Journal Articles


Twenty-four fathers were interviewed to explore their level of child care involvement at home and with family day care (FDC). Data from mothers was used for comparison. Fathers were more involved in work than mothers but participated in a variety of home and FDC child care activities. Few significant differences were found between fathers and mothers in their evaluations of FDC program goals, provider qualifications, and the adequacy of FDC services. Implications are made for research and application.


Day care researchers have primarily examined the roles and responsibilities of women. As a result, information about the experiences of fathers in day care is limited and less well focused. Four aspects of child care, including the location of care, fathers' type and level of involvement, and family structure, were used to organize a review of research concerning fathers' roles and involvement in day care. The following questions were considered. Where and how do fathers participate in day care? What factors encourage or discourage their participation, commitment and involvement? What effect does fathers' increased involvement in the care of children within the family have on their participation in day care? How might increased father participation in day care affect other members of the day care system? Questions such as these must be addressed before fathers’, as well as mothers’, roles and responsibilities in day care can be understood and evaluated.


Delayed marriage and childbearing, more births outside marriage, the increase in women’s labor force participation, and the aging of the population have altered family life and created new challenges for those with caregiving demands. U.S. mothers have shed hours of housework but not the hours they devote to childrearing. Fathers have increased the time they spend on childcare. Intensive childrearing practices combine with more dual-earning and single parenting to increase the time demands on parents. Mothers
continue to scale back paid work to meet childrearing demands. They also give up leisure time and report that they “are always rushed” and are “multitasking most of the time.” Time-stretched working couples reduce the time they spend with each other. A large percentage of both husbands and wives also report they have “too little time” for themselves. Delayed childbearing and the aging population also increase the likelihood that both (adult) children and elderly parents need support and care from workers later in life.


The overall findings and implications of the research presented in this paper are three-fold. First, gendered socially constructed norms and gendered community-based social networks are highlighted as important factors that help to account for the persistent link between women and domestic responsibility. Second, taking cues from research carried out in Third World and low-income Western communities, it is important to shift research agendas on domestic divisions of labour to focus not only on intra-household divisions but also inter-household and intra-community relations. Third, the need is highlighted for greater attention to the links between socially constructed norms on masculinities, men's friendships and domestic responsibility.


This article argues for a conceptualization of domestic responsibility that is constantly negotiated, relational and interactional, intrahousehold and interhousehold, and material and “moral.”


The current study incorporated both employment and family variables in identifying four distinct dual-earner couple types among respondents from the National Survey of the Changing Workforce. Couple types were compared regarding demographic information, and memberships in couple types were predicted based on this information. Some significant differences emerged that may begin to explain the circumstances and motivations behind selecting certain work-family arrangements, though the more peerlike couples were less distinct and in some ways less economically advantaged than expected.

Relationships between work and family variables and children’s internalizing and externalizing behavior are examined in 132 dual-earner couples of preschool-age children. Mothers’ and fathers’ parenting stress and mothers’ work-family conflict predict children’s internalizing behavior; mothers’ work-family conflict, mothers’ and fathers’ parenting stress, the number of hours fathers worked, and mothers’ beliefs about father involvement predict externalizing symptoms in children. Results are discussed in terms of the importance of mothers’ and fathers’ work and family issues for children’s behavior.


This study examined work-family facilitation and working fathers. Work-to-family facilitation was positively related to job satisfaction and life satisfaction, and negatively related to individual stress. Family-to-work facilitation was positively related to marital satisfaction, family satisfaction, and life satisfaction, and negatively related to organizational commitment. Working fathers reported long work hours (49 hours/week), major involvement in household responsibilities (46 hours/week), and a work culture less supportive of their family life than working mothers reported. However, working fathers reported less work-family conflict, less individual stress, and greater family satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction than working mothers.


This study examines how work-related factors such as father-friendly environment at work, workplace’s accommodation of parental needs, job stress, and autonomy are associated with Japanese men’s participation in child care. Using 2010 data collected from Japanese fathers with preschool children (N = 1,317), a theoretical model is tested on men who work for large or small/medium companies. The study demonstrates that company’s accommodation of parental needs and job autonomy increase child care involvement of fathers in medium/small companies, and job stress reduces such involvement among men in large companies.


Much sociological research focuses on employed women's strains in negotiating paid work and family demands. Yet few studies examine women's subjective sense of success in balancing these spheres, especially compared with men. Using a sample of married, employed Americans from the 1996 General Social Survey, we examine feelings about work-family balance, and we find, unexpectedly, that women and men report similar levels of success and kinds of work-family tradeoffs. We find some gender differences, however. For men, imbalance is predicted by longer work hours, wives who work fewer
hours, perceived unfairness in sharing housework, marital unhappiness, and tradeoffs made at work for family and at home for work. For women, only marital unhappiness and sacrifices at home are imbalancing, and for women who are employed full-time, young children are.


Both mothers and fathers expressed strongly egalitarian ideals that fathers should be equally involved in child-rearing across five nurturant domains—discipline, emotional support, play, monitoring, and care-giving—as well as in financial support. In contrast, mothers perceived much less father involvement in actual parenting than fathers perceived—especially in disciplining and providing emotional support for their children.


Cultural imperatives for “good” parenting include spending time with children and ensuring that they do well in life. Knowledge of how these factors influence employed parents’ work-family balance is limited. Analyses using time diary and survey data from the 2000 National Survey of Parents (N = 933) indicate that how time with children relates to parents' feelings of balance varies by gender and social class. Interactive “quality” time is linked with mothers' feelings of balance more than fathers'. More time in routine care relates to imbalance for fathers without college degrees. Feeling that one spends the “right” amount of time with children and that children are doing well are strong and independent indicators of parents' work-family balance.


Infant care is no longer purely a private family matter. As more mothers return to paid employment in their child's first year, governments develop provisions to support working parents with very young children. Statutory parental leave and flexible working provisions for fathers are expanding rapidly, particularly in Europe. The author compares fathers' patterns of leave-taking across twenty-four countries from 2003 to 2007 to present new types of father-care-sensitive leave models. Although studies are limited, parental leave has the potential to boost fathers' emotional investment in and connection with infants.

Using Current Population Survey data for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2001 (N = 73,001), we document change in the prevalence of couples where (a) the wife contributes less than 40% of the family income, (b) income contributions are relatively equal, and (c) the wife's income contribution surpasses her husband's contribution. In 1970, close to 90% of couples had conventional earning arrangements: The husband was the sole provider in 56% of couples and contributed 60% or more of the income in an additional 31% of couples. By 2001, husbands were still the sole (25%) or major provider (39%) in a majority (64%) of couples but wives shared equally in providing income in 24% of couples, more than double the 9% in 1970. Additionally, wives as primary (or sole) earners increased from 4% to 12%.


The analysis of time diary data from 6,572 married fathers and 7,376 married mothers with children under age 13 indicates that fathers (1) engage in more “solo” care of children when their wives are employed, (2) are more likely to do the kind of child care associated with responsibility for their children when their wives spend more time in the labor market, and (3) participate more in routine care when their wives contribute a greater share of the couple’s earnings. In addition, the “father care” to “mother care” ratio rises when mothers contribute a greater share of household earnings.


This study explored the effects of paternal commitment on the quality of life of fathers. Data were gathered from 56 fathers who had at least one child under the age of 10 years. Respondents completed self-report measures that assessed their level of involvement with the children, proportion of contribution to the family income, perception of social supports, as well as objective and subjective quality of life. Higher levels of involvement with the children together with a greater contribution to family finances were related to fathers scoring lower on both the objective and subjective domains of the quality of life measure.


This study examines this question by drawing on data from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey and the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce. The author found that work-family conflict has increased during this period, particularly for men. In addition, marital, parental, and spouse’s employment status prove to be consistently important predictors of work-family conflict.
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