Although the couples group intervention beginning in mid-pregnancy and ending about 3 months postpartum prevented the normative downward slide in marital satisfaction over a 5-year period, we could find no *direct* effects of the intervention on teachers' ratings of children's externalizing or internalizing behavior or their academic achievement test scores. This intervention ended almost 5 years before the children's classroom behavior was assessed.

Schoolchildren and their Families. In this study, the intervention ended just before the children entered school, and assessments of the child were made in kindergarten, 1st grade, 4th grade, and 9th grade (high school).

- The 16-week groups with a parenting emphasis showed positive effects on parenting behavior, on the children's sense of well-being (assessed in a puppet interview), and on internalizing behavior in 1st grade.
- The groups with a couple relationship emphasis showed positive effects on both marital and parenting behavior and positive effects on the children's externalizing behavior and academic achievement in 1st grade.
- A 10-year follow-up showed that the children were still showing positive effects of their parents' participation in the interventions on their hyperactivity and aggression 10 years later during their transition to high school.

Supporting Father Involvement (low-income families).

- Couples who participated in the one-time meeting (the information control condition) described their children as showing increased aggression, hyperactivity, shy/withdrawn behavior, and symptoms of depression 18 months after baseline, one year after the intervention ended.
- Couples in the fathers and couples groups reported either no change in their children's problem behaviors or a significant reduction in aggressive behavior over the same period of time, depending on which trial we focused on.

The results reported in both Carolyn Cowan's paper and this one indicate that a couples group intervention not only maintains the quality of the couple's relationship over time, but also leads to increased quantity and quality of fathers' involvement with their children. Our results support the rarely-tested hypothesis that this intervention approach has positive effects on children's behavior—as observed by parents and teachers.

Path models that we have published include the following multimeasure latent variables representing each of the five domains of risk/protective factors associated with children's development: (1) Adult Attachment (perceptions of family of origin relationships), (2) fathers' and mothers' mental health symptoms, (3) life stressors, (4) couple relationship conflict and non-collaborative co-parenting, (5) parenting style. Child outcome measures include (kindergarten or 1st grade teachers' ratings of externalizing and internalizing behavior, and tested academic achievement). These models, run separately for fathers and mothers, show that when parents have secure working models of attachment with their parents, they are less likely to have symptoms of anxiety and depression, perceived life stress, and conflict as a couple, and more likely to have collaborative co-parenting, positive, authoritative individual parenting styles in the pre-kindergarten period, and their children are more likely to show more adaptive behavior at school one and two years later.

The models explain from 32 to 57% of the variance in the children's behavior. Fathers' and mothers' models show similar overall contributions to predicting variance in children's behaviors, but their contribution depends in part on which outcome we consider. Measures obtained from self-reports and observations of mothers are more strongly related to depressive behavior in daughters, while fathers' measures are more strongly related to aggressive behaviors in both sons and daughters.

The path models in themselves do not establish whether the linkages represent causal links. However, we have shown in the intervention studies that participation in a couples group (a safe environment in which to reflect on their relationships) causes positive changes in couple relationship quality and both father-child and mother-child relationship quality. The impact on children is both direct (observation of high conflict or

collaborative problem-solving by adults) and indirect, through the strengthening of positive couple patterns that provide a safe and secure environment for children to develop internal and interpersonal emotion-regulation strategies.

On the basis of 4 decades of research we conclude that there has been a missing link in attempts to explain variations in fathers' involvement with their children and variations in children's adaptive behavior. We cannot simply focus on mothers' parenting when father's involvement and parenting play a strong role in children's adaptation. Nor can we focus simply on parent-child relationships. The nature of the relationship *between the parents*, regardless of marital status, plays an important role in their children's development. Finally, further exploration of the power of father and couple interventions to affect children is urgently needed if the results of research are to affect policy decisions about the allocation of funds to strengthen families.

Impact on personality development (self competencies)

Julius Kuhl

What does personality contribute to cognitive and emotional development? In what ways does parents' personality have an impact on child development? Do individual differences in infants' personality have an impact on later development? Empirical research related to those questions has examined the predictive value of individual differences variables such as temperament or basic personality factors like extraversion, neuroticism etc. on child development. This research has yielded an abundance of findings suggesting an impact of individual differences (either parents' personality or early child dispositions) on child development. However, prediction does not necessarily imply explanation. The latter requires analyzing interactions among relevant cognitive, emotional, motivational and self-regulatory processes both in children and their caretakers. How do such processes shape child development? Our research on adult personality functions has resulted in an assessment system yielding up to 100 personality functions which can be measured by self-report or by non-reflective ("objective") methods (Kuhl, Kazén & Koole, 2006). We used this level of differentiation in our search for distinguishing early predictors of developing self-competencies. Guided by this research and a theory of personality (i. e., PSI theory: Kuhl, 2000, 2001) describing the interaction of personality systems relevant for self-regulatory competence (e. g., enactment of intentions) and self-growth as a function of self-regulated emotional change we could identify two basic self-competencies whose early development seems to be relevant for many personality functioning at later stages.

There is a growing body of research describing the self as a functional system whereby the regulation of emotions belongs to important process components of emotional regulation in both adults and children. The self as a functional system has been investigated, widely (e.g. Molnar-Szakacs, Uddin & Jacobini, 2005; zusf. Kuhl, 2001; Schore, 2003), suggesting it to be an implicit experiential network that integrates individually relevant experiences in concert with autonomic responses and somatic markers into a coherent representation of the personal identity. It is the theory of Personality Systems Interaction (PSI theory: Kuhl, 2000, 2001) which explains why emotion regulation does not only have a direct impact on well-being and psychological health, but also affects interactions among personality systems. That is, for example, maintaining (or restoring) positive affect facilitates interactions between two behaviorally relevant systems: intention memory and behavior control (determining volitional efficiency, e. g., the enactment of difficult or unpleasant intentions as opposed to procrastination), whereas coping with negative affect modulates interactions between pain perception and the self. Those interactions are necessary to integrate adverse experience into a network of individual experiences (i.e. the self) which in turn promotes learning processes based on error-detection and painful experience. Consequently, self-regulation of emotion, especially the ability to upregulate positive affect, is a crucial condition for self-motivation (Kuhl, 2000, 2001). Demand-related challenges, such as work load, difficult tasks and uncompleted intentions, dampen positive affect. However, self-motivation restores the positive affect in order to facilitate the enactment of difficult or unpleasant intentions.

Examples from our research will be presented relating parental self-competencies and socialization styles to their children's emotion regulation, volitional efficiency and other self-competencies affecting the ability-performance relationship in primary school. In addition, findings will be discussed which suggest that the moderating roles of the over- or underavailability of fathers (as compared to mothers) can have distinct effects for males versus females which vary as a function of the type of personality measure (i.e., which personality styles, emotional, motivational or self-regulatory dispositions are concerned).

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Men as fathers: Impact on child development

Susan Golombok

This presentation will examine what can be learned from research on non-traditional family forms about the role of fathers in child development. In addressing the question “How important are fathers?” it is first necessary to establish which aspects of child development we are considering – cognitive development, social development, moral development, and so on. For the purpose of this presentation I shall focus on the two aspects of child development that are most often discussed in relation to the influence of fathers, and that are most often considered to be adversely affected by father-absence: children’s psychological adjustment and children’s gender development.

Three non-traditional family forms will be discussed: (i) single mother families (ii) lesbian mother families, and (iii) gay father families.

Single mother families. Single mother families tell us about the outcomes for children of father-absence. If children raised by single mothers do not differ from children raised in families where their father is present then this would suggest that fathers do not play an important role in the development of their children. The large body of research on the psychological adjustment of children in single mother families shows that children are more at risk for psychological problems than are their counterparts from father-present homes. This is true of single mother families formed by divorce as well as single mother families headed by unmarried single mothers. However, this difference is largely accounted for by the factors that often accompany single-parenthood such as economic hardship, maternal depression and lack of social support as well as factors that pre-date the transition to a single parent home such as parental conflict. When these factors are controlled for, differences in psychological adjustment between children with and without fathers largely disappear. In terms of gender development, there is no evidence to suggest that children who live apart from their fathers differ from father-present children in terms of gender identity or gender-role behaviour. Recent studies of a new kind of single mother family—single mothers by choice—enable the effects of father absence to be examined in families where children do not experience the risk factors that commonly accompany single motherhood. However, for these children, their father is an anonymous sperm donor whose identity they may never know. Investigations of these new single mother families will shed light on the importance for children of knowing the identity of their father even if they do not have a relationship with him.

Lesbian mother families. Lesbian mother families provide an even better paradigm for examining the outcome of father absence on child development as it is possible to control for number of parents in the family; comparisons can be conducted between

two-parent lesbian mother families and two-parent heterosexual families or between single lesbian mother families and families headed by single heterosexual mothers. There are now a number of studies that have compared donor-conceived children born to lesbian couples, i.e. where there has been no father present from birth, and donor-conceived children born to heterosexual couples. These studies have consistently shown that children who are raised by lesbian mothers from the start do not differ from children raised by mothers and fathers in terms of either psychological adjustment or gender development. Instead, children’s psychological adjustment in lesbian mother families is associated with quality of parenting and stigmatisation by the outside world.

Gay father families. Gay father families are interesting because they shed light on what happens to children raised by two male parents in the absence of a mother from the family home. If children raised by gay fathers do not differ from children raised in families where their mother is present then this would suggest that fathers can play as important a role in the development of their children as do mothers. Although few studies yet exist on the development of children in gay father families, the available findings show no evidence of elevated levels of emotional or behavioural problems, or of atypical gender development. Again, children’s psychological adjustment appears to be associated with quality of parenting rather than the presence of two fathers in the home.

Conclusions. Research on single mother, lesbian mother, and gay father families suggest that neither father absence nor the presence of two fathers *per se* has an important influence on children’s psychological adjustment. Instead, processes within the family, and the wider social environment in which children grow up, appear to be more influential. Moreover, the finding that children from two-parent families generally show more positive psychological adjustment than those from single parent families irrespective of the sexual orientation of the parents suggests that it is the presence of a second parent rather than the gender of that parent that matters more. Interestingly, however, many donor-conceived children born to single mothers have been found to search for their biological father, indicating that he is an important figure in their lives. It is not possible at present to establish whether it is his role as a father, or as a genetically related parent, that is important to donor-conceived children. In terms of gender development, it appears that fathers (and mothers) have little influence on the gender development of their children. Instead, it is now generally agreed that prenatal factors such as prenatal androgens interact with complex social and cognitive factors in children’s acquisition of sex-typed behaviour.

So are fathers important for child development? It seems that fathers are not essential but have a positive influence on psychological adjustment to the extent that they have a committed and involved relationship with their children. In contrast, fathers who have dysfunctional relationships with their children may have a negative effect. With respect to gender development, fathers do not appear to influence the sex-typed behaviour of their daughters or sons.

SESSION 8

FAMILY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

PAPERS BY

Margaret O'Brien and Philip Hwang

DISCUSSION INITIATED BY

Kate Ellis-Davies

DISCUSSION MODERATED BY

Lieselotte Ahnert

TIME

May 9, 15.00 – 17.00

The session will highlight the cultural constructs of fatherhood obligations and rights, and how social politics have been providing several opportunities to stimulate paternal involvement. While examining fatherhood obligations and rights in Great Britain and Sweden, we will improve our understanding about why some socio-political actions have become effective supporters of fatherhood whereas others have not. Those cross-cultural comparisons might also help to compare variations within a society by focusing on less privileged fathers who are in the low education bracket and experience insecure employment conditions (intra-cultural comparisons).

Perspectives on fatherhood in the context of the society

Margaret O'Brien

"In a rapidly changing world, we will continue witnessing the growing momentum and recognition of the importance of men for gender equality, reconciling work-family life and impacting the future of their children" UN (2011)

1. Context. Fathers' active participation in family life will likely be one of the most important social developments of the 21st century. However, the recent economic down-turn may not provide an optimal environment to sustain father-friendly policies and the legacy of father as economic provider-in-chief remains a strong cultural force in many countries. My presentation will focus mainly on fathers and work-family policies.

The Nordic countries have been a global touchstone for policy makers and academics concerned with encouraging greater participation of fathers in the care of children and gender equality (Haas & Hwang, 2013). They have led the way in devising work-family policy innovation and attempts to emulate (taking a "Nordic turn") are happening across Europe (Erler, 2009) and in other regions of the world (Chin, et al, 2011). The picture has become complex with even conservative and market-oriented governments and countries attempting to address work-family reconciliation (Thévenon, 2011). Demographic considerations in particular fertility decline have stimulated consideration of the role of fathers in work-family measures.

2. Definitions, classifications & typologies. In terms of classic father involvement constructs, I conceptualize father-friendly work policies such as paternity leave as providing a macro/distal context to potentiate paternal *availability* and *interaction* with infants (Lamb, et al 1987). If fathers also receive some income replacement (through tax contribution, government or corporate support) the measure can promote transmission of paternal *financial capital* (Pleck, 2007). I will review empirical indicators used to classify and create father-friendly work policies. There is a growing body of scholarship suggesting that governments and civil societies promote and regulate cultural constructions of fatherhood, fatherhood obligations, and fatherhood rights, creating "*fatherhood regimes*" as a context for human action in families and in the workplace (e.g. Hobson, 2002; Gregory & Milner, 2008; Hook & Wolfe, 2012).

3. Policy experimentation. There has been considerable policy experimentation to increase paternal use of leave: penalty for not using; use it or family lose it; non-transferable branded daddy time periods; incentives to use e.g. bonus payments. What works? How can societies make room for less privileged fathers with insecure conditions of employment?

4. Experience and impact of leaving taking. Historically, there has been a substantial debate about the likely efficacy of various public policy proposals meant to stimulate paternal involvement in the care and well-being of children. The logic has been that giving fathers the opportunity to spend more time at home through leave after childbirth or reduced working hours should result in them being more involved in the care of their children. There is still surprisingly little empirical research on what parents 'do' and the different kinds of father involvement during parental leave and as such understanding the mechanisms by which parental leave may operate to promote child well-being/ couple sharing are still unclear. More qualitative family based research is needed in different cultural contexts. Other issues include:

Implementation experiences and dilemmas—the "black-box" of diverse arrangements. Apparently similar entitlements do not necessarily mean similar levels of exposure to the entitlement. Secondary data analysis often equates provision with usage.

Methodological dilemmas: selection effects—country and individual level. Confounding factors—e.g. public investment in health and child care services for children and parents. It can be difficult to disentangle the effect of parental leave policies from for instance total GDP devoted to child welfare.

Summary of what we know (update of O'Brien & Moss, 2010)

- (i) Experiences of fathers taking leave;
- (ii) Behavioural associations with length of leave and generosity;
- (iii) Benefits for children, fathers, mothers.

5. Importance of family policies as signaling societal values.

Family policies transmit significant implicit and explicit messages about what is valued within particular social systems e.g. what constitutes a good quality of life for infants; the appropriate family and work roles of men and women through the life course; expectations of "family-friendly" and "family-unfriendly" workplaces. In many parts of the world dispossessed working parents are highly dependent on the vagaries of local elders, employers and markets with few citizen entitlements and formal safety nets. The role of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other bodies promoting compliance with a basic legal framework for work-family balance, a social protection floor and children's needs provide a vital signalling function in these contexts (Heymann & Earle, 2010).

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Family policy and practices in Scandinavia

C. Philip Hwang

In my introductory statement on family policies and practices, I will briefly mention: (1) some of the family policies affecting fathers in Scandinavia; and (2) the impact of family policy on fathers' participation in childcare in Scandinavia.

Before the 1960s, Scandinavian fathers were unlikely to be involved in childcare activities, because of norms that emphasized their breadwinning role. Since the 1960s, this has changed dramatically in that normative fatherhood has expanded to include men's involvement in everyday childcare activities. From an international perspective, Scandinavian nations are unique in that governments have pioneered the idea that active fatherhood can and should be shaped by family policy. Policy has been driven by a desire to realize the dual-earner/dual-care-giver family model, which is seen as helping to establish a firm economic foundation for families, women's economic independence, and better relations between fathers and children. Most policies targeted to fathers provide them the opportunity to be released from work to stay home to care for young children, with wage compensation. Family policies also address the need for fathers and children to maintain relations following parental separation.

Why have the Scandinavian nations been so active in this regard? First, each nation is a social welfare state where the well-being of children has high political priority. Second, grass-roots activists and social scientists have been particularly influential in convincing policymakers and the public that children's well-being is enhanced by policies that promote children having a secure economic base with two working parents and a secure emotional base with two parents who are actively involved in and responsible for their care. Third, family policies that support the dual-earner/dual-caregiver model have been enacted by Parliaments that involve more representation of women than in most of the rest of the world.

The dual-earner/dual-caregiver model, however, has only been partially realized in Scandinavia. Gendered division of labor persists, with fathers more responsible for paid work and breadwinning and mothers more responsible for childcare. Women's roles have changed more than men's roles; paid work is no longer optional for women, but shared involvement in childcare is still optional for men. While mothers as well as fathers are active in the paid labor force, aided by a strong government-subsidized high-quality system of early childcare education, there is a tendency for mothers to work fewer work hours than fathers and to contribute substantially less to family income. Fathers as well as mothers are active in childcare (including physical caregiving not just social interaction), but there is a tendency for mothers to still do the majority of childcare and retain responsibility over this important area of social life. At least one family policy, the "cash for care" caregiver's allowance, has the potential to reinforce this gender-based division of labor, by offering a non-taxed wage to parents (typically women) who stay home to care for children once paid parental leave is over.

Of the three Scandinavian countries, Sweden has set the boldest course toward a society where fathers participate in childcare at the same level as mothers, with family policies such as the gender equality bonus and forceful attempts through the social insurance office to change the cultural discourse about men's role in society. Expectations for Swedish fathers to share childcare are higher than in Denmark, Norway, or most other countries. However, in some respects Swedish fathers' actual participation in childcare is similar to men's elsewhere. They are not likely to share responsibility for childcare equally with mothers, they are less likely to engage in physical caregiving than play, and they are unlikely to reduce work hours significantly to promote work-family integration.

In speaking about fatherhood policies in Nordic countries, Lammi-Taskula (2006, p. 95) concluded that "Policies promoting father's care of young children appear to be more significant on the symbolic level of gender relations than on the level of actual division of labor between mothers and fathers." Policies to promote active fatherhood would seem likely to be more effective when they are structured in ways that make it difficult for couples to fall back into the traditional division of labor. One example of a policy already in place is the "father's quota" that offers families additional paid parental leave only if the father takes it, which is now up to two to three months in Sweden and Norway and is taken by the vast majority of fathers. Additional paternal leave that could not be transferred to mothers could be offered. Another policy that could be enacted that might encourage fathers to be more active in childcare would be wage compensation for reduced work hours, that would enable fathers to continue to contribute to family income while becoming more available to be with children.

A final word of caution, as has been noted by Duvander (2008, p. 3), "it is important to stress that the same family policy implemented in another country, with a different history, culture and population composition, is likely to lead to other consequences. Nevertheless, only by looking at the success and failure of other countries' attempts to attain the aspired goals, can policy makers make informed choices about the future".

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