

ABSTRACT

JOYNER, JASON DANIEL. The Effects of Economic Resources on Men's Parental Involvement in Two-Parent Families. (Under the direction of Dr. Theodore Greenstein).

There are a number of reasons to believe that families' access to economic resources will have effects on men's parental involvement in two-parent families. One view, focused on men's success as family breadwinners, posits that fathers in families that are experiencing economic insecurity will reduce their parental involvement as a means of coping with feelings of failure. An alternate view, focused on families' practical efforts to cope with limited economic resources, argues that the fewer economic resources families have, the more they will make use of fathers' care of children as a means of maximizing their well-being with the resources they have available. Both of these views highlight the importance of the level of economic resources available to families, although they hypothesize effects on fathers' parental involvement that are in opposite directions. In addition, economic resources, as resources, are potentially important indirect influences on families' household division of labor because they can enable or constrain families' consumption behavior, affecting families' ability to manage the demand for fathers' parental involvement. However, little research has been done as of yet to map the potential indirect links between families' economic resources and men's parental involvement that might exist as a result of such consumption, or to identify the specific mediating factors which may be involved. Finally, research on the determinants of men's parental involvement must necessarily address the effects that the ongoing cultural redefinition of fatherhood from breadwinning to co-parenting might have on men's fathering behavior. Yet in the current fatherhood research the question of whether the major determinants of fathers' involvement operate similarly for men

who see themselves as “good providers” as for men who view their role in terms of “co-parenting” is largely unaddressed.

This dissertation improves our understanding of these issues. The effects of four types of economic resources are modeled for each of the three commonly accepted aspects of father involvement relative to mothers’ involvement. In addition, this dissertation maps three potential paths of indirect influence from families’ economic resources to fathers’ relative parental involvement. The first pathway focuses on families’ ability to outsource childcare, thus reducing the demand for fathers’ parental involvement relative to mothers’. The second pathway focuses on the effect of families’ economic problems on fathers’ feelings of success or failure and the resulting impact of these feelings on men’s relative involvement. The third pathway explored in this dissertation examines the impact of families’ neighborhood context on men’s relative father involvement. Given the assumption that families will attempt to reside in the best neighborhoods they can afford to live in, this project examines how the level of social cohesion and the level of risk or hazards in the neighborhood affect men’s relative involvement, given men’s historical role as family protectors. Finally, this dissertation tests for empirical interaction effects between fathers’ fatherhood attitudes and the other determinants of men’s involvement, as a way of assessing the degree to which the effects of these other determinants are moderated by men’s beliefs about their proper role as a father. The findings of these analyses suggest that the effects of economic resources on men’s relative parental involvement are nuanced, depending both upon the specific type of economic resource under consideration the specific aspect of father involvement. The findings also indicate limited support for each of the three paths of influence, although their influence is also specific to a particular aspect of father involvement. In addition, a number

of interaction effects were identified which indicate differential effects of key determinants of fathers' involvement depending on the degree to which fathers' attitudes are more traditional or more egalitarian in nature.

**THE EFFECTS OF
ECONOMIC RESOURCES
ON MEN'S PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
IN TWO-PARENT FAMILIES**

by

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BIOGRAPHY

Jason Daniel Auger was born on November 9, 1970 in Wurtzburg, Germany. After a brief stay in Germany courtesy of the U.S. Army, Jason's family returned to the United States, eventually taking up residence in Jesup, Georgia. Jason's parents divorced in 1975 and in 1976 his mother married Harold L. Joyner. Soon after, Harold legally adopted Jason, whose name was then changed to Jason Daniel Joyner. Jason received his primary and secondary education in Jesup, Georgia. He entered the Program for Gifted Children in Fifth Grade and during High School he took the Advanced Placement, College Preparatory course of study. He graduated from Wayne County High School in June of 1988. Upon graduation he attended Middle Georgia College in Cochran, Georgia for two years before transferring to Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia where he completed his Bachelors Degree in Sociology in May, 1992. From there, Jason was accepted into the graduate program in Sociology at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio and received a Masters Degree in Sociology in May, 1994. He won the Sociology Department's Masters Thesis Award in that year. Jason returned to Georgia and began teaching Sociology as a temporary instructor at Georgia Southern University. On July 15 of 1995 he married Michele Lynn Meade of Douglasville, Georgia and they moved to Raleigh, North Carolina where they both entered graduate school at North Carolina State University in August of 1995. While a student at North Carolina State University, Jason completed the Preparing the Professoriate program, was named one of the first Alcoa Teaching Fellows, and was Assistant Editor of the American Sociological Association's flagship review journal *Contemporary Sociology*. On September 22, 1999 Jason and Michele welcomed their first child, Nicholas James, into their family. In May of 2001, Michele earned her Ph.D. in Mathematics and took position with

MIT Lincoln Laboratories and, as a result, the family relocated to Dracut, Massachusetts. During the year Jason and family spent in Massachusetts, Jason continued his studies long distance and enjoyed being a stay at home father. In June of 2002, Jason and family relocated to Douglasville, Georgia in order to be closer to Michele's family during her father's extended illness. Jason continued his studies long distance and began teaching part-time at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. In September of 2003, Jason accepted a position as a Research Analyst with the customer asset management company CFI Group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He continues to be employed with the company in this position. On May 27, 2004 Jason and Michele welcomed their second child, Kristen Marie, into their family, and on April 3, 2006 they welcomed their third child, Nathan Lee, into their family. After many years of hard work, Jason defended his dissertation and completed his Ph.D. in Sociology in August of 2006.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study is motivated in part by the realization that the distribution of economic resources in the United States became noticeably more unequal across the last 3 decades of the twentieth century (Harrison and Bluestone 1988, Morris and Western 1999, Nielsen and Alderson 1997, Wolff 1994). When measured in constant dollars, nearly everyone lost ground economically, although the poor lost the most. When we consider wages, the only workers who did not see a drop in real wages across this period were those at the top of the income distribution, who saw the value of their wages increase by about 10% (Morris and Western 1999). Hidden within this larger trend is a striking difference between men's and women's economic fates. Among men, no one fared well, with men at the top of distribution only managing to hold the value of their real wages constant between the early 1970s and late 1990s. Among women, however, some real gains were made, with women at the median income realizing modest gains of about 5% and women at the top of the distribution seeing as much as a 30% gain relative to where they were in the early 1970s. This increase was not sufficient to close the wage gap, because median income women were still only making what men in the 35th percentile earned by the late 1990s. But the difference in trends between men and women in terms of wages is likely to have had broader consequences, especially in terms of the relative balance of power between husbands and wives.

The rise in economic inequality in the United States raises more fundamental questions about the broader social changes to which it is connected. The empirical research

on social inequality is replete with examples of how access to economic resources is related to life style and life chances. In addition, research on marriage and the family often discusses the connection between access to resources and family processes. Of particular interest for this present study is the change in men's parental involvement that has occurred over this same period, from the early 1970s to the late 1990s. As men's economic fortunes have eroded in the last quarter of the twentieth century, there has been a modest increase in co-residential fathers' absolute and relative contributions to child care labor (Pleck 1997, Sandberg and Hofferth 1999, Yeung et al. 2001). This pattern raises an interesting question: are men doing more at home because they are earning less (relatively speaking) at work?

Currently, for two-parent families, little is known about the effect of economic resources on father involvement beyond the traditional consideration of the relative balance of earnings between mothers and fathers. To the extent that measures of economic resources have been included in research on father involvement, they have been included with little consideration being given to how or why they should operate to shape men's paternal involvement with their children. These existing studies can roughly be sorted into three groups based on how measures of economic resources are handled. The first group of studies, exemplified by the work of Volling and colleagues (1991), include a single measure of economic resources – usually current family income – as a control variable. Limited discussion is given to why the measure of economic resources needs to be controlled, and there is usually no mention of the effects of the control variable in these studies' discussions or conclusions. In such studies the family's economic status is an afterthought and the inclusion of the economic measures offers no additional insight into the relationship between economic resources and men's parental involvement.

A second group of studies gives economic resources somewhat more consideration as explanations for men's paternal involvement, but focuses consideration on the relative balance of earnings between spouses rather than considering the absolute level of economic resources that are available to the family. These studies essentially follow the pattern established in the much larger research tradition focused on the problem of how household labor is allotted between spouses. As we find in the work of Marsiglio (1991) and of Aldous and colleagues (1989), these studies of father involvement include no measures of the family's income or economic status but instead include a measure of the proportion of the family's resources earned by the father (or mother). The use of such proportional measures highlights an important mechanism through which economic resources can affect men's parenting behavior by drawing attention to how marital power is leveraged by parents in their negotiations over who does what with the children. However, it fails to consider the more fundamental question of whether those resources, regardless of who earned them, are sufficient to meet the family's needs and what impact this sufficiency (or lack of) has on men's parental involvement.

A third, and much smaller group of studies, includes measures of economic resources as primary explanatory measures, often in conjunction with some form of a proportional measure of the relative earnings of the parents. Such studies have tended to stake out one of two positions on the linkage between economic resources and father involvement. First, they may argue, like Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine (1992), that fathers are more likely to be involved with their children when the family's economic resources are sufficient to provide a sense of economic security. Such an argument is usually based on the understanding that fatherhood has historically been defined in terms of breadwinning or being a "good provider"

and that father's involvement with their children beyond simple provisioning hinges on the degree to which fathers are successful at provisioning. Here the expectation is that in families with greater economic resources, men should demonstrate greater parental involvement with their children. Alternately, studies in this third group may argue, like Glass (1998), that father involvement is likely to increase when families are under economic stress. From this point of view, the financial constraints imposed by inadequate economic resources puts pressure on men to take on greater responsibility for child care labor in order to avoid purchasing non-parental care and in order to give mothers greater ability to earn supplemental income that could help alleviate the economic stress. At issue here is the question of how couples negotiate fair and equitable work and childcare arrangements under conditions of financial distress. Studies like Glass' suggest that there should be an inverse relationship between the family's economic resources and men's paternal involvement.

Fortunately, studies following the pattern of this third group give us greater direction about what to expect when linking economic resources to men's parental involvement and upon reviewing them we are faced with two competing and opposed views of the impact of economic resources on men's participation in the care of their children. Do fathers contribute more to the care of their children when their families are economically secure or do fathers contribute more as the results of having to find the means to cope with economic insecurity? Where these linkages have been investigated, the range of economic resources considered for inclusion in the research has tended to be very limited, with near exclusive focus on current family income as the primary measure of families' economic condition, overlooking the possibility that a family's economic condition may be better captured by other measures of the family's economic resources, like their permanent income, wealth

holdings, and homeownership status. Moreover, because economic resources are important in part because they can be used to purchase needed goods and services, it stands to reason that they may affect men's parenting (and other family processes) indirectly through the consumption they enable. The implications of these issues for this study is that a broader range of economic resources needs to be considered, as does a fuller accounting of the indirect ways that these economic resources might be leveraged to change the demand for men's parental involvement.

Given this brief overview, there is a clear need for research to better develop our understanding of the connection between a families' access to economic resources and fathers' parental involvement. This study offers a modest contribution to this goal by combining existing theory from research on the sociology of the family about how household and child-care labor is distributed within families with developing themes in social stratification research on the importance of wealth as an indicator of financial wellbeing, the long-term effects of economic stress on family functioning and relationships, and on the connection between financial resources, the neighborhoods people inhabit, and the strategies they use to manage the risks and opportunities that their neighborhoods present. In this project I extend beyond the current research focus in the sociology of the family on the distribution of marital power between parents, parents' differential availability for doing child care, and parents' beliefs about who should be responsible for child care as determinant of men's parental involvement by building models that not only test the direct links between economic resources and father involvement, but that also begin to trace the indirect connections through a number of theoretically plausible mediators.

For this study, I articulate and empirically test four perspectives about how economic resources can be expected to impact men's parental involvement. The first view, following Glass (1998), focuses on the degree to which a family's access to economic resources allow parents to outsource some childcare labor to alternative paid childcare arrangement and thus decrease the demand for father's parental involvement. Hence, the family's expenditures on paid childcare arrangements become a central mediating mechanism in the causal chain linking family economic resources to men's parental involvement. The second view follows the work of Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine (1992) discussed above, as well as the line of research found in the work of Conger and colleagues (1992) and Elder and colleagues (1992) and argues that men's involvement in childcare labor may hinge on families' experience financial distress and the degree to which this distress reduces men's sense of competence as husbands and fathers. Here, the focus shifts to understanding how men may develop a sense of psychological distress as a result of their family's experience of economic insecurity and men's sense of self-efficacy and/or depression become central mediating mechanisms in need of investigation.

In addition to these two perspectives, the third viewpoint I develop of the connection between the families' economic resources and fathers' involvement with their children takes inspiration from the work of Hofferth (2003), who argues that men's parenting behavior may change in response to the condition of the local neighborhood environment, with fathers spending more time with and exerting more control over children in neighborhoods that are less than ideal environments for raising children. This third viewpoint builds on the now substantial research on "neighborhood effects" to articulate an investment theory of parental involvement that views men's parental involvement as being partly a response to the

environmental resources or challenges presented by the neighborhoods in which families reside. Homeownership and neighborhood residence are then viewed as a form of status attainment, with parents purchasing residence in the best neighborhoods they can afford. From this point of view, the central mediating mechanisms that are expected to link economic resources to men's parental involvement are the level of risk present in the neighborhood and the degree to which there is social cohesion among neighborhood residents that can be leveraged to create effective local social control, both of which can be expected to impact the level of demand for men's parental involvement. In a sense, neighborhood stress can be viewed as a manifestation or outcome of economic stress, and can be expected to have similar effects on men's parental involvement.

The final viewpoint I articulate for this project focuses on an assumption that is implicit in the above three perspectives, the assumption that good fathers are first and foremost good providers. In each of the viewpoints introduced thus far it has been assumed that the prospective relationships between the family's economic resources and the father's parental involvement are governed by the logic of the breadwinner definition of fatherhood that takes for granted the notion that child care is women's work. Historians of fatherhood note, however, that the cultural definition of fatherhood has been shifting recently toward a co-parenting view of fatherhood in which fathers are expected to take equal interest in and responsibility for child care labor as do mothers (see Demos 1982 for example). This raises the possibility that as fathers increasingly espouse a co-parenting orientation towards fatherhood instead of the breadwinning model of fatherhood the suspected links between economic resources and father involvement may change in character or even disappear. Unfortunately, the implication of this cultural shift for the empirical study of fathering

behavior has not been well investigated. This study pursues this line of reasoning both theoretically and empirically and investigates the potential interactive effects men's fatherhood attitudes may have with other substantive determinants of their parental involvement.

1.2 Project Goals

In this project I begin with the assumption that men largely see their role as a father in terms of breadwinning or being a good provider and that the family's economic security is a primary measure of the father's success. I then investigate the extent to which the family's financial condition affects fathers' involvement in childcare, net of the other key determinants of father involvement like marital power, economic dependence, time availability, and gender ideology. In addition I test each of the key mediating variables associated with each of the competing explanations for how families' economic resources affect men's parental involvement. In doing so, I use a broader set of indicators of the family's economic resources, which include not just the family's current income, but also their permanent income, wealth holdings, and homeownership status. I then take into account the fact that some men are increasingly adopting a co-parenting orientation towards fatherhood that values men's direct engagement in childcare labor and assess whether the impact of the family's economic resources (and other key determinants) on father involvement are different when men view themselves as co-parents.

This dissertation essentially addresses three key questions. First, are the effects of economic resources on father involvement largely positive or negative in direction? Addressing the question involves determining whether there are predictive relationships

between the measures of families' economic resources and the measures of fathers' involvement with their children and determining whether, on the whole, father involvement increases or decreases in response to increases in families' economic resources.

Second, are the effects of economic resources largely direct or indirect, and what specific causal pathways are involved? Addressing this question involves testing whether the mediating variables drawn from the multiple competing viewpoints under consideration have any impact on men's parental involvement and whether these mediators can, themselves, be predicted to any substantively important degree by the measures of families' economic resources. To the extent that economic resources can substantively predict these mediators and these mediators are found to also substantively predict father involvement, we will have evidence of these indirect linkages.

Third, are the effects the same across all men, regardless of their level of commitment to co-parenting/breadwinning, or do the effects differ depending on which fatherhood attitudes they espouse? That is, are there interaction effects between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and the other determinants of fathers' involvement? To address this issue, a scale measuring fathers' relative commitment to breadwinning versus co-parenting is used in the analysis and is appropriately treated to assess whether such interactions exist.

To address all of these issues, I use a data source uniquely suited to this task. The 1997 Child Development Supplement (CDS) to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is the data of choice for this project and contains detailed information about the quality of family members relationships with each other, fathers' involvement with their children, and families' economic resources. In this data source I am fortunate to have access to both a detailed accounting of fathers' and mothers' time spent with their children collected via time

diaries and a detailed accounting of families economic resources from the 1997 PSID individual and family data files and the supplemental wealth data file collected in 1994. From these files I am able to compute measures of families' current and permanent incomes, as well as families' net worth (assets minus debts) and homeownership status.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters. The current chapter presents the introduction and description of the scope and goals of the current study. Chapter 2 presents the relevant theory and research needed to understand how economic resources can be expected to influence men's paternal involvement. In this chapter, I show how current theory on the household division of labor can be extended to better account for the potential effects of economic resources by incorporating insights from the study of neighborhood effects on family processes and from research on how economic stress impacts parent-child relations. In addition, in this chapter, I note how current notions of marital power, which focus only on the allocation of labor between parents, overlooks parents' ability to substitute other childcare arrangement when economic resources allow. I also argue for an expanded set of economic measures to be considered as a matter of course in family research. The specific hypotheses under investigation in this project are detailed in Chapter 3 and serve to focus the arguments presented in the literature review in Chapter 2 in anticipation of their operationalization in Chapter 4 and their inclusion in the statistical analysis presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 describes the data used in the current study, the analytic sample selection procedure, and the methods used to test the hypotheses as presented in Chapter 3. I begin

with a brief description of the three data sources used in the current study: 1) the individual and family data files of the 1997 Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), 2) the 1994 wealth supplement to the PSID, and 3) the 1997 Child Development Supplement (CDS) to the PSID. Because the PSID is a complicated data source designed to represent the U.S. population, but with over-sampling of poor and minority segments of the population, and because the 1994 wealth supplement and 1997 CDS data are not available for all respondents in the full PSID panel, a number of sample selection criteria are imposed that are more fully described in Chapter 4. The measures, their measurement properties, and the descriptive statistics are also described in this chapter in some detail, as is the analytic strategy that is to be used.

Chapter 5 of this dissertation presents the results of the analysis and is organized into two large sections. The first explores the direct effects of the economic resources under investigation on several measures of father involvement. The second explores the effects of these resources on the suspected mediators of the relationship between economic resources and men's parental involvement. All the analyses presented in Chapter 5 are executed using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. A number of interaction effects and nonlinear effects are presented graphically for ease in interpretation.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I summarize and discuss the results presented in Chapter 5. I offer a number of limited conclusions and discuss the restrictions of the current research. I also suggest a number of potentially fruitful avenues for future research on father involvement based on the findings of the current study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC RESOURCES ON FATHER INVOLVEMENT

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I develop a theoretical model of the impact of economic resources on co-resident fathers' parental involvement. I begin with a brief discussion of the history of fatherhood and its scientific study, noting how the cultural image of the "good father" shifts in response to shifts in the market economy. Next I describe the two main competing theoretical explanations for the division of household and childcare labor – human capital theory and gender construction theory – and discuss how these perspectives can be leveraged to help explain father involvement. I also survey the three primary mechanisms these theories suggest determine men's parental involvement and discuss the empirical evidence supporting the view that marital power, time availability and gender ideology operate as central explanations for fathers' involvement. Then, in response to the three orienting questions posed in Chapter 1, I articulate the need to better understand the role of economic resources in shaping the allocation of household labor and make the case for including measures of permanent income, household wealth, and home ownership in studies of father involvement. From there, I discuss three potential causal pathways through which access to economic resources can be expected to impact resident fathers' involvement with their children. The first pathway connects family economic resources to families' ability to reduce demands for fathers' childcare labor through outsourcing. The second pathway highlights the pivotal role of economically induced stress on fathers' sense of competence and

experience of depression, both of which are expected to reduce resident fathers' level of involvement with their children. The third approach builds on recent research into "neighborhood effects" and highlights the ways in which economic resources can be expected to indirectly influence resident fathers' involvement based on their subjective evaluations of the degree to which their neighborhood of residence is a socially cohesive and safe place in which to raise children. Finally, I discuss the implications of the cultural shift toward co-parenting and the degree to which this shift de-contextualizes co-resident fathers' parental involvement.

2.2 The History and Study of Fatherhood

As Lamb (2000) notes, fatherhood has always been a multidimensional concept whose meaning has shifted considerably over time. Historians of fatherhood typically sort the temporal shifting in the culture of American fatherhood into four broad periods: Colonial fatherhood, fatherhood during Industrialism, fatherhood from the turn of the century until the 1960s, and fatherhood in the present (see Pleck 1984 as a typical example). In each period, fatherhood practices are connected to cultural images of masculinity, which are themselves affected by broader economic patterns.

During the first period the good father was primarily a teacher or moral overseer, responsible for children's spiritual and moral education. Fathers were expected maintain order in their families and in the larger civil society, in part, by leading their families in prayer, providing religious instruction, placing children in lawful occupations, overseeing the choice of children's spouses, and strictly disciplining household members (Mintz 1998). Because of the primarily rural agrarian mode of production during this period, men's work

on the family farm or small artisan's shop often kept them in close contact with their wives and children. While mothers were children's primary caretakers during this period, the Puritan's deeply ambivalent view of women gave father increased responsibility for their children's moral development (Griswold 1997). In fact, most of the parental advice of this period was addressed to fathers, not mothers, because fathers were considered the stronger parent. In rare cases where divorce or separation occurred, children most often went with their fathers (Coltrane and Hickman 1992).

As the colonial period came to a close and industrialism took root, the father's moral authority over children began to weaken. The decline of farming and artisanal work, combined with the increase in factory employment and office work meant that increasing numbers of men commuted to work, becoming breadwinners, while women assumed greater responsibility for directing the household. At the same time an important ideological shift occurred, as the Victorian doctrine of "separate spheres" emerged and began to dictate that men's and women's roles in family work become differentiated. This doctrine viewed women as being uniquely and naturally suited for caring for home and family and enshrined the expectation that women should realize their "true" nature by marrying, having children, and rearing them (Coltrane 1994, Allen and Hawkins 1999). Through the influence of 19th and early 20th century social movements like the "cult of true womanhood" and the home economics movement, women were encouraged to see themselves as highly skilled experts in domestic matters, exercising at least some degree of privilege and power over the household as a result. This ideology idealized motherhood, and increasingly the contrast between the home and the outside world was seen as an indicator of the inherent differences between women and men. Men, in this period, were expected to be breadwinners, family protectors,

and the family's link to the impersonal and competitive world of work, politics, and public life. The historian Demos (1982, p. 434) describes the effect this shift had on American fatherhood:

Of course, fathers had always been involved in the provision of goods and services to their families; but before the nineteenth century such activity was embedded in a larger matrix of domestic sharing. With modernization, it became "differentiated" as the chief, if not the exclusive, province of adult men. Now, for the first time, the central activity of fatherhood was sited outside one's immediate household. Now being a father meant being separated from one's children for a considerable part of each working day.

Thus, 19th century fatherhood segregated men from the intimacies of the home, reduced men's motivation and opportunity to bond with their children, and placed responsibility for managing children's lives squarely in women's hands (Rotundo 1985).

The impact of this differentiation of family roles on men's lives was significant. The image of the father as "the good provider" conferred on individual fathers a special status, respect from others, deference from wives and children, and familial love (Demos 1982). Men were encouraged to define themselves in terms of their primary responsibility (their jobs), rendering family life a secondary consideration (Scanzoni 1975). Bernard (1981, p. 4) rightly argues that, by the 20th century, "success in the good provider role came to define masculinity itself". This strict separation of men's and women's work left little room for men's participation in the daily lives of their children.

The third broad period in American fatherhood began in the early 20th century, as family experts began to worry about the potential feminizing influence that the increasingly female managed family life might have on young men. Because the domestic sphere was seen as being a woman's realm, family experts began to publicly call for fathers to increase their interaction with sons in particular. Fathers were encouraged to become role models for

their children, and to increase their time spent with them. This did not mean that fathers were expected to be doing children's laundry, cooking for them, or being children's chauffeurs. Most men still considered these kinds of tasks women's work. However, as Griswold (1993) notes, men were increasingly expected to foster creativity and individualism in their children, and especially proper sex-role identification. Fathers were encouraged to take time from their busy schedules to play sports and engage in hobbies or other diversions with their children, building a sense of trust, affection and companionship with them (Griswold 1997). In this way, there emerged a tenuous connection to family life for fathers in this period. As the mid-20th century approached, images of dads as their children's "buddies" became more common, yet fathers faced a number of contradictory messages about breadwinning, achievement, sex-role modeling, and parental involvement which led most fathers to continue to feel disconnected from the emotional currents of daily family life.

World War II only intensified the concerns of family experts about the father's role in the family as fathers were increasingly drafted into the military and sent overseas. During the war, psychologists asserted the "psychological indispensability" of fathers and urged mothers to keep absent fathers present in children's lives (Griswold 1997, p.81). As fathers returned to their lives after the war, fathers found their role in family life becoming even more elaborate. While breadwinning continued to be of primary significance, experts in the 1950s and 1960s articulated a view of fathers as capable and necessary for the production of well-adjusted children. More involved fathering began to be seen as an antidote to social disorder in a society that was becoming increasingly anxious about the cold war and the emerging sexual revolution. Even so, it is important to note the very narrow range of activity proscribed to fathers, which was centered on play and leisure activities. Even with

the increased emphasis on fathers as necessary sex-role models, there was little or no cultural support for fathers to assume the host of routine tasks mothers performed for children.

The increase in women's participation in paid labor since the 1960, however, upset this division of paid and domestic labor and put renewed pressure on men to become more involved in family life. Women's paid work and contributions to the family economy began to increasingly challenge the ideology of breadwinning as a justification for men's limited involvement in domestic matters during the 1960s and thereafter. Women's involvement in paid work and their contributions to the family economy also encouraged some to feel more entitled to help from their partners with housework and childcare. Increasingly, women's gains outside the home raised questions about the appropriateness of men's traditional lack of involvement in routine domestic labor and challenged the ideological and structural foundations of fatherhood and masculinity. Yet the division of family work has proven to be highly resistant to change.

Thus with the 1960s began a contentious period in American fatherhood, one that continues to the present. American couples have been engaging in what Thompson and Walker (1989, p.859) call an "ambivalent struggle" where men are reluctant to take on more family work and women are reluctant to give it up, even in the face of women's increasing rate of employment in paid work. Men's justifications for their lack of involvement in routine domestic work have often hinged on claims that men aren't trained to do domestic work and hands-on routine childcare, that women's standards are too high, or that they simply lack sufficient time (Allen and Hawkins 1999, Hochschild 1994).

Women, too, appear to feel ambivalent about increasing men's involvement in childcare, in particular, because of the continuing cultural glorification of motherhood and

the belief that "all women need to be mothers, all mothers need their children, and all children need their mothers" (Oakley 1976). Household labor and childcare are still symbolically and structurally identified with women by the larger society, and men's parenting competency continues to be viewed with suspicion. The monopoly women have held over the emotional and practical responsibilities of family work since Victorian times is something many can be expected to continue to cherish, and is an integral part of women's traditional power in the home (Allen and Hawkins 1999). As Thompson and Walker (1989, p.855) note, "family work is intermingled with love and embedded in family relations" and has been an important basis for women's self esteem and satisfaction. Breadwinning has traditionally worked in a similar fashion for men. The more men and women collaboratively share childcare and housework, the more they may fear losing their traditional bases of power, their self respect and their identities as men or women.

The history of fatherhood sketched out above is necessarily a simplistic view. Changes in fatherhood did not happen all at once, nor did they occur evenly across social groups. Variation in the cultural images associated with masculinity and in specific fatherhood practices by race, class, ethnicity, and region further complicate the story. Social change is necessarily uneven and localized before becoming broadly apparent and more global in reach. Keeping this qualification in mind, a number of important points about the shifts in the culture of fatherhood are worth noting. First, fatherhood practices in each historical period appear to be tightly bound to the predominant cultural views of men's and women's inherent differences (Coltrane 1996). The cultural notions of masculinity and femininity are themselves tied tightly to existing economic patterns, and change as men and women come to play different roles in the overall economy. This can be seen clearly in the

transition from the agricultural production centered in the home to industrial production separated from the household. According to historical accounts (Griswold 1993), this transition and the attendant rise of market capitalism prompted the development of the Victorian ideal of separate gender spheres.

Second, public fears of men's emasculation appear to have increased as fathers spent more time breadwinning and less time at home and as men's authority over the household eroded. As separate gender spheres became entrenched and women's authority over the children and the household became more complete, men's participation in fraternal orders like the Odd Fellows and the Freemasons grew substantially, popular descriptions of male heroes shifted from emphasizing piety, thriftiness, and industry to an emphasis on vigor, toughness, and mastery, and organizations like the Boy Scouts emerged to ensure that boys were properly turned into "red blooded, moral, manly men" (Kimmel 1987; Hantover 1989, cited in Coltrane 1996). As women made gains in employment and the legal arena, fears of men's emasculation appear to have intensified, leading men to agitate through labor unions for legislation and job protections that would curb women's ability to compete for rewarding jobs and ensure that women remained financially dependent on their husbands (Bose 1987).

Finally, regardless of the specific historical arrangements, the normative allocation of productive and reproductive work within each period tended to preserve and promote men's interests over women's (Connell 1987). Men's access to and success in the labor market is tied to the division of labor at home and its ideological justifications. In a practical sense, men as workers and as employers have historically benefited from women's unpaid labor at home. As workers, men have benefited from less competition for jobs and higher wages. As employers, men have been able to secure the hidden reproductive labor of women who care

for and maintain their male employees. And as the home shifted from being organized around economic production to consumption, employers have benefited from having women become the primary household consumers (Hartmann 1976, Sokoloff 1980). Men have also benefited from the lower wages paid to women in that they are able to leverage their greater economic power in romantic and marital relationships, using their greater earning power to attract and keep mates and to get out of doing less pleasant tasks at home (Blumberg & Coleman 1989).

2.2.1 Involved Fathering

As the above discussion suggests, involved fathering – where men bear joint responsibility for managing the lives of their children and actively engage in their routine care – is contested terrain. To begin with, involved fathering is distinct from mothers' in that it has been, and still is, a largely optional activity (Coltrane 2000). In American culture fathers are given a good deal more leeway in their commitment to parenting, their identification with the parenting role, and their competence in performing parenting tasks because of the traditional emphasis on men's breadwinning (Daly 1995). This makes involved fathering "uniquely sensitive to contextual influences, both interpersonal and environmental" (Doherty et al. 1998, p.289), suggesting that fathers are more or less likely to do childcare based on the specific conditions in which they are parenting. Where sufficient supports and incentives exist, involved fathering may take root. In their absence, breadwinning is the expected default. Given that American culture is more permissive toward fathering than mothering, understanding which specific conditions lead men to be more actively involved with their children becomes an important task. This isn't to suggest

that mothering isn't contextually sensitive, but rather that the existing cultural mandate that women be mothers - because they have been culturally defined as being uniquely and naturally suited for it - places tighter restrictions on the mother-child relationship regardless of the specific conditions in which it exists.

The latitude that fathers receive as they perform as fathers stems partly from the cultural ambivalence surrounding fatherhood and men's involvement in family life in general. In part because of the sweeping changes that have occurred in American family life, the cultural image of the father's role in families has fluctuated substantially over time, as noted above. However, as early as the 1930s and particularly since the 1970s, social expectations for fathers have been changing. Those expectations have expanded beyond the "good provider" role (Bernard 1981) toward a co-parent model of fathering which includes childcare and nurturing as responsibilities to be equally shared along with mothers.

The idea of the co-parent father is partly a response to feminism, the growth in mothers' employment, and to the increasing demands from employed mothers that husbands share in housework and childcare (Pleck & Pleck 1997). It has emerged only within the last two decades as a serious alternative to traditional breadwinning fatherhood and appeared first among the highly educated and among middle-class families (Palkovitz, Chistiansen, and Dunn 1998). Rotundo (1985, p. 17) offers a vivid description of this "new fatherhood" ideal:

This emerging form of fatherhood can at least be outlined. As part of the evolving style, a good father is an active participant in the details of day-to-day child care. He involves himself in a more intimate and expressive way with his children, and he plays a larger part in the socialization process that his male forebears had long since abandoned to their wives. In short, the new style of parenting blurs the distinctions between fatherhood and motherhood.

Thus the cultural image of the involved father encourages men to behave more like mothers, taking in increased responsibility for managing children's lives and engaging more directly in the routine care required for their upkeep.

Yet even as this new model of fatherhood emerges, the older cultural model of fathers as breadwinners has not disappeared, and now multiple cultural models of fathering are competing for men's attention in what continues to be a rapidly changing social and economic environment. Much of the current political and intellectual debate about fatherhood is focused specifically on the decline of traditional breadwinning and the alternative modes of fathering that are emerging in its place, with some commentators (Blankenhorn 1995, Popenoe 1996) lamenting its decline and warning of dire social consequences. Not all men, however, are able to operate in their families as primary breadwinners and "good providers". Economic and racial inequalities, in particular, complicate our understanding of contemporary masculinity and fatherhood. They form part of the context in which masculinity is constructed, and there is much evidence to suggest that masculinity is constructed somewhat differently across the many permutations of race, ethnicity, and class that exist in contemporary society (Connell 1987, 1995, Donaldson 1993, Messerschmidt 1993). Inequalities among men help to create a situation where some men, because of either advantaged or disadvantaged positions relative to others, are either unable to fulfill or seek to abandon the traditional mode of fathering in favor of a variety of alternatives (Zinn 1989, 1990, Gerson 1994, Rubin 1994). Involved fathering, or co-parenting, is one such alternative, as is becoming a "deadbeat dad" or absent father.

Even as this different set of expectations for fathers' involvement emerges - however unevenly - everyday life for fathers seems to have undergone only modest change (LaRossa

1988). In the aggregate, fathers still spend significantly less time than mothers in childcare and nurturing activities (Acock & Demo 1994, Biller 1993, Pleck 1997, Yeung et al. 2001), lending some support to the view that these ongoing cultural changes are being met with a measure of ambivalence and resistance within individual families. The co-parent model of fatherhood clearly prescribes higher levels of participation than fathers are currently achieving. So to the extent that it gains standing among families as the appropriate model of fatherhood, we should expect mothers and fathers to experience some sense of dissonance, feelings of frustration or guilt, and increasing pressure to reduce the chasm between the culture and the conduct of fatherhood.

2.2.2 Father Involvement: Conceptualization and Estimates

When academic research on fatherhood began in the 1970s, its primary focus was on the effect of father presence versus absence on children's development and on father's competence as caregivers. Finding that fathers spent significantly less time with children than mothers (Kotelchuck 1976) and that fathers behaved much like mothers do with children when circumstances warranted (Parke and O'Leary 1976), studies then began to examine a wide variety of father-child interactions (like warmth, control, sex role modeling, playfulness, and independence training), often with little coherence. Then Lamb and colleagues (1985, 1987) introduced a content-neutral approach to assessing father involvement that included three components: (1) paternal engagement, which involves direct caregiving, leisure, or play; (2) paternal accessibility, or being available to the child without being directly engaged; and (3) paternal responsibility, knowing what the child needs and making decisions about how to respond. With the advent of this paternal involvement

construct, subsequent research began to focus on the extent of father involvement, both in absolute terms and relative to that of mothers.

In terms of absolute levels of involvement, recent estimates show fathers engaged with their children about 2 to 2.5 hours a day on weekdays and anywhere from 3.3 to 6.5 hours a day on weekends (McBride & Mills 1993, Yeung et al. 2001). Estimates of fathers' accessibility to their children range from about 2.8 to 4.9 hours per day on weekdays and from 3.5 to 9.8 hours per day on weekends (McBride & Mills 1993, Yeung et al. 2001). Interestingly, longitudinal research using time diary data by Sandberg & Hofferth (1999) shows that most of the increase in the absolute time fathers spent with children occurred prior to the 1980s. Since the early 1980s, father's time spent with children has not substantially changed.

Studies examining men's parental involvement, relative to that of mothers, does show an increase in men's involvement over time. In Pleck's (1997) review of studies conducted across the 1980s and early 1990s, fathers' proportional engagement was roughly two-fifths (43.7%) that of mothers and their accessibility was about two-thirds (65.6%) of mothers. The most recent estimates using time diary data place fathers' total engagement between 60 percent and 82 percent of that of mothers on weekdays and between 80 percent and 94 percent of that of mothers on weekends (Yeung et al. 2001).¹ It is important to recognize that most of the change in this proportional measure is due to the decrease in mothers absolute time spent in childcare activities over the same time period.

Only a few studies have examined the degree to which fathers take responsibility for managing their children's lives by making plans and arrangements for their children's care.

¹ Exact estimates of fathers' involvement vary widely, in part because of the use of different samples of fathers, the ages of children studied, and the exact methods used to assess paternal involvement.

They find that fathers' average share of responsibility for children is lower than mothers' (Leslie, Anderson, and Branson 1991, McBride and Mills 1993, Peterson and Gerson 1992), and that father's share of responsibility is also lower than their share of direct engagement or accessibility (McBride and Mills 1993). More recently, Yeung (1999) notes that self-reports of parental responsibility from mothers and fathers show that fathers think they are sharing such responsibilities more than mothers think fathers are sharing. When considering activities like choosing children's daily activities, selecting a childcare or school setting, or selecting a child's pediatrician and making appointments, fathers report a moderate level of sharing such responsibilities (80%, 67%, and 29% respectively), whereas mothers report lower levels of sharing by fathers (66%, 50%, and 20% respectively) and are more likely to report that they (mothers) alone bear full responsibility for these tasks (32%, 48%, and 79% respectively). That such disagreements exist is to be expected, and mirrors the "reporting gap" in self reports of other kinds of household labor, where fathers appear to over-report their own involvement and mothers under-report fathers' involvement (Granbois and Willett 1970, Press and Townsley 1998). Such differences may reflect simple random error (Granbois and Willett 1970), recall or memory problems (Hill 1985), better information possessed by wives who do the most domestic labor (Berk and Shih 1980), or a gendered social desirability response bias where men inflate reports of their own labor to mirror increasingly egalitarian gender attitudes held by the wider society (Press and Townsley 1998).

Because this three-part assessment of father involvement proposed by Lamb et al. (1985, 1987) is focused on level of involvement rather than kind of involvement, it is particularly well suited for studies seeking to address issues of gender equality and

distributional fairness in the household division of labor. This method of assessing the quantity of father involvement, however, is drawing some criticism, partly because it does not consider the quality or nature of men's involvement with their children, and partly because it promotes a deficit approach to assessing father involvement by highlighting what fathers aren't doing. Palkovitz (1997, 2002), in particular, argues that studies which use this kind of assessment take for granted the idea that "more is better," neglecting to consider that what men do with their kids may be as important as how much, and suggests that researchers need to consider more fully what constitutes "good fathering," especially in terms of its impact on child development. Because my interest in father involvement for this study is predominantly motivated by a desire to understand how parents negotiate an equitable division of labor and to understand how access to economic resources might promote or inhibit greater father involvement, such criticism aren't particularly worrisome.

There has also been some recent work that focuses on determining whether there are qualitatively different kinds of fathers rather than focusing on the pervasiveness or effect of particular discrete kinds of fathering behaviors. Jain et al. (1996) used cluster analysis on a small purposive sample to generate natural groupings of fathers and then used discriminant analysis to confirm the predictive power of these groupings. They determined that fathers can be effectively categorized into two primary groups: 1) progressive-involved fathers, who report higher levels of direct caretaking, playing and teaching behavior, and 2) traditional-uninvolved fathers, who are either largely disengaged from their children or confine their involvement to issues of discipline and control. Moreover, they find that such fathers can be distinguished by a number of antecedents of parenting behavior: progressive-involved fathers were more likely to be of higher social status, reported lower levels of neuroticism and daily

hassles, and were more likely to trust in the dependability of others than were traditional-uninvolved fathers. While the use of a small (n=69) purposive sample like the one used by Jain and colleagues is problematic, the fact that their categorization of fathers mirrors the larger cultural divide emerging between co-parenting fatherhood and traditional breadwinning fatherhood lends some credence to their results.

2.3 Theoretical Concerns: Human Capital and Gender Display

A variety of theoretical explanations have been offered for men's involvement in household labor in general, and for men's parental involvement in particular. Coltrane (2000) sorts existing explanations into six general categories: 1) economic and exchange theories, which give theoretical emphasis to how household labor is shaped by the rules of economic exchange; 2) institutional theories, which explore the constraints imposed on couples by the formal economy, informal markets, state services, and other institutions; 3) socialist-feminist theories, which locate women's oppression in the dual systems of capitalism and patriarchy; 4) morality theories, which tend to revolve around issues of whether women are uniquely qualified to perform family labor; 5) life course theories, which are a rather loose conglomeration of hypotheses about the effects of age, life course, and life transitions on household labor; and finally 6) gender construction theories, which give theoretical weight to the use of household labor by couples as a way to affirm and reproduce gendered selves. While the first category of theories, having to do with economic exchange, has tended to dominate the research agenda (Brines 1994), the last category of theories having to do with gender construction is beginning to gain ground (Shelton & John 1996).

That one of the predominant theories used to explain father involvement is based on economic theory is not surprising given the preceding historical arguments connecting changes in fatherhood to changes in the economy. However, for reasons that will be clearer in a moment, an economic theory of father involvement that bases its predictions on principles of exchange alone is insufficient. It must necessarily be supplemented with ideas that more clearly articulate the dual nature of family labor as both productive in an instrumental sense, and as a principal site in the production of gendered selves. The present study makes use of both economic theory and gender construction theory as a backdrop for understanding how access to economic resources affects men's involvement in parenting.

2.3.1 Human Capital

One of the most studied explanations for the allocation of household labor is the economic explanation, typically referred to as human capital theory. The economist Becker (1981), basing his arguments on classical economic theory, argues that men and women trade off spending time in paid labor and housework, based on decisions about how to get the most out of the time spent in each activity. Assuming that couples make decisions for the good of the entire family, couples are expected to spend time in the activities at which they are most efficient. To the extent there is an unequal division of labor between spouses, it is thought to arise from differences in productive efficiency. Because men are assumed to prefer paid labor, they are expected to invest more time in it and become most efficient at it. Because women are assumed to be biologically committed to childbirth and childcare, they are expected to develop a preference for and productive efficiency at household labor. Thus the theoretical linchpin in human capital theory is the idea of labor specialization (Coltrane

1996). Because time is assumed to be traded in a zero-sum fashion, maximizing the household's well-being requires spouses to specialize in the labor at which they are most productive. As one spouse's paid labor time becomes more valuable, it puts pressure on the other spouse to perform more household labor. Because having children creates a great deal of demand for both household and paid labor, the more children couples have, the more specialized their division of labor should become.

In practice, a person's investment in human capital is generally assessed using indicators associated with paid work. Level of education, whether one is employed or not, how long one has been employed, and whether one is working full-time or part-time are the most consistently used measures of human capital investment (Bergen 1991). Men who have a greater investment in these forms of human capital are predicted to earn higher wages, spend more time in paid labor, and do less household labor and childcare. Likewise, men who have less investment in human capital are expected to earn lower wages, work fewer hours, and do more household labor and childcare, simply because their paid labor time is less productive. Stated differently, the better a provider a man is, the less time he should devote to childcare. Thus the relationship between economic provision and childcare labor should be straightforwardly inverse.

Empirical tests of human capital theory on father involvement have generally only offered mixed support for its hypotheses (Coltrane 1996, Petersen & Gerson 1992). Counter to the expectations of human capital theory, most studies find that fathers with higher levels of education have higher levels of involvement rather than lower, while mothers' level of education has no discernable effect (Pleck 1997). Similarly, Hofferth (2003) found that men spend less time engaged with their children and take less responsibility for them when their

wives are supporting them. Also, Petersen and Gerson (1992) found in their study of the NLS cohort of 1972 that as demand for childcare labor increased (as the number of children in the household rose) the household division of labor became less specialized, not more so, as men increased their time spent in childcare. Gender construction theory, which focuses on the ways in which the relationships and social contexts in which people are embedded provide them opportunities to construct and sustain their views of themselves as appropriately gendered people, provides clues as to why human capital theory often fails to explain men's paternal involvement.

2.3.2 Gender Construction

Gender, from a social-constructionist point of view, isn't naturally or biologically determined, but is an accomplishment. People "do gender" through their interactions with others, acting to make their behavior seem gender appropriate whatever the context (West and Zimmerman 1987). And according to the theory this isn't an optional activity. People are held accountable by others for how they perform gender. So while gender the boundaries that differentiate men and women are breachable, people tend to go along with the gender norms that they are exposed to because of socialization, the weight of morality, and immediate social pressure (Lorber 1994). These cumulative performances of gender help to create a society that is gendered structurally and institutionally (Risman 1998), and that favors some men's interests over those of women and other less advantaged men (Connell 1987, 1995).

Family work provides people with a prime opportunity to enact or display gender because of the plethora of cultural prescriptions about the appropriateness of men and women

doing different kinds household labor. The doing of household chores and childcare allows people the opportunity to reaffirm their gendered view of themselves and their gendered relationship to the outside world (Allen and Hawkins 1999, Berk 1985, Potuchek 1992). Couples may negotiate, bargain, coerce, collude, delegate, manage or relinquish different aspects of family work and child care in order to maintain the expected gender specialization, irrespective of its productive efficiency, financial payoff, or effects on their individual well-being or marital satisfaction. Thus childcare serves a dual purpose, producing both goods or services and gender, because culturally it is associated with "women's work," while economic provisioning does the same because of its association with "men's work". From this point of view, men and women are expected to perform family duties that are gender appropriate to the extent that it is possible, and when it is not possible men and women are expected to seek ways to compensate for their inability to perform family duties in a gender appropriate way. That is, couples should be expected to engage in some form of deviance neutralization when their division of childcare labor is non-normative (Greenstein 2000).²

For men with sufficient incomes, who are able to be providers for their families, the predictions of the display perspective mimic those of human capital theory: these men should attempt to minimize their involvement in childcare as their time in paid labor increases. But for men who lack sufficient resources to be adequate providers, who are themselves dependent on their spouse's for support, the predictions of the gender construction perspective contradict those of the human capital perspective: these men should attempt to minimize their involvement in childcare to an even greater extent in compensation for their

² Whether the pressure to engage in deviance neutralization is uniform across both men and women is a matter of continuing debate. Brines (1994) argues that women feel less threatened by non-normative gender-role enactment than do men, while Greenstein (2000) finds the argument for uniformity more compelling. Empirically, the difference seems to hinge on whether absolute or relative measures of household labor are used as the dependent variable during analysis.

economic dependency. Thus the relationship between economic provision and childcare labor should be more curvilinear in form, where both low and high levels of provision are associated with lower levels of childcare, and moderate levels of provision are associated with moderate levels of childcare labor. It is important to note, however, that both theories largely leave unanswered the question of what happens to men's involvement in childcare when families' economic resources are insufficient, irrespective of which parent the primary earner happens to be.

2.4 Mid-Range Explanations: Marital Power, Time Availability, and Gender Ideology

The above two theories of how couples arrive at a division of parenting duties are fairly general in nature. Yet implicitly or explicitly they make use of a number of more specific, "mid-range" concepts that serve as the primary drivers of couples' allocation of childcare labor. The three most commonly referenced predictors of the household division of labor are: (1) marital power, usually operationalized in terms of an imbalance in relative resources between parents; (2) time availability, which considers the level of demand for household labor and the time available to do it; and (3) gender ideology, the attitudes or beliefs couples have been socialized to hold about who should do what kind of labor. These three mid-range explanations are proximate in the sense that they appear to have the most direct, unmediated effect on household labor allocation. Each indicates a slightly different way mothers and fathers may use what resources they have to negotiate or bargain for the division of household labor they desire. For instance, concerns about who holds power in a relationship focus our attention on fathers' and mothers' ability to force their desired division of labor on the weaker partner. Looking at issues of time availability concentrates our

attention on parents' ability to leverage their other time commitments as a way of gaining a favorable allocation of family work. While paying attention to people's beliefs about gender and the cultural suitability of different ways of dividing childcare and household labor draws our attention to the ways in which people have been socialized to expect certain family arrangements and work to enact them in their own circumstances. In the sections that follow, I will describe how each of these explanations has generally been described, the empirical support that exists for each, and how I intend to modify and apply these explanations as I explore how access to economic resources and cultural changes in fatherhood affect men's level of parental involvement. Because most research has treated childcare as a component of household labor, researchers have tended to use the same basic approach to exploring and accounting for their performance (Aldous et al. 1998). This means that the typical explanations for fathering that exist in the literature are quite similar to those given for the overall household division of labor. Given that fathering, in particular, has received much less systematic investigation than other types of household labor, I will, in the discussions to follow, supplement what is directly known about fathering with what is known about household labor more generally.

It is important to re-iterate here at the outset that the traditional focus of each of these mid-range explanations has been on how couples' use what resources and constraints they each bring to the family to negotiate a favorable household division of labor. However, as will become apparent below in the extended discussion of these explanations, there is little consideration of whether the family's resources are sufficient to meet their needs or how those resources, where sufficient, might be used in other ways to alter the demand for parents' child care labor.

2.4.1 Marital Power

The basic idea behind the consideration of marital power here is that the person with the most power in the marriage will likely do the least household labor (Coltrane 1996, Coverman 1985, Shelton and John 1996). While marital power may be derived from any number of sources, most researchers agree that economic power is fundamental to power in marriage (Blumberg & Coleman 1989). Thus, any consideration of the effects marital power on household labor tends to focus on the relative resources spouses bring to the relationship, where the resources considered are generally those that reflect socioeconomic status in the larger society. Using those resources, the person with the most power then negotiates himself or herself out of housework and childcare (Blood and Wolfe 1960, Brines 1994).

Researchers generally ask each parent how much money they earn in a year and then compute a relative income measure that compares the two, such as the ratio of husband-to-wife earnings, the percentage of household income earned by one spouse, or the dollar difference between spouse's incomes.³ Evaluations of this explanation for the division of household labor yield fairly consistent results. Most researchers find that the smaller the gap between husbands' and wives' earnings, the more equal the division of household labor (Blair & Lichter 1991, Brayfield 1995, Kamo 1991, 1994, Presser 1994, Shelton & John 1993, Greenstein 2000).

While the above description of marital power applies to household labor in general, the results of studies that explore the impact of relative resources specifically on father involvement have generally found there to be no consistent relationship (see Pleck 1997 for a

³ Brines (1994) operationalizes relative resources somewhat differently in terms of economic dependency, defined as the difference between spouses incomes divided by the total of their combined incomes. As Greenstein (2000) points out, this specification is perfectly correlated with the more common specification of the father's or mother's income as a proportion of their joint income, and therefore offers no additional analytic leverage.

review), although there are a few studies which offer weak indications that men's involvement in childcare is related to their economic dependence on their wives. Glass (1998) using data from a longitudinal study of 324 women employed at least part-time during their 1st trimester of pregnancy found fathers were more likely to provide large amounts of care when most of their income was provided by mothers. Yeung and colleagues (2001) using data from the Child Development Supplement to the PSID, found that mothers' income had little overall impact on fathers' involvement, except when mothers contribute half or more of the total family income. Only then do fathers increase their involvement, although only by about 10 minutes and only on weekdays. Yet there is a corresponding decrease in the amount of time fathers spend with children playing, effectively redistributing the activities fathers engage in, but producing no net change in total time involved. However, most recently, Hofferth (2003) using the same CDS data finds that fathers in families where only mothers are employed spend less time directly engaged with children and take less responsibility for managing their lives than do fathers in male breadwinner or dual-earner families. This suggests the possibility that unemployed men may attempt to compensate for their inadequacy as family providers by withdrawing from domestic duties.

One problem with this whole approach to examining the effect of relative resources, in both studies of household labor and of childcare allotment, is the reliance on measures of current income as a proxy for economic power. Reliance on current relative income suggests that researchers believe that couples are making relatively short-term decisions about who's in charge and who does what - adjusting the division of labor as the balance of current income fluctuates. To the extent that couples' incomes are unstable, so too will their allocation of childcare be unstable. An alternate way of conceptualizing couples' decision

making is to assume that couples' make long-term decisions about marital power and household labor, adjusting the division of labor only when there appears to be a long-term shift in one or the other spouse's economic power. That is, couples will tend to ignore or overlook deviations income and the resulting economic power balance that they expect to be short-lived. Relying entirely on current income to construct measures of relative resources makes it impossible to tell both whether the current power arrangement is a long-term one or just a temporary deviation and whether any effect on the division of labor is due to the long-term trend or some short-lived deviation from it.

A potential solution to this problem is to consider both current and long-term or “permanent” income when constructing measures of relative resources. The argument underlying the use of permanent income suggests that economic decisions and negotiations of household labor involve both short-term and long-term considerations. Behaviorally, I think it is useful to think of these long-term considerations as structurally or institutionally supported habits. Following Giddens (1979, 1984), I take habit to mean a day-to-day continuity in action, or a routine, that is largely unmotivated because it is taken-for-granted. A measure of marital power based on permanent income should, I think, tap into this routinization of the exercise of power in marriage. Short-term fluctuations are unproblematic to the extent that they approximate what is routine and taken-for-granted. Thus we should expect the effects of a measure of marital power based on current income to mirror those of a long-term measure to the extent that the two closely correspond, deviating in quantity somewhat but not quality. However, if they diverge significantly, especially in ways that suggest a qualitative change, they may denote what Giddens (1979, 1984) calls a 'critical situation,' where there is a radical disturbance in the typical routine that calls into question

the suitability of current arrangements. So there is a need to assess the difference between the short-term and long-term balance of marital power, as represented by current and permanent income, especially if the difference represents a fundamental shift not just in degree but also in the nature of the provider/dependency relationship among partners. As far as I am aware, the only study of household labor that has yet made this distinction is Brines (1994), although she does not use the language I adopt here. Brines computes a measure of economic providership/dependency using both current income and long-term (3 year average) income and estimates the effects on household labor in separate models, finding that both current and long-term income measures produce similar effects. Unfortunately, Brines doesn't investigate the potential effects of differences between current and long-term/permanent income measures, an oversight I hope to address.

Additionally, while each parent's marital power is primarily rooted in their share of household income, it is not the only basis of such power, especially for women. Because domestic labor, including childcare, is still largely defined as women's work, it may also provide women with some degree of power over what occurs inside the home. Women's responsibility for and control over family work, to the degree that it supports women's sense of self-respect as women, may create incentives for them to resist fathers' attempts to become more involved. Mothers have been found to engage in a variety of gate-keeping behaviors - such as criticizing fathers' work, redoing task, and setting unbending standards - intended to reinforce and protect their own authority in the home (Allen and Hawkins 1999). Yet empirical evidence of maternal gate-keeping is stronger for divorced couples than for two-parent co-resident families (Pleck 1997) and likely hinges on mothers' beliefs about their own and their partner's inherent competence for nurturing children. Put differently, the degree to

which mothers resist fathers' attempts to increase their responsibility and involvement with children may depend on their own gender ideologies.

Fathers' ability to resist the gate-keeping efforts of mothers likely depends on their willingness to break out of the pattern prescribed by the culture of motherhood that continues to tower above American parenting behavior. Diehart and Daly (1997) suggest that fathers need to be willing to take responsibility for learning parenting skills themselves, rather than simply relying on mothers to teach them. This may mean being willing to experiment for themselves, away from the scrutiny of mothers, or taking a parenting class, or reading childcare literature. Similarly, fathers may need to be willing to challenge their partner's expertise with children in particular situations, demonstrating that they have strong ideas about how to handle them, rather than simply acceding responsibility for children to mothers. Developing some kind of childcare related specialization may also benefit fathers attempting to diffuse mothers' resistance to their involvement. In either case, the idea that women are the natural repositories of appropriate parenting weakens, creating space for fathers to increase their involvement and become primary parents in their own right rather than simply mothers' helpers.

2.4.2 Demand and Time Availability

As Coltrane (1996) notes, the use of time availability to explain who does what is hardly a full-blown theory of household labor allocation, although it does heavily inform human capital theory. At base, it reflects an important practical consideration in couples' division of household labor and is usually conceptualized as one of the most proximate sources of the allocation of household labor. Whether labeled the time availability

hypothesis (Hiller 1984), the demand/response capability hypothesis (Coverman 1985), or the situational view (England & Farkas 1986), this explanation for household labor allocation characterizes the division of labor as the result of husbands' and wives' other time commitments. They do household labor and childcare to the extent that there is a demand for it and they have the time available to do it, assuming that time spent in paid labor is unavailable for household labor. The most commonly used indicators of demand for household labor and the time available to do it are: employment or weekly hours worked, the presence or number of children and their age and sex, and work schedule (Coltrane 1996, Shelton & John 1996).

In a similar vein, Dienhart and Daly (1997) recently argued that the "culture of work" is one of the most serious impediments involved fathering. Fathers' lack of involvement at home is often justified through their involvement in their jobs, where paid employment can be an excuse to opt out of housework and childcare. It is clear that fathers parent under the shadow of the good provider role regardless of whether or not they personally embrace it, and they feel pressure to be employed in jobs that pay living wages, provide benefits, and offer job stability (Palkovitz 2002). Career advancement and job stability may take on new meaning for men once they become fathers, pulling them toward longer hours, greater consistency, and the desire to prove their loyalty to their employers. And although corporate policy in the U.S. may be officially characterized as "family friendly," it appears that unwritten rules and pressure from coworkers clearly convey to fathers that they shouldn't take paternity leave or be too involved with their families. If they do, they are likely to be viewed as uncommitted to their jobs - or worse, be viewed as overly feminine (Hwang 1987, Pleck 1993).

This pressure to invest time in the greedy institution of work is likely also heightened for fathers because of ongoing wage discrimination against women and because women often restrict their own paid labor when they have children. Currently, women earn an average of 79 cents for every dollar earned by men, a figure that has increased only slightly in the last decade, mostly because men's wages have dropped. At the same time, women often opt out of work when they become mothers, reducing family income precisely when there is increased financial need. To offset women's lower wages, or the loss of mothers' income altogether, many fathers appear to increase their commitment to and time spent at work (Belsky and Kelley 1994).

When considering parents' time investments, we also have to consider their access to recreation and leisure. While recreation and leisure are often overshadowed by concerns about how mothers and fathers balance their commitment to paid work and domestic duties, they play an important role in people's lives. Leisure also embodies a cultural contradiction of sorts in that it is often viewed as a reward for hard work, but is ignored when there isn't enough time to meet the responsibilities of paid work and childcare. Men, because the traditional good provider role separates their work life from their home life, have generally felt more entitled to leisure, and have had greater access to "time off" from work (Cyba 1992, Dienhart and Daly 1997, Hochschild 1989, Shaw 1992). In contrast, women have generally found it harder to separate work and leisure. This is especially true for housewives, whose daily demands often prove to be "fluid, seamless, and inclusive" (Firestone and Shelton 1994). Even women who engage in paid labor outside the home often find it difficult to pursue recreation and leisure because of their responsibility for the "second shift" and the attendant feeling that their work is never done (Hochschild 1989).

Most studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s on general household labor found that husbands of employed wives spent little or no more time in housework than husbands of housewives (Coltrane 1996, Hochschild 1994). That is, husbands' and wives' time is not traded in an equal fashion. On the other hand, many studies find that the presence, number, and age of children do predict men's participation in family labor. The more children and the younger those children are, the more hours husbands tend to spend in housework and childcare. Heightened demand for additional childcare labor from fathers seems to matter.

Studies that have specifically explored the time availability hypothesis for father involvement have generated results similar to those reported for household labor in general. While mothers' employment does lead to a proportional increase in men's parental involvement, it does not seem to result in much of an increase in men's absolute involvement (Bailey 1991, Blair et al. 1994, McBride & Mills 1993, Gotfried et al. 1988, Pleck 1985, see Pleck 1997 for a review). However, the mother's employment schedule does matter when predicting fathers' childcare activity (Brayfield 1995). Fathers are more likely to do childcare when mothers work part-time rather than full-time (Barnett & Baruch 1987, 1988, Presser 1986, 1988, 1989) and when mothers work non-day shifts (Nock & Kingston 1988, Presser 1986, 1988, 1989). However, if mothers work a variable or rotating shift it discourages fathers from spending time in childcare (Pleck & Staines 1985).

Prior research also indicates that a father's employment schedule also influences his time spent in childcare, with fathers who work weekend or non-day shifts spending less time involved with their children (Davis & Sanik 1991, Nock & Kingston 1988, Pleck & Staines 1985, Staines & Pleck 1983). However, there is little agreement over whether fathers' own

work hours influence their own parental involvement (see Barnett & Baruch 1987, Coverman 1985, Davis & Sanik 1991, Staines & Pleck 1983).

As for the demand for men's parental involvement, recent studies have generally found that fathers are more involved with sons than with daughters (Amato 1987, Barnett & Baruch 1987, Blair, Weak & Hardesty 1994, Goldschieder & Waite 1991, Harris & Morgan 1991, Ishii-Kuntz 1994, Marsiglio 1991). Fathers are also less involved with older children (Amato 1987, Barnett & Baruch 1987, Marsiglio 1991, Pleck 1985). And finally, contrary to the expectations of human capital theory, in families with more children, fathers tend to be more involved in childcare, though some studies find there to be no association (Barnett & Baruch 1987, Baruch & Barnett 1981, Goldscheider & Waite 1991, Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane 1992, Marsiglio 1991, Russell 1983, 1986, Radin 1994). In my view, concerns about time availability represent important controls that need to be included in models of father involvement rather than theoretically compelling issues in their own right.

2.4.3 Gender Ideology

Besides marital power and time availability/demand, the third most immediate explanation for the allocation of household labor is gender ideology. Gender ideologies can be defined as how people identify themselves with regard to marital and family roles that are traditionally linked to gender (Greenstein 1996, 2000). From this perspective, ideologies or attitudes refer more to evaluations of things or behaviors, whereas gender identities refer to self-labels that help create internalized expectations for behavior (Stryker 1980, p.54). Gender ideology hypotheses tend to argue that the ideas or beliefs about appropriate gendered behavior into which people have been socialized as children influence their later

allocation of household labor as adults (Coverman 1985). According to this explanation, men and women who espouse more egalitarian attitudes will have a more equal division of labor. Men with more traditional beliefs should spend less time in domestic labor (Huber & Spitze 1983) while the reverse is expected for women (Brayfield 1992).

The findings of studies that have explored the association between gender ideology and domestic labor are generally consistent with these expectations (see Shelton & John 1996 for a review). However the strength of the association is usually weak. Most studies find that the more egalitarian a man's ideology is, the more equal the proportional allocation of household labor (Blair & Lichter 1991, Kamo 1988, 1994, Presser 1994, Ross 1987). To the extent that there is a relationship between men's gender ideology and their proportional share of housework, it is due to the effect it has on wives' household labor time (Kamo 1991, Shelton & John 1993, Presser 1994). In addition, there is some evidence that husbands' and wives' gender ideologies interact with one another in their effect on husband's share of household labor (Greenstein 1996).

In Pleck's (1997) review of the predictors of father involvement, he notes that in many studies father involvement is higher among men with more egalitarian beliefs about women or about gender (Bailey 1991, Baruch & Barnett 1981, Blair et al. 1994, Goldscheider & Waite 1991, Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane 1992, Levant et al. 1987). However, nearly as many studies fail to find support for this relationship (Crouter et al. 1987, Marsiglio 1991, McHale & Huston 1984, Pleck 1985). There are a number of issues which might serve to cloud the expected relationship. I suspect that part of what is going on is that typical measures of gender ideology are failing to capture men's partial support for gender egalitarianism. Most such studies assess gender attitudes using a single scale that taps the

global traditionalism or progressiveness of people's attitudes. Yet such measures may not work well in discerning potential inconsistencies or contradictions in people's attitudes when, for instance, they may support a woman's right to work outside the home, but nonetheless expect her to be responsible for housework and childcare. Put differently, people's attitudes about gender may not be reducible to a single set of internally consistent principles.

Hofferth (2003) addresses this problem, using CDS data, by factor analyzing 20 gender attitude indicators into four internally consistent sub-scales which assess gender beliefs about: 1) traditional marriage, 2) traditional motherhood, 3) gender equity, and 4) individualism. In the CDS sample only men's attitudes about gender equity had any effect on their direct engagement with and responsibility for their children.

It is also likely that gender ideology indirectly influences men's parental time by mitigating the effect of women's economically based marital power. That is, beliefs about the appropriate gendered division of household labor should act as a "discount factor" against the economic power women might be able to leverage against their husbands when their incomes are competitive (Blumberg & Coleman 1989). Particularly when both spouses agree that men should be the primary providers and decision makers, women should have more difficulty invoking whatever marital power they might derive from the economic resources they bring to the marriage. In couples where spouses' gender ideologies conflict and where women are more egalitarian than their husbands, attempts at negotiating a more favorable division of labor are likely to meet resistance and generate conflict (Blumberg & Coleman 1989, Greenstein 1996, Hochschild 1989, Atkinson et al 2005).

The most common critique of studies that use gender ideology as a predictor of any sort of gendered behavior (including parental involvement) is that they conceptualize gender

too narrowly. They tend to treat gender as simply a set of beliefs to which people adhere once those beliefs are acquired through primary socialization. Studies using such attitude scales often lack predictive power because they miss what may be most important about gender - its pervasiveness. It isn't simply that people are socialized into rigid gender role or that they develop relatively fixed attitudes or deeply gendered personalities, rather, institutions are gendered, interactions between people are gendered, and individual selves are gendered (Lorber 1994, Risman 1998).

To a large extent the gender construction perspective described above addresses this critique of the use of gender ideology. It argues that people act in gendered ways not simply because they have been socialized to do so but also because they feel social pressure to do so regardless of their own personal beliefs. I think, in this respect, it is important not to discard gender ideology because of its limitations, but to think of it as part of a larger context in which fathering takes place, and to examine its effects in the midst of the other social and economic pressures which are bearing on fathers. It is my contention that men's ideological orientations toward gender and fathering are likely to influence the degree to which they use involvement in or the avoidance of childcare labor as a way of doing gender. In this project, rather than using measures of gender ideology as indicators of men's general orientations toward paid work and family work, I will use the more specific measures of men's beliefs about fatherhood, that is, their fathering ideology. I do so because I expect men's specific fathering ideologies to be more closely tied to their actual fathering behavior while at the same time capturing much of the same information that traditional gender ideology measures seek to represent.

2.5 Access to Resources: Income, Wealth and Neighborhoods

Given that men's participation in families has historically been centered on their activities as "good providers," families' economic resources are important to consider when investigating paternal involvement. Before women's substantial movement into the labor force, men's responsibilities as breadwinners secured their claims to the best jobs and pay, and to their status as heads of households. As women's labor force participation has increased, men have faced increasing pressure to become more directly involved with their children. Yet men continue to feel responsible for the economic welfare of their families; they continue to define themselves as breadwinners; and the income, wealth, and lifestyle they help provide are, in a sense, measures of their success vis-a-vis other similarly situated men (Gerson 1993). Unfortunately, relatively scant attention has been paid to families' financial situations in studies of father involvement.

Existing perspectives on parental involvement focus primarily on parents' relative access to economic resources and how such access affects the relative allotment of childcare labor between parents. This is, of course, a reasonable way to approach parental involvement, especially in a society where parents are held fundamentally responsible for managing their children's lives and providing primary care. While parents in many European countries, like France and Denmark, have access to high quality, publicly funded childcare, working parents in the U.S. struggle to arrange for adequate care (Clawson and Gerstel 2002). A recent report by the NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (1997) shows clearly that family economics are the primary determinants for the amount of non-family childcare American infants receive and the kind of such care. Clawson and Gerstel (2002, p.

30) offer good description of the hurdles American parents face regarding childcare arrangements:

Until their children start school, most U.S. parents struggle to find childcare, endure long waiting lists, and frequently change locations. They must weave a complex, often unreliable patchwork in which their children move among relatives, informal settings, and formal care, sometimes all in one day. Among three- to four-year-old children with employed mothers, more than one out of eight are in three or more childcare arrangements, and almost half are in two or more arrangements. A very small number of the wealthy hire nannies, often immigrants; more parents place their youngest children with relatives, especially grandmothers, or work alternate shifts so fathers can share childcare with mothers. Many pay kin to provide childcare – sometimes not because they prefer it, but because they cannot afford other care, and it is a way to provide jobs and income to struggling family members. For children three and older, however, the fastest growing setting in the United States is childcare centers.

In families that lack economic resources, parents may have little ability to leverage help from others outside their immediate family, which is one reason why most of the existing research has focused on factors that determine relative levels of parental involvement between mothers and fathers. But as families' economic resources increase, so does their ability to outsource some aspects of parenting. Increased access to economic resources may give parents a greater ability to substitute others' labor for their own, if they desire to do so.

Much research has demonstrated that family work, including childcare, is labor that many traditionally oriented fathers would prefer to avoid. Human capital theory and gender display theory highlight men's under-investment in parenting skill, their self-respect as family providers, and the weight of social pressure as incentives that encourage men to avoid substantial parental involvement. Having access to sufficient economic resources may also create this kind of incentive by giving men, especially breadwinning oriented men, an attractive alternative to increasing their own involvement in the face of women's increasing labor force participation. Some families may simply be able to buy-out fathers from

substantial parental involvement by putting children in other care arrangements, by being able to afford after-school enrichment programs, sports and recreational activities, or by being able to afford to live in safe, cohesive neighborhoods where neighbors can be trusted to supervise children's activities.

This view is supported by Glass' (1989) longitudinal study that found that a lack of resources and the attendant financial pressure it produces increases fathers' involvement as couples' seek ways to save money by substituting "father care" for paid childcare arrangements. Of course, this solution is more available to families with greater freedom to rearrange their work and family schedules, and becomes less viable the more families are locked into "standard" work schedules. Nonetheless, Glass' findings suggest that the absolute level of economic resources is as important to understanding fathers' involvement as are fathers' earnings relative to mothers.

To the extent that this link between parental economic resources and parenting has been made in the existing literature, it has focused mainly on issues of child development. Having greater resources means having greater ability to invest in children's development, particularly in building children's human capital. Income can enable parents to access better housing, better food, better medical care, or to find higher quality neighborhoods and higher quality schools that enhance parents' efforts to invest in their offspring (Becker and Thomes 1986, Haveman and Wolfe 1994, Mayer 1997, Yeung et al. 2002). Having wealth may also enhance parents' ability to invest in their children's development and human capital by increasing the likelihood that parents are able to bequeath their holdings to their children through inter-vivo giving and inheritance (Miller and McNamee 1998). Whether or not family economic resources are important determinants of children's development is a matter

of some continuing debate (see Mayer 1997 in particular). However, there is reason to believe that such resources not only impact children but are also likely to affect father involvement because some of the things in which parents invest are often activities or care provided by non-family members.

Existing literature also suggests that the lack of sufficient economic resources may be a source of stress that can negatively affect parenting behavior. Parents who are having difficulty providing adequate income for their families have been observed withdrawing and parenting more harshly than those who aren't under such economic stress (Elder 1974, Elder et al. 1992, Conger et al. 1993, McLoyd 1990). From this point of view, a family's stock of economic resources could be expected to affect resident fathers' parental involvement indirectly by eroding fathers' sense of well-being in ways that damage marital and parent-child relationships (Conger et al. 1992, 1993). Measures of families' objective financial situations, such as having a high debt-to-asset ratio, unstable work history, low per capita income, and the experience of income loss have all been linked to family members' reports of feeling economic pressure (Whitbeck et al. 1997). The experience of economic stress has, in turn, been empirically linked to parent's reports of negative affect (Elder 1974, Elder and Caspi 1988), depression (Elder et al. 1995, Oliver and Pomictier 1981, Warr 1984), lowered self-esteem (Baum et al. 1986), and reduced parental effectiveness (Elder et al. 1995). This path of influence is becoming relatively well established, especially for mothers' parenting, and mirrors much of the logic inherent in gender construction theory.

Simons and colleagues' (1990) work, one of the few studies to focus on both mothers' and fathers' parenting, demonstrates how low income and employment instability act as stressors and undermine effective parenting by both parents. As stressors, these

economic circumstances decrease parents' ability to create the kind of family life and opportunities they wish to provide their children. In particular, they found that high stress affected fathers' parenting by increasing fathers' depression and irritability, their sense that what they do has little impact on their children's lives (parental self-efficacy), their sense that children were difficult to raise, and by decreasing the enjoyment men received from their interactions with their children. The more irritable, unimportant, and dissatisfied men felt, the more likely they were to withdraw from parenting or to parent harshly. While they found similar effects for mothers, the effects were not as strong, leading Simons and colleagues to believe that women faced stricter constraints on their parenting because of existing normative beliefs about mothers and children. Similarly, Grimm-Thomas and Perry-Jenkins (1994), using a sample of working-class parents, find that the more negative fathers' work experiences the lower their self-esteem, and the more likely fathers are to adopt a harsh or abusive parenting style. Thus objective economic conditions are believed to impact families' subjective perceptions of stress and failure and increase the likelihood of destructive parenting for both mothers and fathers, and of avoiding or withdrawing from involvement by fathers. This line of reasoning found here in the research on the effects of economic distress on parental behavior and child well-being lend greater credence to arguments made by Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine (1992) in their study of a small purposive sample of black fathers that economic security is the foundation for men's increased parental involvement.

2.5.1 Permanent Income

In most research, economic well-being is usually cast in terms of the income that families have available to meet their needs, or in terms of their proximity to the officially

defined poverty line for households of a particular size. Access to income is quite unevenly distributed across households, and the degree of income inequality in the United States has been increasing since the early 1970s (Nielsen and Alderson 1997, U.S. Census Bureau 2000) in a pattern that has fittingly been described as the “Great U-Turn” (Harrison and Bluestone 1988). Census data released in the year 2000 show that there has been a steady rise in the Gini coefficient for household income between the years 1970 and 1993, although since 1993 there has been no statistically significant year-to-year increase.

There are a couple of reasons for this increase in inequality. To begin with, the wage gap between college-educated and less educated workers widened significantly in the 1980s and early 1990s and, consequently, there was stronger growth in incomes for families with a college-educated parent than for other families. In addition, there was a great deal of change in family composition during this period, with substantial growth in the number of single-mother families. The growth of single-mother families increased the degree of income inequality as single-mother families became increasingly likely to live in poverty (Bianchi et al. 2003, Cancian and Reed 1999, Levy 1998).

However, because single-year measures of income are somewhat unreliable, due to sometimes large between-year fluctuations, researchers are beginning to use multiple-year averages of income as proxies for what economists refer to as “permanent income” (see Duncan et al. 1994, Conley 1999, Mayer 1997 as examples). Permanent income is a concept usually found in the economics literature on consumption behavior (Friedman 1957, Modigliani & Brumberg 1954, Modigliani & Ando 1957,1963). Both the Permanent Income Hypothesis (PIH) and its variant, the Life Cycle Hypothesis (LCH), argue that consumption behavior (like investing in children’s development or purchasing childcare) is independent of

current income levels. Instead, consumption behavior depends on permanent income or lifetime earnings - the total income that an individual (or family) can expect to earn the life-course. While permanent income is a largely theoretical concept, researchers attempting to predict socioeconomic outcomes have tended to use an average of up to five years of income as a proxy (Conley 1999, Mayer 1997, Solon 1992, Zimmerman 1992). Adding more years to the five-year average does little to improve explanatory power.

From this point of view, it is useful to think of income as having two components. The first is a stable or "permanent" component and the second is an unstable or "transitory" component. Most economists believe that the transitory component of income has little effect on a family's living standard, because families will borrow against future income or draw down savings when income is low in order to keep consuming at the level of their "permanent" or stable income. Similarly, when income is higher than normal, families will pay off their debts or save rather than consuming more. Consumption behavior only changes when transitory fluctuations in income persist over time. Because measures of annual or current income include this transitory component (short-term fluctuations in income), they understate the effect of "permanent" or stable income (Mayer 1997, Solon 1992, Zimmerman 1992). Here permanent income taps into a family's ability to accumulate and spend income across years, either through borrowing or saving or through purchasing durable items during years when their incomes are higher than average (Rodgers and Rodgers, 1992). This approach is preferable, even to typical longitudinal approaches, in that it does not assume that income earned in one year can only be spent in that same year. Thus, consumption and the lifestyle it produces aren't tightly linked to current income, and using current income, even in

a longitudinal way, is likely to underestimate the link between income, consumption, and financial distress.

2.5.2 Wealth and Homeownership

Importantly, in this project, my conceptualization of economic resources focuses not only on the income available to families, but also on their assets or property and the financial leverage they may provide. As Henretta and Campbell (1978) note, sociologists have paid relatively scant attention to wealth as an indicator of economic status, favoring income, education, and occupational status instead. In family research articles from six major journals (from 1991-1993), education was the most frequently used indicator of economic status (used 71% of the time), followed by occupation and income (50% each), with area of residence (24%) and especially assets/possessions (7%) used much less frequently (Smith and Graham 1995). Yet wealth is an important determinant of life chances, and not just for the wealthy. Even modest assets, which may only provide a small addition to total family income, can provide a cushion from the shock of illness or job loss. Such assets may make it possible to pay a home mortgage, car loan or other bills for a short time, preventing an even larger economic crisis (Spilerman 2000). Moderate wealth accumulation may also reduce the need to accumulate savings, freeing up income for other consumption.

Wealth has been ignored in sociology for a number of reasons, but primarily because it doesn't fit neatly into the favored existing theoretical approaches to explaining social inequality (Henretta and Campbell 1978). Marxists, in spite of their interest in studying class distinctions and the capitalist class, have been largely unconcerned with the distribution of personal assets (like home ownership, small business proprietorships, and savings accounts),

the kind of assets generally possessed by the middle and working classes. For them, it is one's position in the sphere of production that is central rather than the assets one might accumulate as a result. Similarly, Functionalists have neglected personal possessions, wealth, and the possibility of inheritance in their explanations of social inequality because they have no place in a conceptual scheme centered on mobility generated through talent, skill and merit. Status attainment theorists, too, have ignored wealth in their studies of people's access to income, education, and occupation, even while examining the extent to which access to these resources is inherited. Put more generally, research on stratification in the U.S. has neglected wealth because it has focused almost exclusively on locating social class in the sphere of production and in labor market processes rather than in terms of consumption potential or level of consumption (Henretta and Campbell 1978, Parkin 1978, Spilerman 2000).

Part of what makes wealth important to consider is that it has several attractive characteristics not shared by income (Spilerman 2000). First, income is best conceived of as a *flow* of resources over time, whereas wealth refers to a *stock* of resources (property) owned at a particular point in time. Second, income generated by wealth does not require the same tradeoff between time spent working and time spent in leisure activity - there is no cost in the form of a forgone alternative use of time. Third, the income flow generated by wealth does not fluctuate due to illness or unemployment, as is the case with income (although it likely fluctuates due to cycles of economic expansion and contraction in the larger economy). Wealth can also be used and enjoyed without being consumed, making it important when considering quality of life issues. And finally, in a time of economic crisis wealth can be consumed to supplement income, unlike human capital. More generally, wealth provides

both short- and long-term financial security, bestows social prestige, contributes to political power, and can be used to create more wealth (Domhoff 1970, 1990, Henretta and Campbell 1978, Oliver and Shapiro 1995).

Obviously, families with higher incomes will tend to have higher wealth levels. But empirically the relationship between wealth and income is only moderate to weak, suggesting that income only tells part of the financial story of American households. Using income as the sole measure of financial status would be acceptable practice if the correlation between income and wealth were relatively high (Keister and Moller 2000). However, estimates during the 1980s suggest a correlation of about 0.50, and much of that correlation is attributable to the inclusion of asset income (income generated by wealth) in the definition of total income. With asset income removed, the correlation drops to 0.26 (Lerman and Mikesell 1988: 779). Moreover, while in 1989 the Gini coefficient for wealth (net worth) was 0.84, the Gini coefficient for income was only 0.52, implying that income only tells part of the story of how financial well-being is distributed (Wolff 1994).

Given the advantages to wealth ownership, it is important to consider the degree to which wealth is unevenly distributed. The majority of wealth is owned by less than 10 percent of the population (Keister 2000). As of 1989, the top 1 percent of wealth owners held 38.9 percent of all wealth (net worth), and the top 20 percent held an enormous 85 percent of all wealth. Wealth inequality is also increasing. Wolff (1994) reports that the Gini coefficient for wealth increased from 0.80 in 1983 to 0.84 in 1989. And when we consider the distribution of wealth by race, the picture becomes starker. By 1990, black Americans owned a measly 1 percent of all wealth. While the typical black family had a small nest egg

of assets totaling a median of \$9,800 in 1994, the typical white family held a median of \$72,000 worth of assets, a ratio of about 8 to 1 (Conley 1999).

Historically, most people have not owned stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or certificates of deposit. The average American family's wealth holdings have typically included a checking account, a savings account, a car or two, and a primary residence, which in itself comprises the bulk of their wealth holdings and is usually financed using credit (Conley 1999, Oliver and Shapiro 1995, Keister 2000). Keister (2000, p. 8) describes a common scenario:

Many middle-class Americans first use their income to make payments on a house to take advantage of tax breaks and the combination of consuming and investing that is available in homeownership. After a mortgage payment, however, there is often little left over to save in other forms. Americans do tend to buy their homes and vehicles with credit, and they finance other expenditures with debt as well.

While such debt accumulation is unavoidable for most Americans, who lack sufficient wealth to begin with and are often forced to take out loans to meet their basic needs, it also erodes what small amounts of wealth they may have already accumulated.

As the above discussion suggests, home ownership is an important component of wealth to consider. In some ways, owning a home prototypically represents middle class status in the U.S., and is an asset to which most Americans aspire. As Sullivan and colleagues (2000, p.199) note, "homeowners are widely regarded as the backbone of the large and stable group that will mow lawns, support local schools, worship regularly, pick up litter, obey traffic laws, and perform the thousands of acts of responsibility that weld a community together". Thus homeownership can be read as a barometer of men's bread-winning success and a family's financial security. Equity in one's home is also the single

largest source of personal wealth for most of the two-thirds of Americans who are homeowners, making it a key aspect of a family's economic profile. Buying a home means not only purchasing a place to live, but may also mean acquiring some sense of physical protection and a safe, favorable living environment.

We are also beginning to see some research that investigates the impact of wealth ownership on families and child development, although studies have yet to investigate the possible effects of wealth ownership on specific parenting behaviors. Nonetheless, Conley (1999) shows that parental wealth, in particular home ownership, and private transfers of wealth to children improve the likelihood that children will avoid teenage childbearing, complete school, get married, and avoid the use of public assistance. Boyle (2002) also reports that homeownership reduces the incidence of emotional and behavioral problems among children and youth in a Canadian sample. And Green and White (1997) find that children of homeowners are more likely to be in school or graduate from school and have lower rates of teenage childbearing.

Yet exactly why owning a home matters is unclear. One fruitful avenue of investigation focuses on the quality of the housing itself. Owner-occupied housing may simply be less dangerous or pose fewer health hazards to children, such as exposure to toxic substances like lead, asbestos, or pesticides. Or, such homes may be more spacious than the accommodations available to renters, decreasing the likelihood that overcrowding will occur. Overcrowding, particularly within households as measured by the number of people per room, has been found to produce physical and psychological withdrawal among family members, declines in the quality of social relationships both within and outside the home, poorer mental health and poorer physical health (Gove, Hughes, and Galle 1979). Conley

(1999) speculates that children who live in overcrowded housing may have poorer outcomes because they are more likely to suffer higher rates of illness, lack privacy, get less frequent sleep or have irregular sleep patterns, and are likely to interact with stressed and irritable parents.

Acquiring a home may also lead to personal transformation for homeowners (Boyle 2002). Parents may develop new skills or interests because of the demands and expectations associated with owning a home. Green and White (1997) refer to this idea as the “learning by doing model” of personal development. Because owning a home may require parents to develop maintenance, finance, or time management skills that may be applicable to parenting as well, they may also become better parents. And there is a financial incentive for homeowners to develop these kinds of skills, because upkeep and improvements to housing can lead to asset appreciation. Of course such appreciation also depends on the context of the neighborhood in which it is located, giving homeowners extra incentive to monitor and control the behavior of their own children and the children of other residents in order to protect their housing investment. This suggests that the location of housing may also matter in terms of children's wellbeing. As will be discussed further below, owner-occupied housing is likely to be located in stable, more cohesive, less dangerous neighborhoods than renter-occupied housing.

2.6 Neighborhoods, Social Cohesion, and Ambient Hazards

In the course of this project I will also consider how fathering behavior is connected to the kind of neighborhood families inhabit. As Furstenberg et al. (2000, p. 18) note, neighborhoods can be thought of as "geographically confined areas with distinctive social

milieus, containing local resources in the form of services and social capital and providing varying levels of opportunity and dangers." Interest in neighborhoods has arisen in part because of the growing popularity of ecological models (Bronfenbrenner 1989, Sucoff and Upchurch 1998) and because of the recent changes in the socioeconomic composition of neighborhoods that reflect the increasing spatial concentration of poverty (Ellwood 1988, Jargowsky and Bane 1990, Wilson 1987). Given the sociological adage that social structure shapes behavior in somewhat predictable ways, it is perfectly reasonable to suspect that neighborhoods might influence the behavior of the people who live in them in ways that extend beyond the influence of individuals' own characteristics (Tienda 1991). The question is how are neighborhood effects produced? Most of the theoretical attention in neighborhood research is focused on how differences in the cultural climate of the local environment affect family functioning. While a variety of factors have been examined, the two most central are the presence of effective local social networks (social capital) and the level of threat or danger that exists within the neighborhood.

2.6.1 Social Capital and Social Cohesion

Social capital is a term whose meaning has been greatly inflated over the last decade, although not without reason. It refers generally to the investment in and use of resources that are embedded in social relations for some expected return (Lin 2000). Thus, the common conceptualization of social capital highlights the idea that people cultivate social relationships with others and in doing so gain some access to others' resources. Of course, not all people acquire the same quantity or quality of social capital, nor are they as equally adept at employing the social capital they have (Lin 2000). In the context of neighborhood

studies, social capital is usually conceived of in terms of the cohesiveness of local networks, or the degree to which network members share a common normative framework and can be counted on to enforce it and exert social control on neighborhood residents.

A good deal of the interest in local social capital and families comes from the work of Sampson (1992, 1997), who links social disorganization theory (Shaw and McKay 1942, Kornhauser 1978, Bursik 1988) with early thinking about social capital (Coleman 1988). Sampson argues that the degree to which families can be effective in parenting, especially in monitoring and supervising their children, depends on whether there are effective local social networks that can be counted on to help with parents' social control efforts. From this perspective communities are seen as agents of collective socialization, creating and enforcing, to the extent that they are able, a localized normative system. Neighborhoods that are "disorganized" or less cohesive, lack effective social networks and should be less able to exert control and should experience higher rates of deviance, juvenile delinquency, and crime. Thus parents in disorganized or less cohesive neighborhoods should face additional obstacles as they attempt to raise their children in places where they cannot count on neighbors to assist with social control.

Most recently, the work of Furstenberg and colleagues (2000) highlights the importance of considering the availability of social capital on the strategies parents use to promote their children's development. In what is probably the most comprehensive study of neighborhoods and families to date, they find an important interaction between parents' resources and local neighborhood resources: (1) when advantaged (more educated) parents are living in advantaged (higher social capital) neighborhoods, they are more likely to use neighborhood institutions, networks, and schools to promote their children's development;

whereas, (2) when disadvantaged (less educated) parents are living in disadvantaged (lower social capital) neighborhoods, they are more likely to restrict their children's access to the community and rely on their own investment in their children's development. They conclude that less educated parents in places that are poor in social capital must be more self-reliant because they cannot count on the local setting "to co-socialize their children with them – or even for them" (p.163). Better-educated parents living in places with sufficient social capital don't appear to invest as much in their children or restrict them from the local setting as much because they see local social networks as trustworthy parental substitutes.

Furstenberg and colleagues (2000) do not specifically consider how local social capital affects father involvement, although they do examine how it affects mothers' involvement.⁴ As I would expect given the strength of the mothering mandate, there is no effect of social capital on mothers' involvement. Yet there is reason to hypothesize that fathering will be sensitive to the level of social capital present in the local setting, although there may be two sets of countervailing influences. On the one hand, as Furstenberg and colleagues' (2000) work implies, social capital rich neighborhoods may provide fathers with greater opportunity to substitute the childcare labor of others for their own when they trust their neighbors to co-socialize their children. Fathers in less cohesive neighborhoods may be less able to substitute others labor for their own, simply because they don't know their neighbors or can't trust them to effectively monitor and control their children. They may feel more pressure to personally invest in their children, and such self-reliance likely requires more time and child-centered effort from parents than family management strategies that make use of locally available resources.

⁴ They refer to respondents generically as parents, although the most of the respondents in the sample are mothers. Only 6% of their respondents are fathers and they do not conduct separate analyses for mothers and fathers.

On the other hand, recent work by Wilcox (2001), grounded in Putnam's (2000) work on social capital, argues that men's civic and religious engagement, broadly conceived, promotes their involvement with their children. Civic and religious institutions are believed to foster fathers' leadership, time management, and communication skills, which may help fathers better relate to their children. In addition, the social ties fathers develop through civic and religious engagement may offer men a source of social support, social control, and practical knowledge about fathering that may encourage them to be more involved with their children. These networks may offer fathers parenting advice and support if they are seeking help, or they may sanction fathers who are performing poorly as parents or whose behavior deviates from local parenting norms. These ties may also provide fathers with concrete opportunities to interact with their children through activities like sports, boy scouts, or religious activities. Wilcox's (2001) analysis suggests that the benefits of civic and religious engagement accrue mostly to low income fathers, in part because higher income fathers appear to have access to more advantaged work environments and educational resources from which to draw on to support their parenting. Lacking these kinds of resources, lower income fathers appear to rely more heavily on social networks for support. From my point of view, cohesive, organized neighborhoods may operate in much the same way as other kinds of civic organizations, offering support and practical knowledge for fathers, exerting control over fathers whose parenting doesn't meet community standards, and providing activities that encourage father involvement.

Taken together, we have two competing explanations for how local social capital may affect men's fathering behavior. The substitution explanation suggests a negative linear relationship between social capital and father involvement, particularly for fathers who have

sufficient resources to afford to live in neighborhood settings rich in social capital. The sponsorship explanation suggests a positive linear relationship between local social capital and men's parental involvement, particularly for fathers who lack access to other kinds of resources from which to draw on as they parent their children. One key difference between the two perspectives, however, is that parents can conceivably benefit from social control efforts of neighbors without being involved in those efforts or being members of the social networks who pursue them, which should make the substitution hypothesis more likely. The sponsorship perspective, on the other hand, assumes that men get benefits as the result of direct involvement in social networks that would promote greater father involvement, benefits that would not be available to men who were not involved in those social networks. In my view, this makes the sponsorship perspective a less plausible explanation of father involvement.

2.6.2 Ambient Hazards

A good deal of theoretical and empirical work on neighborhoods indicates that poor quality neighborhoods are poor environments for rearing children in part because their residents engage in higher levels of problematic behavior, including crime, violence, drug use, and gang involvement (Sampson et al. 1997, Coulton et al. 1995, Sampson 1992, Garbarino and Sherman 1980). That is, neighborhoods are potential sources of environmental stress for parents, especially violent crime and drug selling, which are seen by neighborhood residents as a source of anxiety and distraction affecting their parenting (Furstenberg 1993, Korbin and Coulton 1994). Like stress produced by financial hardship, I think we can expect the environmental stress families experience to lead to harsher parenting

by both parents, and limited involvement or withdrawal on the part of fathers. Because residential location is a kind of status attainment, and one closely linked to the traditional conception of fathers as breadwinners, living in a high risk neighborhood environment may reinforce a feeling of failure among some fathers, leading to depression, irritability, and a sense of futility, as well as decreasing the enjoyment fathers are likely to experience with their children. Even if a family is not directly victimized, the signs of disorder in their neighborhood indicate the persistent potential for harm, creating a sense of general psychological distress, and may produce feelings of depression (Ross 2000, Ross et al. 2000, Aneshensel and Sucoff 1996).

It is reasonable, then, to expect that the choices residents make about where to live are affected by their perceptions of neighborhood quality and likely risk exposure. Parents who can afford to relocate out of riskier places are expected to move to safer neighborhood environments. Of course, people's decisions about where to live, play, and work also influence the demographic composition of the neighborhoods and communities they are joining or leaving, producing what Logan (1978) refers to as the "hierarchy of place." In a sense, the spatial distribution of groups reflects their relative socioeconomic attainment, but also structures inequalities between places which enhance the quality of living for residents of the most desirable places while limiting the wellbeing of residents of less desirable locations (Alba, Logan, and Bellair 1994; Massey 1995; Massey, Condran and Denton 1987). Crime and social disorder are important symbolic indicators of the desirability and inhabitability of places. Crime, in particular, seems to create a fear of strangers and general estrangement from community life (Liska and Warner 1991; Rosenbaum 1991; Skogan 1991), and safety concerns appear to trigger population out-migration, especially among

more affluent residents (Wilson 1987). This, in turn, is likely to further reinforce the poverty and deterioration of the neighborhoods people are fleeing.

While it is generally expected that parents concerned with their children's safety will move them to safer neighborhoods, Furstenberg and colleagues (2000) find that 66% of their Philadelphia based sample report being unable to do so. Moreover, a number of studies show that White families face fewer barriers when relocating out of less desirable neighborhoods than do Black or Hispanic families, either in terms of the lack of financial resources, access to jobs or ongoing residential discrimination (Jargowsky and Bane 1991; Massey and Denton 1993; Massey, Gross and Shibuya 1994; Wilson 1987). Parents who lack sufficient resources to relocate are expected to adopt alternative strategies for coping with the dangers presented by the local environment. They may constrain their interactions with others to safe areas of the neighborhood or restrict their movement in public spaces to safer times of day. They are likely to avoid unsafe areas of the community and the businesses or residences in them, and may, in essence, become prisoners in their own homes (Liska, Sanchirico, and Reed 1988; Skogan and Maxfield 1981). That is, their primary strategy for avoiding local danger may be to make their homes a secure environment, and to carefully guard it, their possessions, and family members (Liska and Warner 1991). Schneider (1987) in particular finds that actions intended to increase personal household security (like installing an alarm system, having a gun or dog for protection, etc.) are related to people's perceptions of the type of neighborhood they inhabit, their access to economic resources with which to purchase such security (like income or home ownership), and their sense of vulnerability to the level of risk their local environment affords. And, to the extent that residents mistrust their environment or their neighbors and withdraw from public spaces into their homes,

neighborhood cohesiveness becomes more difficult to maintain. Thus neighborhood social organization and neighborhood risks are linked. Neighborhoods that are low in social capital tend to have higher levels of objective dangers and vice versa (Furstenberg et al. 2000, Sampson et al. 1997).

A number of factors seem to affect parents' perceptions of neighborhood risk. Numerous studies show that while men are more likely to be victims of crime and violence, women harbor significantly more fear of victimization. Moreover, people are more likely to fear strangers than intimates, even though the likelihood of attack from intimates is much higher. Warr (1990) suggests that people look for three specific cues as to the dangerousness of a situation or environment: (1) the presence of novelty, or the degree to which the situation, place or people they are around are new or strange; (2) the presence of darkness; and (3) the demographic composition of the others they are around, particularly whether those others are young and male. In addition, Hollander (2001) finds that both the race and apparent poverty of others are often viewed as markers of their potential dangerousness. Taken together, these findings suggest that neighborhood residents may use the demographic composition of neighborhoods as markers of their dangerousness. People living in neighborhoods where they have difficulty telling residents from strangers, where poverty is concentrated, or where the proportion of Blacks, Hispanics, or other racial or ethnic minorities is higher, are expected to view their locations as riskier or more dangerous, independent of the actual level of crime or violence present.

The risks that neighborhoods pose to families with children should be particularly salient for men's parental involvement considering that men have historically been regarded as family protectors (Palkovitz 2002, Blankenhorn 1995). In a particularly clear statement,

Blankenhorn (1995, p.122) describes traditional fatherhood: "historically, the good father protects his family, provides for its material needs, devotes himself to the education of his children, and represents his family's interests in the larger world." Traits typically glorified by traditional conceptions of masculinity like aggression, toughness, competition, and instrumentalism, should encourage men to get involved when others create a threatening situation for their families. The potential for violent behavior from men and the perception of vulnerability to violence on the part of women (and children) are a key part of the gendered world (Hollander 2001, Connell 1987). Women's perceived vulnerability to violence and men's perceived invulnerability cast women as likely victims, and cast men both as potentially dangerous if they are strangers, and as potential protectors if they are intimates. These perceptions shape the strategies men and women use to keep themselves (and others) safe, their interactions with others, and their feelings of freedom to move through public space. Valentine's (1997) reports from interview with children show that children of both sexes viewed girls as vulnerable to danger, but not boys. Hollander's (2001) reports from focus groups also suggest that men, not women, are viewed as being capable of protecting others and that women should depend on male relatives for protection rather than take action themselves.

For many fathers, protecting their children may involve more than simply providing a safe physical environment. Discipline and supervision appear to be viewed as part of the protective obligations for fathers as well. Jarrett and colleagues' (2002) review of qualitative accounts of urban fatherhood show that urban fathers often view talking to children about how to behave, how to avoid a "street" oriented lifestyle, and how to do "what is right" are parts of fathers' protective responsibilities (see Anderson 1990, Zollar 1985, Wilson 1996).

Similarly, they find that fathers' monitoring of children's whereabouts, especially of children's travels outside the household, is an important component of fathering in urban settings. Urban fathers report escorting children from place to place (Clark 1983, Williams and Kornblum 1994) and setting curfews (Fordham 1996, Burton 1991) as means for helping children avoid risks or illicit opportunities prevalent in some neighborhoods. Several studies also suggest that fathers carefully monitor their children's relationships with their peers, especially their teen daughters' relationships with boyfriends (Patillo-McCoy 2000, White 1999) for much the same reasons.

Formulating hypotheses about how neighborhood danger will affect men's parental involvement is more difficult, in part because there is less guidance in the literature about what to expect. As far as I am aware, only Hofferth (2003) has investigated the potential connection. In Hofferth's study of racial differences in men's parental involvement, she argued that neighborhood context should be considered as a potential factor influencing the differential involvement of black and white fathers with their children because black and white families often live in neighborhoods of differing quality and or dramatically different racial/ethnic composition. Hofferth asserts that fathers should be expected to exert more control over children in neighborhoods that are less than ideal places for raising children. Her results indicate that for families that live in better quality neighborhoods, fathers spend less time per week directly engaged with children. Hofferth's results give us little insight to how neighborhood context might affect fathers' involvement relative to that of mothers.

Thus, on the one hand it seems reasonable to assert that the less social cohesion and the more risk present in the local setting, the more involved men may become with their children. This is essentially a corollary of the substitution hypothesis about social capital and

men's childcare labor. In less cohesive, riskier neighborhoods, parents are likely to be less trusting of the external environment, and feel greater need to restrict their children's access to it, forcing them to make greater investments of their own time and energy to promote their children's development. Therefore, traditional conceptions of men's responsibilities as family protectors are likely to encourage greater father involvement in dangerous settings, which may increase their involvement relative to mothers. However, since breadwinning is also a primary responsibility for many men, not being able to afford to move one's family out of a poor quality neighborhood into one more suitable for raising children might also prompt feelings of despair and failure for fathers, leading to increasing withdrawal rather than increasing involvement. That is, neighborhood related stress might act on fathers much as economic stress appears to do in the work of Conger and colleagues (1992) and Elder and colleagues (1992), which could result in decreased involvement for fathers both in absolute and relative terms.

2.7 The Co-parenting Complication

The above discussion highlights how access to resources like wealth, homeownership or neighborhood location, which aren't normally considered in studies of the household division of labor, may affect men's involvement in parenting, especially under the influence of the traditional breadwinning model of fatherhood with its emphasis on families' economic security. But what happens if, as Pleck and Pleck (1997) suggest, men's childcare activities are being culturally redefined as appropriately masculine family labor? From a human capital point of view, cultural preferences for different kinds of labor are exogenous to the model, so while a redefinition of fatherhood *might* affect individual fathers' initial

preferences for childcare, it should not affect the general calculus by which labor is allocated. From this perspective, co-parenting should take place when there is little demand for specialization or when parents are so evenly matched in terms of their human capital and productivity that there is no real advantage to be had by specializing. Thus couples who have fewer children or older children (low demand), or who have relatively equal levels of education, employment, and income (matched human capital) should be more likely to co-parent. Yet the persistence of the marriage gradient and continuing wage disparities between women and men (Padavic and Reskin 2002) make such human capital match-ups unlikely and equally as unlikely to reap similar financial payoffs if they do occur. And, the normative shift regarding fatherhood wouldn't be expected to alter the contextual sensitivity of men's parenting either; demand for and productive efficiency at childcare and paid labor would still determine who does what.

From a gender construction viewpoint, co-parenting should occur when parents choose not to use childcare labor as a means of maintaining gender differentiation. To the extent that the co-parent model of fatherhood gains cultural support, it provides a competing model of appropriate masculinity and an alternative view of how men should behave in their families and should encourage greater involvement in childcare much as the good-provider ethos has supported men's pursuit of bread-winning. The co-parent cultural ideal, in effect, extends the parenting mandate that women currently experience to men, removing traditional justifications for men's opting out of childcare, thereby reducing the incentive to use childcare as a means for marking gender boundaries. As the wider society begins to adopt a co-parenting model of fatherhood, family members, friends, neighbors, and employers can be expected to alter their expectations for men's family involvement, reducing the weight of

immediate social pressure on parents to adopt a gender differentiated style of parental involvement.⁵

In addition, the widespread adoption of the co-parenting model should remove the need for men who are failing as providers to withdraw from childcare as a means of re-establishing themselves as appropriately gendered. Instead, men who lack the resources to be providers should be able to display gender appropriately by doing childcare, rather than avoiding it, if they accept the legitimacy of the co-parent ideal. As norms supporting father involvement tighten and their enforcement increases, fathers' behavior should become less responsive to the degree to which they are dependent upon or provide for their partners. In essence, the normative redefinition of fatherhood should de-couple men's parenting from their economic provisioning and set stricter limits on how much fathers can withdraw from direct engagement with or responsibility for children as involvement ceases to be optional. This is essentially the situation mothers are facing, where they are expected to be primary parents to their children regardless of their involvement in the marketplace.

Similarly, the widespread cultural redefinition of fatherhood may somewhat ecologically de-sensitize fathering behavior in other ways as well. As Rotundo's (1988) description of the "new fatherhood" suggests, children's characteristics like their sex and age should have less impact on what co-parent fathers do. This should also hold true for fathers' own characteristics, mothers' characteristics, the nature of parent's conjugal relationship, the family's access to resources, and the kind of neighborhood setting in which they live. As is already the case with mothers, as the cultural expectation that fathers be active parents strengthens, the father-child relationship should become subject to tighter controls, regardless

⁵ This doesn't mean that men will cease attempting to display gender appropriately, but that they are likely to use different means to create gender boundaries, like participating in sports or male organizations, or even by increasing their levels of involvement in traditionally male forms of household labor.

of whatever else may be occurring outside the parent-child relationship. This argument highlights an interaction I will explore in the course of this study. For men who support a bread-winning approach to fathering, childcare labor should be sensitive to key contextual variables which represent social and economic support for greater father involvement, whereas for fathers who espouse the co-parent ideal, time spent in and responsibility for childcare labor should be less sensitive to these conditions because of the legitimizing power of the co-parenting ideal, and increasingly widespread efforts to enforce it. That is, the size of the effects of many of the determinants of father involvement should be smaller (or even disappear completely) for co-parent fathers.

There is already some research that begins to shed light on why a minority of couples equitably share domestic responsibilities without regard for gender. Although they are rare in a statistical sense, such families provide some insight into the specific pathways that might lead to fathers to adopt co-parenting over breadwinning. Both Coltrane (1989, 1990) and Gerson (1997) found that parents who engaged in higher levels of sharing were both more ideologically committed to co-parenting, tended to choose employment that offered flexibility, and both were committed to putting their children first. In addition, Schwartz (1994) re-interviewed couples who were engaged in “peer marriages” from the famous *American Couples* study (Blumstein and Schwartz 1983), finding that peer couples viewed each other as best friends; they were highly committed to each other and therefore believed that they should both have equal influence over decision-making, equal control over economic resources, and equal right to pursue their own careers.

Risman (1998, Risman and Sumerford 1998) studied another small sample of “fair families” and found that couples arrived at shared arrangements in a number of ways. Some

were “dual-career couples” who shared family labor because both partners were interested in pursuing and advancing their own careers. “Dual-nurturer” couples appeared to be more child-centered than other couples, focusing their own lives around managing their children’s lives. Other couples were found to be “post-traditional” in that they spent at least some time in more traditionally arranged family situations and had later rejected them, while a few others appear to have been “pushed” into sharing by external constraints – like job difficulties or illness.

What sharing couples in each of these studies seem to have in common is an ideological commitment to the principle that both family work and domestic labor are joint responsibilities. Such families seemed committed to these ideas: fathers’ jobs aren’t more important than mothers’ jobs; children aren’t more a mother’s responsibility; and housework should be shared. Having rejected traditional ideas about women’s domesticity and men’s breadwinning, they appear to have largely sought out employment arrangements that give them the flexibility to share at home. This suggests that for highly involved men, instead of being largely dependent on or driven by contextual factors, their commitment to co-parenting may instead encourage them to alter their circumstances to better fit their desired level of involvement.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter I reviewed much of the existing research on fatherhood and father involvement and developed a model of father involvement that highlights a number of indirect paths and potential mediating variables through which families’ access to economic resources affects men’s relative responsibility for and involvement in childcare. After

discussing the general theoretical frameworks typically leveraged in research on the distribution of household labor, and the existing, well-established mid-range explanation for men's relative involvement, I offered arguments and evidence from a number of independent research programs that I think can be profitably adapted to better explain how differential access to economic resources like permanent income, wealth, and homeownership across families might ultimately result in differential father involvement, especially relative to that of mothers. In the next chapter, I present a conceptual model of the determinants of father involvement that highlights the role of the family's economic resources and discuss the specific research hypotheses to be tested in the course of this project.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Introduction

The literature review presented in Chapter 2 is extensive in scope, covering a range of topics relating to the study of father involvement, the household division of labor more generally, economic inequality and measures of economic resources, the long term effects of economic distress, and neighborhood composition and climate. Because of the range of concepts, theories and issues I am drawing from is large, it is necessary to distill the major issues and describe the specific hypotheses that are the focus of the rest of this project. In the sections that follow, I present the conceptual model I am using to orient my investigation of the effects of economic resources on men's parental involvement, and give a detailed accounting of the hypotheses to be tested.

3.2 Conceptual Model

The theoretical discussion thus far suggests that there are three indirect pathways through which families' economic resources affect residential fathers' involvement with their children. Figure 3.1 below offers a visual representation of central concepts and their expected linkages, at a fairly general level. According to this depiction, I expect economic resources to affect the demand for fathers' involvement such that as economic resources increase, demand for childcare will decrease as couples become better able to afford to outsource some aspects of childcare labor. A second path of influence I have depicted below links economic resources to fathers' experience of psychological distress. As economic

resources decrease and families experience increased economic hardships, I expect fathers' sense of self-efficacy to decline and depressive affect to increase, leading to reduced levels of father involvement relative to that of mothers. A third and final path of influence I've plotted in Figure 3.1 below links economic resources to the nature of the local neighborhood environment. As economic resources improve, families become better able to choose neighborhoods in which to reside that are more structurally stable, more socially cohesive and present fewer ambient hazards. Living in such neighborhoods should reduce fathers' relative involvement with children because of the reduced need for fathers' monitoring and protection of children, as neighborhood residents are expected to increasingly assist parents with efforts at social control. Thus, the causal pathways linking economic resources to fathers' relative involvement, as depicted in Figure 3.1 below, are mostly of an indirect nature. Potential direct effects of economic resources are also addressed within the context of the conceptual model I describe here, and they will be apparent in the empirical models to the extent that they still exist after controlling for the expected mediating factors. The diagram also shows the expected interaction effects between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and the other determinants of men's parental involvement. This is a key consideration for this study, and is represented graphically by the intersecting arrows just prior to the dependent variables in Figure 3.1 below.

Importantly, my approach as laid here involves the integration of all three pathways into a single conceptual model. The only realistic way to judge the validity of any of these proposed causal linkages is to include operationalizations of each of their mediating mechanisms in the same analysis. By including them jointly in the empirical modeling, I should be able to account for more variance in fathers' relative involvement and at the same

time more accurately specify each path's predictive power relative to the others. And, in the end, I should be able to tell a more nuanced story about the ways in which families' economic resources influence men's parental involvement that better maps the complexities of the social processes involved.

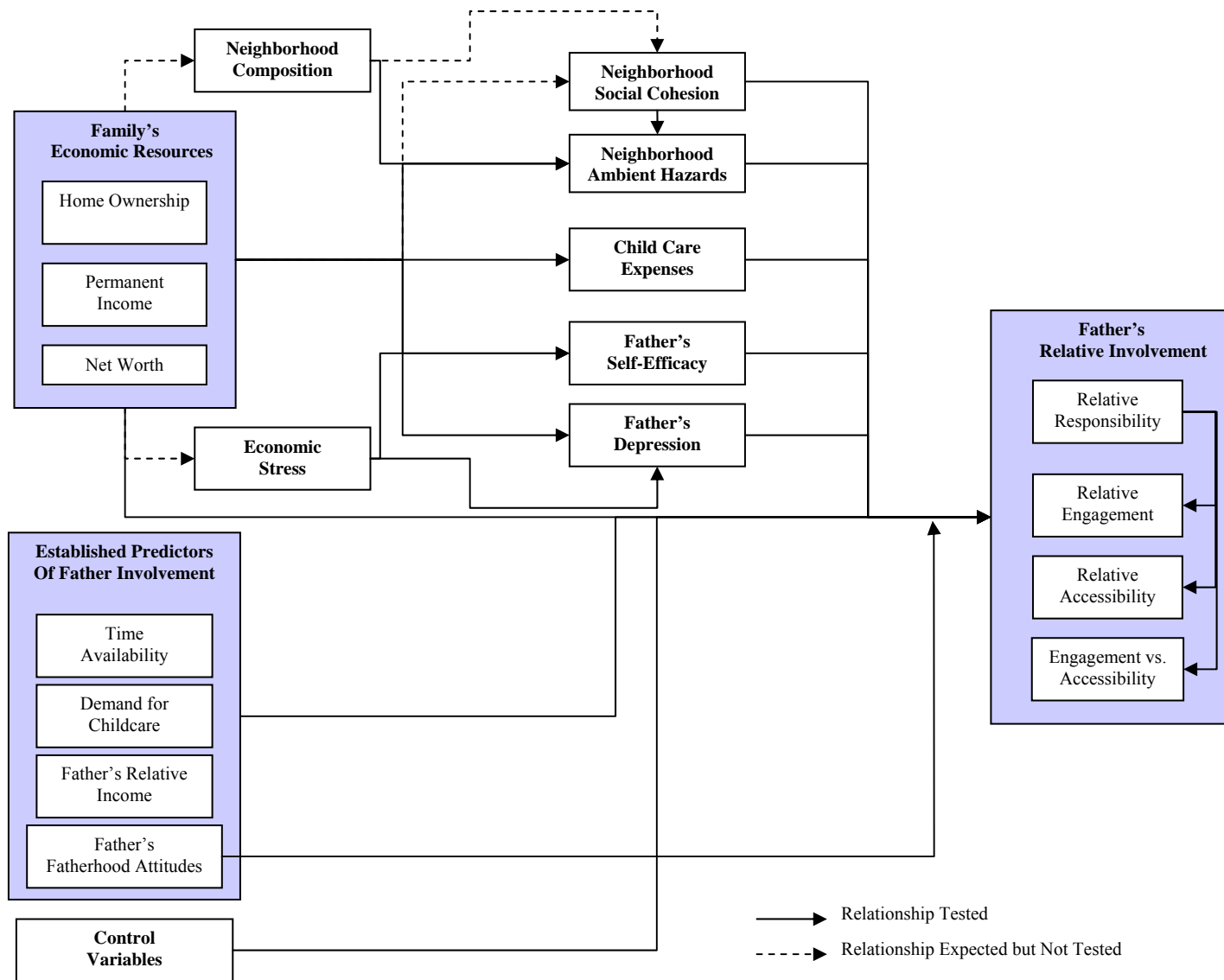


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model of the Impact of Economic Resources on Father's Relative Involvement

3.3 Hypotheses

Three orienting questions guide this project. First, are the effects of economic resources on father involvement largely positive or negative in direction? Second, are the effects largely direct or indirect in nature and what specific causal pathways are involved in the linkage? And third, are the effects the same across all men regardless of their attitudes toward fatherhood? These questions are essentially “meta-questions” rather than hypotheses *per se* in that they seek general conclusions as answers and they make no specific, falsifiable predictions about the expected relationships between the key theoretical constructs in use in this project.

In my view at the outset of this analysis, the issue of whether the effects of economic resources on father involvement are positive or negative in direction is an open question. There appears to be some evidence in favor of both arguments (Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine 1991, Glass 1998), but even that evidence is based almost entirely on current family income as the sole indicator of families’ economic resources. Moreover, it is entirely plausible that the economic resources could have both positive and negative effects on men’s parental involvement to the extent that there are multiple indirect paths of influence that involve different mediating processes. That is, economic insecurity could both put pressure on men to take on greater childcare responsibility in order to avoid the expense of paying for childcare and lead them to want to withdraw from childcare labor because of the feelings of failure that economic insecurity may provoke. As a result, I cannot predict in advance which perspective will have greatest support in this project given my use of an expanded set of economic indicators and a more elaborate view of how those economic resources may act on men’s parental involvement.

However, given the instrumental nature of economic resources as “resources” available to fund families’ consumption of other goods and services, I find the argument that families’ access to economic resources on fathers’ relative parental involvement should be primarily indirect to be compelling. Their availability, or lack of, places limits on families’ consumption behavior. Determining the pathways through which access to resources affects fathers’ behavior centers on figuring out what kinds of things families might purchase, if they had the resources, that would either change the level of demand for fathers’ behavior, change their ability to leverage themselves out of child care labor, or change fathers’ beliefs about how fathers should behave. In fact, I can think of no forceful argument in favor of preferring direct effects. As a result, I expect that once the mediating variables are entered into the analysis, any direct effects of economic measures on measures of father’s relative involvement should disappear or be greatly reduced in magnitude. In my view, findings of persistent direct effects of indicators of families’ economic resources even after controlling for the suspected mediating variables would suggest that there are additional, unknown mediators that have yet to be discovered.

As for the question of whether the effects of the economic indicators are the same across all fathers regardless of their attitudes toward fatherhood, I also find the argument in favor of differential effects compelling. I expect that there will be statistically significant interaction effects between fathers’ fatherhood attitudes and the other determinants of men’s parental involvement (including but not limited to measures of families’ economic resources). In fact, were the co-parenting model of fatherhood to be adopted widely and fully institutionalized, I would expect that many of the contextual supports currently necessary for involved fathering would become unnecessary, substantially attenuating any

empirical relationships that may exist between measures of these contextual factors and measures of fathers' relative involvement. However, given the ongoing disconnect between the culture and conduct of fatherhood noted by LaRossa (1988) and the greater leeway given to fathers in their commitment to parenting, identification with the parenting role, and expected competence in performing parenting tasks that result from the persistent emphasis on fathers as "good providers" (Daly 1995), it is highly unlikely that we will find that the relationships of the determinants of father involvement entirely disappear for fathers who show greater support for co-parenting over breadwinning.

In this study I test six sets of specific hypotheses. Five of these sets involve hypotheses that focus on the indirect pathways through which economic resources can be expected to affect men's relative parental involvement. The sixth set of hypotheses deals with whether the impact of economic resources is conditional upon fathers' attitudes toward fatherhood. These hypotheses link four measures of families' economic resources to three primary measures of fathers' relative father involvement through five key mediating variables. While a full description of the definition and operationalization of these measures is presented in the next chapter, a brief summary is in order here to facilitate discussion of the study hypotheses. The four financial measures to be used are: an indicator of the family's permanent income (an average of 4 years of income), an indicator of the difference between the family's permanent income and current income (permanent income minus current income), a measure of the family's net worth (assets minus debts) and an indicator of whether the family owns or rents their primary residence. Two of these four measures involve income or the ongoing *flow* of resources into the family economy, while the other two resources involve the family's *stock* of resources held as some form of wealth. The three

primary target variables of interest in this project are a measure of the father's level of responsibility for childcare labor in the household, a measure of the father's relative share of the couple's weekly time spent directly engaged with a focal child, and a measure of the father's relative share of the couple's weekly total time spend accessible to but not directly engaged with the focal child. These three measures correspond to Lamb and colleagues (1985, 1987) three-part conceptualization of father involvement discussed in Chapter 2. The five mediating variables of interest are an indicator of the family's annual expenditures for childcare, a measure of the father's sense of self-efficacy, a measure of the father's experience of depression, a measure of the perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood in which the family resides, and a measure of the perceived level of ambient (surrounding or encircling) hazards present in the neighborhood. These five mediating variables are all implicated in the indirect pathways illustrated in the model diagram above and the extended discussion in Chapter 2. The hypotheses involving these measures are presented in Table 3.1 below.

Beginning with hypothesis 1a, it is my expectation that the relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current incomes, and the family's net worth with their annual childcare expenses will all be positive. All else held constant, families should be able to increase their spending on paid childcare, if they choose to do so, the greater the stable flow of income into their family economy, the greater the increase in their current income over their permanent income, and the greater their asset holdings are over and above their debts. While such an increase in spending may involve simply purchasing better quality care, rather than quantity, increasing quantity of care does become more feasible given greater resources. Supporting this view are the

findings of a recent report by the NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (1997) that indicate that the quantity and quality of the non-family care children receive is primarily determined by family economics, as well as results from Glass (1989) that indicate there may be a negative relationship family income and families' use of "father care," suggesting that as family income increases, families substitute other arrangements for men's parenting.

Hypothesis 1b, although less probable in my view (because it should be harder to draw on the stock of resources stored in the home's value) makes the same argument for the effect of homeownership on the size of families' annual childcare expenses. Essentially, homeownership is expected to act as a bellwether of the families' financial condition. Families that can afford to purchase a home should be, on average, in better financial shape to purchase greater childcare services. Hypothesis 1c goes on to connect families' annual childcare expenses to the three measures of men's relative parental involvement, again following Glass' reasoning, and claims that annual childcare expenses will be negatively related to men's parental involvement.

Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c all follow specifically from the results of work by Elder and colleagues (1995) and Simmons and colleagues (1990). Hypotheses 2a and 2b assert that the relationships of the family's economic resources on the father's sense of self-efficacy will all be positive. The greater the stable flow of income into the family economy, the greater the increase in current income over the family's permanent income, the greater the families assets are in comparison to their debts, and the attainment of the status of homeowner should all work to increase men's sense of their own capabilities to exert themselves in their relationships with others and have confidence in their productive (an reproductive or parenting) skills. Hypothesis 2c connects men's sense of self-efficacy to their parental

involvement and asserts that the relationship between fathers' self-efficacy and the three measures of their relative involvement will all be positive.

Like the second set of hypotheses above, hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c are based on the work of Elder and colleagues (1995) and also the findings of Oliver and Pomicter (1991) and Warr (1984). Hypotheses 3a and 3b declare my expectation that in families with greater economic resources, fathers will show lower levels of depression, all else being equal. Fathers' should be happier in the absence of economic stress than when economic resources are fewer and financial constraints are tighter. Hypothesis 3c links fathers' depression to their relative parental involvement. I expect that fathers who show higher levels of depression will have lower levels of relative parental involvement, all else being equal. That is, I expect fathers to withdraw from active parenting in response to feelings of failure and despair that result from their families' financial difficulties and their sense of insufficiency as family breadwinners.

The fourth and fifth sets of hypotheses focus on neighborhood social cohesion and neighborhood ambient hazards as mediators of the relationship between economic resources and men's parental involvement, respectively. Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 5a, and 5b are all based on the findings of Logan (1978), Alba and colleagues (1994), Massey (1995), Massey and Denton (1993), and Jargowsky and Bane (1991) which indicate that families' neighborhood residence is heavily influenced by both their race/ethnic membership and level of economic resources available to purchase or rent a place to live. Poorer people and racial/ethnic minorities are more likely to live in neighborhoods that are less cohesive and less safe than are people with greater economic resources and people who are white. Hypotheses 4c and 5c connect neighborhood social cohesion and neighborhood ambient hazards to men's relative

parental involvement. Hypothesis 4c, following the results of Furstenberg and colleagues (2002), asserts that fathers will be more involved in childcare relative to mothers in neighborhoods that are perceived to be less cohesive than in neighborhoods perceived to be more cohesive. Following the work of Hofferth (2003) but contrary the arguments of Ross (2000), Ross and colleagues (2000), and Aneshensel and Sucoff (1996), hypothesis 5c asserts that fathers' relative involvement will increase in neighborhoods that are perceived to be less safe than in neighborhoods where perceived ambient hazards are fewer and the environment is better for raising children.

Hypotheses 6a and 6b focus on interaction effects between men's fatherhood attitudes and the other determinants of men's parenting. Hypothesis 6a asserts that there will be differential effects for the full set of predictors on men's relative parental involvement based on fathers' beliefs about fatherhood. Hypothesis 6b asserts that in these interaction effects, the size of the effects should be smaller for fathers with more egalitarian attitudes and larger for fathers with more traditional attitudes about fatherhood. These two hypotheses are based on insights gained from Doherty and colleagues (1998) about the general contextual sensitivity of father involvement, and on assertions made by Rotundo (1988) about the insensitivity of the "new fatherhood" model of involved fathering to factors such as children's age and sex. To the extent that the co-parent model of fatherhood desensitizes fathers to difference in their children's characteristics that might otherwise strongly influence their level of involvement with their children, it might also desensitize fathers to other contextual influences, like the family's economic resources, annual childcare expenses, neighborhood conditions, etc., such that more egalitarian fathers maintain higher levels of involvement regardless of the specific conditions under which they are parenting.

Table 3.1 Hypotheses

Outsourcing Fathers' Involvement: Childcare Expenses

- 1a. The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current income, and the family's net worth with their annual childcare expenses will all be positive.
- 1b. Annual childcare expenses will be higher for homeowners than for renters.
- 1c. The relationships between the family's annual childcare expenses and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility) will all be negative.

Economic Distress: Fathers' Self-efficacy

- 2a. The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current incomes, and the family's net worth with the father's sense of self-efficacy will all be positive.
- 2b. The father's self-efficacy will be higher for homeowners than for renters.
- 2c. The relationships between the father's sense of self-efficacy and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility) will all be positive.

Economic Distress: Fathers' Depression

- 3a. The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current incomes, and the family's net worth with the father's level of depression will all be negative.
- 3b. The father's level of depression will be lower for homeowners than for renters.
- 3c. The relationships between the father's level of depression and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility) will all be negative.

Neighborhood Context: Social Cohesion

- 4a. The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current incomes, and the family's net worth with the perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood will all be positive.
 - 4b. The perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood will be higher for homeowners than for renters.
 - 4c. The relationships between the perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility) will all be negative.
-

Table 3.1 Hypotheses (cont.)

Neighborhood Context: Ambient Hazards

- 5a. The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current incomes, and the family's net worth with the perceived level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood will all be negative.
- 5b. The perceived level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood will be higher for renters than for homeowners.
- 5c. The relationships between the perceived level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility) will all be positive.

Interactions with Fathers' Fatherhood Attitudes

- 6a. There will be an interaction effect between the father's fatherhood attitudes and each of the other predictors in the model on each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility).
 - 6b. In each interaction effect between the father's fatherhood attitudes and each of the other predictors in the model, the size of the effects of the economic measures will be smaller for fathers who show greater support for co-parenting than for fathers who show greater support for breadwinning.
-

Importantly, a number of additional hypotheses could reasonably be proposed about the other important factors, like fathers' relative incomes, their time availability, or the level of demand for fathers' childcare labor created by the number of children living in the household, and so on, that have been used to explain fathers' involvement in prior studies. I have chosen not to include such hypotheses here because these factors have been the subject of considerably more scrutiny in other studies and are not the primary focus of this analysis. Their importance as predictors of men's parental involvement is typically well enough supported that they do not warrant special attention here. In the next chapter I describe the data to be used in this analysis, the limiting criteria imposed on the selection of the analytic

sample, the operationalization of the concepts involved in testing the hypotheses just presented and the modeling strategy I am using to investigate these hypotheses.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe the data, analytic sample, operationalization of the variables and the modeling strategy used to investigate the effect of families' access to economic resources on fathers' parental involvement in two parent families. I focus attention in this study on measures of fathers' involvement with a focal child, relative to that of the child's mother rather than on absolute measures of fathers' involvement. This choice is motivated by Greenstein's (2000, p.325) argument that there are conceptual advantages to using a distributional or relative measure of household labor because such measures are more likely to be associated with couples' attempts to negotiate divisions of labor that they perceive as fair or just than would the use of absolute measures. In addition, there are a potentially limitless number of factors that could act to affect the total time spent in child care labor at any particular point in time, which would require that substantially more control variables be added to models of absolute involvement.

In addition, I focus my analysis on the parental involvement of co-resident fathers rather than on non-resident fathers, or some combination of the two. The focus on co-resident fathers has several motivations. First, the legal, social, and family processes that affect non-resident father involvement are often quite different from those that affect co-resident father involvement, and may include court-ordered custody arrangements, visitation schedules, and child support arrangements (Lamb 2002). In addition, the use of measures of neighborhood context in the current study would be significantly more complicated if non-

resident fathers were included in the study, given the reduced likelihood that fathers would live within the same neighborhood boundaries as their children or share the same neighborhood context. It is theoretically unclear how neighborhood context would affect father involvement if fathers and their children experienced substantially different neighborhood environments. Thus the focus on co-resident fathers allows for a cleaner, more coherent approach to assessing the indirect influence of economic resources on men's parenting through neighborhood residence than including non-resident fathers would allow.

4.2 Data

The data used in this study are drawn from three sources: 1) the 1993-1997 waves of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID); 2) the 1997 Child Development Supplement (CDS) to the PSID; and 3) the 1994 Wealth Supplement to the PSID. The PSID, itself, is a longitudinal survey that has been conducted yearly since 1968 on a single, continuing probability sample, which has grown from 5,000 families in 1968 to over 8,700 families as of 1996. In 1997, the PSID core sample was reduced and a refresher sample of immigrants to the U.S. was added so that the data would continue to be representative of the current U.S. population. Because of these changes, the core PSID sample in 1997 consisted of 6,792 families. Unique to the PSID is the fact that as households break up or new ones form, those new families are added to the sample and tracked in successive waves of the survey. The PSID also over-samples low-income households, and thus contains a comparatively large number of households that are female headed. Importantly, it contains detailed information about household structure, marital and fertility behavior, income sources, housing, residential

mobility, employment experience, and labor force participation, as well as some data about local labor market conditions collected through surveys to county planning departments.

Increasingly, users of the PSID have been examining the consequences of family events and circumstances during the years when children are living with their parents. Such research has often focused on issues of family structure and access to income and their relation to children's development and status attainment (for example: Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov and Sealand 1993; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov 1994; Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn and Smith 1998; Haveman and Wolfe 1994; McLanahan and Sanefur 1994). Unfortunately, until 1997, very little data was available about children themselves in the PSID. Information on children was largely limited to their ages, sex, and schooling, making it difficult for researchers to determine the childhood processes and mechanisms through which families, neighbors and schools likely impact children's wellbeing. In addition, the PSID contains very little data about men as fathers or their involvement with their children. The collection of the Child Development Supplement to the PSID in 1997 largely rectified this problem.

4.2.1 Child Development Supplement

The 1997 Child Development Supplement was collected from a nationally representative sub-sample of 3,563 focal children from 2,380 households included in the original PSID sample that had at least one child between the ages of birth and 12 years old at the time of the interview. The majority of these focal children are from long-term PSID families. The CDS is well suited for this study because it contains substantial data on fathers, their involvement with their children, and a range of resources on which these families

depend. Specifically, the CDS obtained information on the following: 1) reliable, age specific assessments of children's cognitive, behavioral, and health status; 2) a comprehensive assessment of parental and caregiver time investments in children; 3) teacher reports of children's time use in elementary and preschool programs; and 4) measures of resources other than time – for example, the learning environment in the home, teacher and school administrator reports of school resources, and parent reported measures of neighborhood resources. Data were collected from several sources, including the primary caregiver, a second caregiver, absent parents, a teacher, a school administrator, and the child. The reported primary caregiver is usually the child's mother, although it could be the child's father, legal guardian or person who knows most about the child if the child's mother is not living with the child. The other caregivers from whom reports about children are available are usually the child's father, although they may also be grandparents, legal guardians, or others.

The primary caregiver interviews and child interviews form the core of the CDS data collection efforts. To be included in the CDS supplement, data about the focal child must have been collected from the primary caregiver. In this study, I use a subset of variables taken from the primary caregiver child-focused interview, the primary caregiver household-focused interview, the other caregiver child-focused interview, the other caregiver household-focused interview, the children's time use time diary assessment, and an additional demographic data file. Each of these data sources is contained in a separate computer file. The files were sorted and merged by appropriate identification variables into a single focal child centered data file. The overall response rate for the CDS is 88 percent,

although response rates for the auxiliary interviews were sometimes substantially lower, as reported in the Table 3.1 below.

Table 4.1 Response Rates by Questionnaire and Respondent Type.

Questionnaire Completion	Baseline (number eligible)	Number Responding	Percent Response
By Number of Children			
Number of Children:	3,563		
Number of children having primary caregivers	3,563	3,563	100.00%
Number of children having other caregivers	3,563	2,741	76.93%
Child Questionnaires:			
Number completed by primary caregivers	3,563	3,563	100.00%
Number completed by other caregivers	2,741	1,395	50.89%
Household Questionnaires:			
Number completed by primary caregivers	3,563	2,233	62.67%
Number completed by other caregivers	2,741	1,362	49.69%
Time Diary Questionnaires (2 per child):			
Number of children with at least one completed diary	3,563	2,904	81.50%
By Number of Households			
Number of Households:	2,380		
Number of households with primary caregivers	2,380	2,380	100.00%
Number of households with other caregivers	2,380	1,824	76.64%
Household Questionnaires:			
Number completed by primary caregiver	2,380	1,513	63.57%
Number completed by other caregiver	1,824	929	50.93%

4.2.2 Supplemental Wealth Data

One of the strengths of the PSID data is that they are rich in financial information about the households included in the sample. In the PSID the assets and liabilities of each family are reviewed every five years. In my case, the wealth data collected most closely to, but prior to, the 1997 CDS data is the data collected as a supplement to the 1994 wave of the PSID. The 1994 Wealth Supplement contains data about a variety of assets and debts and appears to be comparable to data from the Survey of Consumer Finances (which oversamples high-wealth households and is generally considered the best source of wealth data) at least up through the 98th percentile, possibly even up through the 99.5th percentile (Hurst, Luoh, & Stafford 1998). Measurement problems, where they exist, appear to be confined to those families beyond the 98th percentile – the very rich – whose wealth is hard to measure, in part, because the sampling frame is hard to define and the survey instrument must accommodate a far more complex asset structure than is sufficient for the typical family. While data about wealth can be difficult to collect in household surveys, in the PSID, the individual components of wealth have a surprisingly high per-item response rate. For most components of wealth not much more than 1% of the data are missing, in part, because PSID respondents appear to have confidence in the interviewers and typically have been interviewed on numerous prior occasions. The primary shortcoming of the 1994 Wealth Supplement is that it did not collect data from the Hispanic sub-sample of the PSID. The only other problem of significance with the wealth data is that they are top-coded to amounts no greater than \$10 million per wealth component (again, only a serious problem when estimating the wealth of the very rich).

The 1994 Wealth Supplement includes a broad range of measures of household assets. Included are measures of the net value of any real estate other than the main home, vehicles or other assets ‘on wheels’, and of farm or business assets. Also included are measures of the value of shares of stock, mutual funds or investment trusts, including stocks in IRAs, the value of checking and savings accounts, money market funds, certificates of deposit, savings bonds, Treasury bills, other investment trusts or estates, bond funds, and life insurance policies or special collections. The value of pensions is also included as are the value of any debts held, other than mortgage debt, such as credit cards, student loans, medical or legal bills, and personal loans. Two overall measures of net worth are also available, one which included all assets and debts, including any home equity (market value minus any outstanding mortgage balances) held in a primary residence, and one which excludes home equity focusing instead on more liquid forms of wealth.

4.3 Analytic Sample

The analytic sample for this study consists of a relatively small subset of fathers included in the 1997 CDS data file. To select the desired cases, four sets of filters were applied to the total sample of 3,563 focal child cases, as illustrated in Table 3.2 below. First, records that did not have each of the needed completed questionnaire booklets used in the analysis were excluded from the study.⁶ This was by far the most stringent filtering criterion, effectively removing 70% of focal child cases in the base sample from the analytic sample, dropping the available sample size down to 1,073 cases.

⁶ The CDS data files include case weights computed to adjust for non-response bias at the questionnaire booklet level.

A second set of sample filters were used to select cases in which the mother was reported to be the primary caregiver, the father was reported as the other caregiver and the head of the household, and the focal child was reported to be the biological or adoptive child of both parents. Thus cases were deleted from the analytic sample if there was no father present for that record, the father did not co-reside with the focal child, the focal child was a stepchild of one of the parents, or the father was identified as the child's primary caregiver. Fathers were only identified as primary caregivers if mothers were absent from the household, usually due to incarceration, long-term hospitalization, or other forms of institutionalization. Cases involving stepchildren were removed because existing research suggests that there is less normative support for parental involvement by stepparents (Cherlin 1978, Daly and Wilson 1998), and because inclusion of stepchildren would potentially necessitate including the additional non-residential parent in the analysis. This set of filters removed an additional 118 cases from the analytic sample, resulting in an available sample size of 955 cases.

A third set of filters was used to select cases for which data from the 1994 Wealth Supplement to the PSID was available. Unfortunately, as noted above, no wealth data was collected for Hispanic respondents for the 1994 Wealth Supplement, so the analytic sample for this study is restricted to records that reported the head of household's race as either white or black. In addition, respondents who belong to the supplemental immigrant sample added as part of the 1997 data collection were not present in the sample at the time the wealth data were collected and are excluded from the analytic sample as a result. This set of filters also removed cases where the parent's relationship with each other began after the 1994 wealth

data were collected. This third set of filters removed 181 cases from the analytic sample, resulting in an available sample size of 774 cases.

Table 4.2 Analytic Sample Selection Criteria.

Filter #	N	% of records	Description
0	3563	100.0%	Total number of "focal child records" in merged CDS data file ^a
CDS Questionnaire Booklet Response Filters			
1	2233	62.7%	Primary caregiver household booklet was completed
2	1362	38.2%	Other caregiver household booklet was completed
3	1395	39.2%	Other caregiver child booklet was completed
4	2904	81.5%	Time diary was completed
Family Structure Filters			
5	3407	95.6%	Mother is the primary caregiver
6	2391	67.1%	Father is the other caregiver
7	2500	70.2%	Father is the head of household
8	3128	87.8%	Child is the biological/adopted child of both parents
Filters Needed for Using 1994 Supplemental Wealth Data			
9	3163	88.8%	Head of household's race is white or black
10	3234	90.8%	Family is not part of new immigrant supplemental sample
11	1936	54.3%	Parental relationship has been "intact" since 1994
Filter Needed to Select One Focal Child Record per Household			
12	2380	66.8%	Random selection of 1 focal child record per household ^b
Final Sample Size After All Filters Have Been Applied			
1-12	512	14.4%	All needed controls imposed, including: booklet response, family structure, wealth data, and random focal child selection

^a Sample sizes reported in this table are unweighted.

^b Randomly selecting one focal child per household returns a sample size equal to the number of distinct households in the sample (N=2380).

Because the records in the CDS data files are organized at the case level around the 3,563 focal children included in the study and because in roughly 33% of these focal children are siblings of another focal child in the base sample, if I were to use all eligible focal child records from the application of the above filters, some of the fathers of interest would make it into the analytic sample more than once by virtue of having more than one focal child in the base sample. To eliminate any double counting of fathers, a single focal child record within each household was randomly selected when there was more than one focal child record available for a father. This procedure, used in conjunction with the above sample filters, results in a final analytic sample of 512 black or white co-resident fathers who are the chosen focal child's biological or adoptive father, who are either married or cohabiting with the child's biological or adoptive mother in a relationship that has been intact since 1994, for whom we have all of the necessary completed questionnaire booklets, and who are not part of the immigrant refresher sample. The analytic sample represents 14.4% of the original focal child records in the base sample, and 21.5% of the total number of households included in the base sample.

In many ways, then, the analytic sample is demographically different from the full CDS sample of households and/or focal children, which was designed to over-represent poor and minority populations. The focus on two-parent families whose relationships have been intact for a minimum of 4 years who are raising their own biological or adoptive children and who are either black or white necessarily eliminates what are often described as "fragile" families from the analysis. These families are typically characterized by high rates of single motherhood, non-resident or absent fathers, poverty and minority status. As a result, the analytic sample for this project is more affluent than is the full CDS sample. The average

respondent in the analytic sample has a family income that is \$19,647 more than the average respondent in the full CDS sample, and they have a net worth that is \$39,463 more than the net worth of the average respondent in the full CDS sample, and both are statistically significant differences at the $p < .05$ level according to the results of t-tests of those differences.⁷ In addition, the rate of homeownership in the analytic sample is 80% versus the 56% rate of homeownership in the full CDS sample, a difference that is also statistically significant. Members of the analytic sample also report a statistically significant lower number of economic problems (.36 fewer problems on average) and a much lower rate of poverty (4% versus 19%) than the full CDS sample.

There are also other statistically significant differences between the analytic sample and the full CDS sample that result from the application of the filters used to select the analytic sample. For instance, families in the analytic sample report having slightly smaller families (an average of 4.13 versus 4.23 family members), fewer children in the household under the age of 18 (an average of 2.06 versus 2.36 children), are less likely to be cohabiting (2% versus 7%), and spent less money on childcare expenses (an average of \$1,348 versus \$1,963) than did families in the full CDS sample.

In terms of the characteristics of fathers in the analytic sample versus the full CDS sample, fathers in the analytic sample are older (an average of 37.8 years versus 36.3 years), have more education (an average of 13.6 years versus 12.6 years), are more often employed full-time (95% versus 82%), work a larger number of hours in an average week (an average of 44.7 hours versus 40.0 hours), and take home higher incomes (an average of \$38,968 versus \$26,824) than their counterparts in the full CDS sample, differences that are all statistically significant. Much the same is true for mothers in the analytic sample, who also are older (an

⁷ Here, both the analytic sample and the full CDS sample are compared unweighted.

average of 35.7 years versus 34.7 years), have more education (an average of 13.7 years versus 13.0 years), are more often employed at least part-time (71% versus 63%), work a larger number of hours in an average week (an average of 27.7 hours versus 20.0 hours), and take home higher incomes (an average of \$15,850 versus \$9,342) than their counterparts in the full CDS sample. The differences for mothers are also statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level according to t-test results.

The practical implication of these differences for the upcoming analysis is that the analysis is being carried out on a mostly white, lower middle-class sample. This is partly a result of limiting the analysis to two-parent families, and of imposing the requirement that the parents' relationship have been intact for a minimum of 4 years (so that the 1994 household wealth data could be included). More importantly, it is also the result of the fact that more "fragile" families were much less likely to have completed and returned all of the necessary questionnaire booklets. If any one of the four needed booklets were unavailable for a respondent, that respondent was necessarily excluded from the analysis, although the case weights provided with the CDS data have been adjusted so that they do correct for some of this non-response.

4.4 Measurement

In the section that follows, measures included in the analysis are categorized as either dependent or independent variables. I describe the treatment of the dependent variables first, followed by the independent variables of interest. The independent variables are organized roughly according to their order of appearance in Figure 2.1 found in chapter 2. That is, the treatment of the economic measures is described first, followed by the description of the

treatment of the neighborhood measures, which is then followed by the description of the treatment of the measures of psychological distress. The treatment of measures of the more common, well-established concepts such as marital power, time availability, and fatherhood attitudes is described next, followed finally by the control variables.

4.4.1 Dependent Variables

I use the children's time diary data from the CDS to examine two types of fathers' involvement proposed by Lamb (1985): *engagement* with the focal child and *accessibility* to the focal child. Reports of father's time are culled from mother's reports of children's time use collected through the use of the time diaries. In the CDS, each family was asked to complete a diary for a prearranged random weekday and weekend day. The diary was designed to gather information on a child's activities over the 24 hours of the assigned day, with the day beginning and ending at midnight. In addition to the target child, the primary caregiver of the target child, usually the mother, was the preferred respondent for time diary data. In the time diaries, respondents were asked to provide information about what activities the focal child was engaged in, when the activity began and ended, where the child was during the activity, who was doing the activity with the child, and who else was there but not directly involved in the activity with the child. There were typically anywhere from 15 to 40 entries per diary, which can be aggregated using some or all of the 244 available activity codes. From this time diary data, I should be able to get better estimates of fathers' involvement with their children than are available in other large-scale surveys that do not use time diary methods, in part because time diary methods produce less biased estimates than do other methods (Juster 1985, Juster and Stafford 1991).

For this study, fathers' *engagement* is operationalized as the amount of time the focal child interacts with his or her father across a range of activities and is measured by summing all the individual time segments (measured in minutes) where the father was reported to be doing an activity with the focal child. Fathers' *accessibility* is operationalized in terms of the amount of time the father is available to the focal child but not directly involved in the child's activities and is measured by summing all of the time segments in which the father was reported to be at the same location as the focal child but not directly participating in the reported activity. Mothers' time was treated in a similar fashion so that the measures of fathers' *relative engagement* could be computed by dividing fathers' time engaged with the focal child by the sum of fathers' and mothers' combined time engaged with the focal child. Fathers' *relative accessibility* was computed similarly. Because the CDS time diary data contains information for both a random weekday and a random weekend day for each focal child, it is possible to compute three sets of relative measures of fathers' involvement (engagement and accessibility): one set using the weekday data, one set using the weekend data, and one set using both weekday and weekend data weighted to represent the whole week (week = weekday * 5 + weekend * 2). The full week measures of fathers' *relative engagement* and *relative accessibility* are used in the analyses described in Chapter 5.

In this study I also examine fathers' *responsibility* for child-care, the third type of involvement identified by Lamb (1985). Unlike engagement and accessibility, responsibility was not assessed through the use of time diaries, but rather through the use of a summed scale. Eight items were available for inclusion in the scale. The items focus on routine activities related to the care of children, including 'bathing or changing diapers', 'disciplining the children', 'buying children's clothes', 'driving children to activities', 'selecting a child

care program or school', 'selecting the children's pediatrician', and 'playing with the children'. A careful inspection of the data for this scale showed that the first activity, 'bathing or changing diapers', had a substantially lower response rate than the other items, with fathers of older children being more likely to be missing a valid response. As a result, this item was removed from the scale, reducing the number of items included to seven. For each activity, respondents were asked whether they usually do the activity, another household member performs the activity or whether the task is shared. Following the coding scheme used by Hofferth (2003), if the father reported that he usually did the activity, the response is coded 1; if the task was shared the activity is coded as 0.5; and if another household member performed the activity it is coded 0. The resulting scale score was computed by summing across the seven items ($\alpha = .71$). It is important to note that while this treatment of fathers' *responsibility* is a summed scale, it implicitly captures fathers' *relative responsibility* because the items were asked so that respondents rated their degree of responsibility for the activity relative to the other household members who might also share responsibility for the activity. Because the level of fathers' sharing across tasks is expected to be low, and their level of sole responsibility for tasks even lower (as reported in Yeung 1999), other treatments of this set of items (such as computing the proportion of tasks for which fathers have sole responsibility or the proportion of tasks which fathers report sharing responsibility) are unviable because they result in measures whose distributions have very narrow ranges, with little variance.

4.4.2 Independent Variables

Economic resources, the primary explanatory variable of interest in this study, are assessed using multiple measures including: *current income*, *permanent income*, *net worth*, *poverty status*, and *home ownership*. *Current income* is measured as the family's total income, from all sources, for the most recent year prior to the 1997 CDS measurement, in this case it is income earned in 1996.⁸ ⁹ *Permanent income* is measured as an average of the prior 4 years of total family income (1993-1996) for couples whose relationship was intact as of 1993 and as an average of the prior 3 years of total family income (1994-1996) for couples whose relationship was intact beginning in 1994. Couples whose relationships were not intact since 1994 were excluded from the analytic sample, as described above. *Net worth* is measured as the total value of all assets minus debt, including home equity, as of 1994. This measure involves subtracting the value of a family's debts from their assets and can take on negative values for families that have debts greater than their assets. Because the above financial measures are all highly positively skewed, logged values of these measures are used for modeling purposes. The family's *poverty status* is measured by a single dichotomous indicator, coded 1 if the family fell below the official poverty line in 1996, and coded 0 otherwise.¹⁰ Because *homeownership* comprises the bulk of most households' asset

⁸ All monetary variables were originally measured in dollars and have been recoded into units of \$10,000.

⁹ In addition, because the primary predictors of interest in this study – economic resources – are all measured prior to the measurement of the other variables in the models, some of the causal ambiguity inherent in regression models that are based on cross-sectional data is mitigated. Having the economic variables measured prior to the variables they are assumed to affect limits the possibility of reverse causation, although not perfectly.

¹⁰ However, because the definition of the official poverty line has become increasingly arbitrary over time and families expenditures have outpaced the assumed market-basket of goods used to calibrate the poverty line, I have chosen not to include this measure in the empirical models I estimate in the next chapter.

holdings, I also use a dummy coded variable to track whether or not households are homeowners (coded 1 if the respondent is a homeowner, 0 if renter).

Measures of the neighborhood environment are categorized according to whether they describe the composition of the neighborhood or describe respondents' experience of life in the neighborhood (following Aneshensel and Sucoff 1996).¹¹ It is important to note that the measures of neighborhood composition and neighborhood experience that are available in the CDS data are respondent's subjective reports, rather than objective measures collected from official public data sources (like the U.S. Census). Thus they may be less reliable measures of actual neighborhood conditions than objective measures would be, but they offer an advantage over objective measures in that they should also be more closely tied to respondents' behavior than would objective measures of neighborhood conditions. How parents behave in response to neighborhood conditions should be driven by their perceptions of the neighborhood more so than by the actual objective conditions which indirectly influence those perceptions.

In terms of composition, the neighborhood size is measured both in terms of its *population density* and its *geographic size*. *Population density* is measured as a simple count by a question that asked resident to report the total number of families that live in their neighborhood. Because the distribution of responses is strongly positively skewed, the log of *population density* is used for modeling purposes. In addition, respondents were asked whether their current neighborhood consisted of the block or street they live on, the block or street plus several additional streets, an area within a 15-minute walk, or an area greater than a 15-minute walk. Given the ordinal nature of this measurement, I chose to recode the

¹¹ Neighborhood measures were only solicited within the Primary Caregiver Household Booklet, and thus are mothers' reports rather than fathers' reports.

geographic size of the neighborhood so that 1 indicated neighborhoods that were within a 15-minute walk or greater than a 15-minute walk (the two largest categories), while 0 indicated geographically smaller neighborhoods. The *racial composition* of neighborhoods is assessed by an item that indicates the proportion of neighborhood residents that are black, and ranges from 0, indicating ‘almost none’, to 1.0 indicating ‘almost all’.¹² A similarly coded item measures the proportion of *neighborhood homeownership*. It ranges from 0, indicating ‘almost none’ to 1.0 indicating ‘almost all’. Missing from this set of measures of neighborhood composition are items relating to the *economic composition* of the neighborhood and the *family structure* composition of the neighborhood, both of which have been shown to be important determinants of neighborhood social cohesion and rates of criminal activity (Shaw and McKay 1942, Bursik 1988, Sampson 1992, Sampson et al. 1997, Rice 2003). However, both the *racial composition* and *neighborhood homeownership* measures I do have available should indirectly, if imperfectly, control for these missing items. It is well known that neighborhoods that are predominantly black in composition are more likely to be poorer and have a greater proportion of single-parent households. Similarly, neighborhoods that are composed of primarily homeowners will tend to also have a greater proportion of residents of higher socio-economic status because of the strict financial requirements imposed on homebuyers seeking to obtain a mortgage. While the interpretation of these measures will be somewhat less clear, because they are *de facto* surrogates measures of economic composition and family structure composition in addition

¹² Three similar items measure the proportion of neighborhood residents who are white, Hispanic, and Asian, respectively. The items measuring the proportion of residents who are Hispanic or Asian both have very truncated distributions, and are not used as a result. The item measuring the proportion of residents who are white is strongly negatively correlated with the item measuring the proportion of neighborhood residents who are black, making it largely redundant.

to their stated purposes, the potential confounding is relatively well understood and should not pose a major problem.

Residents' subjective experience of the neighborhood is assessed using a neighborhood *social cohesion* scale and a scale measuring *ambient hazards* in the neighborhood. The social cohesion scale consists of eight items measuring how likely neighborhood residents would be to do something if 'someone were breaking into their home in plain sight', 'someone was trying to sell drugs to their children in plain sight', 'there was a fight in front of their home and someone was being beaten', 'their kids were getting into trouble', 'a child was showing disrespect to an adult, a child was playing with matches', 'a child was writing or painting on a car or building', or 'a child was taking something out of a neighbors' residence'. All eight items are based on work by Elliott et al. (1996) and were originally measured on a four point scale, where 1 indicates 'very likely', 2 indicates 'likely', 3 indicates 'unlikely', and 4 indicates 'very unlikely'. All items were reverse coded so that higher numbers would indicate greater likelihood to intervene and then summed to produce the neighborhood *social cohesion* scale score ($\alpha = .92$). *Ambient hazards* are measured with a scale produced by summing two items. The first item assesses neighborhood safety, asking respondents to rate how safe the neighborhood is to walk around alone after dark on a 4-point scale, where 1 indicates 'completely safe' and 4 indicates 'extremely dangerous'. The second item assesses the overall quality of the neighborhood as a place to raise children, and uses a 5-point scale, where 1 indicates 'excellent' and 5 indicates 'poor'. Because very few respondents rated their neighborhoods as 'poor', codes 4 and 5 were combined so that a score of 4 indicated neighborhoods that were rated 'fair or poor'. These two items were summed to produce the *ambient hazards* scale ($\alpha = .47$).

Because respondents' experience of their neighborhood is likely to be shaped by the degree to which they interact with other neighborhood residents, a couple of additional measures of residents' *neighborhood integration* are necessary. Two items measure the number of neighborhood residents who are family members or close friends, respectively. A third item measures the number of adults in the neighborhood that respondents talk to regularly, while a fourth item measures the number of children in the neighborhood respondents know by name. All four of these items were originally measured as counts. However, the first two items regarding the presence of family and close friends in the neighborhood have been dummy coded so that a code of 1 indicates that at least one such person lives nearby, while a code of 0 indicates otherwise. The third and fourth items regarding the number of adults talked to regularly and the number of children known by name have both been left as counts, but have been top-coded to a maximum count of 20. A final item measures neighborhood tenure and assesses how long respondents have been residents in their current neighborhood. It has been dummy coded with a code of 1 indicating that residents have been living in the neighborhood for 1 year or more and coded 0 for residents who have been living in the neighborhood less than 1 year. I expect that respondents who have family members or close friends in the neighborhood, who talk to a larger number of adults in the neighborhood and who know a larger number of children in the neighborhood by name will experience their neighborhoods as more cohesive and less hazardous.

The next set of measures relate to respondents' experience of psychological distress. *Economic stress*, identified by Elder et al. (1995) as an important source of feelings of depression and reduced parental effectiveness, is measured by a count of how many of the

listed fifteen situations respondents had experienced as a result of economic problems. The situations include ‘selling possessions’, ‘postponing major purchases’, ‘postponing medical care’, ‘borrowing money from friends or relatives’, ‘applying for governmental assistance’, ‘filing for bankruptcy’, ‘falling behind in paying bills’, ‘obtained a loan to pay off debts’, ‘had creditors call or visit’, ‘had wages garnished by a creditor’, ‘had a lien filed against their property’, ‘had a home, car or other property repossessed’, ‘moved to cheaper living quarters’, ‘moved in with other people’, or ‘sent one or more of their children to live with someone else’. Thus *economic stress* is measured as a simple count, where higher scores indicate more systematic or widespread economic problems.

Fathers’ *depression* is measured using a set of 10 items from the short form of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI) developed by Kessler (Kessler and Mroczek 1994) for use in the National Health Interview Survey. Items asked respondents how often in the last 30 days they ‘felt tired out for no good reason’, ‘nervous’, ‘so nervous that nothing could calm you down’, ‘helpless’, ‘restless or fidgety’, ‘so restless you could not sit still’, ‘depressed’, ‘felt like everything was an effort’, ‘felt so sad nothing could cheer you up’, or ‘felt worthless’. All 10 items were measured on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicates ‘all of the time’, 2 indicates ‘most of the time’, 3 indicates ‘some of the time’, 4 indicates ‘a little of the time’, and 5 indicates ‘none of the time’. All items were reverse coded so that higher numbers indicated more frequent depressive symptoms and were summed to create the *depression* scale score ($\alpha = .86$). Scores on this scale can range from 10 to 50, with scores between 10 and 15 showing no or low risk of a depressive disorder, scores between 16 and 29 showing a medium risk, and scores equal to or greater than 30 showing a high risk of a depressive disorder (Andrews and Slade 2001).

Fathers' *self-efficacy* is measured using the seven-item Pearlin Self-Efficacy Scale (Pearlin et al. 1981). Each of the seven items is measured on a 4-point scale, where 1 indicates 'strongly agree', 2 indicates 'agree', 3 indicates 'disagree', and 4 indicates 'strongly disagree'. The items ask respondents to rate their agreement with the following statements: 'there is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have'; 'sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life'; 'I have little control over things that are happening to me'; 'I can do just about anything I really set my mind to'; 'I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems in life'; 'what happens to me in the future mostly depends on me'; and finally, 'there is little I can do to change the things that are important in my life'. Two of these items, 'I can do just about anything I set my mind to' and 'what happens to me in the future mostly depends on me' had to be reverse coded so that higher scores indicate greater *self-efficacy*. Then all seven items were summed to produce the *self-efficacy* scale score ($\alpha = .76$).

Next I describe the measures of the more traditional explanatory variables used in father involvement research. Both fathers' and mothers' *fatherhood attitudes* are assessed by an identical series of eight questions drawn from the "Being a Father" scale (Pleck 1997) and from the "Role of the Father" questionnaire (Palkowitz 1984), which tap the belief that fathers are important in child development. Items ask respondents to rate their agreement with the following statements: 'being a father an raising children is one of the most fulfilling experiences a father can have'; 'it is essential for the child's well-being that father spend time interacting and playing with their children'; 'it is difficult for fathers to express tender and affectionate feelings toward children'; 'a father should be as heavily involved in the care of his child as the mother'; 'fathers play a central role in the child's personality development';

‘fathers are able to enjoy children more when the children are older’; ‘if it keeps him from being involved in his job, a father is being too involved with his children’; and ‘in general, fathers and mothers are equally good at meeting their children’s needs’. These eight items were originally coded so that 1 indicates ‘strongly agree’, 2 indicates ‘agree’, 3 indicates ‘disagree’, and 4 indicates ‘strongly disagree’. The first, second, fourth, fifth, and eighth items were recoded so that high scores indicates greater support for egalitarian, involved parenting and low scores indicate attitudes more compatible with traditional bread-winning. The total score for the *fatherhood attitudes* scale is obtained by summing the eight items (alpha for fathers = .73, alpha for mothers = .68).

Time availability is assessed using a measure of fathers’ average weekly work hours, where hours spent at work are assumed to be unavailable for childcare. *Demand for childcare labor* is assessed using several items. The first indicator of *demand* is a measure of the total number of children in the household, where larger numbers of children are assumed to require greater total childcare labor. The second indicator is the age of the focal child, where younger children are assumed to require more care. The third measure of *demand* is a scale that measures fathers’ perceptions of how difficult the focal child has been to raise. Fathers were asked to assess how true each of the following five statements are: ‘the focal child seems to be harder to care for than most children’; ‘there are things that the focal child does that really bother me’; ‘I find myself giving up more of my life to meet the focal child’s needs than I ever expected’; ‘I often feel angry with the child’; and finally, ‘I would be doing better in my life without the focal child’. Items were coded so that 1 indicated ‘not at all true’ and 5 indicated ‘completely true’. Items were summed to compute the scale score (alpha = .68). The fourth measure of *demand* is a measure of mothers’ average weekly work

hours, where greater hours spend at work is assumed to increase the demand for fathers' childcare labor. The final item related to the *demand* for fathers' childcare labor is a measure of the total amount spent on paid childcare in 1996, measured in dollars. Because the distribution of this last indicator is highly skewed, logged values are used for modeling purposes.

The *father's relative income* is assessed using a single indicator. It is a computed variable that measures the father's share of the couple's joint income, and uses measures of fathers' and mothers' individual permanent incomes as inputs. It has a range from 0, indicating that the father contributes nothing to the couple's joint permanent income, to 1.0 indicating that the father contributes all of the couple's joint income. The mid-point is a score of .50 and indicates that the father and mother contribute equally to the couple's joint permanent income. It is also possible to compute this measure using current income measures instead of permanent income measures, and doing so allows the computation of a difference measure which captures whether the father's share of the couple's current income is greater than or less than the father's share of the couple's permanent income.

4.4.3 Additional Control Variables

The additional control variables to be used in this study break down into three main categories: fathers' characteristics, mothers' characteristics, and characteristics of the focal child. Controls for father's characteristics include *race*, *age*, *education*, *marital status*, *employment status*, and *excessive alcohol use*. Fathers' *race* is accounted for by a binary variable coded 1 if the father's race is black, 0 if it is white. Father's *age* and *education* are both measured in years. *Marital status* is coded as 1 if the father is cohabiting with but not

married to the child's mother and 0 if he is a married. *Employment status* is also measured using a binary variable, coded 1 if the father is currently employed and coded 0 otherwise. A final control for fathers' *excessive alcohol use* is included because it is important for the modeling of fathers' *depression* (Ross 2000). It is a single item and asked fathers whether they had ever felt the need to cut down on their drinking. It is coded 1 for yes and 0 for no. Fathers who report that they do not consume alcohol are also coded 0.

Controls for mothers' characteristics include *age*, *education*, and *employment status*. Because I expect mothers' ages and educational levels to be highly correlated with fathers', the difference between fathers' and mothers' ages and educational levels are used instead of the mother's actual age or educational level. Mothers' *employment status* is measured by a single item that is coded 1 if the mother is currently employed and coded 0 otherwise. The only additional control related to the focal child is the *child's sex*, coded 1 if the child is male and coded 0 if the child is female.

4.5 Treatment of Missing Data

While the exclusion of respondents from the analysis who did not complete all four needed questionnaire booklets does have the effect of limiting the amount of missing data in the responses of the 512 respondents who are included in the analytic sample, there is still some missing data to be dealt with. Of the measures and scales included in the analysis, the scale with the most missing data was the one measuring father's level of responsibility for childcare, which appeared to be missing valid responses for 9% of the 512 cases. This was followed by the scale measuring mothers' attitudes toward fatherhood (with 8% missing data), the scale measuring fathers' attitudes toward fatherhood (with 5.5% missing data), the

scale measuring fathers' sense of self-efficacy (with 4.1% missing), the scale tallying the number of economic problems the family has faced (with 3.3% missing data), the scale measuring fathers' experience of depression (with 2.9% missing), and the scale measuring the social cohesion of the family's neighborhood (with 2.7% missing data). The remaining variables had 2% or fewer respondents missing valid responses.

These missing values were all replaced with predicted values generated using the Expectation-Maximization algorithm implemented in the NORM software package, version 2.02 for Windows (Schafer 1997). Where computed scales are involved, missing data was replaced in the individual scale components and then the scale values were recomputed on the now "complete" data. Because the values generated by the E-M algorithm are calculated to an accuracy of several decimal places, while the raw data for scale items exists purely as whole numbers, an option in the NORM package was used to round the imputed values to the nearest observed value in the original data. This has the dual effect of ensuring that the imputed values are imputed as integers, matching the original raw data, and of not allowing imputed values to extend beyond the range of values actually observed for each scale item in the original raw data. Had the simple list-wise deletion of cases with missing data been used instead, it would have reduced the usable sample size from 512 cases to about 425 cases, plus or minus, depending on the specific analysis.

4.6 Descriptive Statistics

In Table 4.3, I present descriptive statistics for selected variables. Within this table, comparisons are made by race, in part, because these statistics reflect the weighted sample and the primary effect of the case weighting was to adjust the racial composition of the

sample. Prior to case weighting, the analytic sample was 18.5% Black, after case weighting it is 7.2% Black. As can be seen in Table 4.3 below, fathers' share of the total time the couple spends per week engaged with the focal child is much less than 50%. The same is true for father's share of the total time the couple spends per week accessible with the focal child, as both are 39%. Similarly, fathers' responsibility for their children is low, with a mean score of 2.49 out of seven.

In terms of economic resources, the total sample has a mean total family income in 1996 of \$66,500 and a mean permanent total family income slightly lower at \$64,700. The average net worth for the sample is \$133,100, with 83% of fathers being homeowners. Only 3% of the total sample reported being below the poverty line in 1996. As for the neighborhoods in which the families live, the average population of the neighborhood is about 64 families, with 32% of families reporting that they live in a geographically large neighborhood (an area within a 15 minute walk or greater in size). Respondents report living in neighborhoods where 10% of residents are Black and 85% of residents are homeowners. The mean social cohesion score is fairly high at 27.8 (the maximum possible score is 32) and the mean ambient hazards score is just below the middle of the scale range at 3.67 (out of 8). Forty-six percent of respondents report having at least one family member living in the same neighborhood, while 76% report having at least one close friend living nearby. Respondents report on average to talking regularly to fewer than 6 adults in their neighborhood and to knowing by name an average of 9 children living in their neighborhood. Eighty-nine percent of respondents report having lived in their current neighborhood for 1 year or more.

Turning to measures related to psychological distress we see that out of the 15 possible economic stressors families might have faced, respondents report an average of only 1.5. Fathers' average self-efficacy score stands at 22.4 (the maximum possible score is 28), while the average depression score is low, standing at 15.1 (the maximum possible score is 50). Diagnostically, this average depression score is in the "normal" range, indicating little evidence of depressive symptoms. Only 15% of fathers report ever having felt the need to cut down on their alcohol consumption.

The fatherhood attitudes score for fathers and mothers in the total sample are almost identical at 26.0 and 26.1, respectively. These scores are certainly toward the high end of the scale range (the maximum possible score is 32), and indicate greater attitudinal support for involved parenting rather than traditional breadwinning. Marital power appears to be largely in fathers' hands, as the average share of the couple's joint permanent income stands at 70%. In terms of father's time availability, the mean of father's average weekly work hours is just under 45 hours per week, not quite double that of mothers' at 27.2. This difference reflects the fact that nearly 96% of fathers are currently employed, whereas only 67% of mothers are currently employed as of the date of data collection. Respondents report an average of 2 children per household, with 48% of focal children being male and the average age of the focal child just over 6 years of age. Fathers report that the focal child isn't particularly difficult to parent, with an average difficulty score of 7.7 (out of a possible maximum score of 25). The last of the measures related to demand for childcare is the total spend on childcare, and the average expenditure is \$1,150 in 1996.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics for the Total Sample, White Fathers, and Black Fathers.^a

Measures	Total Sample (N = 512)		White Fathers (N = 475)		Black Fathers (N = 37)		
	Mean	(Standard Deviation)	Mean	(Standard Deviation)	Mean	(Standard Deviation)	
Father Involvement Measures							
Father's Relative Engagement	0.39	(0.19)	0.38	(0.18)	0.40	(0.22)	
Father's Relative Accessibility	0.39	(0.21)	0.38	(0.21)	0.47	(0.27)	*
Father's Responsibility	2.49	(0.94)	2.45	(0.90)	2.96	(1.33)	*
Economic Measures							
Total Family Income 1996 (\$10,000s)	6.65	(5.33)	6.77	(5.47)	5.04	(2.76)	
Permanent Total Family Income (\$10,000s)	6.47	(5.60)	6.60	(5.76)	4.79	(2.42)	
Net Worth 1994 (\$10,000s)	13.31	(33.14)	13.94	(34.28)	5.20	(7.07)	
Poverty Status (1 = Below Poverty Line in 1996)	0.03	(0.18)	0.03	(0.16)	0.11	(0.31)	*
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	0.83	(0.38)	0.84	(0.36)	0.65	(0.48)	*
Neighborhood Measures							
Population Density	63.98	(104.99)	62.20	(98.72)	86.75	(165.71)	
Neighborhood Size (1 = Large)	0.32	(0.47)	0.32	(0.47)	0.36	(0.49)	
Proportion who are Black	0.10	(0.22)	0.06	(0.14)	0.64	(0.32)	*
Proportion who are Homeowners	0.85	(0.28)	0.86	(0.27)	0.70	(0.35)	*
Social Cohesion	27.81	(4.38)	27.86	(4.24)	27.18	(5.88)	
Ambient Hazards	3.67	(1.27)	3.61	(1.24)	4.45	(1.41)	*
Any Family Members (1 = Yes)	0.49	(0.50)	0.49	(0.50)	0.51	(0.51)	
Any Close Friends (1 = Yes)	0.76	(0.43)	0.76	(0.43)	0.72	(0.46)	
Adults Talked to Regularly	5.64	(4.96)	5.68	(4.93)	5.08	(5.64)	
Children Known by Name	9.18	(6.74)	9.31	(6.72)	7.49	(6.86)	
Tenure (1 = 1 Year or More)	0.89	(0.31)	0.89	(0.31)	0.85	(0.37)	

Note: * p<.05 indicate significance levels of racial comparisons.

^aMeans (Standard Deviations) are based on the weighted sample.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics (Cont.)

Measures	Total Sample (N = 512)		White Fathers (N = 475)		Black Fathers (N = 37)	
	Mean	(Standard Deviation)	Mean	(Standard Deviation)	Mean	(Standard Deviation)
Psychological Distress Measures						
Economic Stress	1.49	(1.70)	1.46	(1.68)	1.87	(1.96)
Father's Self-Efficacy	22.40	(3.04)	22.44	(3.01)	21.84	(3.32)
Father's Depression	15.08	(5.06)	15.06	(5.03)	15.35	(5.47)
Traditional Measures						
Father's Fatherhood Attitudes	26.01	(2.98)	26.06	(2.97)	25.32	(3.05)
Mother's Fatherhood Attitudes	26.05	(2.88)	26.12	(2.86)	25.21	(2.96)
Father's Share of Permanent Income	0.70	(0.25)	0.71	(0.25)	0.60	(0.22) *
Father's Avg. Weekly Work Hours	44.44	(11.99)	45.06	(11.30)	36.50	(16.96) *
Number of Children in Family	2.01	(0.83)	1.99	(0.80)	2.18	(1.140)
Age of Focal Child	6.36	(3.71)	6.27	(3.74)	7.45	(3.28)
Father's Difficulty Raising Child	7.88	(2.86)	7.90	(2.88)	7.63	(2.70)
Mother's Avg. Weekly Work Hours	27.24	(18.47)	26.73	(18.24)	33.66	(20.35) *
Childcare Expenses 1996 (\$1,000s)	1.15	(2.97)	1.19	(3.07)	0.59	(1.02)
Additional Controls						
Father's Race (1 = Black)	0.07	(0.26)	0.00	(0.00)	1.00	(0.00)
Father's Age (Years)	38.26	(7.09)	38.15	(7.06)	39.63	(7.52)
Mother's Age (Years)	36.06	(6.32)	35.95	(6.31)	37.47	(6.41)
Father's Education (Years)	13.84	(2.17)	13.92	(2.14)	12.87	(2.31) *
Mother's Education (Years)	13.82	(1.98)	13.89	(1.98)	12.95	(1.79) *
Sex of Focal Child (1 = Male)	0.48	(0.50)	0.47	(0.50)	0.64	(0.49) *
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.96	(0.20)	0.97	(0.18)	0.80	(0.40) *
Mother's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.69	(0.46)	0.68	(0.47)	0.77	(0.43)
Marital Status (1 = Cohabiting)	0.02	(0.13)	0.02	(0.13)	0.02	(0.14)
Father's Excessive Drinking (1 = Yes)	0.15	(0.35)	0.15	(0.36)	0.09	(0.29)

Note: * $p < .05$ indicate significance levels of racial comparisons.

Finally, we see that fathers' average age is 38 years old, about two years older than mothers' average age. Fathers' and mothers' average years of education are identical, at 13.8 years of education (about 2 years of college). Only 2% of families are currently cohabiting, the rest are married.

When we compare the white fathers in the sample to the black fathers, a few statistically significant differences are notable. First, black fathers' average relative accessibility and average responsibility scores are higher than white fathers, with black fathers sharing accessibility time with the focal child almost evenly with mothers, on average. The percent of black families in poverty is significantly higher, at 11%, while the percentage of homeownership is lower than Whites, at 65%.¹³ On average black fathers live in neighborhoods that are 67% black and 70% homeowners, compared to neighborhoods that are 6% black and 86% homeowners for white fathers. Moreover, black fathers appear to live in neighborhoods that are more hazardous, on average, than are white fathers' neighborhoods. Black fathers also appear to have lower levels of employment, lower average weekly work hours, and reduced marital power compared to white fathers, as evidenced by an average share of couple's joint permanent income of 60%. Similarly, wives of black fathers appear to have higher levels of employment and higher weekly work hours compared to wives of white fathers. In addition, white fathers' and mothers' years of education are both about 1 year higher than that of black fathers' and mothers', respectively. The only other notable racial difference is in the proportion of focal children who are male, which stands at 64% male for black fathers and 47% male for white fathers. To the extent that black fathers are down-weighted in the analytic sample as a result of case weighting,

¹³ The difference in net worth between white and black fathers is also quite large, with white fathers having nearly 2.7 times the net worth of black fathers. This difference fails to achieve statistical significance, however, because of the high degree variability in net worth among white fathers.

these racial differences are expected to have less impact on the model results than they would have if the analysis were based on the unweighted sample.

4.7 Modeling Strategy

For this project, my modeling strategy is relatively simple: I will test the six sets of hypotheses presented in Chapter 3 using hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models. In the analysis of each dependent variable, I will begin by estimating a simple empirical model that includes only the appropriate control variables. In the next model, the economic measures will be added to the control variables. In the third model, the mediating variables will be included along with the economic measures and controls, and so on, until the final, fully elaborated model is estimated using all of the appropriate measures. In order to assess the mediated effect of economic resources on fathers' relative involvement I will estimate the effect of the mediating variables on each of the measures of fathers' relative involvement first, and then estimate the effects the economic measures on each of the mediating variables in a subsequent set of analyses. This is similar in spirit to pursuing a Simon-Blalock type path modeling approach (Simon 1957, Blalock 1964, see discussion in Asher 1983), where each dependent variable in the causal chain is modeled separately using regression methods. The results of these analyses are reported in the next chapter.

All of the analyses in this study use weighted data. The CDS data provides a set of child-level and family level case weights that have been created to compensate for non-response at the questionnaire booklet level. The child-level weights are equal to the family level weights multiplied by a factor designed to compensate for the probability of selection of the focal child out of the total number of children in the household. For my purposes in this

study, I have chosen to use the family level case weights that compensate for non-response in the least measured data type – the data in the Other Caregiver Household Questionnaire (see table 4.1). The family level weights are appropriate because the primary theoretical variables of interest, economic resources, are measured at the household level and because the focus of the analysis is on the father rather than the focal child(ren). The family level weights are designed to weight the 1997 CDS sample cell totals to match the 1997 CPS totals for the cells (in thousands). The family weight used in this study has to be normalized before use in the statistical models described in the next chapter. The normalized weight was computed to be equal to [raw family weight * (analytic sample size/sum of the raw family weights for the analytic sample)]. This method results in a case weight variable that has a mean of 1 and keeps the weighted sample size equal to the unweighted sample size while preserving the relative distance between the weights across cases.

While the regression modeling approach used here to assess the indirect effects of economic resources on fathers' relative involvement is not optimal when compared to a covariance based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach – because the latter involves the use of measurement models in addition to a fully elaborated structural model and estimates all parameters simultaneously using a maximum likelihood algorithm – it is appropriate given the preliminary and exploratory nature of the current study. The more rigorous approach encoded into SEM methods also imposes more stringent assumptions about data distributions, measurement levels, and theoretical development that are often untenable in introductory investigations of a subject, where theory is less well developed and precise empirical observation of central concepts is more difficult to achieve. An SEM based approach becomes more appropriate as the study of a subject area matures, theory

becomes less conjectural, and measurement of key concepts is refined (Falk and Miller 1992).

Beyond the preliminary nature of the current study there is an additional consideration that precludes the use of SEM techniques in this study that is related to the way multiple indicators of latent variables are handled by current SEM methods. SEM methods assume that the indicators used to measure a latent variable are reflective in nature. That is, the latent variable, although not directly measured, is assumed to be the cause of change in its associated indicators. From a measurement viewpoint, reflective indicators are basically repeated operationalizations of the more abstract concept, and should be highly correlated with one another as such. This is the measurement model currently codified in covariance based SEM techniques like LISREL. However, the reflective specification is not conceptually appropriate in all cases (Bollen and Lenox 1991, Jarvis et al. 2003). Some latent variables are properly assumed to arise out of, rather than cause changes in, their associated indicators and should be modeled using formative indicators. In this study, one of the traditional concepts used in studies of father involvement is the *demand for childcare labor*, and it would need to be modeled as a latent variable using the formative specification. As noted above, I am using five indicators of *demand*: number of children in the household, age of the focal child, fathers' perceptions of the difficulty raising the focal child, mothers' average weekly work hours, and total child care expenditures in the current year. These indicators are theoretically appropriate, yet they need not be highly correlated with one another because they are not repeated operationalizations of the same concept, and would not be properly treated in a reflective specification. Similarly, a concept like socio-economic status (SES), that is thought to arise out of the joint distribution of resources like income,

education, and occupational prestige should be modeled using a formative specification. This is not currently possible using covariance based SEM techniques.¹⁴ However, using the indicators separately in a regression model more closely approximates a formative specification than would using them inappropriately in a reflective specification in LISREL.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter I described the source data, analytic sample selection, variables, measurement, and modeling strategy used to investigate the impact of economic resources on men's relative father involvement. I also noted important racial differences in the analytic sample which are expected to have somewhat less impact on the modeling results as a result of case weighting. In the next chapter, the results of the statistical models are presented in some detail.

¹⁴ An alternative form of SEM analysis called Partial Least Squares with Latent Variables (PLSLV) handles both reflective and formative latent variable specifications, in part, because it is built on a least-squares algorithm rather than a maximum likelihood algorithm (Wold 1982, Lohmoller 1984, Fornell and Cha 1994). However its statistical properties are less well understood and what little software exists for doing PLSLV analysis is either not publicly available (proprietary) or is in beta-testing (unfinished).

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This project focuses on three main questions about the relationship between families' economic resources and father's parental involvement. First, are the effects of the resources on father involvement positive in direction or negative in direction? That is, will fathers be more involved with their children, relative to mothers, as a result of greater economic security or will fathers' involvement increase as a means of coping with the stress of limited financial resources? Second, are the effects of economic resources primarily direct or indirect in nature, and if they are primarily indirect, what causal pathways and mediating mechanisms arbitrate the relationship between economic resources and men's relative involvement? Third, are these relationships the same regardless of how men think about their proper roles as fathers or do these relationships change depending on whether men see themselves as breadwinners or as co-parents? In order to better focus the investigation of these general questions, I presented six sets of specific, falsifiable hypotheses about how each of the economic measures to be used in this study are related to the suspected mediating variables, and how these mediators are, in turn, are related to the measures of father's relative involvement employed as the final dependent variables in this project.

In this chapter I test these six sets of hypotheses. The mediating variables at the center of these hypotheses, which include families' financial expenditures on childcare, father's self-efficacy and symptoms of depression, and neighborhood social cohesion and ambient hazards, have been chosen because they represent three primary causal pathways

through which economic resources can be expected to impact the three measures of father's relative involvement based on the literature reviewed at the outset of this project. I begin the analysis by looking at how economic resources and these proposed mediators are directly related to father's relative involvement. Then I analyze the effect of the economic resources on the subset of mediators that appears to have some direct effect on at least one dimension of father's relative involvement in order to better pinpoint the nature of the indirect effect of economic resources on father's relative involvement through each of the relevant mediators. Mediating variables that fail to demonstrate any statistically significant direct effect on at least one measure of father's relative involvement in the first set of analyses will not be included in this second stage of analysis because the lack of such direct effects immediately invalidates such items as mediators and any effects the economic resources might have on these items become irrelevant in the context of the current analysis.

The effects of these variables are tested using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression. Each analysis involves the construction of a series of nested models predicting a specific dependent variable in which each successive model includes the independent variables from the previous model plus an additional set of explanatory variables. The variables are entered in blocks, with each block containing a thematically related set of variables. They are entered sequentially, with controls being added in the first model, economic variables in the second model, followed by a block of mediating variables. Then the more traditional, proximate predictors of father involvement are entered to produce a complete model, lacking only interaction effects. The analysis up to this point does not use stepwise estimation; all relevant variables are forced into the models regardless of their level of statistical significance.

In the final models used to predict father's relative involvement, I investigate the degree to which father's attitudes about fatherhood act to moderate the relationship between these variables and fathers' involvement. This final analysis involves the use of OLS regression, as before, but proceeds in a somewhat different fashion. First, interaction terms are computed for each of the explanatory variables by fathers' fatherhood attitudes. The effects of these interactions terms are then estimated by forcing the original predictors from the competed models, mentioned above, into the final model regardless of statistical significance, while allowing the interactions terms to enter the model only if they achieve statistical significance, at the $p < .05$ level, using a stepwise method. Given that the moderating effect of fathers' fatherhood attitudes specified in hypotheses 6a and 6b in Chapter 3 are expected to be fairly diffuse, with fathers' attitudes potentially affecting the relationships of all other predictor variables, it is difficult in advance to pinpoint which of the interaction terms are most applicable. Entering them in the stepwise manner allows each of them to be tested, without swamping the models with a large number of potentially irrelevant variables. The interaction terms that succeed in entering the models are then presented graphically to aid in their interpretation.

5.2 Direct Effects on Father's Relative Involvement

In the models that follow, the direct effects of economic resources and the expected mediating variables on measures of fathers' relative involvement are investigated. I begin with an analysis using fathers' responsibility as the dependent variable of interest, followed by analyses using fathers' relative accessibility and fathers' relative engagement as dependent variables.

5.2.1 Fathers' Responsibility

The results of the analysis of fathers' responsibility are presented in Table 5.1. As noted in Chapter 4, this measure of father involvement is computed as the sum of the father's responses to seven questions about which member of the family usually performs the childcare activity specified in each question. If the father reports having sole responsibility for the specified task the response to the question is coded 1. If the father reports sharing the task with the mother the response is coded 0.5. And, if the father reported that the mother usually had responsibility for the task, the response to the question was coded 0. As a result, scores on the father's responsibility scale can range from 0 to 7. The four measures of economic resources included in the analysis are: net worth (logged), permanent family total income (logged), a measure of the difference between the family's current total income and their permanent total income, and an indicator of the family's home ownership status. Of these, only the family's permanent total income and home ownership status appear to be statistically significantly correlated with father's responsibility for childcare, and the direction of the correlation is negative for both.

First I estimate a model with control variables only, as seen in Model #1. In this baseline model, four of the seven control variables demonstrate statistically significant effects on father's responsibility. The direction of the effects of both father's race and the difference between the parents' years of education are positive, whereas the direction of the effects of fathers' years of education and the difference between the parents' ages are negative. Father's age, the sex of the focal child and fathers' reports of their difficulty raising the focal child appear to have no effect on the father's responsibility in this initial model. Controls

alone appear to explain only 5% of the variance in father's responsibility as indicated by the adjusted R^2 .

When the economic measures are added to this basic model with only the controls variables included, as in model #2, we see that home ownership status is the only economic measure of the four to demonstrate some predictive power. This model indicates that fathers in families that are homeowners report lower levels of responsibility for childcare than fathers in families that rent. Net worth, permanent family total income, and the difference between the family's current income and their permanent total family income show no apparent relationship with the dependent variable in this model. It also appears that the effect of one of the control variables, father's education, is no longer statistically significant in the model once the economic measures are added. The addition of the economic measures increases the model's explanatory power over the initial controls only model by only an additional 1%, as indicated by the model's adjusted R^2 .

To determine whether the effect of the measures of economic resources is mediated rather than direct, five suspected mediating variables are added to model #3. These five mediators are: 1) a measure of the family's child care expenses, 2) a measure of the father's self-efficacy, 3) a measure of the father's depression, 4) a measure of the level of social cohesion in the family's neighborhood, and 5) a measure of the level of ambient hazards in the family's neighborhood. When these mediating variables are included in the analysis we find that none of the measures has a statistically significant effect on father's responsibility even though the measures of child care expenses and neighborhood social cohesion are both negatively correlated with father's responsibility and the measure of neighborhood ambient hazards shows a positive correlation. The inclusion of these mediators appears to have no

appreciable effect on the relationship between the family's home ownership status and father's responsibility. Thus model #3 gives no support to hypotheses 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c which state the expected relationships between each of these mediators and the measures of men's parental involvement.

In model #4 the more traditional measures used to explain father involvement are included in the analysis. Of these, only father's attitudes about fatherhood has a statistically significant effect on father's responsibility, and the direction of the effect is positive, indicating that as father's attitudes become more egalitarian, fathers' self-reported responsibility for childcare increases. The addition of these traditional measures does little to change the effect of the family's homeownership status on father's responsibility, which continues to have a statistically significant negative effect. However, once these traditional measures are added to the model, the effect of the control measure related to the sex of the focal child becomes statistically significant and the direction of its effect is positive, indicating that father's responsibility increases when the focal child is male. The adjusted R^2 for this model indicates that it explains an additional 1% of the variance in father's responsibility over the prior 2 models.

The interaction effects proposed in hypotheses 6a and 6b are tested in the final model reported in Table 5.1. These interaction effects all involve father's fatherhood attitudes as one of the interacting terms, and are used to test the degree to which the effects of other predictors in the models are dependent upon the degree to which fathers' attitudes are more or less egalitarian. The four interaction effects included in model #5 were chosen using the modified stepwise procedure described in section 5.1 above. Interestingly, of the four interaction terms included in this model, two of them involve measures of economic

resources, while the other two terms involve the father's and mother's current employment status. The specific nature of each interaction effect is plotted graphically and described in detail below.

First, however, we need to consider model # 5 as a whole. In this final model, only two of the control variables have statistically significant effects on father's responsibility. They are the items that measure the differences between the parents' ages and years of education. While both of these items are related to differences between parents, their effects on the father's level of responsibility are in opposite directions. The older fathers are than mothers, the less responsibility they take for managing and organizing their children's lives. However, the larger the education gap between fathers and mothers, the more responsibility fathers appear to take for their children.

In this model we also see that now two of the four economic measures of interest appear to demonstrate statistically significant direct effects on father's responsibility. In addition to the effect of the family's home ownership status, which has had a persistent negative effect since introduced in model #2, the difference between the family's current income and permanent total family income also has a statistically significant effect in this final model. However, both of these terms are involved in interaction effects with the measure of the father's fatherhood attitudes, making their interpretation less straightforward. In fact, it is interesting to note that the effect of the difference between the family's current income and their permanent total family income only becomes statistically significant once the interaction term between it and the father's fatherhood attitudes is entered in the model. This is not the case for the effect of the family's home ownership status.

In this final model, none of the suspected mediating variables have any effect on the father's level of responsibility for their children, indicating clearly that if the effect of economic resources on father's responsibility is in some way mediated, it is not mediated by any of these five measures. This finding casts doubt on hypotheses 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c in the context of father's responsibility. However, this model also indicates that three of the traditional predictors of father involvement appear to have statistically significant effects on father's responsibility. The father's fatherhood attitudes, which is a fairly narrow measure of gender ideology focused on parenting issues, and the father's and the mother's employment statuses all appear to help explain variation in father's responsibility. These three items are also all involved in interaction effects that will be described in more detail below.

If we examine the standardized regression coefficients, we see that the two largest relative effects are associated with the interaction term involving the father's employment status ($\beta = -1.235$) and the linear term associated with the family's home ownership status ($\beta = -1.223$). These are closely followed in size by the relative effects of the interaction terms involving the mother's employment status ($\beta = 1.151$) and the family's home ownership status ($\beta = 1.134$). The next largest relative effects are those associated with the linear terms for the mother's employment status ($\beta = -1.109$) and the father's employment status ($\beta = 1.008$). All of these effects are of a magnitude of 1.0 or higher indicating that that a 1 standard deviation change in the predictor variables, controlling for all other effects, will produce a 1 standard deviation change or more in father's responsibility. Given that the measure of father's responsibility has a standard deviation in the analytic sample of 0.94, a one standard deviation change is roughly equivalent to an increase or decrease of sole responsibility for one task or shared responsibility for two tasks.

Table 5.1 Analysis of Father's Responsibility (N=512)

Measures	Correlations	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Control Measures</i>						
Father's Race (1 = Black)	0.140 *	0.432 * (0.160)	0.369 * (0.160)	0.355 (0.162)	0.330 * (0.165)	0.258 (0.160)
Father's Age (Years)	-0.078 *	-0.001 (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.009)	-0.003 (0.009)
Father's Education (Years)	-0.044	-0.051 * (0.023)	-0.018 (0.027)	-0.017 (0.027)	-0.027 (0.029)	-0.037 (0.028)
Difference between Parents' Ages	-0.126 *	-0.033 * (0.012)	-0.038 * (0.012)	-0.041 * (0.012)	-0.038 * (0.014)	-0.035 * (0.013)
Difference between Parents' Educations	0.085 *	0.075 * (0.026)	0.059 * (0.028)	0.054 (0.028)	0.063 * (0.028)	0.064 * (0.028)
Sex of Focal Child (1 = Male)	0.079 *	0.156 (0.082)	0.156 (0.082)	0.163 * (0.083)	0.191 * (0.083)	0.137 (0.081)
Father's Difficulty Raising Child	-0.052	-0.013 (0.014)	-0.013 (0.014)	-0.012 (0.015)	-0.008 (0.015)	-0.013 (0.015)
<i>Economic Measures</i>						
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	-0.061		0.181 (0.291)	0.169 (0.294)	0.094 (0.298)	-0.052 (0.290)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	-0.135 *		-0.394 (0.212)	-0.344 (0.221)	-0.213 (0.232)	-0.078 (0.226)
Income Difference	0.013		-0.009 (0.015)	-0.010 (0.016)	-0.007 (0.016)	0.335 * (0.128)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	-0.157 *		-0.272 * (0.118)	-0.243 * (0.123)	-0.251 * (0.125)	-3.065 * (0.925)
<i>Mediating Measures</i>						
Childcare Expenses 1996 (Log 10)	-0.073 *			-0.172 (0.148)	-0.205 (0.163)	-0.298 (0.159)
Father's Self-Efficacy	0.001			0.009 (0.016)	-0.005 (0.016)	-0.006 (0.016)
Father's Depression	0.002			-0.003 (0.009)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.009 (0.010)
Social Cohesion	-0.077 *			-0.007 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.010)
Ambient Hazards	0.092 *			0.022 (0.037)	0.014 (0.038)	0.011 (0.036)

Table 5.1 Analysis of Father's Responsibility (cont.)

<i>Traditional Measures</i>					
Father's Fatherhood Attitudes	0.101 *			0.041 * (0.016)	0.080 * (0.068)
Mother's Fatherhood Attitudes	0.007			-0.003 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.015)
Father's Share of Permanent Income	-0.066			-0.155 (0.208)	-0.157 (0.202)
Share Difference	0.018			0.114 (0.203)	0.055 (0.200)
Age of Focal Child	0.030			0.018 (0.015)	0.019 (0.015)
Number of Children in Family	-0.062			-0.094 (0.052)	-0.079 (0.050)
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	-0.078 *			-0.201 (0.240)	4.651 * (1.590)
Mother's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.027			0.069 (0.101)	-2.262 * (0.758)
<i>Interaction Terms</i>					
Father's Attitudes * Home Ownership					0.106 * (0.035)
Father's Attitudes * Father's Employment					-0.192 * (0.063)
Father's Attitudes * Mother's Employment					0.089 * (0.029)
Father's Attitudes * Income Difference					-0.014 * (0.005)
Intercept	3.30 *	2.88 *	2.82 *	2.91 *	2.55
R²	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.12	0.18
Adjusted R²	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.13
F	4.65 *	4.03 *	2.94 *	2.63 *	3.80 *

*p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

The standardized coefficients for the effects associated with the difference between the family's current income and their permanent total family income are the next largest. The relative effect size of the interaction term involving this measure ($\beta = -0.992$) is slightly larger than the relative effect size for its linear term ($\beta = 0.967$). The relative effect sizes of the remaining three statistically significant terms are all much smaller, with the largest of them being the linear term associated with the father's fatherhood attitudes ($\beta = 0.251$), followed by the term for the difference between the parents' ages ($\beta = 0.146$). The smallest effect size belongs to the term for the difference between the parents' years of education ($\beta = 0.124$). Also of note is the fact that the variance in father's responsibility explained by this final model in Table 5.1 is nearly double that of the preceding model, standing at 13% according to the model's adjusted R^2 . While the explanatory power of this model is still modest by any standard, the increase over the previous model indicates that the interaction terms – all of which involve the father's fatherhood attitudes – are important elements of the model. Thus hypothesis 6a, which claims that such interaction effects should exist, has some support here in the analysis of fathers' responsibility for childcare.

Given that the interaction terms in the final model have some of the largest relative effects of all the terms in the model, a close look at the nature of the interactions is warranted. The first interaction term in model #5 involves the father's fatherhood attitudes and the family's home ownership status. While the effect of home ownership on father's responsibility across models 2 through 4 is consistently negative, indicating that owning a home tends to decrease father's responsibility or childcare, the interpretation of the effect given the statistically significant interaction term is somewhat different. To aid interpretation of this effect, the interaction is plotted in Figure 5.1 below. In order to plot this interaction

effect, the predictive equation from model #5 in Table 5.1 was solved three times, once each for fathers with the most traditional fatherhood attitudes, for fathers with transitional fatherhood attitudes, and for fathers with the most egalitarian fatherhood attitudes.

Inspecting Figure 5.1, we see that the effect of homeownership on father's responsibility is different across the three groups of father's as defined by their fatherhood attitudes. Among egalitarian fathers, there appears to be no difference in father's responsibility between families who are homeowners compared to families who are renters. Among the transitional group of fathers, fathers in families who are renters report 0.31 points greater responsibility for childcare than do fathers in families that are homeowners. The gap is largest among the group of fathers with the most traditional fatherhood attitudes, a difference of 0.62 points. Looking across the three groups of fathers, we see that fathers' responsibility decreases for renters as fathers' fatherhood attitudes become more egalitarian. The decrease is about 0.39 points between the traditional fathers and egalitarian fathers. The opposite appears to be true for homeowners: fathers' responsibility increases as father's attitudes become more egalitarian. Here the difference is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point between the traditional fathers and egalitarian fathers. For the measure of homeownership status, then, hypothesis 6b's assertion that the size of the effects of the determinant of men's parental involvement should be smaller for fathers who's fatherhood beliefs are more egalitarian is supported in the context of father's responsibility.

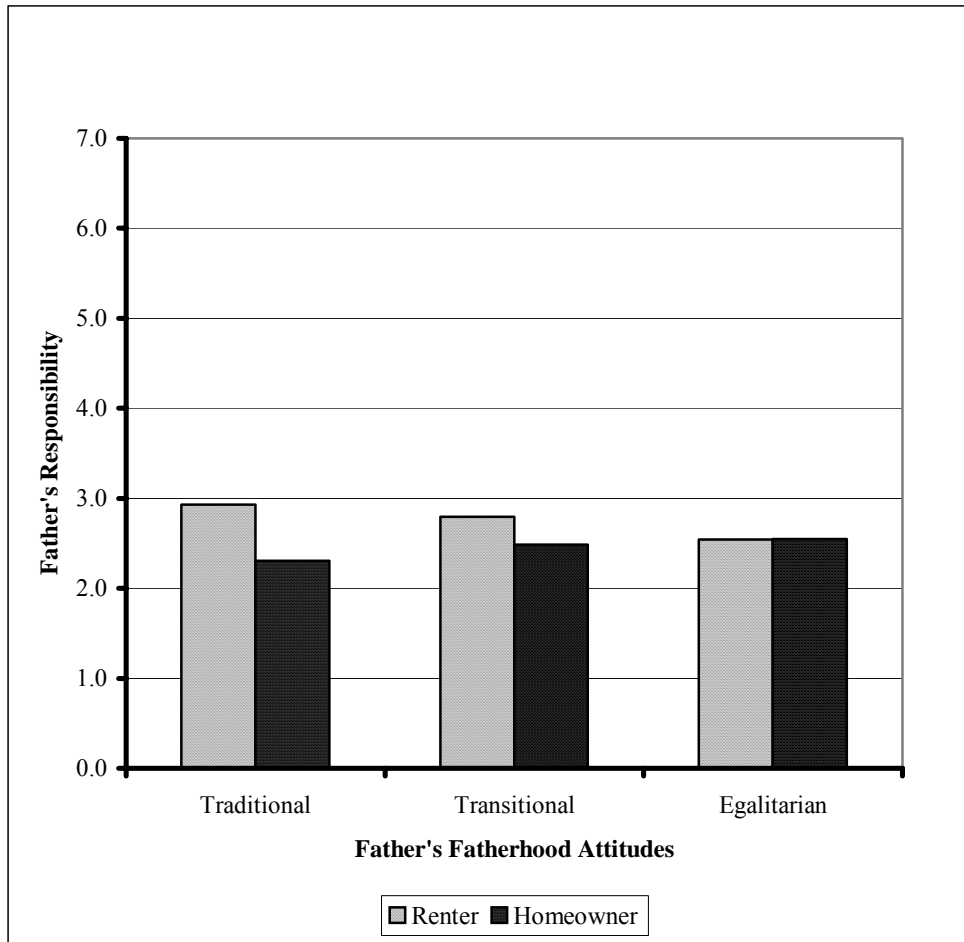


Figure 5.1 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Home Ownership on Father's Responsibility

The interaction between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and fathers' employment status on fathers' responsibility is displayed in Figure 5.2. Again, the effect of father's employment on fathers' reports of responsibility for childcare is illustrated for the same three groups of fathers as before. Among the egalitarian group of fathers, unemployed fathers report a much higher level of responsibility than employed fathers report. The difference is relatively large at 0.91 points, nearly equivalent to fathers taking on sole responsibility for one additional task (out of the 7 tasks included in the scale) or sharing responsibility for two additional tasks. Among the transitional group of fathers, the gap is smaller at about a third

of a point, although unemployed fathers still report a higher level of responsibility than that of employed fathers. However, among the most traditional group of fathers, unemployed fathers report a slightly lower level of responsibility than do the employed fathers, although the difference is a relatively smaller 0.24 points.

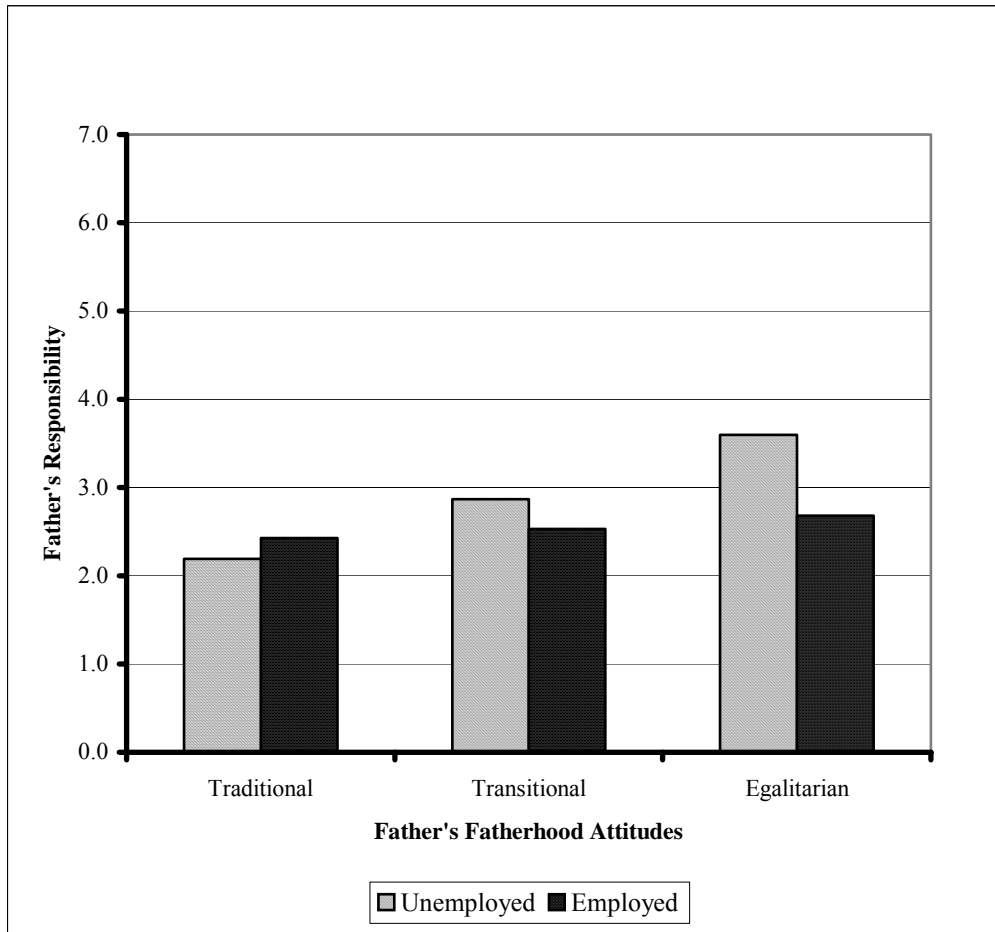


Figure 5.2 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Father's Employment Status on Father's Responsibility

Across the three groups, we see that there are relatively small differences in the level of responsibility reported by employed fathers, with employed but traditional fathers looking much like their transitional and egalitarian counterparts. The largest difference is between the traditional and egalitarian groups of fathers at 0.25 points. The larger difference

illustrated in Figure 5.2 is among the unemployed fathers, where we see that as fathers' fatherhood attitudes become more egalitarian, father's reported level of responsibility increases by 1.40 points when comparing unemployed traditional fathers to unemployed egalitarian fathers. This large change is nearly equivalent to fathers taking on sole responsibility for one additional task plus sharing responsibility for one additional task (out of seven) or of sharing responsibility for three additional tasks. Importantly, the much larger effect size of father's employment on men's parental involvement for the egalitarian group of fathers contradicts hypothesis 6b.

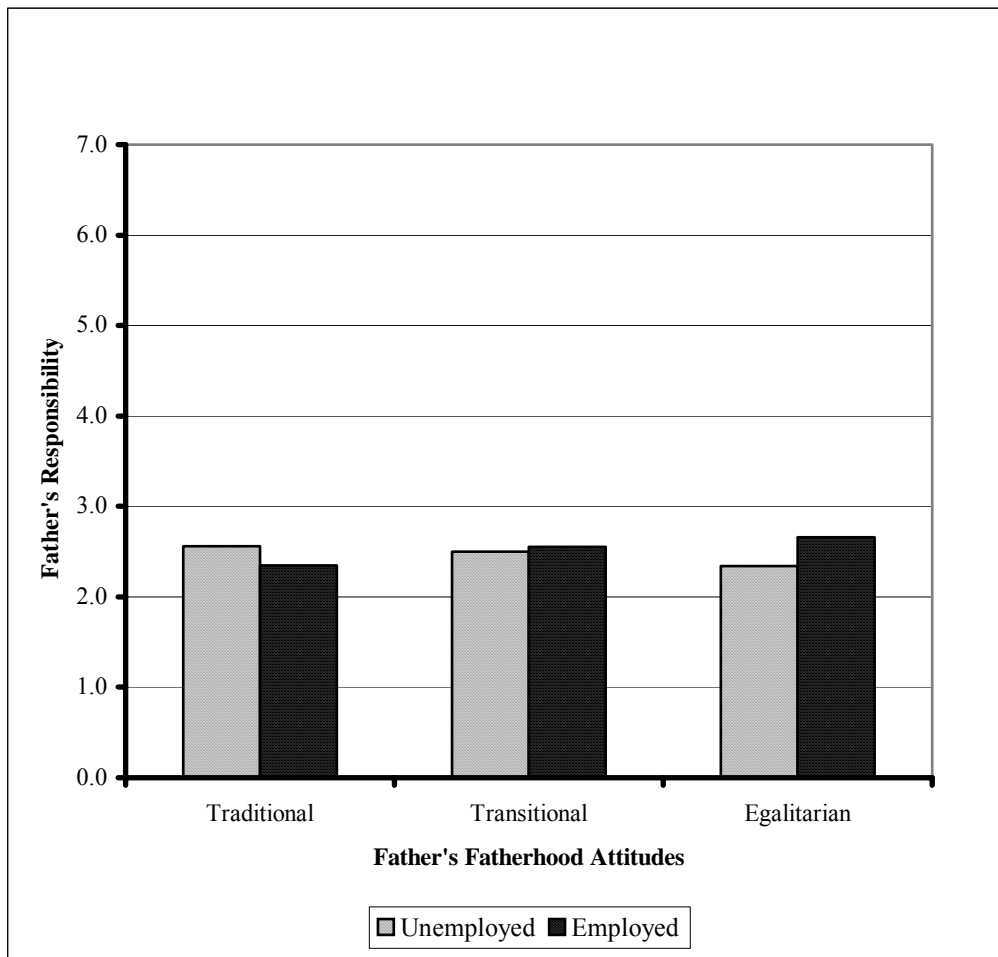


Figure 5.3 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Mother's Employment Status on Father's Responsibility

The interaction between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and mothers' employment status on fathers' responsibility is displayed in Figure 5.3. As before, the effect of father's employment on fathers' reports of responsibility for childcare is illustrated for the same three groups of fathers. Among the egalitarian group of fathers, employed fathers are predicted to have a higher level of responsibility than unemployed fathers, by 0.32 points. Among the transitional group of fathers we see very little difference (0.05 points) in father's responsibility whether the mother is currently employed or not. However, among the most traditional group of fathers, then mothers are unemployed fathers appear to have a slightly lower level of responsibility than when mothers are employed, a difference of 0.22 points.

If we look across the three groups of fathers and compare the level of responsibility when mothers are unemployed, we see that as fathers' fatherhood attitudes become more egalitarian there is a slight decrease in father's responsibility. There is a difference of 0.22 points when comparing traditional fathers to egalitarian fathers. However, when mothers are employed, we find that fathers' responsibility increases as fathers' fatherhood attitudes become more egalitarian. Here the difference between the traditional fathers and the egalitarian fathers is 0.32 points.

Finally, the interaction between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and the difference between the family's current total income and their permanent total income on fathers' responsibility for childcare is plotted in Figure 5.4. It is interesting to note that until this interaction term was included in the analysis in model #5, there was no indication that the difference between the family's current total income and their permanent total income would have any appreciable effect on fathers' responsibility. As a result it is important to keep in mind that the modified stepwise procedure used to select the interaction terms to be included

in the model runs the risk of capitalizing on chance data structure that may be present in the data for the analytic sample. Therefore, this interaction effect, and the others already described, should be taken as suggestive until their effects can be validated on a separate and independent sample.

This interaction effect is also illustrated for the same three groups of fathers. Among the egalitarian group of fathers we see that as the family's current family income increases above their permanent total family income (when the income difference is positive), fathers' responsibility decreases significantly. When the family's current family income decreases below their permanent total family income (when the income difference is negative) fathers' responsibility for childcare is predicted to increase substantially. If we compare the prediction for egalitarian fathers whose income difference is -20 to those whose income difference is $+20$, we see that there is a sizeable 2.84 point drop in responsibility across this interval. This difference is nearly equivalent to fathers' transferring sole responsibility for three tasks completely over to mothers or transferring shared responsibility for six tasks completely over to mothers. Among the transitional group of fathers we see a pattern that is similar in direction to the pattern exhibited by the egalitarian group of fathers, although the size of the predicted effect is smaller with only a 1.16 point drop between fathers at a -20 income difference and those with a $+20$ income difference. However, among the most traditional group of fathers, the direction of the effect of the income difference is the reverse of that observed for the egalitarian and transitional groups of fathers. For the traditional fathers we see that as the income difference increases, fathers' responsibility also increases, although the predicted increase is a smaller 0.52 points when comparing fathers' whose income difference is at -20 to those whose income difference is $+20$. This increase is nearly

equivalent to increasing the number of tasks fathers' share responsibility for by one. Here too, while we have evidence that appears to confirm hypothesis 6a that asserts that such interaction effects should exist, this evidence also appears to partially disconfirm hypothesis 6b's assertion that the effect size should be smaller for egalitarian fathers. Quite the opposite appears to be the case here with the effect of the income difference on men's parental involvement.

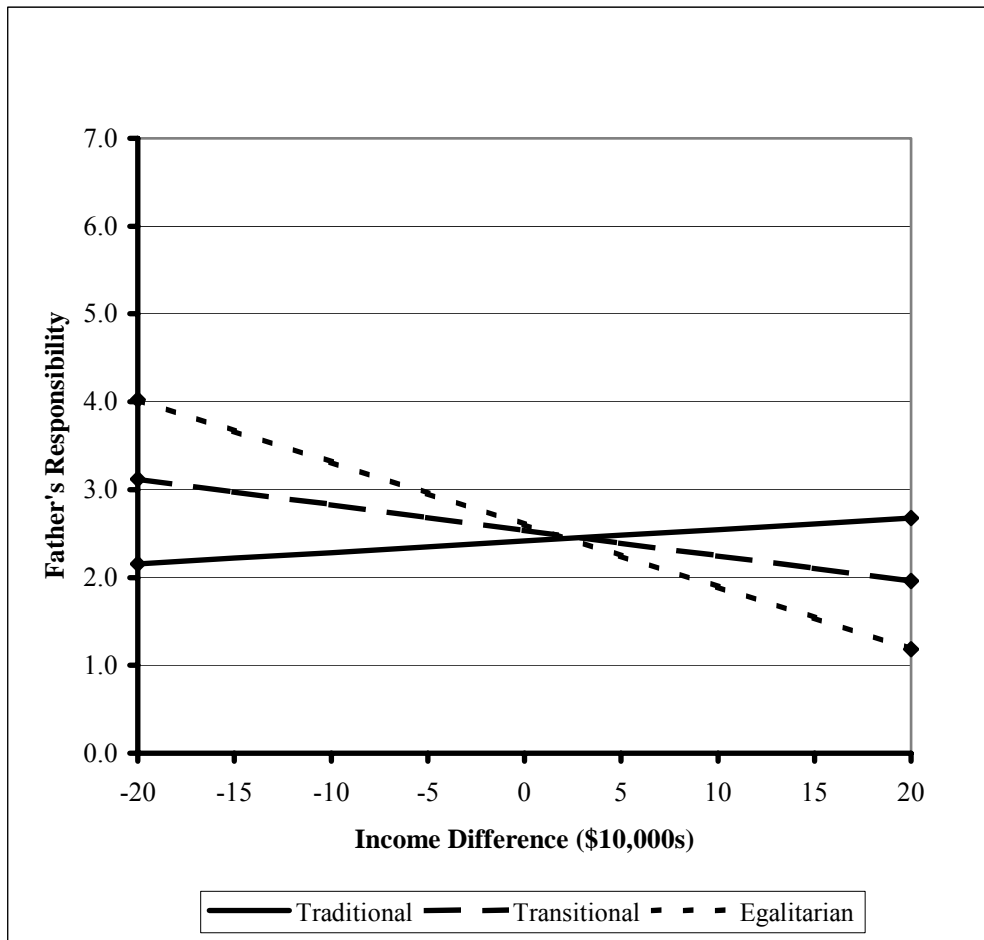


Figure 5.4 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Income Difference on Father's Responsibility

In summary, the results of the analysis of the direct effects of the economic measures' and mediating measures' on fathers' responsibility for childcare appear to give support to the

claims of hypothesis 6a, and offer contradictory evidence regarding hypothesis 6b, while clearly disconfirming hypotheses 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c. Additionally, the statistically significant direct effects of the difference between families' permanent and current incomes and families' homeownership status on fathers' responsibility for childcare persist even in the presence of the suspected mediating variables. In the next section, these same hypotheses are examined in the context of men's relative accessibility to the CDS focal child.

5.2.2 Fathers' Relative Accessibility

The results of the analysis of fathers' relative accessibility are presented in Table 5.2. As noted in Chapter 4, fathers relative accessibility is computed to be the sum of the father's weekly time spent accessible to but not directly engaged with the focal child divided by the sum of the father's and mother's weekly time spent accessible to the focal child, where all of the time measurements involved were collected via time diary. As a proportional measure, it has can range from a minimum value of 0, which indicates that only mothers are accessible to the focal child, to a value of 1.0, which indicates that only fathers are accessible to the focal child. A score of 0.5 would indicate that fathers and mothers are equally accessible to the focal child based on the time diary measurements.

The same four measures of economic resources are included in the analysis of fathers' responsibility are also used here. Interestingly, none of these measures appear to be statistically significantly correlated with father's relative accessibility at the $p < .05$ level, although both the family's permanent total income and home ownership status are correlated at the more generous $p < .10$ level, and the direction of the correlation is positive for both.

Model #1 in Table 5.2 is estimated using the same set of control variables used in the prior analysis. Of these only father's race appears to have any impact on father's relative accessibility, with black fathers appearing to have higher levels of relative accessibility with the focal child than white fathers, a difference that was also apparent in the descriptive statistics reported in Chapter 4. The control variables alone explain only 1% of the variance in father's relative accessibility to the focal child, as indicated by the model's adjusted R^2 and the model as a whole does not achieve statistical significance.

When the economic measures are added to the analysis in model #2, we see that permanent total family income is the only economic measure of the four to demonstrate some predictive power. This model indicates that fathers in families with greater permanent total family incomes have higher levels of relative accessibility with the focal child, although the effect is nonlinear given that the income measure is added to the model in its logged form. In this model, there are now two control measures with statistically significant effects. In addition to father's race, the effect of the measure of father's education is also significant and its direction is negative, indicating that as the father's years of education increases, his relative accessibility to the focal child is expected to decrease. This model, which includes the economic measures, explains only 2% of the variation in father's relative accessibility, although the model as a whole does achieve statistical significance at the $p < .05$ level.

Again we need to determine whether the effect of the measures of economic resources is mediated rather than direct, and in model #3 the five suspected mediating variables are included in the analysis. We see that once again none of the measures has a statistically significant effect on fathers' relative accessibility with the focal child. In fact, none of these mediators are even correlated with the dependent variable. Thus the inclusion

of these mediators appears to have no appreciable effect on the relationship between permanent total family income and fathers' relative accessibility. Thus this model offers no support for hypotheses 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c. The only effect of the inclusion of these mediators appears to be that the effect of father's education is no longer statistically significant in this model. The adjusted R^2 is also unchanged from the previous model and while the model as a whole is not statistically significant.

In model #4 the more traditional measures used to explain father involvement are included in the analysis. Of these, three measures appear to have some predictive power when included in the analysis with the control variables, economic measures, and mediating variables. The difference between the father's share of the couple's joint current income and his share of the couple's joint permanent income appears to be negatively related to his relative accessibility to the focal child. The total number of children in the family also appears to be negatively related to father's relative accessibility. The mother's employment status, however, is positively related to fathers' relative accessibility in model #4, with fathers in families where the mother was employed appearing to have higher levels of relative accessibility than fathers in families where the mother was currently unemployed.

More importantly, once the more traditional predictors of father involvement are added to the analysis in model #4, the effects of several of the mediating variables becomes statistically significant. Here, both the family's total childcare expenses and fathers' depressive affect appear to reduce fathers' relative accessibility with the focal child. Additionally, the effect of permanent total family income on fathers' relative accessibility is not appreciably affected by the inclusion of the traditional predictors of father involvement. However, the one control variable – father's race – that up to this point had some predictive

power is no longer statistically significant in model #4. Even so, this model does a better job of explaining the variation in father's relative accessibility to the focal child, as evidenced by the adjusted R^2 of 0.10. This model, taken as a whole, is statistically significant and appears to offer support for hypotheses 1c and 3c, which refer to the effects of family childcare expenses and fathers' depression respectively.

In model #5, a single but important variable is added to the analysis: father's responsibility. Its effect is positive and statistically significant, indicating that fathers who report higher levels of responsibility for childcare in general also report greater accessibility to the focal child relative to that of mothers. Its inclusion in model #5 does not appreciably change the results reported in the prior model, except that the effect of one of the mediating variables, father's depression, now ceases to be significant at the $p < .05$ level in this model. The model appears to explain an additional 3% of the variance in father's relative accessibility over that explained by Model #4, and the model as a whole is statistically significant.

Table 5.2 Analysis of Father's Relative Accessibility (N=512)

Measures	Correlations	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Control Measures</i>							
Father's Race (1 = Black)	0.110 *	0.088 * (0.037)	0.098 * (0.037)	0.091 * (0.037)	0.058 (0.037)	0.045 (0.036)	0.834 * (0.296)
Father's Age (Years)	-0.004	0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Father's Education (Years)	-0.049	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.013 * (0.006)	-0.012 (0.006)	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)
Difference between Parents' Ages	-0.041	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
Difference between Parents' Educations	-0.018	0.002 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)
Sex of Focal Child (1 = Male)	-0.027	-0.018 (0.019)	-0.017 (0.019)	-0.016 (0.019)	-0.017 (0.018)	-0.024 (0.018)	0.339 * (0.163)
Father's Difficulty Raising Child	0.064	0.006 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.006 * (0.003)
<i>Economic Measures</i>							
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	-0.045		-0.103 (0.067)	-0.104 (0.068)	-0.094 (0.066)	-0.098 (0.065)	-0.085 (0.065)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	0.059		0.114 * (0.049)	0.134 * (0.051)	0.145 * (0.052)	0.153 * (0.051)	0.119 * (0.051)
Income Difference	0.007		0.001 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	0.065		0.046 (0.027)	0.050 (0.028)	0.025 (0.028)	0.034 (0.028)	0.570 * (0.206)
<i>Mediating Measures</i>							
Childcare Expenses 1996 (Log 10)	-0.016			-0.027 (0.034)	-0.098 * (0.036)	-0.090 * (0.036)	-0.086 * (0.035)
Father's Self-Efficacy	-0.051			-0.004 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)
Father's Depression	-0.002			-0.002 (0.002)	-0.004 * (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)
Social Cohesion	0.020			0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Ambient Hazards	0.045			0.010 (0.009)	0.013 (0.008)	0.013 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)

Table 5.2 Analysis of Father's Relative Accessibility (cont.)

<i>Traditional Measures</i>							
Father's Fatherhood Attitudes	-0.076 *			-0.005 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.004)	-0.014 * (0.015)	
Mother's Fatherhood Attitudes	-0.005			0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	
Father's Share of Permanent Income	-0.134 *			-0.088 (0.046)	-0.082 (0.046)	-0.089 * (0.045)	
Share Difference	-0.102 *			-0.119 * (0.045)	-0.123 * (0.045)	-0.121 * (0.044)	
Age of Focal Child	0.012			-0.003 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	
Number of Children in Family	-0.133 *			-0.032 * (0.012)	-0.028 * (0.011)	-0.026 * (0.011)	
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	-0.082 *			-0.084 (0.053)	-0.076 (0.053)	-0.942 * (0.357)	
Mother's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.231 *			0.088 * (0.022)	0.085 * (0.022)	0.098 * (0.022)	
<i>Father Involvement Measures</i>							
Father's Responsibility	0.173 *				0.039 * (0.010)	0.043 * (0.010)	
<i>Interaction Terms</i>							
Father's Attitudes * Sex of Focal Child							-0.014 * (0.006)
Father's Attitudes * Father's Race							-0.031 * (0.012)
Father's Attitudes * Home Ownership							-0.020 * (0.008)
Father's Attitudes * Father's Employment							0.034 * (0.014)
Intercept	0.41 *	0.58 *	0.62 *	0.80 *	0.69 *	0.77	
R²	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.14	0.17	0.21	
Adjusted R²	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.10	0.13	0.16	
F	1.65	2.05 *	1.64	3.34 *	3.91 *	4.32 *	

* p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

Interaction effects are introduced in the final model reported in Table 5.2. As before, these interaction effects all involve father's fatherhood attitudes as one of the interacting terms, and were chosen using the same modified stepwise procedure used in the analysis of fathers' responsibility. Interestingly, of the four interaction terms included in this model, two of them were also included in the final model in the analysis of father's responsibility: the term involving father's employment status and the term involving the family's homeownership status. The other two interaction terms involve the sex of the focal child and the father's race, two of the control measures. The existence of these interactions provides support for hypothesis 6a here in the context of fathers' relative accessibility. These interactions will be explored more fully below.

If we examine the final model in Table 5.2, we see that it has a number of terms with statistically significant effects that did not achieve statistical significance in any of the prior models in this analysis. For instance, the linear term associated with the sex of the focal child and the one associated with the father's perceptions of the difficulty of raising the focal child are both of interest here in Model #6, and the direction of both effects are positive. Similarly, the linear term associated with the family's home ownership status is also of significance here, due to the inclusion of the interaction term in which it is also involved. The direction of the effect of this linear term is also positive, however the interpretation of the total effect of homeownership status on father's relative accessibility to the focal child requires us to consider the nature of the interaction term in which it is involved. We also find that the linear terms associated with several of the traditional predictors of father involvement are statistically significant in this final model. Father's fatherhood attitudes, father's share of the couple's joint permanent income, and father's employment status now

have statistically significant effects. The direction of all three of these linear effects is negative. Of the 29 predictor measures included in Model #6, over half (59%) have effects that are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level or better. The model appears to explain about 16% of the variance in father's relative accessibility to the focal child, an additional 3% over Model #5. In addition, the model, as a whole, is statistically significant.

When we compare the size of the standardized regression coefficients for Model #6, we see that only two of the terms have standardized effects that are greater than 1.0 in magnitude. These terms are the linear term associated with father's race ($\beta = 1.016$) and one associated with the family's homeownership status ($\beta = 1.007$). Given that the standard deviation of the measure of father's relative accessibility in the analytic sample is 0.21 and the measure itself is scaled from 0 to 1, we see that a standardized effect size of 1.0 would indicate that the father's share of the couple's total joint time accessible with the focal child increases or decreases by about 21%. The rest of standardized effects are smaller in size, with three of the four interaction effects having very similar effect sizes, all between a β of 0.96 and 0.97 in absolute magnitude. These are followed in size by the effects of father's employment status ($\beta = -0.904$), the interaction term involving the sex of the focal child ($\beta = 0.840$), and the linear term for the measure of the sex of the focal child ($\beta = 0.796$). All of the other standardized effects are much smaller in absolute magnitude, at or below a β of 0.213 (mother's employment status), with the smallest relative effect size belonging to the measure of the father's perception of the difficulty involved in raising the focal child ($\beta = 0.085$).

In this analysis, as was the case with the prior analysis of father's responsibility, we see that the interaction terms involving the father's fatherhood attitudes all have fairly large

effects relative to the other terms in the final model and are therefore deserving of closer inspection. The first interaction term in model #6 involves the father's fatherhood attitudes and the sex of the focal child. It is important to note that up until the inclusion of the interaction term in this model, the sex of the focal child demonstrated no apparent effect on the father's relative accessibility to the focal child. Its effect appears only when considered in combination with fathers' fatherhood attitudes. To aid interpretation of this effect, the interaction is plotted in Figure 5.5. I solve the predictive equation from model #6 for each of the three groups of fathers – defined by their fatherhood attitudes – in keeping with the treatment used in section 5.2.1 above.

As can be seen in Figure 5.5, the effect of the sex of the focal child on fathers' relative accessibility is different across the three groups of fathers. Among the most traditional fathers, there is only a very slight increase of about 2% (0.02 points) in relative accessibility when the focal child is male. For the transitional fathers, there is a slight increase of 2% (0.02 points) in relative accessibility when the focal child is female. The same is true for the egalitarian fathers, although the increase for them is a somewhat more substantial 7% (0.07 points). When we look across the three groups of fathers, we see a basic trend toward increasing relative accessibility as fathers' attitudes become more egalitarian and the focal child is female. We see a basic trend in the opposite direction when the focal child is male where increasingly egalitarian fatherhood attitudes seem to lead to a decrease in fathers' relative accessibility. Thus, the size of the effect is larger for the group of egalitarian fathers, and this contradicts hypothesis 6b.

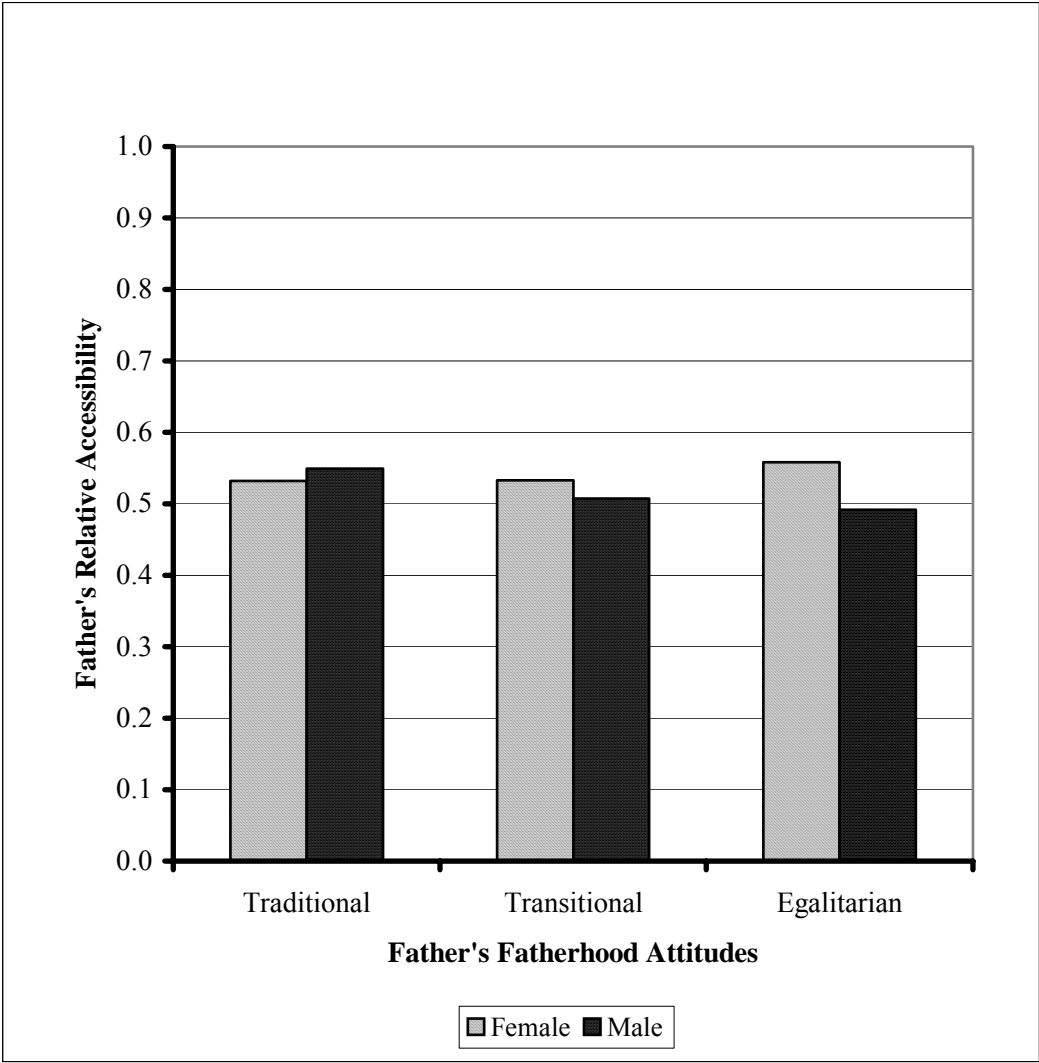


Figure 5.5 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Sex of the Focal Child on Father's Relative Accessibility to the Focal Child

The interaction between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and fathers' race can be seen in Figure 5.6. Among egalitarian fathers, relative accessibility to the focal child is higher among white fathers than black fathers, with a predicted difference of 6% (0.06 points). This pattern reverses for transitional and traditional fathers, with the largest gap of 12% (0.12 points) occurring between white and black fathers occurring among the group of fathers with the more traditional fatherhood attitudes. Looking across the three groups of fathers, we see

that there is very little change in father's relative accessibility among white fathers regardless of the nature of their fatherhood attitudes. The effect is limited to only black fathers, where increasingly egalitarian fatherhood attitudes appear to produce a sharp decrease in men's relative accessibility to the focal child, with a predicted difference between black traditional fathers and black egalitarian fathers of 18% (0.18 points). Contrary to the pattern found in the first interaction effect involving the sex of the focal child, the effect size for father's race on men's relative accessibility is larger for traditional fathers than for egalitarian fathers, giving support to hypothesis 6b.

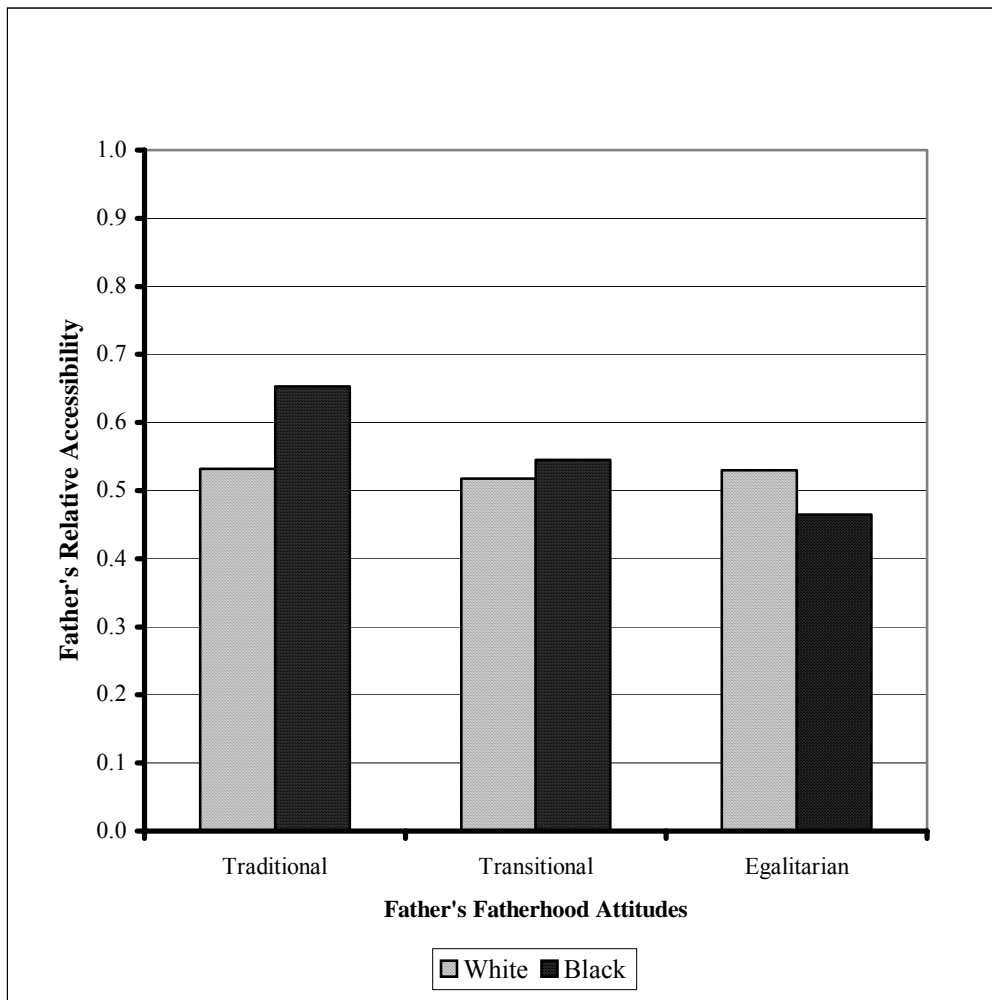


Figure 5.6 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Father's Race on Father's Relative Accessibility to the Focal Child

The next interaction term in model # 6 involves the father's fatherhood attitudes and the family's home ownership status. The interaction is displayed in Figure 5.7 below. Here we see that among the egalitarian fathers, there is no substantive difference between homeowners and renters in terms of their relative accessibility to the focal child (a difference of only 0.01 points, or 1%). Among transitional fathers, there is a modest gap with renters' relative accessibility trailing that of homeowners by 5% (0.05 points). Among the traditional group of fathers, trend continues, but the predicted gap in father's relative accessibility to the focal child is larger at 11% (0.11 points). When we look across the three groups, we see that for renters, increasingly egalitarian fatherhood attitudes are associated with increased relative accessibility to the focal child. The difference when we compare traditional fathers and egalitarian fathers is 9% (0.09 points). For homeowners, there is a slight decline in relative accessibility of 3% (0.03 points) as fatherhood attitudes move from traditional to transition, but there is no subsequent decline as fatherhood attitudes move from transitional to egalitarian. As with the interaction effect involving the father's race, we also find here that there is support for hypothesis 6b's assertion that the effect sizes in these interactions should be smaller for egalitarian fathers.

The final interaction term in model #6 from Table 4.2 is illustrated in Figure 5.8. This interaction involves fathers' fatherhood attitudes and fathers' current employment status. For egalitarian fathers there is a predicted difference between employed and unemployed fathers of 5% (0.05 points) in favor of the employed fathers. The pattern reverses when we examine the predicted values for the transitional and traditional groups of fathers. Among the transitional fathers, the predicted relative accessibility for unemployed fathers is 6% (0.06 points) higher than that of unemployed transitional fathers. For the

traditional fathers, the gap is larger with unemployed fathers' predicted relative responsibility being 16% (0.16 points) higher than that of the employed fathers with traditional fatherhood attitudes. This appears to once again support hypothesis 6b.

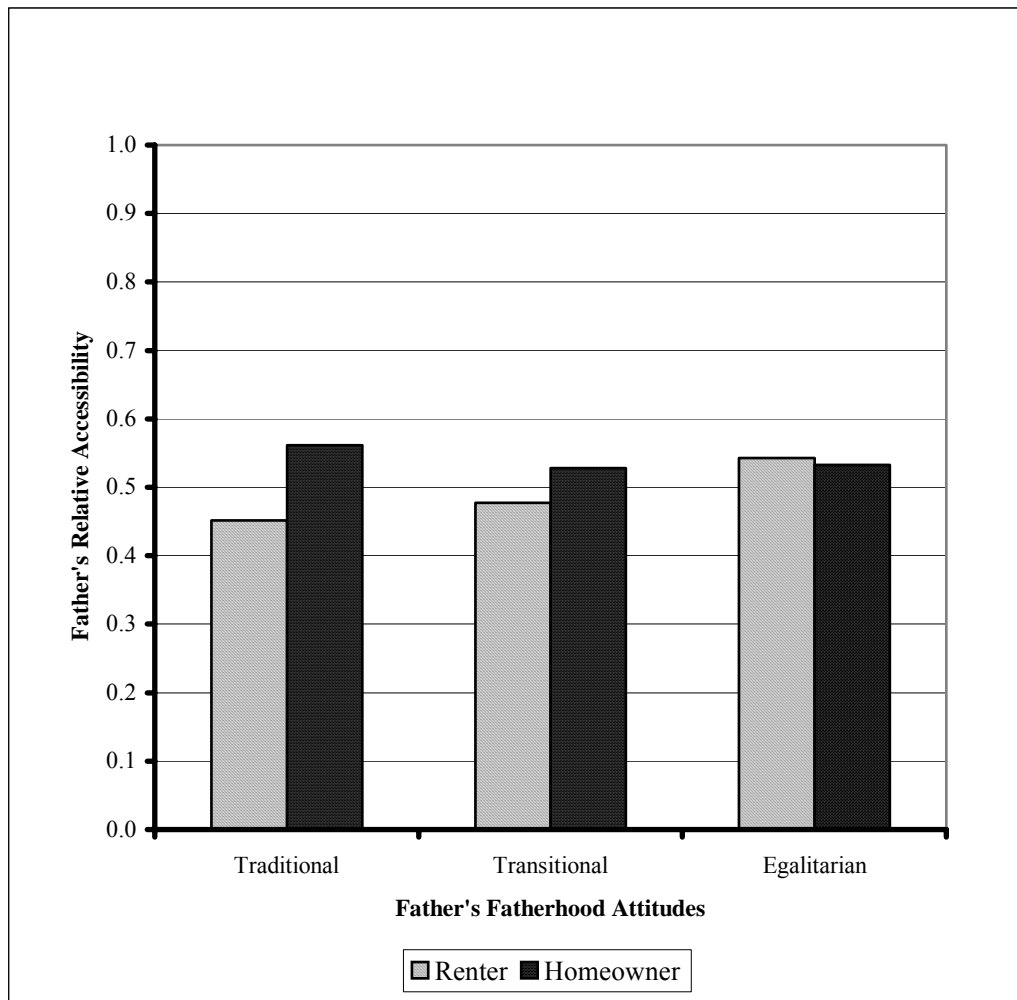


Figure 5.7 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Home Ownership Status on Father's Relative Accessibility to the Focal Child

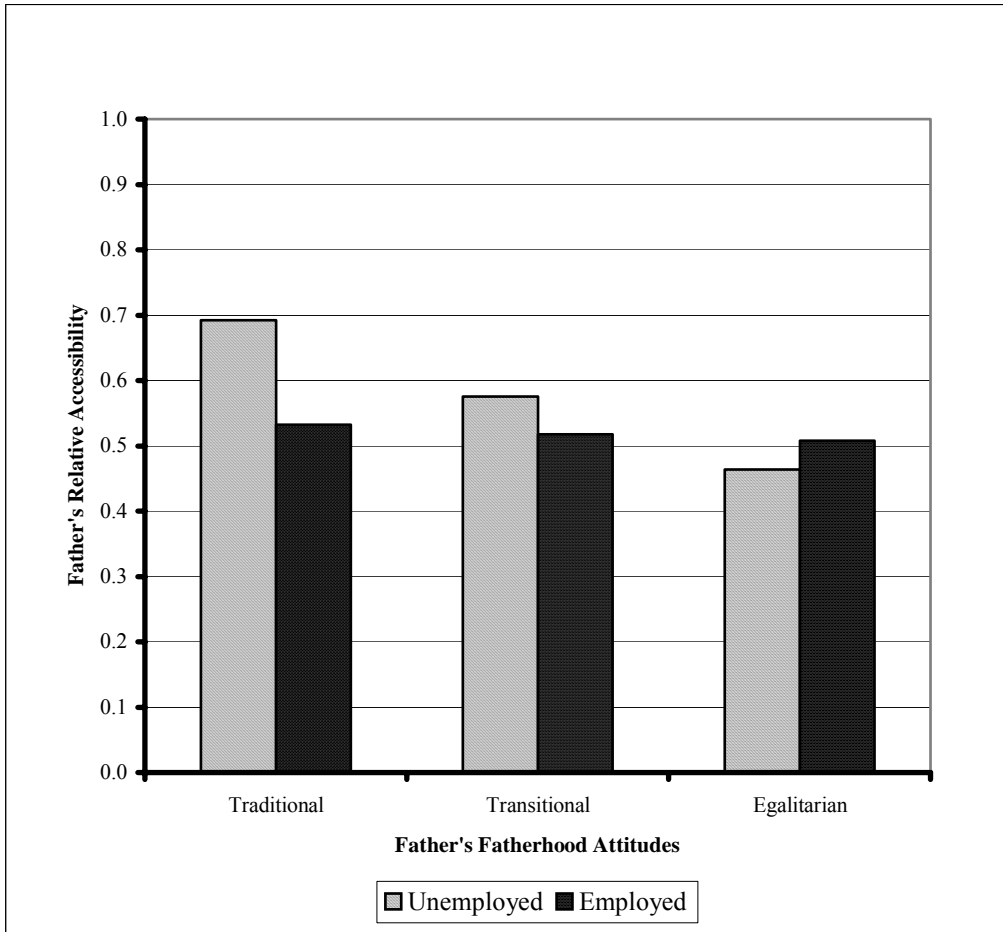


Figure 5.8 Interaction of Father's Fatherhood Attitudes and Father's Employment Status on Father's Relative Accessibility to the Focal Child

When we look across the three groups of fathers, we see that the primary trend is among unemployed fathers, where increasingly egalitarian attitudes appear to be related to a decrease in fathers' relative accessibility to the focal child. The gap between the unemployed traditional fathers and unemployed egalitarian fathers is a substantial 23% (0.23 points), whereas the comparable difference among employed traditional and egalitarian fathers is only 2% (0.02 points).

Finally, there are two additional items in Model # 6 that require additional attention. The effects of permanent total family income and the family's 1996 childcare expenses on

father's relative accessibility to the focal child are best inspected graphically. While not involved in interactions, as the above items have been, these terms are nonlinear in nature by virtue of the fact that I've included the base 10 log of these variables in the model rather than the untransformed original variables. Figures 5.9 and 4.10 illustrate these nonlinear relationships.

As can be seen from the graph in Figure 5.9, father's relative accessibility changes most rapidly in response to changes in permanent total family income when the value of the latter is in the low part of its range. As permanent total family income increases, the size of the corresponding incremental change in father's relative accessibility to the focal child tapers off substantially. To see how the slope changes, we need to partially solve the full equation from the final model in Table 5.2 by substituting mean values for all the other variables in the equation except the one to be evaluated (permanent total family income). Then we evaluate the first derivative of the equation for the curve at the point of interest (equation: $y = c + .119 * \log_{10}(x)$, where c is a constant representing the new intercept after substituting mean values and solving; first derivative: $y' = .119 * 1 / x * \ln(10)$). When permanent total family income is equal to 1 (\$10,000) the slope is 0.052, indicating that a 1 point increase in permanent total family income returns about a 5% increase in father's relative accessibility. At a value of 5 (\$50,000) the slope reduces to 0.010 and indicates that a one-point increase in permanent total family income returns only a 1% increase in father's relative accessibility. By the time we reach a value of 10 (\$100,000), the slope has reduced to 0.005. At this value, a one-point increase in permanent total family income returns only a 0.5% increase in father's relative accessibility.

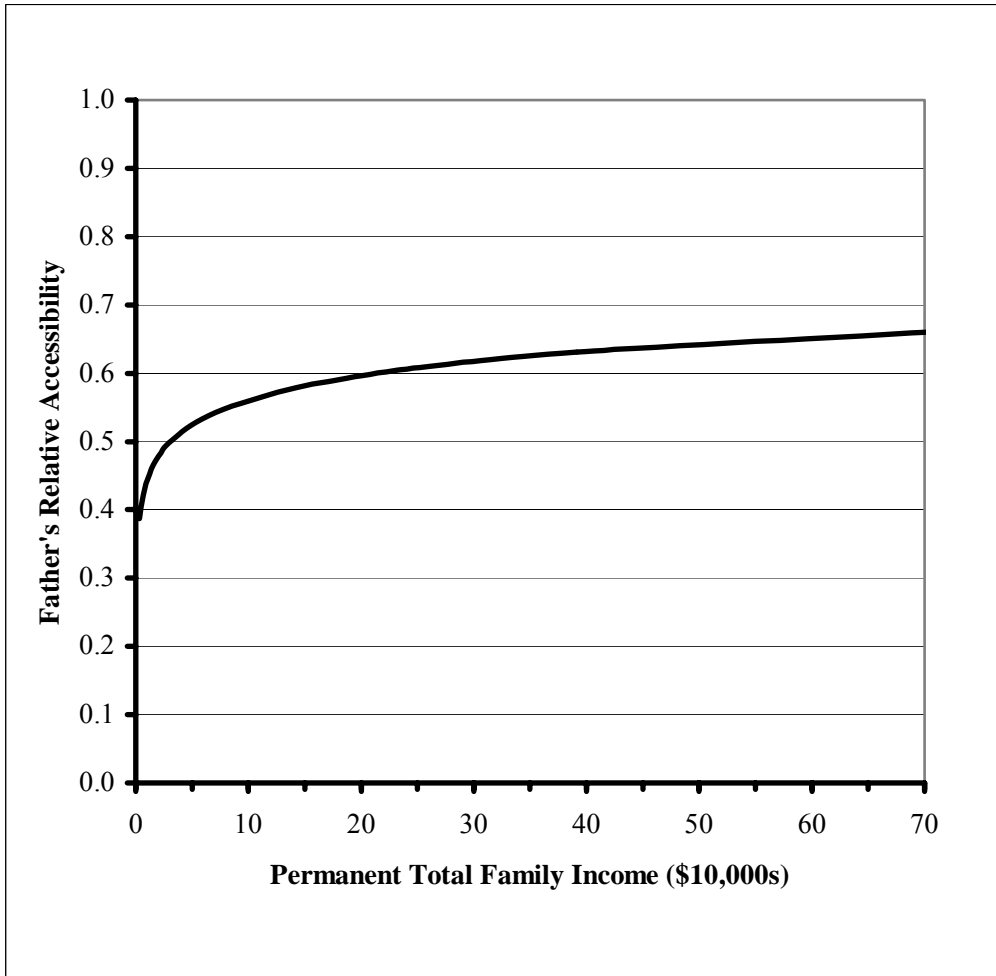


Figure 5.9 The Nonlinear Effect of Permanent Total Family Income on Father's Relative Accessibility to the Focal Child

The effect of the family's 1996 childcare expenses on father's relative accessibility to the focal child is shown in Figure 5.10. As can readily be seen, father's relative accessibility changes most rapidly in response to changes in childcare expenses when the value of the latter is in the low part of its range. As childcare expenses increase, the size of the corresponding incremental change in father's relative accessibility to the focal child reduces significantly. As before, by evaluating the first derivative of the equation for the curve at the point of interest after substituting mean values and solving the equation we can see how the

slope changes (equation: $y = c - 0.086 * \log_{10}(x)$; first derivative: $y' = -0.086 * 1 / x * \ln$ (10)). When childcare expenses are equal to 1 (\$1,000) the slope is -0.037, indicating that a 1 point increase in childcare expenses returns about a 4% decrease in father's relative accessibility. At a value of 5 (\$5,000) the slope reduces to -0.008 and indicates that here a one-point increase in childcare expenses returns about a 1% decrease in father's relative accessibility. By the time we reach a value of 10 (\$10,000), the slope has reduced to -0.004. At this value, a one-point increase in permanent total family income returns less than a 0.5% decrease in father's relative accessibility.

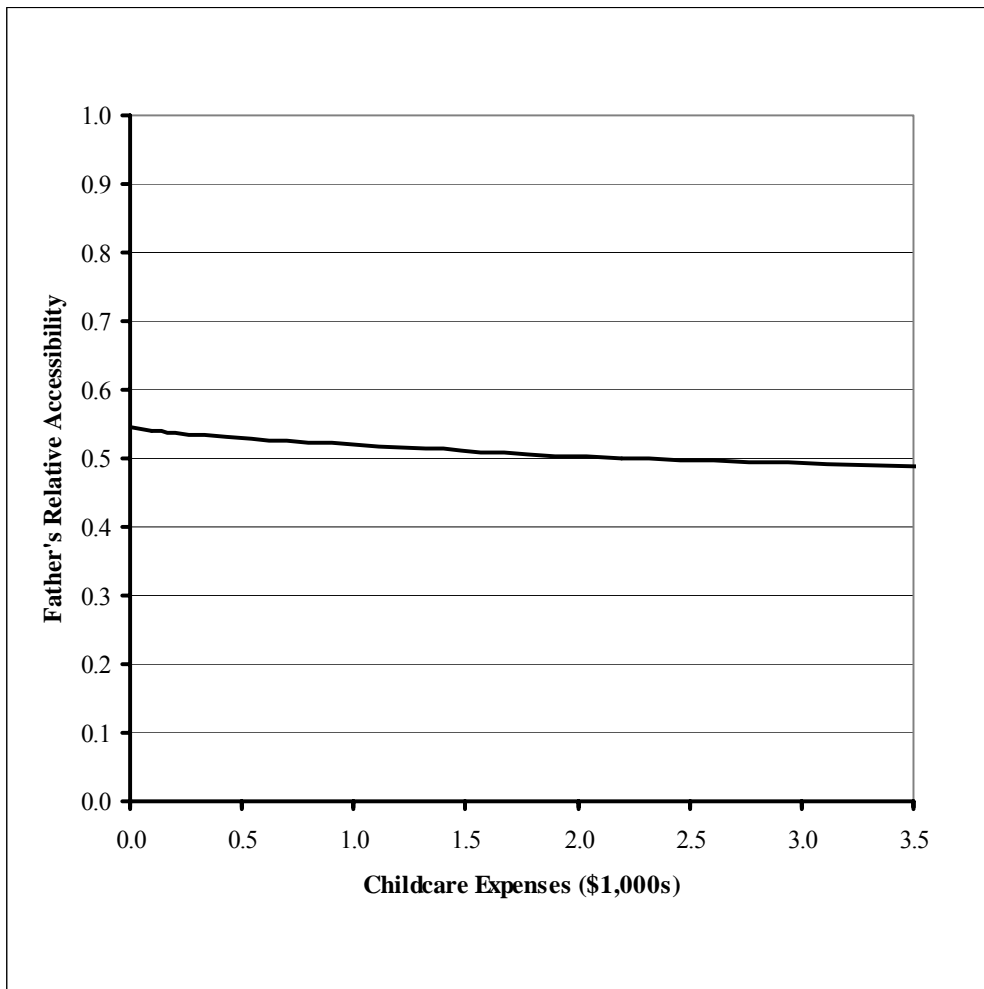


Figure 5.10 The Nonlinear Effect of Childcare Expenses on Father's Relative Accessibility to the Focal Child

In summary, the results of the analysis of the direct effects of the economic measures' and mediating measures' on fathers' relative accessibility to the focal child appear to give support to the claims of hypothesis 1c and 6a, and offer contradictory evidence regarding hypothesis 6b, while clearly disconfirming hypotheses 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c. We also find that the statistically significant direct effects of families' permanent income and homeownership status persist in the presence of the suspected mediating variables. In the next section, the same sets of hypotheses are examined in the context of men's relative engagement to the CDS focal child.

5.2.3 Fathers' Relative Engagement

The results of the analysis of fathers' relative engagement with the focal child are presented in Table 5.3. As specified in Chapter 4, fathers relative engagement is computed to be the sum of the father's weekly time spent directly engaged in activities with the focal child divided by the sum of the father's and mother's weekly time spent in direct engagement to the focal child, where all of the time measurements involved were collected via time diary. As a proportional measure, it can range from a minimum value of 0, which indicates that only mothers are directly engaged with the focal child, to a value of 1.0, which indicates that only fathers are directly engaged with the focal child. A score of 0.5 would indicate that fathers and mothers have equal levels of direct engagement to the focal child based on the time diary measurements.

Here again I use the same four measures of economic resources are included in the analysis of fathers' responsibility and the analysis of father's relative accessibility. Three of

these economic measures are statistically significantly correlated with fathers' relative engagement at the $p < .05$ level: net worth, permanent total family income, and the family's homeownership status. Both net worth and homeownership show a positive correlation with fathers' relative engagement, whereas permanent total family income shows a negative correlation.

Model #1 in Table 5.3 is estimated using only control variables. Of these, the father's age, the difference between the father's age and the mother's age, and the sex of the focal child all appear to have some impact on father's relative engagement with the focal child. Results from this model indicate that older fathers and fathers of male focal children are predicted to have higher levels of relative engagement, whereas the larger the difference between the father's and mother's ages the lower fathers' relative engagement is predicted to be. The adjusted R^2 for this model indicates that the control variables explain only about 1% of the variance in father's relative engagement with the focal child, although the model as a whole is statistically significant.

When the economic measures are added to the analysis in model #2, we see that net worth, permanent total family income, and homeownership status each demonstrate some predictive power. This model indicates that the directions of the effects are the same as those indicated by their correlations reported in Table 5.3. Note, however, that because both net worth and permanent total family income are included in the model in their logged forms, their effects are non-linear with the size of the effects decreasing as the values of the predictor variables increase. Note also that the inclusion of the economic measures in this model appears to cause the effect of the father's age on fathers' relative engagement with the focal child to become statistically non-significant at the $p < .05$ level and it never re-gains

statistical significance in any of the models that follow. This model is statistically significant, and the inclusion of the economic measures increases the explanatory power of the model by an additional 3% over the prior model according to the adjusted R^2 .

To determine whether the effect of the measures of economic resources is mediated rather than direct, we include in model #3 the same five mediating variables included in the prior two analyses. We see that none of the mediating measures has a statistically significant effect on fathers' relative engagement with the focal child. In fact, none of these mediators are even correlated with the dependent variable. There is no appreciable change in the explanatory power of this model over the prior model, although the model does manage to remain statistically significant in its own right even after the inclusion of this block of variables. On its own, this model suggests that there should be some doubt about the validity of hypotheses 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, and 5c in the context of father's relative engagement with the focal child.

In model #4 the more traditional measures used to explain father involvement are included in the analysis. Of these, two measures appear to have some predictive power when included in the analysis with the control variables, economic measures, and mediating variables. The age of the focal child appears to be positively related to fathers' relative engagement with the child. The mother's current employment status also appears to be negatively related to father's relative engagement in model #4. Interestingly, the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income, a measure of marital power, does not have a statistically significant effect on fathers' relative engagement even though it shows a statistically significant negative correlation.

More importantly, once the more traditional predictors of father involvement are added to the analysis in model #4, the effects of two of the suspected mediating variables becomes statistically significant. Here, both fathers' self-efficacy and depression appear to act to reduce fathers' relative engagement with the focal child, giving some limited support to hypothesis 3c's assertion that increased depression should be negatively related to men's parental involvement, but contradicting the assertion of hypothesis 2c that fathers' self-efficacy is positively related to father involvement. Additionally, the effect of the family's homeownership status on fathers' relative engagement ceases to be statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, as does the effect of the difference between the parents' ages. Given these changes, we should not be surprised that the predictive power of the model increases over the prior model. The adjusted R^2 for Model #4 is now a modest 0.10.

In Model #5, the measure of father's responsibility is added into the analysis. It's effect is positive and statistically significant, indicating that fathers who report higher levels of responsibility for childcare in general also report greater engagement to the focal child relative to that of mothers. However, its inclusion in Model #5 does appear to change the results reported in the prior model in that the effect of father's depression on fathers' relative engagement is no longer statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, now casting doubt on hypothesis 3c, while the effect of homeownership status once again becomes statistically significant after having dropped out in Model #4 with the inclusion of the more traditional predictors of father involvement.

Interaction effects are introduced in the final model reported in Table 5.3. However, unlike the prior analyses involving fathers' responsibility and fathers' relative accessibility with the focal child, in this analysis only one interaction term was selected for inclusion in

the model. This term involves the interaction of fathers' fatherhood attitudes and the difference in the number of years of education that exist between fathers and mothers. When this term is included in the final model, the only noticeable change that occurs in the model when compared to the prior model is that now the linear term for the difference between the parents' years of education becomes statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. In fact, the explanatory power of the final model appears to be the same as that of the prior model according to a comparison of their respective adjusted R^2 s. As a result, we give preference to the simpler model, Model #5, and return to it for additional comment. As a consequence, we find no support for hypotheses 6a and 6b in the context of father's relative engagement with the focal child.

If we examine Model #5 in its entirety we see that eight of the twenty-five predictors included in the model have some impact on fathers' relative engagement with the focal child. The adjusted R^2 for the model indicates that these ten measures account for a modest 11% of the variance in the dependent variable. If we examine the direction of the effect of these eight predictors, we see that fathers' relative engagement increases if the focal child is male, if the family owns their home, and if the mother is currently employed. Also, as the family's net worth and the number of children in the family increase, fathers' relative engagement increases. On the other hand, fathers' relative engagement decreases as families' permanent total income increases and as fathers' self-efficacy increases. The effect of the difference between the parents' years of education, however, is conditional upon fathers' fatherhood attitudes as the interaction term discussed above indicates.

If we examine the standardized regression coefficients for Model #5 of Table 5.3, we find that the largest effect size is that of the interaction term associated with permanent total

family income ($\beta = -.169$). The next largest effects are those associated with the age of the focal child and the mother's employment status (both $\beta = .164$). Father's self efficacy ($\beta = -.131$), father's responsibility ($\beta = .120$), net worth ($\beta = .110$), and sex of the focal child ($\beta = .101$) are next in size. The smallest effect in terms of absolute magnitude is that of the family's homeownership status, at $\beta = 0.100$.

Table 5.3 Analysis of Father's Relative Engagement (N=512)

Measures	Correlation	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Control Measures</i>							
Father's Race (1 = Black)	0.020	-0.002 (0.032)	0.006 (0.032)	0.000 (0.032)	-0.015 (0.032)	-0.023 (0.032)	-0.016 (0.032)
Father's Age (Years)	0.028	0.003* (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)
Father's Education (Years)	-0.010	-0.004 (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)	0.001 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)	0.001 (0.006)
Difference between Parents' Ages	-0.081*	-0.006* (0.002)	-0.007* (0.002)	-0.007* (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Difference between Parents' Educations	-0.003	0.001 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.000 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.077* (0.038)
Sex of Focal Child (1 = Male)	0.087*	0.038* (0.016)	0.037* (0.016)	0.036* (0.016)	0.042* (0.016)	0.037* (0.016)	0.039* (0.016)
Father's Difficulty Raising Child	-0.060	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)
<i>Economic Measures</i>							
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	0.076*		0.136* (0.058)	0.135* (0.058)	0.129* (0.058)	0.126* (0.057)	0.127* (0.057)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	-0.075*		-0.148* (0.042)	-0.135* (0.044)	-0.125* (0.045)	-0.120* (0.045)	-0.131* (0.045)
Income Difference	0.036		0.000 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	0.095*		0.061* (0.023)	0.061* (0.024)	0.043 (0.024)	0.049* (0.024)	0.054* (0.024)
<i>Mediating Measures</i>							
Childcare Expenses 1996 (Log 10)	-0.018			0.000 (0.029)	-0.012 (0.032)	-0.007 (0.031)	-0.007 (0.031)
Father's Self-Efficacy	-0.064			-0.006 (0.003)	-0.008* (0.003)	-0.008* (0.003)	-0.008* (0.003)
Father's Depression	-0.063			-0.003 (0.002)	-0.004* (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Social Cohesion	0.017			0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Ambient Hazards	-0.002			0.007 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)

Table 5.3 Analysis of Father's Relative Engagement (cont.)

<i>Traditional Measures</i>							
Father's Fatherhood Attitudes	0.066			0.005	(0.003)	0.004	(0.003)
Mother's Fatherhood Attitudes	0.059			0.005	(0.003)	0.005	(0.003)
Father's Share of Permanent Income	-0.121 *			-0.028	(0.040)	-0.024	(0.040)
Share Difference	-0.030			-0.009	(0.039)	-0.012	(0.039)
Age of Focal Child	0.149 *			0.009 *	(0.003)	0.008 *	(0.003)
Number of Children in Family	0.023			-0.001	(0.010)	0.002	(0.010)
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	-0.028			-0.011	(0.046)	-0.006	(0.046)
Mother's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.188 *			0.067 *	(0.020)	0.066 *	(0.019)
<i>Father Involvement Measures</i>							
Father's Responsibility	0.158 *					0.024 *	(0.009)
						0.025 *	(0.009)
<i>Interaction Terms</i>							
Father's Attitudes * Education Difference							-0.003 * (0.001)
Intercept	0.37 *	0.15	0.28	0.12	0.06	0.06	
R²	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.14	0.15	0.16	
Adjusted R²	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.11	0.11	
F	2.04 *	3.13 *	2.47 *	3.24 *	3.44 *	3.50 *	

*p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

As with the prior analysis of father's relative accessibility, there are two additional items in the current Model # 5 that require additional attention. The effects of the family's net worth and their permanent total family income on father's relative engagement to the focal child are both nonlinear in nature due to the use of log transformations and are best inspected graphically. Figures 5.11 and 5.12 illustrate these nonlinear relationships.

As can be seen from the graph in Figure 5.11, father's relative engagement changes most rapidly in response to changes in the net worth when the value of the latter is negative. Given that net worth is a measure of wealth that takes into consideration the degree to which a family's assets are greater than their debts, negative values are substantively important because they indicate not just that a family has a heavy debt load, but that these debts may substantially exceed their available assets. As net worth increases, and particularly as it crosses zero into positive territory, the size of the corresponding incremental change in father's relative engagement to the focal child appears to taper off substantially. To see how the slope changes, we once again need to evaluate the first derivative of the equation for the curve at the point of interest after substituting mean values and solving the equation for the Model #5 in Table 5.3 (equation: $y = c + .126 * \log_{10}(x + d)$; first derivative: $y' = .126 * 1 / (x + d) * \ln(10)$). However, because the measure of net worth can take on negative values we evaluate the derivative not with the original raw values of net worth (x), but with their rescaled values after the adding of a constant ($x + d$). This constant (d) is required because the log transformation is undefined for negative values, so they must first be rescaled into non-zero positive values so that the log transformation can be applied. Having done that, when the original raw value of net worth is equal to -30 (debt \$300,000 greater than the value of their assets) the slope is 0.054, indicating that a 1 point increase (\$10,000) in net worth

returns about a 6% increase in father's relative engagement. At a value of -10 (debt \$100,000 greater than the value of their assets) the slope reduces to 0.003 and indicates that a one-point increase in net worth returns only a 0.3% increase in father's relative engagement. By the time we reach a value of 1 (assets \$10,000 greater than their debts), the slope has reduced to 0.002. At this value, a one-point increase in net worth returns only a 0.2% increase in father's relative engagement. Finally, at a value of 10 (assets \$100,000 greater than their debt) the slope becomes 0.001, indicating that a one-point increase in net worth returns a 0.1% increase in the father's relative engagement with the focal child. While these slopes are quite small once the value of net worth becomes positive, the valid range of the variable as measured in the analytic sample is large, offering quite a lot of room for small incremental changes to add up.

The effect of the family's permanent total family income on the father's relative engagement with the focal child is shown in Figure 5.12. Here the relationship is negative and nonlinear, indicating that father's relative engagement drops sharply in response to increases in the family's permanent total family income when the latter is small. As the value of permanent total family income increases, the incremental change in the father's relative engagement tapers off. To see how the slope changes, we evaluate the first derivative of the equation for the curve at the point of interest using the same basic procedure as before (equation: $y = c - .120 * \log_{10}(x)$, where c is a constant; first derivative: $y' = -.120 * 1/x * \ln(10)$). When permanent total family income is equal to 1 (\$10,000) the slope is -0.052, indicating that a 1 point (\$10,000) increase in permanent total family income produces about a 5% decrease in father's relative accessibility. At a value of 5 (\$50,000) the slope reduces to -0.010 and indicates that a one-point increase in permanent total family income

produces much smaller 1% decrease in father's relative accessibility. By the time we reach a value of 10 (\$100,000), the slope has reduced to -0.005. At this value, a one-point increase in permanent total family income produces only a 0.5% decrease in father's relative accessibility. Interestingly, these slopes are nearly identical to those found for the same relationship in the analysis of father's relative accessibility from Table 5.2 and Figure 5.9 above, except that the slopes are now negative.

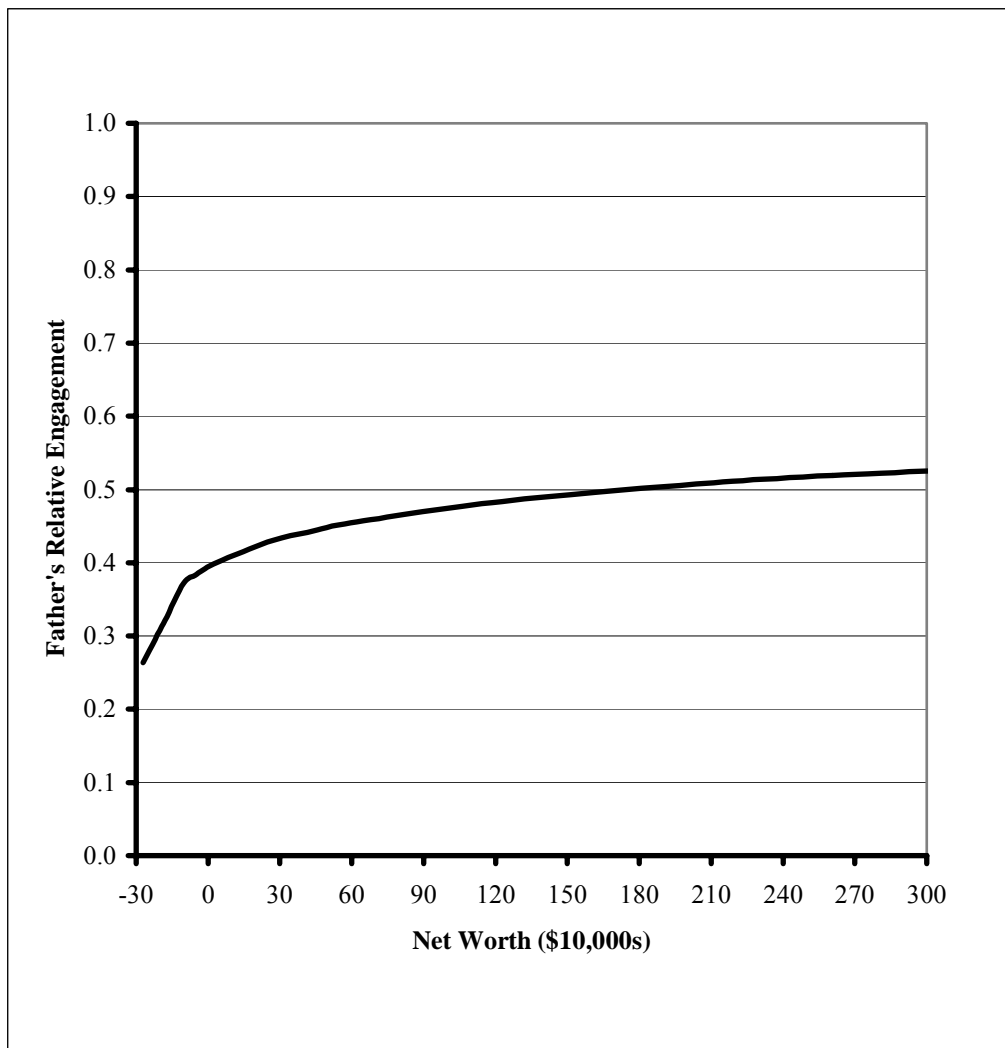


Figure 5.11 The Nonlinear Effect of Net Worth on Father's Relative Engagement to the Focal Child

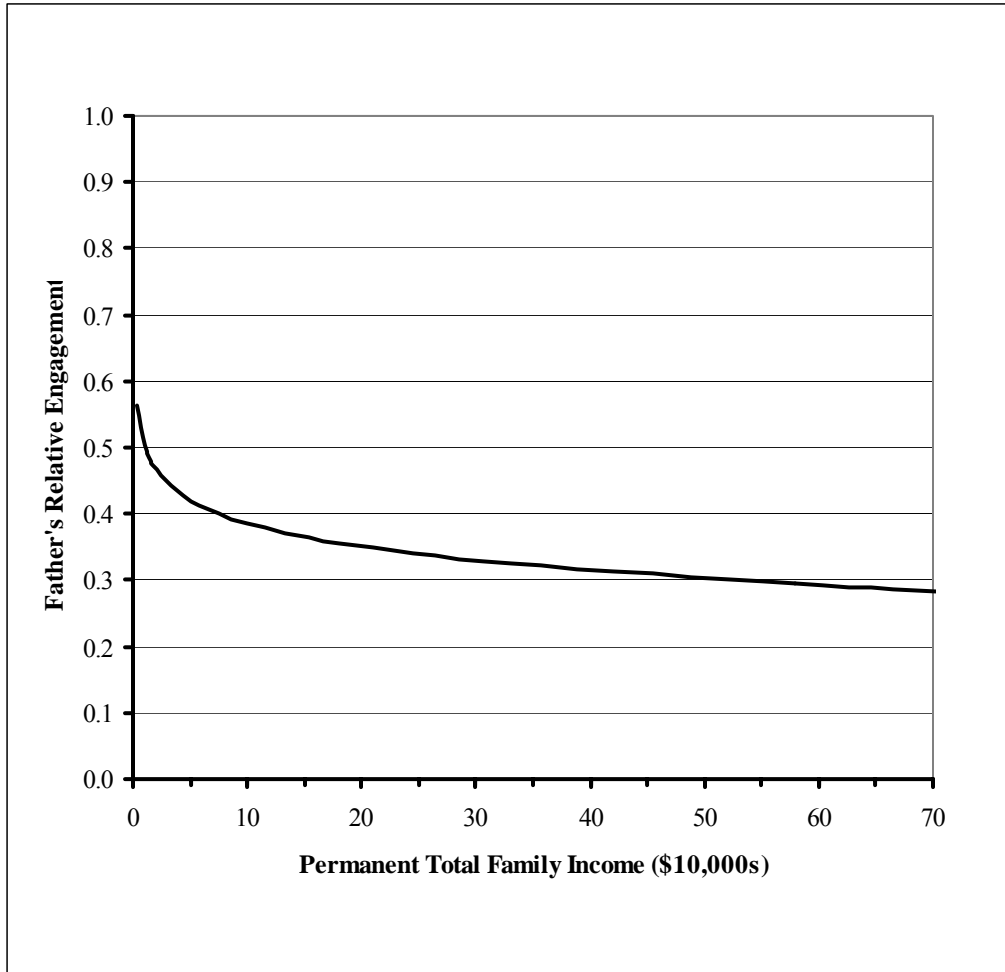


Figure 5.12 The Nonlinear Effect of Permanent Total Family Income on Father's Relative Engagement to the Focal Child

This finding, where a predictor variable has a nearly identically sized effect, but with opposite signs, on two dependent variables that are themselves linked, suggest an additional interesting avenue to pursue in the analysis of father involvement. If the father's own total time engaged and accessible to the focal child remains constant, but his relative share of engagement (relative to that of the mother) decreases in response to an increase in permanent total family income while his relative share of accessibility (relative to the mother) is increasing in response to increases in permanent total family income at nearly an identical rate, it suggests that the shift in father's relative share of engagement and accessibility may

be occurring because the predictor variable is causing the balance engagement and accessibility within the fathers own total time spent with the focal child to shift. So, as permanent total family income increases fathers may be shifting more of their own total time with the focal child towards being accessible to the child rather than engaged with the child, which could in turn alter their share of accessibility and engagement relative to the mother's. To further examine this possibility, I explore the effect of economic resources on father's time engaged with the focal child as a proportion of his own total time with the focal child in the next section.

To summarize these results, we find in the analysis of the direct effects of the economic measures' and mediating measures' on fathers' relative engagement with the focal child that there is no support for the claims of hypothesis 1c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6a, and 6b. And, while there is evidence that fathers' self-efficacy does have a direct effect on men's father involvement as asserted in hypothesis 2c, the direction of the effect is opposite that claimed in the hypothesis. Also, we find that the statistically significant direct effects of families' net worth, permanent income, and homeownership status continue to exist, essentially unchanged, in the presence of the suspected mediating variables.

5.2.4 Father's Proportion of Time Spent Engaged

The results of the analysis of fathers' engagement as a proportion of his own total time with the focal child are presented in Table 5.4. To be specific, this new dependent variable, which has not been described yet in this study, is computed by dividing the father's total weekly time engaged with the focal child by the father's total weekly time engaged added to his total weekly time spent accessible to the focal child, where the time

measurements were all collected via time diaries. In its definition no reference is made to the mother's time with the focal child. As a proportional measure, this variable can range from a minimum score of 0, indicating that all of the father's weekly time with the focal child is spent being accessible but not directly engaged, to a maximum score of 1.0, which indicates that all of the father's weekly time with the focal child is spent in direct engagement.

Once again, I use the same four measures of economic resources that are included in the analysis of fathers' responsibility, relative accessibility, and relative engagement found in the previous sections. Two of these economic measures are statistically significantly correlated with father's proportion of time engaged at the $p < .05$ level: net worth and permanent total family income. Both show a negative correlation with fathers' proportion of time engaged.

Model #1 in Table 5.4 is estimated using only control variables. Of these, only the father's age and the father's perception of the difficulty involved in raising the focal child appear to have some impact on father's proportion of time engaged with the focal child. Results from this model indicate that older fathers and fathers who indicate that the focal child is more difficult to raise are predicted to spend less of their total time engaged with the focal child, and by definition, spend more of their total time being accessible to the child. The adjusted R^2 for this model indicates that the control variables explain only about 4% of the variance in father's proportion of time engaged with the focal child, and the model as a whole is statistically significant.

When the economic measures are added to the analysis in model #2, we see that only permanent total family income demonstrates some predictive power. This model indicates that the direction of the effect is the same as that of the correlation reported in Table 5.4. Of

course, the effect of permanent total family income is nonlinear here, as before, because it is included in the model in its logged form. Note also that the inclusion of the economic measures in this model appears to cause the effect of the father's age on fathers' relative engagement with the focal child to become statistically non-significant at the $p < .05$ level and it never re-gains statistical significance in any of the models that follow. Also the measure of the father's race becomes statistically significant with a negative coefficient, indicating that the father's proportion of time spend engaged is predicted to be lower for black fathers than for white fathers. This model is statistically significant, and the inclusion of the economic measures increases the explanatory power of the model by an additional 2% over the prior model according to the adjusted R^2 .

To determine whether the effect of the measures of economic resources is mediated by any of the five suspected mediating variables, we include them in model #3. We see that none of the economic measures has a statistically significant effect on fathers' proportion of time spent in engagement with the focal child, in spite of the fact that two of these mediators are correlated with the dependent variable. Both father's depression and the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood show negative correlations with the dependent variable as reported in Table 5.4. The inclusion of these mediators appears to have no appreciable effect on the relationship between the three economic measures with significant effects and fathers' relative engagement. There is no appreciable change in the explanatory power of this model over the prior model, although the model does manage to remain statistically significant in its own right even after the inclusion of this block of variables.

In model #4 the more traditional measures used to explain father involvement are included in the analysis. Of these, two measures appear to have some predictive power when

included in the analysis with the control variables, economic measures, and mediating variables. The father's fatherhood attitudes appear to be positively related to the father's proportion of time spent engaged with the focal child. Also, the difference between the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income and their joint current income, a measure of the magnitude of recent short-term shifts in fathers' marital power relative to mothers', is negatively related to the father's proportion of time spent engaged.

More importantly, once the more traditional predictors of father involvement are added to the analysis in model #4, the effect of one of the suspected mediating variables becomes statistically significant. Here, the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood appears to act to reduce the father's proportion of time spent engaged with the focal child. This is the only analysis in which a neighborhood related mediator has an effect and provides some limited support for hypothesis 5c. Additionally, the effect of the father's race ceases to be statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, while the effect of the difference between the parents' ages becomes statistically significant. Given these changes, we should not be surprised that the predictive power of the model increases over the prior model. The adjusted R^2 for Model #4 is now a modest 0.10.

In Model #5, the measure of father's responsibility is added into the analysis, and interaction effects are included in Model # 6. However, neither Model #5 or Model #6 offer any appreciable improvement over Model #4 in terms of explanatory power (the adjusted R^2 s of the three models are identical). Therefore, Model #4 becomes the final model for our purposes and we return to it for additional comment.

If we examine Model #4 in its entirety we see that six of the twenty-four predictors included in the model have some impact on fathers' relative engagement with the focal child.

The adjusted R^2 for the model indicates that these six measures account for a modest 10% of the variance in the dependent variable. If we examine the direction of the effect of these six predictors, we see that fathers' proportion of time spent engaged increases as the father's fatherhood attitudes become more egalitarian and decreases the older the father is than the mother, the more difficult the child is to raise, the higher the permanent total family income, the higher the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood, and the larger the difference between the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income and their joint current income.

If we examine the standardized regression coefficients for Model #4, we find that the largest effect size is that associated with the interaction term associated with permanent total family income ($\beta = -.161$). The next largest effect is the one associated with the father's fatherhood attitudes ($\beta = .148$). The difference between the parents' ages ($\beta = -.121$), the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood ($\beta = -.098$), and the father's report of the difficulty raising the focal child ($\beta = -.093$) are next in size. The smallest effect in terms of absolute magnitude is that of the difference between the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income and their joint current income ($\beta = -.007$).

Table 5.4 Analysis of Fathers' Time Spent Engaged as a Proportion of Their Total Time (N=512)

Measures	Correlation	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Control Measures</i>							
Father's Race (1 = Black)	-0.083	-0.081 (0.043)	-0.094* (0.043)	-0.088* (0.043)	-0.057 (0.043)	-0.056 (0.044)	-0.062 (0.044)
Father's Age (Years)	-0.163*	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Father's Education (Years)	-0.033	0.000 (0.006)	0.012 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)	0.000 (0.008)	0.000 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)
Difference between Parents' Ages	-0.098*	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.008* (0.004)	-0.008* (0.004)	-0.008* (0.004)
Difference between Parents' Educations	-0.035	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.012 (0.007)	-0.009 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.007)
Sex of Focal Child (1 = Male)	0.013	0.020 (0.022)	0.022 (0.022)	0.019 (0.022)	0.021 (0.022)	0.022 (0.022)	0.022 (0.022)
Father's Difficulty Raising Child	-0.147*	-0.013* (0.004)	-0.012* (0.004)	-0.010* (0.004)	-0.008* (0.004)	-0.008* (0.004)	-0.009* (0.004)
<i>Economic Measures</i>							
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	-0.097*		-0.054 (0.078)	-0.074 (0.078)	-0.063 (0.078)	-0.063 (0.078)	-0.073 (0.078)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	-0.144*		-0.160* (0.056)	-0.177* (0.058)	-0.155* (0.061)	-0.156* (0.061)	-0.159* (0.061)
Income Difference	0.021		-0.002 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)	0.072* (0.034)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	-0.062		-0.006 (0.031)	-0.033 (0.033)	-0.018 (0.033)	-0.019 (0.033)	-0.019 (0.033)
<i>Mediating Measures</i>							
Childcare Expenses 1996 (Log 10)	0.033			0.031 (0.039)	0.028 (0.043)	0.027 (0.043)	0.017 (0.043)
Father's Self-Efficacy	0.052			0.000 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)
Father's Depression	-0.102*			-0.004 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
Social Cohesion	0.076			0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)
Ambient Hazards	-0.088*			-0.015 (0.010)	-0.019* (0.010)	-0.019* (0.010)	-0.019* (0.010)

Table 5.4 Analysis of Fathers' Time Spent Engaged as a Proportion of Their Total Time (cont.)

<i>Traditional Measures</i>									
Father's Fatherhood Attitudes	0.186 *			0.013 *	(0.004)	0.013 *	(0.004)	0.012 *	(0.004)
Mother's Fatherhood Attitudes	0.092 *			-0.001	(0.004)	-0.001	(0.004)	-0.001	(0.004)
Father's Share of Permanent Income	-0.019			-0.007	(0.055)	-0.007	(0.055)	-0.014	(0.054)
Share Difference	0.111 *			0.104 *	(0.053)	0.104 *	(0.053)	0.088	(0.054)
Age of Focal Child	-0.191 *			-0.007	(0.004)	-0.007	(0.004)	-0.006	(0.004)
Number of Children in Family	-0.014			0.002	(0.014)	0.002	(0.014)	0.001	(0.014)
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.098 *			0.088	(0.063)	0.087	(0.063)	0.086	(0.063)
Mother's Employment (1 = Employed)	-0.082			-0.039	(0.027)	-0.039	(0.027)	-0.038	(0.026)
<i>Father Involvement Measures</i>									
Father's Responsibility	0.013					-0.005	(0.012)	-0.007	(0.012)
<i>Interaction Terms</i>									
Father's Attitudes * Income Difference								-0.003 *	(0.001)
Intercept	0.84 *	0.81 *	0.91 *	0.62 *	0.63 *	0.68 *			
R²	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.14	0.14	0.15			
Adjusted R²	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.10	0.10			
F	4.17 *	3.75 *	3.31 *	3.27 *	3.14 *	3.23 *			

*p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

Model #4 confirms that part of the effect of permanent total family income is to shift the relative balance of the father's own time engaged versus time spent accessible to the focal child (irrespective of how his time relates to that of the mother). The effect is nonlinear, of course, and is plotted in Figure 5.13 below.

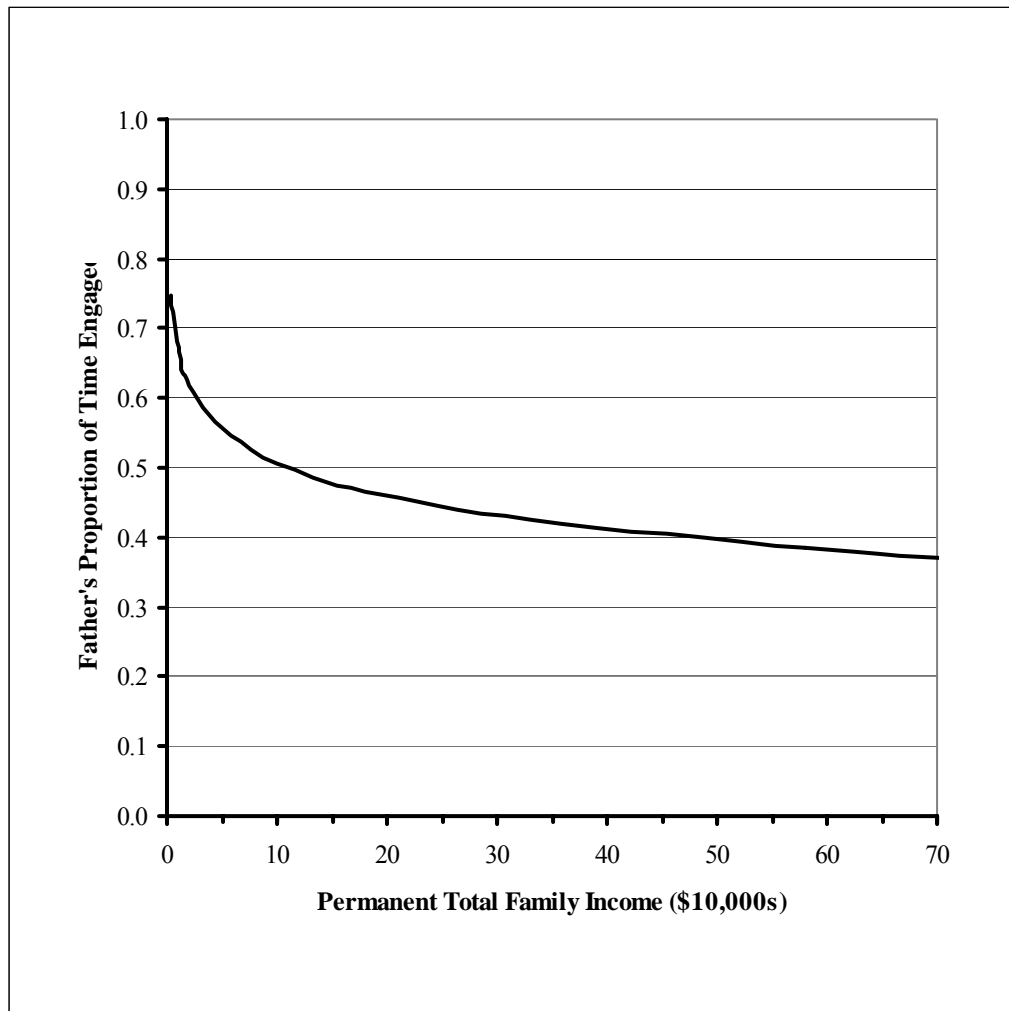


Figure 5.13 The Nonlinear Effect of Permanent Total Family Income on Father's Proportion of Time Spent Engaged to the Focal Child

Here we see that the father's proportion of time spent engaged drops sharply in response to increases in permanent total family income when the latter is small. As the value of permanent total family income increases, the incremental change in the father's relative

engagement tapers off. To see how the slope changes, we evaluate the first derivative of the equation for the curve at the point of interest using the procedure outlined previously (equation: $y = c - .155 * \log_{10}(x)$, where c is a constant; first derivative: $y' = -.155 * 1 / x * \ln(10)$). When permanent total family income is equal to 1 (\$10,000) the slope is -0.067, indicating that a 1 point (\$10,000) increase in permanent total family income produces about a 7% decrease in father's proportion of time spent engaged. At a value of 5 (\$50,000) the slope reduces to -0.013 and indicates that a one-point increase in permanent total family income produces much smaller 1.3% decrease in father's proportion of time spent engaged. By the time we reach a value of 10 (\$100,000), the slope has reduced to -0.007. At this value, a one-point increase in permanent total family income produces only a 0.7% decrease in father's proportion of time spent engaged.

To summarize, I conducted an additional analysis of fathers' proportion of their own total weekly time spent with the focal child that was spent engaged with the child rather than being accessible to the child. This additional analysis was conducted because results from the analysis of fathers' relative accessibility and relative engagement seemed to indicate that fathers' time spent engaged with the focal child relative to mothers' and their time spent accessible to the focal child relative to mothers' were shifting in opposite directions in response to changes in families' permanent income. The results of this current analysis appear to indicate that such shifting may be occurring because changes in families' permanent income is, in fact, changing the balance of fathers' own time spent engaged versus accessible to the focal child in and of itself. While the dependent variable in this last analysis was not one of the originally chosen three measures of fathers' relative involvement and was not included in the sets of hypotheses described in Chapter 3, there is nonetheless evidence to

support hypothesis 5c's claim that the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood are directly related to father involvement, and the direction of the effect is negative, indicating that fathers' time spent engaged as a proportion of their own total weekly time decreases as ambient hazards in the neighborhood increase. However, we also find that the statistically significant direct effects of families' permanent income and the difference between their permanent and current incomes persist even in the presence of the suspected mediating variables.

5.3 Indirect Effects Through Mediators

In the next set of analyses I investigate the effect of the economic measures on the mediating variables whose direct effects were established above. By directly linking the economic measures to the mediating measures, with appropriate controls applied, I am better able to establish how the mediators function to connect families' economic resources to fathers' parental involvement. Of the five potential mediations under consideration, only two demonstrated some statistically significant effect on at least one measure of fathers' involvement relative to mothers'. In the analysis of the father's relative accessibility to the focal child, childcare expenditures appear to predict the father's share of the couple's joint total time accessible to the focal child. Specifically, we find that the greater the total of the family's childcare expenses, the smaller the father's relative accessibility. In the analysis of the father's relative engagement with the focal child, the father's self-efficacy appears to predict the father's share of the couple's joint total time engaged with the focal child. In this analysis, the greater the father's sense of self-efficacy, the smaller the father's relative engagement. In addition, we found that an additional mediating variable related to the level

of ambient hazards in the neighborhood demonstrated some predictive power in the analysis of fathers' proportion of their own total weekly time spent with the focal child spent in direct engagement. Here we found that when ambient hazards are higher, fathers spend a greater proportion of their time accessible to the focal child and a smaller proportion directly engaged with the child. Yet to be seen is whether the four economic measures included in those analyses, namely the family's net worth, their permanent total family income, the difference between their current income and their permanent income, and their home ownership status, demonstrate any substantive impact on these three mediators.

5.3.1 Childcare Expenses

The results of the analysis of the effects of economic resources on families' childcare expenses are presented in Table 5.5. Childcare expenses are measured as the simple total of the family's spending on childcare for all their children in the calendar year 1996. Here we're interested in whether any of the four measures of economic resources are substantively related to the family's childcare expenses. If so, that would be evidence of a potentially mediated relationship with father's relative accessibility through childcare expenditures, which have already been demonstrated to predict father's relative accessibility. Because the measure of childcare expenses was added to the models in the prior analyses in its logged form, it is modeled here as a dependent variable in its logged form as well in order to preserve a sense of continuity. As can be seen in Table 5.5, both permanent total family income and homeownership status appear to be statistically significantly and positively correlated with the log of childcare expenditures, although the strength of association appears to be much stronger for permanent income.

In Model #1 in Table 5.5, the effects of the control variables childcare expenses are displayed. Five of the ten control variables have a statistically significant positive impact on childcare expenses. These include the mother's age, years of education, employment status, and average weekly work hours, as well as the father's average weekly work hours. The age of the focal child is the only control variable in this model to have a negative effect on childcare expenditures. The model as a whole is statistically significant, and the control variables account for 19% of the variance in childcare expenditures.

Model #2 includes the four measures of economic resources. Of these, only permanent total family income has a statistically significant effect on childcare expenditures, and the direction of the effect is positive, giving some empirical support to hypothesis 1a. We also find that the effects of the mother's age and years of education, in addition to the father's average weekly work hours, are reduced to non-significance in this model. The model as a whole is statistically significant and accounts for 21% of the variance in childcare expenditures, up from the prior model.

In Model #3, we add two measures of marital power into the analysis. These measures should help give a sense of whether the family's childcare expenditures change based on the stable long term distribution of power, as indicated by the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income, and whether they change based on recent upward or downward shifts in marital power, as indicated by the share difference measure. We see from Model #3 that the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income does have a statistically significant effect on childcare expenditures, while the share difference measure does not. Thus, as the father's long-term marital power increases, the family's childcare

expenditures decrease, net of all other effects in the model. This final model is statistically significant and accounts for 26% of the variance in childcare expenditures.

Table 5.5 Analysis of Childcare Expenditures (N=512)

Measures	Correlation	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control Measures</i>				
Father's Race (1 = Black)	-0.046	-0.017 (0.047)	-0.012 (0.047)	-0.020 (0.045)
Mother's Age (Years)	-0.049	0.005* (0.002)	0.003 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)
Mother's Education (Years)	0.197*	0.021* (0.006)	0.008 (0.007)	0.003 (0.007)
Number of Children in Family	-0.069	0.007 (0.015)	0.008 (0.014)	0.020 (0.014)
Age of Focal Child	-0.248*	-0.026* (0.004)	-0.026* (0.004)	-0.024* (0.004)
Marital Status (1 = Cohabiting)	-0.028	0.000 (0.091)	0.001 (0.092)	-0.035 (0.090)
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.102*	-0.011 (0.070)	-0.040 (0.070)	0.012 (0.069)
Mother's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.259*	0.118* (0.033)	0.111* (0.032)	0.088* (0.032)
Father's Avg. Weekly Work Hours	0.109*	0.003* (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.003* (0.001)
Mother's Avg. Weekly Work Hours	0.266*	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
<i>Economic Measures</i>				
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	0.056		0.011 (0.084)	-0.055 (0.082)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	0.265*		0.266* (0.062)	0.313* (0.061)
Income Difference	0.034		0.006 (0.004)	0.008 (0.004)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	0.079*		-0.031 (0.035)	-0.035 (0.034)
<i>Marital Power Measures</i>				
Father's Share of Permanent Income	-0.275*			-0.339* (0.061)
Share Difference	0.044			-0.070 (0.056)
Intercept		-0.40*	-0.21	0.14
R²		0.20	0.24	0.28
Adjusted R²		0.19	0.21	0.26
F		12.84*	10.21*	11.37*

*p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

If we look at the statistically significant effects in Model #3, we see that when the focal child is older, and when the father's long-term marital power is greater, childcare expenses are reduced. However, when the mother is employed, the father's average weekly work hours are greater, and permanent total family income is greater, childcare expenditures increase. Examining the standardized regression coefficients, we find that the effect with the largest absolute magnitude is associated with the age of the focal child ($\beta = -.305$), followed by the effect for the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income ($\beta = -.287$), and the family's permanent total income ($\beta = .279$). The effect sizes for the mother's employment status ($\beta = .139$) and the father's average weekly work hours ($\beta = .123$) are smaller.

As before, when we take a closer look at the effect of permanent total family income on childcare expenditures, a graphic illustration like the one in Figure 5.14 is of some assistance. Childcare expenditures change most rapidly in response to changes in permanent total family income when the value of the latter is in the low part of its range. As permanent total family income increases, the size of the corresponding incremental change in childcare expenditures tapers off substantially. To see how the slope changes, we need to partially solve the full equation from the final model in Table 5.5 by substituting mean values for all the other variables in the equation except the one to be evaluated (permanent total family income) in order to find the value of the resulting intercept term. Then we evaluate the first derivative of the equation for the curve defined by the logged variable at the point of interest. However, because both permanent total family income and childcare expenditures are used in their logged form the equation we are evaluating is $\log_{10}(y) = c + .313 * \log_{10}(x)$, and the first derivative of this equation is somewhat more complicated to produce, requiring the use

of the chain rule. After some manipulation, we arrive at the derivative: $y' = 10^c * (10^{.313 * \log_{10}(x)} * \ln(10) * (.313 * (1/x * \ln(10))))$, where c is the new intercept found by solving the equation in Model #3 in Table 5.5. When permanent total family income is equal to 1 (\$10,000) the slope is .284, indicating that a 1 point increase in permanent total family income returns about a \$284 increase in childcare expenditures (which are measured in \$1000s). At a value of 5 (\$50,000) the slope reduces to .094 and indicates that a one-point increase in permanent total family income returns only a \$94 increase in childcare expenditures. By the time we reach a value of 10 (\$100,000), the slope has reduced to .058. At this value, a one-point increase in permanent total family income returns only a \$58 increase in childcare expenditures.

Thus, these results appear to support hypothesis 1a about the direct positive effects of permanent income on childcare expenses, although hypothesis 1b about the effects of homeownership is not supported. When considered in conjunction with the results from the analysis of father's relative accessibility, which offered support for hypothesis 1c about the direct negative effects of childcare expenses on fathers' accessibility to the focal child, we have narrow but compelling evidence that childcare expenses mediate the relationship between families' permanent income and fathers' relative accessibility to the focal child.

5.3.2 Fathers' Self-Efficacy

The results of the analysis of the effects of economic resources on father's self-efficacy are presented in Table 5.6. Self-efficacy is measured using the seven-item Pearlin Self-Efficacy Scale (Pearlin et al. 1981). The seven items all relate to issues of whether respondents feel they have control over their lives and are able to act to solve problems.

Because scale components are measured on a four-point scale, when the items are summed the resulting scale scores can range from a minimum of 7 to a maximum score of 28. Higher scores indicate greater self-efficacy.

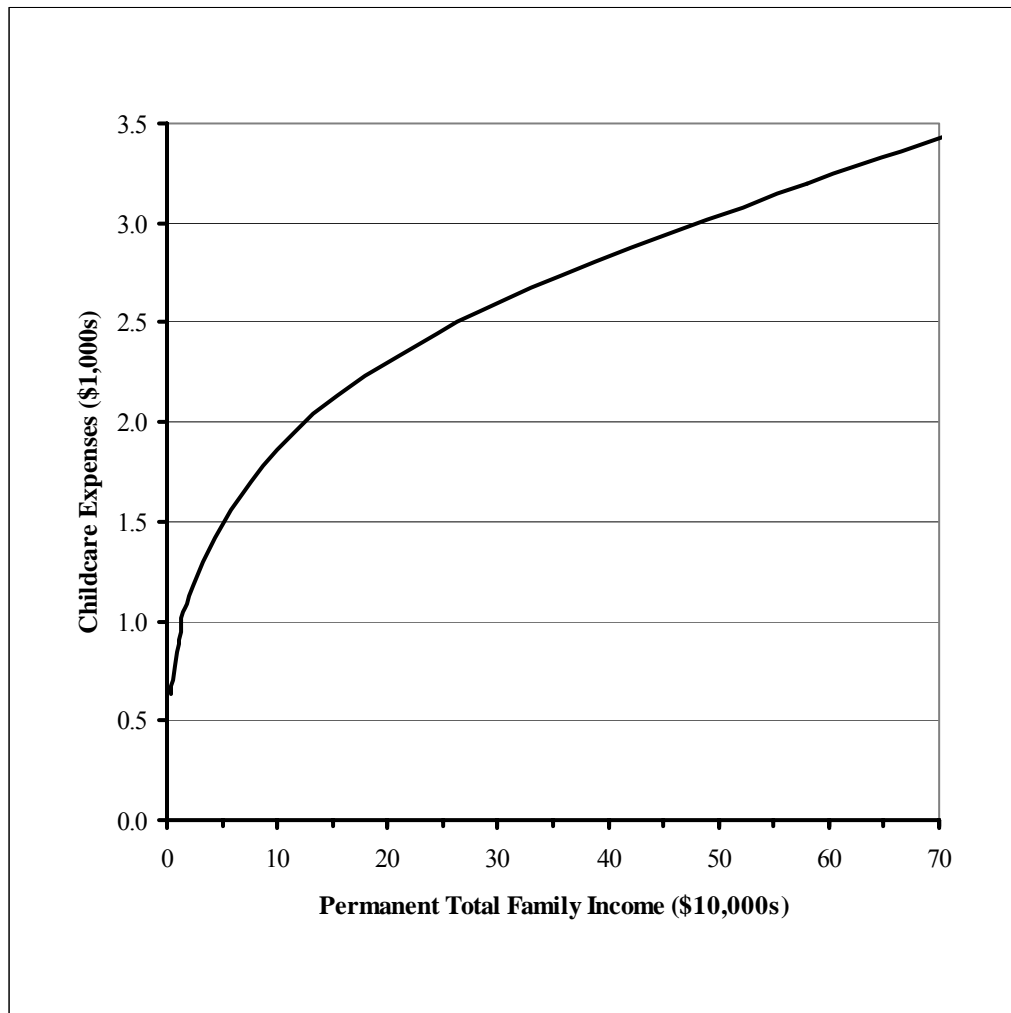


Figure 5.14 The Nonlinear Effect of Permanent Total Family Income on Childcare Expenses.

In this analysis we find that three of the four economic measures appear to be statistically significantly correlated with the father's sense of self-efficacy at the $p < .05$ level, and the direction of the association for all three is positive. The correlation between the

family's homeownership status and the father's sense of self-efficacy is statistically significant only at the more lenient $p < .10$ level.

Model #1 of Table 5.7 is estimated using the control variables only. Included are measures of the father's race, age, education in years, and current employment status, as well as measures of the parents' marital status and an indicator of whether the father has ever felt the need to cut back on his alcohol consumption. Of these, only the father's years of education and current employment status have statistically significant effects on the father's sense of self-efficacy, and the direction of the effects is positive for both. This model containing control measures only explains about 7% of the variance in father's self-efficacy.

In model #2 the economic measures are added. Both of the income related measures appear to have an impact on father's sense of self-efficacy, but net worth and homeownership status do not. The effects of both income variables are positive and indicate that fathers in families whose permanent total income is higher feel a greater sense of self-efficacy and fathers in families where their current income is increasingly greater than their permanent income also feel a greater sense of self-efficacy. Thus, model #2 gives support to hypothesis 2a, but not hypothesis 2b. The addition of these economic measures also alters the effects of the control variables, reducing the size of the effect associated with the father's current employment status by about 21% and reduced the effect size associated with the father's educational level by about 32%. This model, taken as a whole, is statistically significant and explains about 9% of the variance in the dependent variable versus the 7% explained by the prior model.

Next, the measure of economic strain is added to the control measures and economic measures. When added to the model, we find that this measure has a statistically significant

effect, and the direction of the effect indicates that as the number of economic problems increases, the father's sense of self-efficacy is expected to decrease. Also, we see that the effect size of permanent total family income is reduced by about 20% from the prior model, indicating that some of the effect of families' permanent income on fathers' self-efficacy is attributable to the level of economic strain the families are experiencing. This model is statistically significant and explains 10% of the variance in the measure of the father's sense of self-efficacy.

From a comparison of the standardized regression coefficients, we see that the largest effect in absolute magnitude is associated with the measure of economic problems ($\beta = -.136$), closely followed by the effect of the difference between the family's permanent and current income ($\beta = .135$). The remaining effects are similar in size, at or just below a β of 0.119. The smallest effect is that of the father's age ($\beta = -.090$).

On the whole, these results appear to support hypothesis 2a's assertion that there will be a positive relationship between families' economic resources and fathers' sense of self-efficacy, as both families' permanent incomes and the difference between their permanent and current incomes demonstrated positive relationships with the measure of fathers' self-efficacy included in the analysis.

Table 5.6 Analysis of Father's Self-Efficacy (N=512)

Measures	Correlation	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control Measures</i>				
Father's Race (1 = Black)	-0.051	0.075 (0.516)	0.103 (0.514)	0.083 (0.510)
Father's Age (Years)	-0.057	-0.028 (0.019)	-0.036 (0.020)	-0.039* (0.020)
Father's Education (Years)	0.205*	0.274* (0.063)	0.185* (0.070)	0.167* (0.069)
Father's Employment (1 = Employed)	0.190*	2.249* (0.674)	1.778* (0.686)	1.723* (0.682)
Marital Status (1 = Cohabiting)	-0.003	1.038 (0.990)	1.029 (1.005)	1.215 (1.000)
Father's Excessive Drinking (1 = Yes)	-0.063	-0.463 (0.371)	-0.425 (0.369)	-0.385 (0.367)
<i>Economic Measures</i>				
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	0.084*		0.194 (0.919)	0.274 (0.914)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	0.185*		1.621* (0.660)	1.297* (0.665)
Income Difference	0.137*		0.160* (0.049)	0.151* (0.048)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	0.070		-0.018 (0.384)	-0.357 (0.400)
<i>Economic Strain Measures</i>				
Economic Problems	-0.192*			-0.244* (0.087)
Intercept		17.56*	18.07*	19.22*
R²		0.08	0.10	0.12
Adjusted R²		0.07	0.09	0.10
F		6.88*	5.77*	6.04*

*p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

5.3.3 Ambient Hazards

The results of the analysis of the effects on economic resources on parent's perceptions of neighborhood ambient hazards are presented in Table 5.7. For this project, the neighborhood ambient hazards score is computed by summing the values of two items, one which asks respondents to rate how dangerous their neighborhood is to walk alone in after dark, while the second item asks about the quality of the neighborhood as a place to raise

children. The computed scale score can range from a value of 2 to a value of 8, where higher values indicate greater hazards in the neighborhood. For this analysis we are interested in whether the four economic measures used in the prior analyses predict the level of ambient hazard in the neighborhood in which the family resides, particularly once we control for neighborhood composition and the level of social cohesion present there. From the outset, three of the four economic measures appear to be statistically significantly correlated with ambient hazards at the $p < .05$ level, and the direction of the association for all three is negative. Only the measure of the difference between the family's permanent income and their current income shows no statistically significant correlation.

Model #1 of Table 5.7 is estimated using the control variables only. Included are measures of the father's race, age, education in years, as well as measures of the number of children in the family and the parents' marital status. Of these, father's race appears to have a positive effect on the perception of ambient hazards in the neighborhood, indicating that ambient hazards are perceived to be greater when the father is black. Two other control variables, the father's years of education and the number of children in the family, have statistically significant negative effects. In this model, ambient hazards are predicted to be smaller when the father has more years of education and when the family has a larger number of children. This model containing control measures only explains about 7% of the variance in ambient hazards and is statistically significant as a whole.

In model #2 the economic measures are added to the controls. Neither of the income related measures appears to have any impact on perceptions of ambient hazards, while both net worth and homeownership status have statistically significant negative effects. The addition of these economic measures also alters the effects of the control variables. The

effect of the father's years of education cease to be statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, while the effect of the father's age becomes significant in this model and indicates that the older the father, the greater the perception of ambient hazards in the neighborhood. This model, taken as a whole, is statistically significant and explains about 17% of the variance in the dependent variable, an increase of an additional 10% over the prior model.

Next, the measures of neighborhood composition are added to the control measures and economic measures. The first two of these measures are related to the size of the neighborhood. The first, neighborhood size, is a dichotomous measure that captures the physical size of the neighborhood, while the second, population density, refers to the number of families that live within the boundaries of the neighborhood and is included in the model in its logged form. The third and fourth measures of neighborhood composition, the proportion of residents who are black and the proportion of residents who are homeowners, are focused more on the demographic mix of the residents who live there. When added to the model, we find that three of the four neighborhood composition measures have statistically significant effects, with only the measure of population density failing to achieve statistical significance. The direction of the effects indicate that as the neighborhood gets larger in physical size, and as the proportion of residents who are homeowners increases, perceptions of ambient hazards are expected to decrease. However, as the proportion of neighborhood residents who are black increases, perceptions of ambient hazards are predicted to increase. Also, as the neighborhood measures are added to the model, the effects of race and net worth become non-significant and the effect of homeownership, while still statistically significant, is reduced in size by more than half. This should not be surprising given that the two

primary mechanisms by which people are sorted into neighborhoods involve center on people's access to economic resources and the effects of racial segregation.

Finally, a measure of neighborhood social cohesion is added in model #4. As expected, it has a statistically significant negative effect on the perception of ambient hazards. Its addition also appears to reduce the size of the effect of the proportion of neighborhood residents who are homeowners by about 30%. Its inclusion also boosts the adjusted R^2 to .30 for an additional 6% increase in explained variance over the prior model.

If we examine the standardized regression coefficients for Model #4, we find that the largest effect in absolute magnitude is associated with the measure of neighborhood cohesion ($\beta = -.262$), followed by the effects of two other neighborhood related variables, the proportion of residents who are homeowners ($\beta = -.176$) and the proportion of residents who are black ($\beta = .159$). The effect size for the one economic measure that still has a statistically significant effect in the model is smaller, with the coefficient for family's homeownership status coming in at $\beta = -0.115$. The smallest effect in absolute magnitude is associated with the father's years of education ($\beta = -.093$). Taken as a whole, this model is statistically significant and explains 24% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.24$) of the variance in perceptions of ambient hazards, an increase of 7% over the prior model.

The results of this analysis appear to support the claim of hypotheses 5b that perceptions of neighborhood ambient hazards are lower when families are homeowners than when they are renters. However, the impact of homeownership is substantially reduced as the neighborhood composition measures are included in the analysis. Similarly, the effect of families' net worth is reduced to non-significance as the neighborhood composition measures are included. Both results suggest that the relationship between families' economic resources

and their perceptions of neighborhood safety is mediated by the residential composition of the neighborhoods in which families can afford to reside. The results also suggest that perceptions of neighborhood social cohesion impact men's parental involvement, although very indirectly, by reducing perceptions of the level of risk present in the neighborhood.

Table 5.7 Analysis of Neighborhood Ambient Hazards (N=512)

Measures	Correlation	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Control Measures</i>					
Father's Race (1 = Black)	0.170 *	0.753 * (0.211)	0.521 * (0.203)	-0.082 (0.264)	-0.072 (0.253)
Father's Age (Years)	-0.030	0.001 (0.008)	0.017 * (0.008)	0.017 * (0.007)	0.018 * (0.007)
Father's Education (Years)	-0.210 *	-0.109 * (0.026)	-0.052 (0.028)	-0.053 * (0.027)	-0.055 * (0.026)
Number of Children in Family	-0.106 *	-0.185 * (0.066)	-0.183 * (0.063)	-0.164 * (0.060)	-0.156 * (0.058)
Marital Status (1 = Cohabiting)	0.087 *	0.636 (0.407)	-0.033 (0.398)	-0.074 (0.381)	-0.072 (0.366)
<i>Economic Measures</i>					
Net Worth 1994 (Log 10)	-0.215 *		-0.817 * (0.368)	-0.598 (0.357)	-0.550 (0.342)
Permanent Total Family Income (Log 10)	-0.249 *		-0.334 (0.259)	-0.270 (0.261)	-0.184 (0.250)
Income Difference	0.056		0.022 (0.019)	0.021 (0.019)	0.028 (0.018)
Home Ownership (1 = Homeowner)	-0.336 *		-0.918 * (0.153)	-0.388 * (0.174)	-0.408 * (0.167)
<i>Neighborhood Composition Measures</i>					
Neighborhood Size (1 = Large)	-0.085 *			-0.283 * (0.109)	-0.285 * (0.104)
Population Density (Log 10)	0.088 *			0.121 (0.093)	0.124 (0.089)
Proportion who are Black	0.272 *			0.908 * (0.317)	0.907 * (0.304)
Proportion who are Homeowners	-0.413 *			-1.165 * (0.237)	-0.811 * (0.233)
<i>Neighborhood Experience Measures</i>					
Social Cohesion	-0.365 *				-0.076 * (0.011)
Intercept		5.44 *	6.36 *	6.36 *	8.04 *
R²		0.08	0.18	0.26	0.32
Adjusted R²		0.07	0.17	0.24	0.30
F		9.22 *	12.18 *	13.17 *	16.52 *

*p<.05 Note: standard errors in parentheses.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes my central findings and includes a discussion of their implications for current and future research on father involvement. I also discuss a number of ways in which this study and the conclusions that can be drawn from it are limited by the choice of data, the choice of the analytic sample, and the methods used to conduct the analysis.

I began this project with an interest in investigating three related questions. First, are the effects of economic resources on father involvement primarily positive or negative in direction? Second, are the effects of economic resources largely direct or indirect, and what specific pathways are involved? Third, are the effects of economic resources the same across all men, regardless of their level of commitment to co-parenting or breadwinning? In the course of reviewing the current state of knowledge about men's parental involvement, with its focus on the themes of marital power, gender ideology, and time availability, I noted how little research exists that treats families' economic resources as theoretically relevant explanatory variables and drew attention to the near singular focus in the existing research on the relative share of resources mothers and fathers bring into the family economy and the rather narrow conception of economic resources in terms of current income.

Importantly, in this literature there appear to be two largely opposing views about how economic resources affect men's parental involvement, the first of which asserts that

fathers should become more involved with their children as their families' economic conditions improve because men are likely to experience an increased sense of economic security and sense of success as "good providers" for their families (Ahmeduzzman and Roopnarine 1991). That is, success at economic provisioning is the key to greater father involvement. The second view claims that fathers' involvement with their children should instead increase as families' economic situations worsen in response to the increased pressure families should feel to cut costs and limit consumption (Glass 1998). Thus, economic strain should prompt men to take on more childcare labor in order to limit spending on childcare and in order to allow mothers greater freedom to earn income to relieve their family's financial distress.

To address these issues I took a number of steps. First, I broadened the scope of the economic resources included in the study. Going beyond current income, I included a measure of permanent income in the analysis designed to capture the family's long-term economic status and which better reflects the fact that families can shift income across time through their use of savings, loosening the connection between current income and current consumption. I also included a measure of the difference between the family's permanent income and their current income in order to test the degree to which the family processes under study might be affected by short-term fluctuations in income that might otherwise get averaged out of a measure of permanent income that is computed by taking the mean of 4 or 5 years worth of current income measures. I used a similar approach when handling measures of the father's share of the couple's joint income as an indicator of his power in the marriage relative to the mother. I computed this share variable using permanent income measures for the father and the mother, and then computed an indicator the degree to which

the current share, based only on current income measures, differed from the measure of share based on permanent income. Importantly, I included two measures of wealth in this analysis, one quantitative in nature and the other more qualitative in meaning. Net worth, or the value of the family's assets minus its debts, is included in the analysis in order to capture aspects of the family's financial wellbeing that aren't well signaled by the much narrower measures of income. In addition, an indicator of the family's homeownership status is included separately, in part because the bulk of most families wealth holds is contained in the value of their homes, because homeownership is a key indicator of middle class status, and because the consideration of homeownership offers a conceptual bridge between the internal life of the family and the larger neighborhood or community in which they live.

Next, I articulated three ways in which the effects of these economic resources, as a set, might be mediated by other social processes rather than simply be direct onto men's parental involvement. Following Glass (1998) I argued that when economic resources were sufficient, parents could outsource some childcare labor by buying paid childcare services, thus reducing the demand for men's parental involvement. Secondly, following Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine (1992) and Conger's (1992) and Elder's (1992) work, I argued that when economic resources were insufficient and families were experiencing financial distress, fathers may choose to withdraw from parenting activities. Third, taking inspiration from Hofferth's (2003) research, I argued that families leverage what economic resources they have available as they decide where to live and that as a result, the neighborhood context in which they live and parent their children likely affects men's parental involvement both through the level of risk or threat the neighborhood presents, as well as through the level of social cohesion and support it offers. Finally, I took seriously

Pleck and Pleck' (1997) contention that men's fathering behaviors are being culturally redefined in terms of co-parenting and argued that the effects of the determinants of father involvement should differ across men according to their beliefs about fatherhood. For fathers who believe in co-parenting, the size of the effects of the determinants should be smaller than the size of the effects for those same predictors of father involvement for fathers who see themselves as breadwinners.

6.2 Hypothesis Testing

In Chapter 3, I described in some detail the six sets of hypotheses that have been tested in the course of this analysis. In this section I review each of the study hypotheses and the evidence supporting or disconfirming each of them, as it was uncovered in the course of this analysis. I also step back and look across the more narrow itemized results to consider what evidence can be marshaled to answer the three global questions that guide this project.

6.2.1 Hypothesis 1a

The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current income, and the family's net worth with their annual childcare expenses will all be positive.

Results from the analysis of families' childcare expenses in Table 5.5 show that as family permanent income increases, so to do families' childcare expenses, giving some limited support to Hypothesis 1a. The effect of families' permanent income is not the largest driver of families childcare expenses, a role played by the age of the focal child in the current analysis, yet the size of the effect is still relatively large in comparison to the effects of the other predictors of families' childcare expenses. Interestingly, there is also an

indication that families childcare expenses may also increase as the difference between families permanent and current incomes becomes larger, although this effect did not achieve statistical significance at the customary $p < .05$ level but instead at the more lenient $p < .10$ level. I view it as suggestive rather than definitive as a result. No effect was found to exist for families' net worth on families childcare spending.

6.2.2 Hypothesis 1b

Annual childcare expenses will be higher for homeowners than for renters.

The results of the analysis of families' childcare expenses reported in Table 5.5 show no statistically significant relationship between families' homeownership status and the level of their childcare expenses. This hypothesis is not confirmed.

6.2.3 Hypothesis 1c

The relationship between the family's annual childcare expenses and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative accessibility, relative engagement) will all be negative.

The results of the analysis of fathers' level of responsibility for childcare reported in Table 5.1 indicate that fathers' responsibility for childcare may decrease as families childcare spending increases, although the effect is only suggestive and attains statistical significance only at the more lenient $p < .10$ level. Even if it were statistically significant at a more conventional level, it would be one of the smallest effects relative to the other drivers of fathers' responsibility identified by the model.

On the other hand, the results of the analysis of the determinants of fathers' relative accessibility to the focal child reported in Table 5.2 indicate that as families' childcare expenses increase, fathers' relative involvement with the focal child decreases, with mothers taking on a greater proportion of the total time the parents spend being accessible. This effect is relatively small in comparison to the effects of some of the other predictors of fathers' relative accessibility, but persists even after the more traditional predictors of men's parental involvement are included in the analysis.

However, the results of the analysis of fathers' relative engagement with the focal child and of the supplemental analysis of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement, reported in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 respectively, show no effect of childcare expenses on these measures of father involvement. Taken together, these results present relatively narrow support for Hypothesis 1c, and only in the context of father's relative accessibility to the focal child.

6.2.4 Hypothesis 2a

The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current income, and the family's net worth with the father's sense of self-efficacy will all be positive.

The results of the analysis of fathers' sense of self-efficacy presented in Table 5.6 show that two of the four measures of families' economic resources have positive relationships with fathers' sense of self-efficacy. Specifically, as families' permanent incomes increase and as the difference between their permanent and current incomes increase, fathers' self-efficacy increases. In addition, as families' experience of economic problems increase, fathers' self-efficacy decreases. An examination of the relative sizes of

their effects show that the experience of economic problems and the difference between families' permanent and current incomes are the two strongest drivers of fathers' self-efficacy of the predictors included in the analysis. The effect of families' permanent incomes is relatively smaller in size. However, no relationship was found to exist between families' net worth and fathers' self-efficacy. Taken together, these results appear to largely support Hypothesis 2a.

6.2.5 Hypothesis 2b

The father's sense of self-efficacy will be higher for homeowners than for renters.

The results of the analysis of fathers' self-efficacy reported in Table 5.6 show no statistically significant relationship between families' homeownership status and fathers' self-efficacy. This hypothesis is not confirmed.

6.2.6 Hypothesis 2c

The relationship between the father's sense of self-efficacy and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative accessibility, relative engagement) will all be positive.

The results of the analysis of fathers' responsibility for childcare reported in Table 5.1 and of fathers' relative accessibility reported in Table 5.2 show no indication of an effect from father's self-efficacy. In neither of these analyses does fathers' self-efficacy achieve a statistically significant effect on these measures of father involvement. However, in the analysis of fathers' relative engagement reported in Table 5.3, we find a statistically significant negative relationship. That is, as fathers' self-efficacy increases, fathers' relative

engagement with the focal child appears to decrease, contrary to the prediction in Hypothesis 2c. Thus, while an effect appears to exist for father's self-efficacy in the context of fathers' relative engagement, it is in the wrong direction. In addition, the results of the supplemental analysis of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement, reported in Table 5.4, also shows no statistically significant effect. Thus, Hypothesis 2c is disconfirmed, both by the lack of effect on father's responsibility and relative engagement, and by the direction of the effect on father's accessibility.

6.2.7 Hypothesis 3a

The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current income, and the family's net worth with the father's level of depression will all be negative.

Because father's depression failed to demonstrate statistically significant direct effects on any of the measures of father involvement, which is a necessary (but insufficient) condition for establishing father's depression as a mediating variable, there was no need to test whether fathers' depression is affected by measures of families' permanent income, the difference between families' permanent and current incomes, or families' wealth holdings. Hypothesis 3a has been effectively rendered irrelevant.

6.2.8 Hypothesis 3b

The father's level of depression will be lower for homeowners than for renters.

Since father's depression failed to demonstrate statistically significant direct effects on any of the measures of father involvement, there was also no need to test whether fathers'

depression is affected by families' homeownership status. Thus, hypothesis 3b is also irrelevant.

6.2.9 Hypothesis 3c

The relationship between the father's level of depression and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative accessibility, relative engagement) will all be negative.

The results of the analyses of all three measures of father involvement, and of the supplemental measure of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement, all indicate that there is no effect of fathers' depression on men's parental involvement for the analytic sample under consideration in this analysis. However, in the analysis of fathers' relative accessibility reported in Table 5.2 and in the analysis of father's relative engagement reported in Table 5.3, there is a suggestion of an effect at the more lenient statistical criteria of $p < .10$, where it appears that an increase in fathers' depression acts to decrease both fathers' relative accessibility to the focal children and fathers' relative engagement with the focal children. Because the statistical significance of these effects does not meet the conventional standard, they are considered to be suggestive but not definitive enough to argue that there is support for Hypothesis 3a in this analysis. Hypothesis 3c is therefore disconfirmed for this analytic sample.

6.2.10 Hypothesis 4a

The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current income, and the family's net worth with the perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood will all be positive.

Because families' perceptions of neighborhood social cohesion failed to demonstrate statistically significant direct effects on any of the measures of father involvement, which is a necessary (but insufficient) condition for establishing it as a mediating variable, there was no need to test whether perceptions of neighborhood social cohesion are affected by measures of families' permanent income, the difference between families' permanent and current incomes, or families' wealth holdings. Hypothesis 4a has been effectively rendered irrelevant.

6.2.11 Hypothesis 4b

The perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood will be higher for homeowners than for renters.

Again, because families' perceptions of neighborhood social cohesion failed to demonstrate statistically significant direct effects on any of the measures of father involvement, there was no need to test whether perceptions of neighborhood social cohesion are affected by families' homeownership status. Hypothesis 4b is also irrelevant.

6.2.12 Hypothesis 4c

The relationship between the perceived level of social cohesion in the neighborhood and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative accessibility, relative engagement) will all be negative.

The results of the analysis of all three measures of men's parental involvement, as well as the supplemental analysis of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement all show there to be no statistically significant direct relationship between families' perceptions of the level of social cohesion in their

neighborhoods and fathers' parental involvement. However, there is an indication that social cohesion is involved in determining fathers' parental involvement more indirectly through its effect on families' perceptions of the level of ambient hazards in their neighborhoods. As reported in Table 5.7 in the analysis of neighborhood ambient hazards, as neighborhood social cohesion increases, ambient hazards appear to decrease. A comparison of the relative size of this effect to the others established by the model show that social cohesion has the strongest effect, followed by the effects of the proportion of neighborhood residents who are homeowners and the proportion of neighborhood residents who are black. However, if we trace the paths linking social cohesion to fathers' involvement through the neighborhood's level of ambient hazards, we find that the effect of social cohesion is ultimately positive in direction. This is because increases in social cohesion appear to decrease perceptions of ambient hazards, which should in turn result in a net increase in the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement as noted for the supplemental analysis presented in Table 5.4. Thus while we have evidence of an interesting and theoretically plausible indirect effect of social cohesion on men's parental involvement, its direction is opposite that claimed in Hypothesis 4c and therefore this hypothesis is ultimately disconfirmed.

6.2.13 Hypothesis 5a

The relationships of the family's permanent income, the difference between the family's permanent and current income, and the family's net worth with the perceived level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood will all be negative.

The results of the analysis of families' perceptions of the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood in which they live as reported in Table 5.7 show that neither families'

permanent income, the difference between their permanent and current incomes, nor their net worth appear to have any statistically significant effect on perceptions of ambient hazards.

Hypothesis 5a is not supported by this current analysis.

6.2.14 Hypothesis 5b

The perceived level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood will be higher for renters than for homeowners.

The results of the analysis of families' perceptions of the level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood in which they live as reported in Table 5.7 show a statistically significant negative effect of homeownership on perceptions of neighborhood ambient hazards.

Homeowners report living in less hazardous neighborhoods than do renters. The relative size of the effect is less than half that of the effect of social cohesion on neighborhood ambient hazards, and falls in the middle of the distribution of the standardized regression coefficients for this model. In addition, its absolute (unstandardized) effect size is substantially reduced (by more than half) by the inclusion of the neighborhood composition measures in the analysis, suggesting that part of the effect of owning a home is attributable to the kinds of neighborhoods in which homeowners tend to live. Nonetheless, the effect of homeownership on perceptions of neighborhood ambient hazards persists, and thus Hypothesis 5b is supported by the results of this analysis.

6.2.15 Hypothesis 5c

The relationship between the perceived level of ambient hazards in the neighborhood and each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative accessibility, relative engagement) will all be positive.

The results of the analysis of fathers' responsibility, father's relative accessibility, and fathers' relative engagement as reported in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 respectively indicate that there is no statistically significant effect of perceptions of neighborhood ambient hazards on men's parental involvement as it has been operationalized in this study. However, in the supplemental analysis of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement reported in Table 5.4, we find that as perceptions of neighborhood ambient hazards increase, there is a decrease in father's proportional time spent engaged with the focal child. While this effect is small when compared to the effects of the other predictors of father's proportional time spent engaged, it persists even after the more traditional predictors of father involvement, like father's fatherhood attitudes, time availability, marital power, and so on are added into the analysis. Unfortunately, the direction of the effect is negative rather than positive as is claimed by Hypothesis 5c.

6.2.16 Hypothesis 6a

There will be an interaction effect between the father's fatherhood attitudes and each of the other predictors in the model on each of the three measures of father involvement (responsibility, relative engagement, relative accessibility).

The results of the analysis of fathers' responsibility for childcare reported in Table 5.1 show that there are statistically significant interaction effects between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and two of the measures of economic resources included in the analysis: the difference between families' permanent and current incomes and families' homeownership status. However, no such effects were found to exist for families' net worth or their permanent incomes in the context of fathers' responsibility for childcare. If we consider the results of the analysis of father's relative accessibility, reported in Table 5.2, we find that

only families' homeownership status, of the four measures of economic resources, has a statistically significant interaction effect in conjunction with fathers' fatherhood attitudes. Neither the measures of families' net worth, permanent incomes, nor the difference between their permanent and current incomes appear to have such interaction effects when analyzed in the context of fathers' relative accessibility.

The results from the analysis of fathers' relative engagement, as reported in Table 4.3, show that the one interaction effect involving fathers' fatherhood attitudes that attains statistical significance does not involve a measure of families' economic resources and does not add enough additional explanatory power to the empirical model to justify its inclusion. Additionally, while the interaction effect identified in the supplemental analysis of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement, as reported in Table 5.4, does involve a measure of families' economic resources (income difference), its inclusion in the empirical model also does not improve the performance of the model enough to justify the additional complexity its inclusion brings with it. As a result, a more parsimonious model was chosen as the final model in this analysis. Taken together, these results offer narrow support for the assertion in Hypothesis 6a that father's fatherhood attitudes interact with families economic resources to affect men's parental involvement in the context of men's parental responsibility and their relative accessibility, but not in the context of father's relative engagement or in fathers' proportional time spent engaged with the focal child.

Interestingly, there are additional interaction effects in the analysis of fathers' responsibility and fathers' relative accessibility that involve fathers' fatherhood attitudes. In the analysis of father's responsibility for childcare, reported in Table 5.1, interaction effects

between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and fathers' employment status and between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and mothers' employment status were found to have statistically significant effects in addition to those involving the economic measures. In the analysis of fathers' relative accessibility, reported in Table 5.2, interaction effects between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and fathers' employment status were also found to be statistically significant, as were interaction effects between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and the sex of the focal child and between father's fatherhood attitudes and fathers' race.

6.2.17 Hypothesis 6b

In each interaction effect between the father's fatherhood attitudes and each of the other predictors in the model, the size of the effects of the economic measures will be smaller for fathers who show greater support for co-parenting than for fathers who show greater support for breadwinning.

Again we turn to the results from the analysis of fathers' responsibility and of fathers' relative accessibility for evidence regarding Hypothesis 6b, having already noted that there is no useful evidence of the existing of interaction effects involving father's fatherhood attitudes in the analysis of fathers' relative engagement (or in the supplemental analysis of fathers' proportional time spent engaged with the focal child). If we look first at the results of the analysis of fathers' responsibility, from Table 5.1, we find that only for the interaction between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and families' homeownership status is the size of the effect of homeownership status smaller for the egalitarian fathers than for the transitional and traditional (breadwinning) fathers. This is apparent when we examine the plot of the interaction effect in Figure 5.1 for these three groups of fathers. From this plot we can see that there is no apparent effect at all of homeownership on fathers' responsibility for

childcare for the egalitarian fathers, whereas for transitional fathers and traditional fathers, especially, the level of responsibility fathers' show for childcare is larger among renters than homeowners. This finding supports Hypothesis 6b above in the context of fathers' responsibility.

However, in the other interaction effect from the analysis of fathers' responsibility that involves a measure of families economic resources, namely the difference between families permanent and current incomes, the size of the effect of the income difference is largest among the egalitarian group of fathers and smallest among the traditional group of fathers, with the pattern for the transitional group of fathers falling in between. This can be readily seen in the plot of this interaction effect in Figure 5.4. Upon inspection, this plot shows that as the income difference changes from -20 ($-\$200,000$) to $+20$ ($+\$200,000$), egalitarian fathers' level of responsibility decreases by 2.84 points, whereas for the traditional group of fathers, this change in the income difference reveals only a slight 0.52 point increase in fathers' level of responsibility for childcare. Thus the effect of changes in the income difference for traditional fathers is only one-fifth that of the effect for egalitarian fathers, and is in the opposite direction. This finding contradicts the claim in Hypothesis 6b above in the context of fathers' responsibility.

If we turn to the interaction effect between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and families' homeownership status identified in the analysis of fathers' relative accessibility in Table 5.2, we see a pattern similar to that described for this same interaction effect in the context of fathers' responsibility. That is, according to the plot of this interaction in Figure 5.7, there is essentially no effect for families' homeownership status on fathers' relative accessibility to the focal child for the group of fathers with the most egalitarian fatherhood attitudes. The

largest effect for homeownership status occurs in the most traditional group of fathers, with the effect for the transitional fathers falling in between the two. As a result, this finding also appears to support Hypothesis 6b.

If we consider the additional five interaction effects that do not involve measures of families economic resources spread across the analyses of fathers' responsibility and relative accessibility, we find once again that the evidence regarding the issue involved in Hypothesis 6b is mixed. Granted, these additional interaction effects are not directly implicated in Hypothesis 6b because of its focus on the measures of families' economic resources, but nevertheless, they offer a view of how men's beliefs about parenting affect the way their parental involvement is impacted by other factors. In both of the interaction effects involving parents' employment status found in the analysis of fathers' responsibility for childcare, parental employment has the largest affect on men's parenting among the egalitarian group of fathers. For this group of fathers, the father's employment appears to decrease the father's level of responsibility for childcare, while the mother's employment appears to increase the father's level of responsibility for childcare. The effects of fathers' and mothers' employment on fathers' responsibility are smaller among the transitional and traditional groups of fathers, as can be seen from Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3.

Similarly, we find that the effect of the focal child's sex is largest among the group of egalitarian fathers in the analysis of fathers' relative accessibility, and smallest among the group of traditional fathers, as can be seen in Figure 5.5. According to the plot in Figure 5.5, egalitarian fathers in the sample are predicted to have an additional 7% (0.07 points) relative accessibility to the focal child if the child is female than if the child is male, while traditional

fathers are predicted to be more accessible relative to mothers by only an additional 2% (0.02 points) when the focal child is male.

When we consider the interaction effect involving fathers' racial identification, we find that the effect of the father's race on their relative involvement is neither the largest nor the smallest for the group of egalitarian fathers in the sample, but is instead in the middle, with the largest effect occurring for the traditional fathers and the smallest effect occurring for the transitional fathers. From an inspection of Figure 5.6, we see that fathers' relative accessibility is about 6% (0.06 points) higher when the father is white for the egalitarian group of fathers, while father's relative accessibility is about 12% (0.12 points) higher when the father is black for the traditional group of fathers. Among transitional fathers, there fathers' relative accessibility is only 3% higher when the father is black versus white.

Finally, we return to the interaction between fathers' employment status and fathers' fatherhood attitudes in the context of fathers' relative accessibility, we see that the effect of fathers' employment is smallest for the egalitarian group of fathers in the sample, and largest for the traditional group of fathers, as can be seen clearly in Figure 5.8. In this plot we find that unemployed fathers have significantly higher levels of relative accessibility than employed fathers for the traditional group (a difference of 0.16 points, or 16%) while employed fathers have a slightly higher level of relative accessibility than unemployed fathers for the egalitarian group (a difference of only 0.05 point, or 5%).

Taken together, the patterning of impacts across these interaction effects does not bear out the argument that men's parental involvement is less sensitive to contextual factors when fathers espouse co-parenting than when they prefer the breadwinning model of fatherhood. Rather, egalitarian father and traditional fathers appear to be sensitive to

different contextual factors and sensitive to the same factors in different and often opposing ways. This issue is discussed in more detail below.

6.3 Three Questions

Having examined each of the hypotheses and the support for them that exists on the basis of the analyses I have conducted throughout this project, I now look across these specific issues and consider the broader questions that this study seeks to address. Having articulated three orienting questions at the outset in Chapter 1, I now return to each of them in turn and address them given the insights developed by my work here.

6.3.1 Question #1

Are the effects of families' economic resources on men's parental involvement largely positive or negative in direction? At the heart of this question is the issue of how fathers' parental involvement is affected by their families' sense of economic security. One view, which shares many assumptions with the traditional view of fathers as family breadwinners, argues that fathers will become more involved with their children when their families' resources are sufficient to meet their needs. This view locates father's success at being "good providers" as the central condition for their increased involvement in the care of their children beyond simple provisioning. This is the viewpoint expressed by Ahmeduzzman and Roopnarine (1991) and it is echoed in the work of Conger and colleagues (1992) and Elder and colleagues (1992) on men's responses to economic distress. The expectation is that men will withdraw from parental involvement the worse their family's financial situation becomes as a means of coping with the feelings of failure such economic

distress is likely to produce. This of course implies that men's involvement will increase, as their economic situations get better. This is essentially a social-psychological view of how men respond to economic problems that highlights men's role expectations as husbands and fathers in shaping how they cope with their circumstances.

The opposing view argues that one of the ways that families facing economic constraints compensate is by leveraging whatever resources they have available to cut costs by reducing spending on goods or services that family members could potentially provide for free. It is essentially a rational, economic view of how families respond to economic distress that focuses on couple's ability to maximize their families' wellbeing by adjusting their division of labor at home. Glass' (1998) work on the circumstances under which families adopt "father care" as a strategy for coping with limited economic resources illustrates this viewpoint well. From this point of view, fathers' parental involvement should increase as families' economic resources become more limited, all else being equal, rather than decreasing as is claimed by the social-psychological perspective.

The results of this study do not clearly favor either one of these points of view. The empirical pattern discovered for this analytic sample suggests a more complicated situation in which the direction of the effect is dependent upon both the economic measure and the measure of father involvement under consideration. If we consider the effect of net worth on fathers' relative engagement, as reported in Table 5.3, we see that it has a positive direct effect and this effect exists only for fathers' relative engagement. It would appear, then, that in the context of father's relative engagement, greater net worth acts to provide a sense of economic security that prompts fathers take on more direct engagement relative to mothers.

If we instead consider the effect of permanent income, we see that it has a positive direct effect on fathers' relative accessibility, a negative direct effect on fathers' relative engagement and the supplemental measure of fathers' proportional time spent engaged with the focal child. In addition, there is evidence that families' permanent income has a net negative indirect effect on fathers' relative accessibility through its effect on family childcare expenditures. Also, permanent income appears to have a net negative effect on fathers' relative engagement through its effect on fathers' sense of self-efficacy. Together, the patterning of these direct and indirect effects clearly indicate that permanent income's effect on fathers' relative engagement is negative, which would lend support to the view that fathers' increase their direct involvement childcare in response to the limited ongoing flow of resources into the household economy. That is, fathers may be taking on greater direct involvement when economic stress is greater, consistent with Glass' (1998) view of families' use of "father care" as a viable childcare strategy. However, upon first inspection, the effect of permanent income on fathers' relative accessibility is mixed, as the direct effect of permanent income is positive and the indirect effect through childcare expenses is negative. Since only a fraction of the effect of childcare expenses on fathers' relative accessibility is attributable to families' permanent incomes, the negative effect through this indirect pathway is likely much smaller than is the direct positive effect permanent income has on fathers' relative accessibility. So, on balance, I would argue that the net effect of permanent income on fathers' relative accessibility is positive, indicating that fathers take on greater accessibility relative to mothers when the stable flow of resources into the family economy is greater. Thus there appears to be a tradeoff between father's relative accessibility and

relative engagement, each moving in the opposite direction as families permanent incomes increase.

The effect of the difference between families' permanent and current incomes exist only in the context of fathers' responsibility, and becomes apparent only when the appropriate interaction effect involving fathers' fatherhood attitudes is specified (see Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4). The effect is negative for the egalitarian group of fathers and the transitional group of fathers and it is positive for the traditional group of fathers. I interpret this result to mean that egalitarian and transitional fathers increase the level of responsibility they take for their children the larger the short term disruption to the family income is relative to what they are used to receiving. For them, economic stress prompts greater involvement. But for traditional fathers, the pattern is to increase their responsibility for childcare the larger the short term increase to the family income relative to what they are used to receiving. Here increased economic security seems to prompt greater involvement for fathers who espouse the "good provider" role.

The effect of homeownership is even more complicated. When we consider homeownerships effect on fathers' responsibility, we find that there is no appreciable effect for egalitarian fathers, while being a homeowner appears to decrease fathers' responsibility for childcare among transitional and traditional fathers (see Figures 5.1 and 5.7). In the context of fathers' relative accessibility, we find once again that there is no appreciable effect for egalitarian fathers, while being a homeowner appears to increase fathers' relative accessibility. As for fathers' relative engagement, being a homeowner appears to increase fathers' engagement across the board, regardless of the father's fatherhood attitudes. In addition, there is a net positive indirect effect of homeownership on fathers' proportional

time spent engaged with the focal child through the level of neighborhood ambient hazards, as reported in Table 5.4. Being a homeowner appears to decrease the perceived risk associated with living in the neighborhood, and this, in turn, appears to decrease fathers' time spent engaged with the focal child relative to their total time spent with the focal child. Unfortunately, it is difficult to reconcile the patterning of effect from homeownership on either of the two views of how economic resources likely affect men's parental involvement. There is evidence for transitional and traditional fathers that the economic security that accompanies homeownership frees them from some responsibility for childcare, as would be suggested by the rational, economic view of fathers' involvement as a response to financial distress, while it at the same time appears to increase their relative accessibility and engagement with the focal child, as would be suggested by the view of fathers' involvement as an outcome of successful provisioning. For egalitarian fathers, homeownership has no appreciable effect except on their relative engagement, where the economic security homeownership brings seems to encourage greater involvement.

6.3.2 Question #2

The second question I consider in the course of this project is whether the effects of families' economic resources on fathers' involvement are largely direct or indirect in nature. Given my view that economic resources are important primarily because they can be used to buy goods and services that can, in some way, be used to alter or diminish the demand for parents' childcare labor, I have argued that the effects of economic resources should be largely indirect. Moreover, I offered three specific pathways through which I believe economic resources operate to impact men's parental involvement. First, families can

leverage their resources to purchase paid childcare, thus reducing the demand for fathers' involvement. Second, families can use their resources to relocate to safer, more socially cohesive neighborhoods, thus reducing the demand for fathers' involvement. Or, third, it may be that increased economic resources provide fathers with a sense of control over and satisfaction with their lives that prompts them to participate more fully in the case of their children.

The results of the analyses presented in this dissertation provide some evidence for all three of these perspectives, although the evidence is not as systematic and clear-cut as I would have hoped. First, it appears that families' childcare expenses do partially mediate the relationship between families' permanent income and fathers' relative accessibility, as reported in Table 5.2 and Table 5.5. With fathers in families with higher permanent incomes spending more on childcare arrangements that in turn appear to reduce fathers' accessibility to the focal child relative to that of the mother. Second, it also appears that fathers' self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between families economic resources and fathers' relative engagement with the focal child. As reported in Table 5.3 and Table 5.6, fathers' self-efficacy is higher in families with greater permanent incomes and in families whose current income is larger than their permanent income. However, fathers' self-efficacy is lower in families who report having greater numbers of economic problems. In turn, fathers' relative engagement is lower in families where fathers have higher levels of self-efficacy. Third, there is evidence from the supplemental analysis of fathers' of the proportion of fathers' own total time spent with the focal child that was spent in direct engagement, reported in Table 5.4, and from the analysis of neighborhood ambient hazards reported in Table 5.7, that the neighborhood climate also partially mediates the relationship between

families economic resources and fathers' involvement. Specifically, fathers who live in families who are homeowners report lower levels of ambient hazards in the local neighborhood environment, and lower levels of ambient hazards appear to lead to a reduction in fathers' time spent engaged with the focal child relative to the time they spend being accessible. Note, however, that in each case, the mediating relationship exists only in the context of a specific dimension of fathers' involvement and only involves one, at best two, measures of families economic resources.

More importantly, even after these mediators are included in the empirical models, substantial direct effects from the measures of families' economic resources onto the measures of fathers' involvement remain. In most cases, the inclusion of the mediators does little to reduce the magnitude of these direct impacts. That the direct impacts remain is a clear sign that there are other mediating mechanisms yet to be discovered and included in the analysis.

6.3.3 Question #3

Finally in the course of this project I've considered whether the cultural redefinition of fatherhood as co-parenting has any effect on the degree to which fathers' involvement needs contextual support. My argument has been that as fathers embrace the co-parenting view of fatherhood, their involvement with their children should become less sensitive to the typical factors that promote or erode father involvement, as fathers' involvement with their children become less optional. The implication of this view for the empirical models is that fathers' attitudes about fatherhood are likely involved in interaction effects with the other determinants of men's parental involvement, and that the size of the effects of the

determinants of father involvement should be smaller for co-parent type fathers than for breadwinner type fathers. These smaller slopes would indicate a reduction in the influences these factors would have over men's parental involvement. These expectations were the basis for Hypotheses 6a and 6b.

As I have already noted above in sections 6.2.16 and 6.2.17, the results of my analysis do show there to be interaction effects between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and some of the determinants of men's parental involvement. However the results do not strongly support the view of that father involvement is less sensitive to contextual supports for co-parent type fathers than for fathers of the breadwinning variety. Rather, fathers at the ends of the co-parent-breadwinner continuum appear to be both sensitive to different factors and sensitive to some of the same factors but in different, often opposing, ways.

6.4 Implications of Results for Study of Father Involvement

This study raises a number of considerations that have bearing on future research on men's parental involvement. They involve our understanding of how to conceptualize men's parental involvement, the degree to which that involvement can be explained by either human capital theory or gender construction theory, the impact of economic resources on men's involvement directly or indirectly, and the implications of expanding the range of economic resources used in research of this sort.

This study, like most recent quantitative research on father involvement uses the three-part conceptualization of father involvement proposed by Lamb and colleagues (1985, 1987). The three categories of father involvement they proposed are described as being content-free in that they do not make specific assumptions about what sort of involvement

the father is engaged in with his children. Whether the father is involved in leisure, play, teaching, discipline, caretaking or other household labor is not taken into consideration.

The three categories can be thought of as lying along an implied continuum of lesser to greater involvement. That is, they can be treated as differing levels of a single underlying dimension. Accessibility would be located closest to the end of the continuum representing minimal involvement and responsibility would be located at the other end of the continuum representing maximum involvement, with engagement somewhere in between these poles. Such a unidimensional conceptualization gives the impression that increased accessibility would lead to increasing engagement which would in turn lead to increased responsibility.

However, the way these three categories of involvement are typically conceptualized argues against this unidimensional conceptualization. Accessibility is usually defined in terms of the father's simple proximity in time and space with their children and is essentially passive in nature. Importantly, it does not seem to preclude engagement in other non-child focused activities. Engagement, for its part, presumes the same temporal and spatial proximity as accessibility, but requires that the father be doing something with the children that requires attentiveness to and interaction with them, and would seem to preclude anything other than cursory involvement in non-child focused activities. In that sense, accessibility and engagement are very different and fundamentally mutually exclusive. Responsibility, on the other hand, does not theoretically require either accessibility or engagement but could just as well overlap them both. A father could, at least in theory, manage his children's lives without having to be in close proximity to them or having direct interaction with them. That is, he could approach parenting as a distant patriarch, controlling and orchestrating the lives of his children without necessarily being near them or getting involved in carrying out the

activities required for their care. Alternately, a father might be drawn into greater engagement or accessibility with his children as a result of being responsible for managing their activities. This is closer to the image of the father as co-parent that is discussed at length elsewhere in this study. Thus the responsibility aspect of father involvement could be viewed in terms of either task management or routine task accomplishment. Because of how responsibility is operationalized within this study, in terms of which parent usually does each of seven childcare related activities (bathing or changing diapers, disciplining children, buying their clothes, driving them to activities, selecting a childcare program or school, selecting the child's pediatrician, and playing with them), it is closer to the routine task accomplishment view of responsibility than the task management view, and as a result, can reasonably be expected to predict men's accessibility and engagement with the focal child.

In the models presented in my research here, fathers' responsibility for their children is used as a predictor of fathers' relative accessibility and relative engagement, as well as to predict fathers' degree of trading-off between their own degree of accessibility and engagement. The results show that fathers who exhibit higher levels of responsibility also exhibit higher levels of relative accessibility and of relative engagement, but that fathers' responsibility does not predict the degree of trade-off between men's own time spent accessible to their children and their time spent engaged with them. That is, increased responsibility, as it has been operationalized in this study, appears to bring with it greater involvement for fathers relative to that of mothers (in terms of relative accessibility and relative engagement), but does not appear to carry with it fathers spending a greater proportion of their own total time spent with the focal child in direct engagement rather than passive accessibility. While the finding that a father's level of responsibility predicts his

relative accessibility and engagement is consistent with expectations, this last finding has interesting implications for future research on father involvement in that it suggests that men's responsibility for childcare is independent of (not related to) their own apportionment of their time into either being accessible or being engaged. Highly responsible fathers can either be more engaged than accessible, more accessible than engaged, or anywhere in between. Likewise for the fathers who showed the least responsibility for their children's care. This independence is unexpected given the operationalization of responsibility noted above, and suggests that fathers can potentially be "responsible" for their children in a variety of ways. So "responsibility for childcare" may itself be a multi-dimensional concept, one that is in need of greater theoretical "un-packing" and clearer, more careful operationalization in future research. Also, there is clearly a greater need for future research to explore and map the interconnections between these three aspects of father involvement and the ways in which they are aligned in relation to each other across different historical and/or sub-cultural definitions of the normative father.

This study also offers some evidence regarding the proper theoretical understanding of what factors drive men's greater involvement with their children relative to mothers. As noted in Chapter 2, there are two main competing theoretical explanations for men's parental involvement: human capital theory and gender construction theory. With human capital theory's focus on labor specialization and efficiency, we would have expected to see men's relative parental involvement decrease as indicators of men's investment in paid labor (such as level of education, employment status, weekly work hours, earning a greater share of the couple's joint income, etc.) increase and as indicators of the demand for childcare labor (such as number of children, ages of children) increase. Alternately, the focus of gender

construction theory for men who see themselves through a “traditional” gender lens is largely on their response to failing to achieve the expectations set out by normative gender proscriptions to be “good providers” and their engagement in activities intended to ward off any stigma that may arise for failing to live up to this ideal. But it also considers the situations of men who have chosen to define themselves in less traditional ways, such that activities like active engagement in childcare or other typically “feminine” household tasks are considered acceptable means of expressing oneself as an appropriately gendered man. Gender construction theory makes the formation and maintenance of a person’s gender identity a central consideration, rather than treating it as “exogenous” to the model as human capital theory does. From the gender construction point of view, the emergence of a “traditional” gender identity is as much of a riddle to be unraveled as is the emergence of a less traditional or completely non-traditional gender identity. From the gender construction vantage point “traditional” does not mean “default” or “assumed.”

When we consider the father’s level of responsibility for childcare as the dependent variable, the analysis presented in this study in Table 5.1 seems to support a gender construction theory of father involvement over the human capital view. Few of the typical indicators of men’s investment in paid labor show any statistically significant effect. The one such indicator that does achieve statistical significance, the difference between the parents’ years of education, indicates that fathers are more involved the greater number of years of education they have above that of the mother, a clear contradiction of the expectations of human capital theory.

Additionally, one of the interaction effects included in the model (one pertaining to the father’s employment in Figure 5.2) lends clear support to gender construction theory. For

fathers with the most traditional fatherhood attitudes, we see them take less responsibility for their children when they, themselves, are unemployed. Fathers with the most egalitarian attitudes, on the other hand, appear to take substantially more responsibility for their children when they are unemployed. The decline in responsibility for unemployed traditional fathers would seem to indicate an attempt to avoid the stigma of failing to be the family's "good provider" by withdrawing from involvement in childcare, just as gender construction theory predicts. Likewise the increased involvement of unemployed egalitarian fathers suggests that such involvement acts as a means of supporting a less traditional gender identity.

A similar story emerges from the interaction involving the mother's employment status (seen in Figure 5.3). The most traditional fathers show decreased responsibility for their children when the mother is employed versus when she is not currently employed. For the most egalitarian fathers we see an increase in responsibility when mothers are employed versus when they are not. Here again we see evidence consistent with attempts at deviance neutralization for the traditional fathers with employed wives (counter to the expectations of human capital theory) and of the re-definition of childcare as a gender appropriate task for egalitarian fathers with employed wives.

We find further support for the gender construction perspective as it related to men's responsibility for childcare in the final interaction effect in Table 5.1 (depicted in Figure 5.4). Here we find that as the family's current income drops below its permanent income (indicating a recent decline in earning power), traditional fathers report somewhat lower levels of responsibility for their children than when the family's current income exceeds its permanent income (indicating a recent increase in earning power). However, egalitarian

fathers show the opposite pattern, substantially increasing their responsibility for childcare as the family's economic fortunes take a turn for the worse in the short-term.

Taken together, the evidence for gender construction is much stronger than the evidence in support of human capital theory when the dependent variable is fathers' responsibility for childcare. When we shift attention to fathers' relative accessibility, however, the pattern of evidence begins to favor human capital theory over gender construction theory. As reported in Table 5.2, several of the typical indicators of men's investment in paid labor assumed by human capital theory to be important predictors of men's involvement in childcare have statistically significant effect in the direction presumed by human capital theory. In particular we find that the effects of the father's share of the couple's joint permanent income, the difference between the father's share of the couple's joint current income and joint permanent income, and the mother's employment status seem to support a human capital interpretation. Fathers who earn a greater share of the couple's joint permanent income are seen to have lower levels of relative accessibility. The effect of the difference between the father's current share and permanent share is similarly negative, indicating that as the father's share of current income increases above that of the couple's joint permanent income, fathers' relative accessibility also declines. And when mothers are employed, fathers' relative accessibility appears to increase.

Even the interaction effect between fathers' fatherhood attitudes and fathers' employment status appears to support a human capital view of father involvement. This interaction (depicted in Figure 5.8) shows that for the most traditional fathers there is a steep increase in their level of relative accessibility when they are unemployed compared to when they are employed. This is clearly in line with the human capital theory point of view that

men's involvement in childcare or other domestic labor should be greatest when they are unengaged in paid labor.

Turning our attention to fathers' relative engagement (found in Table 5.3), we find some limited support for human capital theory. Consistent with human capital theory, we find that the mother's employment seems to bring with it an increase in the father's relative engagement (of course this may be entirely due to a decrease in the mother's absolute level of engagement). Also we find that as the age of the focal child increases (and presumably the demand for childcare, at least for this child, decreases) the father's relative engagement also appears to increase. This too is consistent with human capital theory in that a decrease in the demand for childcare is assumed to lead to a decreased demand for labor specialization, allowing for greater involvement by fathers in childcare and household labor. None of the other typical indicators of men's investment in paid labor appear to have any statistically significant effect on their relative engagement with the focal child in this analysis. Similarly, when we consider the fourth dependent variable, the father's proportion of their own total time spent with the focal child that was spent directly engaged with the child (reported in Table 5.4), we find little evidence for either perspective.

The last strand of evidence in favor of the gender constructionist perspective comes from the results across models relating to the effect of fathers' fatherhood attitudes. In the analyses of fathers' responsibility and of fathers' proportion of their own total time spent engaged with the focal child, we see that more egalitarian attitudes appear (in this cross-sectional analysis) to lead to greater levels of responsibility and a greater proportion of time spent in direct engagement. Given the assumption clearly found in human capital theory that men are expected to show a preference for a traditional division of labor. Clearly not all

fathers embrace such a traditional view of father involvement and to the degree that their attitudes turn toward egalitarianism, their behavior appears to follow.

What is most interesting about these results is the differential support for one theory versus the other depending on which measure of father involvement is considered. Were the three aspects of father involvement simply different but essentially repeat operationalizations of the same underlying construct, as a unidimensional view would imply, we should expect each of the three aspects of father involvement to have the same antecedents. That is, they should be embedded in substantially the same nomological network or pattern of associations. In this analysis we find that their antecedents are often different, and that the patterning of results appears to clearly favor a gender constructionist theory for fathers' responsibility and to clearly favor a human capital explanation of fathers' relative accessibility, while there is only weak support for the human capital explanation for fathers' relative engagement. Thus we find substantial empirical evidence here that the three aspects of father involvement proposed by Lamb and colleagues (1985, 1987) are multi-dimensional in nature. Each appears to arise out of a different mix of predictors, indicating that each type of father involvement is likely to become salient in a somewhat different social or familial context.

This dissertation also makes the case that economic measures are not simply necessary control variables. They are, instead, theoretically interesting and useful predictors in their own right and including them as such in future work will help to clarify how the market economy and family economy are linked and how each affects men's performance as fathers. Who earns the greater share of the family income is not the only important economic consideration, particularly when the family's economic resources are woefully insufficient to

meet members' needs or when there is such abundance of resources and the family's options for arranging family labor expand. Even for the largely middle class analytic sample used in this analysis, economic resources prove to be valuable contributors to the empirical models. Of course this insight isn't limited to the study of fatherhood, but is applicable to studies of the household division of labor more generally. The theoretical riddle surrounding the effects of economic resources on men's family participation involves both the expectations fathers have for their respective roles in family life, the economic pressures or freedoms that their family's level of resources provide, families desire to and ability to outsource some parents' labor to others, and men's feelings about themselves and their ability to meet their family's material and emotional needs. Unraveling this riddle will require that more attention be paid to how couples manage and leverage both their own human capital and their expectations of themselves and each other as gendered beings in the course of negotiating who does what in the family economy. There are probably other important issues connected to family economic resources as well.

In addition, this study demonstrates the usefulness of including a broader range of economic resources into research on men's parenting. Measures of both the flow of resources into the family economy, like current or permanent income, as well as measures of families' accumulated stock of resources, like wealth or the families' homeownership status, have proven useful here in helping to understand why some fathers are more involved with their children than others. In particular, it appears that homeownership an important determinant of fathers' involvement with their children, but in ways that are complex. More work needs to be done to unravel why homeownership is important for men's family participation, and there are a number of possible routes to pursue. For example, it may be

that acquiring a home brings with it more traditional expectations for fathers about what their responsibilities are for household maintenance, lawn care, and the like that bleed over into their expectations for their involvement with their children. Or, as the results of this project suggest, homeownership may matter for men's parental involvement more for the physical place in which it locates the family and the resources and risks present in the local community than for any set of expectations homeownership may bring with it for men's family participation. Homeownership may also be important for its symbolic role as an indicator of middle class status and a bellwether of families' financial condition. We need to know whether homeownership matters because of the meaning it has for family members, what it indicates to others about the family's social position, or how it grounds families in larger community based social networks and the only way to get at these issues is to explicitly include homeownership in future research.

Additionally, we shouldn't assume that fathers are a monolithic group sharing common needs and expectations. At a minimum we should adapt how we study fathers to take into account the differing cultural views of fatherhood, and the possibility that the culture of fatherhood is itself splintering (or has always been splintered?). We need better insight into the social processes that encourage men to adopt differing views on fatherhood, and in particular the social processes that encourage attitudinal agreement with the view of fathers as co-parents strong enough to generate actual behavioral co-parenting. Currently there is a dearth of research on whether men can be effectively sorted or segmented into meaningful empirical groupings based on their fatherhood attitudes and behavior. But if such groupings exist, they will need to be taken into account.

6.5 Limitations of Current Study

This study is not without its limitations, and the results it has produced should be evaluated with these limitations in mind. As with all research, the degree to which the information generated in the course of this project is widely useful is limited by the choice of topic, the sample studied, the methods employed and the insight and creativity brought to the project by the researcher.

6.5.1 Data

As noted in Chapter 4, the choice of the analytic sample for this study was driven by several factors, including the desire to study father involvement in two-parent families and the desire to include a broader range of economic resources, such as the family's permanent income and net worth. In order to select a sample that met these requirements, a number of filtering criteria were imposed, whose net effect was to produce a sample that met the needs of the study but was also more heavily composed of white and middle class respondents than I would have liked. By intentionally choosing to focus on two-parent families, I necessarily excluded from the analysis non-resident fathers and families whose fathers are absent. In addition, by selecting families for whom the parental relationship had been intact for at least four years in order to have enough income data to compute a measure of families' permanent incomes and in order to use the data from the 1994 wealth supplement to the PSID, I excluded more newly formed families in favor of those that had already demonstrated their stability. Finally, in order to use the data from the interview of the mother and the father about both the focal child and the household in general, it was necessary to select those respondents for whom all such data was available. Thankfully this sample selection criteria

was offset somewhat by case weights provided in the CDS dataset that were designed to compensate for non-response across the different interview booklets. However, the net result of these selection measures was to exclude many of the more economically vulnerable respondents in the CDS dataset, and thus the view of the impact of economic resources on men's parental involvement I am able to gain from this study is limited by their exclusion.

6.5.2 Measures

It is also the case that some of the concepts employed in this study were not measured as adequately as they could have been. In this regard, three measures come to mind as needing improvement. First is the measure of fathers' responsibility for childcare. As described in Chapter 4, this scale purports to measure Lamb and colleagues (1985, 1987) third aspect of father involvement, which is intended to capture fathers' ability to know what their children need and make decisions about how to respond. However, as currently operationalized in the CDS survey, this measure is more focused on who usually accomplishes typical childcare tasks rather than on who is responsible for managing the accomplishment of these tasks and making decisions about when, where and how they need to be performed. As a result, we currently do not get a clear picture of the degree to which fathers are truly taking the initiative to manage their children's lives and activities versus simply accomplishing the tasks they may have been delegated by their wives.

The second measure that might yield additional insight were it to be improved is the self-efficacy scale included in this study. This scale is based on one developed by Pearlin and colleagues (1981) and measures respondents global sense of self-efficacy as it is experienced across all domains of their lives. However, what is needed for this study is a

more focused measure of self-efficacy targeted at fathers' sense of control and ability to act to achieve their desired goals, not just globally, but specifically in the realm of parenting. This project would have been better served by a measure of father's parental efficacy more in line with that employed by Elder and colleagues (1995). I think the fact that the measure of self-efficacy employed in this project was global in nature is largely responsible for the contradictory findings regarding the effect of fathers' self-efficacy on fathers' parental involvement as noted above in the discussion regarding Hypothesis 2c.

Finally, the measure of ambient hazards employed in this project was substantially underdeveloped. Comprised of only two items, this scale at best captured a general sense that respondents neighborhoods were poor places to raise a family and places that were best avoided after dark. However, these two items certainly could not cover the multitude of ways that neighborhoods might be seen as dangerous, and did not ask respondents about their specific perceptions of the prevalence of crime, violence, drug use, or gang activity, which are all potential sources of anxiety and distraction for parents (Furstenberg 1993, Korbin and Coulton 1994). Had such items been available, the content validity of this measure would have certainly been improved, and I suspect so too would its reliability, which was far below conventional standards (Chronbach's $\alpha = .47$). In spite of its poor construction, the use of the ambient hazards scale in this study did prove useful, particularly in the supplemental analysis of fathers' proportional time spent engaged with the focal child, where it demonstrated some predictive power and appears to act to mediate the relationship between families' homeownership status and fathers' proportional time spent engaged with the focal child.

6.5.3 Analysis

All of the analyses conducted in this project were carried out using OLS regression. Separate analyses were undertaken in order to test the direct effects of families' economic resources and the suspected mediating variables on each of the measures of father involvement. Then, in a separate step, an additional set of analyses were conducted in order to assess the degree to which the mediating variables that demonstrated some utility in the first round of testing were themselves predicted by families' economic resources. This approach does, in fact, provide evidence of mediation, but SEM methods would provide a more robust test – providing the obstacles it presents, which are detailed in Chapter 4, can be overcome. In future work, I intend to adapt this project to make it suitable for testing in a SEM framework.

There is also a need for a more longitudinal approach to the study of economic resources and men's parental involvement. Certainly longitudinal analysis is needed to validate the findings of my own work here, in order to establish that the causal relationships claimed here exist across time and in the proper temporal order. But there are other more substantive reasons to desire longitudinal analysis as well, which include determining how fast or slow fathers' involvement changes in response to changes in their family's economic circumstances and whether different dimensions of men's parental involvement change at the same rate as their family's economic fortunes change. Such questions cannot be answered with any confidence without the application of longitudinal data and methods.

Unfortunately, most longitudinal dataset collect limited information about fathers' involvement with their children and their experiences as parents, and they also tend to

information about a fairly standard and limited set of economic measures, making the task of conducting longitudinal analysis on this topic quite challenging.

We also need to consider the fact that to the extent that my results here indicate the existence of qualitatively different kinds of fathers (breadwinners versus co-parents, for example), other approaches, like finite mixture modeling, may be more appropriate for use when the sample is suspected of being heterogeneous. Unlike traditional OLS regression, finite mixture modeling assumes that the analytic sample is comprised of an unknown, but finite mixture of respondents from groups that are different in substantively important ways and attempts to determine both how many groups are represented, which respondents belong to which groups, and what the predictive relationships between variables are for a given solution.

6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Given the research I've reviewed for this project and the insight I have been able to generate through the analyses presented here, I have several suggestions for future research in this area. First and foremost, it is important that fatherhood researchers pay attention to differences between fathers' absolute and relative involvement with their children.

Measures of fathers' levels of absolute involvement are probably better suited for the studies linking men's parenting behavior to issues of child development, whereas measures of fathers' relative involvement are better suited for studies involving issues of gender equity and marital decision-making. Even so, both aspects of men's parental involvement need further study, and work that illuminates how and why the determinants of one type of

involvement are similar and/or different from the other will likely lead to better theory and more considered and useful public policy.

Importantly, we cannot assume that results of this project apply to the situations of non-residential fathers. While I chose not to include non-residential fathers in this analysis, in part to keep the project more manageable, there clearly is a need for more work to be done to study fragile families, looking how access to or the lack of economic resources affect men's involvement in less stable situations.

Also, as research begins to consider how parents respond to the level and quality of social capital embedded in their local communities, as I have attempted to do in this analysis, there is a need for more research on effects of parents' social networks on their attitudes and behaviors as parents. Neighborhoods are not the only sources of social capital for parents, and they may be less relevant to fathers who are more likely to have social networks based on their working relationships rather than networks organized socially and geographically around the home. My failure here in this study to find any substantive relationship between neighborhood social cohesion and fathers' parental involvement may stem from the fact that fathers may not be particularly aware of or integrated into neighborhood networks and organizations.

I also think that more research needs to follow Risman's (1998) strategy of first identifying families where fathers actually do share household labor (and not just give it lip service) and then studying the factors associated with their organization of who does what. Defining fathers as traditional or egalitarian based on attitudes, as I have done here, is often less successful because attitudes are fairly plastic. Behavior should be the standard for

grouping fathers for such analyses, but getting samples that include significant numbers of couples who really share turns out to be quite difficult. It is worth pursuing anyway.

Finally, my research here indicates that there is a need to work to uncover additional mediating mechanisms that may arbitrate the relationships between families' economic resources and men's parental involvement. The persistent direct effects of economic resources on fathers' involvement suggest that there are others such mechanisms yet to be discovered. Targeted qualitative research may be required to better elaborate how families use their economic resources to fund certain kinds of consumption or lifestyle choices that may in turn affect men's parental involvement. Research may also need to explore the full range of household labor (both housework and childcare) to see how economic resources affect tradeoffs across task types as well.

In conclusion, it is my hope that I have better articulated the need for research on fatherhood to take into account the role that families' economic resources play in shaping how men think and act as fathers. I have attempted, with some success, to carry out an analysis of these issues on the best data currently available, using reliable methods and theoretical insights and arguments from both family sociology and the study of social inequalities. However, there is still much more work that needs to be done before we fully understand the linkages that exist between the market economy, the family economy, and men's parenting behavior.

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