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This study was designed to test the influence of the congruence between mothers' and fathers' fathering identity standards on fathers' later involvement with their children. Using two waves of data from the Fragile Families Study of Child Well-being, the effect of identity standard congruence at the time of the child's birth on father involvement one year later was tested using structural equation modeling with 2,107 sets of parents who shared varying relationship statuses (married, cohabiting, romantic noncohabiting, nonromantic). Also tested was whether this effect was mediated by fathers' satisfaction with the father identity and whether parents' relationship status at birth and at one year moderated the effect.

Consistent with Burke's (1991, 1997) identity verification model, identity congruence did predict later involvement, such that when identity standards were more congruent, fathers were more involved with their children. Contrary to what was suggested by identity theory, identity satisfaction did not mediate the effect between congruence and involvement, and parents' relationship status only partially moderated the effect. Specifically, the effect of congruence on involvement was not moderated by parents' relationship status, but the association between identity satisfaction and involvement was stronger for noncohabiting fathers than cohabiting fathers. These findings suggest the need for broader conceptualizations of distress within identity theory. Further, it highlights differences between family structures in the ways in which identity translates into behavior -- personal satisfaction with an identity was more strongly associated with involvement when fathers did not reside with their children/children's mothers.

THE EFFECT OF CONGRUENCE OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' BELIEFS
REGARDING FATHERING ROLES ON FATHER INVOLVEMENT

By

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Approved by

Committee Chair

To Kay Pasley and the numerous other faculty members
who mentored me through the journey that is graduate school,
whose advice was always available, whose support was unwavering,
and without whom this never would have been possible.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The numerous potential cognitive, emotional, behavioral, physical, and financial benefits to children of having an involved father are well established (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000). Importantly, fathers vary widely in their involvement with their children, particularly among differing family structures. Married fathers tend to exhibit higher levels of involvement than do divorced, separated, or never-married fathers, and divorced or separated fathers tend to exhibit higher levels of involvement than do never-married fathers (McKenry, McKelvey, Leigh, & Wark, 1996). However, father involvement differs within family structures as well, particularly among nonresident fathers (Carlson & McLanahan, 2002; Coley, 2001; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; England & Folbre, 2002; Hofferth, Pleck, Stueve, Bianchi, & Sayer, 2002). For example, according to one set of national estimates, 18% of nonresident fathers see their children daily, whereas 39.6% have not seen their children at all in the past year (Seltzer, 1991). Variation exists among married, resident fathers as well, as Pleck (1997) found paternal engagement levels among married fathers of approximately 1.9 hours per day on weekdays, compared with 6.5 hours per day on Sundays. Further, fathers from any family structure fill a number of different roles in their children's lives (e.g., provider, disciplinarian, caretaker, mentor, religious guide), and fathering takes forms that are both tangible and intangible (Palkovitz, 1997).

Despite advances in our knowledge of the patterns and benefits of father involvement, our understanding of the specific factors responsible for the variation in

involvement remains inadequate. Understanding variation in father involvement is worthwhile for any population, but it is of particular importance for unmarried parents (McLanahan, Garfinkel, Reichman, & Teitler, 2001). Often referred to as “fragile families,” unmarried parents experience numerous challenges. Both mothers and fathers in unmarried families are more likely to live in poverty and earn lower incomes than are married mothers and fathers (Insabella, Williams, & Pruett, 2003). For example, one study found that unmarried fathers earn, on average, approximately half of what married fathers earn (Rich, 2001). Unmarried parents also tend to exhibit higher levels of mental and physical health problems than do married individuals, and unmarried fathers exhibit higher levels of drug and alcohol abuse (Wilson & Brooks-Gunn, 2001). Further, approximately one-third of all births are nonmarital, and the widest variation in involvement exists among unmarried fathers (Carlson & McLanahan, 2002; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Lerman & Sorensen, 2000). These fragile families also experience higher rates of relationship dissolution than do married families, adding further barriers to father involvement (Binstock & Thornton, 2003).

A partial explanation for variation in involvement among fathers from different family structures is offered by the nature of the father’s relationship with the mother -- as noted, married fathers tend to be more involved than unmarried fathers, and unmarried fathers who are romantically involved with their children’s mothers tend to be more involved than those who are no longer romantically tied to the mothers (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Hamer, 1998; Lerman & Sorensen, 2000; Teitler, Reichman, & Sprachman, 2003). However, such an explanation is incomplete, with relationship status being only one of a host of factors influencing father involvement among unmarried parents. Scholars (e.g., Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998) consistently note the

importance of contextual influences as a source of variation in fathering behaviors and, in particular, the beliefs and expectations that mothers hold towards fathers (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003). However, much of this research was conducted with samples of married (or previously married) parents, excluding never-married families (either those who are currently romantically involved or those who have dissolved a previous romantic relationship). Further, research has not examined the issue of the similarity or dissimilarity of mothers' and fathers' views, focusing on the views of each parent individually rather than from a dyadic perspective (e.g., Allen & Hawkins; Gable, Belsky, & Crnic, 1995; DeLuccie, 1995, 1996). Research also typically has been cross-sectional in nature, preventing even preliminary analysis of causal relationships (e.g., Allen & Hawkins; Bouchard & Lee, 2000; DeLuccie, 1996; Insabella et al., 2003). In light of these shortcomings, this study sought to use propositions suggested by identity theory (Burke, 1991, 1997; Stryker, 1968) to extend current research in three important ways: (a) by using a dyadic perspective (Thompson & Walker, 1982), (b) by using a sample that includes both married and unmarried parents, and (c) by using a short-term longitudinal approach that allows for preliminary conclusions regarding causal relationships.

A theoretical framework suggested as useful for understanding fathering (Marsiglio et al., 2000) and increasingly used by fathering scholars to explain variation in fathering behaviors (e.g., Henley & Pasley, 2005; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Rane & McBride, 2000) is identity theory (Stryker, 1968). Broadly speaking, this theory suggests that the meanings (role identities) which fathers assign to the social position/status of being a father affect the ways in which they behave with their children (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). For example, fathers who view financial provision as an important fathering role

likely will work long hours in paid employment; fathers who value having an active role in day-to-day caretaking activities will be likely to change diapers, feed, and bathe their children. Research using this framework supports the general proposition that father identity is associated with fathering behaviors (e.g., Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, & Buehler, 1993; Minton & Pasley, 1996; Rane & McBride), but empirical examinations of the processes underlying this association are scant.

Burke (1991, 1997) proposed one explanation for this process via his identity verification model. According to this model, individuals act in identity-relevant ways, seeking feedback from others that reinforces their sense of how particular identities should be enacted (identity standards). Feedback is evaluated by the individual as either congruent or incongruent with his/her identity standards. Congruent feedback results in identity verification (i.e., the behavior is “correct”), and reinforces the individual’s identity-relevant behavior. Incongruence results in distress and leads the individual to either adjust behavior in an attempt to change the feedback received (convince the feedback provider that the behavior was appropriate; Burke), ignore or dismiss the feedback as irrelevant (Pasley, Kerpelman, & Guilbert, 2001), or, in the face of persistent incongruence, adjust the identity standards to match the feedback (Burke). Additionally, Burke suggested that in some extreme instances of persistent incongruence the individual might attempt to exit a disconfirming relationship, a suggestion also offered by others (Pasley et al.) regarding married couples.

Not specifically discussed but implied in Burke’s model is the existence of a second set of identity standards - those held by the counter-identity. Theoretically, identities are assumed to exist in pairs, such that for every identity there exists a counter-identity (e.g., husband-wife, employer-employee). Similarly, I argue that for each

identity there implicitly exists two sets of identity standards: one delineating a person's expectations for him/herself in that identity, and one delineating that person's expectations for the person holding the counter-identity. Building on Burke's model, I argue that the identity standards held by the counter-identity have implications for an individual's behavior via feedback given in response to the individual's identity-relevant behavior. For example, a mother holds identity standards for each of her various mother role identities (e.g., provider, disciplinarian, caretaker). Some roles are seen as being complementary (important to being a father but not part of her responsibilities as a mother, or vice versa), and other roles are expected to overlap (both she and the father should enact the role). In the first case, her identity standards for the counter-identity are complementary to her expectations for herself -- e.g., fathers should be both the primary providers and disciplinarians for their children (and she should not). In the latter case, she might expect that both she and the father are highly involved in the day-to-day caretaking of their child. In both cases, she simultaneously holds two sets of identity standards -- one outlining what she views as her own responsibilities and, implicitly, one outlining her standards for the behavior of the counter-identity (the father).

When individuals holding counter-identities interact, the feedback given in response to identity-relevant behaviors originates from the counter-identity standards. As such, one potential source of incongruent feedback is a counter-identity who holds incongruent identity standards (i.e., identity standards that are different from the individual's own identity standards). Similarly, counter-identities holding congruent (similar) identity standards likely result in congruent feedback.

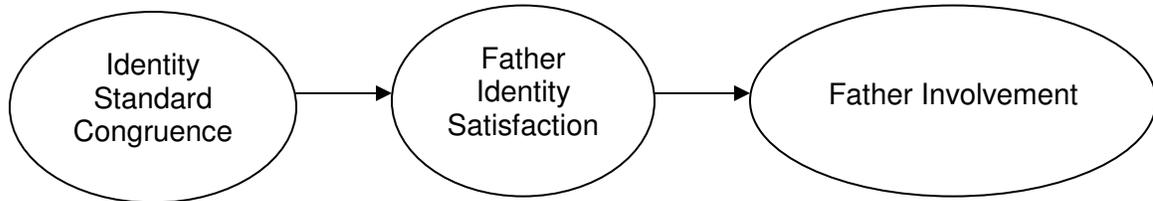
As noted, according to Burke's (1991, 1997) model, individuals consistently receiving incongruent feedback typically either change their identity standards to match

the feedback, ignore/dismiss the feedback as inaccurate, or withdraw from the disconfirming relationship. In one theoretical piece (Pasley et al., 2001), this process was suggested as a potential reason for marital dissolution. They proposed that spouses holding differing identity standards regarding the “spousal” identity provide incongruent feedback to one another in response to identity-relevant behaviors, resulting in mutual distress and, ultimately, dissolution of the marital relationship. The existence of more subtle forms of disengagement (e.g., emotionally withdrawing, discounting the disconfirming person’s opinion regarding that particular identity) also was suggested; however, the empirical validity of these additional forms of disengagement and the suggested underlying process have yet to be tested.

This study sought to address several gaps in the theoretical literature. First, the study further explored the identity–behavior link and the processes underlying this association by empirically testing a model of the effects of congruent (or incongruent) identity/counter-identity standards on father involvement (see Figure 1). I hypothesized that fathers who parent with mothers (counter-identities) who hold more similar (congruent) fathering identity standards will be more involved with their children than will fathers who parent with mothers who hold dissimilar fathering identity standards. Further, given Burke’s (1991, 1997) suggestion that incongruence causes distress within the identity enactment process and that it is this distress that prompts change in behavior or identity standards, I proposed that the influence of identity congruence on father involvement is mediated by fathers’ satisfaction with being a father (lower levels of satisfaction indicating greater distress). Specifically, I expected that fathers experiencing more incongruence would be less satisfied with the experience of being a father, and this lowered satisfaction would be associated with less involvement with their children.

Finally, I tested whether parents' shared relationship status moderated these associations, such that the association between identity congruence and involvement weakens as fathers' romantic ties to mothers weaken (i.e., fathers are more likely/able to discount mothers' feedback and or choose to disengage from the disconfirming relationship). Although not depicted in the figure, to more accurately assess the theoretical propositions and relationships among the variables of interest, the influence of relevant characteristics of mothers, fathers, and children known to affect father involvement were used as control variables.

Figure 1. Conceptual model relating identity to father involvement



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ways in which involved fathers potentially benefit children are well documented (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000); as such, scholars have turned their attention to examining the factors that foster or inhibit father involvement. Research demonstrates that there is wide variation in involvement among both married and unmarried fathers (Carlson & McLanahan, 2002; Hofferth, Pleck, Stueve, Bianchi, & Sayer, 2002; Pleck, 1997), and it has been suggested that fathering is more contextually influenced than is mothering (Doherty et al., 1998). Understanding which factors affect father involvement is particularly important among unmarried parents, as currently one-third of births are non-marital, and unmarried fathers exhibit both greater variation and lower overall levels of involvement (as compared with married fathers) (Carlson & McLanahan; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Lerman & Sorensen, 2000). This variation is explained partly by fathers' relationships with the mothers of their children, as fathers who are romantically involved with the mother tend to be more involved (Coley & Chase-Lansdale; Hamer, 1998). However, relationship status is only one of a host of factors that potentially influence father involvement, particularly over time.

Identity theory (Stryker, 1968) suggests that one such influential factor is fathers' sense of what it means to be a parent (father identity; e.g., Bruce & Fox, 1999; Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; Rane & McBride, 2000). A derivation of symbolic interactionism, identity theory suggests that individuals construct meaning from interactions with others,

and this meaning provides clues regarding societal expectations of the social statuses (e.g., parent) that they occupy. These expectations (roles; e.g., breadwinner, disciplinarian) are interpreted by the individual, resulting in the creation of identities (self-meanings in a role; Burke & Reitzes, 1981). Although studies consistently find that father identity is related to fathering behaviors (e.g., Ihinger-Tallman et al.; Minton & Pasley, 1996; Rane & McBride), and identity theory assumes that identities are constructed through social interactions (Burke, 1991, 1997), few studies have investigated the origins of fathering identities or the ways in which these identities are negotiated, adapted, or maintained. To address this gap in the literature, one aspect of this process was examined here – the congruence between mothers' and fathers' expectations for fathers' behaviors with their children and the link between such congruence and fathering behaviors. Also examined were whether this association is mediated by fathers' satisfaction with their enactment of the paternal identity and whether these associations are moderated by relationship status (married, cohabiting, romantic noncohabiting, nonromantic) shared by the parents.

Theoretical Framework

Identity theory (Stryker, 1968) suggests that individuals occupy particular statuses (social positions; e.g., father) and assign meanings to these statuses in the form of identities. As noted, identities reflect individuals' integration of societal expectations with their own beliefs and expectations regarding what it means to occupy a certain role (e.g., provider, caretaker), and these identities subsequently guide behavior (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Stryker, 1980, 1987). Men who define being a father primarily as consisting of providing financially for one's child likely behave in ways consistent with this belief (e.g., working long hours at paid employment); similarly, men

who believe that fathering means being involved in their children's day-to-day caretaking likely exhibit behaviors such as changing diapers and bathing and feeding the child. Important to the enactment of an identity is the level of importance an individual assigns to that identity (centrality), as more important identities are more likely to be enacted (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Thus, regardless of how an individual defines fathering, men who view fathering identities as unimportant are less likely to exhibit any kind of fathering behaviors. Similarly, men who assign little importance to particular roles (e.g., disciplinarian) are less likely to exhibit behaviors reflecting those roles.

Identity Verification and Negotiation

Identity theory emphasizes the importance of the meanings one assigns to his or her interactions with others, and Burke's (1991, 1997) self-verification model attempts to explain the mechanisms through which identities are interactively negotiated and maintained. This model suggests that individuals seek out interactions that support and confirm their identities. Accordingly, individuals hold *identity standards*, or ideals regarding a particular identity, and act in ways that they see as reflecting these standards. In response to such behaviors, individuals receive feedback from others, which they perceive as indicating that their behaviors are either congruent or incongruent with their identity standards. Theoretically, congruence results in identity confirmation, whereas incongruence creates distress. In response to such distress, individuals typically alter their behavior in an attempt to regain congruence (e.g., convince the source of the feedback that they are acting in ways consistent with their identity standards, such that the feedback changes to become congruent with their identity standards). However, when faced with continued incongruence, individuals might alter the identity standards, dismiss or ignore the incongruent feedback, or (when

possible) withdraw (physically, emotionally, or psychologically) from the disconfirming relationship (Burke, 1991, 1997; Pasley et al., 2001). Important to recognize is that this process might or might not be one that the individual is consciously aware of; rather, identity theory suggests that these responses are virtually instinctive due to the aversive nature of distressing interactions and the desire of individuals to be seen in a positive light.

Less emphasized than the actions and reactions of the individual in this model is the implied existence of a reciprocal relationship between the individual holding the identity and the person providing feedback. This is particularly important when the person providing the feedback is the person holding the counter-identity, or the other half of an identity dyad. Because identities arise out of social positions/statuses that exist in relation to the positions/statuses of others, identities are assumed to exist in pairs (e.g., one is a husband because someone else is a wife; one is an employee because someone else is an employer; Burke & Cast, 1997). As such, for each status that a person holds, there implicitly exist two sets of identity standards: one delineating a person's expectations for himself or herself in that identity, and one delineating that person's expectations for the person holding the counter-identity. Although not specifically explored within Burke's (1991, 1997) model, presumably the identity standards held by counter-identities have implications for one another.

By way of example, when a woman holds the status of mother, at some point she evaluates the set of mothering roles and determines how she will internalize and define each role (i.e., define the identities). She might decide that, as a mother, she should have a large amount of involvement in the day-to-day caretaking of her child, much less involvement in providing financially for her child, and limited involvement in the discipline

of her child, doing so only when the father is not available to do so (e.g., at work, out of town). Such an interpretation of what it means to be a mother clearly implies the existence of an additional set of expectations regarding what it means to be a father. She might view some roles as being complementary (important to being a father, but not part of her responsibilities as a mother). In that case, her expectations of the father are complementary to her expectations for herself -- i.e., fathers should be both the primary providers and disciplinarians for their children. Too, she might expect some roles to overlap (e.g., she expects that both she and the father will be highly involved in the day-to-day caretaking of their child). In either case, she simultaneously holds two sets of identity standards: one outlines what she views as her own responsibilities and another outlines her standards for the counter-identity.

Theoretically, when individuals holding counter-identities interact, feedback to a given identity-relevant behavior originates from these counter-identity standards. Thus, issues of congruence and incongruence become more complicated, as at least two sets of identity standards held by two separate individuals are involved in the negotiation of each individual's identity and its associated behaviors. Extrapolating from this logic, it is likely that multiple others also influence the negotiation of identities and their behaviors, not just counter-identities (e.g., employers, extended kin, friends). However, in this study I focused specifically on the influence of counter-identities, as these likely have the most direct implications (theoretically and practically) for identity and behavior.

Identity Development

Work regarding identity development supports the proposition that identities are socially constructed (e.g., Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001; Kerpelman, Pittman, & Lamke, 1997). During childhood and adolescence, individuals begin constructing their *possible*

selves, or the ways in which they see themselves occupying social statuses that they might fill or be expected to fill in the future (e.g., self as parent, employee, spouse). Largely derived from the Eriksonian tradition where adolescents are believed to face a primary dilemma of identity achievement versus identity diffusion, developmental identity theory suggests that (optimally) individuals go through a period of exploration of various identities, trying on different selves and ultimately retaining those that they feel fit (Waterman, 1984). Although scholars differ in their beliefs regarding the methods and criteria that are used by individuals to construct (e.g., Berzonsky, 1989, 1993) or discover (e.g., Waterman, 1984, 1993) these possible selves, consensus exists that identity exploration is an active, dynamic process that occurs within and is influenced by an individual's context (both environmental and interpersonal).

In much the same way as others assist with the verification of established identities, others also assist in the identity exploration process by providing feedback to the individual. For example, a student might hold a possible self of professional musician and would receive feedback from friends, family, and teachers regarding his or her aptitude for such a career and or the feasibility of a career in music. The student would evaluate this feedback and incorporate it to varying degrees into his or her ultimate possible career self. Research (e.g., Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001) demonstrates that peers and romantic partners can influence adolescents' construction of their possible selves, depending on: (a) how committed the adolescent is to the particular possible self, (b) whether outside feedback (e.g., given by the researchers) is positive or negative, and (c) whether the peers/romantic partners agree or disagree with the outside feedback when giving their own feedback. Thus, individuals begin to construct identities and create sets of identity standards well before statuses are actually occupied.

Applied to fathers, this suggests that both fathers and mothers hold certain identity standards regarding what it means to be a father well before the birth of their first child. Although other individuals (including romantic partners) influence the construction of these identity standards, these standards often are created during adolescence and likely before an individual meets the partner with whom he or she actually will have children. In the absence of an opportunity to enact the father status (i.e., before children are born and one is provided with opportunities to parent), it is unlikely that in-depth discussions or negotiations regarding these standards occur between parents-to-be. Thus, the birth of the first child marks the beginning of these negotiations and might be the first indication to parents of any differences in fathering identity standards. As such, studying identity at or around the time of the birth of a couple's first child could provide important insights regarding the negotiation of fathering identity standards and how incongruence or congruence in identity standards influences fathering behaviors.

Contextual Influences on Identity and Behavior

Studies consistently demonstrate the importance of contextual influences on fathering behaviors, particularly maternal expectations (e.g., Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Doherty et al., 2000). It might be that fathers' identities are more malleable than are mothers' and or are particularly vulnerable to being influenced by mothers' beliefs and expectations due to mothers' positions as counter-identities. This would be consistent with Burke's (1991, 1997) proposition that continued incongruence between identity-relevant behavior and feedback eventually results in a change in identity standards. However, this proposition has yet to be tested empirically. Although such shifts in identity standards were not directly tested here, a helpful first step is to examine the effect of congruence between identity standards and counter-identity standards on later fathering

behaviors. Further, the role of incongruence-induced distress in the identity-behavior process was examined here, assessing whether satisfaction with fathering (an indicator of distress regarding enactment of the father identity) mediates the association between identity congruence and father involvement. Finally, whether relationship status moderates these associations also was tested.

Father Involvement

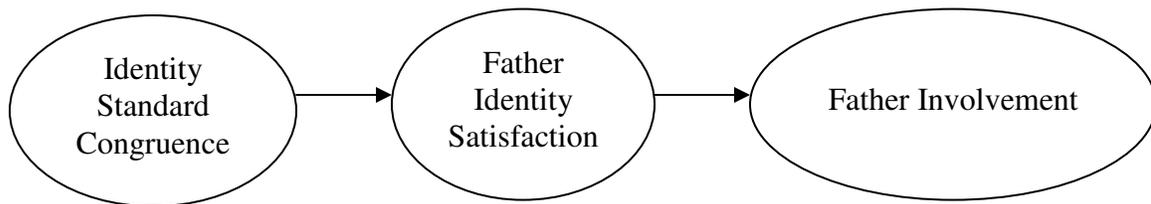
The ways in which parents are involved with their children vary greatly. Generally speaking, fathers are less involved in day-to-day caretaking activities than are mothers and enact more recreational or playing behaviors than mothers (Stewart, 1999). However, differences between levels and forms of involvement among fathers are well documented. For example, Pleck (1997) found the engagement levels of married fathers varied by approximately 4.5 hours per day, depending on whether involvement was measured on weekdays or Sundays (with higher levels of involvement on weekends). Fathers also fill a number of different roles in their children's lives (e.g., provider, disciplinarian, caretaker, mentor, religious guide), and the characteristics of fathering behaviors vary (e.g., observable versus unobservable, high time investment versus low time investment; Palkovitz, 1997).

Research suggests that fathering is more contextually determined than is mothering (Doherty et al., 2000). These contextual factors include father characteristics (e.g., father's ethnicity, age, income), mother characteristics (e.g., mothers' age and education, mothers' encouragement or discouragement of fathers' involvement), and child characteristics (e.g., child age, child temperament) (Pleck, 1997; Rane & McBride, 2000). In addition, unmarried (and especially nonresident) fathers face specific barriers to involvement with their children that produce even greater variation in fathering

behaviors. Here, the contextual factors representing maternal, paternal, and child characteristics were statistically controlled to provide a cleaner test of the theoretical relationships that were the focus of the study.

A model of father involvement was tested that examines the influence of identity congruence on father involvement as mediated by identity satisfaction (see Figure 1) and as moderated by parents' relationship status. As such, this study accounts for intrapersonal (father identity standards, father identity satisfaction), interpersonal (counter-identity standards), and key contextual (relationship/residential status, family characteristics) influences on fathering behaviors, making an important contribution to the theoretical literature. Each of these influences specifically is discussed in more detail below.

Figure 2. Conceptual model relating aspects of identity to father involvement



Identity and Fathering

The primary goals of this study were threefold: (a) to examine the influence of congruence between mothers' and fathers' identity standards on fathering behaviors, (b) to test whether this association is mediated by identity satisfaction, and (c) to test whether these associations are moderated by the shared relationship status of the parents (married, cohabiting, romantic noncohabiting, nonromantic). The influence of identity on father involvement is discussed first.

Father identity. Research consistently links identity and behavior, particularly within the fathering literature. Ihinger-Tallman and colleagues (1993) first studied the identity-behavior association among fathers and found a positive relationship between various father identity measures (status satisfaction, competence, investment, and salience) and father involvement in child-related activities, a finding replicated by other studies (e.g., Minton & Pasley, 1996). Stone and McKenry (1998) examined this link specifically among a population of nonresident fathers and found that fathering identities were related to father involvement among these fathers as well. They noted the particular importance of role clarity (having a clear sense of what is expected of one as a father) for nonresident fathers, as it was the single best predictor of involvement. Bruce and Fox (1999) found that father identity salience was associated with involvement and further noted that this association was moderated by child age and father's resident status (the association was stronger for those with adolescent, nonresident children). Rane and McBride (2000) investigated the importance of identity centrality by examining the centrality of the father status and the centrality of various fathering roles (e.g., nurturer, breadwinner) in first-marriage fathers. They found that the centrality of the father status was not associated with father involvement, but that the centrality of the nurturer role within the father status was. This demonstrates the importance of asking about the centrality of specific fathering role identities (e.g., how important is it to be a nurturing father, a breadwinning father, a disciplining father, potentially in comparison with one another), either in place of or in addition to a reference to a singular father identity (i.e., how important is being a father in comparison with other social positions/statuses).

Status centrality. Because of Rane and McBride's (2000) findings regarding the relative importance of role identity centrality compared with status centrality, the proposed model includes centrality of the father status (the importance men assign to being a father) as a control variable. Theoretically, statuses that are more central are more likely to be enacted (Stryker & Serpe, 1994); thus, fathers who assign more importance to the father status are more likely to enact fathering behaviors. Accordingly, it is important that status centrality be included in the conceptual model as a potential factor influencing father involvement. However, given Rane and McBride's findings that the centrality of specific fathering roles are more strongly associated with fathering behaviors than is status centrality, the focus primarily was on the congruence of role identity centrality and status centrality was included merely as a control variable.

Identity congruence. The primary goal of this study was to examine the nature of the association between congruence or incongruence of maternal and paternal expectations regarding fathering and father involvement. Research supports the proposition that maternal attitudes regarding fathering are associated with father involvement, a finding particularly prevalent within the literature on maternal gatekeeping (the ways in which mothers encourage or discourage father involvement with children) (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; McBride et al., 2005). Numerous studies find that when mothers hold attitudes that are supportive of father involvement in childrearing (e.g., think fathering is important, believe that fathers are competent parents) and act in ways that reflect such attitudes, fathers tend to be more involved in childrearing; conversely, when mothers hold unsupportive attitudes and exhibit behaviors that discourage father involvement, fathers are less involved (Allen & Hawkins; DeLuccie, 1995, 1996; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride et al.).

However, this research is limited in several ways. Most studies of the impact of mothers' attitudes on fathers' behaviors used samples of married parents (e.g., Allen & Hawkins, 1999). A few studies have examined maternal gatekeeping in divorced populations (e.g., Insabella et al., 2003); however, no studies could be found that examined the influence of maternal attitudes among never-married parents. Also, research only has examined mothers' attitudes, failing to take fathers' attitudes jointly into consideration. This greatly limits interpretation of the research findings, as this unidirectional approach ignores the dyadic and reciprocal nature of family interactions (Thompson & Walker, 1982) and the dyadic processes suggested specifically by identity theory. Thus, it is unknown whether mothers' attitudes affect father involvement directly; whether mothers' attitudes and behaviors affect father involvement indirectly (e.g., by shaping fathers' attitudes to become more negative or positive over time); whether fathers hold certain attitudes and influence mothers' attitudes such that they become more negative or positive over time; or whether mothers simply tend to pair with fathers holding similar attitudes such that fathers' level of involvement is due to their own beliefs and is related only spuriously to mothers' attitudes. Further, research has failed to examine mothers' beliefs regarding specific fathering behaviors or roles, instead focusing only on the importance of overall father involvement.

Although scholars agree that maternal attitudes and fathering are closely tied, important questions remain regarding the details of this association, the role of fathers' attitudes, and the mechanisms through which both mothers' and fathers' attitudes are associated with fathering. For example, although a large body of research confirms the link between identity and involvement, few studies have investigated the process of identity standard negotiation and whether differences or similarities in mothers' and

fathers' identity standards affect fathering behaviors. One study (Pasley, Futris, & Skinner, 2002) examined fathers' appraisals (self-perceptions) and reflected appraisals (perceptions of others' views of oneself) and found that fathers' reflected appraisals (i.e., how they thought their wives viewed them as fathers) were strongly associated with fathering behavior, even more so than fathers' own self-perceptions (e.g., self-perceived competence). This supports the hypothesis that a father's perceptions of counter-identity standards (others' expectations) will affect his behavior as a father. However, the Pasley et al., study was cross-sectional in nature and also did not directly assess wives' attitudes and expectations.

Pasley, Kerpelman, and Guilbert (2001) suggested that newly married couples with greater disparity between husbands' and wives' expectations and beliefs (identity standards) were more likely to experience identity disruption and marital instability and or divorce. They argued that incongruence between the identity standards among husbands and wives (those holding counter identities) would result in identity disruption and disengagement from the relationship (divorce). However, no empirical test of this proposition was done nor could any be found.

The current study builds on these theoretical propositions and research findings to address a significant gap in the literature by taking a more process-oriented approach to exploring the identity-behavior link. Specifically, I focused on a longitudinal view of identity-behavior rather than a snapshot of identity and behavior at a single point. Both mothers' and fathers' views (and the similarity/dissimilarity between them) were examined, as well as how these views (expectations) influenced fathers' later behavior with their children. A positive association was hypothesized, such that greater

congruence of identity standards early on (at birth) will be associated with higher levels of father involvement later (at one year).

In light of the findings of Rane and McBride (2000) that individual roles are key for father involvement, the influence of identity congruence was tested here in three general ways. First, the congruence of each of the six role identities were used as individual manifest variables to test the direct associations of each with father involvement (see Figure 3).

Thereafter, the congruence of the six role identities were summed to create a single manifest “cumulative role congruence” construct (see Figure 4). Finally, the congruence of the role hierarchies (a single manifest indicator, constructed from mothers’ and fathers’ ratings of the most/least important fathering roles) was used to predict father involvement (see Figure 5) (see Chapter III – Method for additional discussion).

Father identity satisfaction. Fathers’ satisfaction with the enactment of their fathering identities (at Year 1) was included as a mediator of the association between identity congruence and father involvement (see Figures 6 through 8).

Figure 3. Congruence of individual role identity standards associated with father involvement.

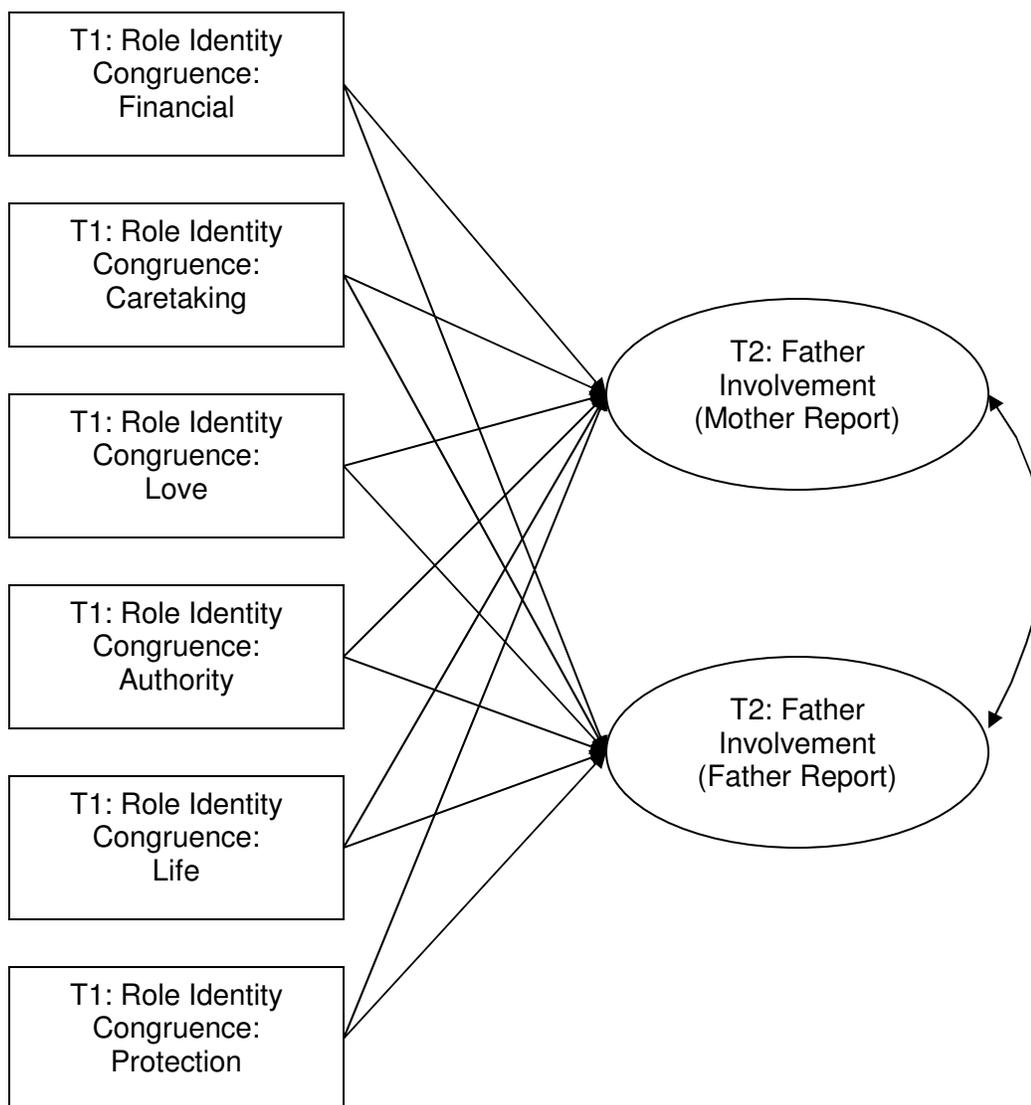


Figure 4. Cumulative role identity congruence and father involvement.

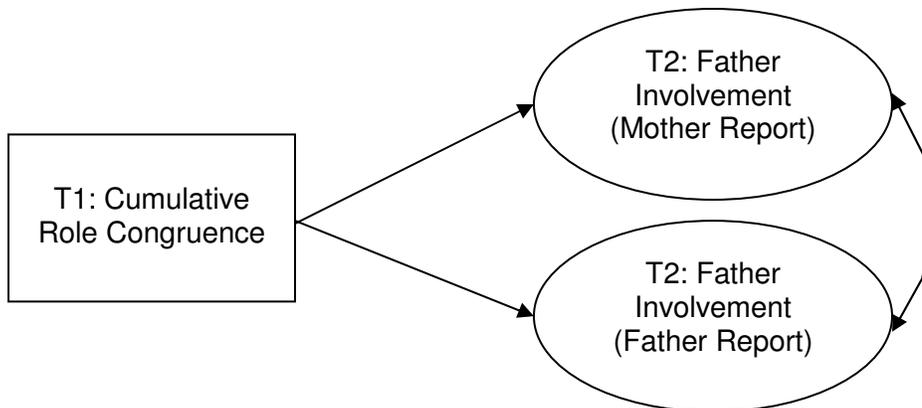


Figure 5. Hierarchical role centrality congruence and father involvement.

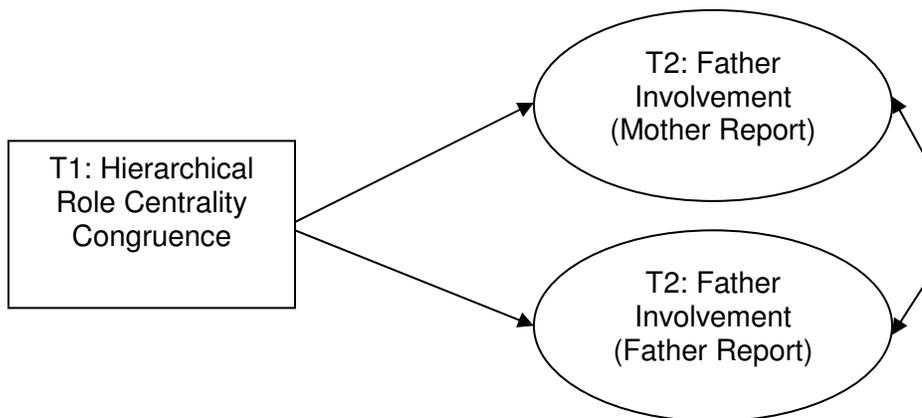


Figure 6. Full model relating individual role identity congruence to father involvement as mediated by father identity satisfaction.

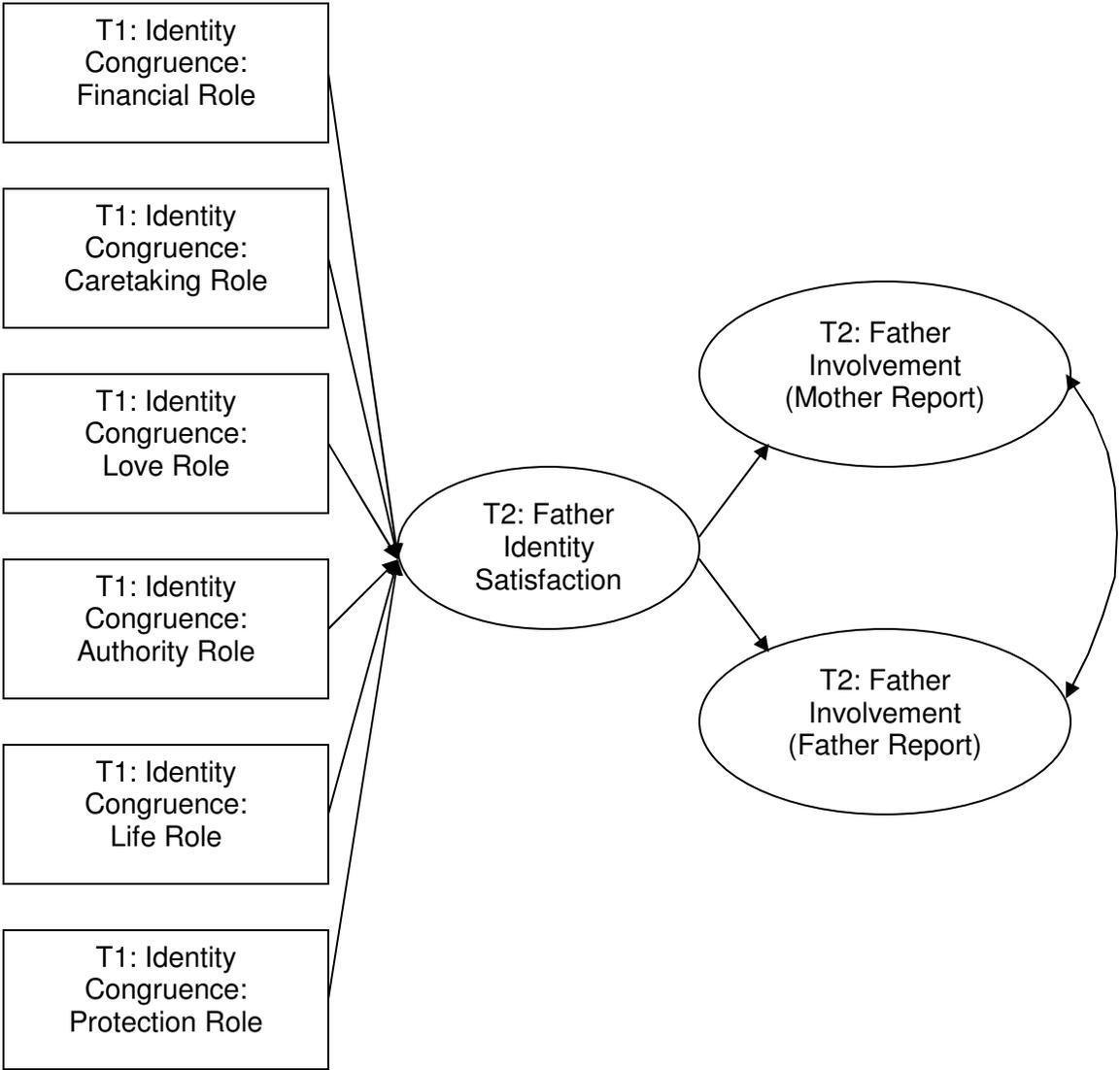


Figure 7. Full model associating cumulative role identity congruence to father involvement as mediated by father identity satisfaction.

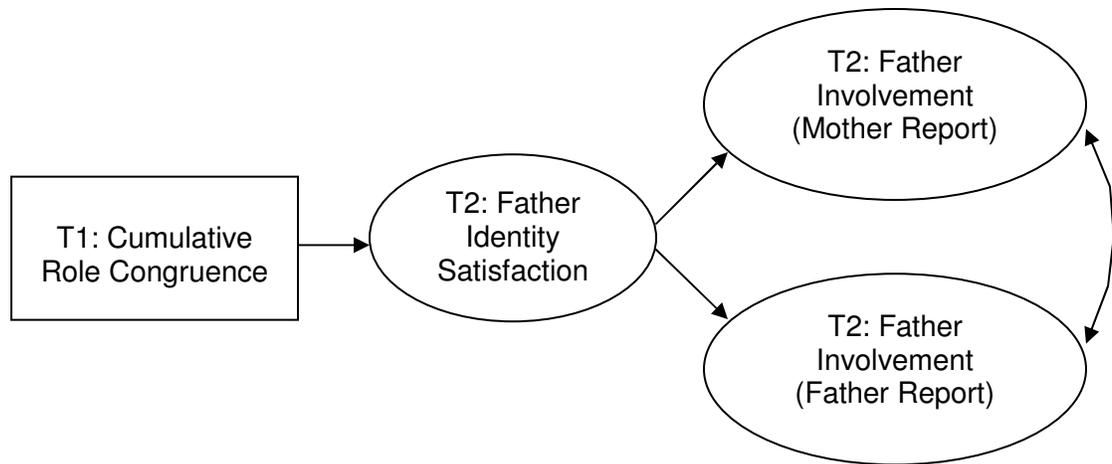
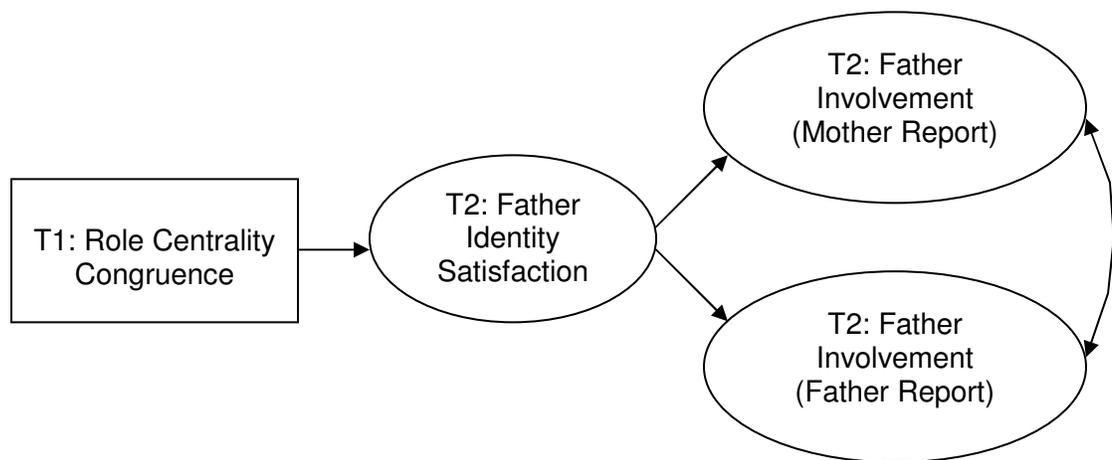


Figure 8. Full model associating role centrality congruence to father involvement as mediated by father identity satisfaction.



As noted, prior studies of father identity (e.g., Henley & Pasley, 2005; Minton & Pasley, 1996) suggested that fathers who are more satisfied with their father identities tend to be more involved with their children. Theoretically, Burke (1991, 1997) suggested that incongruence between identity standards and feedback received from others creates distress. Here, identity standards and identity centrality both were assessed at the time of the child's birth, whereas identity satisfaction and involvement were assessed when the child is 1 year old, allowing preliminary causal relationships to be examined. I hypothesized that greater incongruence between mothers' and fathers' identity standards at the time of the child's birth will result in fathers having lower levels of identity satisfaction at year one; these lower levels of identity satisfaction then will be associated with lower levels of father involvement at year one and mediate the relationship between congruence and involvement.

Unmarried fathers. More so than married, resident fathers, unmarried fathers (and particularly nonresident fathers) face barriers to involvement that result in variations in the types and levels of their involvement that make this a particularly important group to study. For example, according to one set of national estimates, 18% of nonresident fathers reported seeing their children daily, whereas 39.6% reported not seeing them at all in the past year (Seltzer, 1991). Too, studies of unmarried fathers (cohabiting, noncohabiting, romantically involved and nonromantically involved; e.g., Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Lerman & Sorenson, 2000) found that the involvement of these fathers waxes and wanes over time. For example, Coley and Chase-Lansdale found that about half of unmarried fathers were highly involved with their children at the time of the birth, and about half of fathers were relatively uninvolved when the children were one year old; however, these snapshots of involvement are misleading as just under half of fathers

(40%) either increased or decreased their involvement substantially over this period. Thus, involvement among these fathers is highly unstable and exhibits great variation, and understanding what prompts such variation is important.

A number of factors and theoretical models have been proposed to explain this variation (e.g., Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; Rane & McBride, 2000; Braver, Wolchik, Sandler, & Sheets, 1993). One explanation suggests that nonresident fathers are no longer involved in their children's lives by default (via their simple absence from the household). As such, they have limited and often more highly structured opportunities for interaction with their children (Fox & Blanton, 1995). By contrast, identity theory would emphasize the symbolic importance of fathers' unmarried status -- that is, the tendency of fathers experiencing incongruence to disengage from the disconfirming relationship or dismiss/minimize the importance of the incongruent views. Although many unmarried fathers retain strong romantic ties to the mothers of their children and, as such, would value their opinions and feedback, disengagement as a response to incongruence would be more likely among unmarried parents (as compared to married parents), as these relationships are more likely to dissolve and, as noted, involvement among these families tends to be relatively unstable over time. To test the influence of relationship/resident status on these associations, parents' shared relationship status (married, cohabiting, romantic noncohabiting, nonromantic) was included as a moderating influence in the proposed model. I hypothesized that relationship status will weaken the association between congruence and father involvement, such that unmarried fathers (and particularly nonromantically involved fathers) would have a weaker association between incongruence and involvement than would married fathers.

Another barrier to unmarried and especially nonresident father involvement is the ambiguity of the father identity for this population of fathers. Consistent with identity theory, most nonresident fathers report wanting to be involved with their children but not knowing what is expected of them (i.e., role clarity) or how to accomplish it (Seltzer, 1991; Stone & McKenry, 1998). In addition, societal and spousal expectations of nonresident fathers often are minimal (Braver & O'Connell, 1998), creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of disengaged fathers. Although role clarity was not assessed directly in the current study, the influence of congruence or incongruence of identity standards serves as a proxy indicator of such clarity. That is, incongruence conveys a message to fathers that their expectations for themselves as fathers are wrong, potentially leaving them confused as to how they should behave.

Some nonresident fathers are completely uninvolved with their children due to a variety of factors (for a discussion of some of these factors, see for example, Arditti, 1992; Arendell, 1995; Dudley, 1991; Kruk, 1994). However, because both mothers' and fathers' reports were used in this study, the current sample likely includes greater numbers of fathers who were at least minimally involved with their children in the past year (and underrepresents disengaged fathers) than would be the case if only mothers' reports were used (Teitler et al., 2003). Using only mothers' reports would allow the inclusion of families wherein fathers were not locatable, mothers did not know who the fathers were, or fathers simply had completely disengaged from their children's lives (and, as such, would be less likely to participate in a longitudinal study of fathering and their child). As such, it is important to recognize that the results of the study cannot generalize to all unmarried parents, as families with the most uninvolved fathers are the least likely to be included (Teitler et al.).

Individual Characteristics

As noted, the primary purpose of this study was to test the theoretical relationship between identity (and specifically congruence of identity standards) and behavior in a population of biological parents. As such, several characteristics of mothers, fathers, and children that are known to be associated with father involvement were included as control variables. This permits a truer test of the nature and strength of the theoretical relationships under investigation.

Maternal characteristics. Mothers' age and education both affect father involvement, such that older mothers and mothers with more education tend to be associated with fathers who are more involved with their children (Pleck, 1997). Mothers' employment also affects fathering, such that mothers who are employed and who are employed for longer hours tend to be associated with fathers who are more involved in childrearing (Pleck; Wood & Repetti, 2004). Thus, maternal age, education, and hours of employment were included as control variables.

Child characteristics. Although a few studies found no relationship between fathering behaviors and sex of child, most research supports the relevance of sex of child for father involvement -- fathers are more involved with sons than with daughters and demonstrate higher overall levels of involvement with their children when there are sons present in the family than when there are only daughters present (Wood & Repetti, 2004; also, see Pleck, 1997, for a review). As such, sex of child is included here as a control variable to account for this influence.

Another important child characteristic is simply the number of children that fathers have, particularly if they have biological children by other mothers. Such children might compete for fathers' time, attention, and resources, and fathers who have children

by other mothers tend to have lower levels of involvement than fathers who have no childrearing obligations outside of the current family (Manning, Stewart, & Smock, 2003). The presence of other biological children is important for theoretical reasons as well; if fathers have previous children, then their fathering identities likely are more solidly established and might undergo less negotiation/adaptation than if the child born with the current mother is a first child. As such, presence of fathers' other biological children was included here as a control variable.

Paternal characteristics. Like mothers and children, fathers' age affects fathering behaviors; older fathers tend to be more involved with their children than younger fathers (Pleck, 1997). Also like mothers, fathers' education level is positively associated with father involvement, and their higher income also is associated with higher levels of fathering and more positive fathering behaviors (Pleck). However, father employment is negatively associated with fathering (when fathering is defined as other than financial provision) (Crouter, Bumpas, Head, & McHale, 2001), largely due to the constraints that increased hours of employment puts on their available time. Too, with the emphasis on financial provision as an important role of fathers, some fathers "buy out" of caregiving and more direct forms of involvement through their involvement in paid labor; as such, fathers' employment status also is associated with lower levels of involvement (Pleck, 1997). Because these factors are known to influence father involvement, they also are included as control variables.

Measuring Fathering Behaviors

Oftentimes studies use (a) mother reports of fathering behavior as proxies for father reports or (b) fathers' reports alone. Both of these approaches are problematic, as numerous studies find that, even in married families, mothers' reports and fathers' reports

of fathering behaviors differ (Braver & O'Connell, 1998; Smock & Manning, 1997). This raises the question of which parent provides the more accurate report of father involvement. Given the differing views about what fathers should do, mothers' reports might reflect their subjective lens of what they believe that the father should be doing rather than what they actually do. Although asking mothers about fathers is problematic in any research regarding fathering, it is especially so when dealing with unmarried and or nonresident fathers. Even in the assessment of seemingly objective topics such as visitation frequency and payment of child support, studies find that fathers' and mothers' reports differ, with fathers consistently reporting higher levels of both (Braver & O'Connell; Smock & Manning). The amounts of child support reported paid by fathers and reported received by mothers did not differ significantly; however, Smock and Manning found the predictive ability of their models was improved when reports from the nonresident father were included. Thus, although including the resident parent's report might not be critical to a model's predictive validity, including the report of nonresident parents appears to improve the model's predictive validity. A particular strength of the current study is its dyadic approach and, as such, its inclusion (and comparison) of matched reports from both fathers and mothers. This dyadic perspective allows for potential differences in perspectives of fathering to be incorporated and accounted for in analyses, rather than remaining a potential limitation of unknown importance.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study used extant data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study (Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, & McLanahan, 2001), a national longitudinal study of married and unmarried mothers, fathers, and their newborn children. Data are being collected over five years from a birth cohort of approximately 5,000 children and their families with the goal of better understanding the processes, patterns, and outcomes of families with parents who were unmarried at the time of their child's birth (married families were included in the sample primarily for comparison purposes). Baseline interviews occurred between 1998 and 2000, with follow-up interviews and home visits conducted thereafter when the children were 1, 3, and 5 years old. Data from the first two waves were used here. Wave 1 was collected at the time of the children's birth and usually was obtained via in-person interviews with both mothers and fathers at the hospital. When in-person interviews were not possible, data were collected via telephone. Wave 2 was collected when children were approximately one year old and again via either in-person or telephone interviews.

Sample

The original sample included 4,898 families (mothers, fathers, and children; approximately 80% of fathers responded at Wave 1) of which approximately 3,800 were unmarried and 1,200 were married couples at the time of the child's birth. The original sample was a stratified random sample that (when weighted appropriately) is nationally representative of cities in the U.S. with populations over 200,000 (Reichman et al.,

2001). Sampling occurred in three stages. First, a stratified random sample of 16 U.S. cities was selected from the 77 U.S. cities with populations of 200,000 or greater. Cities were categorized according to “environment” (welfare benefits, level of child support enforcement, and strength of local labor market). One city then was randomly selected from each of the eight “extreme” (e.g., generous welfare benefits, strict child support enforcement, and strong labor market) and eight “moderate” (e.g., weak welfare benefits, weak child support enforcement, and moderate labor market) environments. Four additional cities that were of interest to the study researchers or funding agencies were added, bringing the total to 20 cities. Second, hospitals within these 20 cities were sampled (in 5 cities, all birthing hospitals were used). Hospitals were rank-ordered according to their number of nonmarital births, and selection of hospitals continued until 75% of the nonmarital births in the city were covered. A total of 75 hospitals participated in data collection. Finally, births within hospitals were sampled by random selection from all available maternity beds within each hospital; nonmarital births were oversampled by a ratio of approximately 2:1.

For this study, the first two waves of data were used. However, the full sample was not used, as several restrictions were imposed. Both mothers’ and fathers’ reports were used in the present study. As such, the sample was restricted to include only those mothers and fathers for whom data were available from both parents at both waves. Imposing this restriction reduced the sample to 3,056 couples. Next, due to the dyadic nature of the study and because relationship status or other variables of interest might change over time, mothers’ and fathers’ interviews (not always conducted simultaneously) had to have occurred within 3 months of one another at both waves (Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, 2003). Introducing this

restriction limited the sample further to 2,499 couples. The sample also was restricted to 18 of the original 20 cities, because different questions were asked regarding father involvement for 2 of the cities sampled. Specifically, the first two cities in which data were collected were treated as informal “pilot” sites, and several changes were made to the survey following data collection at these sites. After imposing this restriction, the resulting sample was 2,126 couples.

Two additional minor restrictions were imposed. One case was dropped in which father interviews were completed, but the mother had reported the father as “unknown.” Another 18 mothers reported that the children lived primarily with someone else (maternal or paternal grandparents, foster parents, or father [5 cases]). In the interest of consistency of custody/primary caregiver status across cases, these 18 families also were dropped.

After all restrictions are imposed, the final sample included 2,107 matched pairs of mothers and fathers. At Wave 1, the final sample consisted of 680 married couples, 872 cohabiting couples, 465 romantically involved (noncohabiting) couples, and 90 nonromantically involved couples. At Wave 2, the sample consisted of 841 married couples, 681 cohabiting couples, 435 romantically involved (noncohabiting) couples, and 150 nonromantically involved couples.

Imposing these restrictions limits the representativeness of the sample used for this study, and this affects the implications of the findings in several ways. For example, families with nonparticipating fathers (at either wave of data collection) were excluded. Thus, levels of father involvement will be overestimated, as nonparticipating fathers had lower levels of involvement (per mother reports) than did participating fathers (Teitler et al., 2003). Thus, I will be limited in my ability to explain the behavior of fathers who

exhibit the lowest levels of involvement (no involvement) with their children. However, not all fathers in the final sample were actively and frequently involved with their children, with approximately 6% of fathers in the final sample having had no contact with their child within the past month and up to an additional 20% having had no involvement within the past week (this varied by activity), so some variation in involvement was retained.

Despite these limitations, a strength of the final sample is that it includes parents from a variety of relationship statuses. Not only does this sample include parents who were and who remained romantically involved and or married, but also included are those parents who were never-married, who were not romantically involved at the time of the child's birth, or who were romantically involved but who have since dissolved their relationships. Given Burke's (1991, 1997) proposition that individuals experiencing continual incongruence between their identity standards and the feedback received in response to their identity-relevant behaviors might attempt to disengage from the disconfirming relationship (and the suggestion of Pasley et al., 2001, that this occurs particularly with married couples), the inclusion of nonromantically involved parents is an important strength of the study. Including nonromantically involved couples increases the potential impact of response bias (via fathers' nonparticipation), as participation rates of fathers were highest among the married and romantically involved groups (e.g., 88% of eligible married fathers were interviewed) and lowest among fathers who were no longer romantically involved with their children's mothers (60% response rate among noncohabiting fathers) (Teitler et al., 2003). Further, nonparticipating fathers were the least likely to be romantically involved with the children's mothers (per mothers' reports; Teitler et al.). Thus, the sample potentially suffers from problems associated with

nonresponse bias. However, studying incongruence of identity standards among only romantically involved parents would exclude an important group of fathers -- those who have disengaged from a romantic relationship with the mother and or participation in the child's life – and would limit the generalizability of the findings even further. As such, despite these limitations, I believe that this study provides an important first step towards assessing the impact of identity standard congruence on the behaviors of fathers with varying relationships with their children's mothers.

To examine the impact of the restrictions on the final sample, a series of analyses (MANOVA and chi-square) were conducted comparing the original full sample with the restricted sample on a number of variables (see Tables 1 and 2). Differences were found. Parents in the restricted sample less frequently reported having children by other mothers/fathers; fathers were more likely to have worked in paid employment during the previous week; mothers and fathers were more likely to report being White; mothers and fathers reported higher levels of education; and fathers were more involved with their children (according to both mothers' and fathers' reports).

Overall, differences between the two samples were such that the restricted sample is somewhat less diverse, more educated, has fewer other biological children, and has more involved fathers. These differences are important to keep in mind when considering the generalizability of any findings. However, it is worthwhile to note that parents did not differ on the majority of variables for which comparisons were made, including household income, hours of employment, parents' age, sex of child, household composition (number of resident adults and children), or centrality of the father identity.

Measures

Information was obtained regarding basic demographic characteristics, including mothers' and fathers' age, relationship status, household income, mothers' and fathers' education, mothers' and fathers' race/ethnicity, household size, number of mother's and fathers' other biological children, and mothers' and fathers' employment status (see Appendix A for additional description of items/variables). Extensive additional demographic information is available in the data set regarding such things as welfare and child support policies, parent and child health, parents' education, parents' employment, parents' families of origin, and parents' social support; however, this information was not used.

Data also were used regarding mothers' and fathers' expectations regarding fathering roles, fathers' self-perceptions as fathers (e.g., satisfaction, competence), fathers' reports of the centrality of the father identity, and mothers' and fathers' reports of father involvement. More complete descriptions of all nondemographic variables of interest follow.

Identity Variables

Data regarding all identity variables were collected at the time of the children's birth, with the exception of fathers' self-perceived satisfaction with their enactment of their fathering identities (collected at Wave 2 or one year).

Father identity centrality. At the time of the child's birth (Wave 1), fathers were asked four questions regarding the importance they assigned to being a father. Sample items include "Being a father and raising children is one of the most fulfilling experiences a man can have" and "Not being a part of my child's life would be one of the worst things that could happen to me." Responses ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly*

agree; higher scores represent higher centrality of the father identity. The alpha for these items in the current sample was .70.

A measurement model was tested using AMOS 5 to determine the goodness-of-fit of the proposed one-factor model of status centrality. Error terms of individual items were allowed to correlate. The chi-square value and other goodness-of-fit indices were examined to evaluate the fit of the proposed model. When evaluating model fit, the chi-square test assesses the degree to which the proposed model significantly differs from the empirical data, with a higher chi-square indicating greater differences. As such, lower, statistically non-significant chi-square values are desirable. However, the chi-square test is highly sensitive to sample size (larger samples are more likely to produce statistically significant chi-squares, irrespective of the actual degree of model fit). Thus, per the recommendations of Byrne (2001), here I also assessed model fit using the CFI (Comparative Fit Index, which provides a comparison of the hypothesized model with a fully independent model in which no variables correlate; see also Bentler, 1990), the TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index [Tucker & Lewis, 1973], a derivative of the Normed Fit Index which also compares the hypothesized model with the independence model in which all correlations are 0, but which takes parsimony and the number of parameters into consideration), and the RMSEA (Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation, which adjusts for sample size and rewards parsimony). Generally accepted standards for these indices are as follows: CFI and TLI values greater than .90 demonstrate good model fit, whereas values greater than .95 show excellent model fit (Bentler, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1995); an RMSEA value of less than .08 demonstrates adequate model fit, and less than .06 demonstrates good model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The model of status

centrality fit the data extremely well, $\chi^2(2) = 0.73, p = .70$; CFI = 1.00; TLI = 1.00; RMSEA = .00).

Identity congruence. To evaluate the congruence of mothers' and fathers' fathering role identity standards, a total of eight items were used from the data collected at Wave 1. Six items ask about the importance mothers and fathers assigned to various roles that fathers could play in their children's lives. Both mothers and fathers were asked "Fathers do many things for their children. Please tell me how important each of the following activities is to you" and responded to the prompt for the following roles: "provide regular financial support," "teach child about life," "provide direct care, such as feeding, dressing, and child care," "show love and affection to the child," "provide protection for the child," and "serve as an authority figure and discipline the child." Responses ranged from 1 = *very important* to 3 = *not important*; responses were re-coded so higher scores indicated greater importance assigned to the role identity. Two other items ask mothers and fathers to rank (via a card sort) which of the six roles they thought was most important and which they thought was least important for fathers to perform.

From these items, identity congruence was treated in several ways. First, to assess the *absolute* congruence/incongruence of parents' identity standards regarding each role, six variables were created to reflect the congruence of mothers' and fathers' responses on the items asking about the importance of the individual roles (0 = *incongruent*, 1 = *congruent*). Responses were congruent if mothers' and fathers' ratings matched exactly (e.g., the mother and father each rated "Teaching the child about life" as *very important*). Thereafter, these items were summed to create a single "cumulative absolute congruence" score, reflecting the total number of congruent role importance

responses (scores potentially would range from 0 = *all responses incongruent* to 6 = *all responses congruent*).

Next, six variables were created to represent the *relative level* of congruence between mothers' and fathers' responses regarding the importance of the six individual roles. Variables were created by subtracting the mother's response from the father's response (0 = *congruent*) and taking the absolute value of the difference score; higher scores indicated greater incongruence such that one spouse assigned higher importance to the role identity than the other. Thereafter, a cumulative relative congruence score was created by summing these absolute value difference scores.

Finally, variables were created to represent whether the mothers' and fathers' responses matched regarding the roles that they ranked as being most and least important (0 = *incongruent*, 1 = *congruent*). These 2 items then were summed to create a second cumulative congruence score (0 = *neither most nor least congruent*, 1 = *either most or least congruent*, 2 = *both most and least congruent*), reflecting the overall congruence of mothers' and fathers' role hierarchies.

Identity satisfaction. At Wave 2, fathers were asked four questions regarding their perceived satisfaction with the experience of being a father. Sample items included "Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be" and "I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent." Responses range from 1 = *strongly agree* to 4 = *strongly disagree*; higher scores indicate higher satisfaction. The obtained alpha for the current sample for these 4 items was .59.

A measurement model was tested using AMOS 5 to determine the goodness-of-fit of the proposed one-factor model of father identity satisfaction. Error terms of

individual items were allowed to correlate. The model demonstrated adequate fit, $\chi^2 (2) = 20.34, p < .001$; CFI = .97; TLI = .87; RMSEA = .07.

Father Involvement

Father involvement was assessed using mothers' and fathers' reports on eight items at Wave 2 (one year). Items were designed to measure the average amount of fathers' direct involvement in various activities with their children over the course of a week, using the prompt "For each activity, please tell me how many days a week you do this in a typical week;" for mothers, the prompt read "Please tell me how many days a week he [the father] does this in a typical week." Sample items include "Play games like 'peek-a-boo' or 'gotcha' with (CHILD)", "Read stories to (CHILD)," and "Hug or show physical affection to (CHILD)."

A composite score was created using the mean of fathers' and mothers' responses and initial alphas obtained in the current sample were .70 for fathers (8 items), .76 for mothers (8 items), and .78 for mothers and fathers combined (16 items). An initial SEM measurement model was constructed using all items (mothers' and fathers' reports) as 16 manifest indicators of a single latent "father involvement" construct. This model fit the data poorly ($\chi^2 (104) = 2,415.68, p < .00$; TLI = .41, CFI = .55, RMSEA = .13). Next, a measurement model was attempted wherein a mothers' composite variable and a fathers' composite variable were used as two manifest indicators of a single latent father involvement construct; however, with only two indicators there were not enough degrees of freedom in the model to estimate all of the parameters.

Finally, based on exploratory factor analyses and a content analysis of the items, a subscale was created from five of the items, representing a composite "recreational"

father involvement score. One item (“Takes child to visit relatives”) was dropped due to its low frequency of occurrence and lack of correlation with any of the other items. Thereafter, two latent father involvement variables were created (mother report and father report) using three manifest indicators: the “recreational involvement” composite and the two remaining items (“Hug or show physical affection to child” and “Puts child to bed”). Error terms for corresponding mother report and father report items were correlated, as were the disturbance terms of the two latent variables. A measurement model indicated that this conceptualization/operationalization of father involvement fit the data well, $\chi^2(5) = 29.04$, $p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .05, and this model of father involvement was used as the dependent variable in all subsequent analyses.

Moderating Variables

In the study, parents’ relationship status was included as a moderator of the association between identity congruence and father involvement. Two variables constructed by the Fragile Families Study (using primarily mothers’ data but cross-tabulating responses to several questions asked of mothers and fathers regarding their relationship/resident status) were used to designate couples as *married*, *cohabiting*, *romantic noncohabiting*, or *nonromantic* at each wave. Thereafter, multiple group comparisons were performed to test (separately) the moderating influences of Wave 1 and Wave 2 relationship status on the complete models (the mediated models with all control variables).

Data Analyses

Structural equation modeling (AMOS 5) was used to evaluate the proposed models (see Figures) regarding the ways in which congruence between mothers’ and fathers’ father identity standards are associated with father involvement, controlling for

appropriate demographic and intrapersonal characteristics. As with the measurement models, to evaluate the fit of the structural models, I examined chi-square values and other relevant goodness-of-fit indices (CFI, TLI, and RMSEA). Thereafter, multi-group comparisons were conducted to test for moderating effects of parents' relationship status upon the associations in the proposed model (Byrne, 2001). Missing data was estimated through the use of FIML (full information maximum likelihood) estimation through the AMOS5 software.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Five models were tested reflecting the five conceptualizations of identity congruence described in Chapter II: absolute individual role congruence, relative individual role congruence, absolute cumulative role congruence, relative cumulative role congruence, and congruence of the role identity hierarchies. For each conceptualization, a structural model linking identity congruence with father involvement was tested first. For the individual role congruence models, a reduced model was then created, including only those role identities that were significantly associated with mothers' and or fathers' reports of father involvement in the first model. A model then was tested with father identity satisfaction mediating the association between congruence and involvement. Thereafter, control variables were added to the model to obtain a purer test of the associations between the theoretical constructs of interest. Finally, two sets of multiple-group comparisons tested the moderating influence of parents' relationship status (at birth and at one year).

Preliminary Analyses

In the interests of parsimony, initial bivariate correlational analyses were conducted to determine which control variables to include in the structural models. Correlations between the control variables and mother and father reports of father involvement are presented in Table 3. Father age (at child's birth), father's education (at child's birth), father's race/ethnicity (at child's birth), father's current employment status (employed versus unemployed in the last week, Year 1), and number of father's other

biological children (at child's birth) were associated significantly with both mothers' and fathers' reports of father involvement and in the expected directions. Older White fathers with more education were more involved with their children, whereas fathers who had other biological children and who were employed for pay in the last week were less involved with their children. These variables were then placed into a structural model relating each control variable to father involvement. (Note: Mother's age, education, and race also were correlated significantly with father involvement, but due to their strong correlations with the corresponding father characteristics, only father characteristics were included as controls in the interests of parsimony and to avoid multicollinearity.)

Results of the model associating control variables with father involvement are presented in Table 4. All paths were significant with the exception of the association between father education and mother's report of involvement ($p = .09$). The overall fit of the model was adequate, $\chi^2 (25) = 303.24, p < .001$; CFI = .96; TLI = .89; RMSEA = .07. A model then was tested where father education was not included. This represented a significant improvement in model fit, $\chi^2 (21) = 245.40, p < .001$; CFI = .96; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .07; thus, only these four control variables were used in all later analyses.

Although not a demographic variable, centrality of the father status was treated as a control variable here, and a structural model relating status centrality to father involvement also was tested. As expected, status centrality was associated positively with both mother and father reports of father involvement ($\beta = .40$ and $\beta = .41$, respectively; $p < .01$), and the model demonstrated excellent fit to the data, $\chi^2 (26) = 74.09, p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .03.

Finally, a full measurement model was tested (all independent and dependent variables correlated) to assess any other correlations among the variables. This model

represented an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2 (121) = 918.31, p < .001$; CFI = .91; TLI = .85; RMSEA = .06. The correlation between identity satisfaction and status centrality was significant ($r = .20, p < .001$), as was the correlation between identity congruence and status centrality ($r = .15, p < .001$). Also, father employment status was correlated with status centrality and identity satisfaction ($r = -.11, p < .001$; and $r = -.11, p < .001$, respectively), and father race also was correlated with centrality and satisfaction ($r = -.10, p < .001$; and $r = -.06, p < .05$, respectively). To account for these correlations, correlations among the disturbance/error terms of these variables were included in all applicable analyses.

Results of Structural Models

Absolute Individual Role Congruence

The first theoretical model related the six individual measures of absolute role congruence to father involvement. The model fit the data well, $\chi^2 (29) = 63.25, p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .02, but explained very little of the variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .01, R^2_F = .02$). Only three of the roles were related to father involvement: “teach child about life,” “provide direct care, such as feeding, dressing, and child care,” and “show love and affection to the child” (see Table 5 for path estimates). As hypothesized, when parents’ fathering identity standards were congruent at the time of the child’s birth, fathers were more involved with their children one year later.

Thereafter, a reduced model was tested wherein only these three variables were included. This model also fit the data well, $\chi^2 (17) = 56.63, p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .03, but still explained little of the variance in later father involvement ($R^2_M = .01, R^2_F = .02$). Again, when parents’ identity standards were congruent, fathers were more involved (see Table 5 for path estimates).

Father identity satisfaction was then added to the reduced model as a mediator of the association between individual role congruence and father involvement. This model generally fit the data well, $\chi^2(50) = 168.45$, $p < .001$; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .03, and explained an additional 1-3% of the variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .02$, $R^2_F = .05$). However, although identity satisfaction was positively associated with father involvement (fathers who were more satisfied with their parental identities were more involved with their children), none of the associations between role congruence at birth and identity satisfaction one year later were significant (see Table 5 for path estimates). As such, a mediational model was not supported for this conceptualization of identity congruence.

A model including control variables (but dropping the paths from congruence to identity satisfaction) demonstrated good fit, $\chi^2(157) = 647.60$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .04, and explained an additional 5-6% of the variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .08$, $R^2_F = .10$). All control variables were significantly associated with father involvement in expected directions. Fathers who were older, White, and not employed for pay in the last week, who had fewer other biological children, and who held the father status as more central tended to be more involved with their children. With the addition of the control variables, the association between congruence of the “teaching about life” role identity standards and involvement became nonsignificant ($p = .72$ and $p = .06$ for mother and father report, respectively), as did the association between “showing love and affection” and mother report of involvement ($p = .15$). All other associations remained the same, albeit slightly diminished in strength (see Table 5 for path estimates).

Thereafter, moderating analyses were conducted via multiple-group comparisons within SEM to test the influence of parents' relationship status at the time of the child's birth and when the child was one year old on the association between identity standard congruence, identity satisfaction, and father involvement. Initial models using four relationship statuses (married, cohabiting, romantic noncohabiting, and nonromantic) did not fit the data well, $\chi^2(850) = 3297.90, p < .001$; CFI = .69; TLI = .66; RMSEA = .04, likely due to the small sample sizes for each group (and particularly the nonromantic group, $N = 90$) and the large number of parameters being estimated. Thereafter, relationship status was recategorized according to marital status (married versus nonmarried). However, this model also provided a poor fit to the data, $\chi^2(388) = 2482.56, p < .001$; CFI = .75; TLI = .70; RMSEA = .05. Finally, parents were classified according to cohabitation status (cohabiting versus noncohabiting). This model provided an improved and marginal fit to the data, $\chi^2(388) = 1695.97, p < .001$; CFI = .84; TLI = .81; RMSEA = .04). This categorization was used in subsequent moderating analyses.

A more conservative alpha level ($p < .01$) was used to test for significance in the moderating analyses and to reduce the chance that only random differences between groups were reported. Parents' relationship status at the time of the child's birth (cohabiting versus noncohabiting) moderated the association between congruence of the caregiving role and mothers' report of involvement, as well as the association between identity satisfaction and fathers' report of involvement ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [388] = 16951.97, \chi^2_{\text{Un}} [380] = 1675.84, \Delta\chi^2 [8] = 20.17, p < .01$). Both associations were stronger for noncohabiting parents. Parents' relationship status at one year did not moderate any of the associations between congruence and involvement, but did moderate the association between satisfaction and involvement ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [388] = 3558.60, \chi^2_{\text{Un}} [380] =$

2796.64, $\Delta\chi^2 [8] = 761.96, p < .01$). Again the association between satisfaction with the father status and involvement was stronger for noncohabiting fathers (see Table 6 for path estimates).

Relative Individual Role Congruence

Initially, a model was tested which related the six individual measures of relative role congruence to father involvement. This model fit the data well, $\chi^2 (29) = 64.20, p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .02, but it did not explain much of the variance in later father involvement ($R^2_M = .01, R^2_F = .02$). Again only three of the roles were related to father involvement: “teach child about life,” “provide direct care, such as feeding, dressing, and child care,” and “show love and affection to the child” (see Table 7 for path estimates). Greater congruence of mothers’ and fathers’ identity standards at the time of the child’s birth was associated with fathers being more involved with their children one year later.

Thereafter, a reduced model was tested wherein only the three identities that were significantly associated with either mother or father report of involvement were included. This model also fit the data well ($\chi^2 [17] = 57.52, p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .03), again explaining little of the variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .01, R^2_F = .02$). Fathers were more involved at one year when there was more congruence between mothers’ and fathers’ identity standards at the birth of their child (see Table 7 for path estimates).

Father identity satisfaction was then added to the reduced model as a mediator of the association between individual role congruence and father involvement. This model generally fit the data well ($\chi^2 [50] = 166.65, p < .001$; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .03) and explained an additional 1-3% of the variance in later father involvement (R^2_M

= .02, $R^2_F = .05$). Further, although identity satisfaction again was associated positively with father involvement, none of the associations between role congruence and identity satisfaction were significant. As such, a mediational model again was not supported (see Table 7 for path estimates).

A model including control variables (but dropping the paths from congruence to identity satisfaction) demonstrated good fit ($\chi^2 [157] = 646.13, p < .001$; CFI = .94; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .04) and explained some additional variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .08, R^2_F = .10$). All control variables were significantly associated with father involvement in expected directions. Fathers who were older, White, not employed for pay in the last week, and who had fewer other biological children and held the father status as more central also tended to be more involved with their children. With the inclusion of the control variables, the associations between “teaching about life” and mothers’ report of involvement and between “showing love and affection” and mothers’ report of involvement dropped to non-significance ($p = .77$ and $p = .08$, respectively); all other associations remained the same, albeit slightly diminished in strength (see Table 7 for path estimates).

Thereafter, moderating analyses were conducted via multiple group comparisons within SEM to test the moderating influence of parents’ relationship status at the time of the child’s birth and when the child was one year old on the association between identity standard congruence and father involvement. Parents’ relationship status at the time of the child’s birth using cohabiting and noncohabiting categories did not moderate any of the associations between congruence, satisfaction, and involvement ($\chi^2_{Con} [385] = 1843.70, \chi^2_{Un} [377] = 1826.24, \Delta\chi^2 [8] = 17.46, p > .05$). Parents’ relationship status at one year did not moderate the association between congruence and involvement, but

did moderate the association between satisfaction and involvement ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [385] = 3522.02$, $\chi^2_{\text{Un}} [377] = 2752.40$, $\Delta\chi^2 [8] = 769.62$, $p < .01$). Again, the association between satisfaction with the father status and involvement was stronger for noncohabiting fathers (see Table 8 for path estimates).

Absolute Cumulative Role Congruence

For this conceptualization, the first model tested the association between a single manifest indicator of the cumulative level of absolute role congruence and father involvement. This model fit the data well ($\chi^2 [9] = 40.72$, $p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .04), but again it explained very little of the variance in later father involvement ($R^2_{\text{M}} = .01$, $R^2_{\text{F}} = .01$) (see Table 9 for path estimates). As hypothesized, higher cumulative levels of identity standard congruence were associated with greater involvement by fathers.

Next, father identity satisfaction was added to the model as a mediator of the association between cumulative absolute role congruence and father involvement. This model also fit the data well ($\chi^2 [36] = 146.40$, $p < .001$; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .04), explaining an additional 1-3% of the variance in later father involvement ($R^2_{\text{M}} = .02$, $R^2_{\text{F}} = .04$). Unlike the individual role congruence models, identity satisfaction was associated positively both with father involvement and with cumulative absolute role congruence, such that greater cumulative congruence of identity standards at the birth of the child was associated with higher levels of satisfaction with the father identity one year later, and greater satisfaction was associated with more involvement. However, the direct association between identity congruence and father involvement was not reduced upon the inclusion of identity satisfaction; as such, a mediational model was not

supported for this conceptualization of identity congruence (see Table 9 for path estimates).

A model including control variables demonstrated good fit ($\chi^2 [126] = 587.00, p < .001$; CFI = .95; TLI = .93; RMSEA = .04) and explained some additional variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .08, R^2_F = .09$). All control variables were significantly associated with father involvement in expected directions. Fathers who were older, White, not employed for pay in the last week, who had fewer other biological children, and who held the father status as more central tended to be more involved with their children. All other associations remained the same, albeit slightly diminished in strength (see Table 9 for path estimates).

Thereafter, multiple group comparisons were conducted to assess the moderating influence of parents' relationship status (cohabiting versus noncohabiting). Parents' relationship status at the time of the child's birth did not moderate the associations between congruence, satisfaction, and involvement ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [317] = 1578.40, \chi^2_{\text{Un}} [312] = 1569.80, \Delta\chi^2 [5] = 8.6, p > .05$). However, parents' relationship status at one year did moderate part of this model ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [317] = 3098.40, \chi^2_{\text{Un}} [312] = 2430.14, \Delta\chi^2 [5] = 668.26, p < .001$). Specifically, the association between congruence and involvement was not moderated by parents' relationship status. However, the association between father identity satisfaction and father involvement was significantly stronger for noncohabiting than cohabiting parents (see Table 10 for path estimates). Identity satisfaction was more strongly associated with father involvement for noncohabiting compared with cohabiting fathers.

Relative Cumulative Role Congruence

For this conceptualization, a model relating a single manifest indicator of the cumulative level of relative role congruence to father involvement was tested first. This model fit the data well ($\chi^2 [9] = 38.28, p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .04), but explained very little of the variance in later father involvement ($R^2_M = .01, R^2_F = .01$; see Table 11 for path estimates). Overall, as parents' identity standards were more congruent, fathers were more involved with their children.

Next, father identity satisfaction was added to the model as a mediator of the association between cumulative relative role congruence and father involvement. This model also fit the data well ($\chi^2 [36] = 143.36, p < .001$; CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .04), but it explained relatively little of the additional variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .02, R^2_F = .04$). Congruence remained associated with involvement such that fathers were more involved with their children when parents' early identity standards were more congruent. Unlike the individual role congruence models but like the other cumulative congruence model, identity satisfaction was associated positively with both father involvement and cumulative absolute role congruence; when early identity standards were more congruent, later satisfaction was higher, and higher levels of satisfaction were associated with increases in involvement one year after the birth of the child. However, the association between identity congruence and father involvement was not reduced upon the inclusion of identity satisfaction, so a mediational model was not supported (see Table 11 for path estimates).

A model including the control variables demonstrated good fit ($\chi^2 [126] = 584.00, p < .001$; CFI = .95; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .04) and explained some additional variance in father involvement ($R^2_M = .08, R^2_F = .09$). All control variables were associated with

involvement in the expected directions. Fathers who were older, White, and not employed for pay in the last week, and who had fewer other biological children and held the father status as more central tended to be more involved with their children. All other associations remained the same, albeit slightly diminished in strength (see Table 11 for path estimates).

Thereafter, moderating analyses again were conducted. Parents' relationship status at the time of the child's birth (cohabiting versus noncohabiting) again did not moderate the associations between congruence, satisfaction, and involvement ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [317] = 1632.00$, $\chi^2_{\text{Un}} [312] = 1622.70$, $\Delta\chi^2 [5] = 9.30$, $p > .05$). However, parents' relationship status at one year did serve as a moderator of the association between identity satisfaction and involvement ($\chi^2_{\text{Con}} [317] = 3442.90$, $\chi^2_{\text{Un}} [312] = 2698.20$, $\Delta\chi^2 [5] = 744.70$, $p < .001$). Again the association between father identity satisfaction and father involvement was much stronger for noncohabiting parents than cohabiting parents (see Table 12 for path estimates for each group). Identity satisfaction was more strongly and positively associated with involvement for noncohabiting fathers than cohabiting fathers.

Role Centrality Congruence

First tested was a model of the association between a single manifest indicator of the congruence of parents' ranking of role importance (most important and least important) and father involvement. This model fit the data well ($\chi^2 [9] = 39.1$, $p < .001$; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .04), although the association between centrality congruence and father report of involvement was not significant ($p = .24$). A more congruent role centrality hierarchy was associated with greater father involvement as reported by mothers ($\beta = .07$, $p < .01$), but it explained little variance ($F^2_M = .01$). Due to the fact that only one path was significant in this model and the minimal explained

variance, further analyses were not conducted regarding this conceptualization of identity standard congruence.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using short-term longitudinal data from The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, I examined the association between the congruence of mothers' and fathers' fathering identity standards and father involvement and whether this association was mediated by identity satisfaction (a proxy for distress due to incongruent feedback) and or moderated by parents' relationship status (at birth and one year later). The central hypothesis was that greater congruence between mothers' and fathers' identity standards would be associated with greater father involvement; this hypothesis was largely supported by the findings.

Identity Standard Congruence

In the individual role congruence models, half of the roles (teaching about life, caregiving, and showing love and affection) were associated significantly with mother and father reports of father involvement, and both forms of cumulative role congruence also were associated with father involvement. Identity theory suggests that congruent feedback encourages identity-relevant behavior, and the present findings support my extrapolation that feedback reflects an individual's own identity standards. As such, greater congruence among standards would result in congruent feedback, encouraging identity-relevant behavior. Here, more congruence among role centrality beliefs at the time of the child's birth resulted in greater father involvement one year later, even when controlling for demographic characteristics of the father and centrality of the father status itself.

Theoretically, these findings confirm those of Rane and McBride (2000) that role centrality plays a unique part in the explanation of father involvement, above and beyond that explained by the importance of simply being a father. My findings further confirmed the importance of the centrality of what they referred to as the “nurturer” role (here, comparable to the “love” and “caregiving” roles, both of which were associated with father involvement). Also similar to Rane and McBride, congruence of the centrality of the financial provider role was not associated with fathers’ involvement. However, unlike their findings, here status centrality consistently was a stronger predictor of father involvement than was the congruence of centralities of individual roles. It is important to remember that the direct effect of role centrality was not assessed here; the *congruence* of parents’ role centrality hierarchies was assessed. Thus, it is difficult to directly compare these findings. Theoretically, the stronger effect of status centrality likely was due to its direct link to behavior (i.e., more central identities are more likely to be enacted), whereas congruence is posited as having an indirect and longitudinal effect on behavior (via Burke’s [1991, 1997] feedback loop).

Empirically, the present findings also were consistent with those of previous studies of fathering, and particularly studies of minority fathering, which emphasize the importance of “being there” for one’s children as a primary role of fathers (e.g., Hamer, 1998). The three roles significantly associated with father involvement in the present study (“teaching about life,” “caregiving,” and “showing love and affection”) are consistent with this portrayal of a father who is directly and actively involved in childrearing and child-related activities.

Importantly, the nature of the measure of father involvement might have affected the findings. Father involvement was operationalized here as consisting of involvement

in recreational and direct caregiving activities. No measures of financial provision, discipline, or protective behaviors were included; thus, the failure of certain identities to predict later behavior might be the result of measurement limitations.

The hierarchical role rankings (which roles were the most and least important) were related only to mothers' reports of involvement. This finding indicates that it is not the relative hierarchical location of roles and whether parents agree on these rankings that is important to fathers' behavior, but rather, the individual importance assigned to specific roles. Empirically, no other studies have examined this distinction. Theoretically, Burke's (1991, 1997) identity verification model operates at the role identity level, suggesting that the enactment of specific role identities garners feedback specific to those roles. It might be that feedback of a comparative nature (e.g., suggesting that a father's "misperformance" of an identity is because he should be performing another role identity) is less likely to occur or less distressing than feedback regarding the enactment of that specific role identity alone (e.g., suggesting that the role identity should be enacted differently). Whether such a mechanism is operating here is difficult to determine from the available data, but this would be an area worthy of further examination.

Identity Satisfaction

Contrary to what was predicted by identity theory, identity satisfaction did not mediate the association between identity standard congruence and father involvement in any of the models tested. Instead, the individual role congruence models showed that identity satisfaction was associated directly with father involvement (and not with congruence at all), and in the cumulative role congruence models, satisfaction was

associated with both congruence and father involvement, but did not reduce the association between congruence and father involvement.

Empirically, these findings are consistent with previous research findings that greater satisfaction with the father identity was associated with higher levels of father involvement (e.g., Bruce & Fox, 1999; Henley & Pasley, 2005; Minton & Pasley, 1996). Theoretically, these findings suggest that Burke's (1991, 1997) identity verification model is incomplete. That is, identity satisfaction/distress is not the only mechanism through which congruence or incongruence affects identity-relevant behaviors. The low reliability of the current measure of satisfaction might have contributed to the failure of satisfaction to mediate the identity-behavior association. It also might be that a broader measure of distress (e.g., anxiety, depression), a measure of satisfaction/distress with the disconfirming relationship, or a measure of satisfaction/distress with specific role identities (rather than the father status) would more accurately or more fully describe the type of distress created by incongruent feedback. Too, just as cumulative congruence more strongly affected involvement, it might be that cumulative distress affects behavior. As noted, counter-identities are merely one of several potential sources of confirmation/disconfirmation of an enacted identity, and identity satisfaction likely would draw on several different "behavioral partners" beyond the counter-identity. Thus, if a father received congruent feedback from other sources, his satisfaction with the father identity might not be compromised by one incongruent source, even when that source was the mother. It is beyond the scope of the present study to test such alternate mechanisms, but this is a noteworthy finding that suggests a direction for future research.

Parents' Relationship Status

Results were mixed regarding parents' relationship status moderating the association between congruence and father involvement. With the exception of a single congruence item in a single model (caregiving in the absolute individual role congruence model), relationship status at neither birth nor one year moderated the association between role centrality congruence and father involvement. Thus, the preponderance of the evidence does not support a moderating effect of relationship status on the association between congruence and involvement. However, parents' relationship status at one year (and in two of the models, at birth) did moderate the association between identity satisfaction and father involvement, such that the association was stronger for noncohabiting parents.

Theoretically, this fits with the proposition from identity theory that in the face of continued incongruence and distress, individuals will attempt to disengage from the disconfirming relationship (in the present case, the relationship with the mother). Here, relationship status did not moderate the association between congruence and involvement, but relationship status did moderate the association between identity satisfaction and involvement. At the time of the child's birth, differences in identity standards might not yet be apparent, because the behaviors are not fully enacted and such differences would not cause distress. However, by one year, the father identity has been enacted and incongruence between identity standards has become apparent, potentially with concomitant disillusionment with the father identity. Thus, it makes theoretical sense for the relationship status one year after the birth of the child to be more consistently influential. Over the course of a year, incongruence might lead some

couples to dissolve their relationship or, at the least, to not move to formalize it (e.g., moving from dating to cohabitation, moving from cohabitation to marriage).

It makes empirical and theoretical sense that the association between satisfaction and involvement would be stronger for noncohabiting fathers than cohabiting fathers. Other studies (e.g., Bruce & Fox, 1999; Henley & Pasley, 2005) have demonstrated similar patterns of findings for resident and nonresident fathers, with identity factors having increased relevance to the involvement of nonresident fathers. Although not explicit in Burke's (1991, 1997) identity verification model, some research (e.g., Pasley et al., 2001) suggests that not all feedback is weighted equally, with the opinions and feedback of some individuals being assigned more weight and importance than others. The present findings suggest that for fathers in less formalized (noncohabiting) relationships, individual factors (e.g., identity satisfaction) are more important to involvement than dyadic characteristics (congruence), whereas in more formalized relationships, individual characteristics take on less importance.

Interestingly, the direct association between congruence and involvement was not moderated by parents' relationship status. This runs counter to what would be hypothesized by identity theory, but might be due to the generally weak and indirect effect of congruence on involvement. Further, sample size and model fit are concerns regarding the moderating analyses. Despite the restructuring of the analyses into two categories (due to small sample sizes with some of the groups and poor model fit), the moderating models only fit the data marginally well, at best. Thus, the moderation findings should be interpreted with caution.

Although the original hypothesis regarding congruence was confirmed, ultimately the amount of variance explained by role centrality congruence was quite small (1-2%).

Thus, the practical utility of these findings is limited. Numerous other factors, including demographic characteristics, identity satisfaction, and centrality of the father status, were stronger predictors of father involvement than was congruence. This might be due to measurement issues and certain unique characteristics of these data (discussed further below), which might have attenuated some of the associations. However, given the indirect ways in which congruence affects involvement, such small effect sizes are not surprising, and this study represents a significant first step (particularly theoretically) in this largely unexplored area of research. Further investigations of these associations are warranted before disregarding these particular aspects of identity theory as inconsequential to fathering behavior.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several important limitations exist with the data that require additional consideration when interpreting the findings, and many questions remain unanswered. First, although the sample was fairly representative in terms of characteristics such as race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status, non-romantically involved couples were underrepresented, as were disengaged fathers. Given that father involvement was the focus of this study, and that non-romantic couples were the least likely to have father participation, these findings tell us little about fathers who have the lowest levels of involvement with their children (complete disengagement). Also, given Burke's (1991, 1997) hypotheses about disengaging from disconfirming relationships, disengaged fathers and non-romantically involved couples are of particular theoretical importance, and future research efforts should focus on these populations.

Further, only congruence of mothers' and fathers' beliefs were examined and in a limited area (role centrality). Future research should explore the importance of

congruence with the beliefs of other individuals (e.g., fathers and grandparents, fathers and employers, fathers and their children) and using a broader conceptualization of identity standards than role centrality. For example, questions could be asked regarding the amount of time that should be spent in various roles or evaluations of parental competence. Also, responses regarding centrality were closed-ended and directive (i.e., fathers were asked to rate certain roles and not allowed to list other roles that were meaningful to them) and were limited in the variability of their responses (responses ranged from 1-3). Similarly, fathers could be asked who they look to for feedback regarding the father identity. It might be that fathers who are no longer romantically involved with their children's mothers do not value the mothers' feedback; thus, incongruence between these sets of standards would not cause distress. Other sources of feedback might include a father's employer, extended family, or friends/mentors; however, not all individuals serve as valuable sources of feedback for all fathers. Asking parents to suggest and define the roles that are important to them, as well as whose advice and feedback they seek, would allow a broader conceptualization of fathering (and greater variability of congruence/ incongruence) to emerge than did the measures available in the present study.

Regarding the limited variables available here, future research could attempt to tease apart the relationships among congruence of specific roles and specific forms of father involvement. For example, when fathers and mothers agree or disagree that financial provision is an important fathering role, are fathers more or less likely to be highly involved in providing financially for their children? Because the questions asked of parents regarding father involvement (partly due to the children's age) were limited in their scope, such analyses were impossible with these data. In addition, measures of

identity at both birth and at one year rather than limited to birth alone would provide a better understanding and better test of the identity verification cycle proposed by Burke (1991, 1997). Here, identity satisfaction and changes in relationship status could serve as proxies, but having direct measures of whether identity standards change over time would add to our knowledge of identity development.

In terms of sampling, a larger sample of non-romantically involved parents would assist in determining whether incongruent parents are more likely to dissolve their relationships than are congruent parents (as suggested by Pasley et al., 2001). Unfortunately, the small number of non-romantic parents, coupled with the complex models being estimated, did not allow this question to be answered. Further, replication of this study with a group of first-time parents would be of value. Although presence of other biological children was controlled statistically, sampling a group of first-time parents would provide a clearer examination of the identity standard negotiation process that follows the initial enactment of the father identity. It also might be that more frequent data collection points are necessary during the crucial first year to accurately capture the identity negotiation process.

Finally, testing these associations over a longer period than was possible with these data would be of value. Using the same dataset, future waves of these data (when children are three and five years old) could be used to test additional longitudinal associations with father involvement, as well as changes in satisfaction and parents' relationship status. More data points also would allow the use of statistical techniques more suited to dyadic data, such as HLM. Techniques like HLM also allow for the use of more of the sample, as individuals missing data at different times can be estimated,

rather than deleted. (Recall that in the current study, only parents with data available at both data points were used.)

Regarding identity theory, the present findings generally confirm Burke's (1991, 1997) identity verification model, as well as suggesting some additional refinements. As noted, it appears that identity satisfaction in and of itself is not the sole mechanism responsible for changes in identity standards or behavior, at least not within a particular two-person interaction. As such, future research should examine whether cumulative incongruence across individuals is more strongly associated with identity distress, and or whether different forms of distress (anxiety, relationship satisfaction) are more strongly associated with changes in standards and or behavior.

Relatedly, Burke's (1991, 1997) model should be expanded to include more than just two-person interactions. Often identities are enacted in the presence of groups of individuals, not just a single other person, and feedback will be received simultaneously from multiple sources (e.g., in triadic coparenting situations involving the other parent and the child). Although the original dyadic conceptualization provides a useful foundation for conceptualizing interactions with larger groups of individuals, Burke's model should be expanded to better reflect the simultaneous nature of behavior and feedback occurring within such interactions.

Overall, the present findings confirm the theoretical hypothesis that congruence of identity standards between parents is a relevant consideration when examining fathers' behavior with their children. Although this provides important insight regarding the theoretically processes underlying the translation of identity into behavior, whether it is an important practical consideration remains dubious. Here, numerous other factors, including demographic characteristics, identity satisfaction, and status centrality were far

stronger predictors of involvement than was identity congruence. This is not surprising, given the theoretically indirect effect of identity congruence on involvement and the limitations noted. Additional studies should investigate whether these findings hold or are merely a product of these particular data. In the absence of replication studies that demonstrate a greater influence of congruence than was found here, the present findings suggest that in terms of intervention and policy implications, it might be best to allow parents to agree to disagree and focus on more direct influences on father involvement.

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Appendix A. Tables

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Significant Differences Between Samples

Variables	Full Sample (<i>N</i> = 4,898)		Restricted Sample (<i>N</i> = 2,107)	
	Mean	(<i>SD</i>)	Mean	(<i>SD</i>)
<u>Mothers</u>				
Age (in years)	27.78	(6.06)	27.93	(6.14)
Hours of employment	35.49	(11.78)	35.38	(11.82)
Number of adults in household	2.12	(.71)	2.13	(.70)
Number of children in household	2.14	(1.23)	2.12	(1.24)
Number of total biological children	2.08	(1.25)	2.05	(1.27)
Number of biological children with father	1.60	(.95)	1.61	(.93)
Household income (in thousands)	46.10	(41.65)	47.65	(41.44)
Father involvement	26.80**	(13.44)	29.39**	(12.07)
<u>Fathers</u>				
Age (in years)	28.98	(6.87)	29.21	(6.91)
Hours of employment	45.62	(11.48)	45.31	(11.11)
Number of adults in household	2.18	(.72)	2.20	(.73)
Number of children in household	1.88	(1.31)	1.90	(1.31)
Number of biological children with mother	1.58	(.90)	1.59	(.91)
Household income (in thousands)	52.49	(51.33)	53.10	(45.18)
Father involvement	30.81**	(13.26)	33.38**	(11.59)
Centrality of father identity	11.27	(1.27)	11.24	(1.71)

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

Table 2

Chi-Square Tests of Significant Differences Between Samples

Variables	Full Sample (N = 4,898)		Restricted Sample (N = 2,107)		Significance Test
	N	%	N	%	
<u>Mothers</u>					
Worked for pay in last week					$\chi^2 (1) = 2.28$
Yes	2307	52.9	1157	54.9	
No	2053	47.1	950	45.1	
Has children by other fathers					$\chi^2 (1) = 11.69^{**}$
Yes	1538	35.8	661	31.4	
No	2762	64.2	1441	68.6	
Sex of child					$\chi^2 (2) = .98$
Male	2538	51.9	1066	50.6	
Female	2261	46.2	996	47.3	
Race					$\chi^2 (2) = 23.45^{**}$
White	1480	30.2	760	36.1	
Black	2390	48.8	932	44.2	
Other	1028	21.0	415	19.7	
Highest education received					$\chi^2 (3) = 44.94^{**}$
< High school	1693	34.6	598	28.4	
Completed high school	1480	30.3	622	29.5	
Some college	1189	24.3	567	26.9	
College or higher	525	10.7	318	15.1	
<u>Fathers</u>					
Worked for pay in last week					$\chi^2 (1) = 8.14^{**}$
Yes	2636	78.6	1717	81.8	
No	717	21.4	382	18.2	
Has children by other mothers					$\chi^2 (1) = 26.83^{**}$
Yes	1536	36.9	627	30.3	
No	2626	63.1	1444	69.7	
Race					$\chi^2 (2) = 237.85^{**}$
White	1117	22.8	697	33.1	
Black	1870	38.2	980	46.5	
Other	1911	39.0	299	20.4	

Table 2 (cont.)

Chi-Square Tests of Significant Differences Between Samples

Variables	Full Sample (N = 4,898)		Restricted Sample (N = 2,107)		Significance Test
	N	%	N	%	
<u>Fathers (cont.)</u>					
Highest education received					$\chi^2 (3) = 23.58^{**}$
< High school	1266	33.2	594	28.2	
Completed high school	1239	32.5	686	32.6	
Some college	880	23.1	523	24.9	
College or higher	423	11.1	300	14.3	

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

Table 3

Correlations Between Control Variables and Father Involvement

Variable	Father Report	Mother Report
Mother's age	.14**	.11**
Father's age	.11**	.11**
Child sex	.00	-.03
Father's total household income	.06*	.04
Mother's education	.16**	.14**
Father's education	.15**	.14**
Mother's race/ethnicity	-.08**	-.09**
Father's race/ethnicity	-.13**	-.11**
Mother's employment	-.06*	-.03
Father's employment	-.11**	-.09**
Mother's other biological children	-.05*	-.04
Father's other biological children	-.08**	-.06**
Father's other biological children with mother of current child	.02	.03

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

Table 4

Standardized Regression Weights (Structural Path Estimates) Between Selected Control Variables and Father Involvement

Variable	Father Report	Mother Report
Father's age	.11**	.14**
Father's education	.05*	.05
Father's race/ethnicity	-.08**	-.07**
Father's employment	-.11**	-.08**
Father's other biological children	-.07**	-.09**

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

Table 5
SEM Structural Path Estimates for Absolute Individual Role Congruence Model

Model/Variables	Base Model		Reduced Model		Mediated Model		Full Model	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Life role → Mom report	.02	.20 (.22)	.03	.23 (.21)	.03	.21 (.21)	.01	.08 (.21)
Life role → Dad report	.06*	.51 (.21)	.06*	.52 (.21)	.06*	.49 (.21)	.05	.38 (.21)
Caregiving role → Mom report	.05*	.23 (.10)	.06*	.25 (.10)	.06*	.23 (.10)	.06**	.27 (.10)
Caregiving role → Dad report	.05	.19 (.10)	.05*	.20 (.10)	.04	.17 (.10)	.05*	.22 (.10)
Love role → Mom report	.04	.65 (.38)	.05*	.75 (.37)	.06*	.81 (.37)	.04	.53 (.37)
Love role → Dad report	.07**	1.05 (.38)	.08**	1.11 (.37)	.08**	1.20 (.37)	.06*	.91 (.36)
Protector role → Mom report	.03	.32 (.28)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Protector role → Dad report	.02	.18 (.28)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Authority role → Mom report	.03	.13 (.11)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Authority role → Dad report	.02	.08 (.11)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Financial role → Mom report	-.03	-.12 (.10)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Financial role → Dad report	-.02	-.08 (.10)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Life role → Identity satisfaction	---	---	---	---	.02	.06 (.08)	---	---
Caregiving role → Identity satisfaction	---	---	---	---	.05	.06 (.04)	---	---
Love role → Identity satisfaction	---	---	---	---	-.03	-.16 (.14)	---	---
Identity satisfaction → Mom report	---	---	---	---	.12**	.37 (.10)	.07*	.23 (.11)
Identity satisfaction → Dad report	---	---	---	---	.19**	.58 (.10)	.14**	.44 (.11)
Father age → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.16**	.04 (.01)
Father age → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.13**	.03 (.01)
Father employment → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.30 (.10)
Father employment → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.10**	-.42 (.10)
Father's other kids → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.10**	-.12 (.03)
Father's other kids → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.08**	-.10 (.03)
Father race → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.06**	-.15 (.06)
Father race → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.17 (.06)
Status centrality → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.13**	.63 (.15)
Status centrality → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.11**	.56 (.14)

Note. --- indicates that association was not measured in model. Correlations between error and disturbance terms not reported.

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

Table 6

SEM Structural Path Estimates for Absolute Individual Role Congruence Model as Moderated by Relationship Status

Variable	Cohabiting		Non-Cohabiting	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
<u>Birth</u>				
Life role congruence → Mom report	-.02	-.12 (.23)	.03	.28 (.40)
Life role congruence → Dad report	.06	.46 (.23)	.01	.07 (.39)
Care role congruence → Mom report	.03**	.12 (.11)	.15**	.59 (.19)
Care role congruence → Dad report	.03	.12 (.11)	.09	.38 (.19)
Love role congruence → Mom report	.04	.55 (.42)	.04	.53 (.70)
Love role congruence → Dad report	.04	.54 (.40)	.14	2.01 (.68)
Satisfaction → Mom report	.07	.22 (.12)	.01	.03 (.19)
Satisfaction → Dad report	.11**	.34 (.11)	.33**	1.07 (.19)
<u>Year 1</u>				
Life role congruence → Mom report	-.05	-.10 (.07)	.04	.36 (.37)
Life role congruence → Dad report	.02	.15 (.20)	.10	.78 (.36)
Care role congruence → Mom report	.05	.06 (.03)	.03	.17 (.17)
Care role congruence → Dad report	.06	.18 (.10)	.05	.21 (.17)
Love role congruence → Mom report	.16	.64 (.12)	.03	.60 (.65)
Love role congruence → Dad report	.08	.85 (.35)	.11	1.53 (.63)
Satisfaction → Mom report	.14**	.19 (.06)	.97**	5.48 (.53)
Satisfaction → Dad report	.10**	.36 (.18)	.56**	2.51 (.30)

* Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .05$. ** Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .01$.

Table 7
SEM Structural Path Estimates for Relative Individual Role Congruence Model

Model/Variables	Base Model		Reduced Model		Mediated Model		Full Model	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Life role → Mom report	-.02 ^{**}	-.17 (.20)	-.03	-.21 (.20)	-.03	-.19 (.20)	-.01	-.06 (.20)
Life role → Dad report	-.07 [*]	-.56 (.20)	-.08 ^{**}	-.58 (.19)	-.07 ^{**}	-.55 (.20)	-.06 [*]	-.44 (.19)
Caregiving role → Mom report	-.06 [*]	-.22 (.10)	-.06 [*]	-.25 (.10)	-.06 [*]	-.22 (.10)	-.06 ^{**}	-.26 (.10)
Caregiving role → Dad report	-.05	-.19 (.10)	-.05 [*]	-.20 (.10)	-.04	-.16 (.10)	-.05 [*]	-.21 (.09)
Love role → Mom report	-.05	-.69 (.36)	-.06 [*]	-.78 (.34)	-.06 [*]	-.83 (.34)	-.04 [*]	-.58 (.34)
Love role → Dad report	-.07 [*]	-.91 (.35)	-.07 ^{**}	-.96 (.34)	-.08 ^{**}	-1.04 (.34)	-.06 [*]	-.78 (.33)
Protector role → Mom report	-.02	-.15 (.25)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Protector role → Dad report	-.01	-.07 (.25)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Authority role → Mom report	-.05	-.18 (.10)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Authority role → Dad report	-.02	-.08 (.09)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Financial role → Mom report	.02	.07 (.09)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Financial role → Dad report	.01	.02 (.09)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Life role → Identity satisfaction	---	---	---	---	-.02	-.05 (.07)	---	---
Caregiving role → Identity satisfaction	---	---	---	---	-.06	-.06 (.03)	---	---
Love role → Identity satisfaction	---	---	---	---	.03	.13 (.12)	---	---
Identity satisfaction → Mom report	---	---	---	---	.12 ^{**}	.41 (.11)	.07 [*]	.26 (.12)
Identity satisfaction → Dad report	---	---	---	---	.19 ^{**}	.65 (.12)	.14 ^{**}	.49 (.12)
Father age → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.16 ^{**}	.04 (.01)
Father age → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.13 ^{**}	.03 (.01)
Father employment → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.07 ^{**}	-.30 (.10)
Father employment → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.10 ^{**}	-.42 (.10)
Father's other kids → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.10 ^{**}	-.12 (.03)
Father's other kids → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.08 ^{**}	-.10 (.03)
Father race → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.06 ^{**}	-.15 (.06)
Father race → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	-.07 ^{**}	-.17 (.06)
Status centrality → Mom report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.13 ^{**}	2.58 (.84)
Status centrality → Dad report	---	---	---	---	---	---	.11 ^{**}	2.25 (.78)

Note. --- indicates that association was not measured in model. Correlations between error and disturbance terms not reported.

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

Table 8

SEM Structural Path Estimates for Relative Individual Role Congruence Model as Moderated by Year One Relationship Status

Variable	Cohabiting		Non-Cohabiting	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Life role congruence → Mom report	.04	.09 (.06)	-.04	-.33 (.34)
Life role congruence → Dad report	-.04	-.21 (.19)	-.12	-.85 (.33)
Care role congruence → Mom report	-.05	-.05 (.03)	-.01	-.07 (.17)
Care role congruence → Dad report	-.06	-.19 (.09)	-.03	-.11 (.16)
Love role congruence → Mom report	-.19	-.68 (.11)	-.03	-.45 (.60)
Love role congruence → Dad report	-.08	-.77 (.32)	-.09	-1.11 (.58)
Satisfaction → Mom report	.15**	.20 (.07)	.98**	5.71 (.58)
Satisfaction → Dad report	.10**	.37 (.19)	.57**	2.63 (.32)

* Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .05$. ** Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .01$.

Table 9

SEM Structural Path Estimates for Cumulative Absolute Role Congruence Model

Model/Variables	Base Model		Mediated Model		Full Model	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Cumulative congruence → Mom report	.07**	.13 (.04)	.07**	.12 (.04)	.06*	.09 (.04)
Cumulative congruence → Dad report	.09**	.16 (.04)	.08**	.14 (.04)	.07**	.12 (.04)
Cumulative congruence → Satisfaction	---	---	.06*	.03 (.02)	.06*	.03 (.01)
Identity satisfaction → Mom report	---	---	.12**	.40 (.11)	.07*	.26 (.12)
Identity satisfaction → Dad report	---	---	.18**	.63 (.12)	.13**	.47 (.12)
Father age → Mom report	---	---	---	---	.14**	.04 (.01)
Father age → Dad report	---	---	---	---	.11**	.03 (.01)
Father race → Mom report	---	---	---	---	-.06*	-.15 (.06)
Father race → Dad report	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.17 (.06)
Father employment → Mom report	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.30 (.10)
Father employment → Dad report	---	---	---	---	-.10**	-.42 (.10)
Father's other kids → Mom report	---	---	---	---	-.09**	-.12 (.03)
Father's other kids → Dad report	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.10 (.03)
Status centrality → Mom report	---	---	---	---	.13**	2.69 (.86)
Status centrality → Dad report	---	---	---	---	.13**	2.52 (.83)

Note. --- indicates that association was not measured in model.

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

Table 10

SEM Structural Path Estimates for Cumulative Absolute Role Congruence Model as Moderated by Year One Relationship Status

Variable	Cohabiting		Non-Cohabiting	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Role congruence → Mom report	.08	.04 (.02)	-.02	-.06 (.14)
Role congruence → Dad report	.07	.08 (.04)	.01	.03 (.11)
Role congruence → Satisfaction	.10	.04 (.02)	.08**	.03 (.03)
Satisfaction → Mom report	.16**	.23 (.08)	.98**	6.48 (.69)
Satisfaction → Dad report	.12**	.40 (.18)	.80**	4.53 (.50)

* Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .05$. ** Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .01$.

Table 11

SEM Structural Path Estimates for Cumulative Relative Role Congruence Model

Model/Variables	Base Model		Mediated Model		Full Model	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Cumulative congruence → Mom report	-.09**	-.14 (.04)	-.08**	-.13 (.04)	-.07**	-.10 (.04)
Cumulative congruence → Dad report	-.10**	-.17 (.04)	-.09**	-.15 (.04)	-.08**	-.12 (.04)
Cumulative congruence → Satisfaction	---	---	-.06*	-.03 (.01)	-.06*	-.03 (.01)
Identity satisfaction → Mom report	---	---	.11**	.40 (.11)	.07*	.25 (.12)
Identity satisfaction → Dad report	---	---	.18**	.63 (.12)	.13**	.47 (.12)
Father age → Mom report	---	---	---	---	.16**	.04 (.01)
Father age → Dad report	---	---	---	---	.13**	.03 (.01)
Father race → Mom report	---	---	---	---	-.06*	-.14 (.06)
Father race → Dad report	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.16 (.06)
Father employment → Mom report	---	---	---	---	-.07**	-.30 (.10)
Father employment → Dad report	---	---	---	---	-.10**	-.42 (.10)
Father's other kids → Mom report	---	---	---	---	-.10**	-.12 (.03)
Father's other kids → Dad report	---	---	---	---	-.08**	-.10 (.03)
Status centrality → Mom report	---	---	---	---	.13**	2.65 (.86)
Status centrality → Dad report	---	---	---	---	.13**	2.49 (.82)

Note. --- indicates that association was not measured in model.

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

Table 12

SEM Structural Path Estimates for Cumulative Relative Role Congruence Model as Moderated by One-Year Relationship Status

Variable	Cohabiting		Non-Cohabiting	
	β	B (S.E.)	β	B (S.E.)
Cumulative congruence → Mom report	-.09	-.04 (.01)	.04	.07 (.11)
Cumulative congruence → Dad report	-.07	-.09 (.04)	-.10	-.15 (.08)
Cumulative congruence → Satisfaction	-.09	-.03 (.01)	-.10	-.03 (.02)
Satisfaction → Mom report	.13**	.18 (.07)	.98**	5.75 (.59)
Satisfaction → Dad report	.10**	.36 (.19)	.56**	2.58 (.32)

* Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .05$. ** Critical Ratio for parameter comparisons $p < .01$.

Appendix B. Additional Description of Demographic Measures

Mothers' and Fathers' Age were constructed variables created by the Fragile Families Study that indicate the parents' age (in years) at the time of the baseline interview. Age was constructed by subtracting the parents' date of birth from the interview date.

Parents' Relationship Status at each wave were constructed variables created by the Fragile Families Study that indicated whether mothers and fathers were married, cohabiting, romantically involved but not cohabiting, friends, separated/widowed/divorced, or never talk. Classifications were created by cross-tabulating mothers' and fathers' responses on several questions regarding their current interparental relationship and resident status. For the proposed study, this variable was recoded to contain only four categories: married, cohabiting, romantically involved but not cohabiting, and not romantically involved.

Sex of Child was a constructed variable created by the Fragile Families Study that indicated whether the target child was male or female.

Household income

Prompt: "Now, please think of your household income from all sources. Include not just your own income, but also the income of everyone living with you. Include the money you have told me about from jobs and public assistance programs, as well as any sources we haven't discussed such as rent, interest and dividends. What was your total household income for the last year before taxes?" (Verbatim response recorded)

Parental Education

Question I1: What is the highest grade or year of regular school that you have completed?

Responses:

- No formal schooling
- 8th grade or less
- Some high school (Grades 9, 10, 11, & 12)
- High school diploma (Completed 12th grade)
- G.E.D.
- Some college or 2-year-degree
- Technical or trade school
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional school

(For this study, this variable was recoded to contain only four categories: less than high school, high school degree or equivalent, some college, and college or higher.)

Parental Race/Ethnicity

Question H3: Which of these categories best describes your race?

Responses:

- White
- Black, African-American
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut
- Other, not specified

Hispanic
Don't Know

(For this study, this variable was recoded to contain only three categories: White, Black, and Other.)

Parental Employment Status

Question K8. Now I'd like to ask you about your current work status. **Last week**, did you do any regular work for pay? Include any work you might have done in your own business (or military service) where you got a regular paycheck.

Responses: Yes
No

Hours of Parental Employment

Question K14. How many hours do you usually work per week at this job? Include regular overtime hours. (Verbatim response recorded)