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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Lauren Ella Renkert entitled "From Father to Child: An Application of the Process-Person-Context-Time Model." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Social Work.

Terri Combs-Orme, Ph.D.
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Greer Litton Fox, Ph.D._____

William R. Nugent, Ph.D.____

John G. Orme, Ph.D._____

Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew_____
Vice Chancellor and
Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

From Father to Child:

An Application of the Process-Person-Context-Time Model

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lauren Ella Renkert
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the two most important fathers in my life:
For my father, Edward F. Reist, who loved me before I was born and has loved me since, and whose love and constant presence mean so much; and
For my husband, H. Samuel Renkert IV, who decided long ago that having a family and being a good father were the most important goals of his life.
Sam, our children are glorious proof of your stellar achievement of your goals.

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Abstract

This study assumes several overarching goals. The first is to bring the social work profession firmly to the table in the discourse on fathering. A second goal of this study is to place the study of fathering in a theoretical framework that aptly acknowledges and accommodates the complexities of the subject. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1995) Process-Person-Context-Time model, a third major goal of this study is to examine more closely what fathers themselves say about fathers and fathering and the implications of their perceptions. This study utilizes a subsample of fathers from a large nationally representative data set to test and expand what we have learned from several smaller qualitative studies of fathers. The findings in this study are convergent with those of previous studies, indicating that time together, communication, and affection appear to be important in determining the quality of the father-child relationship.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Each of us has a father. Except for their biological contribution to their offspring, it seems fathers today are not often considered "imperative" to children's development. Yet, the various ways fathers are involved with their children after conception appear to have effects on their children, the mothers, and fathers themselves. Compared to mothers, fathers have been studied much less frequently (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Strug & Wilmore-Schaeffer, 2003) and much of what we have learned about fathering has been the result of studies done since the 1970s (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000).

Social workers are called by their Code of Ethics to recognize the importance of human relationships (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). Surely, as primary innate human connections, father-child relationships merit consideration. Yet, social work has been relatively quiet about and seemingly uninterested in fathering. Indeed, a search of Social Work Abstracts, a primary database for social workers, yielded only 31 results for the key word *fathering*, since 1977. About half were published after 1990; only three after 2000. Strug and Wilmore-Schaeffer (2003) have also noted the profession's lack of attention to fatherhood, particularly regarding the needs of noncustodial fathers. When broadening the search of Social Work Abstracts, from 1977 to the present, using the truncated term *father** and *social work*, over 400 hits are indicated. However, many of these are not actually articles about fathers themselves, e.g. the word *father* might be mentioned peripherally in the context of discussing issues

related to mothers and children. Overall, social work research about fathers has often been confined to reports of adolescent, absent, or abusive fathers, and issues of child support (Greif & Bailey, 1990).

The Encyclopedia of Social Work, 19th edition (Edwards, 1995) does not include the terms *fathers* or *fathering* in the index, although *mothers* is included. The Encyclopedia of Social Work, 18th edition (NASW, 1987) includes a paragraph about fathering under the topic *Men* (Lichtenberg, 1987). The entry notes a "renewed interest" in fathering, suggesting the idea that men are both nurturers and providers. Concerns related to fathering include custody rights, gay men's roles as fathers, nurturing, men in dual-career families, stepfathers, and fathers with sole custody.

The literature search conducted for this study included electronic databases, peer-reviewed professional journals, books, and other relevant sources found across such diverse disciplines as anthropology, biology, agriculture, family and consumer sciences, child development, nursing, community health, psychology, and social work. Key words used to search electronic databases included *fathering* and *fathers*, with *fathering infants*, *infants and fathers*, and *fathering tasks* also used in some databases. Databases searched included ProQuest, Social Work Abstracts, CQ Researcher, CINAHL, Ovid, AGRICOLA, ERIC, PsycINFO, Biological Abstracts, and Eureka Anthropological Literature.

The topic of fathering is one that easily leads to related but tangential paths, such as childbirth and sex education, mothering, marital relations, identity and role theory, feminism, gay rights, cultural diversity, policy, programs, and politics. Drawing from the

broad overview acquired as a result of the multidisciplinary search of the professional ure on fathering, several issues and relevant sources were selected as relevant for this study.

Purposes of This Study

This study assumes several overarching goals. The first is to bring the social work profession firmly to the table in the discourse on fathering. Many of the fundamental tenets of social work theory and practice provide an elucidating framework for understanding and addressing key issues related to fathering. Yet, social work as a profession has overlooked the opportunity to contribute its unique perspective to the broader discourse about fathers. When social work has considered fathering at all it, too, has been preoccupied with tangential, albeit important, other paths.

A second goal of this study is to place the study of fathering in a theoretical framework that aptly acknowledges and accommodates the complexities of the subject. To this end, various definitions and theoretical perspectives that have been utilized or suggested to study fathering are explored. This exploration leads to the selection of a comprehensive ecological systems model, which subsequently becomes the theoretical framework for this study.

Applying this framework and exploring a noted gap in the research literature, a third major goal of this study is to examine more closely what fathers themselves say about fathers and fathering and the implications of their perceptions. An important priority in social work practice is to begin where the client is (Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen, 2002). Lamb (2000) stated "it is not very informative to ask individuals about

the importance of fatherhood without first ascertaining what fatherhood means to them" and noted "few researchers have done this" (p. 38). When we have asked fathers at all, it has most frequently been in small, qualitative studies and often in the context of indirectly related purposes. This study utilizes a subsample of fathers from a large nationally representative existing data set to more broadly explore and expand what we have learned from the qualitative studies.

Relevant Definitions

Scholarly interest in fathers began to emerge in the 1970s and 80s (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000). Although terms referring to fathers and their behaviors are often used in the professional literature, they are rarely defined. We can likely agree that *father* refers to a male who begets a child, although there are several other uses of the word (Costello, 1991; Mish, 2001). In a college dictionary published over a decade ago, *fatherhood* was defined as the state of being a father or fathers collectively (Costello, 1991). Interestingly, a look at the most recent edition of the dictionary adopted by the American Psychological Association as the standard for professional writing reveals that *fatherhood* has been subsumed under *father*, and is referred to simply as a noun (Mish, 2001).

Although scholars frequently mention fathering, this writer found no explicit definition in the professional literature. Rohner and Veneziano (2001) note that the term *mothering* often connotes "a warm, fuzzy, nurtured feeling," while *fathering* elicits "something stronger, colder, harder, and less affectionate" (p. 387). Atkinson and Blackwelder (1993) analyzed popular magazine articles from 1900 to 1989 and noted that

the popular definition of fathering appeared to have fluctuated during those years between fathers as providers and fathers as nurturers. Using frequency counts and content analysis to examine the cultural definitions of fatherhood, the researchers then compared those results to trends in fertility and married women's participation in the labor force (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993). They found that higher fertility rates were related to indicators of a cultural definition of *fathering* as providing for the family. However, LaRossa (1997) cautions that "popular magazines cannot be assumed to mirror everyday life" and that the "culture of fatherhood and the conduct of fatherhood, though related, must be kept distinct" (p. 143).

The term *fatherwork* has been suggested to denote the generative work that fathers do as they care for their children (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997), but it does not appear to be widely used. The concept of generative work will also be discussed further below.

Hewlett (1992, 2000) has distinguished between paternal investment and involvement. *Investment* is a term drawn from evolutionary biology and refers to behaviors the father engages in to contribute to the survival of his offspring and his own success at reproduction. Investment in a particular child "limits" a man's ability to have another child (Hewlitt, 2000, p. 68). Direct investment denotes behaviors such as holding, caregiving, proximity, protection, knowledge transmission, and providing resources or food. Indirect investment includes behaviors the father engages in beyond his immediate role with the child but that influence the child's well-being, such as

protecting food resources, providing support for the mother, or maintaining the home and kin relationships (Hewlitt, 1992, 2000).

Hewlitt (1992) once described involvement as a type of paternal investment, referring to "interaction with or proximity to the child" (p. xiv). Active involvement included "holding, feeding, cleaning, or talking to the child" (Hewlitt, p. xiv). Passive involvement included "touching, sleeping with, or being near the child" (Hewlitt, p. xiv). In a more recent work, Hewlitt (2000) noted that the term *involvement* has been used by social scientists in their focus on the influence of father-child interactions on children's development. From the standpoint of evolutionary ecologists, who focus on child survival and fitness, a father might be very invested in his child, although he might not be very involved. Nevertheless, researchers have been interested in effects of various levels of paternal involvement, including the father's presence or absence.

To summarize, *investment* may be characterized as the use of available resources, including time, while *involvement* may be more multi-faceted, reflecting the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive implications of fathers' interactions with their children (G. Fox, personal communication, October 21, 2004). Paternal involvement will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Theoretical Perspectives

In addition to lack of agreement and consistency regarding definitions related to fathering, no clear, unifying theory that offers an explanation of fathering behaviors has been identified (Lamb, 1997). Authors have grounded their studies of fathering in a variety of theoretical foundations and some have proposed new theoretical frameworks.

In social work, "theory establishes a context for understanding behavior and for applying that understanding" to practice (Brennan & Weick, 1995). Discussion of theory may be used as intervention to illuminate or reframe a client's experiences, offering new possibilities and choices. Social workers have adopted an ecological systems model to inform their work with various client populations (Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen, 2002). Interestingly, many of the tenets of other theories that have been utilized to explore fathering appear to be consistent with an ecological systems framework. A review of this model and the theoretical frameworks most frequently discussed in the literature about fathering follows.

Ecological Systems Model

A "person-in-environment" perspective was dominant in social work until the mid-1970s (Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen, 2002). This perspective recognized the influence of the environment upon human functioning but placed emphasis on internal factors as a result of the prominence of Freudian theories. Increased awareness of ethnic, cultural, and ecological factors eventually led to greater emphasis on the importance of the interaction of human beings with their environments.

Systems models originated in the natural sciences (Hepworth et al., 2002) and have been widely utilized by social workers as an overall framework for thinking about the complexities of intervention at many levels (Suppes & Wells, 2000). Simply defined, a system is a whole consisting of interacting and interrelated parts. Subsystems are found within larger systems, e.g. a central nervous system within a human body or a family

within a community, state, or nation. This leads naturally to a consideration of environment.

Ecological theory developed as a result of the environmental interests of biologists (Hawley, 1950; Hepworth et al., 2002). Hawley (1950), a sociologist, stressed that organisms live "collectively in organized unions of one kind or another" and emphasized the importance of "communal adaptation," or the "cooperative or organized population that emerges from the adaptive efforts of organisms" (p. 32). The ecological systems model acknowledges the ongoing, necessary, and intrinsic interactions of a unique individual with others and the environment. Drawing from both the systems model and ecological theory, the social work profession has adapted an ecological systems model as a basic theoretical framework to promote understanding of human behavior and to inform assessment and intervention (Hepworth et al., 2002).

Social workers serve clients at various levels of systems and have adopted the terms *micro* and *macro* to differentiate between these levels (Hepworth et al., 2002). For this study, the micro context refers to the people, environments, and settings nearest or most connected to an individual, e.g. his child, significant other, family, and work. Macro context refers to larger systems, e.g. communities, countries, world, and the social, cultural, economic, and political forces within those systems.

Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) Model

Bronfenbrenner has been widely regarded for his contributions to our understanding of human development (Moen, Elder, & Lüscher, 1995). In a volume examining scholars' perspectives regarding Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, Moen

(1995) notes that Bronfenbrenner's model "requires behavior and development to be examined as a joint function of the characteristics of the person and of the environment" (p. 1). Several years ago, Bronfenbrenner (1995) extended his ideas about the "bioecological model as a system" (p. 621), suggesting a process-person-context-time (PPCT) model.

In the PPCT model, *proximal processes* are progressively complex reciprocal interactions between a person and his or her environment, which "must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 620). These interactions may involve persons, objects, or symbols. Proximal processes "serve as mechanisms for actualizing genetic potential" for "effective psychological functioning" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, pp. 569, 571). *Effective psychological functioning* refers to the optimal achievement of developmental outcomes related to: (1) perception and response; (2) directing and controlling one's behavior; (3) coping with stress; (4) acquiring knowledge and skill; (5) establishing and maintaining relationships; and (6) modifying and constructing one's environment. Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) emphasized that genetic activity, i.e. heritability, alone does not produce "finished traits." (p. 572). From conception, an individual's development is necessarily a product of interaction between his genetic potential and his environment. Examples of "enduring patterns of proximal process" include parent-child and child-child activities, solitary or group play, reading, and learning new skills (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 620).

Although proximal processes are considered very important, Bronfenbrenner (1995) also suggests the person's own beliefs will reduce or enhance the power of those

processes to influence behavior and development. This idea is integrated into his *force-resource* model of the person's own biopsychological characteristics, i.e. one's own perceptions, beliefs, and level of motivation and one's own resources, skills, and abilities. The importance of the individual's perception will be discussed further, below.

Context generally refers to environment, ranging from increasingly encompassing levels of micro to macro. It is in the micro system that face-to-face interactions, i.e. proximal processes, occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). By definition, the micro system is encompassed by increasingly larger, but also influential, systems, e.g. communities, cultures, or socio-economic levels. The "form, power, content, and direction" of proximal processes in shaping human development is influenced by context (Bronfenbrenner, p. 621). Proximal processes occurring in more advantaged and stable environments are thought to have more influence on the development of genetic potential (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), resulting in asymmetrical patterns of human behavior across varying environments. Bronfenbrenner notes that when proximal processes occur within unstable environments, we can expect their "effectiveness" (in influencing human development) to be reduced, "with corresponding disruptive effects on psychological functioning" (p. 640).

The addition of time or timing is Bronfrenbrenner's (1995) most recent extension of his original ecological model. Adding time to the model expands its explanatory potential. Considering time might help us to examine the nature of cross-generational human relationships, such as those between parents and children. Historical events "can alter the course of human development" for individuals and large segments of the

population (p. 643). Bronfenbrenner is particularly concerned that there is "growing chaos" in the "everyday environments" in which we live, which might interrupt and undermine "the formation and stability of relationships and activities that are essential for psychological growth" (p. 644).

Developmental Perspective

A developmental contextual perspective takes into account the changing interaction between the parent and child as each of them ages and moves across the life span, while simultaneously considering the community, society, culture, and the ecological and historical contexts in which the parent-child relationship exists (Lerner, Castellino, Terry, Villarruel, & McKinney, 1995; Parke, 1996, 2000). Parke (1996, 2000) has suggested a developmental psychological perspective is important to the study of father involvement. This perspective is certainly reflected in Bronfenbrenner's (1995) PPCT model. Semantics may be important here; there appear to be more similarities than differences between what is called the *developmental contextual* and *ecological systems* perspectives. Indeed, Bronfenbrenner has been recognized as a developmentalist (Moen, Elder, & Lüscher, 1995).

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages (Generative Fathering)

The idea of generative fathering evolved from Erikson's classic work regarding psychosocial stages (Erikson, 1980; Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). Erikson's thoughts regarding human development across the life cycle are well known and frequently utilized among helping professionals, including social workers. The essential theme of the psychosocial stages proposed by Erikson is that humans experience a series of

psychosocial crises as they develop and that these crises occur within the context of relationships with significant others in the individual's micro and macro environment (see Erikson, 1980, p. 178). A complete discussion of Erikson's stages is beyond the scope of this paper, but several stages that appear to relate to theories of fathering are worth mentioning. According to Erikson, individuals must establish a sense of personal identity during puberty and adolescence. In early and young adulthood, individuals learn to develop intimacy with another human being. In later adulthood, individuals begin "to make be" and "to take care of" (Erikson, p. 178), i.e. become generative and begin to give to the world and the next generation. The reader can certainly recognize the similarities between these stages and other theoretical orientations discussed herein.

Snarey (1993) utilized Erikson's framework for his four-decade longitudinal study of "generative" fathers, i.e. "men who contribute to and renew the ongoing cycle of the generations through the care they provide as birth fathers (biological generativity), childrearing fathers (parental generativity), and cultural fathers (societal generativity)" (p. 1).

Symbolic Interactionist/Identity Theory

How men perceive themselves as fathers and the resultant influence of their perceptions on their behavior as fathers has been of interest to researchers using a symbolic interactionist or identity theory perspective (Marsiglio et al., 2000). Symbolic interactionist perspectives assume the self is composed of various identities, structured by role relationships, and prioritized according to the salience of the role identities with one's sense of self (Fox & Bruce, 2001). According to identity theory, a man's

commitment and involvement as a father result from the ongoing salience of the fathering role to his identity. Salience is reinforced by satisfaction with role performance, as perceived by the self and involved others (Fox & Bruce).

Parental Investment Theory

Parental investment theory is based on sociobiological and evolutionary psychology and relates to continuing adaptive genetic reproduction (Fox & Bruce, 2001). Key concepts include the importance of mate selection and choices regarding the procreative relationship, paternity certitude, and differential commitments to children. An underlying premise is that resources of time, money, and energy might be scarce and must be allocated among children and relationships that have the most potential to ensure the "continuation of one's unique genetic inheritance" (p. 397). This theory might have particular relevance for families that include stepparents and mothers' boyfriends, and when paternity has not been clearly established.

Fox and Bruce (2001) utilized key elements of this theoretical perspective and concepts from identity theory in a study of fathering. The concept of *fathering* was operationalized across four dimensions: responsivity, harshness, behavioral engagement, and affective involvement. This operational definition of *fathering* is a rather recent development in the literature, evolving from work that began in the late 1990s. In their application of identity theory and parental investment theory as possible explanations of men's fathering attitudes and behaviors Fox and Bruce (2001) found that "both theoretical models were significant" and noted the "importance of social psychological variables to understanding variations in men's commitments to children" (p.394).

Social Capital

Social capital refers to advantages children have as a result of being embedded in a social system (Furstenberg, 1998). At its most basic level, this refers to the parental dyad and the parents' cooperation and support of the child. Ideas related to social capital might be useful to provide a "conceptual linkage" among fathers' behaviors, children's development, and the larger social network (Marsiglio, Amato, et al., 2000, p. 1176). This is also consistent with a family systems or ecological perspective (Marsiglio et al., 2000).

Self-Psychological Theory

Very recently, Dick (2004) applied self psychology (Kohut, 1977) as the theoretical basis for the development of a scale designed to measure men's relationships with their fathers while growing up. Dick acknowledges that self-psychology has not been tested empirically, but notes that an important tenet of the theory is that an "empathic relationship" with the parent is critical to the child's developing sense of self (p. 83). Furthermore, *empathy* is defined "in its broadest sense" as a "special mode of perceiving the psychological experience of another" (p. 83). According to Dick, this theory presumes that the quality of the father-child relationship is an inescapable element that influences the child's developing "self-structure" (p. 83).

Applying a Unifying Theory to Fathering

Parke (1996, 2000) has discussed a systems view of the determinants of father involvement that includes the father, family, and extrafamilial influences such as relatives, community, work, and culture. Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson (1998) note

that a principal finding supported by their review of a variety of studies is that "fathering is influenced, even more than mothering, by contextual factors in the family and community" (p. 277). In their review of scholarship on fathering in the 1990s, Marsiglio et al. (2000) concluded that explorations of fatherhood from various and diverse theoretical perspectives have led to an understanding of the need to continue "to examine fathering with a systemic and ecological context" (p. 1179). What fathers do and their influence on their children must be examined within the diverse familial, community, cultural, and historical contexts in which they live (Cabrera et al, 2000). Bronfenbrenner would likely agree. Social workers are likely to be particularly adept at conceptualizing individuals' needs and behaviors within an ecological systems framework.

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) PPCT model aptly captures the most salient elements of the theoretical perspectives reviewed above. As such, its components—process, person, context, and time—are utilized as the framework for this study. These components are used to organize additional relevant literature, below.

Process

The Nature Of Men's Involvement With Children

The study of the nature of men's interactions with children has been an evolving endeavor. During the 1970s and 1980s a great deal of research attention was devoted to defining and studying detailed tasks and types of father involvement (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000). Father involvement has been studied against the backdrop of various maternal, paternal, and child characteristics, e.g. employment status, age, education, gender attitudes, child temperament, and family size

(see Pleck, 1997, for a summary of studies of paternal involvement). As a result of his review of studies of paternal involvement, Pleck (1997) concluded that paternal involvement has increased over the last three decades, both in absolute terms and in proportion to mothers. Hawkins and Palkovitz (1999) noted that early studies of father involvement defined the construct primarily as a "linear temporal and directly observable phenomenon" (p.12).

Cabrera et al. (2000) have called for continued attention to the "multidimensional constructions" of father involvement and their integration into a conceptual framework. In his historical review of the research on father involvement, Lamb (1986, 2000) acknowledges the great variability among operational definitions utilized to study paternal involvement as a significant problem within the body of research. He has described three key components of paternal involvement: engagement or interaction, accessibility, and responsibility.

Palkovitz (1997) has suggested that Lamb's conceptualization of paternal involvement lacks comprehensiveness and leaves out important dimensions of involvement. Palkovitz recognized at least 15 major categories of involvement (e.g. communication, teaching, monitoring, thought processes, shared activities, affection) based on his own experiences, qualitative data, observations, and a content analysis of items generated by graduate students. He identified three primary domains of functioning--cognitive, affective, and behavioral--that he believes more adequately capture the range of activities parents engage in on behalf of their children.

The Emotional Connection Between a Father and His Children

The warmth or closeness of the father-child relationship may play a crucial role in the benefits of increased involvement (Lamb, 1997). Cabrera et al. (2000) note that "warmth, affect, sensitivity, and participation during specific engagements" are important aspects of father involvement (p. 129). Affectional support may be a fundamental element of interactions between parents and infants, as it serves to soothe, reassure, and build self-esteem (Combs-Orme, et al., 2003).

Like Hewlitt (2000, 1992), Corwyn and Bradley (1999) have also distinguished between investment and involvement, but leap far beyond the evolutionary biologists to state that the term *investment* implies acceptance of the parenting role, sensitive attunement and joy in relating to one's child. Specifically, the amount of joy a parent experiences with a child (including desire to spend time with the child), expressions of affection, sensitivity and responsiveness to the child's needs, worry about the child's welfare, acceptance of the child's characteristics and the parenting role, and consistent choices to act in the child's best interest characterize the construct socio-emotional investment. The description and operationalization of the construct sound much like the more-often used *love*. Much of the research supporting the conceptualization of socio-emotional investment has been conducted with European-American, biological parents (mostly mothers) in intact families.

Rohner and Veneziano's (2001) extensive review of empirical studies about "father love," conceptualized broadly as paternal acceptance-rejection, found strong

effects of father love on children's and adults' psychological well-being, health, development, and behavioral problems.

Child Trends (2002) assessed the warmth and affection parents show their children using 1997 data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics—Child Development Supplement. Residential parents of children ages 12 and younger reported how often they hugged or showed physical affection to their children, told their children they loved them, and told their children they appreciated something they did. Most mothers and fathers reported hugging and telling their children they loved them every day, with mothers doing so slightly more often than fathers and both parents decreasing displays of warmth to older children. Over 90% of mothers and fathers reported hugging their children under age two daily. Child Trends did not distinguish between biological and surrogate fathers.

In a qualitative study of 14 first-time fathers of two-month old infants, fathers "expressed the need to love, protect, and be emotionally present" for their infants (Anderson, 1996). These findings were echoed in a subsequent qualitative study (n = 56) of low-income mothers' and fathers' perceptions of the fathers' role. Men spoke about the importance of "fatherly love" for one's child (Summers et al., 1999, p. 299). However, mothers described their expectations of fathers in more instrumental terms, i.e. physical caregiving and financial support. While they insisted on a "lack of role differentiation," mothers indicated that the emotional bond is different for fathers and mothers, suggesting the bond between child and mother as closer and more intimate (Summers et al., 1999, p. 299). Interestingly, fathers in the Anderson study (1996)

"suggested their wives had a head start because of [the] mother-fetus bond, the intense communication and closeness associated with breast feeding, and the significantly more time that mothers spent in caring for their infants" (p. 317).

Most fathers in the Summers et al. (1999) study were living with their children and their children's mothers, which obviously increased opportunities for involvement with their children. The authors composed a matrix, using Lamb's (1987) framework for father involvement: engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. Noting the "content-free" nature of this framework (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998), the authors assigned the fathers' roles, tasks, and activities as reported by both mothers and fathers to cells in the matrix. For example, the role *providing love* was seen as a type of engagement, through holding, rocking, and touching the baby. *Providing love* was also seen as a type of accessibility, through sharing joys and sorrows.

Domains of Fathering

A recent report on two new measures of fathering based on adolescents' and young adults' reports revealed two distinct domains of expressive and instrumental fathering (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). These authors again emphasize moving beyond time-based measures of fathers' involvement to an understanding of the content and meaning of fathering behavior. They utilized a phenomenological approach that emphasized young people's retrospective perceptions of their fathers' nurturance and involvement.

The Nurturant Fathering Scale was initially developed to capture themes related to the affective quality of fathering, discussed in Morris' (1988) book about growing up

with older parents (as cited by Finley, 1998; Finley & Schwartz, 2004). The purpose of the scale development was to challenge Morris' qualitative study, which indicated that "paternal age was negatively related to the affective quality of fathering" (Finley & Schwartz, 2004, p. 146). Thirteen similarly worded Likert-type items were developed for mothers and fathers. Factor analysis yielded two original scales, one each for mothers and fathers, with eight items each. The Nurturant Fathering Scale has since been modified to include nine items, which attempt to assess respondents' perceptions of their fathers' enjoyment of fathering, support, energy, availability, emotional closeness to them, relationship to them as adolescents, and daily psychological presence. The scale also assesses respondents' feelings about their ability to confide in their fathers and their overall ratings of them.

The second instrument, the Father Involvement Scale was newly developed for this recent study (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). The included domains were drawn from Hawkins and Palkovitz's (1999) analysis of the father involvement literature and were constructed to assess reported and desired levels of father involvement. The measure was pilot tested on 15 university students and subsequently revised based on feedback from those respondents. There are 20 scale items, including those related to intellectual, emotional, social, ethical/moral, spiritual, physical, and career development.

For this study, both scales were administered to 2,353 university students (31% male; 69% female) in classroom settings. Participants were ethnically diverse, with 23% non-Hispanic Whites, 11% non-Hispanic Blacks, 55% Hispanics, 7% Asians, and 4% others (13 respondents did not report ethnicity). Seventy percent of the respondents and

27% of their fathers were born in the United States; immigrant participants were primarily from the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Sixty-three percent were from two-parent, married families. Ninety-one percent of the respondents rated their biological fathers as the father figure who had the greatest influence on their lives.

Cronbach's alpha for scores on The Nurturant Fathering Scale was .94. Cronbach's alpha for the newly developed Father Involvement Scale was .97 for Total Involvement and .96 for Total Desired Involvement. Thus, both scales exhibited high internal consistency. Results of confirmatory factor analysis suggest that expressive and instrumental involvement emerge as two "conceptually distinct aspects of fathering" (Finley & Schwartz, 2004, p. 155). Expressive involvement includes such factors as leisure, fun, play, companionship, sharing activities, emotional development, and caregiving. Instrumental involvement includes developing responsibility, discipline, ethical/moral development, providing income, and being protective.

Another recent study (Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004) of fathers and infants also indicated support for two domains of fathering behavior, caretaking and affection. During a longitudinal study to explore the parenting of infants, mothers were asked about fathers' involvement with infants. The mothers had been recruited at delivery in a large university-affiliated hospital in a mid-size southeastern city. The original cohort included 246 mothers, of whom 40.0% were African-American. The majority (93%) of mothers were retained for a follow-up interview; logistic regression indicated no significant differences on race, marital status, age, or education among those who were retained and those who were not. When the infants were six to twelve months old, mothers (n = 227)

were asked about their infants' fathers and father figures. Data collected included the men's residential status, marital status, frequency and type of contact with children, and types of activities they engaged in with their infants.

Exploratory factor analysis and latent class analysis were used to examine the behaviors of three types of fathers: residential biological fathers, residential surrogate fathers, and non-residential fathers. For residential biological (n = 138) and surrogate (n = 16) fathers, two domains of fathering behaviors clearly emerged, caretaking tasks and expressions of affection. Information regarding these two domains was not available for non-residential fathers. Interestingly, caregiving is included as an expressive item in the Finley and Schwartz (2004) study. Affection is not specifically addressed in that study.

For over 30 years, multi-disciplinary researchers using varied methods have examined father involvement and learned that fathers engage in a variety of behaviors for and with their children. Although there is some preliminary evidence, it remains uncertain whether these behaviors may be generally characterized as being of distinct domains. Applying Bronfenbrenner's (1995) framework, if proximal processes are ongoing interactions that occur between fathers and their children, then proximal processes would likely be comprised of any distinct domains of behavior that are as yet, not clearly defined.

Person

The Relevance of Perception

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1995) PPCT model, a person's own perspective and beliefs are considered important influential elements in determining behavior and

development. He has held to his earliest position that it is the perception of the environment, rather than the "objective reality" that matters most (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 4). Lüscher (1995) expounds further, stating that proximal process and interpretation are inextricably woven. Knowledge and beliefs "may be considered as elements of perspectives," derive from socialization and are subject to change over time (Lüscher, 1995, p. 588).

The importance of human perception in influencing behavior and development has been similarly expressed by theorists interested in personal narrative (McAdams, Diamond, St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997; Wahler & Castlebury, 2002) and phenomenology (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Thomas & Pollio, 2002; Finley & Schwartz, 2004). Likewise, an individual's "mental representation" of his past and present attachment experiences is an important element of attachment theory (Bretherton, 1992; Fox, 1995; van IJzendoorn, 1995). As Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb (2000) aptly note, "although seldom addressed by researchers, it is important to know what fatherhood means when determining how important it is to individuals" (p. 278).

Men's Perceptions of Fathering

What seems to matter. Fathers begin life with fathers of their own. Milkie, Simon, and Powell (1997) content-analyzed 3,000 elementary school-aged children's essays about the reasons their parent(s) were the "best" mother or father and were surprised that *love* was cited significantly more often to describe "best" fathers than "best" mothers ($p < .001$). They speculated that the term might be used as a "filler term" to compensate for the "absence of alternative descriptors…given the ambiguity in the

meaning of fatherhood…" (p. 226) and suggested that "any paternal behavior in the home" might be "deemed optional" and therefore "worthy of *love*" (p. 226).

Garbarino (2000) notes that children value fathers who spend time with them—it seems important for children to have access to their fathers and a sense that their fathers have a personal investment in them. "What seems to matter is that fathers place children in a special place in their minds and hearts—a highly symbolic dimension to father-child relationships—indicating that the father is connected psychologically, if not present physically" (Garbarino, pp. 14, 15). This sentiment is echoed by low-income adults referring to the importance of their fathers in their lives (Summers, Raikes, Butler, Spicer, Pan, Shaw, et. al, 1999; Kost, 2001).

In a qualitative study of young men (n = 32) who were not yet fathers, but who were of course sons of their own fathers, respondents said they envisioned "good" fathering as "being present, approachable, a friend, and a dispenser of measured discipline" (Marsiglio, Hutchinson, & Cohan, 2000, p. 139). These men reflected on what they valued and missed with their own fathers and vowed to add what was missing when they become fathers themselves--usually emotional responsiveness. The respondents were from varied socio-economic backgrounds, ages 16-30, and were 59% White, 28% African-American, and 13% of other races. They were recruited from a Department of Motor Vehicles office, abortion and prenatal clinics, a childbirth class, an employment agency, a homeless shelter, and word of mouth.

Fathers of three-month old infants (n = 26) were asked about their views on fatherhood (Cordell, Parke, & Sawin, 1980). The fathers, who were White and from

intact two-parent families, were participants in a larger study of parent-infant interactions. They were first contacted on the maternity wards of two large hospitals in a major mid-western city. Both hospitals emphasized "family-centered" infant care (Cordell et al., p. 332) and served predominantly middle-class families. For this small qualitative study, interviews with the respondents took place in their own homes when their infants were three months old. The interviews consisted of 16 open-ended questions such as "What is a father in your view?" (p. 333). The purpose of the questions was to "obtain information on the ideas that fathers themselves have of fatherhood and how they perceive their own roles as fathers during the period of early infancy" (p. 333). Ten six-point rating scales were developed and used to analyze the fathers' responses. Interrater reliability was assessed by calculating the agreement of two raters; a trained rater scored each interview while a second rater scored ten of the interviews. The reported agreement across all ten scales was 93%. Of 260 possible scale scores (10 scores for each of the 26 fathers), there were 11 missing cases. Also, there was missing information on the father's available time and whether the couple had attended childbirth education classes for one family. As a result, some of the analyses were conducted with fewer than 26 fathers.

All the fathers (100%) indicated they should participate in routine infant care and the majority (62%) believed they should "recognize and be sensitive to their children's emotional needs" (Cordell, Parke, & Sawin, 1980, p. 334). Only 44% indicated they should be affectionate with their infants. Fathers' identification with their own fathers was positively associated with their memories of the quality of their relationships with

their fathers ($r = .39$, $p < .05$) and with their willingness to assume child care responsibilities ($r = .50$, $p < .02$). The quality of their relationships to their own fathers was defined simply as being "positive" or "negative."

Confidence in the findings is compromised by the small sample size and its lack of generalizability. As noted, only White, predominantly middle-class fathers from intact families participated in the study. Furthermore, these fathers were contacted in a "family-centered" maternity ward, possibly introducing further bias in that these men might represent a group more likely to be involved, interested, and available to participate in their infant's care.

When what matters is missing. To children and men, perceiving they matter and are loved by their present and involved fathers seems important. However, when asked, men often report having had either negative or distant relationships with their own fathers (Anderson, 1996; Silverstein, Auerbach, Grieco, & Dunkel, 1999). With negative or distant relationships as a model, men often approach their own fathering with uncertainty and lack of preparation (Silverstein et al.). Some vow to do better, but identity is a serious consideration--when one learns about what it is like to be a father from someone he considers less than ideal that might have implications for one's own fathering. It has been suggested that fathers either model their own fathers' behavior or compensate for a perceived lack of involvement (Pleck, 1997). The father's own evaluation of his father's involvement "is likely to be a key moderator" in the choice to model or compensate (Pleck, p. 81).

Pruett (1989) observed and interviewed fathers (n = 17) who were primarily responsible for the care and nurturing of their children in intact two-parent families. The study of this relatively rare phenomenon was conducted in a large, urban New England community. The majority of the families were middle-class; race and ethnicity were not reported. The families' decisions that the fathers would be the primary caretakers were made before, during, and after the pregnancies, with the latter usually related to an economic reason, e.g. the father lost his job. Five of the six men who chose to be the primary caretaker tended to describe their own fathers as uninvolved, absent, or distant in their lives, especially during adolescence. This appeared to be coupled with greater identification with their own nurturing mothers and subsequent marriages to women who did not seek primary fulfillment through nurturing. Eight of the remaining eleven described their families of origin in positive terms, whether their own fathers had been physically available or not. Overall, Pruett noted that the majority of respondent fathers in the study were "either quite close to or quite distant from their fathers during adolescence" (p. 401). He concluded that "a vital sense of fatherliness seems to have strong roots in either one's own father's caring or perceived emotional distance" (p. 402).

During intensive interviews with eight fathers who were also participants in court-mandated group counseling for men who had battered intimate partners, Fox, Sayers, and Bruce (2001) found a common theme of reparation, i.e. a wish to make up for the failings of their own fathers. The men recounted childhood episodes of fear and violence, perpetrated by their fathers, and said they were trying to be different with their own

children. For these men, fatherhood provided an opportunity "to be a better person" (p. 154).

In a small qualitative study of poor men who were fathers (n = 20), respondents appeared to have "adapted their fathering behavior in response to their own father or a father surrogate and their relationship with the child's mother, and not in response to their child. For example, they spoke about 'what fathers should do' rather than what their son or daughter needed" (Kost, 2001, p. 506). These gaps among men's own experiences of having been fathered, their subsequent evaluations of that experience, and their translations of that experience into models of fathering that meet the unique needs of their own children have not been studied, to this writer's knowledge.

Findings of a more recent study begin to demonstrate how fathers' wishes to emulate their own fathers may relate to their behavior with their own six-month old infants. Goldberg, Clarke-Stewart, Rice, and Dellis (2002) utilized observations, interviews, and questionnaires with mothers, fathers, and infants to study fathers' emotional energy as an explanatory construct for engagement with infants. A potential limitation of information gathered during face-to-face interviews in this and other studies is the risk that respondents will provide responses they perceive are socially desirable. However, the use of multiple methods and informants was a strength of this study, potentially increasing confidence in the findings (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). The sample size was small--73 families were recruited as part of a larger study on development during childhood. Parents of full-term healthy infants were conditionally random sampled at the time of birth to maximize representativeness in the catchment area. The

only significant difference between participating and nonparticipating families regarding demographics was that more Latin American fathers were in the nonparticipating group than in the participating group. Most of the families were middle-class and had an average of 15 years of education. The characteristics of the sample limit generalizability, especially among people with less income and education.

Among several hypotheses utilized to study the effects of a number of dependent variables, Goldberg et al. (2002) predicted that men who wanted to emulate their own fathers' open, honest, patient, and understanding style would be more sensitive and/or engaged with their own infants. Interviewers asked how the men wanted their own parenting to be like their fathers' and wrote down their responses. Coders then identified and classified constructs and themes from those responses. Agreement among coders in assigning fathers' responses to identified thematic categories reportedly exceeded 90%. A dichotomous dependent variable, *like father*, was established. This variable was used to indicate whether fathers said "they wanted to emulate their fathers' parenting and communication style (i.e. its openness, honesty, patience, and understanding)" (p. 31).

Sensitivity in caregiving was operationalized as responsiveness to the baby's signals and needs and verbal and nonverbal displays of warmth during feeding, changing, and dressing, as observed and subjectively rated by coders. Fathers' engagement in play was assessed by recording the occurrence of five specific behaviors (i.e. vocalization, affection, physical play, social play, and play with an object) a maximum of once each per 15-second interval.

Researchers found an association among fathers' reports that they wanted to be like their own fathers and more affection ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), play ($r = .25$, $p < .05$), and a mild association between *like father* and sensitivity in caregiving ($r = .23$, $p < .10$) with their own infants. Correlations among variables do not imply causality, however.

To explore further, factor analysis was conducted with the variable, *like father*, loading with variables representing younger age and positive coping strategies to a factor the researchers named *Positive Father*. In a regression analysis controlling for other factors (e.g. father's job stress, engaged mother, child's difficult temperament) the Positive Father factor predicted only the level of play the fathers engaged in with their infants ($\beta = .30$, $p < .05$), but did not predict sensitivity in caregiving, affection, or vocalization.

In a more recent qualitative study of young fathers ($n = 25$), Glikman (2004) found that a majority were significantly involved in the lives of their children, in spite of having difficulties in their own lives. The respondents "clearly" used their experiences with their own fathers as a "benchmark" when considering how they would behave as fathers (p. 199). Their choice to be involved with their children "helped them feel positive about their sense of self" (Glikman, p. 195).

What fathers say about the quality of their relationships to their own fathers and children. As noted above, very few studies have asked fathers directly about the quality of their relationships with their own fathers and children, or of their thoughts about what fathers should do. Yet, it appears that fathers might begin to define good fathering based on their perception of their own experiences.

Table 1 summarizes six studies, which are all mentioned above. These studies cover a 24-year span, from 1980-2004, and utilize an average sample size of 21 respondent fathers. The total number of fathers involved in all six studies is 124. Respondents were mostly White, ages 18-61, with varied socio-economic backgrounds. Some other studies discussed above are not included in the table because they do not specifically address or focus on men's perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their own fathers or children. The words used to describe the quality of relationships may have come from the fathers' own words, or the researchers may have interpreted and summarized fathers' responses.

Across these studies, the quality of relationship with one's own father was often described simply as "positive" or "negative" (Cordell, Parke, & Sawin, 1980; Pruett, 1989; Silverstein, Auerbach, Grieco, & Dunkel, 1999; Glikman, 2004), with "distant" and "absent" (Anderson, 1996; Pruett, 1989; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004) frequently noted as other descriptors. The quality of fathers' relationships with their own children was addressed in only three of these studies (Cordell et al., 1980; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004). "Positive" and "negative" were again used in one study (Cordell et al., 1980); "connected, present, affection, mine, involved, and provide" were used in another (Glikman, 2004). In a third study, fathers indicated they perceived their children needed them and were gratified by the interaction, but they discounted the effect of the interactions for their children (Kost, 2001). In other words, although they recognized the importance of their own fathers in their lives, they seemed not to fully recognize the importance to their children of being in their lives.

Table 1

Studies Asking Men About the Quality of Their Relationships with Their Own Fathers and Children

Author(s), Year	Sample Characteristics	Quality of Relationship with Father Described as:	Quality of Relationship with Child described as:	A father should:	Comments
Cordell, Parke, & Sawin, 1980	n =26; majority middle-upper-middle class; ages 20-38; all White; recruited in "family-centered" maternity wards	Positive/negative	Positive/negative	Be a companion, 62% Recognize and be sensitive to child's emotional needs, 62% Provide for children, 54% Be a disciplinarian, 54% Participate in infant care, 100% Play with and stimulate infants, 80%	Qualitative study; face-to-face interviews; "positive experiences with own fathers helped develop positive attitudes toward fathering"
Pruett, 1989	n = 17; majority middle-class; ages 19-36; race not specified; recruited from pediatric practices	Uninvolved, absent, distant/positive			Qualitative study; face-to-face interviews; men were primary caretakers
Anderson, 1996	n = 14; majority had incomes ≥ $60K, urban Canadian community; ages 28-44; 12 "born in Canada;" recruited through Board of Health, ads in midwives' offices, snowballing	Distant, detached, problematic; own father known only as provider, teacher, playmate		Love, protect, be emotionally present/responsive, provide a sense of belonging and security, supportive to mother and child, have good communication skills, be involved, bridge to outside world	Qualitative study; face-to-face interviews; men wanted to develop relationships different from those with their own fathers
Silverstein, Auerbach, Grieco, & Dunkel, 1999	n = 22; middle-class, suburban men, ages 27-61, mostly White; interviewed in Promise Keepers focus groups	Negative, distant, absent		Do the opposite of own father	Qualitative study; face-to-face interviews; focus on Promise Keepers influence; men initially reported anxiety and lack of prep for fatherhood; later noted the need to be more emotionally responsive to children

Table 1. Continued.

Author(s), Year	Sample Characteristics	Quality of Relationship with Father Described as:	Quality of Relationship with Child described as:	A father should:	Comments
Kost, 2001	n = 20; low-income, urban men, ages 18-30; majority of participants African-American, one Hispanic; recruited at neighborhood resource centers and through snowballing	Absent, violent, abusive; or modeling appropriate behavior, i.e. responsibility, work, emotionally supportive	Indicated their child needed them and they were gratified by the interaction, but discounted the effect of the interaction for their child	Be present, involved, protect, "care"	Qualitative study; face-to-face interviews
Glikman, 2004	n = 25; low-income, urban men, ages 19-27; 52% African American, 24% White, 24% Hispanic; recruited from maternity floor of hospital when visiting their newborns	Positive, negative, absent	Connected, present, affection, mine, involved, provide $, provide emotionally	Be present, involved, i.e. being there, discipline, provide love and caring, do things differently from own father	Qualitative study; face-to-face interviews

In five of the six studies, fathers were asked to express what a father "should" do. Across these five, fathers indicated fathers should be present and involved, and provide love, caring, and/or be responsive to their child's emotional needs. Other descriptors noted by fathers included providing a sense of belonging, security, and discipline, but not providing financial support specifically. These descriptors may be consistent with instrumental and affective domains of fathering identified by Finley and Schwartz (2004) and with the caretaking and affection domains identified by Combs-Orme and Renkert (2004). Across studies, the wish for an emotional connection with their own fathers was the most frequent and significant descriptor mentioned as missing or lacking. This also

applied to fathers whose own fathers had been present and involved with them, but had not been emotionally sensitive or responsive.

Context

Macro Contextual Perspectives on Father Involvement

The nature of men's involvement with children cannot be addressed without noting that there are important social, cultural, and political implications attached to the issue. Much of the writing and research on fathering has an underlying thread of values often undeclared, yet woven in.

Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson (1998) introduced the concept of *responsible fathering* and proposed a systemic and ecological framework of factors that influence responsible fathering to organize scholarship and programmatic efforts. Their framework has been criticized for excluding sufficient attention to the social constructionist perspective that defines the needs of children, fatherhood, motherhood, childhood, and the "patriarchal context" in which social construction occurs (Walker & McGraw, 2000, p. 567). Expressing the opinion that Doherty et al. drew the boundaries around responsible fathering too narrowly, Walker and McGraw argued that there is no unequivocal empirical support for the contention that children need two involved, heterosexual, biological parents. Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson (2000) counter-argued that they reserved the right to limit their review, that there is ample evidence that involved fathers make a positive difference in children's lives, and that "the main goal of promoting responsible fathering is for the sake of the children" (p. 570). Clearly, the notion of responsible fathering sparks an overtly value-laden debate.

Fatherhood has drawn some increased attention within the U.S. socio-political arena since the 1990s (Marsiglio et al., 2000). According to Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson (1998), the term "responsible fathering" was the "original language" (p. 278) used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) when their work was commissioned. Doherty could not recall the actual source of the original language (personal communication, June, 2003), but the language appears to be representative of the socio-political discourse on fathering during the time period.

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services presented a report to Congress on out-or-wedlock childbearing, which included an "expert paper" regarding strategies to reduce nonmarital childbearing. The author, Ooms, stated: "First and foremost, there is a need to build public consensus around a renewed ethic of personal responsibility-—namely that every child deserves to have two married parents" (USDHHS, p. 256). This sentiment was echoed in the Executive Summary of the report: "The dramatic increase in unmarried childbearing in the United States reflects changes in marital behavior as much or more than changes in fertility behavior. Americans are not having more babies; they're having fewer marriages" (USDHHS, p. xxi).

When Silverstein and Auerbach (1999) proposed that "neither mothers nor fathers are essential to child development" (p. 397), they unleashed a storm of controversy between liberals and conservatives (Koch, 2000). Speaking generally, conservatives often view fathers as very necessary to children's healthy development and see the problem as being ameliorated by strengthening marriage. Liberals place less emphasis on

the need for involved fathers and more on the need for eliminating cultural and economic factors that marginalize single mothers, poor fathers, and nontraditional families.

During the 1990s, a series of conferences was held to assist federal agencies to support fathers' positive involvement with their families. The federal initiative has been augmented by the publication of several professional journals with special issues devoted to fathering and several edited volumes on the topic. Several professional and grassroots organizations have sprung up, whose goals are often to educate others and support fatherhood (Marsiglio et al., 2000). However, Curran (2003) cautions social workers to evaluate interventions carefully since they might or might not contribute to child, mother, father, or family well-being. For example, some states encourage increased participation and contact with children by fathers although this may not be desirable if there is evidence of criminal activity or domestic violence.

> Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (2000) provide a cautionary summary:
>
> Systemic, ecological models run the risk of reducing the target behavior—in this case, responsible fathering—to a contextually determined phenomenon stripped of individual initiative and self-determination. We want to emphasize the pivotal role of fathers themselves in appropriating or discarding cultural and contextual messages, in formulating a fathering identity and developing fathering skills with their own children, in working out their feelings about their own fathers, and in dealing collaboratively with their children's mother. The social construction of fatherhood is an evolving creation of all stakeholders in the lives of children, and

contemporary fathers have a central role in this creation. We are all responsible for responsible fathering (p.573).

Comparing U.S. fathers to fathers across the globe. Generally speaking, we know less about fathers across the world than we do about those in the United States and Europe (Hewlett, 1992). Ethnocentrism often leads us to erroneously believe that what appears to be true for fathers and families in these Western countries, in which more studies have been done, is true for all fathers and families. For example, fathers in the United States often participate in childbirth and subsequently engage in play with their infants and young children (Hewlett), which is thought to facilitate father-infant attachment and the child's social competence. However, in non-Western cultures, fathers are not usually present at childbirth and play is not considered integral to father-infant attachment (Hewlett, 2000).

There are some similarities among fathers across the globe. Generally speaking, fathers provide less caregiving than mothers, although they sometimes do assume the role of primary caretaker. They are typically called upon to provide economic support for their children and to support the mother economically and/or emotionally (Hewlett, 1992).

Caution should be exercised when comparing fathering practices among cultures. In a field study comparing "fathering behaviors" across cultures, Mackey (1995, p. 443) concluded that U.S. men are typical of men in 22 other cultures. Cultures studied included those found in such diverse countries as the United States, Brazil, Morocco, Iceland, Japan, India, Kenya, France, and Austria. The author found that U.S. men

associate less with children than U.S. women do, as do men compared to women in each of the other cultures included in the study. The "fathering" behavior studied was simply the joint association of men with children in public areas accessible to both men and women, away from their residence, and during daylight hours. No attempt was made to distinguish the roles or relationships among the subjects being observed. The number of children observed associating with adults varied among cultures, with the least (132) in Austria and the most (14,692) in the U.S. Observations were recorded at time intervals when men would be expected to be available to children, such as weekends and holidays, and during times men might not be available. Simple percentages were reported and ranked by culture. Regression equations were used to define whether U.S. culture was defined as similar or dissimilar to the other cultures, i.e. if the percentage of children with men fell within the confidence limits (.01, two-tailed) of the predicted percentage, U.S. men would be defined as similar.

Based on this observational study of simple frequency of association with children, Mackey (1995) suggested that if U.S. fathers were to "expand their role" to match that of U.S. mothers, they "may become typical parents when compared to U.S. women, but they simultaneously become clearly aberrant men—when compared to other non-U.S. men" (p. 453). This study certainly stands on weak legs as an accurate depiction of "fathering behavior" across the globe; to imply that mere association of men with children in public places accurately represents the richness and complexity of fathering is overly simplistic. Furthermore, there was no attempt in the study to adequately control for the numerous possible confounding variables, e.g. culturally-

defined gender roles, or varied economic, political, or religious contexts. However, the study does draw our attention to concerns that defining U.S. cultural norms for fatherhood by using motherhood as the standard for comparison, i.e. promoting egalitarianism between parents, might have implications within the larger context of fatherhood.

Micro Contextual Perspectives on Father Involvement

As noted previously, father involvement and its association to various characteristics of children, mothers, and fathers themselves has been studied (see Pleck, 1997). Very little is known about the effects of nonresident fathers' involvement on children's development (Cabrera, et al., 2000), although this population represents a substantial number of children in today's world. Men also act as surrogate fathers to other children they live with in their roles as mothers' boyfriends, stepfathers, uncles, and grandfathers (Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004). Much has also been written about the effects of an involved father on the mother's well-being. It is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper to comprehensively review the scholarship regarding all these related issues. To illustrate the importance of the micro context, the following discussion includes effects of father involvement on fathers and children and an exploration of mothers' influences on fathers' involvement with children.

Effect of father involvement on fathers. Fatherhood may have an influence on men's lives and well-being. In a study of 5266 men, in another sample drawn from the 1987-88 NSFH, Eggebeen & Knoester (2001) examined whether men's varied relationships with children (with no children, as fathers, stepfathers, residential or

nonresidential parents) were associated with different effects on their own lives and well-being. They found that being fathers, especially residential fathers, appears to shape men's lives.

For residential fathers, the independent variable *father involvement* was measured by time spent with children in a variety of specific activities, i.e. playing or together at home, engaged in leisure activities together away from home. Nonresidential fathers were asked about the frequency of contacts with their children, by phone, letter, or in person. These measures of father involvement are very simplistic means of attempting to capture a very complex element of fathering and do not take into account the vast differences likely in nurturing, caregiving, emotional closeness, or types of disclipline. However, the authors did distinguish among residential and nonresidential fathers, stepfathers, and fathers of adult children, which is not typical of many earlier studies of fathers' involvement.

The dependent variables were psychological and physical health, social connections, intergenerational family ties, and work behavior. Ordinary least squares and logistic regression were used to analyze two models, one representing only variables linked to measures of fathering experience and a second with control variables of age, education, race, family income, and marital status. The study examined cross-sectional data, therefore causality cannot be established. Potentially confounding variables such as age of the children and characteristics of the marital system (e.g. conflict or cohesion) were not taken into account. In spite of these limitations, the authors contend that "men who are the most healthy, happy, socially connected to their communities and families,

and the most stably employed may be the ones most likely to be coresident fathers or involved fathers" (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001, p. 391).

Effect of father involvement on children. As a result of a comparative analysis of nationally representative, mostly longitudinal data sets, McLanahan and Teitler (1999) concluded "the evidence indicates that, on average, children who grow up with both biological parents do better in terms of human capital development and early family formation behavior than children who grow up with only one of their parents (p. 99)." Their findings also indicate that "a stepfather cannot fully compensate for the loss of a biological father" (p. 99). Confidence in the findings is increased due to the consistency of outcomes across different surveys, among respondents of various racial/ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and for children of both genders. Furthermore, McLanahan and Teitler (1999) express confidence that low income and income loss account for about half of the disadvantage that comes from living apart from one's father; loss of social capital, i.e. relationships between children, parents, and other adults in the community, appears to account for the rest. These relationships may be spurious, however, as it is possible the association between father-absence and child well-being may not be due solely to father-absence but to some other latent variable, "such as parents' psychological functioning or altruism" (McLanahan & Teitler, 1999, p. 99).

Mothers' influences on fathers' involvement with children. An ecological perspective may assume that mothers act as "influencing agents" in father-child relations (De Luccie, 1995). Furthermore, mothers often serve as primary parents and gatekeepers of men's relationships with children (Mintz, 1998; Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Hoffman &

Moon, 1999). Mothers may influence interaction between fathers and their children through their personal characteristics and attitudes, their relationships with their children's fathers, and through situational variables such as employment.

Another issue related to gatekeeping is the ambivalence some women experience as they are simultaneously attracted to the idea of the father's involvement with child care and repelled by the "notion of sharing their domain" (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). The nature of this possible ambivalence about sharing responsibility for children and the significance of the variables noted above are surely more complex among mothers who must decide and negotiate how much parenting and child care to share with non-biological surrogate fathers. Other factors, such as the level of involvement of the biological, non-residential father, availability of other caregivers, child safety, and the nature and stability of the mother-surrogate relationship must be considered.

Findings from a small (n = 14) qualitative study of first-time fathers of two-month-old infants suggested that mothers have a "powerful influence" on developing relationships between fathers and children, through either inviting or excluding involvement in child care (Anderson, 1996, p. 306). When fathers felt supported and encouraged to participate in the tasks of child care, "they were more likely to develop an emotional bond" (p. 318).

A survey of mothers (N =88) and fathers (N = 54) of newborns (Fox, Bruce & Combs-Orme, 2000) found that mothers generally indicated they expected less help with child care than fathers of newborns expected to provide. This finding is consistent with

others (e.g. Danziger & Radin, 1990) that may suggest that many new fathers prefer more participation in their infants' lives.

Belsky, Gilstrap, and Rovine (1984) employed interviews and time-sampling of intact families when infants were one, three, and nine months old, and found a positive association between marital interaction and father-infant involvement. They stressed that studying fathers' relationships and involvement with infants must include consideration of the marital relationship.

Mothers' gatekeeping takes on special meaning when biological fathers do not live with their children and mothers may determine how much access fathers have to their children (Arditti, 1995). Although Cabrera et al. (2000) claim that the cultural ideal of "coparenting" is taking hold, leading to a diminishing role for mother as gatekeepers (p. 133), this may not be true in nontraditional families.

Although it appears that fathers and children often benefit from their interactions with one another, it is also apparent that fathers and their children are subject to the influence of the contexts in which they interact. These various contexts may be more or less supportive and encouraging of that interaction.

Time

Historical Perspectives

The changing nature of fatherhood has been linked to ecological, cultural, social, economic, and political factors throughout history. Anthropologists have studied fathers' roles as far back as 120,000 years ago (Hewlitt, 2000). Since then various roles of fathers as providers of food or other resources, caregivers, educators, and defenders have

advanced or receded in importance based on differing ecologies and needs for survival. Of course fathering in the United States has its roots and connections to fathering in this broader worldwide and historical context.

History of Fathering in the United States

The following discussion is not meant to be an exhaustive history of fatherhood in the United States, but to illustrate the relevance and importance of context and time. Although different historical time periods have given rise to generalized perspectives of fatherhood during those eras, it is important to remember that "continued tension and variability in fathering behavior" have actually been characteristics of fatherhood across time (Parke, 1995). It is also important to note that the historical view of fatherhood in the United States is largely drawn from White, middle-class sources and is not likely representative of fathers from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds (Mintz, 1998; Marsiglio et al., 2000).

In the earliest years of fathering in the United States fathers were largely responsible for moral oversight, teaching, and modeling "good Christian living" (Lamb, 2000, p. 26). Fatherhood in the colonial period was influenced by the patriarchy indicative of the times (Mintz, 1998). However, "class, regional, ethnic, and religious differences characterized men's familial roles and relationships" (Mintz, p. 9), such that different patterns of patriarchal authority were established in various communities depending on demographics such as death rates and gender ratios. For example, in the Chesapeake region, death rates were so high that marriages rarely lasted longer than seven or eight years. Complex family units evolved, including stepparents, stepchildren,

and half siblings, and extended kin networks became more important than the nuclear family (Mintz).

Colonial life was not typically characterized by a division between home and work, therefore it is likely that fathers and their families lived and worked closely together. There is evidence that fathers instructed their children in reading, religion, and crafts (Mintz, 1998). Reading was considered important so one could read and follow the teachings of the Bible (Lamb, 2000).

In the early nineteenth century, the role of fathers as religious and moral leaders of their families was embraced by some men, but rejected by others (Mintz, 1998). Work began to be done away from the home and geographic mobility increased, leading to a sharper division of labor between men and women and an increase in divorce and abandonment. In some intact middle-class families, the family became a haven from outside pressures of the business world, and the husband was considered the family's "protector and provider" (Mintz, p. 15).

As industrialization evolved, the defining role of the father as breadwinner took hold (Lamb, 2000). By the late nineteenth century, middle class men carried heavy responsibilities to provide economic support, educate their children, and provide care to extended family members (Mintz, 1998). Men's roles in families became a cause for concern as the pressures mounted. During the early 1900s, there were efforts to improve wages in order to allow men to support their families without assistance from their wives or children. This was coupled with the promotion of a cultural ideal of a companionate

family, characterized by mutual respect, emotional satisfaction, and leisure time spent together (Mintz, 1998).

Men's roles, generally characterized during the time period as breadwinners, were severely challenged during the Great Depression when many lost their jobs and subsequently, their authority and status within their families. Many became immobilized or deserted their families. Preserving men's breadwinning role became a national priority, resulting in governmental efforts such as the New Deal to put men back to work (Mintz, 1998). The World Wars led to an absence of fathers, heightening concerns about the adequacy and loss of male role models (Mintz, 1998). This led to a focus on the need for men to be "strong sex-role models" (Lamb, 2000, p. 27), especially for boys. Simultaneously, a focus on the importance of the mother-child dyad was surfacing.

The numbers of women in the labor force (including many who are mothers) have risen sharply since the 1940s (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000). There has been an economic shift from a family wage to an individual wage (Mintz, 1998). These factors have certainly had an effect on the importance previously attached to men's roles as breadwinners. Opportunities for economic independence have influenced women to develop new expectations within and regarding marriage. The rise in feminism that began in the 1960s challenged ideas that men and women had distinct roles to play in parenting and criticized gender-specific values men were thought to contribute, i.e. toughness, competitiveness, aggressiveness, and emotional constraint (Mintz, 1998). Abortion rights legislation that clearly supports the right of the woman to choose whether or not to bear a child might have "led many men to shed responsibility

for a child's birth" (Mintz, 1998, p. 23). The sexual revolution and the rise in divorce and nonmarital cohabitation have further influenced the role of men in families.

Although men's roles in families have changed throughout U.S. history, "the authority and respect that men receive inside the home have been inextricably connected to their authority and status outside the home" (Mintz, 1998, p. 23). Echoing what the anthropologists have taught us, Mintz concluded that U.S. history has taught us that men's involvement in families is linked to "broader economic and cultural shifts" (p. 23).

The nature of men's involvement with their children appears to have evolved in an intriguing manner. At the same time we are calling on fathers to be nurturing and actively involved in the day-to-day care of their children (Lamb, 2000), we are witnessing an increase in the number of fathers who are absent from their families (Cabrera et al., 2000). It appears the current historical and cultural context conveys a curiously ambivalent message—fathers' absence has become culturally acceptable, but when present they are expected to be actively involved in nurturing and child care.

Historical Considerations Pertaining to Social Work

The profession of social work was born in the late nineteenth century, amidst the emerging social problems resulting from immigration, industrialization, and urbanization (Popple & Leighninger, 1999). Since its inception, social work has struggled with an inherent tension between a focus on the individual or the environment as an arena for change. As a result, social work has developed "a unique dual perspective—an awareness of the interplay between individual behavior and larger social, economic, and

political structures" (Popple & Leighninger, 1999, p. 77). This perspective provides social work with a well-focused lens for viewing fathering with increased clarity.

Summary

Although fathering and fatherhood have received comparatively little attention in the professional literature compared to mothering and motherhood (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Strug & Wilmore-Schaeffer, 2003), it does appear that the contributions of fathers to children, mothers, and families is significant. Fathers' contributions may be concrete and tangible, as breadwinners and providers of financial support. But, as discussed above, fathers also appear to contribute to varying degrees through caretaking and other types of involvement with their children and by providing affection and love.

It appears that men are often interested in being "good" fathers, although we have not always asked them directly about their wishes, needs, and experiences. It seems that men use their experience of their relationships to their fathers as points of reference for determining the nature of their relationships with their own children (Cordell et al., 1980; Anderson, 1996; Pleck, 1997; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Goldberg et al., 2002; Glikman, 2004). Children have noted the importance of feeling loved and connected to their fathers (Milkie, Simon, & Powell, 1997), and it seems the significance of the relationships between children and their fathers during childhood continues to have meaning as grown men assume the role of father. Findings from several small, qualitative studies suggest that men who are fathers themselves say fathers should be present and involved with their children. But perhaps most importantly, fathers say fathers should provide love, caring, and/or be responsive to their child's emotional needs.

In an overview of the research on lone fathers (those who are raising children alone following marital separation or the death of the mothers), Greif (1992) notes that many of the early studies done since the late 1970s were drawn from small convenience samples, usually in one region of the country. Respondents were usually volunteers, recruited through snowball sampling, advertisements, and contacts with groups or agencies where fathers might seek help. The studies were usually descriptive in nature, although some comparison studies were completed, e.g. comparisons of lone fathers to lone mothers, or to men who did not live with their children. This example generally typifies the small qualitative studies related to fathering in general and of those presented in the discussion above.

Studying small groups, even with some socio-economic, racial, and ethnic diversity, in which fathers have already distinguished themselves as different by visiting their newborns, seeking help and/or volunteering to participate, leaves out a whole group of respondents who are intrinsically different. Another problem inherent in these small qualitative studies is the possibility that respondents will provide socially desirable responses, rather than responses that reflect what they truly feel. Often, the interviews are conducted face-to-face and respondents might have concerns about anonymity, privacy, or confidentiality. There may be legal implications resulting from statements related to fathering, such as child support requirements. The respondents might be concerned that their responses will affect their or their children's receipt of needed services.

Some researchers have dismissed self-reports as reliable sources of data, but others recognize the respondents' perceptions as valuable (Olson, 1977; Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Lüscher, 1995). In spite of the potential problems, there is support for the use of qualitative interview methods, as they might enable the researcher to tap the cognitive and interpersonal processes and cultural contexts inherent in men's perceptions of their fathering (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000).

Fathers cannot be fathers in a vacuum; they must be fathers in the environmental, cultural and historical contexts in which they live their lives. As previously noted, Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (2000) emphasized the "pivotal role of fathers themselves in appropriating or discarding cultural and contextual messages, in formulating a fathering identity and developing fathering skills with their own children, in working out their feelings about their own fathers, and in dealing collaboratively with their children's mother" (p. 573). Nevertheless, as discussed above, the role of fathers has been the subject of much controversy and we have struggled to decide what makes a "good" father. Our definition of this has changed over time. In spite of the primal and integral role they play in our lives, fathers must navigate contextual waters that are often indifferent, rarely supportive, and strewn with conflicting and confusing messages.

The foregoing review provides support for exploring fathers' perceptions of their relationships with their own fathers as starting points for defining and determining their own fathering behavior. This has rarely been addressed in previous research--most frequently in small, qualitative studies of limited generalizability. Respondents in these studies do represent some diversity in age, socio-economic levels, race, and ethnicity.

This preliminary evidence suggests that fathers themselves think fathers should be present and involved, and provide love, caring, and/or be responsive to their child's emotional needs. As noted, this appears consistent with recently identified domains of fathering. Across studies, the wish for an emotional connection with their own fathers was the most frequent and significant descriptor mentioned as missing or lacking, even among fathers whose own fathers had been present and involved with them.

Chapter Two

Research Methods

The NASW Code of Ethics requires that social workers use the professional knowledge base in practice (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). In spite of this, social workers have struggled to bring science to practice (Kirk & Reid, 2002). As discussed above, there is a diverse knowledge base, mostly developed in disciplines other than social work, which attempts to describe and understand the meanings and relevance of fatherhood. The knowledge base includes theoretical paradigms and empirical studies that social workers can use to inform and extend their own work and research on behalf of children, mothers, and fathers, but few have examined the meanings of fathering to fathers themselves.

Overview of Previous Types of Studies about Fathering

Many of the studies reviewed by this writer and mentioned above appear to fall broadly into two categories: 1) small, qualitative studies utilizing loosely structured interviews, either face to face or by telephone, and/or questionnaires; and 2) large, quantitative studies, often utilizing secondary analysis of data sets of nationally representative samples to provide information about possible associations among a variety of outcome measures for children, mothers, and fathers. Strengths and limitations of small, qualitative studies have previously been discussed, above.

Large Quantitative Studies

Some studies have been conducted using cross-sectional data from large nationally representative samples, such as the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001). The NSFH

utilizes personal interviews and self-administered questionnaires and measures a number of outcomes for men, women, and children. Cross-sectional data can provide information about correlation among variables but cannot establish causality. It is often difficult to capture and operationalize theoretical constructs adequately within the constraints of a large household survey (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000), but their large sample sizes have the potential to improve generalizability. Other issues related to the use of the NSFH and secondary analysis will be discussed in more detail below.

Longitudinal Studies

This writer found only three longitudinal studies examining father involvement (Belsky, Gilstrap, & Rovine, 1984; Snarey, 1993; Furstenberg & Weiss, 2000). While these studies make important contributions to the literature on the nature of father involvement, their relevance to this study is limited. To briefly summarize, the earliest was The Pennsylvania Infant and Family Development Project (Belsky et al., 1984), which examined stability and change in mother-infant and father-infant interaction in family settings. The Baltimore Parenthood Study (Furstenberg & Weiss, 2000) examined the intergenerational transmission of fathering roles in families at risk.

As mentioned above, Snarey (1993) presented findings of a four-generation study solidly grounded in Erikson's psychosocial theories, contributing support to the idea of generative fathering. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry were utilized. The study began in the 1940s in Boston with 500 boys who were interviewed and identified as a control group for a similar group of delinquent boys in a larger study. The boys, whose average age was 14, were born into lower and working class families. The

respondents were interviewed again at ages 25, 31, and in midlife (average age of 47). The respondents were "ethnically diverse, although the sample unfortunately did not include African-Americans" (p. 3). Over time, attrition reduced the cohort to 231 respondents, with fertility, mortality, and incomplete data accounting for much of the reduction. However, attrition was more common among men from "multiproblem families" (p. 41). These men were also the most antisocial and severely mentally ill, but reportedly did not differ from others regarding IQ, childhood emotional problems, or childhood environmental strengths.

After the midlife interviews, four respondents were selected as representative of the diversity in the sample—one each from Russian, English, Irish, and Italian descent. These four respondents were also considered "reasonably" representative of the other respondents, except that they represented "successful fathers—men whose children were upwardly mobile by early adulthood and who themselves were societally generative at midlife" (Snarey, 1993, p. 30). Narrative summaries of the interviews with these four and their sons or daughters were presented by the author to provide richness and depth to the overall study. It is these summaries, which provide us with information from the fathers' own perceptions, which are of interest in this study.

In these summaries, the four middle-aged respondent fathers were asked about their memories of their own fathers (Snarey, 1993). Their responses most often indicated their fathers were frequently absent or uninvolved, but were good providers and hard workers. These responses are similar to those noted by fathers in the qualitative studies summarized on Table 1.

Other Methodological Issues

Operationalizing definitions about fathering is a difficult task that often fails to fully capture the concepts under study, thus compromising construct validity. The use of many different operationalized definitions makes synthesis of findings virtually impossible.

In the past, many studies have relied on the mother or another single respondent to provide information about other members of the family and their behaviors, possibly introducing same-source bias (Amato & Rivera, 1999). Using only one type of measure, i.e. a self-administered questionnaire, introduces shared method variance. Use of multiple informants and multiple methods, as in the multitrait-multimethod (MTMM) approach, is desirable, when possible (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). MTMM allows for the examination of convergent and discriminant validity (Kenny & Kashy, 1992; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), increasing confidence in the results.

Advances in statistical analysis, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), allow for adjustment for measurement error and the development of clearer models that control for confounding variables. SEM extends the multitrait-multimethod approach to further assess reliability and validity of observed data (Melby, Conger, Ge, & Warner, 1995). The use of multivariate statistics, including multiple regression and SEM, has made it possible for us to see the unique contributions of specific father-related variables to outcomes and questions under study (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

As discussed in Chapter One, a recent study (Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004) employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and latent class analysis (LCA) to explore

fathers' caretaking and affection behaviors with infants. EFA is concerned with the structure of variables (i.e., their correlations), and as such it is a *variable-centered* approach. LCA is concerned with the structure of cases (i.e., the latent taxonomic structure), and as such it is a *person-centered* approach. In both methods latent variables are inferred from observed variables, which are indirect and imperfect indicators of the latent variables. Both are exploratory methods. This study, utilizing data from the VIPS project, mentioned above, was the first to employ Latent Class Analysis to identify patterns of fathering behavior of infants. Patterns were examined for three different "types" of fathers: those who live with their infants, those who do not live with their infants, and men who act as residential surrogate fathers.

As noted above, results indicated that caretaking and expressions of affection appear to represent two distinct domains of fathering behaviors for residential fathers (Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004). Two classes of residential fathers were found: one with low levels of both types of fathering behavior and one with higher levels, particularly higher expressions of affection. Similarly, two classes of non-residential fathers with dramatically different levels of fathering behavior were found. While surrogate fathers did provide affection to their infants, their levels of caretaking were low. The application of advanced statistical techniques can provide us with new insight, which in turn leads to new questions regarding fathering.

Other problems intrinsic to studying fathering have been a failure to differentiate among fathers who cohabitate with their own or other children, but are not married to the mothers (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001) or to study stepfathers. There has often been a

failure to include or adequately represent racially diverse respondents. Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb (2000) suggest developing sampling strategies that include fathers who are in jail, prison, the military, and those who are unmarried, not residing with their children, and have lower incomes.

As previously noted, fathers' perspectives have been infrequently studied. Children's perspectives have been largely ignored (Milkie, Simon, & Powell, 1997), although children's perceptions of their fathers may influence their feelings and behavior (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000).

No unifying theory about fathering has been developed to guide our research, although an ecological systems model, such as Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, appears to reflect the most salient components of other theoretical models that have been applied to study fathers. A search of Social Work Abstracts using the key word *Bronfenbrenner* and the truncated key word *father** yielded no hits. A search of all text fields of Academic Search Premier, using the same combination, yielded 426 scholarly journal articles. When this search was narrowed to *Bronfenbrenner* and *father** and *PPCT* or *process-person-context-time*, no hits were obtained. As such, this might be one of the first deliberate applications of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model to the study of fathers and quite possibly the first in social work.

Study Design

As previously noted, many small qualitative studies have found that, when asked, men have indicated their perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their own fathers and these appear to be determinants of the nature of their relationships to their

own children. The PPCT model was established as a theoretical framework in Chapter One. Secondary analysis of a large national data set affords the opportunity to apply the PPCT framework and examine several hypotheses within a much larger, more representative population of fathers.

Survey research is often a preferred method for collecting data to describe or explore the characteristics of a large population (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Careful probability sampling and use of thoughtfully constructed standardized questionnaires provide uniform data from all respondents (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Surveys can be administered by trained interviewers either face-to-face or by telephone, or respondents might complete questionnaires themselves.

Although the use of surveys to reach a large sample might increase generalizability, particularly when the sample is representative of the larger population, this is offset by the inherent limitation in internal validity resulting from the acquisition of cross-sectional data collected at one point in time (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Although associations among variables might be demonstrated, causality cannot be established with this study design. Other limitations of survey research, i.e. "superficiality, missing social context, inflexibility, artificiality, and questionable validity" can be mitigated through the addition of qualitative methods in the overall study design (Rubin & Babbie, 2001, p. 382).

Secondary Analysis

The cost, in time and money, of administering a survey and/or actually interviewing a large sample makes this an impractical choice for many researchers

(Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985). However, large scale surveys have been completed by other researchers affiliated with large agencies, organizations, institutions, or universities. These research centers have organized a network of data archives that are available to interested researchers, making secondary analysis of a number of large data sets possible (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Secondary analysis is defined as "the reanalysis of data previously gathered for other research" (Moriarty, et al., 1999, p. 143). Indeed, to research "means to search and search again" (Moriarty, et al., 1999, p. 145). Available data sets cover a broad array of topics and time periods, and many have been collected from nationally representative samples (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985).

Some of the problems encountered by secondary analysts are inherent in survey research (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985), as previously discussed. However, validity is the main problem associated with the use of existing data, i.e. whether the question originally asked actually represents the variable you want to measure (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). This problem can be offset through the use of replication (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Other problems include finding and acquiring a data set that best fits the research objectives, accurately assessing errors and measurement problems, and extracting a representative subsample of the population under study (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985).

Secondary Analysis in Social Work Research

For social workers, who must often conduct research with limited resources, secondary analysis presents the opportunity to access and utilize a large quantity of archived data regarding many topics and issues of interest to our profession. The precedent for use of secondary data in social work research is well established. A search

of Social Work Abstracts yielded 102 hits for social work and secondary analysis or secondary data. These studies represent a wide array of data sets and topics from 1977 to the present.

Researchers representing education, health, social science, psychology, politics, and government have made their data available for public use. The interdisciplinary nature of the available data is appealing; the application of social work theory to an existing data set might provide thought-provoking new perspectives.

Conducting a Secondary Analysis

When determining that secondary analysis might be the preferred method for a pending research study, one must consider several steps. Designing and conducting other types of studies is likely to be a relatively linear process, but in secondary analyses the actual structure of the data set is already in place and guides the precise development of the research questions; the process is more recursive than linear (McCall & Appelbaum, 1991). The research questions, drawn from the current literature on the topic, are broad in the initial phase of the study, and are refined and honed as the process unfolds. Several authors (Moriarty, et al., 1999; Orsi, et al., 1999; Shepard, et al., 1999) have discussed considerations related to planning and conducting a secondary analysis of a large secondary data set for research of families: 1) Researchers must first become familiar with available data sets; 2) It is recommended that a theoretical perspective be selected to serve as the guide for variable selection; 3) Variables, suggested by the selected theory and previous research, are selected; 4) Reliability and validity of the data

in the context of theoretical framework must be addressed. On a practical note, a subsample might be selected and data must be managed and analyzed.

Selection of Data Set

There are many resources available to assist in the exploration of available data sets, including the university library and its website. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), a unit within the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, is a comprehensive data archive and source of assistance for researchers affiliated with over 500 colleges and universities worldwide (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2004, June 25). Child Trends, Inc. has published a guide to survey and statistical data on U.S. families (Zill & Daly, 1993), which includes a comprehensive list of available data sets, with summaries of the purpose, design, and limitations of each.

Given the literature that indicates the need to ask fathers directly about their fathering experiences, a search was conducted for a data set that did just that. Other criteria included the ability to draw a nationally representative sample and compatibility with the PPCT model. After careful consideration, the National Survey of Families and Households, Wave II was selected.

The National Survey of Families and Households

The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) is sponsored by The Center for Population Research of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute on Aging (National Survey of Families and Households, 2004, June 25). The survey was developed and conducted by the University

of Wisconsin (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988; Zill & Daly, 1993). There is extensive information available about this data set and its contents (see the website and/or other references cited here for more details).

Characteristics of the sample. The NSFH includes interviews with a probability sample of 13, 017 respondents. The sample includes a main cross-section sample of 9,643 households plus a double sampling of African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, single-parent families and families with stepchildren, cohabiting couples and recently married persons (n = 3374). The main sample was drawn from a sampling frame developed by the Institute for Survey Research (ISR) (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988). The ISR's 100 Primary Sampling Unit (PSU) National Sampling Frame is based on 1985 population projections. The PSUs were established by subdividing all counties in the conterminous United States into two groups, either "self-representing areas" or the rest of the country (p. 19). A *self-representing area* may be a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) or a Standard Consolidated Area with a population of two million or more. The larger self-representing areas were subdivided into two or more PSUs, resulting in a total of 36 PSUs, comprising 36% of the nation's population.

PSUs for the rest of the country were selected from SMSAs or counties with populations of 150,000 or more and from combinations of adjacent counties with populations of 150,000 or more. These areas were further divided into 32 strata, based on region, metropolitan status, and one or more of the following: degree of urbanization, economic growth rate, racial composition, and proportion of the population of Hispanic

origin. Two areas were selected from each stratum with "probabilities proportional to population size" (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988, p. 19).

Based on population size, block groups were selected from each PSU, resulting in an average of 17 per PSU. Within these 1,700 units, listing areas were created consisting of 45 or more households; one of these listing areas was selected from each block group. The result of this process was an "equal probability sample of 1,700 listing areas for the national sampling frame" (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988, p. 19). Within each selected listing area, approximately 20 housing units were chosen for participation in the study. A screening contact was then made with each household to verify addresses and list household members.

A primary respondent was selected from each household through the use of a random selection table. In addition to being members of established households, primary respondents were typically age 19 or older and able to be interviewed in English or Spanish. Married persons under age 19 were eligible to participate. In the main sample, but not in the oversample, 18-year-old persons were eligible to participate when there were no eligible older respondents in the household (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988).

The oversampling of African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, single-parent families and families with stepchildren, cohabiting couples and recently married persons was accomplished by doubling the number of households consisting of those groups selected within the 100 sampling areas. These target groups were selected for oversampling in order to obtain sufficient sample size to examine comparisons and improve generalizeability. Of the housing units selected within each listing area for

participation in the study, half were randomly assigned to the main sample and half to the oversample.

The initial sample drawn consisted of 33,869 addresses. There was no eligible respondent in 10,007 households (30%) and 3596 addresses (11%) were not housing units, vacant, or outside the listing area. Of the remaining 20, 266 addresses, 1398 (7%) did not yield respondents for various reasons including illness, absence, and language barriers and 5851 respondents (29%) refused screenings or interviews. As previously noted, 13,017 respondents actually participated in the study, a response rate of 64%.

Data collection. As noted, one adult per household was randomly selected as the primary respondent, therefore individuals, not families or households, are the units of observation. Data were derived from the perspective of this individual. Several portions of the main interview were self-administered to facilitate the collection of sensitive information and to facilitate the flow of the interview. The average interview lasted one hour and forty minutes. In addition, a shorter self-administered questionnaire was give to the spouse or cohabiting partner of the primary respondent. A considerable amount of life-history information was collected. The cross-sectional design, with retrospective sequences, permitted "the detailed description of past and current living arrangements and other characteristics and experiences, and the analysis of the consequences of earlier patterns on current states, marital and parenting relationships, kin contact, and economic and psychological well-being" (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988, p 6).

The initial data collection took place during the summer and fall of 1987 and has since become known as Wave I (Sweet & Bumpass, 1996). A five-year follow-up was

completed during 1992-94, known as Wave II, which included personal interviews with the original respondents (N = 10,007) and personal or telephone interviews with several other family members (Sweet & Bumpass). Seventy-seven percent of the original respondents were retained in Wave II. A third wave of data was collected during 2001-2, utilizing telephone interviews of respondents and certain family members. Wave III data are not yet available for public use (NSFH, 2004, June 25).

Theoretical Perspective

The principal components of the PPCT model can be applied easily to the NSFH, Wave II. Responses regarding the nature of respondents' relationships and involvement with their parents and children are relevant to the concept of proximal *process*. The *person* component can be addressed by selecting a subsample of NSFH primary respondents who are fathers. The large, nationally representative probability sample allows the *context* component to be considered comprehensively. Much information is available related to micro and macro contexts (e.g. demographics, socioeconomic levels, marital status). Wave II is particularly significant because it also allows the consideration of the *time* component. The NSFH was conducted during a specific historical period and results must be examined with that component in mind. Furthermore, the significance of cross-generational ties can be examined through the selection of a subsample of fathers who were asked questions about their own fathers and their children.

In order to facilitate the exploration and discussion of several hypotheses related to cross-generational relationships, the following conventions, originally established by Bengston (as cited by Rossi & Rossi, 1990) and adapted from Rossi and Rossi (1990),

will be used: F2 shall refer to the respondent fathers used in this study and described more fully, below; F1 shall refer to their fathers; and F3 shall refer to their children.

Selection of Subsample

As noted, 10,007 primary respondents from Wave I were re-interviewed for Wave II. Of these, 3875 (39%) were men. From this pool, a subsample was drawn for the current study, consisting of all fathers of at least one biological, step, or adopted child who lives in the same household. These fathers will be referred to as the F2 respondents.

Hypotheses, Constructs, Variables, and Methods of Analysis

The application of the PPCT model and to any or all waves of the NSFH provides an ample framework for the exploration of many father-related questions and variables. Confining this study to the hypotheses posed below necessarily and justly limits the selection of variables. Although it is tempting to consider large numbers of variables, which, indeed, might yield some interesting insights, this study will be specifically focused only on those variables needed to adequately test the stated hypotheses.

Table 2 provides a summary of the hypotheses to be tested in this study, relevant constructs and NSFH variables (Bumpass & Sweet, 1997), and methods of analysis. These topics are discussed in more detail below.

Hypotheses. Findings from the qualitative studies presented in Table 1 indicated that fathers themselves say fathers should be present and involved with their children (Cordell et al., 1980; Pruett, 1989; Anderson, 1996; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004). Fathers seem to place even more importance on providing love, caring,

Table 2
Methods

Hypotheses	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Independent Variables	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Dependent Variables	Method(s) of Analysis	Other Comments
1. Fathers (F2) whose own fathers (F1) are involved with them will report high quality of relationship with their fathers.	INVOLVEMENT: MF36 **During the last 12 months, how often did you see your father?** 01 Not at all 02 About once a year 03 Several times a year 04 1-3 times a month 05 About once a week 06 More than once a week MF38 **During the last 12 months, about how often did you communicate with your father by letter or phone?** 01 Not at all 02 About once a year 03 Several times a year 04 1-3 times a month 05 About once a week 06 More than once a week MF93 **During the last month, have you received help from your parents with shopping, errands, or transportation?** 1 yes 2 no MF94 **From which parent?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP: MF30 **Taking all things together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with your father?**	Directional hypothesis IVs MF36, MF38— ordinal IVs MF93-98, 102-107— nominal DV MF30— continuous Linear regression	For all hypotheses and variables: IVs and DVs drawn from specific NSFH survey questions Descriptive Stats for sample Descriptive Stats for all variables, including frequency distributions of IVs, DVs, charts as appropriate Discuss effect size as relevant

Table 2. Continued.

Hypotheses	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Independent Variables	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Dependent Variables	Method(s) of Analysis	Other Comments
	MF95 **Any others?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law MF96 **During the last month, have your received help from your parents with housework, yard work, car repairs, or other work around the house?** 1 yes 2 no MF97 **From which parent?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law MF98 **Any others?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law MF102 **During the last month, have your received help from your parents with child care while you (or your wife/partner) were working?** 1 yes 2 no MF103 **From which parent?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law			

Table 2. Continued.

Hypotheses	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Independent Variables	Constructs and NSFH Questions/Dependent Variables	Method(s) of Analysis	Other Comments
	MF104 **Any others?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law MF105 **During the last month, have your received help from your parents with child care at times other than when you (or your wife/partner) were working?** 1 yes 2 no MF106 **From which parent?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law MF107 **Any others?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law			
2. Fathers (F2) whose own fathers (F1) are emotionally supportive will report the highest quality of relationship with their fathers.	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: MF99 **During the last month, have you received advice, encouragement, moral or emotional support from your parents?** 1 Yes 2 No MF100 **From which parent?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP: MF30 **Taking all things together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with your father?**	Directional hypothesis IVs MF99-101—nominal DV MF30—continuous Linear regression	

Table 2. Continued.

Hypotheses	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Independent Variables	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Dependent Variables	Method(s) of Analysis	Other Comments
	MF101 **Any others?** Categories 01-08; 02 Respondent's father 91 All living parents and parents-in-law			
3. There will be a curvilinear relationship between fathers' (F2) quality of relationships with their own fathers (F1) and with their children (F3).	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP WITH OWN FATHER: MF30 **Taking all things together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with your father?**	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD: ML87 **Taking all things together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with (focal child, ages 5-17)?** ML173 **Taking all things together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with (focal child, under age 5)?**	Directional hypothesis IV MF30—continuous DVs ML87, ML173—continuous Linear regression	

Table 2. Continued

Hypotheses	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Independent Variables	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Dependent Variables	Method(s) of Analysis	Other Comments
4. "Quality of relationship" with fathers' (F2) own fathers (F1) will be positively associated with involvement and emotional support received from father.	INVOLVEMENT: MF36 MF38 MF93-98 MF102-107 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: MF99-101	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP WITH OWN FATHER: MF30	Directional hypothesis Linear regression	
5. "Quality of relationship" with children (F3), ages 5-17, will be positively associated with involvement, emotional support, and physical affection.	INVOLVEMENT: ML17 **Last week, did you spend time with (focal child), just the two of you, for example, working on homework or a project, in leisure activities, or just having private talks?** 1 yes 2 no ML18 **About how many hours did you do this with (focal child)?** Range: 1-50 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: ML23 **During the last 30 days, how often did you and (focal child) talk about something that was worrying him/her?** 01 almost every day 02 several times a week 03 about once a week 04 two or three times 05 once 06 never	QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD: ML87	Directional hypothesis IVs ML17, ML25—nominal IVs ML18, ML26—interval IVs ML23,24—ordinal DV ML87—continuous Linear regression	Unable to test this hypothesis for children <5; no questions clearly related to emotional support or physical affection.

Table 2. Continued.

Hypotheses	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Independent Variables	Constructs and NSFH Questions/ Dependent Variables	Method(s) of Analysis	Other Comments
	ML24 **During the last 30 days how often did you and (focal child) talk about something that he/she was excited about or interested in?** 01 almost every day 02 several times a week 03 about once a week 04 two or three times 05 once 06 never PHYSICAL AFFECTION: ML25 **Some families are very physical in expressing affection and others are not so physical. During the last week, have you given (focal child) a hug or kiss to express your affection?** 1 yes 2 no ML26 **About how many times in the last week have you done this?** Range: 1-99			
6. Higher quality relationships will be evident in more stable environments.	ENVIRONMENT: Age Race Completed Education Marital Status # Weeks Worked/Year Income/Poverty Ratio	ML87 ML173		

and responsiveness to emotional needs (Cordell et al., 1980; Anderson, 1996; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004). Therefore, it is hypothesized that: (1) Fathers (F2) whose own fathers (F1) are involved with them will report high quality of relationship with their fathers; and (2) Fathers (F2) whose own fathers (F1) are emotionally supportive will report the highest quality of relationship with their fathers. It has been noted that men use their experience of their relationships with their fathers as points of reference for determining the nature of their relationships with their own children (Cordell et al., 1980; Anderson, 1996; Pleck, 1997; Silverstein et al., 1999; Fox et al., 2001; Kost, 2001; Goldberg et al., 2002; Glikman, 2004). Pleck (1997) suggested that fathers either model their own fathers' behavior or compensate for a perceived lack of involvement. Pruett (1989) noted that fathers who chose to become the primary caretakers of their children had been either emotionally close or quite emotionally distant from their own fathers. Therefore, it is hypothesized that: (3) There will be a curvilinear relationship between fathers' (F2) quality of relationships with their own fathers (F1) and with their children (F3).

Recent studies have begun to identify domains of fathering (Finley & Schwartz; Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004). Finley and Schwartz (2004) characterized two domains of expressive and instrumental involvement. Combs-Orme and Renkert (2004) found two domains of caretaking tasks and affection. These domains appear to be somewhat consistent with fathers' own statements about what they believe is important for fathers to do, as summarized in Table 1. Further exploration to identify and characterize domains of fathering yields two additional hypotheses: (4) *Quality of relationship* with fathers' (F2) own fathers (F1) will be positively associated with involvement and

emotional support received from father; and (5) *Quality of relationship* with children (F3), ages 5-17, will be positively associated with involvement, emotional support, and physical affection.

The NSFH data set does not allow the opportunity to test an additional hypothesis for children under age five because respondents were not asked questions that clearly related to emotional support or physical affection for that age group. Likewise, physical affection cannot be included as a possible variable denoting *quality of relationship* with fathers' own fathers because questions related to physical affection were not asked in that context. The latter two hypotheses also serve to aid in the definition of the construct *quality of relationship*, which will be discussed further below.

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) PPCT model suggested that context is an important element in human development. Specifically, more advantaged and stable environments are thought to have a positive influence on development. Therefore, a final hypothesis is proposed: (6) Higher quality relationships will be evident in more stable environments.

Constructs and variables. The hypotheses stated above and shown in Table 2 require the development of several constructs. The literature review in Chapter One provides the basis and support for the defining elements of the constructs. As previously noted, Rubin and Babbie (2001) indicated that validity is a problem associated with the use of existing data, i.e. whether the question originally asked actually represents the variable you want to measure (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). To address this concern, a comprehensive overview of the questionnaires and skip maps used in Waves I and II of the NSFH (Bumpass & Sweet, 1997) was conducted in order to best identify relevant

variables. The actual NSFH questions selected to represent each construct are included in Table 2.

Involvement has been characterized by time spent, tasks, and types of involvement (Pleck, 1997; Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2000). Lamb (1986, 2000) suggested three components of paternal involvement--engagement or interaction, accessibility, and responsibility. Palkovitz (1997) believed Lamb's conceptualization was not comprehensive and thus identified three domains of functioning—cognitive, affective, and behavioral—to more adequately describe the range of fathering activities. The fathers in the studies found in Table 1 (Cordell et al., 1980; Pruett, 1989; Anderson, 1996; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004) indicated that fathers themselves say fathers should be present and involved with their children, but provided little detail about involvement beyond that. Fathers seem to place even more importance on providing love, caring, and responsiveness to emotional needs (Cordell et al., 1980; Anderson, 1996; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004).

For this study, *involvement* is characterized by survey questions related to time spent and contact and tasks indicative of interaction, responsibility, help, or support. Because of its stated importance to the fathers in the studies in Table 1, *emotional support* is used as a separate construct, rather than as a component of *involvement.*

Emotional support or *responsiveness* has not been well-defined in the literature. *Emotional support* is characterized in this study through the use of a survey question that actually asks about emotional support received, and by questions which address the frequency of talks with the focal child about something they were either worried about, excited about, or interested in.

Physical affection has been described as hugging (Child Trends, 2002; Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004), holding, and kissing (Combs-Orme & Renkert, 2004). The NSFH included a question that specifically asked respondents about the frequency of physical affection, i.e. kissing or hugging one's child. *Emotional support* and *physical affection* are considered as distinct constructs in this study because it seems obvious that one can be present without the other in a father-child relationship. Fathers in the qualitative studies (see Table 1) rarely mentioned *physical affection.*

Quality of relationship in the NSFH was simply assessed by asking respondents to describe their relationships with various family members on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being *really bad* and 10 being *absolutely perfect.* As noted in Table 1, the nature of men's relationships with their own fathers has been often characterized simply as *positive, negative, distant,* or *absent.* As discussed above, hypotheses 4 and 5 examine the potential elements of the *quality of relationship* construct more closely, specifically to determine if there is an association with *involvement, emotional support,* and *physical affection.*

Methods of analysis. As summarized in Table 2, descriptive statistics will be computed for all variables. Linear regression will be used to test each hypothesis. Although this will be examined more closely before analysis, it appears the following assumptions can be met: 1) Normality of conditional distributions in the population; 2) Equality of variances in the population; 3) Independence of observations; and 4) Linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the population (as applicable).

Chapter Three

Results

As noted in Chapter Two, 10,007 primary respondents from Wave I of the NSFH study were re-interviewed for Wave II. Of these, 3875 (39%) were men, but not all the men were fathers.

Selection of the Subsample of Fathers

In the Wave I interview, primary respondents were asked to list the other members of the household and their relationships to those individuals, e.g. spouse, partner, child, sibling, roommate, unrelated other. Primary respondents were asked about their specific relationship to each of the children under age 18 living in their households. Possible relationships included: 1) biological child; 2) stepchild; 3) adopted child; 4) foster child; and 5) child of partner. In the Wave I interview, each primary respondent who had any biological, step (including partner's), adopted, or foster child under age 18 living in the household was asked a series of questions about a particular child, randomly selected from among eligible children. Specifically, the eligible child whose name came first alphabetically was designated as the focal child.

In Wave II, primary respondents were again asked a series of questions using the same focal child identified in Wave I as the referent. When there was no focal child previously identified in Wave I and there were any children under age five in the household at the time of the Wave II interview, a child was randomly selected among eligible children and designated as the focal child.

It seems reasonable that the nature of men's relationships to their biological, step, or adopted children might be different than their relationships to foster children or

children of their partners. Two key concepts of parental investment theory, paternity certitude and differential commitments (Fox & Bruce, 200l), discussed above, lend support to this. Therefore, the multiple response set feature of SPSS 12.0 was used to identify the specific numbers of biological, step, adopted, foster, and partners' children included in the sample of 3875 male respondents. There were 15 foster children in the subsample and these were reported to be in the households of eight respondents. A manual search of the data set was conducted and those eight cases were subsequently deleted from the data set. There were 97 partners' children, reported by 61 male respondents. These 61 cases were also deleted from the data set. Deleting these 69 cases also resulted in a loss of 30 biological children, no step children, and three adopted children, but this was considered acceptable to ensure that focal children used for this study would be related only as biological, step, or adopted children. Of the 3806 remaining male respondents, 1755 have any combination of biological, step, or adopted children in their households. Among these 1755 fathers, there are 3443 children. Of these, 3000 (87.1%) are biological children, 348 (10.1%) are step children, and 95 (2.8%) are adopted children. This subsample represents the F2 respondent fathers.

Demographic Characteristics of the F2 Respondent Fathers

Table 3 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of the F2 respondent fathers. They range in age from 24 to 92 years, with a mean age of 41.38 years (*SD* = 10.39). The vast majority (89.1%) are married and report they are European-American (76.1%). Of the 1755 fathers, 14.4% failed to complete high school. Approximately one third (33.5%) completed high school or attained their GEDs and 28% have attained bachelors or higher degrees. Of the 1755, 42 (2.4%) refused or failed to

Table 3
Demographic Characteristics of F2 Respondent Fathers

Characteristic	%
Age (N=1755)	
<30	7.5
30-39	41.8
40-49	32.8
50-59	11.7
60-69	3.9
70-79	1.8
>80	.5
Marital Status (N=1755)	
Married	89.1
Separated	1.7
Divorced	5.4
Widowed	2.2
Never married	1.6
Race (N=1754)	
European-American	76.1
African-American	14.5
Hispanic	8.1
American Indian	.2
Asian	1.1
Highest Level of Education (N=1750)	
<High school	14.4
High school diploma/GED	33.5
Some college, no degree	19.4
Associate degree	4.7
Bachelor degree	16.9
Advanced degree	11.1
Annual Household Income (N=1713)	
<$10,000	5.2
$10,000-19,999	9.6
$20,000-29,999	12.5
$30,000-39,999	14.1
$40,000-49,999	15.1
$50,000-59,999	12.1
$60,000-69,999	8.7
$70,000-79,999	7.8
$80,000-89,999	3.9
$90,000-99,999	3.2
>$100,000	7.8

indicate their incomes, did not know their incomes, or suffered financial losses resulting in no incomes. The remaining 1713 reported a mean annual household income of $52,716 and a median annual household income of $46,000. Reported annual income ranged from $0 to $700,200 (*SD* = 42,172).

Missing Data

For each of the hypotheses tested for this study, there were large amounts of missing data. Careful checks and rechecks of the coding and comparisons of the original NSFH data to the data in the subsample of fathers (N=1755) were completed.

A careful review of information provided about the NSFH indicated three significant problems encountered by NSFH staff, which may have contributed to the problem of missing data. The first of these problems is related to the attempt to track individuals across Waves I and II of the NSFH study.

Person numbers (also referred to as household member numbers) were assigned to all identified household members and to children and stepchildren living elsewhere. When a person was mentioned again in Wave II, the same person number that had been assigned in Wave I was used. Persons who were not mentioned in Wave I, but were mentioned in Wave II, were assigned new person numbers. These included new spouses and partners and their children, children born since Wave I, children who should have been mentioned in Wave I but were omitted, new relatives or roommates, and ex-spouses' new household members. The assignment of person numbers was a very complex and tedious process, resulting in "a fairly large number of ambiguous cases, and there are undoubtedly situations where a person was mentioned at NSFH1 and at NSFH2 was assigned a different person number" (NSFH, n.d.).

The second problem encountered by NSFH staff was a "programming error," which was not corrected until "many" Wave II interviews had been completed (NSFH, n.d.). Unfortunately, this error resulted in the omission of a series of questions about the focal child in many cases (NSFH, n.d.).

The third problem was related to the length of the NSFH interview, which took an average of one hour and 40 minutes for each respondent to complete (NSFH, n.d.). Some respondents may have chosen not to fully participate in such a lengthy survey (G. Fox, personal communication, March 9, 2005).

Missing values analyses were conducted and examined for all the hypotheses. Out of the base sample of 1755 fathers, sample sizes for the hypotheses varied in range from 170 to 859 cases. Imputation was not considered a viable option in that values would have to be imputed for from 52% to 88% of the cases. Variable deletion was utilized for two hypotheses; this is discussed further, below. The SPSS default to listwise deletion was used for each of the analyses. A decision was made to determine whether included and excluded cases were significantly different on several demographic predictor variables, using binary logistic regression.

Weighting

As discussed in Chapter One, a few target groups were oversampled in the NSFH. Although case weights are available in the NSFH files, all analyses in this study were based on unweighted data, as recommended by Winship and Radbill (1994) and Fox (personal communication, October 21, 2004). Winship and Radbill have stated that unweighted analyses are preferred when sampling weights are "solely a function of the

independent variables" in the model, because they are "unbiased, consistent, and have smaller standard errors than weighted estimates" (p. 230).

Results of Analyses

As noted in Chapter Two, there are six hypotheses for this study. Of these, Hypotheses 3 and 6 include two different, but similar dependent variables related to the perceived quality of fathers' relationships to their focal children, based on whether that child was 5-17 years old or under age five. For each of these hypotheses, separate analyses were conducted for each age group and were labeled H3a and H6a, for children ages 5-17 and H3b and H6b, for children under age five.

For each of the hypotheses in the study, there are four tables: 1) descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations; 2) a summary of the regression analysis; 3) a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases both included and excluded from the analyses; and 4) a summary of the binary logistic regression used to test whether the included and excluded cases are significantly different. A narrative discussion addressing the assumptions that must be met when using regression and the results of the analyses for each hypothesis accompanies the related tables. Tolerance, or the amount of variance in one independent variable not accounted for by the others, was examined for each regression analysis. No problems with multicollinearity were indicated.

Hypothesis 1 (H1)

Fathers (F2) whose own fathers (F1) are involved with them will report high quality of relationship with their own fathers. See Table 4 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The independent variables labeled *How Often Saw Father Last Year* and *How Often Communicate Father Last Year* were coded 1 for "not at all," 2 for

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H1 (N=232)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. *Relationship with Father*	-						
2. *How Often Saw Father Last Year*	.51***	-					
3. *How Often Communicate w/ Father*	.52***	.61***	-				
4. *Father Help w/ Errands*	.14*	.26***	.20**	-			
5. *Father Help w/ House Work*	.13*	.26***	.21**	.48***	-		
6. *Father Help w/ Child Care/Work*	.08	.21**	.18**	.40***	.61***	-	
7. *Father Help w/ Child Care/Other*	.11*	.20**	.17**	.52***	.34***	.57***	-
M	6.68	3.22	3.56	.03	.03	.01	.02
SD	2.72	1.51	1.51	.18	.18	.11	.13

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

"once a year," 3 for "several times a year," 4 for "one to three times per month," 5 for "once a week," and 6 for "more than once a week." The independent variables labeled *Father Help with Errands, Father Help with Housework, Father Help with Child Care/Work*, and *Father Help with Child Care/Other* were coded 0 if they had not received help from parents or if someone other than their fathers had helped them and 1 if they received help from their fathers. The dependent variable was perceived quality of *Relationship with Father*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. A non-directional hypothesis was tested because a result in either direction would be important.

An examination of the histogram of the residuals did not reveal any reason to believe the residuals were not distributed normally. An examination of the scatterplot of the studentized residuals and predicted values suggested a possible problem with homogeneity of variance; therefore, the results should be interpreted with some caution. Cook's D was examined to determine whether there were any outliers, i.e. unusual or

atypical data points. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases, indicating that influential outliers were not identified.

Quality of relationship (QR) with father was regressed on the independent variables. Results indicated that F1 father involvement overall accounted for 33% of the variance in QR. According to Cohen's (1988) conventions, this represents a large effect size. However, results indicated only partial confirmation of the specific hypothesis. Only two of the independent variables, *How Often Saw Father Last Year* and *How Often Communicate with Father* were significant. See Table 5.

Because these two variables were missing in 82% of the cases, an additional regression analysis was conducted, using only the four remaining independent variables (N = 713). The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(4,708) = 2.19$, $p = .08$.

The possibility was explored that age, marital status, race, completed education, and annual household income would predict whether cases were included or excluded from the analysis due to missing values on some or all of the variables. Non-directional hypotheses were tested because a result in either direction would be important for each variable.

Table 5
Relationship with Father (F1) Regressed on Father Involvement (N=232)

Variable	β	B	SE B
How Often Saw Father Last Year	.31***	.55	.13
How Often Communicate w/ Father	.34***	.61	.12
Father Help w/ Errands	-.00	-.04	1.04
Father Help w/ House Work	.01	.10	1.10
Father Help w/ Child Care/Work	-.06	-1.53	1.89
Father Help w/ Child Care/Other	.03	.61	1.52

Note: $R^2 = .33$, $F(6,225) = 18.46$, $p = .000$
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

See Table 6 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses.

Inclusion/exclusion status was the dependent variable. Included cases were assigned a 0 (no missing data) and excluded cases were assigned a 1 (missing data on one or more variables). Of the independent variables, age and education were measured in years, marital status was coded as 0 (not married) or 1 (married), and income was measured in dollars. Race was dummy coded, with European-American as the reference category.

Inclusion/exclusion status was regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income, using binary logistic regression. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 107.95, N = 1708, $\underline{p}$ = .000). More specifically, older F2 fathers were more likely to be excluded from the analysis due to missing data on one or more variables. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 7.

Hypothesis 2 (H2)

Fathers (F2) whose own fathers (F1) are emotionally supportive will report the highest quality of relationship with their fathers. See Table 8 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The independent variable was *Father's Emotional Support*, coded as 0 if F2 fathers had not received emotional support from parents or if they had received emotional support from someone other than their fathers and 1 if they had received emotional support from fathers. The dependent variable was perceived quality of *Relationship with Father*, as in H1, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. A non-directional hypothesis was tested because a result in either direction would be important.

Table 6

H1 Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=232)		Age (N=1523)	
Range: 25-54		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 35.57		Mean: 42.26	
SD: 5.69		SD: 10.65	
Marital Status (N=232)		Marital Status (N=1523)	
Married	89.7	Married	89.0
Not married	10.3	Not married	11.0
Race (N=231)		Race (N=1523)	
European-American	74.0	European-American	76.4
African-American	15.2	African-American	14.4
Hispanic	9.1	Hispanic	7.9
Other	1.7	Other	1.3
Completed Education (N=230)		Completed Education (N=1520)	
<High school	13.9	<High school	14.5
High school diploma/GED	37.0	High school diploma/GED	33.0
Some college, no degree	23.0	Some college, no degree	18.8
Associate degree	5.2	Associate degree	4.6
Bachelor degree	11.3	Bachelor degree	17.7
Advanced degree	9.6	Advanced degree	11.4
Annual Household Income (N= 228)		Annual Household Income (N= 1485)	
Range: $0-609,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $48,678		Mean: $53,336	
Median: $41,675		Median: $47,000	
SD: 49,314		SD: 40,949	

Table 7

Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H1(N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.10***	.01	1.10
Marital status	.20	.26	1.22
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	-.28	.22	.76
Hispanic (2)	-.22	.27	.80
Other (3)	-.26	.57	.77
Completed education	.00	.03	1.01
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 107.95$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H2 (N=849)

Variable	1	2
1. Relationship with Father	-	
2. Father's Emotional Support	.10**	-
M	7.28	.08
SD	.08	.27

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases. An examination of the histogram of the residuals did not reveal any reason to believe the residuals were not distributed normally. An examination of the scatterplot of the studentized residuals and predicted values suggested a possible problem with homogeneity of variance. Levene's test was appropriate for this analysis and was significant (p = .000), indicating the assumption has been violated. The ratio of the group sample sizes was greater than 1.5; therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was conducted. This test was significant (p = .04). Quality of relationship (QR) with father was regressed on the independent variable. Results indicated that *Father's Emotional Support* accounted for .9% of the variance in QR, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). F2 fathers who indicated they had received emotional support from their F1 fathers were more likely to report higher quality of relationship with their fathers. See Table 9.

A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 10 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant (X^2 [7] = 288.41, N = 1708, p = .000). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded, as were African-American fathers.

Table 9
Relationship with Father (F1) Regressed on Fathers' Emotional Support (N=849)

Variable	β	B	SE B
Fathers' Emotional Support	.10**	.87	.31

Note: R^2 = .009, $F(1,847) = 7.74$, $p = .006$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 10

H2 Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=849)		Age (N=906)	
Range: 24-58		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 35.57		Mean: 45.19	
SD: 6.50		SD: 11.80	
Marital Status (N=849)		Marital Status (N=906)	
Married	90.7	Married	87.5
Not married	9.3	Not married	12.5
Race (N=848)		Race (N=906)	
European-American	80.3	European-American	72.1
African-American	10.9	African-American	17.9
Hispanic	7.4	Hispanic	8.7
Other	1.4	Other	1.3
Completed Education (N=846)		Completed Education (N=904)	
<High school	11.6	<High school	17.0
High school diploma/GED	34.2	High school diploma/GED	33.0
Some college, no degree	20.4	Some college, no degree	18.3
Associate degree	5.3	Associate degree	4.2
Bachelor degree	16.9	Bachelor degree	16.8
Advanced degree	11.6	Advanced degree	10.7
Annual Household Income (N= 838)		Annual Household Income (N=875)	
Range: $0-609,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $52,400		Mean: $53,017	
Median: $45,000		Median: $48,000	
SD: 42,864		SD: 41,520	

The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 11.

Hypothesis 3a (H3a)

There will be a curvilinear relationship between fathers' (F2) quality of relationships with their own fathers (F1) and with their children (F3), ages 5-17. The sample included 557 respondents. The dependent variable was *Relationship with Focal Child, ages 5-17*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. The independent variable was *Relationship with Father*, also measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. See Table 12 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations.

Non-directional hypotheses were tested because a result in either direction would be important. To examine the curvilinear effect of *Relationship with Father* on *Relationship with Focal Child, Relationship with Father* was entered into the regression equation first, and then *Relationship with Father squared* was added to the equation. As shown in Table 13, there was a statistically significant curvilinear relationship between

Table 11
Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H2 (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.10***	.01	1.10
Marital status	.20	.19	1.22
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	.41*	.16	1.50
Hispanic (2)	.11	.20	1.11
Other (3)	.35	.45	1.42
Completed education	-.03	.02	.97
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 288.41$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H3a, Focal Child, ages 5-17 (N=557)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Relationship with Focal Child	-		
2. Relationship with Father	.20***	-	
3. Relationship with Father^2	.24***	.96***	-
M	8.55	7.35	60.40
SD	1.44	2.53	29.96

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 13

Curvilinear Regression of Relationship with Focal Child, ages 5-17 (F3), on Relationship with Father (F1) (N=557)

Block/Variables	B	β	t	p (two-tailed)
Block 1				
Relationship with Father	.11	.20	4.7	.000
Block 2				
Relationship with Father^2	.03	.69	4.8	.000

Note: $R^2_{\text{change}} = .03$, $F_{\text{change}}(1,554) = 20.06$, $p = .000$. *Total* $R^2 = .07$, $F(2,554) = 21.44$, $p = .000$.

Relationship with Father and *Relationship with Focal Child*. A plot of *Relationship with Focal Child* with the unstandardized predicted values, from the regression equation including *Relationship with Father* and *Relationship with Father squared*, was examined to determine the nature of the curvilinear relationship. This plot indicated that the higher the perceived quality of *Relationship with Father*, beginning with a value of 4 on the 0 to 10 scale, the higher the perceived quality of the *Relationship with the Focal Child*. However, between the values 0 and 4, the inverse is true, e.g. at a value of 0 on *Relationship with Father*, perceived quality of *Relationship with Focal Child* is about the same as that for a value of 8. The perceived quality of *Relationship with Focal Child* then declines steadily as *Relationship with Father* increases from 0 to 4. See Figure 1. An examination of the plot of the studentized residuals with the standardized predicted values of *Relationship with Focal Child* does not suggest heteroscedasticity and the histogram of the residuals does not suggest a serious violation of the normality assumption. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases.

A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 14 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 108.36, N = 1708, $\underline{p}$ = .000). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded, as were African-American fathers. Fathers with more years of education were less likely to be excluded. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 15.

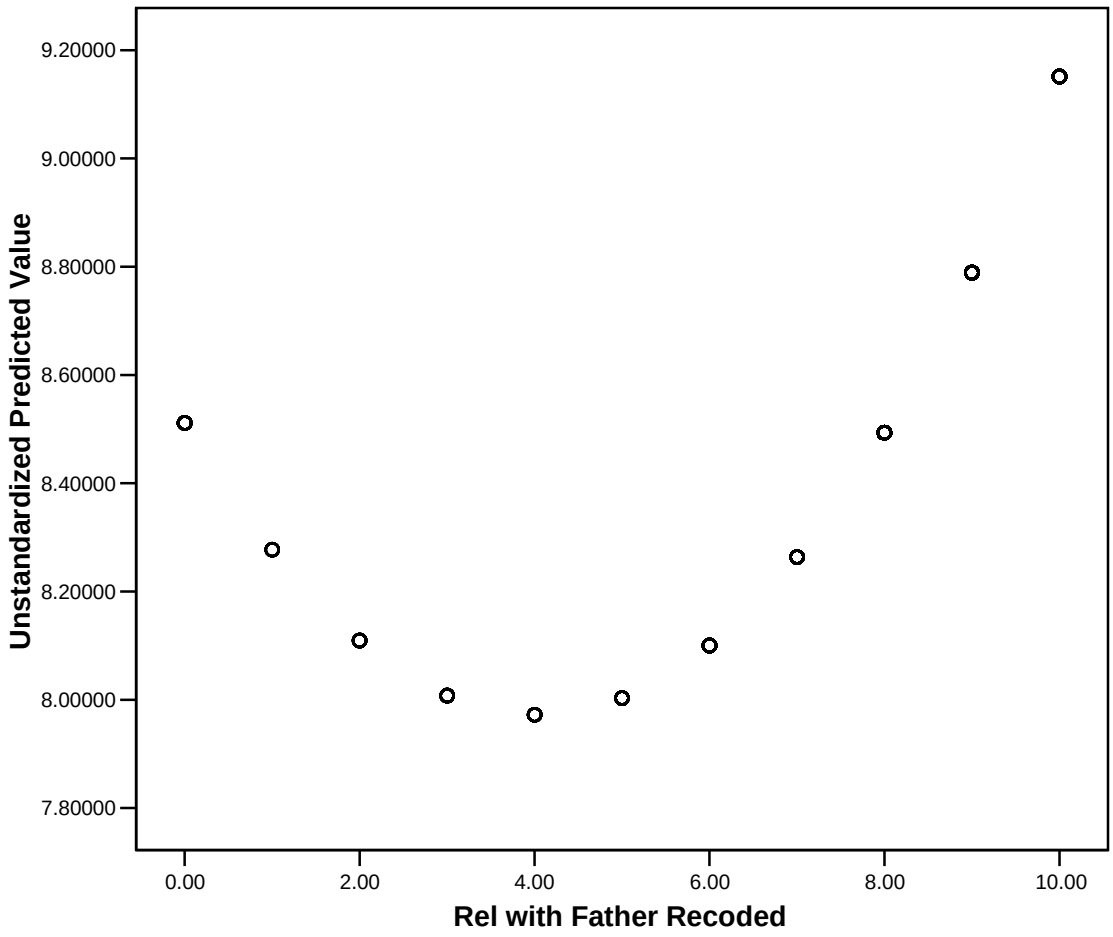

Figure 1: Curvilinearity Graph for Hypothesis 3a
Focal Child, ages 5-17

Table 14
H3a Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics, Focal Child, ages 5-17

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=557)		Age (N=1198)	
Range: 25-57		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 37.98		Mean: 42.96	
SD: 5.27		SD: 11.72	
Marital Status (N=557)		Marital Status (N=1198)	
Married	90.3	Married	88.5
Not married	9.7	Not married	11.5
Race (N=556)		Race (N=1198)	
European-American	81.3	European-American	73.6
African-American	9.5	African-American	16.8
Hispanic	8.1	Hispanic	8.1
Other	1.1	Other	1.5
Completed Education (N=555)		Completed Education (N=1195)	
<High school	10.1	<High school	16.4
High school diploma/GED	35.3	High school diploma/GED	32.7
Some college, no degree	20.4	Some college, no degree	18.8
Associate degree	4.7	Associate degree	4.8
Bachelor degree	17.7	Bachelor degree	16.5
Advanced degree	11.8	Advanced degree	10.8
Annual Household Income (N=546)		Annual Household Income (N=1167)	
Range: $0-421,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $50,983		Mean: $53,526	
Median: $45,000		Median: $47,000	
SD: 36,408		SD: 44,605	

Table 15
Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H3a (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.05***	.01	1.06
Marital status	.15	.19	1.16
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	.54**	.18	1.71
Hispanic (2)	-.06	.20	.94
Other (3)	.76	.52	2.13
Completed education	-.06**	.02	.94
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 108.36$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b)

There will be a curvilinear relationship between fathers' (F2) quality of relationships with their own fathers (F1) and with their children (F3), under age 5. The sample included 131 respondents. The dependent variable was *Relationship with Focal Child, under age 5*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. The independent variable was *Relationship with Father*, also measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. See Table 16 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations.

Non-directional hypotheses were tested because a result in either direction would be important. To examine the curvilinear effect of *Relationship with Father* on *Relationship with Focal Child, Relationship with Father* was entered into the regression equation first, and then *Relationship with Father squared* was added to the equation. As shown in Table 17, there was not a statistically significant curvilinear relationship between *Relationship with Father* and *Relationship with Focal Child*. However,

Table 16
Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H3b, Focal Child, under age 5 (N= 131)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Relationship with Focal Child	-		
2. Relationship with Father	.30***	-	
3. Relationship with Father^2	.32***	.96***	-
M	9.24	7.63	62.18
SD	.98	2.01	25.02

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. $p < .001$.

Table 17
Curvilinear Regression of Relationship with Focal Child, under age 5 (F3), on Relationship with Father (F1) (N=131)

Block/Variables	B	β	t	p (two-tailed)
Block 1				
Relationship with Father	.14	.30	3.53	.001
Block 2				
Relationship with Father^2	.02	.45	1.53	.13

Note: $R^2_{\text{change}} = .02$, $F_{\text{change}}(1,128) = 2.33$, $p = .13$. *Total* $R^2 = .11$, $F(2,128) = 7.47$, $p = .001$.

there was a statistically significant positive linear relationship between the two variables. The observed power was .84 (alpha = .05).

An examination of the plot of the studentized residuals with the standardized predicted values of Relationship with Focal Child does not suggest heteroscedasticity. The histogram of the residuals does not suggest a serious violation of the normality assumption. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases.

A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 18 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 249.32, N = 1708, $\underline{p}$ = .000). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded, and fathers with more years of education were less likely to be excluded. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 19.

Hypothesis 4 (H4)

"Quality of relationship" with fathers' (F2) own fathers (F1) will be positively associated with involvement and emotional support received from father. See Table 20 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The independent variables labeled *How Often Saw Father Last Year, How Often Communicate Father Last Year, Father Help with Errands, Father Help with Housework, Father Help with Child Care/Work,Father Help with Child Care/Other,* and *Father's Emotional Support* were coded as described above for H1 and H2. The dependent variable was perceived quality of *Relationship with Father*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating

Table 18
H3b Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics
Focal Child, under age 5

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=131)		Age (N=1624)	
Range: 25-45		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 31.57		Mean: 42.17	
SD: 4.29		SD: 10.33	
Marital Status (N=131)		Marital Status (N=1624)	
Married	90.1	Married	89.0
Not married	9.9	Not married	11.0
Race (N=131)		Race (N=1623)	
European-American	81.7	European-American	75.6
African-American	10.7	African-American	14.8
Hispanic	5.3	Hispanic	8.3
Other	2.3	Other	1.3
Completed Education (N=130)		Completed Education (N=1620)	
<High school	10.8	<High school	14.7
High school diploma/GED	29.2	High school diploma/GED	33.9
Some college, no degree	17.7	Some college, no degree	19.4
Associate degree	6.1	Associate degree	4.6
Bachelor degree	23.1	Bachelor degree	16.4
Advanced degree	13.1	Advanced degree	11.0
Annual Household Income (N=131)		Annual Household Income (N=1582)	
Range: $0-340,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $51,110		Mean: $52,848	
Median: $44,000		Median: $46,126	
SD: 41,909		SD: 42,204	

Table 19

Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H3b (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.28***	.03	1.32
Marital status	.62	.36	1.86
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	.10	.35	1.10
Hispanic (2)	.03	.44	1.03
Other (3)	-.42	.68	.66
Completed education	-.23***	.05	.80
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 249.32$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 20

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H4 (N=215)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Relationship with Father	-							
2. How Often Saw Father Last Year	.53***	-						
3. How Often Communicate w/ Father	.53***	.62***	-					
4. Father Help w/ Errands	.15*	.27***	.21**	-				
5. Father Help w/ House Work	.14*	.27***	.23***	.48***	-			
6. Father Help w/ Child Care/Work	.09	.22**	.20**	.40***	.61***	-		
7. Father Help w/ Child Care/Other	.12*	.21**	.18**	.52***	.34***	.57***	-	
8. Father Emotional Support	.23***	.33***	.30***	.34***	.34***	.29***	.24***	-
M	6.55	3.20	3.52	.04	.04	.01	.02	.14
SD	2.76	1.52	1.51	.19	.19	.12	.14	.35

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

higher quality of relationship. A non-directional hypothesis was tested because a result in either direction would be important.

An examination of the histogram of the residuals did not reveal any reason to believe the residuals were not distributed normally. An examination of the scatterplot of the studentized residuals and predicted values suggested a possible problem with homogeneity of variance; therefore, the results should be interpreted with some caution. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases.

Quality of relationship (QR) with father was regressed on the independent variables. Results indicated that F1 father involvement and emotional support overall accounted for 35% of the variance in QR. According to Cohen's (1988) conventions, this represents a large effect size. However, results indicated only partial confirmation of the specific hypothesis. Only two of the independent variables, *How Often Saw Father Last Year* and *How Often Communicate with Father* were significant. See Table 21.

Table 21
"Quality of Relationship" with Fathers (F1) Regressed on Father Involvement and Emotional Support (N=215)

Variable	β	B	SE B
How Often Saw Father Last Year	.32***	.58	.13
How Often Communicate w/ Father	.33***	.61	.13
Father Help w/ Errands	-.01	-.14	1.05
Father Help w/ House Work	.00	.03	1.12
Father Help w/ Child Care/Work	-.07	-1.67	1.90
Father Help w/ Child Care/Other	.03	.61	1.53
Father Emotional Support	.04	.33	.50

Note: $R^2 = .35$, $F(7,207) = 15.96$, $p = .000$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Because these two variables were missing in 82% of the cases, an additional regression analysis was conducted, using only the five remaining independent variables (N = 642). The overall model was not statistically significant, $\underline{F}(5,636) = 1.91$, $\underline{p} = .09$.

A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 22 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 97.22, N = 1708, $\underline{p} = .000$). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 23.

Hypothesis 5 (H5)

"Quality of relationship" with children (F3)(ages 5-17) will be positively associated with involvement, emotional support, and physical affection. See Table 24 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The independent variables labeled *Number of Hours 1 on 1 (last week)* and *Number Times Kiss/Hug/Week* were coded simply as 1 through 50 and 1 through 99, respectively. The independent variables labeled *Time How Often Talk/Worrisome (last 30 days)* and *How Often Talk/Exciting (last 30 days)* and were coded 0 for "never," 1 for "once a month," 2 for "two or three times per month," 3 for "about once a week," 4 for "several times a week," and 5 for "almost every day." The dependent variable was perceived quality of *Relationship with Child, ages 5-17*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. A non-directional hypothesis was tested because a result in either direction would be important.

Table 22

H4 Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=215)		Age (N=1540)	
Range: 25-54		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 35.61		Mean: 42.18	
SD: 5.69		SD: 10.64	
Marital Status (N=215)		Marital Status (N=1540)	
Married	89.8	Married	89.0
Not married	10.2	Not married	11.0
Race (N=214)		Race (N=1540)	
European-American	74.3	European-American	76.3
African-American	14.0	African-American	14.5
Hispanic	9.8	Hispanic	7.9
Other	1.9	Other	1.3
Completed Education (N=213)		Completed Education (N=1537)	
<High school	12.7	<High school	14.6
High school diploma/GED	37.1	High school diploma/GED	33.1
Some college, no degree	24.4	Some college, no degree	18.6
Associate degree	5.6	Associate degree	4.6
Bachelor degree	11.3	Bachelor degree	17.6
Advanced degree	8.9	Advanced degree	11.5
Annual Household Income (N=211)		Annual Household Income (N=1502)	
Range: $0-609,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $47,939		Mean: $53,387	
Median: $42,500		Median: $47,000	
SD: 46,460		SD: 41,507	

Table 23

Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H4 (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.09***	.01	1.10
Marital status	.19	.26	1.21
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	-.16	.23	.85
Hispanic (2)	-.29	.28	.74
Other (3)	-.35	.57	.70
Completed education	.01	.03	1.01
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 97.23$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 24

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H5 (N=558)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Relationship with Child	-				
2. Number of Hours 1 on 1 Time	.09*	-			
3. How Often Talk/Worrisome	-.05	.20***	-		
4. How Often Talk/Exciting	.10**	.13**	.25***	-	
5. Number Times Kiss/Hug/Week	.15***	.08*	.06	.20***	-
M	8.80	4.82	1.97	3.61	11.13
SD	1.14	5.43	1.33	1.13	14.47

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

An examination of the histogram of the residuals did not reveal any reason to believe the residuals were not distributed normally. An examination of the scatterplot of the studentized residuals and predicted values did not reveal any reason to believe the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases.

Quality of relationship (QR) with child was regressed on the independent variables. Results indicated that involvement, emotional support, and physical affection overall accounted for 4% of the variance in QR, for a small to medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). Furthermore, results indicated each of the independent variables was significant. See Table 25.

A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 26 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 57.05, N = 1708, $\underline{p}$ = .000). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded. Married fathers and those with more

Table 25
"Quality of Relationship" with Children, ages 5-17, Regressed on Involvement, Emotional Support, and Physical Affection (N=558)

Variable	β	B	SE B
1. Number of Hours 1 on 1 Time	.09*	.02	.01
2. How Often Talk/Worrisome	-.10*	-.08	.04
3. How Often Talk/Exciting	.09*	.09	.04
4. Number Times Kiss/Hug/Week	.13**	.01	.00

Note: R^2 = .04, $F(4,553) = 5.98$, p = .000
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p <.001.

Table 26

H5 Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=558)		Age (N=1197)	
Range: 26-68		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 39.39		Mean: 42.30	
SD: 6.52		SD: 11.65	
Marital Status (N=558)		Marital Status (N=1197)	
Married	92.8	Married	87.3
Not married	7.2	Not married	12.7
Race (N=557)		Race (N=1197)	
European-American	79.2	European-American	74.6
African-American	12.4	African-American	15.5
Hispanic	7.7	Hispanic	8.2
Other	.7	Other	1.7
Completed Education (N=557)		Completed Education (N=1193)	
<High school	8.4	<High school	17.2
High school diploma/GED	31.2	High school diploma/GED	34.6
Some college, no degree	23.2	Some college, no degree	17.5
Associate degree	5.2	Associate degree	4.5
Bachelor degree	18.0	Bachelor degree	16.4
Advanced degree	14.0	Advanced degree	9.8
Annual Household Income (N=548)		Annual Household Income (N=1165)	
Range: $0-421,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $54,453		Mean: $51,898	
Median: $47,000		Median: $45,500	
SD: 38,252		SD: 43,887	

education were less likely to be excluded. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 27.

Hypothesis 6a (H6a)

Higher quality relationships with children (F3), ages 5-17, will be evident in more stable environments. See Table 28 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The independent variables labeled *Age* and *Completed Education* were coded in years. *Race* was dummy coded, with European-American used as the reference category. *Marital Status* was coded as 0 for "not married" and 1 for "married." *Number of Weeks Worked/Year* was coded 0 through 52. *Income/Poverty Ratio* was computed as a ratio of total household income to poverty line for the household. The dependent variable was perceived quality of *Relationship with Focal Child, ages 5-17*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. A non-directional hypothesis was tested because a result in either direction would be important.

An examination of the histogram of the residuals did not reveal any reason to believe the residuals were not distributed normally. An examination of the scatterplot of the studentized residuals and predicted values did not reveal any reason to believe the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases.

Quality of relationship (QR) with focal child was regressed on the independent variables. Results indicated that the independent variables overall accounted for 2.1% of the variance in QR, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). However, only one independent variable, African-American, was significant. See Table 29.

Table 27

Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H5 (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.03***	.01	1.03
Marital status	-.45*	.20	.64
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	.04	.16	1.04
Hispanic (2)	-.15	.20	.86
Other (3)	.96	.56	2.61
Completed education	-.09***	.02	.91
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 57.05$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 28

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H6a, Focal Child, ages 5-17 (N=859)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Rel w/Child	-									
2. Age	-.06*	-								
3. Euro-American	-.11***	-.01	-							
4. Afr-American	.11**	.04	-.70***	-						
5. Hispanic	.04	-.03	-.60***	-.12***	-					
6. Other	-.02	.03	-.19***	-.04	-.03	-				
7. Education	-.06*	.19***	.24***	-.07*	-.27***	.01	-			
8. Marital Status	-.01	-.04	.08*	-.06	-.02	-.09**	.09**	-		
9. # wks worked/yr	.02	-.03	.04	.04	-.07*	-.08**	.15***	.17***	-	
10. Inc/Pov Ratio	-.06	.16***	.12***	-.06*	-.11***	.03	.35***	-.01	.04	-
M	8.54	39.38					13.51	.92	49.75	3.85
SD	1.45	6.57					2.77	.28	7.85	3.32

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 29
Relationship with Focal Child, ages 5-17 (F3), Regressed on Environment (N=859)

Variable	β	B	SE B
Age	-.06	-.01	.01
Race			
European-American			
African-American	.11	.50**	.15
Hispanic	.05	.24	.18
Other	-.06	-.08	.49
Completed Education	-.02	-.01	.02
Marital Status	-.01	-.05	.18
# Weeks Worked/Year	.02	.00	.01
Income/Poverty Ratio	-.03	-.01	.02

Note: $R^2 = .02$, $F(8,850) = 2.32$, $p = .02$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 30 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 70.55, N = 1708, $\underline{p}$ = .000). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded. Hispanic fathers and fathers with more education were less likely to be excluded. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 31.

Hypothesis 6b (H6b)

Higher quality relationships with children (F3), under age 5, will be evident in more stable environments. See Table 32 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The independent variables were the same as those for H6a. The dependent

Table 30
H6a Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics
Focal Child, ages 5-17

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=859)		Age (N=896)	
Range: 25-68		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 39.38		Mean: 43.29	
SD: 6.57		SD: 12.75	
Marital Status (N=859)		Marital Status (N=896)	
Married	91.5	Married	86.7
Not married	8.5	Not married	13.3
Race (N=859)		Race (N=895)	
European-American	77.8	European-American	74.4
African-American	12.0	African-American	16.9
Hispanic	9.2	Hispanic	7.0
Other	1.0	Other	1.7
Completed Education (N=859)		Completed Education (N=891)	
<High school	10.1	<High school	18.5
High school diploma/GED	35.4	High school diploma/GED	31.8
Some college, no degree	20.8	Some college, no degree	17.8
Associate degree	4.8	Associate degree	4.7
Bachelor degree	16.8	Bachelor degree	17.0
Advanced degree	12.1	Advanced degree	10.2
Annual Household Income (N=842)		Annual Household Income (N=871)	
Range: $0-700,200		Range: $0-609,000	
Mean: $53,660		Mean: $51,802	
Median: $46,800		Median: $46,000	
SD: 41,593		SD: 42,728	

Table 31

Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H6a (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.03***	.00	1.04
Marital status	-.26	.18	.77
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	.18	.15	1.19
Hispanic (2)	-.42*	.19	.66
Other (3)	.74	.48	2.11
Completed education	-.06**	.02	.95
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 70.55$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 32

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations for H6b, Focal Child, under age 5 (N=170)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Rel w/Child	-									
2. Age	-.08	-								
3. Euro-American	.00	.10	-							
4. Afr-American	.08	-.12	-.66***	-						
5. Hispanic	-.03	-.10	-.58***	-.09	-					
6. Other	-.10	.14*	-.33***	-.05	-.04	-				
7. Education	-.02	.43***	.14*	-.08	-.18**	.10	-			
8. Marital Status	.08	.07	.15*	-.17*	-.06	.05	.21**	-		
9. # wks worked/yr	.05	.19**	.20**	-.01	-.30***	.02	.27***	.07	-	
10. Inc/Pov Ratio	-.01	.40***	.28***	-.15*	-.24**	-.01	.48***	.15*	.19**	-
M	9.20	32.20					13.95	.90	49.95	3.84
SD	1.06	4.54					2.84	.30	7.58	2.74

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

variable was perceived quality of *Relationship with Focal Child, under age 5*, measured on a 0 to 10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher quality of relationship. A non-directional hypothesis was tested because a result in either direction would be important.

An examination of the histogram of the residuals did not reveal any reason to believe the residuals were not distributed normally. An examination of the scatterplot of the studentized residuals and predicted values did not reveal any reason to believe theassumption of homogeneity of variance was violated. Cook's D was less than 1 for all cases. Results indicated the overall model was not statistically significant. See Table 33. A binary logistic regression of included and excluded cases was conducted as described for H1. See Table 34 for a summary of the demographic characteristics of cases included and excluded from the analyses. Inclusion/exclusion status was again regressed on age, marital status, race, education, and income. The overall model was statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ [7] = 288.41, N = 1708, $\underline{p}$ = .000). More specifically, older fathers were again more likely to be excluded, as were married fathers. Fathers with more years of education were less likely to be excluded. The other predictors were not statistically significant. See Table 35.

Table 33

Relationship with Focal Child, under age 5 (F3), Regressed on Environment (N=170)

Variable	β	B	SE B
Age	-.07	-.02	.02
Race			
European-American			
African-American	.08	.31	.30
Hispanic	-.01	-.05	.34
Other	-.10	-.66	.55
Completed Education	-.02	-.01	.04
Marital Status	.10	.36	.28
# Weeks Worked/Year	.06	.01	.01
Income/Poverty Ratio	.00	.00	.04

Note: $R^2 = .03$, $F(8,161) = .71$, $p = .68$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 34
H6b Included and Excluded Cases: Summary Demographic Characteristics
Focal Child under age 5

Characteristics of Included Cases	%	Characteristics of Excluded Cases	%
Age (N=170)		Age (N=1585)	
Range: 25-45		Range: 24-92	
Mean: 32.21		Mean: 42.36	
SD: 4.54		SD: 10.36	
Marital Status (N=170)		Marital Status (N=1585)	
Married	90.0	Married	89.0
Not married	10.0	Not married	11.0
Race (N=170)		Race (N=1584)	
European-American	81.8	European-American	75.4
African-American	8.8	African-American	15.1
Hispanic	7.1	Hispanic	8.2
Other	2.4	Other	1.3
Completed Education (N=170)		Completed Education (N=1580)	
<High school	10.6	<High school	14.8
High school diploma/GED	28.2	High school diploma/GED	34.1
Some college, no degree	19.4	Some college, no degree	19.3
Associate degree	4.7	Associate degree	4.8
Bachelor degree	22.4	Bachelor degree	16.3
Advanced degree	14.7	Advanced degree	10.7
Annual Household Income (N=170)		Annual Household Income (N=1543)	
Range: $0-340,000		Range: $0-700,200	
Mean: $51,423		Mean: $52,858	
Median: $46,176		Median: $46,000	
SD: 38,443		SD: 42,572g	

Table 35

Binary Logistic Regression of Included and Excluded Cases for H6b (N=1708)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*OR*
Age	.26***	.02	1.30
Marital status	.68*	.32	1.98
Race			
European-American			
African-American (1)	.29	.32	1.33
Hispanic (2)	-.31	.36	.73
Other (3)	-.43	.61	.65
Completed education	-.24***	.04	.79
Total household income	.00	.00	1.00

Note. $\chi^2(7) = 288.41$.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Chapter Four

Discussion

Although it appears that men are often interested in being "good" fathers, researchers have not always asked them directly about their wishes, needs, and experiences. Social work has also been remiss in this duty, generally limiting its inquiries about fathering to interest in absent, non-custodial, adolescent, and abusing fathers and the payment of child support. The importance of asking fathers about fathering is particularly meaningful in light of social work's tenet to begin where the client is (Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen, 2002).

A review of the relevant literature provides support for exploring fathers' perceptions of their relationships with their own fathers as starting points for defining and determining their own fathering behavior. This has rarely been addressed in previous research--most frequently in small, qualitative studies. Although respondents in these studies do represent some diversity in age, socio-economic levels, race, and ethnicity, the sample sizes were too small and limited in scope to apply the findings to fathers in general. However, this preliminary evidence suggests that fathers themselves think fathers should be present and involved, and provide love, caring, and/or be responsive to their child's emotional needs. The wish for an emotional connection with their own fathers was the most frequent and significant need mentioned as missing or lacking by fathers who were interviewed in the previous studies, even among fathers whose own fathers had been present and involved with them.

This study utilized a subsample of fathers from a large nationally representative data set to test and expand what we have learned from several smaller qualitative studies of fathers. A major goal of this study was to examine more closely what fathers themselves say about fathers and fathering and the implications of their perceptions. The findings in this study are convergent with those of previous studies, indicating that time together, communication, and affection appear to be important characteristics related to the quality of the father-child relationship.

An additional goal of this study was to place the study of fathering in a theoretical framework that aptly acknowledges and accommodates the complexities of the subject. Social work utilizes an ecological systems perspective to provide a framework for understanding individuals and their relationships across contexts. This study utilized and examined the Person-Process-Context-Time model (PPCT), an ecological systems framework developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1995). Unexpectedly, Bronfrenbrenner's assertion that stable environments have a positive effect on some or all aspects of effective psychological functioning was challenged, perhaps lending insight to the development of a broader definition of stability.

The following discussion includes major and unexpected findings of this study; outcomes of the explorations related to the demographic comparisons of included and excluded cases; strengths and limitations of the study; and implications for practice, policy, and research.

Major and Unexpected Findings

Major Findings

The more fathers saw and communicated with their own fathers, the higher quality of relationship they indicated they had with their fathers. Fathers' involvement with their children has been characterized as time spent, tasks, and types of involvement (Pleck, 1997; Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2000). Findings from the previous qualitative studies indicated that fathers themselves have said that fathers should be present and involved with their children (Cordell et al., 1980; Pruett, 1989; Anderson, 1996; Silverstein et al., 1999; Kost, 2001; Glikman, 2004).

In this study, fathers were asked how often they saw and communicated with their own fathers in the last year. Tasks and types of involvement were characterized as various kinds of help from fathers' own fathers, i.e. help with errands, house work, and child care given while at work and at other times. Except for help with child care, while at work, all these forms of help were significantly related to each other, to the frequency of visits and communication, to emotional support, and to the quality of relationships among fathers and their fathers. (Perhaps receiving help with child care while working is seen as less indicative of an overall willingness to be available and helpful and is more of a necessity in some families. Or, perhaps fathers' own fathers were not available to provide help with child care while the respondent fathers were working because they were working, too.)

The findings in this study, derived from an analysis of a large national probability sample, and utilizing a much larger sample than in the smaller qualitative studies, support and strengthen the notion that fathers believe involvement is important. Furthermore, this

study extends the idea that, not only is involvement important, it appears to be linked to the quality of relationships to fathers' own fathers. In this study, fathers were not being asked specifically to state what fathers "should do," as in the previous studies, but were simply asked about types of involvement they already had with their own fathers. Then, in a separate and unrelated question they were asked to characterize the quality of their relationships to their fathers. This method potentially strengthens the link between involvement and quality of relationship.

This study also provides support for previous research on the nature of involvement, and emphasizes the importance of opportunities to spend time with and communicate with one's father. The nature of the communication (content and process) between fathers and their own fathers is not known, but it might be that it is most meaningful when communication is indicative of emotional support.

Fathers who perceived their own fathers were emotionally supportive reported the highest quality of relationship with their fathers. Respondent fathers were asked whether they had received any advice, encouragement, moral or emotional support from their fathers in the last month. Those who said yes were much more likely to report a higher quality of relationship with their fathers. Assuming that these types of interactions are indicative of an emotional connection between fathers and their own fathers, this finding supports and extends the findings of the qualitative studies. When men perceive they have an emotional connection to their own fathers, it appears they also perceive they have a high quality relationship to their fathers.

The quality of fathers' relationships with their children is significantly related to the quality of their relationships to their own fathers. It has been noted that men use their

experience of their relationships with their fathers as points of reference for determining the nature of their relationships with their own children (Cordell et al., 1980; Anderson, 1996; Pleck, 1997; Silverstein et al., 1999; Fox et al., 2001; Kost, 2001; Goldberg et al., 2002; Glikman, 2004). This study lends support to this idea and to Pleck's (1997) suggestion that fathers either model or compensate for a perceived lack of involvement by their own fathers. When fathers of children ages 5 to 17 perceived the quality of their relationships to their own fathers as "really bad," they reported the quality of their relationships to their children as being much better, about the same as for those men who indicated their relationships with their fathers were closer to "absolutely perfect." It is noteworthy, however, that fathers who indicated their relationships to their fathers were even closer to "absolutely perfect" also reported their relationships with their children were closer to "absolutely perfect." Thus, fathers who perceive they have nearly "absolutely perfect" relationships to their own fathers may have the greatest capability for having nearly "absolutely perfect" relationships with their own children.

Although this study does indicate that the quality of fathers' relationships with their children under age five is also significantly related to the quality of their relationships to their own fathers, it does not lend support to the idea of compensating for a poor relationship with one's own father in the relationship with one's own very young children. It is important to note that the sample size for children under age five (N = 131) was much smaller than for children ages 5 to 17 (N= 557) and the resulting reduction in statistical power might have contributed to the difference in outcomes.

There are several other reasons that fathers of very young children might not compensate initially for a poor relationship with their own fathers. Fathers of very young

children have not had as much time to develop relationships with their children—as Bronfenbrenner (1995) has indicated, "patterns of proximal process" (P. 620) are being established in these early years. Young children require a lot of caretaking and these tasks are more frequently completed by mothers, who often expect to provide more child care than fathers (Danziger & Radin, 1990; Fox, Bruce, & Combs-Orme, 2000). The need to maintain a stable household income requires that at least one parent must work in most families and it is the man who can typically earn the most money. Furthermore, women are often more prepared and expected to perform the role of primary caretaker. While it is true that women are often unreasonably expected to know how to mother, our culture tends to provide more support for them in their role than for fathers.

Perhaps the gatekeeping role of mothers keeps fathers of young children at arm's length in those early years. If mothers are expected to be primary caretakers and define their roles as such, they are less likely to encourage fathers to engage in activities of child care. Interactions with infants and very young children are often labor intensive, mundane, exhausting, and not always gratifying. At times, mothers admit they struggle with the duties of child care. Even if mothers encourage fathers to share these activities, they are still likely to be viewed and to view themselves as the "experts" when it comes to knowing and being able to provide what their children need at any given time. The demanding nature of caring for very young children and cultural support of mothers as primary caregivers can easily influence and contribute to men's lack of confidence and participation in their roles as active fathers of young children.

The results for all children under age 18 reflect an overall trend that fathers in this study reported their relationships with their own children to be of higher quality than the

relationships they had with their fathers. Perhaps this is related to changes in our culture that free men up to spend more time with their children and to engage in interactions that are less defined by more restrictive roles of the past, such as primary breadwinner of the household. However, this trend may simply reflect an overall desire to have better relationships with one's own children than men perceive they had with their own fathers, suggesting that men do value and place importance on their role as fathers.

Time spent together, emotional support, and affection appear to be significant characteristics of high quality relationships between fathers and their children. As noted, Finley and Schwartz (2004) characterized two domains of fathering, expressive and instrumental involvement. Combs-Orme and Renkert (2004) found two domains of caretaking tasks and affection, in a study asking mothers of infants about the fathers' roles. These domains appear to be somewhat consistent with fathers' own statements about what they believe is important for fathers to do.

Expressive involvement (Finley & Schwartz, 2004), is said to include companionship, activities, emotional development, and caregiving. Combs-Orme and Renkert's (2004) domain of caretaking is consistent with expressive involvement. In this study, *time spent* and *emotional support*, as defined by father-child talks, are synonymous with the domain of expressive involvement, but have also emerged as separate and significant characteristics of the quality of fathers' relationships with their children. Furthermore, when emotional support was characterized as how often fathers talked with their children about things that were either worrisome or exciting, both were significant, but talking about something that was worrisome to the children seemed to result in fathers' perceptions of a lower quality of their relationships with their children. Perhaps

fathers felt unsure how to respond or help, or perhaps the more difficult and less positive interactions one might expect to characterize conversations in which children were worried resulted in perceiving a lower quality of relationship. The nature of the worrisome conversations is unknown, but the fact that the fathers' children were worried at all might have contributed to a perception of a lower quality relationship, i.e. fathers might have a sense of responsibility that their relationships with their children should protect them from worries and troubles.

Combs-Orme and Renkert's (2004) domain of affection, while not included or mentioned as a factor in Finley and Schwartz's (2004) domains is strongly supported in this study. *Physical affection*, as characterized by the number of times fathers reported kissing and hugging their children per week, appears to be a very significant characteristic of the quality of relationships among fathers and their children. The results of this study invite the possibility that *time spent, emotional support* (as characterized by father-child talks) and *physical affection* might indeed be important and distinct domains of fathering.

Furthermore, if Garbarino (2000) is correct in stating that children value fathers who spend time with them and are connected to them psychologically, it might well be that these behaviors by fathers would contribute to children's positive assessments of the quality of their relationships with their fathers. If Dick (2004) is correct in stating that the empathic quality of the father-child relationship is an integral element of the child's developing sense of self, then talks about things that are both worrisome and exciting to the child seem imperative. Several authors have noted the importance of warmth and

closeness (Lamb, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2000) and affectional support (Combs-Orme, et al., 2003) in the father-child relationship. It seems fathers would agree.

Unexpected Finding

Implications of the PPCT theoretical perspective. As discussed in Chapter One, proximal processes "serve as mechanisms for actualizing genetic potential" for "effective psychological functioning" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, pp. 569, 571). *Effective psychological functioning* refers to the optimal achievement of developmental outcomes related to perception and response, behavior, stress management, acquisition of knowledge and skill, relationships, and construction of one's environment. Bronfenbrenner (1995) noted that when proximal processes, such as parent-child and child-child activities, solitary or group play, reading, and learning new skills, occur within disadvantaged and unstable environments, we can expect their "effectiveness" in influencing human development to be reduced, "with corresponding disruptive effects on psychological functioning" (p. 640).

The fact that the quality of fathers' relationships with their children was not related to age, education, marital status, number of weeks worked, or income provoked further thought about the definition of "stable." Regarding race, only status as an African American father appeared related to quality of relationship with one's children. It can be argued that all or some of these demographic indicators are not actually related to stability, with the possible exception of income. Therefore, analyses were conducted in which the quality of father-child relationships was examined only as related to income. Among fathers of children ages 5 to 17 (N=917), the results were surprising. Unexpectedly, the lower the income, the higher the perceived quality of the father-child

relationship. When race was also included, status as an African American father again appeared to be significant. These additional analyses were not significant for children under age five (N = 171), perhaps due to reduced statistical power related to the smaller sample size.

In spite of the historical prevalence of defining fathers as breadwinners, it appears that these respondent fathers of lower economic status, with children ages 5 to 17, report they have high quality relationships with their children. And, as suggested by other results obtained in this study, if quality of relationship among fathers and their children is related to time spent, emotional support, and physical affection, perhaps these fathers are defining quality of relationship much more broadly than as culturally prescribed, as fathers in the smaller qualitative studies did.

Somehow, status as an African American father of children ages 5 to 17 is positively related to their perceived quality of relationships to their children. Perhaps these fathers are also defining quality of relationship more broadly, or differently. The primary focus of this study has not been on differences among fathers by race. This outcome invites further exploration of potential differences in defining quality of relationships among various racial groups of fathers.

Demographic Comparisons of Included and Excluded Cases

For each of the hypotheses, older fathers were more likely to have been excluded from the analyses due to one or more missing variables, e.g. they might not have answered all the survey questions used in the analyses. There are several possible explanations for this. Many of the questions posed in the original survey and later utilized as the independent variables in this study were only relevant if the respondent

father had a living father. Therefore, some of the data counted as missing might not have been applicable to some respondents. It is likely that a percentage of fathers in the sample, who ranged in age from 24 to 92, were unable to respond to some questions because their fathers were deceased. It is also likely that older respondent fathers were less likely to have needed and/or received help from their own fathers with errands, housework, and child care. Help with housework and child care has traditionally been the domain of women; thus older respondent fathers might have been less inclined to engage in these activities themselves and their own fathers might have been even less inclined to help in these ways. Help with errands and housework might have been performed by spouses, partners, children, and/or outside help. The need for child care of school-age children might have been limited because of their attendance in school, participation in after-school programs and activities, or latchkey status. Other child care needs may have been met by other family members or paid child care workers and babysitters.

Older fathers are more likely to have older children. Some older respondent fathers were undoubtedly excluded because they did not have children between the ages of 5 and 17, or, for two of the analyses, they might not have had children under age five. This is likely to have contributed to the decreased sample sizes for the two hypotheses tested specifically for children under age five. Because the focus of this study was on fathers' relationships with their children under age 18, and not with adult children, the fact that older fathers were excluded is not surprising. Again, some of the data counted as missing might not have been applicable to some respondents.

Respondent fathers with more education were less likely to be excluded due to missing variables for five of the analyses (H3a, H3b, H5, H6a, and H6b). Perhaps this reflects a willingness of more educated fathers to participate more fully in the survey questions, or to answer sensitive questions about the nature of their relationships, work history, and income status.

Married respondent fathers were less likely to be excluded due to missing variables for the analysis in which fathers were asked about their involvement, emotional support, and physical affection regarding their children (H5). It seems likely that married fathers were more likely to live with their children and therefore have the opportunity to engage in these activities with them. As Hewlitt (1992; 2000) suggested, these fathers might be both invested and involved, with marriage being indicative of their commitment.

Married fathers were more likely to be excluded for H6b. For H2 and H3a, African-American fathers were more likely than European-Americans to be excluded due to at least one missing variable. For H6a, Hispanic fathers were less likely to be excluded. It is not known why these patterns occurred.

Limitations of the Current Study

A major limitation of this study is its reliance on the cross-sectional design of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), which precludes the establishment of any causal link between the independent and dependent variables. Although *time spent, emotional support*, and *physical affection* appear to be positively associated with the quality of relationships between fathers and their children, this study does not establish that the presence of these variables in a father-child relationship actually *causes*

or *results* in improvements in the quality of the father-child relationship. It is possible that there is a spurious relationship between the independent and dependent variables, resulting from the influence of one or more unknown variables.

Another major limitation of the reliance on national survey data is the inherent lack of purposefully designed measures of the constructs. The NSFH was thoughtfully developed through consultation with a variety of cross-disciplinary experts, but there is no actual reliability and validity information available relevant to the measures in this particular study. For example, for each of the hypotheses, a single-item measure of the construct, *quality of relationship*, was used as the dependent variable. Although the endpoints of this Likert-type scale were defined as "really bad" and "absolutely perfect," these words are admittedly open to subjective interpretation by respondents, as is the definition of *quality of relationship*. Unreliability and concerns about validity in the dependent and independent variables results in less statistical power and therefore decreases confidence in the findings.

The respondent fathers were interviewed face-to-face and given self-administered questionnaires to fill out at one or more points during the interview. All of the survey questions utilized in this study were asked during the face-to-face interviews, inviting the possibility that respondents provided responses they thought might be socially desirable, rather than reflective of what they actually feel. Face-to-face interviews with respondents might raise concerns about anonymity, privacy, or confidentiality. While the respondents were asked a number of questions about a variety of topics, questions related to parenting might have particularly evoked socially desirable responses. Fox, Bruce, and Combs-Orme (2000) have noted that role enactment (including the way one portrays oneself as a

father in interview settings) is often related to perceptions regarding the "correct" social conventions (p. 128). In addition to the respondents and the interviewers, it is not known who else might have been present in the respondents' residences and able to hear all or part of the interviews. If respondents did provide answers they perceived were more socially desirable, that might have influenced their responses in a number of ways, e.g. inflating their reports about the quality of their relationships with their children. The results should be interpreted with this in mind.

As noted in Chapter Three, there were large amounts of missing data for each of the hypotheses, another limitation of this study. The problem of missing data was explored and the efforts to compensate for the problem have previously been addressed. In a study of the magnitude of the NSFH, problems resulting in lost data are likely to occur in spite of the researchers' best efforts to avoid them. In the NSFH Wave II, from which the subsample of fathers was drawn for this study, a significant problem was the omission of a series of questions about the focal child in many cases, as a result of a programming error (NSFH, n.d.). It is not known which or how many cases were affected by this problem, i.e. whether they were cases in which fathers were the primary respondents. As previously noted, the length of the interview may have contributed to the failure of some respondents to answer all the questions and some questions may not have been relevant for all respondents.

It is possible, of course, that some respondents simply did not respond to specific survey questions because responding would have been negative, uncomfortable, or undesirable in some way. For example, rather than indicate they had a poor relationship with their fathers or children, respondents might have refused to answer the questions

regarding the quality of their relationships to their fathers or children. Respondent fathers who had essentially no relationship with their fathers or children might have also left the questions unanswered.

It is not known, of course, how the results might differ had there been fewer missing cases. It is perhaps reasonable that the representativeness of the subsample of respondent fathers and the large sample sizes utilized for most of the analyses sufficiently account for the variety of reasons there might be missing cases, thereby reducing the potential for any systematic bias in the results. The summaries and comparisons of demographic information for respondents who were included and excluded from each analysis and the implications of these have been discussed above.

Another limitation of this study is that important information about the fathers' own fathers is not known, such as their marital, health, or employment status. These factors might influence the ability of their fathers to be available for communication or to provide help for the respondent fathers. It would be interesting to examine whether a man's perception of the quality of his relationship to his father would be influenced by his father's inability to be available for communication or help, perhaps because of full-time employment or impaired health. It is not known how their fathers are related to the respondent fathers, e.g. whether they are biological or step fathers. It is also not known whether the respondents' fathers would characterize the quality of their relationships with their sons in the same manner as the sons did. All the data for this study comes solely from respondent fathers' reports. As noted throughout, the relevance of utilizing fathers' own perceptions is a fundamental element of this study. However, if we can glean some insight from the foregoing literature review and results of this study, it is likely that

respondents' fathers would report they have a relationship with their sons of as high or higher quality than the sons perceive.

There is also little known about the respondent fathers' children, other than their possible relationship to the respondents and their age range. There is no direct link between a father's response and a specific child, who may have inherent temperamental, health, or other characteristics that have influenced the nature of the father-child relationship. This study did not address whether children would characterize the quality of their relationships with their fathers in the same manner as their fathers did.

This study design produced a "snapshot" of the indicators as reported by the respondent fathers and provided no information about the history of their relationships with their children. For example, many parents report differences in the quality of their relationships to their children during adolescence than they experienced when their children were younger. As previously noted, when fathers talk with their children about things that are worrisome, the fathers seem to perceive a lower quality of relationship. This might be reflected in the responses of fathers of adolescent children, who undoubtedly have worrisome things to talk about if their fathers will listen. The lower quality of relationship might be indicative of the overall nature of the father-child relationship during their children's adolescence, but not of the father-child relationship in its totality and complexity across time.

Similarly, fathers might have changing perceptions of the quality of their relationships to their own fathers as they mature and engage in ongoing relationships with their own children across developmental stages. The PPCT model specifically supports this idea. For example, providing routine care to a toddler, making time to attend

extracurricular activities, or navigating a relationship with an adolescent are activities that might foster a different perspective of one's own father.

Strengths of the Current Study

Despite the limitations noted above, there are several strengths inherent in this study. The NSFH is based on a large probability sample of households in the United States. The survey design and questions were developed by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, based on advice from a large number of consultants, who were experts representing a variety of disciplines. The research team (L. Bumpass, J. Sweet, M. MacDonald, S. McLanahan, A. Sorensen, and E. Thomson) and consultants (F. Furstenberg, G. Fox, J. Gerner, J. Huber, K. Mason, F. Mott, H. Presser, A. Thornton, and J. Seltzer) represented various perspectives including family sociology, family economics, social demography, and social psychology. Staff members of the Center for Population Research were also involved and about two dozen other researchers sent letters offering advice and recommendations for the survey. While social workers are notably absent from this collaborative effort, the goal was broad substantive coverage "to permit holistic analysis of family experience" from varied theoretical perspectives (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988). This goal neatly complements social work's focus on an ecological systems perspective as a framework for understanding individuals and their environments.

Another major strength of this study is that large numbers of fathers were asked directly about their relationships and behaviors with their own fathers and with their children, and their perceptions were considered as meaningful. It should be noted that fathers were not targeted specifically as respondents for this large, comprehensive study

and fathering was not a specifically identified focus. Survey questions were designed to cover a broad array of family experiences and to be asked of randomly selected primary respondents, who might have been any adult in the household, male or female, married or not, with or without children. Married persons under age 19 were also included (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988). These facts make the results all the more intriguing because respondent fathers were not aware of how or whether their responses to any or all of the questions might be utilized. Although the dependent variable and some of the independent variables were subject to personal interpretation and all the data for this study came solely from fathers' reports, this approach was supported by the theoretical perspective adopted for this study. A careful review of the literature and NSFH questionnaire was conducted in order to ensure that the questions selected to define the variables best represented the constructs.

Although the sample sizes varied across hypotheses, they are still considerably larger and more nationally representative than those in other studies that asked fathers directly. Larger sample sizes afforded the opportunity to make estimations that are not possible in smaller studies, extending generalizability. Another strength of this study is that fathering was examined for children of all ages and for fathers across all stages of child rearing. Although there is little available information about the respondent fathers' own fathers and children, beginning with a probability sample helps to ensure that a variety of individual and family traits are represented among the respondents, such as physical and emotional health, socio-economic status, religious and spiritual beliefs, parenting and discipline practices.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy Development

As stated in the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1999):

> The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living (p. 1).

Two of the profession's six core values: 1) to "respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person" (NASW, 1999, p. 5); and 2) to "recognize the central importance of human relationships" (p. 6), are especially salient to a discussion of the importance of valuing fathers.

Beyond the call of our mission statement and core values, the ecological systems model so widely utilized in social work provides an ideal framework for understanding fathers and their relationships across contexts. Our skills at assessment, intervention, evaluation, and research provide a solid foundation for enabling us to keep our focus on the well-being of all our constituencies, including children, mothers, fathers, families, and society.

Social workers need to advocate and work to provide support for fathers' relationships with their children. Too often, the importance of contact and time together, communication, and opportunities for emotional connection with fathers are ignored or

devalued when working with children. Fathers are often left out when conducting initial assessments, possibly noted as "absent" or "too busy." Fathers are often left out when developing treatment and intervention plans, although their role and participation may be vital and contributory to successful outcomes. As previously noted, as a result of a comparative analysis of nationally representative, mostly longitudinal data sets, McLanahan and Teitler (1999) concluded "the evidence indicates that, on average, children who grow up with both biological parents do better in terms of human capital development and early family formation behavior than children who grow up with only one of their parents (p. 99)." When a willing father is encouraged to be a participating co-parent, the benefits to children, mothers, fathers, and perhaps to society, accrue.

The relationship between a father's assessment of the quality of his relationship to his own father and the influence of that on his relationship to his child, suggests the need for men to have opportunities to engage in discussions about the meanings of fathering to them. Wahler and Castlebury (2002) have suggested that the "coherence and richness" of individuals' personal narratives of past relationships are characteristics that can provide insight to clinicians regarding the nature of past and present relationships, creating opportunities to promote change through "constructive feedback" (p. 297).

Although men who report they had "really bad" relationships with their fathers have indicated they have better quality relationships with their own children, they are speaking in relative terms. They may never achieve the quality of relationship possible for men who had nearly "absolutely perfect" relationships with their fathers. Opportunities to meet and talk with other fathers and to engage in "fathering" groups or classes might contribute to the enhancement of their relationships to their children. Of

special concern are fathers who indicate that their relationships with their fathers were of relatively poor quality (that 0 to 4 range of the scale), because it is these fathers who indicated they had the lowest quality relationships with their children. In spite of the overall trend to report their relationships with their own children as better, perhaps these fathers are not modeling or compensating, but maintaining the status quo. The implications of this include the perpetuation of an intergenerational pattern of uninvolved and poor quality father-child relationships, with a resulting negative influence on children's developmental potential.

Mothers should be educated about the importance of fathers in children's lives and about their potential role as gatekeepers who can influence the development of a father-child relationship. This might be especially important in families in which the father had a poor relationship with his own father and might need encouragement and support to participate actively in the care of his own children. Inherently, there will be a father-child relationship; it is only the nature of it that is uncertain.

The co-parental relationship becomes a model for the children, whether fathers are involved or not. If they are devalued and marginalized, choose not to participate, or cannot participate due to disability or for reasons of safety, the implications extend beyond the fathers themselves, to their sons and daughters. Sons are learning how to be fathers and, as noted, appear to use their relationships with their own fathers as starting points for determining the nature of their own role as fathers. Daughters are learning how to co-parent, or not. Children will still have a relationship of some level of quality with their fathers, which might be a determinant of their own parenting and mate selection.

The often unspoken, but clearly influential link between divorced fathers' regular payment of child support and their visits and contacts with their children needs to be examined in light of the critical importance of time spent and communication as characteristics of high quality relationships among fathers and children. Social and workplace policy needs to be developed that considers the importance of fathers' participation in their children's lives. Workplace hours might be more flexible to allow for participation in school and extracurricular activities. Historically, fathers' roles as breadwinners have been emphasized and few agencies or employers have policies that are family-friendly, much less father-friendly.

Research Agenda

This study illuminates several gaps in research related to social work and fathering. This study appears to be one of the first to utilize the PPCT model for social work research. The concepts of *process* and *person* have been easily applied, and the development of the hypotheses and subsequent discussion of the outcomes takes place within the context of current *time*, historical significance, and across generations.

Regarding *context,* the question of whether and how disadvantaged and unstable environments have a detrimental effect on some or all aspects of effective psychological functioning needs further exploration. The importance of the breadwinner role has become so ensconced in our culture that the provision of economic security might predicate all other demands of fathers (G. Fox, personal communication, May 31, 2005). This idea was not supported in this study, thus, a good place to start might be further development of the construct, *stable* environment, with particular attention to the meanings and influence of income and economic security to fathers and their families.

The construct *quality of relationship*, as defined by fathers, needs further exploration regarding its definition and whether this definition is different for fathers of different age groups, marital statuses, and races. Further exploration of the subjective meanings of *quality of relationship* to fathers and the implications of the meanings is needed. For example, can men who try to compensate for a poor quality relationship with their fathers ever do as well in their role as fathers as men who believe they had higher quality relationships with their fathers? How would fathers who do not live with their children assess the quality of their relationship? Do fathers assess the quality of their relationships differently with their sons than with their daughters?

A scale might be developed that can assess quality of relationship more accurately; that scale might include items related to time spent, communication, emotional connection or support, and/or physical affection. In this study, *Father Emotional Support* was used as a variable, but emotional support may not be the same as emotional connection. It does seem clear, though, that the emotional relationship between fathers and their children is very important and should be considered when examining the construct *involvement* and domains of fathering.

Kost (2001) stated that fathers in her qualitative study spoke about " 'what fathers should do' rather than what their son or daughter needed" (p. 506). As noted, gaps among men's own experiences of having been fathered, their subsequent evaluations of that experience, and their translations of that experience into models of fathering that meet the unique needs of their own children have not been studied. Our understanding of fathering must ultimately be child-centered, not solely based on the wishes, needs, and experiences of fathers or mothers, and not simply culturally defined.

Social work researchers might examine the attitudes of social workers and any obstacles to including fathers as standard practice in assessment and intervention on behalf of children and families. A systemic approach that consistently marginalizes and devalues a key member of the client or family system obviously lacks comprehensiveness. It might be helpful to examine the outcomes of child and family treatment and interventions when fathers are included compared to when they are not. For example, what difference might it make to actively include fathers when assessing and designing interventions on behalf of children with problems at school or in the community, or when abuse or neglect by a single mother is alleged?

When studying fathers and fathering, it seems critical that researchers talk directly to fathers themselves, rather than drawing inferences based on others' reports, a problem noted by Amato & Rivera (1999) and discussed in Chapter Two, above. There have been problems related to previous attempts to include fathers, such as their lack of availability due to work and/or other absence from the family. Families today come in many forms. How often have we missed a critical piece of the puzzle because we have ignored or dismissed the father's role, or assumed their contributions could only be detrimental or meaningless? Yet, when we have gone to the trouble to talk with them, fathers have often surprised us with their interest and willingness to teach us about fathering from their perspective.

Conclusion

Fathers have indicated that fathers should be present and involved, and provide love, caring, affection, and/or be responsive to their child's emotional needs. The findings in this study are convergent with information gleaned from fathers' perceptions

and reports in several smaller studies. A central tenet of social work practice is to begin where the client is (Hepworth, Rooney, & Larsen, 2002). Social work's emphasis on absent, non-custodial, adolescent, and abusing fathers and the payment of child support distracts us from this goal and negates the wishes, needs, and experiences of many fathers and their children. Perhaps we also need to begin where the profession is and examine our attitudes and beliefs regarding fathers and fathering. Social work is uniquely poised among other disciplines to draw increased attention to the meaning, value, and needs of fathers.

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Vita

Lauren Renkert was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She was primarily raised in South Florida, where she lived until 1994, when she moved with her family to the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina. Ms. Renkert earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work in 1988, from Florida Atlantic University, in Boca Raton, Florida, and a Master's Degree in Social Work in 1992, from Barry University in North Miami, Florida.

She attained licensure as a Clinical Social Worker in North Carolina in 1994. She is currently serving as a faculty member of Appalachian State University in the Department of Sociology and Social Work and pursuing her doctorate in Social Work at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.