

FATHERS' AND MOTHERS' CHILDCARE IDEAS
AND PATERNAL CHILDCARE PARTICIPATION

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The relationship between fathers' and mothers' gender-role ideas and fathers' level of participation in general housework has been well documented. Data from a study in 1998 were used to explore specific aspects of this relationship. In particular, fathers' and mothers' gender-role ideas with regard to childcare (childcare ideas) was examined to see whether these ideas influence paternal childcare participation. Specifically, what impact they had on performance of childcare tasks and the time fathers spent with their children. The responses of 38 couples (76 individuals) were analyzed. No statistically significant relationships were found between the variables. The distribution of the data suggests that even though most fathers claimed to have nontraditional childcare ideas, most mothers still performed the great majority of childcare tasks.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE ROLE OF FATHER AND FATHER

INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDCARE

The cultural idea of what the father-role should be influences how a father perceives and attempts to enact the role of father (Lamb, 1987). Today, fathers are bombarded with conflicting cultural ideas (i.e. negative versus positive stereotypes) with regard to how they should view the father role and subsequently, how they should model their own individual paternal behavior. Paternal socialization, like any other category of socialization, is not static. Fathers are influenced by not only their preconceived ideas of what the father role should be, but are apt to have their idea of the paternal role constantly challenged or confirmed by their day-to-day interpersonal environment. While it has been widely reported that today's fathers actually want to spend more time with their children (Lamb, 1997; Pleck, 1997) increased levels of father involvement have been slowed by structural, cultural, familial, and personal challenges. This prevents both mothers and fathers from being mutually connected and devoted to nurturing and promoting the growth of their children (Hawkins, Christiansen, Sargent, and Hill, 1993). Allen and Hawkins (1999) suggest that we need to know more about the contextual factors that may limit fathers' childcare involvement, particularly how mothers' beliefs and subsequent behaviors toward men's increased childcare involvement affect actual levels of such

involvement.

This study proposes to examine existing data gathered from parents in the hope of determining possible factors related to paternal childcare participation. A hypothesis confirmed by prior research states that there is a direct relationship between fathers' and mothers' gender-role ideas and fathers' contribution to housework in general. Additionally, previous research has suggested that mothers' gender-role ideas are more influential on fathers' contribution to housework than fathers' gender-role ideas. This study proposes to narrow the scope of this research to examine fathers' and mothers' gender-role ideas with regard to childcare (childcare ideas) in particular, and whether these ideas influence paternal childcare participation.

Previous Research on Fatherhood

Since the turn of the century, and particularly over the last three decades, the notion of what fatherhood is and involves has been a subject of interest to various scholars and social scientists (Lamb, 1997). Marsiglio, Amato, Day, and Lamb (2000) suggest that our view of the late twentieth century father may be enriched by an examination of how the social construction of the American father has varied throughout history. Historically, whatever the current, predominant cultural idea of what the father-role should be has influenced how fathers perceive and attempt to enact the role of father (Lamb, 1987). Marsiglio (1993) suggests that these cultural images of fatherhood include father *stereotypes* (what people believe fathers actually think and do) as well as *ideal images* (what people think fathers should think and do). When examining the social institution of fatherhood, the difference between culture and conduct is noteworthy in that

historical research on fathers strongly indicates that the culture of fatherhood has changed dramatically as compared to the actual conduct of fathers (LaRossa, 1988). Cultural ideas about what fatherhood involves and the resulting effect upon paternal behavior has been explained as having a close association with a society's changing social and economic structure (Dienhart, 1998). Several social, economic, and demographic historical events stand out as harbingers of the changing role of fathers. A review of the major historical periods and the fatherhood role each of these periods emphasized will follow.

The Moral Guide And Stern Disciplinarian Role

During the colonial period of American history, fathers have been classically viewed as being stern, all-powerful patriarchs who maintained unyielding and absolute control over their families (Knibiehler, 1995). The father role during this period was principally considered to be that of the moral teacher, or guide (Lamb, 1997; Marsiglio, 1995; Pleck and Pleck, 1997). A father's role toward his children was to ensure that they grew up with socially correct values, and fathers drew heavily upon the Bible as a resource for such values. The father's role subsequently expanded to that of the children's educator because children had to be literate in order to read the Bible (Lamb, 1996). Pleck (1984) states that a man during this period who provided his children with a good Christian role model and enforced their knowledge of the Scriptures (through physical intimidation when deemed necessary) was defined as a good father.

The near-absolute power that fathers held over their children (and wives) during the Colonial period may be evidenced by the child custody laws of that era. According to

Pleck and Pleck (1997):

English common law, which the American colonists inherited, gave fathers a great deal of power over their children. It gave the father an absolute right to custody, in the event of separation or a divorce. A man's children were not only his property, but also his responsibility to provide for and educate properly.

According to Greven (1977) the dominant idea of the stern, unyielding father in colonial America was principally held by the Protestant, farming majority in the North. The white Southern colonies varied somewhat from this view of Northern colonist's view of moral guidance by fatherhood. Southern white farmers of the planter class, besides sharing the head of the family, additionally adhered to a code of honor in which male children were taught to be manly and daughters were taught to be subservient and remain virginal until marriage. A southern farmer often allowed a certain degree of disobedience or disrespect from his sons and did not require the deference demanded by fathers of the Northern colonies. Two ideological groups of fathers in the Northern colonies can be distinguished, which, while differing somewhat in their patriarchal zeal, were probably more in agreement than not in their view of the proper role of the father. These two groups, the evangelicals and the moderates, both viewed the role of father as a stern patriarch. However, the evangelicals were somewhat stricter in their adherence to these principals than the moderates. In evangelical households, it was not uncommon for children to be required to ask their father for permission for even the simplest privilege such as to sit down or to put on a hat (Greven, 1977). In both of these groups of

fathers, the father was considered absolute ruler over his domain. The family home was considered a spiritual temple in miniature with the father's position placed firmly at the top of the family hierarchy as supreme authority and moral overseer (Morgan, 1966).

Common among all colonists, regardless of social class or geographical region, was the notion that mothers, who, it was believed, had a tendency to lavish their children with too much affection, were totally unsuited for the important task of providing moral guidance to their children (Ulrich, 1983). [For a discussion about how the view of the father role often differed by the racial, cultural, or class characteristics of the father, read Pleck and Pleck (1997).]

The Breadwinner Role

With the advent of the industrial revolution, fathers left the household to seek paid work, leaving the responsibility of childcare primarily to the mother (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb, 2000). However, the centralization of American industry did not immediately give rise to the wage-earning father as is so popularly held from cursory examinations of the period. As reported by Gerson:

Women were heavily represented among early industrial workers – for example, in the emerging textile industries. As the traditional weavers of cloth in the home before the advent of factories, many women initially followed the shift from production in the home to production in a communal workplace (1993 p. 9).

Economist Heidi Hartmann (1976) contends that it was only through political struggle and pacts made between labor union leaders and industry officials that women were ultimately

excluded from outside production work and relegated to the role of homemaker. Degler (1980) contends that at the turn of the 19th century, the job market expanded sharply and the rapid influx of unmarried women into occupations previously held only by men (i.e. typist, cashiers) resulted in a masculinist backlash, promoting a stern Victorian-era belief in separate spheres for men and women. Jones (1985) states that the “mother as homemaker” role was primarily a phenomena of middle class and upper middle class white women and that women of other race categories and/or social class levels often continued to work outside the home during this period out of sheer economic necessity.

Ultimately, however, the American cultural view of the predominant role of fathers in the twentieth century shifted in emphasis from moral overseer and disciplinarian to that of breadwinner (LaRossa, 1997). During the previous era, the pre-industrial family was thought to be a self-sufficient unit in society, providing, and consuming, most of the goods and services essential for the survival of its members, with no barriers between work life and family life, or work place and place of residence (Seward, 1978). Family members worked together for economic survival (Skolnick, 1986). The centralization of American industry, leading to increased urbanization, however, eventually removed most fathers from home agricultural and craft work and drew them to employment outside the home and away from their families (Lamb, 1996).

During this period of rapid social change and instability, the symbolism of the family, particularly among the white, middle class, took on a special significance (Staggenborg, 1998).

Domestic ideologies arose proclaiming stark differences of function and character between men and women. Men began to be viewed as the provider and protector of their wives and children and women began to be described in terms that emphasized moral virtue and stability (Staggenborg, 1998). Consequently, the role of fathers shifted to a more unidimensional conceptualization (breadwinner) that endured through a span covering the mid-nineteenth century through the Great Depression (Pleck, 1984).

This is not to suggest that other aspects of the father role such as moral guardianship were no longer socially valued or that breadwinning had not been valued before (Lamb, 1996). Because centralized industrialization removed paid work from the home, making family members solely dependent on the fathers' wages, the view of the father role, by economic necessity, was, predominately, that of breadwinner (Lamb, 1996).

The Sex-Model Role

Lamb (1996) suggests that powerful shifts in the American economic system such as the Great Depression, World War II., and the New Deal brought about a major conceptual expansion of the father-role to include the father as a sex-role model. The disruption of the U. S. economy, beginning in the 1930s, began to erode the popular view of fathers as breadwinners because many fathers, clearly, were no longer able to fulfill this function. With the breadwinner role still considered important, yet somewhat diminished by the early 1940s, many family professionals began to pivot their discourse about fathers away from economic support and toward a more qualitative and intimate venue with regard to the father/child relationship. In

this realm, fathers were found to be sorely lacking (Wylie, 1942 as found in Lamb, 1996).

Correspondingly, professional and popular literature began to portray fathers as occupying a dimension of inadequacy with regard to their children and suggested the need for fathers to begin being strong sex-role models – especially for their sons (Lamb, 1996).

The Nurturant Father Role

Perhaps more than any other social event of the 1970s, the Women’s Movement and its striking effect on female opportunities in the labor force brought into question previous ideas about what the proper role of the father should be (Lamb, 1997). Census data reveals that in 1950 only 12% of married women with school age children were in the labor force, but by 1997 that proportion had risen fully to two thirds (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1986, 1997). Feminist and scholarly critiques of masculinity and femininity led to the emergence of a new conceptualization of the father-role in the 1970s referred to as the “new nurturant father” (Pleck, 1981). This new type of father was expected to be highly involved in his children’s lives (LaRossa, 1988). Even beyond increased involvement, a father was expected to be a “co-parent”, sharing all childcare tasks equally with the mother as part of an egalitarian relationship (LaRossa, 1988) and sharing their time and concern equally between their sons and their daughters (Lamb, 1987).

Pleck (1997) reports that there is no general consensus among fathers about the desirability of increased paternal involvement. He also reports that the identification of breadwinning with fatherhood continues to influence and limit fathers’ involvement with childcare. This suggests that

while the particular emphasis of what fathers are expected to do may shift from one role to another over time, the previous notions of what fathers should do are not simply removed from a society's cultural memory. Consequently, this suggests that fathers may and often do find that they must wear "many hats" with regard to which particular paternal role they shall employ in any given social context involving their children. Hence, to measure father involvement, many dimensions must be considered.

Measuring Paternal Involvement

In an effort to measure paternal childcare participation not only quantitatively, but also in a qualitative sense, Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1987) constructed a theoretical model that includes three forms of paternal involvement – engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. Engagement activities are those in which the father interacts with the child on a one-on-one basis (i.e. feeding, playing with, and instructing the child). These types of activities require a high degree of interaction with and direct physical proximity to the child. Accessibility activities require less intensive interaction with or physical proximity to the child and include activities that can be carried out in the same room or otherwise within a supervisory hearing range of the child (i.e. cooking, cleaning, typing on the computer). Responsibility can be (and has been) a difficult paternal activity to define due to the fact that taking ultimate responsibility for a child's care can include many diverse activities that, while taken directly on behalf of the child, may or may not require the actual presence of the child (i.e. setting doctor appointments, taking part in babysitting arrangements, selecting the child's wardrobe).

Mother's Social Support

Social support, especially within the family, and particularly from the mother has been reported to be a critical factor in paternal involvement with childcare (Pleck, 1997). Further, Pleck (1997) states that a majority of women surveyed do not want their husbands to be more involved with childcare than they currently are. In their examination of family work, Allan and Hawkins (1999) employ the social construction of gender as a conceptual guide. Through this perspective they view fathers and mothers as embedded in social context, relations, and personal and familial processes in which they both actively participate in evoking and sustaining the meaning of gender through explicit and implicit negotiations involved in family work. Pleck (1987, as reported in Lamb, 1987 p. 9) contends that paternal involvement is associated with wives' nontraditional attitudes about gender and wives' positive beliefs about fatherhood. Additionally, some women may find themselves defending the rights and responsibilities, the boundaries of their maternal roles because the roles associated with the new idea of fatherhood includes forms of involvement formally performed by women, (mother-defined fatherhood). As mentioned earlier, Pleck (1997) reports that the majority of women surveyed do not want their husbands to be more involved with childcare than they currently are. Many men and women experience tremendous anxiety and conflict over sharing parental responsibilities, due in part to their gendered expectations and competing perceptions of family life and parental involvement in particular (Fox and Bruce, 1996). LaRossa (1997) posits that mothers may be hesitant to

share the authority of childcare responsibility for fear of eroding the authority, privilege, and status their position affords them in the family.

Mothers As Gatekeepers

Ahrons (1983) suggests that mothers act as gatekeepers with regard to father/child relationships. Allan and Hawkins (1999) describe *maternal gatekeeping* as: “..... a collection of beliefs and behaviors that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting men’s opportunities for learning and growing through caring for home and children”. Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, and Buehler (1993) state that the preferences of the residential mother toward father/child contact and her perception of his parenting skills moderate the relationship between a father’s parenting role behavior and the actual level of a father’s involvement with his children. According to Coltrane, (1996) some mothers may carry out the gatekeeping role in a managerial sense by “.....organizing, delegating, planning, scheduling, and overseeing.....” the childcare efforts fathers undertake so as to create and sustain a “manager-helper” relationship and assure continued maternal control over childcare. Greenstein (1996) contends that women with traditional gender-role ideas “do” gender by doing the majority of the tasks that they consider appropriate for women while at the same time attempting to limit husbands’ contributions toward those tasks. In his study of the gendered division of housework, Greenstein (1996) hypothesized that men with nontraditional gender-role ideas will do the most housework when they are married to women who also have

nontraditional gender-role ideas than when either the husband, or wife, or both have traditional gender-role ideas.

In view of what has been said so far, the present study may be of some usefulness in narrowing the focus of a previous research study with regard to parents' childcare ideas and paternal childcare participation.

Hypotheses To Be Tested

Hypothesis 1 The father will have higher childcare participation when the father and the mother both have nontraditional childcare ideas (belief that childcare should be equally shared between spouses) than when either the father, or mother, or both, have traditional childcare ideas (belief that childcare is primarily the responsibility of the mother).

Hypothesis 2 The father will spend more time alone with his child without maternal supervision when the father and the mother both have nontraditional childcare ideas than when either the father, or mother, or both, have traditional childcare ideas.

CHAPTER II
GATHERING DATA ON FATHERS'
PARTICIPATION

Methodology

The Research Variables

The study has fifteen dependent variables and one independent variable. The first fourteen dependent variables (fathers' childcare activities) are nominal/categorical, and are measured through the use of fourteen questions about common childcare activities (questions D7 a-n of the research instrument – see appendix). Fathers are asked, “Which of you do the following things in your family: buy food for child, prepare child’s food, feed child, change diapers, put child to bed, buy child’s clothes, wash child’s clothes, arrange child care, play with child, read books to child, teach child to do something new, comfort the child when s/he is sick or tired, take child to doctor, and get up at night?” The value for these fourteen variables is based on the responses the fathers chose from a Likert-like response scale consisting of (a) mostly mother, (b) mother more, (c) both equally, (d) father more, (e) father mostly, (f) does not apply. The first five responses, which are coded from 1 to 5 respectively, were used to determine frequency and percentage distributions and a mean score.

The fifteenth dependent variable (time father spends alone with child) is ratio and is measured with the question (question D4 of the research instrument) “About how many hours per week would you guess you are together with your child?” The value of this variable consists of the fill-in-the-blank responses the fathers gave for “how many hours per week?” Together, these fifteen dependent variables were used to determine fathers’ childcare participation level.

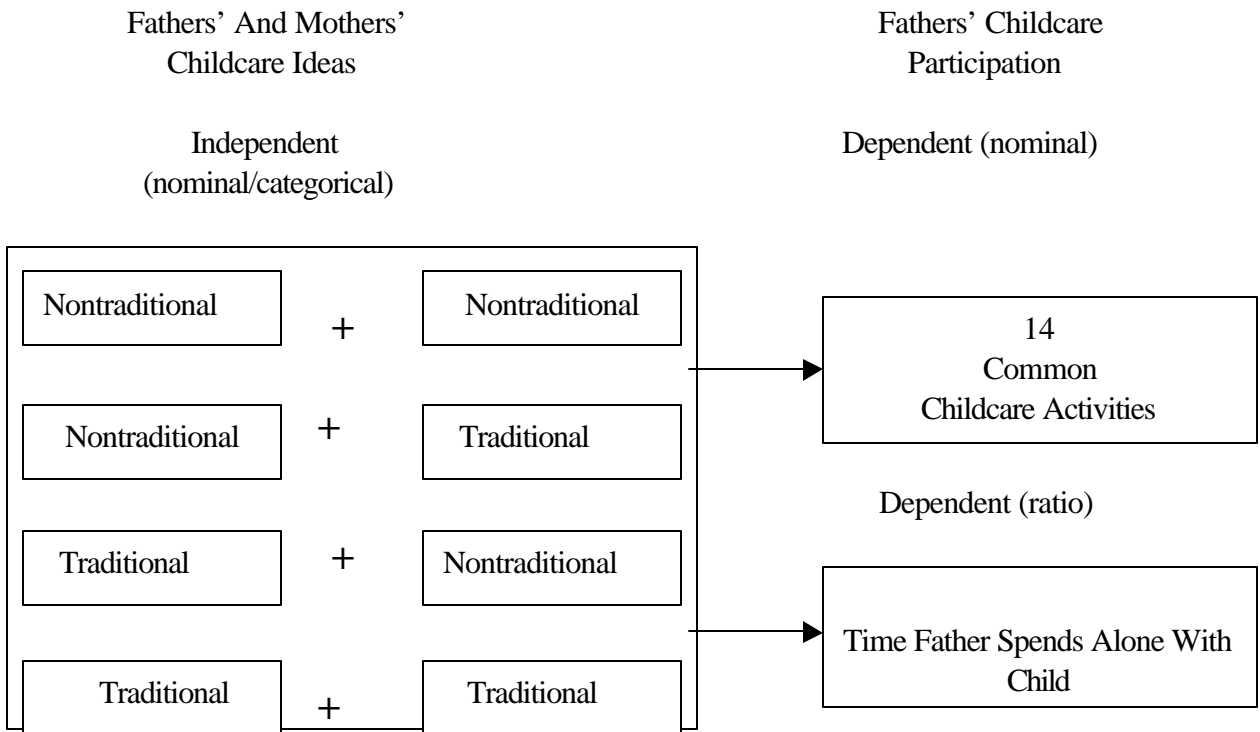
The independent variable combined two indexes to measure both fathers’ and mothers’ childcare ideas. The childcare ideas for both fathers and mothers was measured using responses to the following four questions; (questions F1-3 and F5 of the research instrument) “Do you think the following statements are right or not? (1) Women can be as interested in employment as in children, (2) A father can be as close emotionally to his child as a mother, (3) A man can become as capable as a woman at childcare if he has the chance to learn, and (4) A father ought to take parental leave in order to take care of a child?” The value for each index was based upon the responses individual fathers and mothers chose from a Likert-like scale of response options consisting of (1) Yes, absolutely, (2) Yes, somewhat, (3) No, not much, (4) No, not at all, and (5) Does not apply. The first four responses, which were coded with a value of from 1 to 4 respectively, are used to measure fathers’ and mothers’ traditional versus nontraditional childcare ideas.

In order to determine whether a father or mother holds nontraditional versus traditional childcare ideas as a whole, frequency and percentage distributions for their responses to all four

items were examined, and based upon these distributions for total scores, the values were dichotomized into nontraditional versus traditional childcare ideas. All those scoring a 6 or lower were categorized as having nontraditional childcare ideas. Once fathers and mothers were divided into these dichotomous categories with regard to childcare ideas, four combination groups of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas were constructed. They were father nontraditional/mother nontraditional, father nontraditional/mother traditional, father traditional/mother nontraditional, and father traditional/mother traditional. Each of these four groups represent a different value for the independent variable. Figure 1 presents the 16 variables that were used in the study.

Figure 1

Fathers' and Mothers' Childcare
Ideas and Fathers' Childcare
Participation



Sample and Data

Objectives of the Instrument

The research instrument used to collect the data used in this study is located in the appendix . The data to be analyzed in the study were drawn from a pretest for a larger study conducted beginning January 1, 1998 by a University of North Texas team including Rudy Ray Seward, Dale E. Yeatts, Lisa Zottarelli and Paul Ruggiere that dealt parental leave and paternal participation. Parents were asked about their work before a new baby arrived, changes in their work schedule afterwards, details on any time taken off including parental leave, reactions of self and others to taking parental leave, child care activities, shared activities and relations with partner, current job characteristics, general attitudes, and demographic characteristics. This pretest took place in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex of Texas. Most of the items on the questionnaire are either identical or similar to those used in previous surveys, including Seward, Yeatts, and Stanley-Stevens, (1996) and a Swedish study done by Linda Haas (1992).

Sample Processing

In this non-random convenience sample of parents, parents were contacted through the help of Work Friendly (formerly the North Texas Coalition on Work and Family), which is a voluntary advocacy group of professionals and employers. The employers contacted

were asked to distribute the self-administered questionnaires to their employees who had become parents of children born or adopted after January 1,

1994. Seven employers volunteered to participate, with some of them announcing the study in their personal newsletters or through email asking volunteers to pick up a questionnaire packet at a designated location or to request a packet, via email or phone, directly from the researchers. Other employers promised to distribute the questionnaire packets to all employees or clients who might be eligible for the study. Each packet contained two identical questionnaires, one was to be completed by the employee and the other by the spouse or partner (if any). Since most of the distributed questionnaires were requested by eligible parents, the response rate to the questionnaires was quite high (84%). Parents from 62 households responded to the survey.

Characteristics Of The Initial Sample

Respondents included 38 couples, twenty-one women, and three men. In total, 100 people responded. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were white, 18% were African-American, 3% were Hispanic, 2% were Native-American, 8% were Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 1% were from another minority group. The average age of the respondents was 34 years old. The majority of male and female respondents had completed a bachelor's degree. The median income of the respondents ranged from \$20,000 to \$40,000. Because of the need to combine the responses of the mothers and fathers in a couple, only data collected from the respondents that make up the 38 couples (n = 76 individuals) in the initial sample will be analyzed.

Limitations Of Study

Because the sample used in this study was not random, generalizability is not possible. Further, the limited sample size (n = 38 couples) may greatly impact the determination of significance between variables. Finally, the majority of the respondents reported high levels of education (bachelor's degree) and a moderately high income range (\$20,000-\$40,000) which makes the sample unrepresentative of less educated or lower income parents.

CHAPTER III
 FINDINGS FROM ANALYSIS OF DATA
 FROM SAMPLED MOTHERS
 AND FATHERS

Description Of Sample

The 38 fathers in the sample ranged in age from 19 – 46, (see table 1) with an average and modal age of 33. The majority of the fathers (62.2 %) were between the ages of 31 and 37 (n = 23). Of the 38 sampled fathers, only 4 (10.8 %) were below the age of 31.

Table 1: Age of Fathers

Years Of Age	Percent
19 – 30	10.8
31 – 37	62.2
38 – 46	27.0

n = 37

The majority of the fathers in the sample (67.6 %) reported their race (see table 2.) as white/non Hispanic (n = 25). 16.2 % of the fathers reported their race as Black or African American (n = 6). 5.4 % of the fathers reported their race as Mexican American or Chicano Mexicano (n = 2). Finally, 10.8 % of the fathers reported their race as Asian (n = 4).

Table 2: Race Of Fathers

Race Category	Percent
Black or African American	16.2
Mexican American or Chicano Mexicano	5.4
White/non Hispanic	67.6
Asian	10.8

n = 37

Fathers' length of education ranged from 4 – 30 years (see table 3). The mean and modal years of education for the sampled fathers was 16 years, representing a Baccalaureate degree. 8.1 % of the fathers (n = 3) had not graduated high school, while 16.2 % of the fathers (n = 6) had graduated high school and attained no further education. 40.5 % of the fathers had completed post-graduate work (n = 15).

Table 3: Fathers' Years Of Education

Years Of Education	Percent
Less Than 12	8.1
12 – 16	51.3
17 – 20	23.25
More Than 20	16.2

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n = 37

The 38 mothers in the sample ranged from 22 – 40 years of age (see table 4). The average age was 32, with a median and modal age of 33. The great majority of the mothers (71.1 %) were between the ages of 30 – 35 (n = 23) and 23.7 % were older than 35 (n = 9).

Table 4: Age Of Mothers

Years Of Age	Percent
22 – 29	13.2
30 – 35	71.1
36 – 40	15.8

n = 38

The majority of the mothers in the sample (60.5 %) reported their race (see table 5) as white/non Hispanic (n = 23). 21.1 % reported that that they were Black or African American (n = 8), 5.3 % reported that they were American Indian (n = 2), and four of the respondents (10.5 %) reported their race to be Asian.

Table 5: Race Of Mothers

Race Category	Percent
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Black or African American	21.1
American Indian	5.3
White/non Hispanic	60.5
Asian	10.5

n = 38

Mothers' years of education (see table 6) ranged from 12 – 26, with the average number of years reported as 15 and a modal number of years of 16. All of the mothers had completed high school. About half of the mothers (52.6 %) had not completed a Bachelor's degree (n = 20). Eleven mothers (18.4 %) had completed post-graduate work.

Table 6: Mothers' Years Of Education

Years Of Education	Percent
12 – 15	13.2
16 – 18	36.8
22 – 26	18.4

n = 38

Fathers' And Mothers' Childcare Ideas

The study and hypotheses drew upon previous research that had confirmed a significant relationship between fathers' and mothers' gender-role ideas and fathers' contributions to housework in general. In an attempt to focus more sharply upon fathers' and mothers' gender-

role ideas with regard to childcare (childcare ideas), the study sought to determine a relationship between fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas and fathers' contribution to childcare. Additionally, the study sought to determine a relationship between fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas and the amount of time fathers spent alone with the child without maternal supervision.

Fathers' Childcare Ideas Responses To The Four Items

The majority of the fathers, (59.5 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 7). The next most frequently chosen response was “yes, sometimes” (27 %). The remaining fathers (13.5 %) chose “no, not usually”. None of the fathers chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 7: Women Can Be As Interested In Employment As In Children

	Percent
yes, absolutely	57.9
yes, sometimes	27.0
no, not usually	13.2

n = 37

The majority of fathers (64.9 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 8). The second most chosen response (29.7 %) was “yes, sometimes”. Only two fathers (5.4 %) chose “no, not usually”. None of the fathers chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 8: A Father Can Be As Close Emotionally To His Child As A Mother .

	Percent
yes, absolutely	64.9
yes, sometimes	29.7
no, not usually	5.4

n = 37

The majority of the fathers (56.8 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 9). The second most chosen response (29.7 %) was “yes, sometimes”. Five fathers (13.5 %) chose the response “no, not usually”. None of the fathers chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 9: A Man Can Become As Capable As A Woman At Childcare If Given The Chance To Learn.

	Percent
yes, absolutely	56.8
yes, sometimes	29.7
no, not usually	13.5

n = 37

The mode for the fathers (41.7 %) was the response “yes, sometimes” (see table 10). The second most chosen response (38.9 %) was “yes, absolutely”. Six of the fathers (16.7 %) chose the response “no, not usually”, and one of the fathers (2.8 %) chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 10: A Father Ought To Take Parental Leave In Order To Take Care Of A Child

	Percent
yes, absolutely	38.9
yes, sometimes	41.7
no, not usually	16.7
no, not at all	2.8

n = 36

Mothers' Childcare Ideas Responses To The Four Items

The majority of the mothers (50 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 11). The second most chosen response (39.5 %) was “yes, sometimes”. Two mothers (5.3 %) chose “no, not usually”, and the remaining two mothers (5.3 %) chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 11: Women Can Be As Interested In Employment As In Children

	Percent
yes, absolutely	50.0
yes, sometimes	39.5
no, not usually	5.3
no, not at all	5.3

n = 38

The majority of the mothers (65.8 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 12). The second most chosen response (31.6 %) was “yes, sometimes”. Only one mother (2.6 %) chose the response “no, not usually”. None of the mothers chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 12: A Father Can Be As Close Emotionally To His Child As A Mother.

	Percent
yes, absolutely	65.8
yes, sometimes	31.6
no, not usually	2.6

n = 38

The great majority of the mothers (78.9 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 13). The second most chosen response (10.5 %) was “yes, sometimes”. Two mothers (5.3 %) chose the response “no, not usually”, and the remaining two mothers chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 13: A Father Can Be As Close Emotionally To His Child As A Mother

	Percent
yes, absolutely	78.9
yes, sometimes	10.5
no, not usually	5.3
no, not at all	5.3

n = 38

Seven of the mothers (18.9 %) chose the response “yes, absolutely” (see table 14). The most frequently chosen response (40.5 %) was “yes, sometimes”. 29.7 % of the mothers chose the response “no, not usually”. Finally, three mothers (8.1 %) chose the response “no, not at all”.

Table 14: A Father Ought To Take Parental Leave In Order To Take Care Of A Child.

	Percent
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yes, absolutely	18.9
yes, sometimes	40.5
no, not usually	29.7
no, not at all	8.1

n = 36

Traditional Versus Nontraditional Fathers And Mothers

A distribution was constructed for the purpose of dividing the fathers and mothers into one of two categories (traditional or nontraditional childcare ideas). As mentioned earlier, the four possible responses in the research instrument that measured childcare ideas were numbered 1 – 4 respectively. The lowest possible score is a 4 , representing selection of only the first response, “yes, absolutely” of the four response options, which would indicate the highest level of nontraditional childcare ideas. The highest possible score is 16, representing selection of only the fourth response, “no, not at all” of the four response options, which would represent the highest level of traditional childcare ideas (see tables 15 and 16 for a distribution of fathers’ and mothers childcare ideas scores).

Table 15: Fathers’ Childcare Ideas

Total Childcare Ideas Score	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
4	5	13.9
5	9	38.9
6	7	58.3
7	6	75.0
8	5	88.9
9	3	97.2
12	1	100.0

A score of 4, 5, or 6 for fathers was chosen to represent nontraditional childcare ideas, and those fathers were placed in the nontraditional category. Note in the cumulative percent section of table 15 that a total score of 4 – 6 for fathers divides the group roughly in half (58.3 %), which lends itself well to creating dichotomous categories that represent fathers' childcare ideas. Fathers that had a total score of between 7 and 12 (41.7 %) were placed in the traditional childcare ideas category

Table 16: Mothers' Childcare Ideas

Total Childcare Ideas Score	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
4	4	11.8
5	9	38.2
6	4	50.0
7	9	76.5
8	5	91.2
9	1	94.1
10	1	97.1
12	1	100.0

Following the same line of reasoning, mothers that scored a 4, 5, or 6 were placed in the nontraditional childcare ideas category. Note in the cumulative percent section of table 16 that a total score of between 4 – 6 for mothers divides the group exactly in half (50.0 %). Mothers that scored between 7 – 12 were placed in the traditional childcare ideas category.

As a result of dividing the characteristics of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas into two dichotomous categories (traditional versus nontraditional) it was determined that 21 fathers (58.3 %) held nontraditional childcare ideas, and 15 fathers (41.7 %) held traditional childcare ideas (see table 17).

Table 17: Traditional Versus Nontraditional Fathers

	Frequency	Percent
Father Traditional	15	41.7
Father Nontraditional	21	58.3

Exactly half of the mothers (50 %) were found to hold traditional childcare ideas, with the remaining half of the mothers (50 %) holding nontraditional childcare ideas (see table 18).

Table 18: Traditional Versus Nontraditional Mothers

	Frequency	Percent
Mother Traditional	17	50.0

Mother Nontraditional	17	50.0
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The first hypothesis of the study states that fathers will have higher childcare participation levels when fathers and mothers both have nontraditional childcare ideas than when the father , or the mother, or both, have traditional childcare ideas. In order to test hypothesis one, it was necessary to create categories representing all possible combinations of spouses with the same or differing childcare ideas. Crosstabs were performed upon the nontraditional versus traditional father independent variable and the nontraditional versus traditional mother intervening variable to create the following variable combinations: (1) father nontraditional/mother nontraditional, (2) father traditional/ mother traditional, (3) father traditional/mother nontraditional, and (4) father nontraditional/ mother traditional. These four combinations represent all possible combinations of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas (see table 19) and support the testing of the hypotheses.

Eleven respondents (34.4 %) were determined to be in the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group. Eight respondents (25.0 %) were determined to be in the father traditional/mother traditional group. Five respondents (15.6 %) were determined to be in the father traditional/mother nontraditional group. Finally, eight (25.0 %) respondents were determined to be in the father nontraditional/mother traditional group (see table 19).

Table 19: Fathers' And Mothers' Childcare Ideas Combinations

	Frequency	Total Percent Of Sample
Father Nontraditional & Mother Nontraditional	11	34.4
Father Traditional & Mother Traditional	8	25.0
Father Traditional & Mother Nontraditional	5	15.6
Father Nontraditional & Mother Traditional	8	25.0

n = 32

Testing Hypothesis 1

Using these four combinations of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas that make up the independent variable, (see previous table) crosstabs were employed and frequency and percentage distributions were determined. Cramer's V was calculated to determine the relationship between the fourteen childcare activities, dependent variables and the independent

variable. As mentioned before, these fourteen childcare activities consist of (a) buy food for the child, (b) prepare child's food, (c) feed child, (d) change diapers, (e) put child to bed, (f) buy child's clothes, (g) wash child's clothes, (h) arrange child care, (i) play with child, (j) read books to child, (k) teach child to do something new, (l) comfort the child when s/he is sick or tired, (m) take child to doctor, and (n) get up at night. Respondents are asked, "Which of you do the following things in your family?" Likert-like scale response options included (1) mostly mother, (2) mother more, (3) both equally, (4) father more, (5) father mostly, and (6) Does not apply.

Initial analysis of data revealed no statistical significance between variables. As forewarned in the limitations section, this is possibly due to the small sample size. Further analysis was carried out after response categories were recoded and collapsed. The responses "both equally", "father more", and "father mostly" were combined to create a dichotomy to increase cell size so to increase the likelihood of statistical significance. However, statistical significance was still not found. The tables presented here are based on the five original response categories because this detail was far more useful in interpreting relationships between variables.

For the statement "buys food for the child", (see table 20) no statistical significance was found between the variables. Therefore, the results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship between variables. Only the nontraditional father\ nontraditional mother group selected the "father more" response (9.1 %) or the "father mostly" response (17.9 %).

Table 20: Buys Food For The Child

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	4	5	3	5
Mother Mostly	36.4 %	62.5 %	75.0 %	62.5 %
Count	1	3	1	2
Mother More	9.1 %	37.5 %	25.0 %	25.0 %
Count	3			1
Both Equally	27.3 %			12.5 %
Count	1			
Father More	9.1 %			
Count	17.9			
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .354 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .476

For the statement “prepare child’s food”, (see table 21) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship between variables. Only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group chose the “father more” response (9.1 %) or the “father mostly” response (9.1 %).

Table 21: Prepare Child’s Food

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	1	6	3	6
Mother Mostly	9.1 %	75.0 %	75.0 %	75.0 %
Count	6	2	1	1
Mother More	54.5 %	25.0 %	25.0 %	12.5 %
Count	2			1
Both Equally	18.2 %			12.5 %
Count	1			
Father More	9.1 %			

Count	1			
Father Mostly	9.1 %			

Cramer's V Value = .395 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .269

For the statement "feed child", (see table 22) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1.

Table 22: Feed Child

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	4	6	1	5
Mother Mostly	36.4 %	75.0 %	25.0 %	62.5 %
Count	6	1	3	2
Mother More	54.5 %	12.5 %	75.0	25.0 %
Count	1	1		1
Both Equally	9.1 %	12.5 %		12.5 %
Count				
Father More				

Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .489 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .038

For the statement "change diapers", (see table 23) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1.

Table 23: Change Diapers

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	1	3	2	
Mother Mostly	11.1 %	37.5 %	40.0 %	
Count	4	3	2	3
Mother More	44.4 %	37.5 %	40.0 %	60.0 %
Count	4	1	2	1
Both Equally	44.4 %	12.5 %	40.0 %	12.5 %

Count		1		1
Father More		12.5 %		20.0 %
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .322 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .496

For the statement “put child to bed”, (see table 24). The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1.

Table 24: Put Child To Bed

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	1	3	3	3
Mother Mostly	9.1 %	37.5 %	60.0 %	37.5 %
Count	6	2	1	2
Mother More	54.5 %	25.0 %	20.0 %	25.0 %

Count	3	1	1	2
Both Equally	27.3 %	12.5 %	20.0 %	25.0 %
Count	1	2		
Father More	9.1 %	25.0 %		
Count				1
Father Mostly				12.5 %

Cramer's V Value = .332 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .406

For the statement “buy child’s clothes”, (see table 25) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship between variables. Only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group chose the “father more” response (9.1 %).

Table 25: Buy Child’s Clothes

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	6	7	3	5
Mother Mostly	54.5 %	87.5 %	60.0 %	62.5 %

Count	2	1	2	2
Mother More	18.2 %	12.5 %	40.0 %	25.0 %
Count	2			1
Both Equally	18.2 %			12.5 %
Count	1			
Father More	9.1 %			
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .332 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .403

For the statement “wash child’s clothes”, (see table 26) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1.

Table 26: Wash Child’s Clothes

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
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Count	4	4	2	4
Mother Mostly	36.4 %	50.0 %	40.0 %	50.0 %
Count	5	4	1	1
Mother More	45.5 %	50.0 %	20.0 %	12.5 %
Count	1		2	2
Both Equally	9.1 %		40.0 %	25.0 %
Count	1			1
Father More	9.1 %			12.5 %
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .289 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .531

For the statement “arrange child care”, (see table 27) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship between variables. Only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group chose the “both equally” response (9.1 %).

Table 27: Arrange Child Care

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	6	5	2	5
Mother Mostly	54.5 %	62.5 %	66.7 %	62.5 %
Count	3	3		3
Mother More	27.3 %	37.5 %		37.5 %
Count	2			
Both Equally	18.2 %			
Count			1	
Father More			33.3 %	
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .391 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .131

For the statement “play with child”, (see table 28) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship between variables. Of all groups, only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group did not choose the response “mother mostly”, and this same group chose the response “both equally” more than any other group.

Table 28: Play With Child

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count		1	1	2
Mother Mostly		12.5 %	20.0 %	25.0 %
Count	3	4	3	2
Mother More	27.3 %	50.0 %	60.0 %	25.0 %
Count	7	2		4
Both Equally	63.6 %	25.0 %		50.0 %
Count	1	1		
Father More	9.1 %	12.5 %		
Count			1	
Father Mostly			20.0 %	

Cramer's V Value = .398 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .230

For the statement, “read books to child”, (see table 29) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship between variables. Only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group did not select the

response “mostly mother”. Further, the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group chose the response “both equally” more than any other group.

Table 29: Read Books To Child

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count		1	2	2
Mother Mostly		14.3 %	40.0 %	25.0 %
Count	6	5	3	3
Mother More	54.5 %	71.4 %	60.0 %	37.5 %
Count	5	1		3
Both Equally	45.5 %	14.3 %		37.5 %
Count				
Father More				
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer’s V Value = .358 Cramer’s V Approx. Sig. = .241

For the statement, “teach child to do something new”, (see table 30) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain

relationship between variables. Only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group selected the response “father mostly”.

Table 30: Teach Child To Do Something New

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count Mother Mostly				1 12.5 %
Count Mother More	4 36.4 %	7 87.5 %	1 25.0 %	3 37.5 %
Count Both Equally	5 45.5 %		3 75.0 %	4 50.0 %
Count Father More	1 9.1 %	1 12.5 %		
Count Father Mostly	1 9.1 %			

Cramer's V Value = .393 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .276

For the statement “comfort the child when s/he is sick or tired” (see table 31) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1.

Table 31: Comfort The Child When S/he Is Sick Or Tired

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	3		2	2
Mother Mostly	27.3 %		40.0%	25.0 %
Count	5	8	1	4
Mother More	45.5 %	100.0 %	20.0 %	50.0 %
Count	3		2	2
Both Equally	27.3 %		40.0 %	25.0 %
Count				
Father More				
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .386 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .145

For the statement “ take child to doctor”, (see table 32) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis 1. However, the percentages on the crosstabs table do suggest a certain relationship

between variables. Only the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group selected the response “father more”.

Table 32: Take Child To Doctor

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	2	4	2	4
Mother Mostly	18.2 %	50.0 %	40.0 %	50.0 %
Count	5		1	2
Mother More	45.5 %		20.0 %	25.0 %
Count	3	4	2	1
Both Equally	27.3 %	50.0 %	40.0 %	12.5 %
Count	1			
Father More	9.1 %			
Count				1
Father Mostly				12.5 %

Cramer's V Value = .362 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .403

For the statement “get up at night” (see table 33) no statistical significance was found between the variables. The results of the test for this childcare activity do not support hypothesis

1.

Table 33: Get Up At Night

	Father NonTrad & Mother Non Trad	Father Trad & Mother Trad	Father Trad & Mother NonTrad	Father NonTrad & Mother Trad
Count	3	6	2	
Mother Mostly	27.3 %	75.0 %	40.0 %	
Count	3	1	3	4
Mother More	27.3 %	12.5 %	60.0 %	50.0 %
Count	5			4
Both Equally	45.5 %			50.0 %
Count		1		
Father More		12.5 %		
Count				
Father Mostly				

Cramer's V Value = .442 Cramer's V Approx. Sig. = .027

Testing Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis of the study states that fathers will spend more time alone with the child when the father and the mother both have nontraditional childcare ideas than when the father, or mother, or both, have traditional childcare ideas. Once again, all possible combinations of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas were used (see table 19 for a review of these childcare idea combinations). Because these combinations of childcare ideas are categorical, and the second dependent variable (time spent alone with child) is ratio, ANOVA was employed to determine significance between variables (see table 34). Respondents were asked to respond to the question "About how many hours per week would you guess you are together with your child?" A blank was provided for the respondents to fill in the number of hours.

ANOVA revealed a significance level of .087 between these four groups. Subsequently, there is no statistical significance found between the variables, and hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Table 34: Hours Per Week Fathers Spend Alone With Child

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error

Father Nontraditional/ Mother Nontraditional	10	39.4	2.2441	6.4017
Father Nontraditional/ Mother Traditional	8	29.0	10.4335	3.6888
Father Traditional/Mother Non traditional	5	57.4	39.0359	17.4574
Father Traditional/Mother Traditional	8	27.9	15.6245	5.5241

ANOVA (between and within groups) Sig = .087

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Assuming the role of father can be a highly subjective, confusing, and ongoing task for many men. How fathers perceive and attempt to enact the role of father has been closely associated with a society's economic trends and the prevailing cultural norms that such trends inspire. The social role of the American father has, historically, been dictated by changes in family structure resulting from economic change. Family scholars have noted the transitions in the socially prescribed role of the father as including moral overseer, breadwinner, sex-role model, and most recently, what has been described as the "new nurturant father" (Pleck, 1981). Yet these socially prescribed roles for fatherhood are not clear-cut for the men that must attempt to assume them. For instance, the breadwinner role has always been socially considered important for fathers to assume to one degree or another, and will remain so in the foreseeable future regardless of any new expectations society may generate for fathers. The transition into a new, socially approved fatherhood role may minimize, but does not negate any of the previous roles associated with fatherhood. The role of the father, it appears, is constantly expanding.

Marsiglio (1993) discusses how the *culture* of fatherhood (what members of society generally think a father should think and do) has far outdistanced the *conduct* of fatherhood (what fathers actually think and do). Some researchers have attributed

this disparity between culture and conduct to the expanding opportunities for women in the work place in the 1970s. Since women were entering the labor-force en-mass, someone had to take up the slack for childcare. It was naturally assumed that fathers were filling this childcare gap. In reality, secondary sources of childcare such as daycare centers and extended family began to be employed perhaps as never before (at least in the white, middle class community). On a societal level, fathers had been given credit for childcare where credit simply was not due. Of course, fathers did increase their levels of childcare participation to some degree. But more often than not working mothers were coming home from their jobs only to begin work on what would come to be described as the “second shift”.

While it has been widely reported that fathers actually do want to participate more in childcare activities (Lamb, 1997; Pleck, 1997) one has to wonder if such proclamations only exist to mirror prevailing social expectations for the father role.

Fathers are not only bombarded by previous and prevailing cultural notions of how they should model their paternal behavior, they are also subject to the influence of the individuals who share their interpersonal environments, particularly their spouses. While much of the discussion thus far has dealt with the expanding role of fathers, the historical role of mothers has remained far from static. For every major father role transition that has transpired, the socially prescribed role of the mother has also undergone transformation. Mother role changes have taken place (up until perhaps the 1970s when the social

mechanism appeared to start running in reverse) primarily as a functional means of accommodating father role changes. Consequently, mothers may also carry their own culturally influenced notions about the responsibility and distribution of childcare activities into the social dynamics of the family realm. Because the new nurturant father role includes performing childcare activities previously performed by mothers, some mothers may perceive this new role as a direct threat to the last bastion of status and authority that they have been allowed to enjoy in a patriarchal society. As a result, many mothers may find themselves overtly and covertly, consciously and unconsciously, assuming the role of “gatekeeper” (Ahrons, 1983) by supervising, castigating, and otherwise limiting fathers’ attempts to participate in childcare activities. Subsequently, fathers attempting to enact the father role can be caught in a triple bind between what society expects of them, (Mead’s “generalized other”) what they actually feel willing and comfortable doing, and the expectations of their child’s mother with regard to paternal childcare participation.

Previous research (Greenstein, 1996) had confirmed the hypothesis that fathers will contribute more to housework in general when the father and the mother both share nontraditional gender-role ideas than when either the father, or mother, or both have traditional gender-role ideas. This study attempted to narrow the focus of these findings to concentrate upon fathers’ and mothers’ gender-role ideas with regard to childcare specifically, (childcare ideas) and their impact upon fathers’ contribution to childcare in particular. Fathers’ contribution to childcare was measured through their reports of

participation in 14 common childcare activities, as well as the number of hours fathers reported spending alone with the child. Fathers and mothers were each divided into one of four groups representing all possible combinations of father-mother traditional versus nontraditional childcare ideas.

As forewarned in the limitations of the study section, and lamented in this concluding section, the limited size of the sample ($n = 38$ couples) had major negative consequences for the determination of statistical significance between any of the variables. The results of the previous study were not supported. Virtually no statistical significance was found to support a relationship between the combinations of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas (the independent variable) and fathers' contribution to childcare (the 14 childcare activities that make up the first dependent variable). For the first hypothesis of this study, no statistical support was found. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Further, no statistical significance was found to support a relationship between the combination of fathers' and mothers' childcare ideas (the independent variable) and the amount of time fathers spent alone with the child (the second dependent variable). Consequently, the second hypothesis enjoys no statistical confirmation and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Statistical significance aside, the percentages and means reported in several of the tables pertaining to childcare ideas and childcare activities suggest a relationship between variables that merits discussion. In an examination of table 15 (Fathers' Childcare Ideas) it is interesting to note that the large majority of the fathers (75.0 %) had a score between 4 and

7, which, out of a maximum score of 16 would suggest that the fathers in this study, as a whole, held more nontraditional childcare ideas. Also, it is revealed in table 16 (Mothers' Childcare Ideas) that a majority of mothers (76.5 %) had a score of between 4 and 7, suggesting that the mothers in this study held more nontraditional childcare ideas as a whole. However, the percentages found on many of the childcare activities crosstabs tables indicate that fathers and mothers, while reporting nontraditional childcare ideas generally, are not practicing what they profess to believe. Overwhelmingly, regardless of the nontraditional childcare ideas claimed by the majority of fathers and mothers, mothers still performed the great majority of childcare activities with generally only limited assistance from fathers. This reflects previously discussed discrepancies between the culture and conduct of fatherhood. Society tells fathers (and mothers) that fathers should take an active (if not equal) part in raising children. The idea of, at the least, appearing to be an active and contributing father is important to most fathers, and the idea of having a spouse that at least appears to be an active and contributing father is important to most mothers. In today's society, it is prescribed that fathers take an active part in childcare and that mothers take an active part in letting fathers take an active part in childcare. Yet, previous father and mother roles do not wane easily and the appearance of the widespread acceptance of the new father role by fathers along with the appearance of the widespread acceptance by mothers to capitulate their previous status as childcare specialists may be only that – appearances.

In table 20 (buys child's food) only fathers that belonged to the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group chose the response "father more" or the response "father mostly". In table 25 (buy child's clothes) and table 32 (take child to doctor) fathers in this same group were the only ones to choose the "father more" response option. In table 27 (arrange child care) fathers from this group were the only ones to choose the response option "both equally". What do the childcare activities listed in tables 20,25,32,and 27 have in common? They are all activities that require public contact for their completion. This may suggest that fathers who value the appearance of holding nontraditional childcare ideas may tend to participate (and have nontraditional wives that allow them to participate) more in childcare activities that offer some degree of public recognition of their role as active fathers. As mentioned earlier, fathers and mothers want to maintain at least the appearance that the father is taking an active part in his child's life. What better way to maintain this appearance than for the father to engage (and for the mother to encourage him to engage) primarily in those childcare activities that offer a foray into public consciousness and ideological confirmation?

Although no statistical significance was found to support the second hypothesis that dealt with time the father spent alone with his child, certain relationships between variables are notable. An examination of table 34 (Hours Per Week Fathers Spend Alone With Child) may suggest something about who holds the real power when it comes to whether a father will participate in childcare. Fathers who reported spending the lowest number of hours

(27.9) alone with the child belonged to the father traditional/mother traditional group. This comes as no surprise, as the father and the mother appear to be in agreement with regard to childcare ideas. However, the second lowest number of reported hours (29.0) were reported by fathers that belonged to the father nontraditional/mother traditional group. This may be germane to the earlier discussion that some mothers may consciously or unconsciously assume the role of gatekeeper to protect their own perceived interests with regard to childcare. The question one might ask is this; do these fathers really hold nontraditional childcare ideas or do they just lay claim to them for public approval? If the former is the case, do mothers with traditional childcare ideas actively resist the unsupervised exposure of their children to fathers? If the later is the case, do mothers who hold traditional childcare ideas encourage fathers who only claim to hold nontraditional childcare ideas to simply drop the public charade with regard to childcare once behind closed doors?

A final example that may suggest something about the dynamics of family power with regard to childcare may also be found in table 34. Note that the highest number of hours (57.4) fathers reported to spend alone per week with their child belonged to fathers in the father traditional/mother nontraditional group. These hourly totals far surpassed those of all other groups. The next highest hourly total was made by the father nontraditional/mother nontraditional group, and it was a full 18 hours less per week than the highest hourly totals. It is tempting to muse that because the mothers hold nontraditional childcare ideas, they

would also be inclined to hold nontraditional gender-role ideas in general and that they may tend to hold employment outside the home more than traditional mothers. This in itself would help to explain the disproportionate number of hours their husbands reported being alone with the child. A possible explanation for why this group of fathers differed so much from the other groups of fathers with regard to the time they reported spending alone with their child is fodder for another study.

Like most research studies, this study has brought to the fore even more research questions than it attempted to explore in the first place. For instance, would significance have been found between any of this study's variables had the sample size been larger and more representative? In the area of family power dynamics, do fathers' or mothers' childcare ideas hold more or equal sway with regard to fathers' participation in childcare? Is there a tendency for fathers and mothers to lay claim to nontraditional childcare ideas simply to gain public approval? If so, just how pronounced is this tendency? Finally, and following the same line of reasoning as the previous question, are nontraditional fathers encouraged by nontraditional mothers to participate primarily in childcare activities that offer public displays of the father's childcare participation?

Much recent research has concentrated on the struggle many fathers face in trying to enact the current socially prescribed role of father. Though not in a statistically significant sense, perhaps this study has furthered the idea that the role of mothers with regard to fathers' participation in childcare bears no less of an examination. It is generally accepted in

the American public domain today that fathers have been too long in coming forth to participate equally with the mother in childcare. Fathers have received both scorn and sympathy with regard to this subject. Conversely, along with the public recognition that fathers are expected to participate more equally in childcare comes a certain degree of social support for their plight. Fathers who demonstrate an active role in childcare are generally admired in today's society. Public admiration goes a long way in easing the transition into the "new" father role and makes letting-go of previous rolls that much easier. For the mother, however, no such public admiration exists for her part in this process. Mothers have long been credited and admired for their commitment to childcare. Where are mothers to turn for social support when they must begin to relinquish part of their control over their children (and the status that goes along with it) to this "new generation" of fathers? The public generally believes that increased father childcare participation is long overdue and that mothers should be delighted in the prospect of lowering their childcare burdens. But what the public may view as burdensome, some mothers may view as a source of family authority and social legitimacy. While research indicates that fathers still do only a fraction of the total childcare performed in their families, (and perhaps many of the fathers like it that way) anything that approaches equal childcare participation between fathers and mothers will likely need to begin by providing social support for both fathers and mothers in this new era of parenting.

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENTS AND PAID WORK QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: All the questions concern your most recent child born or adopted AFTER January 1, 1994. Place circle or fill in the appropriate answer. Only one answer should be given per question unless otherwise indicated. It should take about 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

A. WHEN THINKING ABOUT YOUR JOB BEFORE YOUR LAST CHILD’S BIRTH

If you were not employed before this last child was born go to section D?

1. What kind of work did you do? _____
What was your job title? _____
2. How many hours did you work on average per work week? _____
3. Were you employed: [1] in a retail business [4] in a wholesale business
[2] in manufacturing [5] in a service business
[3] by a government agency
[6] something else, if so, please describe _____
4. While holding this job did you work:
[1] mostly full-time
[2] mostly part-time?
5. Whom had the most responsibility for earning your family’s income, before the child was born?
[1] the man mostly
[2] the man a little more
[3] the man and the woman equally
[4] the woman a little more
[5] the woman mostly

B. WHEN THINKING ABOUT JOB CHANGES AFTER YOUR CHILD’S BIRTH

1. Did you take any leave or time off from your work due to your child's birth or adoption?

[1] no, -> go to question 4

[2] yes -> How many weeks total did you take off? _____weeks

On what date did you complete your leave? _____ month ____ day ____
year

2. Was any of this leave paid? [1] no, -> go to question 4

[2] yes, -> How many weeks were paid? _____
weeks

3. Indicate how your leave was paid and the number of weeks paid from each source. (Check all sources which apply and provide the number of weeks paid for.)

[1] vacation time for [] weeks

[1] sick leave for [] weeks

[1] personal days for [] weeks

[1] parental leave for [] weeks

[1] other sources, please describe: _____ for [] weeks

4. Did you make any changes in your work schedule after and BECAUSE OF your new child?

[1] no, -> go to question 5.

[2] yes, -> Which of the following did you do? (Check all the answers which apply.)

[1] worked a flexible schedule

[1] shared job with another person

[1] worked more hours per day but fewer days per week

[1] worked at home or away from the job site

[1] made other changes in my schedule, please describe: _____

5. How many weeks of family/parental leave time does your organization allow? _____
weeks

C. ONLY ANSWER IF YOU TOOK TIME OFF OR LEAVE FROM YOUR JOB AFTER YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH If you did not take any time off or leave go to section D.

1. Did you take all the family/parental leave available to you?

[1] yes, -> go to question 2.

[2] no, -> Why did you not take all the leave available? (Check all answers which apply.)

[1] the family income

[1] situation at my work

[1] could not manage caring for an infant
[1] was not interested in taking leave
[1] something else, please specify, _____

2. Was this leave part of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) program at your job?
[1] yes [2] don't know [3] no

3. What happened at your job when you were on parental leave?
[1] no difficulties at the workplace [2] problem-free for the most part
[3] some difficulties [4] great difficulties occurred
[5] don't know

4. Was your family income less while being on parental leave?
[1] yes, rather a lot [2] yes, a little [3] no

5. Did your spouse or partner take any parental leave?
[1] no, -> go to question 7
[2] yes, -> Was the amount of leave taken by you both about equal?
[1] yes, -> go to question 7.
[2] no, -> Why was the amount of leave different? (Check all which apply.)

[1] the work situation
[1] the family income
[1] breast-feeding of the child
[1] not interested
[1] something else, specify, _____

5. How did the following people react when you went on parental leave?

	<u>Mostly Positively</u>	<u>Neither Positively nor Negatively</u>	<u>Mostly Negatively</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>know</u> <u>apply</u>				
a. your employer	[1]	[2]	[3]	[8]
[6]				
b. your supervisor	[1]	[2]	[3]	[8]
[6]				

- c. your male co-workers [1] [2] [3] [8]
[6]
- d. your female co-workers [1] [2] [3] [8]
[6]
- e. your friends [1] [2] [3] [8].....
[6]
- f. your mother [1] [2] [3] [8]
[6]
- g. your father [1] [2] [3] [8].....
- h. your spouse or partner [1] [2] [3] [8].....
7. Do you wish you and your spouse or partner had shared parental leave equally?
[1] yes [2] partly [3] no

8. If you were to have another baby, would you choose to take parental leave?
[1] yes [2] don't know [3] no

9. How well did you get along in general when you were home and caring for the child?
[1] very well [2] rather well [3] neither well nor badly [4] rather badly [5] very badly

10. Indicate if the following statements applied to your leave:

	Very <u>true</u>	Rather <u>true</u>	Not especially <u>true</u>	Not at <u>all true</u>
a. I felt lonely	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
b. I liked caring for the child	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
c. It was boring	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
d. It felt good not to be working for a while	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
e. It was hard work and stressful	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

D. WHEN THINKING ABOUT YOUR CHILD CARE ACTIVITIES

1. Did you have practical experience concerning child care before you became a parent for the first time? [1] yes, a lot [2] yes, a little [3] no
2. Who has the main responsibility for the care and upbringing of this new child?
[1] mother mostly [2] mother more [3] mother & father
equally
[4] father more [5] father mostly

3. Which of you can best comfort the child? [1] the mother [2] the father [3] both equally

4. About how many hours per week would you guess you are together with your child?
 _____ hours per week

How many of these hours are devoted to one-on-one activities like playing or reading?
 _____ hours per week

5. About how many hours per week would you guess your spouse or partner is together with your child?
 _____ hours per week.

How many of these hours are devoted to one-on-one activities like playing or reading?
 _____ hours per week

6. About how many hours per week would you guess you and your spouse or partner jointly (at _____ the same time) are together with your child?
 _____ hours per week

7. Which of you do the following things in your family?

	Mother	Mother	Both	Father	Father	Does
not						
	<u>mostly</u>	<u>more</u>	<u>equally</u>	<u>more</u>	<u>mostly</u>	<u>apply</u>
a. buy food for child	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]
b. prepare child's food	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]
c. feed child	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]
d. change diapers	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]
e. put child to bed	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]
f. buy child's clothes	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]
g. wash child's clothes	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]	[6]

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| h. arrange child care | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |
| i. play with child | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |
| j. read books to child | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |
| k. teach child to do something new | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |
| l. comfort the child when s/he is sick or tired | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |
| m. take child to doctor | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |
| n. get up at night | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [6] | [6] |

8. Taking things all together, how often do you and your spouse or partner:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|---------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-----|--|
| | | <u>Always</u> | | | | <u>Never</u> | | |
| a. argue about care of your child? | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [5] | [6] | [7] | |
| b. share making major decisions about child's life? | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [5] | [6] | [7] | |
| c. share making day-to-day decisions about child's life? | [1] | [2] | [3] | [4] | [5] | [6] | [7] | |

9. How stressful is it to be a parent? [1] very [2] somewhat [3] not very [4] never

10. In general, how would you describe your relationship with your spouse or partner?
 very unhappy --> [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] <-- very happy

11. Approximately how many weeks did the mother breast-feed this child
 full-time? _____ part-time?[0]
 did not breast-feed

12. This child has _____ brothers and _____ sisters.

13. My child is a [1] daughter or a [2] son and s/he was born in the month of _____ of 19____.

E. WHEN THINKING ABOUT YOUR JOB NOW

1. What would you rather do? [1] work full-time [2] work part-time [3] be at home

2. How important is employment to you just now in comparison with your other interests?

[1] the main interest

[2] a main interest, but not the only interest

[3] one of several important interests

[4] a less important interest

[5] not at all important compared with your other interests

3. Are you currently employed?

[1] no → go to question 12 below

[2] yes with the same employer

[3] yes but with a new employer, provide a reason for change _____

.....
4. Do you do the same work as you did before the child's birth?

[1] yes [2] no → please describe what is different

5. How many *days* do you work on average per work week? _____

6. How many *hours* do you work on average per work week? _____

7. Can you vary your work times? [1] yes, usually [2] yes, sometimes [3] no

8. Compared to the time before the child's birth, have your chances for advancement on the job:

[1] improved

[2] worsened

[3] stayed the same

9. In general, how good is the job which you have now, compared to the job which you really would rather have? Is your job:

[1] precisely like the job you really want to have

[2] very much like it

[3] somewhat like it

[4] not especially like it

[5] not at all like it

10. Which category includes your yearly pay before taxes?

[1] less than \$20,000

[2] \$20,000 to \$39,999

[3] \$40,000 to \$59,999

[4] \$60,000 to \$79,999

[5] \$80,000 to \$99,999

[6] more than \$100,000

11. Has your pay changed since the birth of your child? [1] no [2] yes →
How? _____

12. How did taking family/parental leave change your work and home life? (If you did not take leave, how do you believe that people who take leave change?)

	Yes, <u>Absolutely</u>	Yes, <u>Somewhat</u>	No, not <u>Much</u>	No, not <u>At All</u>	Does Not Apply
a. enjoy job more	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
b. dedication to job greater	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
c. job productivity increases	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
d. less likely to miss work	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
e. recommend employer to others	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
f. have less stress at home	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
g. feel better about myself	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
h. have a better relationship with my spouse or partner	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]

F. WHAT ARE YOUR OPINIONS?

Do you think the following statements are right or not?

	Yes, <u>absolutely</u>	Yes, <u>sometimes</u>	No, not <u>much</u>	No, not <u>at all</u>	Dont <u>know</u>
1. Women can be as interested in employment as in children.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
2. A father can be as close emotionally to his child as a mother.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
3. A man can become as capable as a woman at child care if he has the chance to learn.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
4. The man is the one who should be the family's primary breadwinner.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
5. A father ought to take parental leave in order to take care of a child.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[6]
6. Parental leave ought to be shared equally					

between fathers and mothers. [1] [2] [3] [4] [6]

7. Parents should be paid when they take parental leave. [1] [2] [3] [4] [6]

G. WITH REGARD TO YOURSELF

1. In what year were you born? _____

2. How many years did you go to school (count trade and technical schools)?

3. Did your mother (or woman who raised you) work outside the home when you were growing up? [1] yes, full-time [2] yes, part-time [3] no

4. Who had the main responsibility for your care and upbringing when you were growing up?
[1] mother mostly
[2] mother a little more
[3] mother and father shared equally
[4] father a little more
[5] father mostly
[6] does not apply (care giver single)

5. Have you heard of fathers taking family or parental leave?
[1] no, -> go to question 6
[2] yes, -> describe where you first heard this _____
How many fathers do you know who have taken family and parental leave? _____
and, if employed, how many of these are at your work? _____

6. Which best describes you? I am:
[1] Black or African American [4] White but not Hispanic
[2] Mexican American or Chicano Mexicano [5] Cuban, Puerto Rican or Other
Hispanic
[3] American Indian [6] Asian
[7] Other, please
specify: _____

7. Are you presently:
[1] married
[2] living with someone
[3] divorced
[4] never married
[5] other, please specify, _____

8. During the past week how many days did you

(Circle number of days):

a. feel bothered by things that usually don't bother you? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 days

b. have trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 days

c. feel that everything you did was an effort? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 days

d. feel you could not get going? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 days

9. Are you a [1] a woman or a [2] man?

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