The New Dad: A Portrait of Today’s Father

Prof. Brad Harrington
June 17, 2015
The New Dad Research
2009-2015
1. Breadwinner, Caregiver Or Both?

- May 2013, NY Times: *What are Dads For?*
- Pew Center reports that in 40% of US households, Mom is the primary breadwinner
- But in 5 of 8, Mom was the only breadwinner
- The earnings gap between single moms and mothers in dual-career couple was enormous
- In 75% of dual-career, dad still earns more
Do dad’s define themselves simply as breadwinners? No!

- Earning money to meet my child’s financial needs.
- Mostly earning money to meet my child’s financial needs, but also providing some physical/emotional care for him/her.
- Both caring for my child and earning money to meet his/her financial needs.
- Mostly caring for my child, but also earning some money to meet his/her financial needs.
- Physically/emotionally caring for my child.
How does breadwinning rank?

- Provide love and emotional support: 4.6
- Be involved and present in your child's life: 4.6
- Be a teacher, guide and coach: 4.4
- Provide discipline: 4.0
- Provide financial security: 4.0
- Do your part in the day-to-day childcare tasks: 3.8

Boston College Center for Work & Family
2. Today’s Dad: More Involved With His Kids?

- Fathers spent an average of 2.5 hours per workday with their children
- 77% said they would like to spend more time with children than they do at present
- 94% of dads agreed that “If I were considering a new job, I would consider how much it would interfere with my ability to care for my children.”
  - Source: Boston College Center for Work & Family, 2011
Is this increased involvement a "generational thing?"

### Children 5-18 years old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father age</th>
<th>Talking to children about their day</th>
<th>Helping with homework</th>
<th>Dropping off/picking up children from activities</th>
<th>Sharing a meal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jones and Mosher, 2013

### Children under 5 years old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father age</th>
<th>Playing with children</th>
<th>Bathing, dressing, or diapering</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Feeding or sharing a meal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jones and Mosher, 2013
3. Who Does More, Mom Or Dad?

- *Time* cover story “Chore Wars” highlighted struggles parents face working full-time, raising children, maintaining a household (Konigsberg, 2011)

- Challenge of work-family will become more acute; Millennials more likely than Boomers to have spouse/partner working full-time: 78% vs. 47% (EY, 2015)

- Time-use data shows men have increased time providing primary childcare by 3x in recent years, but women still do more (Wang & Bianchi, 2009)
Moms and Dads, 1965-2011: Roles Converge, but Gaps Remain

Average number of hours per week spent on ...
4. Engaged Dads: Who Benefits?

- Children positively impacted socially, behaviorally, & cognitively by father’s engagement (Sarkadi et. al., 2007)
- Employers: More time fathers spent with children, the more satisfied they were with jobs, less likely to leave employer (Ladge, Humberd, Watkins & Harrington, 2015)
- Mothers with at-home dads reported:
  - High level of trust in and appreciation for their at-home spouse’s contribution to family.
  - Felt enabled in their work/career pursuits (CWF, 2012)
5. Do Dads Feel “Right At Home”?

- Number of at-home dads has more than doubled since 2000 (US Census Bureau, 2014)
- Dramatic changes in the reasons fathers cite for becoming at-home dads:
  - 1970, ¾ stayed home due to difficulty finding work, medical reasons. Today, 50% say same (Kramer, et. al. 2013)
- Major struggles men face when at home
  - Loss of a social network
  - Fear of being stigmatized
  - Fears about jeopardizing future employment
Growth in dad’s networks
6. Does It Pay To Be A Father?

- We often hear of a gender-wage gap (“women earn $.77 for every $1 men earn”). What about parents?
- In 2001 Budig and England identified the “wage penalty for mothers” - 7% penalty per child
- In 2010, Hodges and Budig looked at fathers:
  - Father receive premium not penalty of 6% per child
  - Mainly accrues to Caucasian, white collar workers
  - ... and married dads who may be able to devote themselves more fully to work, thanks to spouse.
7. Is There A Career Penalty For Being A Dad?

- Women have faced a career penalty for many years as a result of caregiving responsibilities

- Mothers viewed as less committed, less promotable, even less competent (Correll, Bernard & Paik, 2007)

- While fathers experience wage bonus, conspicuous caregivers suffer other penalties (Berdahl & Moon, 2013)

- In spite of heightened expectations for dads, those who were conspicuously involved faced likelihood of stigma, harassment, and career marginalization
Evaluations of Employee Work & Gender Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caregiving</th>
<th>Male Employee</th>
<th>Female Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>Good worker, Mediocre man</td>
<td>Good worker, Failed woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low caregiving</td>
<td>Good worker, Good man</td>
<td>Mediocre worker, Bad woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High caregiving</td>
<td>Bad worker, Failed man</td>
<td>Bad worker, Good woman</td>
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Source: Berdahl & Moon, 2013
8. Do Fathers Flex?

The bar chart shows the percentage of fathers using different flextime options:

- **Flex-time**:
  - Not used: 50%
  - Used on an informal basis: 30%
  - Have a formal arrangement through organization policy: 20%

- **Work from home**:
  - Not used: 50%
  - Used on an informal basis: 30%
  - Have a formal arrangement through organization policy: 20%

- **Compressed work week**:
  - Not used: 50%
  - Used on an informal basis: 30%
  - Have a formal arrangement through organization policy: 20%
9. Paternity Leave: Take It Or Leave It?

![Bar chart showing the importance of paternity leave.]
## Time off taken based on available paternity leave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Paid Paternity Leave</th>
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<th>2 Weeks of Paid Paternity Leave</th>
<th>4 Weeks of Paid Paternity Leave</th>
<th>6 Weeks of Paid Paternity Leave</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>Took less than 1 week</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<td>4 weeks</td>
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Paternity Leave: “What Would I do?”

- Caring for new child(ren)
- Changing diapers
- Shopping for food and other family needs
- Visiting spouse or partner and new child(ren) at hospital
- House cleaning
- Preparing meals
- Doing laundry
- Taking child(ren) for doctor’s visits
- Bottle feeding new child(ren)
- Caring for older child(ren)
- Taking child(ren) to playgrounds, museums, etc.
- Taking child(ren) to day care
- Dealing with medical complications related to the birth

Percentage
10. The Age Of “Dadvertising”?

- Partnered with Unilever on a study that found that 2 out of 3 fathers felt media depictions were inaccurate.
- Words most commonly cited as reflecting media depictions of fathers included disconnected, bumbling, & incompetent.
- Review of 1400 ads targeted at men during major sports programming showed men:
  - .1% in a domestic role
  - .5% with emotional connection to children
  - 1/10 violent images of men (Gentry & Harrison, 2010)
A new image for today’s dads
Summary:

Time For Dads To Speak Up

- *Now* is the time for a “hard reset”
- Over past 35 years, we’ve redefined the role of women in the workplace
- Been less able to do this for men at home
- Pres. Obama & Gov. Patrick support working families
- Time for women to champion men in the home
- Time for men to speak up and be recognized as “whole persons”
New Resource:
The Working Dads Survival Guide
Thank you!

Brad Harrington

www.thenewdad.org

www.bc.edu/cwf

@BCCWF

Questions?

Boston College Center for Work & Family
• BC Workforce Roundtable Fall Meeting
  November 4-6, 2015, Boston, MA

• 25th Anniversary Conference and Gala Celebration
  November 5, 2015

Register at http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/events.html
or contact cwf@bc.edu