

# **Drivers and Barriers of Involved Fatherhood**

## **Family characteristics, social class, and country context**

Brett Elizabeth Ory

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Drijfveren voor en barrières tegen betrokken vaderschap.  
Gezinskenmerken, sociale klasse en nationale context

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Prof.dr. R. Keizer

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## Acknowledgments

My father taught me to swim by throwing me in the deep end and having me swim to him. When I was close enough to reach out and touch him, he would back away from me and I would have to swim a little bit farther, and then a little bit farther after that, until I had made my way across the pool. As it turns out, those early swim lessons were good practice for writing a dissertation. Just when you think the end is in sight, something comes up and you have to swim a little bit farther. That is, until the day you look back and realize that you've made it across the pool.

I have made it across the pool.

But just like then, I didn't do it alone. Even in the deepest waters, my supervisors Pearl and Renske were there to make sure I didn't drown. Renske, you have been tireless, quick, and always on point with your feedback. You have also been fun, open, and emotionally supportive. There would have been a lot more tears and a lot fewer words on the page without you helping me through. Pearl, you helped me turn the trees into a forest. In your own work you model how a cohesive narrative can give context to every finding, and through your constant willingness to help and expert editing you helped me develop those skills myself. It has been a pleasure working with you both.

.....

When I first announced the topic of my dissertation, a well-meaning family friend asked if I was studying fathers because I didn't have one. The question struck me as odd, because even though I didn't grow up with a father, I never considered myself fatherless. My biological father may have died when I was young, but his presence, and the lessons he taught me, have stayed with me to this day. No one else, except maybe my brother, could have convinced me that my head would turn into a TV if I watched too much of it, or that a watermelon vine would grow in my stomach if I swallowed the seeds. In addition to my father, I have been lucky enough to have many people in my life who have loved and protected me and helped me grow. First and foremost, my mother, who showed me that one parent is certainly enough to raise a child—or in her case, two. I have no idea how you did what you did, but thank you. Thanks also to my uncle, who was always around to take me fishing, take me to the biggest bookstore in Texas, or just take me to lunch; and finally, my brother: my ally, my friend. Thanks to all

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Family is important, but as colleague Nina Conkova's work shows, nonkin is an important source of support, too. To my colleagues in T15-53 and beyond, it was an honor to have worked with you, and a pleasure to have gotten to do so every day. We may be moving apart now, but I hope you keep me in your thoughts and your WhatsApp contact lists. And an extra special thank you to Nina and Talitha for being my paranymphs--I could not have planned everything without you.

Koen: you are my family and my friend. Building a life and starting a family with you has been an amazing adventure, and I can't wait to see what comes next. Thank you also to all the Havliks for welcoming me into your family. To my daughter: We can't wait to meet you. And finally, to Sam: Although some authors have found mixed support for the intergenerational transmission of father involvement, my research shows that, at least in the Netherlands, sons do grow up to be like their fathers. Believe me when I say this is a very good thing.

Brett Ory  
San Francisco, June 2019

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# Chapter 1

## Drivers and barriers of involved fatherhood

### The second half of the gender revolution

In a reversal of typical 19<sup>th</sup> century parenting advice, Oscar Wilde once quipped that “fathers should be neither seen nor heard. That is the only proper basis for family life” (Wilde, 2002, p. 85). Indeed, since the industrial revolution and until quite recently in historical terms, the father was often separated from the family, both physically and symbolically (Pleck, 1998). Times have changed, however, and although scholars highlight that men continue to be excluded from the family (Christiansen & Palkovitz, 2001; Dermott & Miller, 2015; Hagestad, 1986b; Kalmijn, 2007), it would be rare to hear even the most traditional person advocate that they *should* be excluded (Gerson, 2010). There is much public support for father involvement in childcare across a variety of welfare state types (see for example, **chapter 4**), and many legal systems have expanded men’s rights with regard to their children in the form of paternity leave and co-parenting divorce laws (Blum, Koslowski, & Moss, 2017; Spruijt & Duindam, 2010). Yet, despite near-universal public agreement that father involvement is important for women, children, and men themselves, behavior lags behind (LaRossa, 1998; Machin, 2015). To be sure, fathers are more involved now than they were 50 years ago in all countries (Hook, 2006; Maume, 2010; Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001), yet men in heterosexual partnerships who live with their children still continue to do less childcare than mothers, even when both parents work full time (Dermott & Miller, 2015; Doucet, 2013; Kan, Sullivan, & Gershuny, 2011).

As a result, though the role of men in families has evolved, many argue that it has not revolved (e.g. Esping-Andersen, 2009; Hochschild, 1990; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015). Among such scholars are Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Lappegård (2015), who write that the gender revolution that began in the 1960s with women’s foray into the labor market can only be considered complete once men take on an equal share of domestic work, including but not limited to father involvement in childcare. The perspective that men’s equal involvement in the home is necessary to complete the gender revolution

was developed in the social and historical context of the West, where the first challenge to the male-breadwinner, female-caregiver ideal family model that had been in place since the industrial revolution was the increasing employment of married women and mothers (Lewis, 2001; Pleck, 1998). Yet this perspective holds all the more true in contexts where women's paid labor was not revolutionary, such as in many Eastern European countries where women were required to be equal participants in the labor market during communism (Dimova, 2009; Genov & Krasteva, 2001; Staykova, 2004), as well as for working class women in the West who have always needed to earn an income in order to help their family make ends meet (Goldin, 1994; Weiner, 1985). The question that remains for many researchers is thus not if men's greater involvement in the home is necessary to complete the gender revolution, but whether large-scale male involvement in domestic work is possible to achieve given the current normative and policy climates of the countries in which they live, and if so, how (Cherlin, 2016; England, 2010; Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015; Gerson, 2010; Hochschild, 1997).

Concurrently, scholarship on the life course perspective over the past several decades has progressed our understanding of how the family, social, and national context drive and are driven by demographic trends. A life course is an intersection of individual trajectories, institutionalized pathways, and social and demographic change (Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2015). This perspective recognizes that studying trends in father involvement should involve both a focus on policy and normative climate and the day-to-day reality of men's lives. Applying a life course perspective, this dissertation fully considers the micro, the meso, and the macro in order to better understand the constraints and conditions that drive men's involvement in childcare.

Thus against a backdrop of gender revolution, this dissertation asks how men's family characteristics, social class, and country context can act as drivers and barriers of their involvement in childcare. Family characteristics I investigate include the partner's work hours, children's educational attainment, and early socialization. Social class is captured by men's own educational attainment, and measures of national context are paternity leave policy, the level of gender empowerment, and the gender wage gap. These specific factors are important because together they encompass some of the strongest, most studied, and most policy relevant drivers of father involvement. Individuals receive more support from family than from non-kin (Conkova, Fokkema, & Dykstra, 2017), making family characteristics more theoretically relevant drivers of father involvement than say broader social network characteristics. In a similar vein, I focus on national context rather than regional or neighborhood context because policy, norms, and mass communication tend to differ more between European countries than within them, leading to larger national than subnational effects on



individuals (Friedrichs, Galster, & Musterd, 2003). Finally, social class is a strong driver of a wide variety of aspects of human behavior, from health (Barr, 2014), to academic achievement (Sirin, 2005), parenting styles (Lareau, 2002), and selfish behavior (Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2015). By understanding the way in which each aspect of men's family characteristics, social class, and country embeddedness can influence their involvement in childcare, we can better understand the changes necessary to complete the gender revolution.

In this book, I focus in particular on childcare rather than housework (though in **chapter 5** I touch on housework too) for two reasons. First, childcare is the arena into which men have made the greatest strides. Fathers today perform a greater share of both housework and childcare than they did in the past. Yet, an increase in men's share of housework has come about in part because improved technology and lower standards allowed women to decrease their time spent in housework (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Hook, 2006), whereas an increase in men's share of childcare has come about even while women's childcare has remained constant (Sayer, 2005). Second, in some contexts, the wage gap between men and women is due almost entirely to the birth of a child. In Denmark child penalties explain 80% of the gender wage gap (Kleven, Landais, & Sogaard, 2018). If men were more involved in childcare, perhaps the wage gap would be smaller. Thus I focus on childcare rather than housework because of the two, childcare is the more subject to change and has the greater impact on gender equality outside of the home.

Moreover, father involvement has been shown to have tangible and measureable benefits for men's children, partners, and selves. US studies show that children with involved fathers do better in school, have higher self-esteem, and are more likely to have successful life course trajectories (Allen & Daly, 2007; Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007; McWayne, Downer, Campos, & Harris, 2013). Wives and girlfriends whose male partners are involved in childcare enjoy better well-being and better relationship quality with their husbands. And when men's engagement is sensitive and cognitively stimulating, mothers are also more involved in these types of engagement with children (D. L. Carlson, Hanson, & Fitzroy, 2016; Schober, 2012; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004). When fathers are more involved they experience better personal wellbeing as well as better relationships with their children, partners, extended family, and friends (Allen & Daly, 2007; Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001). Research in other geographical contexts, though less common, likewise suggests that father involvement is beneficial for the entire family (Keizer, Lucassen, Jaddoe,

& Tiemeier, 2014; Levtov, Van der Gaag, Greene, Kaufman, & Barker, 2015). Finally, father involvement has been found to have a unique and positive influence on children's psychological health, academic performance, behavioral problems, and general well-being, suggesting that fathers are, in some ways, irreplaceable (Jeynes, 2016).

## **Life course approach**

In studying the drivers and barriers of father involvement, I acknowledge that family characteristics, social class, and the country context in which fathers live may interact to drive men's involvement with children. My approach to understanding the way each of these factors influences men's childcare is informed by the life course perspective.

### **Linked lives: Family characteristics**

Just as the word "father" tells us who a man is in relation to his family members, father involvement with children can best be understood in the context of family and intergenerational embeddedness. Elder describes how individuals whose lives are linked provide each other with social regulation and support (1994), and this is certainly true within a family where father involvement is a dynamic process that can be blocked or encouraged by a man's partner, his children, and his own parents.

Academics readily acknowledge that how much and in what way fathers are involved with their children is potentially influenced by multiple members of the family (e.g. Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000). Yet due to the limitations of data and existing methods of analysis, researchers have to date mostly studied the influence of one family member at a time, most prominently focusing on the partner (e.g. Esping-Andersen, Boertien, Bonke, & Gracia, 2013). This methodology is problematic for a number of reasons.

First, the focus on the partner reveals an underlying assumption that a "typical" family is self-contained within the immediate family unit. Yet in some contexts it may be that the negotiation of care responsibilities happens not so much between the mother and father as between the mother and another extended family member (Engle & Breaux, 1998), or that outsourcing care responsibility is common. For example, grandparents in Bulgaria are so heavily relied on for childcare that they are legally entitled to parental leave (Conkova & Ory, 2016) and even within the highly individualized context of the Netherlands, research shows that grandparents can be routinely involved in childcare (Geurts, van Tilburg, Poortman, & Dykstra, 2015). In the coming chapters I go beyond a focus on the partner and ask how multiple family members can drive or hinder father

involvement. In **chapters 2, 3, and 5** I focus on the partners, but in **chapter 3** I also consider the role of children and **chapter 5** explores grandfathers as drivers of father involvement.

Second, it can be misleading to rely on father reports of his partner's paid or unpaid work behavior just as it can be misleading to rely on mother reports of father behavior. For example, Mikelson (2008) finds that reports of father involvement from men are 17.6% higher than reports from women in the same household. Learning from this limitation, I turn to multiactor data in **chapters 3 and 5** with the idea that it is always best to measure individuals' own reports of their behavior.

Finally, the life course perspective teaches us that men are not influenced by only one family member, but that they have multiple—at times competing—family members influencing their involvement with children. I address this issue by testing the influence of multiple family members in **chapter 5** where I ask whether the influence of the work hours of the partner and involvement of men's own fathers interact.

This dissertation acknowledges men's intergenerational embeddedness by considering the influence of not only the partner, but also the influence of men's fathers and children. In doing so I add to the life course literature by forming a more complete image of shared familial responsibility for encouraging and enabling father involvement. In this image, being a "new" or "involved" father is not simply a reflection of the man himself, but also characteristics of his family.

### **Lives in context: Country and social class**

Men's involvement with children varies extensively across and within countries. Policymakers in countries with low father involvement are often encouraged to seek ways to increase involvement either for its own sake or in an attempt to decrease female unemployment and underemployment (e.g. EC, 2010). When father involvement is low, it can be tempting for policymakers to look to other countries to see which policies are most effective. Yet similar policies may function very differently in different cultural contexts (Pfau-Effinger, 2005), and more specifically, father-friendly policies and father involvement behavior are not always highly correlated. For example, in 2010 men were allowed 35 weeks of paid leave in Norway compared to only 10.6 weeks in Denmark, yet Danish fathers spent almost 50% more time with their children than Norwegian fathers (Fatherhood Institute, 2010).

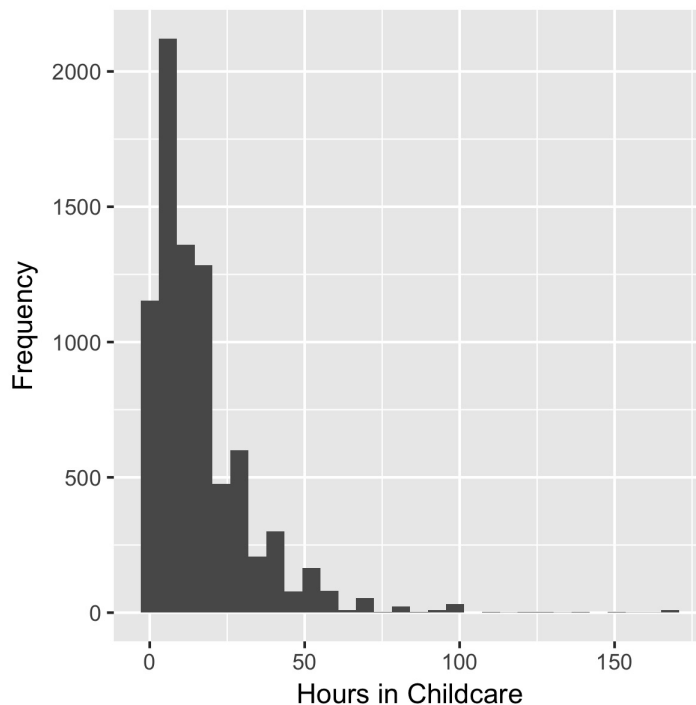
To date the literature on how norms and policies at the national level drive or constrain father involvement is limited. Prior cross-national research mostly uses what I refer to as a qualitative approach to explaining country differences, which involves identifying quantitative differences across countries and then using theoretical reasoning to explain why those differences exist, without quantitatively testing hypotheses (see for example Craig & Mullan, 2011; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015; Hook & Wolfe, 2012). A qualitative approach to explaining cross-national differences is an important initial step in forming hypotheses, but it alone is not sufficient to draw conclusions on the influence of norms or policies on father involvement. In this dissertation I statistically test the role of various aspects of national context in the cross-national study of **chapter 2**, and more qualitatively in the other chapters, which examine father involvement in the specific country contexts of the Netherlands and Bulgaria. When read together, these chapters form a more complete picture of similarities and differences in drivers of father involvement across and within national context.

A focus on policies helps to explain differences in involvement across countries while structural constraints and norms are the most common explanations for differences across social class (Dotti Sani & Treas, 2016). In this dissertation I focus on educational attainment as a marker of social class. Within the Netherlands, as in other European countries, education is thought to be one of the greatest lines of demarcation between individuals, and the greatest contributor to social class (Bovens, 2012).

Structural constraints include different working hours and flexibility for white- and blue-collar workers and different awareness of or access to policies, such that more highly educated men and men of a higher socioeconomic status are better able to combine work and family responsibilities (Hoff, Laursen, & Tardif, 2002). Researchers also suggest that higher educated parents are more involved because they hold different parenting norms and attitudes. Specifically, middle-class parents are thought to identify more strongly with ideas of “concerted cultivation” which emphasize the need to actively control and participate in children’s leisure time, while working-class parents believe in “natural growth” and thus emphasize the importance of adult-free time for children (Lareau, 2002). In **chapter 3** I borrow from the life course perspective to ask how the social class of fathers, mothers, and adult children interact to drive or constrain parental advice and interest. In **chapter 4** I test whether higher educated fathers are really more involved with their children and if so, which norms act as the mechanism driving the educational gradient.

## Multidimensional approach to father involvement

In the European Quality of Life Surveys (EQLS, 2012), respondents were asked how many hours per week they typically spent caring for and educating their children, to which a small but non-negligible number of fathers responded that they engage in these tasks a total of 168 hours per week (Figure 1). There are, of course, only 168 hours in a week. The beauty of this answer is that it is both true and impossible. After all, a father does not care any less for his children when he is at work, driving his car, or sleeping than when he is changing his newborn's diaper, it is merely the way in which he is caring that varies between these activities. The point that defining and measuring involvement is complex is not a new one in the study of father involvement, nor is it simply a question of methodology. What society considers to be father involvement directly influences which men get labeled as “good” or “bad” dads, just as it influences which hypotheses researchers test and which conclusions we draw (Settersten & Cancel-Tirado, 2010). I thus take a multidimensional approach to measuring father involvement.



**Figure 1.** Histogram of fathers' time in childcare in 35 European countries according to the European Quality of Life Surveys<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Figure created from own analyses. Selection reflects all men living with children in all countries in the first three rounds of the EQLS.

Prior to the 1980s, father involvement was generally conceptualized by its presence or absence (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Since then, research has posited a number of typologies or ways of classifying involvement (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1987; R. Palkovitz, 1997), perhaps the best known of which is the engagement, accessibility, and responsibility framework of Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1987). *Engagement* is generally what researchers mean when they speak of involvement: it refers to time fathers spend interacting with children, be it in primary care, play, or anything in between. *Responsibility* refers to the decisions parents make and work they do on behalf of their children, such as attending parent-teacher meetings and scheduling doctor appointments. Finally, *accessibility* refers to moments men are “there” for their children even when they are not interacting directly. The fathers who claim to be taking care of their children for 24 hours a day are likely counting accessibility among their fatherly duties. In the coming chapters, I focus primarily on engagement, and to a lesser extent responsibility because these are the types of childcare tasks that researchers refer to when they talk about completing the gender revolution.

It is important to distinguish between dimensions of father involvement because each dimension may be driven or constrained by different family characteristics, social class, or country context. For example, Gaunt (2005, 2006) finds that men’s work hours constrain their share of direct care and responsibility but have no effect on their playing with and hugging children. Turning to ideological drivers of father involvement, Keizer (2015) finds that the salience of men’s status as parents drives their participation in recreational childcare and taking responsibility, but does not result in them performing more physical or logistical tasks. Learning from these examples, I address the multidimensionality of involvement by clustering aspects of childcare into sub-dimensions in the coming chapters. This includes clustering activities according to: the time it takes to complete them (**chapter 2**), the activity’s function in providing guidance to children (**chapter 3**), the activity’s importance as children age (**chapter 4**), and total father involvement (**chapter 5**).

Furthermore, whether father involvement is measured in absolute or relative terms can likewise impact findings regarding drivers and barriers of involved fatherhood. Absolute involvement is the total amount of father’s childcare ignoring mother’s childcare, and is either measured in hours or frequency (often, daily, etc.). Relative involvement is the share of tasks performed by fathers compared to mothers. In addition to being different in terms of how the measures are made, these measures have conceptual differences. Because it describes men’s share of childcare, relative involvement captures one aspect of gender equality which has been much discussed under the heading of the second half of the gender revolution (Goldscheider et al.,

2015). Thus, relative involvement is perhaps more appropriate for research which takes a gender equality perspective, such as what I do in **chapters 2, 4, and 5**. Conversely, because absolute father involvement describes childcare in terms of what children receive from fathers regardless of what they receive from mothers, this measurement is perhaps most useful for studies focused on child wellbeing or differences in drivers and barriers of involvement between mothers and fathers, a perspective I take in **chapters 3 and 4**. Furthermore, in **chapter 4** I combine the gender equality and child wellbeing perspectives by looking at both the frequency with which men are involved in childcare and how they share those responsibilities with their partners.

Father involvement is a catch-all term for a wide variety of activities and most studies are only able to capture one or two aspects of involvement. The individual chapters in this book are no exception. However, each subsequent chapter uses a different lens to examine father involvement such that the overall book offers a more complete vision of father involvement in Europe—what men do, how often they do it, and how their involvement compares to their partner's. I acknowledge that my ability to draw direct comparisons between the empirical chapters is limited given that each chapter uses a different conceptualization of father involvement, but this limitation is also a strength. For example, in **chapters 2 and 5** I examine the same family characteristic as drivers of father involvement, namely partner's work hours. Although the design and setting of these studies are different, preventing me from being able to directly compare effect sizes, the fact that I consistently find that men are more involved in a variety of tasks the more their partners work allows me to conclude with extreme confidence that this association is real and is not an artifact of the data.

## Data

In the coming chapters I perform statistical analyses on cross-nationally and nationally representative datasets, including the Generations and Gender Surveys (Vikat & Macdonald, 2004), the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra et al., 2005), the Attitudes, Practices, and Barriers to Active Father Involvement in Bulgaria survey (MenCare, 2014), and the Dutch version of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (Verna & Barker, 2011). By using a variety of data sources and contexts I can better generalize findings from each individual analysis. Each dataset provides unique benefits, though each has its own set of drawbacks as well.

## Gender and Generations Survey

The cross-national and longitudinal Gender and Generations Survey (GGS) was designed to measure family dynamics and relationships of the nuclear and extended

family. The first wave of the GGS has been conducted in 20 countries (at the time of writing, only 19 are available for download), nearly half of which are countries in Central and Eastern Europe. This is an impressive geographical range for a survey on family dynamics. By comparison, only a quarter of the countries in another popular cross-European family survey, the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), are in Eastern Europe. For researchers interested in father involvement, the GGS asks respondents about how they divide six childcare activities with their partner, ranging from the time-consuming and female-typed task ‘staying home with children when sick’ to the flexible, male-typed ‘sharing leisure activities with children’.

**Chapter 2** includes a more detailed discussion of country differences with regard to the study of father involvement.

### **The Netherlands Kinship Panel Study**

The first wave of the longitudinal, multiactor Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS) is also the source of the Dutch data for the first wave of the GGS. The first wave of the NKPS was conducted in 2002-2004 and the survey has been repeated approximately every three years, with the fourth wave completed in 2014 being the latest available at the time of writing. I use the first wave of this survey in my study of father involvement with adult children in **chapter 3**. The NKPS is excellent for the purposes of studying intergenerational solidarity between non-resident adult family members. Main respondents and their alters, including brothers and sisters, parents, non-resident children, and partners, have not only been contacted for questioning, but their geographical location is known, making it possible to calculate the distance between family members. Distance is important as a key driver of relationship quality and exchange (see **chapter 3**).

### **Active father involvement in Bulgaria**

The “Attitudes, Practices, and Barriers to Active Father Involvement in Bulgaria” survey from 2014 is the first nationally representative survey in Bulgaria on father involvement. This data was collected as part of the Bulgarian extension of the global MenCare initiative to increase men’s involvement with children. To date, very little research on father involvement has been conducted in Bulgaria due in part to a lack of data but this survey can open up a new geographical context to researchers. The survey asks respondents about their absolute and relative participation in an extensive number of activities related to childcare, a complete list of which can be found in **chapter 4**. A small subsample of men who are divorced and living apart from their children were also interviewed, making the survey interesting to researchers studying family complexity as well as those studying father involvement in intact families.



## International Men and Gender Equality Survey

In addition to their partnership with the Bulgarian active father involvement survey, the MenCare campaign is also affiliated with the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) to collect data about men's involvement in families and their interactions with women. To date the survey has been conducted in a number of countries in South America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, and now with the addition of the Dutch IMAGES survey from 2016-2017, in Western Europe (Verna & Barker, 2011). I focus specifically on the Dutch context in **chapter 5**. The Dutch survey covers in-depth questions about respondents' involvement in housework and with children as well as their own fathers' involvement in housework and childcare in their youth. The partners of a subset of respondents were also interviewed, likewise providing rich data on their paid and unpaid work behavior, income, and own fathers involvement in their youth.

In this dissertation I use these data sources to explore family characteristics, social class, and national context as drivers of father involvement in four empirical chapters. I now provide an overview of each empirical study.

## Overview of chapters

In the following chapters I use different measures of family characteristics, social class, and country context to study drivers and barriers of father involvement. Taking either a *linked lives* or a *lives in context* perspective, each chapter empirically tests hypotheses regarding different driving mechanisms of father involvement. Additionally, each chapter measures a different dimension of father involvement. **Chapter 2** tests whether partner's work hours are a stronger driver of relative father involvement in countries with more paternity leave, a higher level of gender empowerment, and a lower gender wage gap, as well as to what extent this association is dependent on the time it takes to complete certain childcare tasks. **Chapter 3** explores how men's educational homophily with their adult children can be a driver of absolute interest in their children's lives and how father's high educational attainment, but not their child's, drives fathers' absolute advice. **Chapter 4** asks if men's fathering and gender norms mediate the link between high educational attainment and greater absolute and relative involvement in basic care, leisure, teaching, managing, and monitoring childcare activities. Finally, **chapter 5** explores how the intergenerational transmission of men's share of total childcare is greater when their partners work more hours.

## **Chapter 2. The partner as driver and barrier to father involvement**

Political rhetoric behind paternity leave envisions fathers' share of involvement with children as a solution to increased maternal labor market participation (e.g. EC, 2010). Yet prior research reveals that positive links exist between fathers' share of involvement and maternal employment in dual-earner couples in some countries but not others (Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015). In **chapter 2** I start my empirical study of father involvement by ascertaining the strength of one of the most commonly studied covariates of involvement—partner's labor market participation. I ask whether and why the association between partner's work hours and father involvement varies across Europe, acknowledging that the association might be stronger for certain types of childcare. In doing so I study family characteristics by exploring how the partner's work hours can constrain father involvement. Country context is captured by the driving role of paternity leave, gender empowerment, and the gender wage gap at a national level. Finally, I measure relative father involvement in terms of how time-consuming various types of childcare are.

### ***Contribution***

First, although the link between partner's work hours and father involvement is often assumed, empirical results are mixed and mostly limited to one country. Studies that do examine the association in multiple countries often conclude that there are national differences in how strongly father involvement is influenced by partner's work hours, but due to limited data and empirical design they are only able to speculate about why differences might exist (e.g. Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015). Using Bayesian multilevel analysis on 16 European countries and Australia, this chapter is the first to empirically test reasons for cross-national differences posited by other studies, including level of gender equality and availability of paternity leave, and the gender wage gap.

Second, I acknowledge that the strength of the association between partner's work hours and father involvement may vary depending on the type of childcare being considered. A number of studies that look at men's time with children conclude that the much talked about "new fathers" who share care tasks (more) equally with their partners are primarily a weekend phenomenon, and this finding seems to hold true across a variety of welfare state types (Hook & Wolfe, 2012; Neilson & Stanfors, 2014; Yeung et al., 2001). This finding indicates that men's days are still primarily structured by their working hours. On weekdays, those men appear to be virtually indistinguishable from the good providers of decades past. Inspired by this finding, I investigate how fathers share "time-flexible" and "time-structuring" childcare tasks with their partners, where time-flexible tasks refer to those tasks that can be completed at any time such

as playing with children, and time-structuring refers to childcare tasks such as feeding children and bringing them to bed that are repetitive, time consuming, or have to happen at a certain time every day.

### ***Findings***

Father involvement across Europe varies quite a bit depending on the type of childcare being measured and in which country. Norway leads in relative father involvement, with fathers sharing time-structuring tasks equally in approximately half of all households; by comparison just 10% of households in Georgia have fathers who participate equally in time-structuring activities. Nonetheless, it is overly simplistic to assume father involvement follows the Northwestern/Southeastern gradient of other indicators of family solidarity (Dykstra, 2018; Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011) and gender equality (Haberkern, Schmid, & Szydlik, 2015; Saraceno & Keck, 2010). After Norway, the countries with the highest rates of father involvement in time-structuring tasks are Italy, Hungary, and Poland.

Likewise, partners' work hours do influence father involvement in both time-structuring and time-flexible tasks in most countries in our sample, and there is significant cross-national variation in the strength of the association with both types of involvement with partner's work hours. However, the difference in effect sizes across countries, though significant, is small, and there is no clear economic, cultural, or policy explanation for why an association is strong in one country and weak in another. Thus, while other studies have sometimes concluded that the differences between countries in the link between partner's work hours and father involvement can be traced back to "father-friendly policy" (A. J. Smith & Williams, 2007), I test this hypothesis and conclude that the difference across countries is too small to be explained by paternity leave, the level of gender equality, and the gender wage gap.

I do see that the association between partner's work hours and father involvement is stronger when measuring involvement in time-structuring tasks, but in general I conclude that the mechanism of partner's work hours is a robust driver of father involvement in a variety of types of childcare.

## **Chapter 3. Educational similarity as a driver of parental support**

One of the classic sociological research questions is whether social mobility is harmful for family solidarity (Blau, 1956; Litwak, 1960; Parsons, 1951). Driven by the expansion of the middle class in the postwar period, researchers asked whether upwardly mobile children would still provide practical and emotional support for their elderly working-class parents. However, this line of research is generally limited in that it a) historically

focused on upward support from adult child to parent, though we now know that parents tend to contribute more to their children than vice versa (Albertini, Kohli, & Vogel, 2007), b) often only measures father's rather than mother's socioeconomic status, or models them together, thus implicitly assuming that the same mechanisms drive father and mother emotional support (Pillemer & Suitor, 2002). In **chapter 3** I investigate whether adult children receive more advice and interest from their parents when they both have high educational attainment, both have low educational attainment, children are upwardly mobile, or are downwardly mobile. Moreover I perform analyses separately for mothers and fathers and test for gender differences in drivers of parental support. This chapter measures family characteristics in the form of attributes of men's adult children. In doing so, I envision children not as passive recipients of paternal support, but as being able to drive or constrain support through either homophilous interests, violating social scripts, or the promise of future long-term reciprocity. Social class is measured in the form of educational attainment, and the country context is the Netherlands. Father involvement is operationalized as frequency of advice and interest.

### ***Contribution***

**Chapter 3** contributes to the literature in two ways. First, I update decades old research on the link between social mobility and family solidarity by incorporating the latest findings from literature on intergenerational relations and father involvement. In this chapter I reframe the question from one of concern that upwardly mobile children will leave their aging parents behind (Parsons, 1951) to a question of whether educational similarity or difference motivates fathers and mothers to give emotional support to their adult children. Given that research shows that children benefit from parental advice and interest even as adults (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann, et al., 2012; Ratelle, Simard, & Guay, 2013), educational differences in father and mother involvement may continue and compound over the life course.

Second, I compare mechanisms driving emotional support from mothers and fathers. Whereas the literature on intergenerational status transmission has often focused on father to son transmission and neglected the role of mothers (Beller, 2009), literature on intergenerational support has often been overly focused on mothers (Pillemer & Suitor, 2002). I combine these literatures by asking whether the association between educational similarity and parental support is different for mothers and fathers.

## **Findings**

**Chapter 3** reveals that parental emotional support of adult children is motivated by their own and their children's statuses. Homophily drives fathers' interest, but only when both parent and child are highly educated whereas highly educated fathers display their expertise by providing more advice than lower educated fathers. Although mothers tend to invest equally in all children by giving advice regardless of either their own or their children's educational attainment they do have favorites, as evidenced by mothers' preference to show interest in highly educated children. This chapter reveals how father involvement remains important throughout the life course, how socioeconomic status of both the father and the child can play a role in father involvement, and how mechanisms driving father involvement differ from those driving mother involvement. These results suggest that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for encouraging involvement between older fathers and their adult children. Finally, levels of advice and interest from parents to adult children are overall quite high, indicating high levels of downward family solidarity in the Netherlands.

## **Chapter 4. Class differentiated norms as drivers and barriers of father involvement**

More highly educated fathers have been observed to spend more time with their children, particularly in the types of activities that most strongly contribute to children's development (Dotti Sani & Treas, 2016; Gracia, 2014; Hoff et al., 2002; Sullivan, 2010). The educational gradient in father involvement has potential negative consequences for children as it is thought to contribute to the diverging of children's destinies, where socioeconomic differences between children accumulate over time (McLanahan, 2004). Many researchers speculate that the educational gap in father involvement is due in part to differences in parenting and gender norms, without directly testing this hypothesis. In **chapter 4** I explore whether norms mediate the educational gradient in father involvement within the inflexible labor market context of Bulgaria. Men's social class is represented in this chapter by educational attainment and the national context is Bulgaria. I operationalize father involvement in three ways in this chapter, including 1) the absolute and 2) relative time fathers spend with their children in 3) five different types of tasks associated with child development.

## **Contribution**

This chapter makes three contributions to the literature. First, to my knowledge this is the first study to test the assumption that norms explain the educational gradient in father involvement using mediation analysis. Knowing why there is an educational gradient in father involvement is necessary in order to understand the phenomenon of diverging destinies.

Second, I do so in the context of Bulgaria. To date, most studies of father involvement have been conducted in Western countries, where the labor market often allows for telework and flexible hours, particularly for the highly educated (Hoff et al., 2002). In such national contexts it can be difficult to determine whether norms or work hour flexibility drive the higher rates of father involvement among the highly educated. However, the labor market in Bulgaria is quite inflexible for all employees (Tomev, 2009), thus allowing me to focus on norms as mediating mechanisms.

Third, I conceptualize father involvement both in absolute and relative terms. Literature on diverging destinies emphasizes that children with highly educated parents get more time with their fathers in absolute terms, but generally does not focus on how mothers and fathers share childcare (Gracia, 2014; McLanahan, 2004). Yet, prior research suggests that father involvement has unique benefits that are different from mother involvement (Jeynes, 2016). Children who receive a more even balance of involvement from mothers and fathers may also have better life outcomes compared to those whose mothers do the majority of childcare.

### **Findings**

In Bulgaria, just as in other countries, I observe that more highly educated fathers are more involved in childcare. This suggests continuity rather than difference across national contexts, despite the different historical and cultural background of Bulgaria compared to Western Europe. However, our findings differ from prior studies in Western Europe in two ways. First, more highly educated fathers are more involved in all forms of childcare, not only those which are age-appropriate for their children. Second, I find no support for the often-proposed mechanism that norms of father involvement explain why more highly educated fathers are more involved. Rather, I conclude that gender norms are the mechanism explaining educational differences in father involvement. My final conclusion in this chapter is that the findings with regard to absolute and relative father involvement are remarkably similar, indicating that mechanisms driving father involvement may be robust to how involvement is conceptualized.

## **Chapter 5. Parents and partners as drivers and barriers of father involvement**

Applied to the study of father involvement, the life course perspective describes how men's decisions to be involved with their children are shaped by the people in their lives. In **chapter 5** I focus in particular on the father as role model and the spouse's gatekeeping role. Prior research shows that men are more involved in housework and childcare when their wives and girlfriends work more hours (Gracia & Esping-

Andersen, 2015) and when their own fathers were more involved (Hofferth, 2003; Ishii-Kuntz, 2012), but little is known about the interaction between early socialization and structural constraints imposed by the partner. Yet this interaction is key because the influence of the partner always exists simultaneously with the influence of the father. In addition to the family context as represented by the partner and the father, this research is conducted within the country context of the Netherlands and father involvement is operationalized as relative involvement in housework and childcare.

### ***Contribution***

I contribute to the literature by studying the intergenerational transmission of men's housework and childcare, and how that is moderated by the partner's work hours. Although much research has focused on the role of the partner (e.g. Craig & Mullan, 2010; Pleck, 1997), an intergenerational focus is less common. The research that does exist on transmission from father to son tends to focus on attitudes rather than the transmission of behavior (Cardoso, Fontainha, & Monfardini, 2010; Levto, Barker, Contreras-Urbina, Heilman, & Verma, 2014), despite that role modeling theory is a prominent one in explaining intergenerational similarity in behavior (Platt & Polavieja, 2016). To our knowledge this is the first article to consider the influence of both the father and the partner together.

Moreover, I acknowledge critical differences in housework and childcare. Although both are forms of domestic work, they have important differences that demand studying them separately. Housework is seen as women's area of expertise, but is generally considered to be unpleasant (Raley, Bianchi, & Wang, 2013), while childcare may make stronger demands on parents' time, but is consistently rated as more pleasant and more fulfilling than housework (Craig, 2006b).

### ***Findings***

I find that both their fathers' role model and their partner's greater participation in the labor market can drive men's involvement in housework and childcare, though their fathers only drive men's childcare when their wives and girlfriends give them the room to be involved. That is, the influence of the father's example as a role model is stronger the more hours the partner works. Conversely, mothers who do not work at all act as gatekeepers for their partner's involvement.

## Overarching conclusions

From a life course perspective, I study how family characteristics, social class, and country context act as drivers or barriers of father involvement. I will now outline my overarching conclusions regarding each, starting with family characteristics.

### Linked lives: Family characteristics

The specific family characteristics I examine in this dissertation include the labor market behavior of men's partners, the educational attainment of their adult children, and the involvement of their own fathers. Based on my findings as presented in the coming chapters, I draw conclusions about the role of each of these characteristics as well as overarching conclusions about their combined effect.

The role of the partner is widely acknowledged in the literature (e.g. Craig & Mullan, 2011). In **chapters 2** and **5** I measure how her work hours can drive or constrain father involvement, and in both cases I find that men are more involved in childcare when their partners work more hours. The association between partner's work hours and father involvement is quite universal. **Chapter 2** reveals that the association exists across a variety of countries from different welfare regimes, one of which was the Netherlands. This finding is replicated in **chapter 5** when, using different data from the Netherlands, I likewise find that the partner's greater work hours are associated with men's higher involvement in childcare. Furthermore, these chapters use different measurements of father involvement yet still reach similar conclusions; men are more involved in childcare when their partners work more hours. That the association between partner's work hours and father involvement persists despite different country contexts and father involvement measurements leads me to conclude that men's partners are consistent drivers of father involvement. Despite the opportunity for outsourcing to formal or informal caregivers, couples continue to negotiate at least some of the childcare responsibilities.

With regard to the role of men's children in driving father involvement, my research in **chapter 3** illustrates that men's advice is neither driven nor constrained by their children's educational attainment, though their interest is. Specifically I find that children do have some influence in soliciting interest from their fathers, but the extent of their influence depends on the father's own educational attainment and how that interacts with their own. Thus, while men's partners are unequivocal drivers of father involvement, their children can only drive or constrain father involvement under certain circumstances.



In chapter 5 I turn to the role of men's own fathers in driving involvement with children. When they are young, men see their fathers doing (or not doing) childcare in the home, and as adults men tend to follow in their father's footsteps. If their fathers were highly involved, men are also more likely to be highly involved. Yet the extent to which men are able to follow their father's example is constrained by their partners. The more hours per week she works, the more strongly he is influenced by the example set by his own father. Conversely, when women don't work at all, men's early socialization has little influence on their involvement. Important to note is that the effect described here is a two-way interaction effect. What this means is that if men's partners can constrain the influence of early socialization, then we can also speak about early socialization limiting the influence of men's partners' work hours. However, I frame this finding in terms of how men's partners limit the influence of early socialization for two reasons: 1) men are always more involved when their partners work more hours; it is only the extent to which they are more involved that varies depending on their own father's involvement. By comparison, men whose partners work 0 hours are not driven by their own father's involvement. 2) The second reason is due to ordering of events: Men's preferences for involvement are driven by their own fathers in their youth and are presumed to be already formed when they enter a romantic relationship. Because the driving influence of men's partners happens after their early socialization, men's partner's work hours can constrain their own father's influence but not the other way around (though see chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of the role of selection). That the influence of early socialization is dependent on the hours men's partners work suggests that the role of the father, like the role of men's children, can only drive or constrain father involvement under certain circumstances.

In sum, these findings reinforce notions from the life course perspective that lives are linked. Men's partners, children, and fathers can drive and constrain their involvement with children. The life course perspective also suggests that still other family members and non-kin may be able to drive or constrain father involvement (Castillo & Fenzl-Crossman, 2010; Masciadrelli, Pleck, & Stueve, 2006) but my dissertation focuses specifically on immediate family and men's own fathers. I focus on family characteristics rather than non-kin because family more often provides support when people need it the most (Conkova et al., 2017). However, the influence of children is contingent on men's characteristics and the influence of men's fathers is contingent on their partner's characteristics. Only the partner's work hours are a consistent driver of father involvement across country contexts and multiple dimensions of childcare. I thus conclude that men's partners exert the most consistent influence on men's involvement with children. Future research could benefit from extending this linked lives perspective to studying the interaction between additional family characteristics from additional family members.

## Social class context

I asked how socioeconomic status as measured by educational attainment influences father involvement in **chapters 3** and **4**. These chapters study different country contexts, different ages of children, and different measures of father involvement. Nevertheless, I find that a similar pattern emerges in both chapters, where more highly educated men are more involved with their children. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, I attribute the similar behavioral pattern to opposing mechanisms in each chapter. In **chapter 3** I argue that men give more advice to their adult children when they are highly educated because men are socialized to value status, thus they feel more qualified to provide advice to their children when they are more highly educated. This argumentation relies on men with high educational attainment acting in gender-traditional ways, namely that they place a high value on their own and their children's educational achievements. By contrast, I conclude in **chapter 4** that higher educated men are more involved in childcare of young children because they are less traditional. They are more willing to participate in typically female-typed tasks than their less educated counterparts. Although it may seem odd that being more gender traditional would predict that highly educated fathers are more involved with adult children while being less gender traditional might predict highly educated fathers being more involved with young children, these mechanisms are not mutually exclusive. Barring some exceptions such as with learning disabilities, children's 'potential' may become more visible at older ages. Thus men's preference to "invest" in high status children may only become salient as children age. In other words, the age of men's children can drive or constrain the influence of men's social class. As a result, I caution future researchers to be wary of assumptions about how socioeconomic status drives father involvement as mechanisms are also partially dependent on the context of the study—in this case, the age of the children. This finding emphasizes the importance of the life course notion of "lives in context". It is not enough to only consider men's embeddedness in their social class context, researchers must also be aware of the countries in which these class differences occur as well as men's family characteristics.

## National context

In the cross-national study of **chapter 2** I find that how much childcare fathers do varies considerably across all countries, but the strength of the association between partner's work hours and father involvement is quite consistent. In almost all countries fathers are more involved in both time-structuring and time-flexible childcare when their partners work more hours. The strength of this association does vary significantly across countries when measured in a multilevel model, but even in the model with the most variation, the effect size of partner's work hours varies less than .005 across nearly three-fourths of the countries. That is, the variation is too small to be explained

by national-level factors, including paternity leave available to fathers, the gender wage gap, and the level of gender equality. Thus I conclude that men are more involved in childcare when their partners are more involved, across a wide variety of national contexts.

My research shows that men are more involved when their partners work more hours across countries, and that this is particularly true with regard to types of childcare that are most demanding of parents' time. This implies that policy makers have an additional tool in their toolkit to help encourage father involvement, should that be their goal. Specifically, policies that result in greater female employment may also have an effect on father involvement. As of 2018, all EU member states have some sort of paternity or parental leave available to fathers, though many countries fall short of the European Council's proposed two-week minimum for work-life balance (Janta & Stewart, 2018). What this dissertation shows, however, is that policy is best approached holistically. Paternity leave by itself may not always be a driver of men's involvement with children if other policies and normative climate act in opposing directions. For example, too-long maternity leave runs the risk of decreasing the number of hours women work (Ciccia & Verloo, 2012; Galtry & Callister, 2005), which in turn reduces the need for men to be involved in childcare (**chapter 2**).

### **Multidimensionality of father involvement**

Finally, I studied a number of different dimensions of father involvement, all of which contribute to our understanding of drivers of men's childcare. I draw two overarching conclusions with regard to the implications for research of focusing on specific dimensions of father involvement.

The first regards the difference between measuring father involvement in terms of how frequently men perform certain tasks (absolute involvement) or how they share childcare with partners (relative involvement). Both absolute and relative involvement are important to children, mothers, and fathers themselves (Allen & Daly, 2007; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001), but advocates and policy makers with messages to convey to the public may want to promote different dimensions of involvement depending on their goals. Depending on whether advocates want to promote gender equality or father-child bonding, they may engage in discourse about either absolute or relative involvement. Research into the drivers and barriers of father involvement should therefore investigate both absolute and relative involvement, and be especially vigilant for different driving factors of each dimension. If, for example, greater mothers' work hours lead to a better division of labor at home, but do not result in men spending more absolute time with children, then it would be misleading

to talk about fathers facilitating female employment when in fact their behavior has not changed at all.

In **chapter 4** I measure both absolute and relative involvement and I find similar results regardless of whether I use a measure of fathers' absolute or relative involvement—with one exception. Father involvement in monitoring behavior is not inversely related to mother involvement in monitoring; that is, fathers' frequency of praising, scolding, talking to, hugging, and protecting their children does not decrease the share of time that mothers spend in these types of childcare. If anything, monitoring from the father and mothers is probably additive, but I did not test this. Aside from monitoring, however, I conclude that it is unimportant to main conclusions on antecedents of father involvement whether researchers measure men's share of involvement or their absolute involvement. In general, what drives absolute father involvement also drives relative involvement. **Chapter 4** was focused on the association between educational attainment and absolute and relative father involvement. I encourage future research to test whether the effect of other drivers of father involvement such as partner work hours holds for both absolute and relative involvement.

My other overarching conclusion on the operationalization of father involvement is related to the dimensions of childcare encompassed in the term "father involvement." In my research I use a number of different ways to conceptualize father involvement, including how time-consuming the various activities are (**chapter 2**), the inclusion of monitoring as a form of involvement (**chapters 3 and 4**), the age-appropriateness of the type of childcare (**chapter 4**), and total father involvement in **chapter 5**. In **chapters 2 and 5** I look at how partner's work hours influence father involvement in terms of how time consuming the activities (**chapter 2**) are and overall childcare (**chapter 5**). In both operationalizations I extend prior research that shows that father involvement is higher when their partners work more hours (Craig & Mullan, 2011; Hook & Wolfe, 2013) to additional dimensions of father involvement. Similarly, I find in **chapters 3 and 4** that more highly educated fathers are more involved with children across a range of childcare activities; likewise extending prior studies to other dimensions of father involvement (Gracia, 2014; Sayer, Gauthier, & Furstenberg, 2004). Important to note is that I cannot statistically test for whether partner's work hours and educational attainment are more strongly associated with certain dimensions of father involvement because the findings in each chapter are from unrelated analyses. Nonetheless, I can conclude that educational attainment and partner's work hours drive father involvement across a wide variety of activities.

## Limitations and future research

There are a few aspects of my dissertation that limit the generalizability of my conclusions. First, with regard to the role family characteristics play in driving father involvement, I only directly examine the way multiple family characteristics interact in **chapter 5**. In other chapters I examine various family characteristics in isolation. When I do combine characteristics in **chapter 5** I am able to reach interesting conclusions about how early socialization conditionally drives father involvement depending on partner's labor market behavior. In order to reach a more complete understanding of how family characteristics drive and constrain father involvement I encourage future research to continue to study families as networks. For example, Masciadrelli, Pleck, and Stueve (2006) use qualitative interviews to illustrate how the strength of own fathers, peers, and partners as drivers of father involvement differs for different types of fathers. This type of research warrants more attention in a quantitative framework as well.

Second, in my study of how social class drives father involvement, I focus entirely on educational attainment. I chose education to be representative of social class because it is the most important demarcation of class in the Netherlands (Bovens, 2012), but income and occupational status are also important in defining social class. While education is generally fixed throughout adulthood, occupational status can change (Liberatos, Link, & Kelsey, 1988; G. D. Smith et al., 1998), and thus may in some cases be a more accurate snapshot of current social class. Unlike occupational status, education has a cultural as well as an economic component, where in addition to normative differences, less educated individuals are more anomic (Achterberg, De Koster, & Van der Waal, 2015; Van der Waal, Achterberg, Houtman, De Koster, & Manevska, 2010). Future research would benefit from an attention to various dimensions of social class.

With regard to national context, I conducted a cross-national study in **chapter 2**. Yet this study was limited to 17 countries, 16 of which are in Europe with the other being Australia. Although there are important differences in the role of families in Eastern and Western Europe (Billingsley & Ferrarini, 2014; Hofäcker, Stoilova, & Riebling, 2013; Moor & Komter, 2012), these regions to a large extent share history, economic stability, and with the introduction of the EU, political systems. Future research might benefit from comparing non-European countries to European countries to see if different patterns emerge in drivers of father involvement. For example, the drivers of father involvement might be different in contexts where men and women migrate for employment, leaving children at home with grandparents. Furthermore, this is the only cross-national study in the dissertation. Comparing single country studies can be an important step in forming hypotheses, but cross-national hypotheses can only

be tested when measures, sampling, and survey methods are standardized across countries.

As for my conclusions on the multidimensionality of father involvement, there are two limitations. First, only in **chapter 4** do I compare absolute and relative involvement. This chapter shows that gender norms mediate the link between higher educational attainment and higher levels of involvement with regard to both absolute and relative involvement. However, the direct effect of norms on men's childcare does vary between absolute and relative involvement. In other words, the drivers and barriers to absolute vs. relative involvement may differ, but this is not the case in the specific hypotheses I test in **chapter 4**. In the chapters where I study the driving role of mothers' work hours (**chapters 2 and 5**) I link mothers' work hours to relative involvement, thus I am not able to say whether partner's work hours also drive absolute involvement. Future research would benefit from a closer attention to whether drivers of father involvement have the same effect on absolute and relative involvement.

Furthermore, each chapter is focused on different childcare activities thus limiting comparability of findings. For example, both **chapter 3 and 4** ask whether more highly educated men are more involved with their children, but **chapter 3** focuses on advice and interest to adult children while **chapter 4** distinguishes between basic care, play, teaching, managing, and monitoring. These dimensions of father involvement are widely divergent, thus although I find a similar pattern of behavior where more highly educated men are more involved in both chapters, these are actually separate findings rather than replications of the same finding. I encourage future research to focus more on replication within the same dimensions of father involvement.

Finally, in this dissertation I ask how family characteristics, social class, and national context can drive father involvement, but this perspective neglects other important drivers of involvement, including non-kin and social networks (Masciadrelli et al., 2006), business or organizational-level opportunities and constraints (Noonan, 2013), and neighborhoods (Zhang & Fuller, 2012). Future research can benefit from a broader range of drivers and constraints of father involvement, and in particular looking at the way drivers interact. For example, are organizational-level flexwork policies weaker drivers of father involvement in countries with more generous paternity leave policies? What happens when men's social circles are highly supportive of father involvement but men's partners are not?

## Implications for the gender revolution

I started this dissertation by placing it in the debate on the gender revolution, which argues that father involvement in domestic work is necessary to complete the revolution. If the first half of the gender revolution was to get women fully involved in the labor market, then the second half of the revolution is to get men fully involved at home. Researchers generally agree that the first half is closer to completion than the second half, though there are strides to be made in both women's participation in the labor market and men's participation in the home before we can achieve equality among the genders. Optimists such as Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Lappegård (2015) argue that trends are positive. Men are becoming more involved in housework and childcare, and that eventually, they will catch up to their partners in domestic responsibility. Pessimists such as Cherlin (2016) argue that men still have far to go. I see evidence to support both camps. On one hand, men do respond to their partners' working behavior. The more the partner works, the more men are involved with their children. This effect is robust across countries and dimensions of father involvement. It shows, at the household level, how the first half of the gender revolution can have a concrete and measurable effect on the second half of the revolution. However—and there is a fairly strong “however”—men are on average not very responsive to their partner's work hours. Yes, men are more involved when their partners work more, but when we start to quantify by how much more they are involved we see that differences between families are small (see for example **chapter 2**).

Nonetheless, I take the weak relationship between partners' work hours and father involvement not as a sign that the revolution is stalled, but as proof that we need the life course perspective to fully understand how different factors can influence father involvement. In **chapter 5** I show how the effect of early socialization can be reinforced by men's partner's labor market behavior. However, I was not able to examine how upbringing influences selection into marriage, for example. Viewed in a vacuum, partner's work hours may have limited effect on father involvement, but when combined with all other antecedents at the family, social class, and country level, the second half of the revolution may be well underway. Especially when generational changes are considered where highly involved men will raise children who themselves are more involved, we can expect higher levels of father involvement in the future.

**Table 1.1.** Overview of empirical chapters

Chapter	Research questions	Contributions to literature	Drivers and barriers	Conclusions	Dimensions of father involvement
2: The partner as driver and barrier to father involvement  By Brett Ory, Renske Keizer, and Pearl A. Dykstra	How do partner's work hours affect father's share of time-structuring and time-flexible involvement?  Does this relationship vary across European countries?  If so, do paternity leave, gender empowerment, or the gender wage gap explain cross-national differences?	Distinction between time-structuring and time-flexible childcare shown to be important by prior literature (Hook & Wolfe, 2012), but understudied  We test policy, labor market, and gender equality explanations for cross-national differences using multilevel, Bayesian design	Family characteristics: partner's work hours  Country context: paternity leave, gender empowerment measure (GEM), gender wage gap in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Russia	The more mothers work the more fathers are involved in both time-structuring and time-flexible childcare  Fathers are most responsive to mother's work hours in the Netherlands and least in Estonia and Czech Republic, but differences across countries are small  Paternity leave, gender empowerment, and gender wage gap cannot explain the difference in effect size across countries	Father's share of time-structuring and time-flexible tasks
3: Educational similarity as a driver of parental support  By Brett Ory, Renske Keizer, and Pearl A. Dykstra.	How does the educational similarity (or difference) between parents and adult children influence the advice and interest parents show their adult children?  Does gender of the parent moderate the role of educational similarity?	Revisited mostly forgotten question of how educational mobility drives intergenerational support  Show that fathers' support is driven by educational similarity and own educational attainment. Mothers' support is driven by child's education.	Family characteristics: child's educational attainment  Social class: educational attainment  Country context: Netherlands	Mothers do not distinguish between children with regard to advice, but show more interest in highly educated children  Fathers give more advice when they are highly educated, and show more interest in highly educated homophilous dyads	Frequency that fathers and mothers give advice and interest to adult children
4: Class differentiated norms as drivers and barriers of father involvement  By Brett Ory and Nina Conkova	Do norms of father involvement and gender equality mediate the link between high educational attainment and father involvement?  Does the mediation effect persist for absolute and relative involvement?	Bulgarian context and inflexible labor market  Testing whether norms mediate the educational gradient in father involvement  Focus on absolute and relative involvement	Social class: educational attainment  Country context: Bulgaria	Gender norms but not norms of father involvement act as mediators  We observe an educational gradient in all forms of childcare, not only age-appropriate tasks	Absolute and relative father involvement in basic care, play, teaching, managing, and monitoring



5: Parents and partners as drivers and barriers of father involvement	Do men take on a greater share of housework and childcare when their partners work more and their fathers were more involved in housework and childcare?	Focus on both housework and childcare	Family characteristics: partner's work hours and own father's involvement	Father's housework and childcare and partner's work hours influence son's housework and childcare.	Father's share of total housework and childcare
By Brett Ory, Renske Keizer, and Pearl A. Dykstra	Do partners' work hours moderate the effect of men's own fathers?	Interaction of the driving effect of early socialization and the partner's work hours	Country context: Netherlands	Father's domestic work only influences son's childcare when the partner works; the more she works the more men are influenced by their own fathers' involvement.	



# The partner as driver and barrier to father involvement

Brett Ory, Renske Keizer, Pearl A. Dykstra

Research suggests that fathers are more involved in childcare when mothers work longer hours, and recently, that the strength of this association differs across national contexts. However, prior studies have been unable to test why differences exist across countries. The current study asks whether gender empowerment, paternity leave, or the gender pay gap can explain variation across countries in the relationship between mother's work hours and father's share of childcare, differentiating between time-structuring and time-flexible childcare tasks. Bayesian multilevel analyses using the Generations and Gender Surveys (N = 22,480, 17 countries) reveal cross-national differences. Results vary according to the type of task studied; mothers' work hours are more closely related to fathers' share of involvement in time-structuring than time-flexible tasks. Country-level differences cannot be explained by gender empowerment, paternity leave, or the gender pay gap. We discuss these findings, explore alternate explanations, and mention policy implications.

## Introduction

The employment rate of women with young children has increased dramatically over the past 50 years across most Western countries. In 2000, roughly 63% of American mothers with children under six were employed, compared with only 19% in the 1960s. Similar upward trends have occurred across Europe, with the 2016 employment rate of mothers in Sweden settling at 86% while in Italy and Spain maternal employment hovers around 60% (Eurostat, 2017). Although gender equality in caring for children lags behind gains in maternal employment (Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015; Hochschild, 1990), fathers have increased their involvement with children over the past decades (Eydal & Rostgaard, 2015; Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004). These trends suggest that fathers' increased involvement might be in response to mothers' working outside the home.

On the one hand, by assuming a greater share of childcare, fathers may relieve mothers' burden at home, enabling them to spend more time in paid labor. On the other hand, mothers' longer work hours may necessitate fathers performing a greater share of childcare. Thus mother's hours of work and father's share of childcare are likely mutually influential. It cannot be said that one causes the other, nor is it the purpose of this study to do so. Rather, we focus on the relationship between the mother's work hours and father's share of childcare

On an individual level, scholars often find strong linkages between father involvement and the number of hours mothers work (c.f. Boll, Leppin, & Reich, 2013; McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002). However, when comparisons are made between countries, this association appears equivocal. Although women's employment hours have been linked to fathers' greater share of childcare in the Netherlands (Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009), the UK (Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015; Norman, Elliot, & Fagan, 2014), and the US (Coltrane, Parke, & Adams, 2004), a study conducted in Germany (Cooke, 2007) showed no link between the mothers' hours of work and the father's share of childcare. A similar picture arises from the small but growing collection of cross-national studies; father's share of childcare and the hours that mothers work are linked in some countries but not in others (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015).

Although prior cross-national studies have illustrated that there might be differences across countries in the relationship between mothers' working hours and fathers' childcare (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015), they have not actually tested the mechanisms that are proposed to be driving country differences. For example, Gracia and Esping-Andersen (2015) and Hook and Wolfe (2012) ran separate OLS regressions on father involvement for a handful of countries, relying on a qualitative description of country context to explain differences across contexts. In the present study we contribute to the literature by scrutinizing the extent to which cross-national differences can be explained by the national culture, policy, and the gender pay gap.

We argue that the national context can influence negotiations between spouses over work and the division of childcare. Using gender egalitarianism to represent culture, paternity leave as a stand-in for national policies, and the gender pay gap to represent the gendered wage context, we test cultural, policy, and wage mechanisms to explain why differences across countries might exist in the association between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare. To our knowledge, this is the first paper that directly tests mechanisms driving cross-country differences in the association between mother's work hours and father's share of childcare.

Furthermore, despite the fact that compelling data from single-country studies clearly indicates that men are more involved in some types of childcare tasks than others (e.g. Craig, 2006a), many cross-national studies of father involvement do not account for the heterogeneous nature of childcare (e.g. (Boll et al., 2013; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Hook, 2006; A. J. Smith & Williams, 2007), though for exceptions see (Craig & Mullan, 2011; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015; Hook & Wolfe, 2012)). In childcare, some tasks are time consuming or have to be done at a specific time every day, while other tasks can be done at parents' convenience. Because work hours also structure mothers' schedules, we expect that fathers' participation in activities that have to be done at a certain time will be more likely to facilitate mothers' hours of employment than would participation in tasks that can be done at parents' convenience. To better understand linkages between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare, we therefore argue that it is necessary to differentiate between childcare tasks that are seen as time-structuring and those seen as time-flexible.

We use the Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS) (Vikat & Macdonald, 2004), conducted and harmonized across a selected sample of 17 countries, to compare the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare among 22,480 families throughout Europe. The countries in the GGS represent different welfare regimes with great variation in culture, policies, and labor market structure, allowing us to be one of the first studies to use multilevel analysis to test cultural, policy and wage mechanisms explaining why differences across countries might exist in the association between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare. Policy data are obtained from the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) Contextual Database (Spielauer, 2004), Multilinks (Dykstra & Komter, 2012; Keck, Hessel, & Saraceno, 2009), and the Database for Institutional Comparisons in Europe (DICE Database, 2015). The Gender Empowerment Measure is made available by the United Nations Development Programme (United Nations Development Programme 2002-2010), and the gender pay gap data come from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014), the World Bank (Atencio & Posadas, 2015), and the International Labor Office (ILO, 2013). Our research question reads: *to what extent are the hours that mothers work associated with fathers' share of time-structuring and time-flexible childcare tasks across Europe, and how do these relationships vary depending on the Gender Empowerment Measure, effective paternity leave, and the gender pay gap?*

## Theoretical framework

At the individual-level, four theoretical perspectives support a positive relationship between women's working hours and fathers' participation in child care:

Specialization (Becker, 1991), time constraints (Hook, 2006), and relative resources (bargaining) (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003) all start from the premise that women and men seek a rational division of paid work and childcare while gender ideology (Bulanda, 2004) assumes any division of labor is influenced by gender identity and values. Whether rational choice or gender identity drive couples' division of labor, however, all four perspectives predict that men with female partners who work more hours are more involved in childcare tasks.

The specialization perspective posits that men and women divide paid and unpaid work according to what is most efficient for the household (Becker, 1991). For example, if her hourly wage is substantially higher than his, according to specialization theory, she will work full-time while he will stay at home and take care of the household and children. The time constraints perspective is related to the specialization hypothesis, but suggests that couples divide unpaid labor in order to achieve equal workloads per spouse (Hook, 2006). In this case, the spouse who works 30 hours per week will perform more housework than the spouse who works 40 hours per week, simply because he or she has more time to do the work. In contrast, the bargaining perspective posits that men and women try to negotiate out of unpaid labor, using human and economic capital as bargaining chips (Bittman et al., 2003; Vierling-Claassen, 2013). Finally, gender ideology holds that men will continue to perform less childcare than women because they are socialized to see caregiving as feminine and thus not their responsibility (Bulanda, 2004; Erickson, 2005; Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009; Sayer, Gauthier, et al., 2004). However, couples with more egalitarian gender ideology will divide both paid and unpaid work more evenly. Although the individual-level theories suggest in general a positive relationship between the hours that mothers work and fathers' share of childcare, the strength of this relationship may vary across countries depending on the national cultural, policy, and wage context.

First, the cultural context of a country, specifically the level of gender egalitarianism, may affect the relationship between mothers' hours of employment and fathers' share of childcare. In more gender egalitarian countries, both women's contribution to the labor market and men's contribution to childcare are more highly valued by friends, family, and society at large. Cultural values may lead to more support for individuals who follow those values and to more sanctions for those acting contrary to societal

expectations. In other words, there will be more pressure to adhere to an egalitarian division of childcare in more gender egalitarian countries. For example, in a gender traditional society, men may be less likely to share childcare with their spouses even when their spouses work full time, because to do so is to violate the cultural scripts for masculinity. The Gender Empowerment Measure has been linked to men's greater participation in housework (Ruppanner, 2010). In the present study we explore its association with women's hours of paid work and father's share of childcare. We hypothesize that *the relationship between mother's work hours and father's share of childcare will be more positive in more gender egalitarian societies.*

Additionally, the policy context may affect the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare (Roy, 2014a, 2014b). Politicians often tout leave for fathers in particular as a way to help get fathers involved at home and help mothers be active in the labor force (EC, 2010). Longer and better paid paternity leave may enable men and women to share childcare as a joint responsibility, rather than assuming that mothers are the primary caretakers. In countries with long and well-paid leave available for fathers, it is therefore likely that men are more able to substitute for their female partners when the latter spend more hours in paid work. Thus, we hypothesize that *the relationship between mother's work hours and father's share of childcare will be more positive in countries with longer and better paid paternity leave.*

Finally, a nation's wage context can influence the association between mothers' hours of employment and fathers' share of childcare. Countries with a larger gender pay gap are countries where men relative to women have higher earnings. This decreases the incentive for women's paid employment, resulting in a situation in which men are able to contribute more to the household per hour worked than women. Countries with a larger gender pay gap are therefore assumed to encourage a male breadwinner-female caregiver division of labor. In these regimes, women's labor market participation is of less necessity to make ends meet. We therefore hypothesize that *the relationship between mother's work hours and father's share of childcare will be weaker (less positive) in countries with a larger gender pay gap.*

### **Time-structuring vs. time-flexible tasks**

As noted above, it is important to distinguish between different childcare tasks in examining linkages between mother's work hours and father's share of childcare, as we expect that the strength of this association is related to the type of childcare under consideration. Mothers' work hours may be particularly associated with fathers' performance of childcare tasks that have to be done at a specific time every day, such as helping the child get dressed, or with fathers' performance of childcare tasks that

are time-intensive, such as staying home with a sick child, because these are the tasks that act as the biggest obstacles to being engaged in paid work. By comparison, time-flexible tasks such as helping a child with homework or participating in leisure activities with children are easier to fit around working parents' busy schedules. Studies conducted in the Netherlands (Keizer & Dykstra, 2013; Keizer et al., 2014) and the U.S. (Maume, 2008), support a distinction between time-structuring and time-flexible tasks.

Furthermore, time-structuring tasks are also the tasks commonly attributed to women, and women in turn may care more about these tasks because they have internalized some aspects of gender ideology (Erickson, 2005). The division of labor surrounding time-structuring tasks is thus more closely related to the family's level of gender egalitarianism than is the division of time-flexible tasks. Therefore, we expect that mothers' work hours are more strongly related to father's share of time-structuring childcare than to father's share of time-flexible childcare.

## Controls

Previous studies have shown that the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare also depends on a number of individual-level factors. Older fathers may be more involved with children (Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004) and may have partners who work more hours (Gustafsson, 2001). Similarly, more highly educated fathers may be more involved in childcare (Bonke & Esping-Andersen, 2011; England & Srivastava, 2013; Lareau, 2002; Sayer, Gauthier, et al., 2004) and may be more likely to have partners who are more involved in developing their careers (Eckstein & Lifshitz, 2011). The *number* and *age of children* may necessitate that fathers spend more time caring for children simply because there is more care that needs to be done (Monna & Gauthier, 2008). The number of children will also be negatively correlated with female employment as more young children means a higher cost of daycare coupled with a greater demand for childcare (Kalwij, 2000). Work hours of the father were not controlled for in the analyses as these did not vary much across fathers.

Reports of father involvement by men have been shown to be considerably higher than reports by women (Mikelson, 2008), therefore, *gender of respondent* may lead to differences in reported father involvement. By controlling for gender we attempt to address any bias caused by differential reporting.



## Data

The GGS is a longitudinal survey with the first wave at time of analysis being conducted in 16 European countries, Australia, and Japan between 2002 and 2011 ( $N = 188,598$ ). We limit our sample to the first wave of the GGS because changes within respondents over time are beyond the scope of the current article. Japan is excluded to limit the comparison to Western countries ( $N = 179,524$ ). Furthermore, we use both male and female respondents living with children who are married or cohabiting ( $N = 69,220$ ). Only families with children under sixteen were selected where the mother is employed and currently working; that is, not on leave ( $N = 22,611$ ). After excluding the additional 131 respondents for whom gender was unavailable, we are left with a sample size of  $N = 22,480$ . Countries in our final analyses include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Russia.

### Dependent variables

*Fathers' share of time-structuring and time-flexible tasks* is measured as the relative frequency of fathers' participation in dressing the children, putting the children to bed, staying home with the children when they are ill, playing with the children, helping the children with homework, and child-related transport. Respondents reported on whether *they* (1) or *their partner* (5) always perform these activities on a scale from 1 to 5 (recoded to 0 to 4). Responses from male respondents were reverse coded from 0 to 4 such that (4) indicates that the father always performs the activity and (0) is always the mother. Additional answer categories for whether another household or non-household member always performs these activities, the children do it themselves, or when these activities are not applicable were recoded as a 2.

In order to distinguish between time-structuring and time-flexible tasks, we create two dependent variables from these questions with a correlation of  $r = .46$ . When responses to one or more questions were missing, the resulting value is the mean on the remaining questions. Fathers' share of time-structuring tasks is measured as the mean response on the questions about dressing the child, putting the child to bed, staying home with the child when sick, and child-related transport. Time-flexible involvement is measured as the mean response to questions regarding playing with the child and helping the child with homework, with a few exceptions. In the Netherlands, respondents were asked about bathing and dressing the child(ren) in one question, and were not asked about putting children to bed. Italian parents were only asked about transporting children. Fathers' share of time-flexible tasks does not include playing with children in the Italian sample. Dutch respondents were asked

about the same activities, i.e. helping with homework and playing with children, but in terms of frequency of involvement per parent rather than share of involvement. In the Dutch GGS (originally, the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra et al., 2005)), both the mother and the father were asked “how frequently do you help your child with homework”. Answer categories were 0 = not at all; 1 = occasionally; and 2 = several times. We created a relative version of this variable by dividing the father’s frequency of helping with homework by the total frequency of both the mother and father in order to assess fathers’ share of involvement. Answers fall into the same five categories as used in the other country surveys. Descriptive statistics for this and other variables can be found in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1.** Descriptive statistics from Gender and Generations Surveys,  $N = 22,480$

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Time-structuring tasks	1.42	0.63	0	4
Time-flexible tasks	1.71	0.65	0	4
Mother’s hours of work	34.84	10.23	0	50
Father age	38.37	6.80	17	71
Mother education	3.77	1.13	0	6
Father education	3.58	1.11	0	6
Number of children	1.67	0.71	1	9
Any under age four <sup>a</sup>	0.31		0	1
Gender of respondent <sup>a</sup>	0.55		0	1
Effective paternity leave	5.51	8.03	0	30
GEM score	0.66	0.15	0.41	0.91
Gender pay gap	16.98	11.02	6.41	51.40

<sup>a</sup>Any under age four: 0 = none, 1 = one or more. <sup>b</sup>Gender of respondent: 0 = male, 1 female

## Independent variables

*Mother’s work hours* are measured as country mean-centered hours that female respondents or female partners of male respondents usually spend in paid labor. This variable is top-coded at 50 hours per week because 97.5% of women in the sample worked 50 hours a week or less. To test the sensitivity of our model we ran analyses on a sample that included nonworking mothers. In these analyses we assigned unemployed women a score of 0 hours per week. Results are discussed in the section on sensitivity analyses and available upon request.

*Gender egalitarianism* is the country's score on the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) in the year in which the GGS survey was conducted, except for France for which only the 2007 GEM score was available. Higher scores indicate more equality between men and women in parliament and the labor market. The underlying ideology behind the GEM is that men and women would make similar choices regarding work and family if there were true gender equality in employment and political arenas (UNDP Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments, n.d.). Given that we are concerned with how men and women negotiate tradeoffs between mother's work hours and father involvement, we argue that this measure directly captures the form of gender egalitarianism that is relevant to our study. In 2010 the UNDP replaced the GEM with the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which combined measures of women's empowerment with health and economic inequality. Because our data is from prior to 2010 we use the GEM rather than the GII. Recent research from Grunow, Begall, and Buchler (2018) convincingly argues how it is overly simplistic to characterize gender egalitarianism as a one-dimensional factor ranging from traditional to progressive. However, their results generate a five-dimensional measure of gender egalitarianism, an operationalization that is not parsimonious enough for inclusion in the present analysis.

*Effective paternity leave* is measured at the national level from the year in which the survey was conducted. Policy data were gathered from the GGP Contextual Database (Spielauer, 2004), Multilinks (Dykstra & Komter, 2012; Keck et al., 2009), and the Database for Institutional Comparisons in Europe (DICE Database, 2015). Effective leave is calculated by multiplying the length of paternity leave in days by the percent of salary at which paternity leave is paid.

*Gender pay gap* is the gross average men's hourly wage minus the gross average women's hourly wage, divided by men's average hourly wage. This statistic was taken from OECD statistics from 2003 for OECD countries (OECD, 2014). Statistics for Bulgaria, Georgia, Lithuania, and Romania refer to the situation in 2006 and come from the International Labor Office (ILO, 2013), and Russia's statistics are from 2015 from the World Bank (Atencio & Posadas, 2015). It was not possible to find gender pay gap statistics from a single source for each country in the year of survey collection, thus we make use of a few different sources for information on the gender pay gap.

## Controls

*Age of the father* is measured as age in years of a male respondent or male partner of a female respondent. *Education of the father* and *mother* are seven-category ordinal variables on the ISCED scale that we treat as continuous. Categories range from *no*

*education* (0) to *tertiary advanced* (6). *Number of children* living at home is a number ranging from 1 to 4, and *any child under four* is a dummy where (1) stands for any children under four and (0) stands for no children under four. *Gender of the respondent* is coded as a (1) if the respondent is female and a (0) if male.

## Method

Our data have a hierarchical structure with respondents nested in countries. In our analysis we use a multilevel model that allows for the intercept of fathers' share of childcare and the slope of mothers' work hours to differ across countries, but all other individual-level control variables are fixed to be constant across countries. We first include the GEM score, paternity leave, and gender pay gap as a predictor of fathers' share of childcare, then we interact the macro variables with the random slope of mothers' work hours in order to test our hypotheses. This was done in six separate models. Missing values for independent and dependent individual-level variables were imputed simultaneously with the analysis; continuous independent and the dependent variables were imputed assuming a normal distribution with a mean of zero and the same variance observed in the data while nominal independent variables were imputed assuming a Bernoulli distribution with a probability equal to that observed in the data.

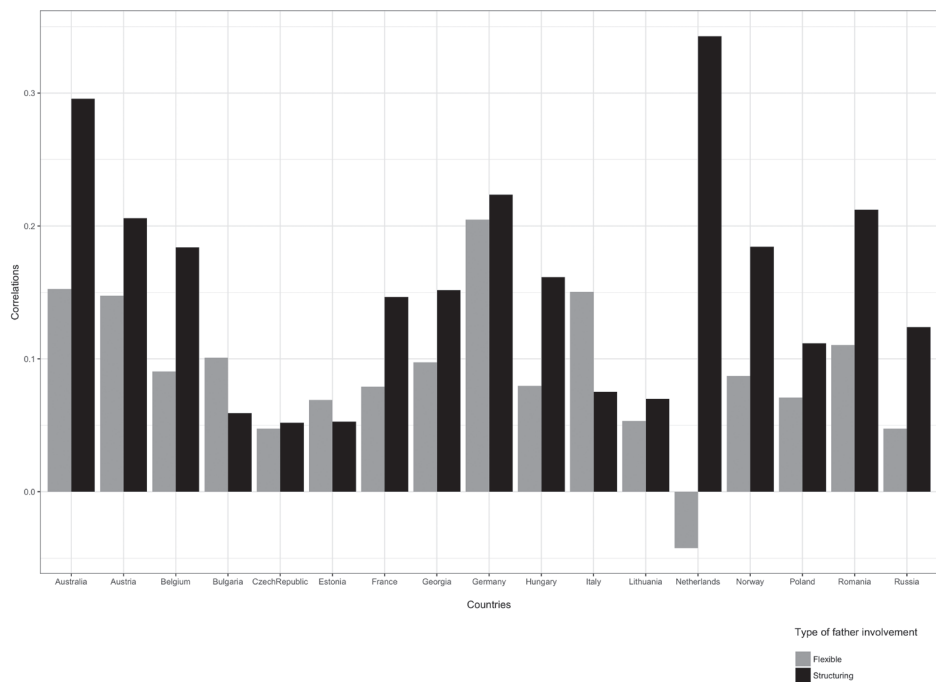
For the analysis we used a Bayesian hierarchical model in the program Just Another Gibbs Sampler (JAGS) because Bayesian analysis has the benefit of producing reliable results even from small samples (Lesaffre & Lawson, 2012). Reliable results are possible because Bayesian methods incorporate prior expectations about the distribution of the coefficients, and then iterate analyses until estimations are stable. This is particularly helpful as our sample has a small number of countries, and maximum likelihood multilevel analysis with 17 countries has been shown to underestimate standard errors, leading to potentially false conclusions about the effect of macro-level variables (Stegmueller, 2013). We conservatively assumed our coefficients to have a normal distribution with a mean of 0 and variance of 100 and our variance parameters were assumed to have an inverse gamma distribution with shape ( $\alpha$ ) and scale ( $\beta$ ) parameters equal to 1. We ran 10,000 iterations of the model.

## Results

### Descriptive results

Figure 2.1 shows the correlations between mother's hours of work and father's share of childcare in time-structuring and time-flexible tasks per country. From this figure we

can draw two main conclusions. First, in all but Bulgaria, Estonia, and Italy, the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare is stronger for involvement in time-structuring activities than time-flexible activities. This is in line with expectations regarding different types of father involvement. Second, in the Netherlands with regard to time-flexible tasks, there even appears to be a negative correlation between the hours that mothers work and fathers' share of childcare. Without controlling for other confounding factors, it appears that fathers perform a smaller proportion of time-flexible childcare when their partners work more hours, perhaps in an attempt to compensate for gender role deviance (West & Zimmerman, 1987).



**Figure 2.1** Correlation of mothers' work hours with time structuring and time-flexible tasks

### Regression results: Fathers' share of time-structuring tasks

We carried out the analyses separately on father's share of involvement in each of the two different types of childcare tasks and we begin by discussing the results of the analysis on father's share of involvement in time-structuring tasks.

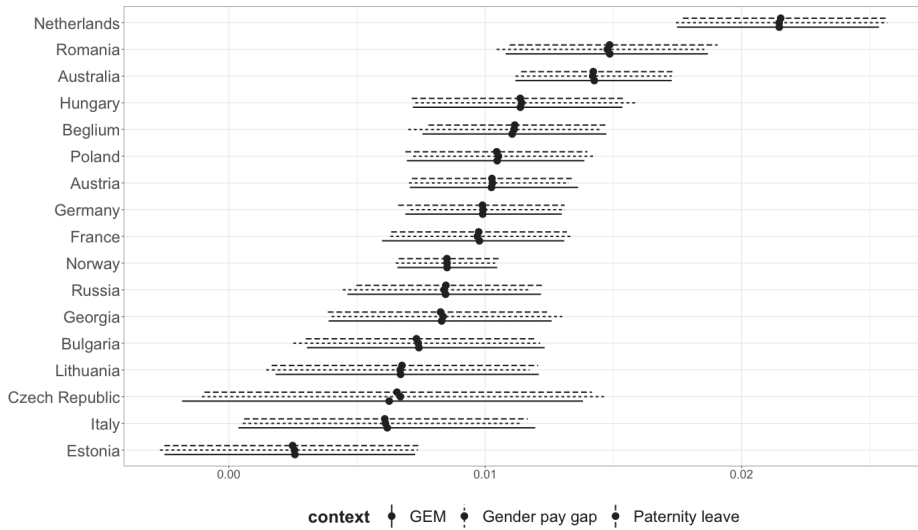
Fathers' average share of time-structuring childcare across countries was 1.42 on a scale of 0 to 4, suggesting that mothers take more responsibility for these tasks than fathers. Variance at the country level before adding individual or macro-level variables is 0.19 and significantly different from 0, revealing that father's share of time-structuring childcare tasks varies across countries. The interclass correlation of  $r = 0.24$  indicates that 24% of the variance in father involvement in time-structuring activities is explained by the country level and the remaining 76% at the individual level. This amount of correlation at the country-level is quite large (Scherbaum & Ferreter, 2011), lending credence to our multilevel design. Actual slopes and credible intervals per country can be seen in Figure 2.2. All models control for father's age, mother's and father's level of education, number of children, any children under four, and the gender of the respondent. Credible intervals are calculated as the highest probability density, allowing for non-normality in the distribution of the coefficients.

Mothers' work hours have a positive relationship with father's share of childcare in time-structuring tasks in 15 of 17 countries; with men on average scoring 0.01 higher on the childcare scale per hour that women work (see Figure 2.2). This amounts to a little less than a half point increase in fathers' share of time-structuring activities when mothers work 40 hours per week compared to when they work 1 hour per week. A closer look at the random slope of mothers' work hours reveals that this effect significantly varies across countries, such that the effect size in the Netherlands (0.022) is 11 times as large as in Estonia (0.002).

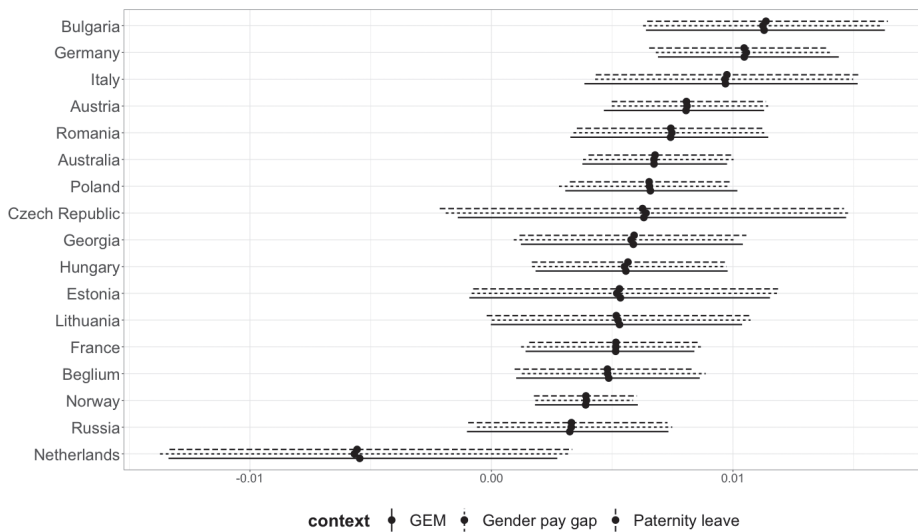
After finding differences across countries in the association between mother's work hours and father's share of time-structuring childcare, we attempted to explain these differences using GEM scores, effective paternity leave, and the gender pay gap. Although we see slightly different effect sizes depending on which macro variable was used in the cross-level interaction, we remain largely unable to explain differences across countries. Thus, we fail to confirm our hypotheses.

### **Fathers' share of time-flexible tasks**

We performed a similar analysis on father involvement in time-flexible childcare tasks (Figure 2.3). Fathers were more involved in time-flexible tasks than they were in time-structuring tasks, averaging 1.70 on a scale of 0 to 4. With a level 2 variance of 0.16 and an interclass correlation of  $r = 0.21$ , fathers' share of time-structuring activities varies significantly across countries. That the ICC for time-flexible tasks is smaller than the ICC for time-structuring tasks reveals fathers' share of time-flexible tasks is slightly less dependent on macro-level characteristics than fathers' share of time-structuring tasks. As before, all models are controlling for father's age, mother's and father's



**Figure 2.2** Point estimates and credible intervals of the relationship between mother's work hours and father's share of time-structuring tasks from models with GEM score, gender pay gap, and paternity leave



**Figure 2.3** Point estimates and credible intervals of the relationship between mother's work hours and father's share of time-flexible tasks from models with GEM scores, gender pay gap, and paternity leave

level of education, number of children, any children under four, and the gender of the respondent, and credible intervals are calculated as the highest probability density.

Figure 2.3 reveals that, on average, there is a positive association between mother's work hours and father's share of time-flexible childcare, though the strength of the association is smaller than with time-structuring tasks. The average association is 0.006, meaning that fathers whose partners work 40 hours per week increase their share of father involvement in time-flexible tasks by approximately a quarter of a point on a scale of 0-4. This is roughly half the average effect size observed in the model of time-structuring tasks. Although we see significant differences across countries, the differences are small, ranging from -0.057 in the Netherlands to 0.011 in Bulgaria.

Finally, we test if GEM scores, effective paternity leave, or the gender pay gap can explain differences across countries. In Figure 2.3 we see slightly different effect sizes depending on which macro variable was used in the cross-level interaction, yet we remain unable to explain differences across countries. Thus, as with the model of fathers' share of time-structuring childcare, we find that none of our macro variables can explain variance in the slope of mothers' work hours, failing to confirm our hypotheses.

### **Time-structuring vs. time-flexible involvement**

As predicted, the association of mothers' work hours with fathers' share of time-structuring tasks seems to be positive for a greater number of countries than the association with fathers' share of time-flexible tasks. This amounts to full time working mothers having partners who are a half a point more involved in time-structuring tasks (on a 0-4 scale) but only a quarter point more involved in time-flexible tasks compared to mothers who only work 1 hour per week.

### **Sensitivity analyses**

We performed a number of sensitivity analyses, and in no analysis were we able to explain the difference across countries in the association between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of involvement in either time-structuring or time-flexible tasks. For brevity's sake, results of our sensitivity analyses are not presented here unless otherwise mentioned, but are available upon request.

First, because the gender of respondent turned out to be quite a strong predictor of fathers' share of childcare, we ran analyses on men and women separately. This yielded no difference in our conclusions, though there were gender differences in the countries in which we found a significant relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare. Second, because the individual measures of context



might be relatively less important than their combined effect, we scored and ranked countries from least to most father-friendly based on the GEM score, gender pay gap, and effective paternity leave. However, analysis of the effect of total father-friendliness does not explain more of the variance in the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' childcare, nor does it affect our main conclusions. Third, we tested for inconsistencies in the set-up of the model by including non-working women in the sample. Here we find a more strongly positive relationship between mothers' working hours and fathers' share of time-structuring tasks, but again, our main conclusions remain unchanged. Fourth, we also test for a possible non-linear relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare, which was not found to be relevant within the range of hours that mothers work. Finally, we tested paternity and parental leave from five years prior to the survey to allow for a possible lagged effect of policies, but this measure was likewise not able to explain why the link between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare cross-nationally.

## Discussion

Using the Generations and Gender Surveys, we set out to explain cross-national differences in the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of 1) time-structuring childcare tasks and 2) time-flexible tasks in 17 countries.

### Differences between types of father involvement

As we suspected, the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare was stronger when measuring involvement in time-structuring tasks. This lends support to our decision to divide analyses according to type of father involvement. Furthermore, it demonstrates that fathers' share of time-flexible tasks may be more strongly influenced by personal preferences than structural considerations, such as mothers' work hours. We urge future research on father involvement to consider the time structuring nature of specific childcare tasks.

### Differences between countries

Our cross-national analyses reveal that mothers' work hours are positively associated with fathers' share of childcare in some countries, but not others. As a possible explanation for national differences, we used the level of gender empowerment, effective paternity leave, and the gender pay gap as proxies to measure a country's cultural, policy, and wage context, respectively. We found no significant moderating effect of these measures, and thus were unable to show how context influences the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare. We offer an explanation for our lack of findings.

Effect sizes in the strength of the relationship between mothers work hours and father involvement are small, and differences in these effect sizes across countries are even smaller. Although the range of cross-national differences in the average association between mother's work hours and father's share of time structuring childcare (0.02) is substantial, four countries are primarily responsible for the strength of this relationship. Fathers are particularly responsive to their partner's work hours in the Netherlands, Romania, and Australia, and particularly unresponsive to their partner's work hours in Estonia. The remaining three-fourths of the countries are not significantly different from each other. With regard to time flexible childcare, the difference between countries is even smaller. Although the difference between countries in the strength of the association with both time structuring and time flexible childcare is statistically significant, the fact that we cannot explain it using a variety of national-level measures suggests that it is not substantively significant. Thus, contrary to our expectations, we conclude that the link between mothers' work hours and father involvement is quite similar across Europe and Australia. In most countries, men are more involved when their partners work more hours.

To our knowledge this is the first study to test cross-level interactions between country-level characteristics and the link between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of involvement. Theory suggests that differences between countries might be explained by paternity leave, gender empowerment, or the gender wage gap, but until now, researchers have been unable to test these theories. Unlike these previous studies, in the present analyses, we test those relationships statistically and find no significant effect. This is an example where null findings are findings; and it reinforces the importance of testing theory with appropriate data.

## Limitations

These data have some limitations that should be taken into consideration when evaluating our findings. The subjective nature of our dependent variable may be a weakness of this study. Male and female reports of father involvement differ so greatly that the control variable *gender of the respondent* has the largest unstandardized effect size of all variables in our analysis. If the difference between male and female reports of fathers' share of childcare is fairly large, the results may be biased due to the subjectivity of the dependent variable. Nonetheless, the sensitivity analyses conducted separately on men and women do not change our major conclusions; i.e., we are still not able to explain associations between mothers' work hours and fathers' childcare. Future research can overcome this limitation by using couple data rather than relying on reports from one spouse, or using time use surveys, which are shown to be more objective than questions of men's and women's shares of childcare (Gershuny, 2000).

Furthermore, Bayesian analysis allowed us to estimate accurate standard errors even with small samples. Even so, if the sample size is small, all but the strongest trends may get lost in random variation. With only 17 countries, it is perhaps not surprising that we find no significant effect of any contextual variable on the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare.

Finally, our choice to measure paternity leave policy and the gender pay gap reveals a focus on the role of the state and market. However, as Lewis and colleagues (2008) assert, the extended family can likewise affect the association between mothers' work hours and fathers' childcare. It was beyond the scope of this study to delve into the complex interactions between government, market, and family at the national level, but future research should more thoroughly address the myriad factors that make up the national context.

### **Robust results**

Data limitations aside, the lack of significant effects of our macro variables on the association between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare is very robust. The association between contextual variables and the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare never reach significance in any of our sensitivity analyses. These results underscore the importance of testing theory with appropriate data. Studies with only a handful of countries explain differences between countries qualitatively, relying on a discussion of the country context to clarify possible differences in findings (see for example Sayer, Gauthier, et al., 2004; Seward, Yeatts, & Zottarelli, 2002). Although this approach is a fruitful first step for forming cross-national hypotheses, it can never be used to test hypotheses. Studies with only a few countries suffer from selection problems in choosing specific countries, and importantly, in which characteristics are used to describe differences between countries. These studies often come to conclusions about why differences between countries might exist despite not having been able to test the hypothesis. Hook and Wolfe (2012), for example, formulate a hypothesis that about the effect of paternity leave and equality reforms in Norway, which they confirm by observing that fathers' childcare time is less responsive to mothers' employment in Norway than the other countries in their study. Although their assertion may be correct, the mechanism of paternity leave was not explicitly tested; that is, there was no variable included in the model. Unlike these previous studies, in the present analyses, we do test those relationships statistically and we find no significant effect. In doing so, we quantitatively test cross-national hypotheses with as many countries as possible and using the best measures available.

Concluding, we join prior research in our finding that the type of childcare being measured can heavily influence outcomes of studies on father involvement (Craig, 2006a). In particular, the more demands that childcare makes on parents' time, the more likely mothers are to be responsible for that task. This is particularly evident when examining the link between mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare.

With regard to explaining differences across countries, we conclude that the link between partner's work hours and father involvement is quite similar across European countries and Australia. Our research implies that similar mechanisms drive the association between partner's work hours and father involvement across countries, and that the mechanisms are relatively uninfluenced by national context, though we did not explicitly test the role of individual-level mechanisms. Similarity across countries may have always existed, or it may be a recent phenomenon due to factors such as globalization. Researchers have identified that globalization is responsible for much observed cross-national similarity in culture, politics, and economics (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 2000). As a result, gender roles within families in Europe and Australia may now be more similar than different. Nonetheless, this article is one of the first to explicitly test explanations for why country differences exist rather than using theory to explain why nations may vary in the relationship between mothers' work hours and fathers' childcare and we hope future research will continue this line of inquiry.





# Educational similarity as a driver of parental support<sup>1</sup>

Brett Ory, Renske Keizer, Pearl A. Dykstra

This article tests competing mechanisms explaining linkages between parent-child educational similarity and parental advice and interest to adult children, asking whether mechanisms differ for mothers and fathers. Educational similarities might provide common ground whereas educational dissimilarity affects parents' authority to dispense advice. Using ordered logistic regression with data from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study ( $N=2,444$ ) parental advice and interest are modeled separately for mothers and fathers. Seemingly Unrelated Estimation is used to test for gender differences across models, revealing that mechanisms driving parental support differ by parents' gender. Fathers show more interest in adult children when they are educationally similar (consistent with the homophily hypothesis), but only among the highly educated, whereas mothers show more interest to highly educated children, regardless of their own level of educational attainment. Fathers' advice is conditioned on their own educational attainment whereas mothers give advice unconditionally (consistent with the gender hypothesis).

When children are young, receiving more advice and interest from parents is linked to children's improved wellbeing and school performance (Fan & Williams, 2010; Wang & Eccles, 2012). When children are adults, receiving parental support in the form of advice and interest helps offspring to define life goals, helps overcome difficult life events, and improves life satisfaction (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann, et al., 2012; Ratelle et al., 2013). Not only is emotional support by parents important to their children's wellbeing, but it remains common throughout children's life courses. Even after children reach adulthood, parents are generally constants in their children's support networks (Albertini et al., 2007). Moreover, thanks to improving health care and long life expectancy, mothers and fathers now spend more time being parents of adult children than they are of minors. Given the importance and frequency of parental advice and interest for adult children, and the increasing amount of time

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that parents and adult children spend as fellow life travelers (Hagestad, 1986a), this article aims to provide a better understanding of the driving forces behind parental advice and interest in adulthood.

In investigating the driving forces underlying parental advice and interest, we posit that different mechanisms may be relevant for mothers and fathers. Studies have shown that the factors influencing involvement with young children differ by gender of the parent. Structural factors such as men's and their partner's work hours tend to guide father involvement, whereas normative factors such as gender ideology or motherhood ideology tend to guide mother involvement (for a review, see Rob Palkovitz, Trask, & Adamsons, 2014). Even when children reach adulthood, mothers and fathers continue to "parent" differently; most notably, mothers give considerably more emotional support than do fathers (Kahn, McGill, & Bianchi, 2011). In light of these findings, we investigate whether mechanisms differ for mothers and fathers, focusing in particular on the role of educational similarity.

## **The importance of education**

Educational attainment plays an important theoretical role in prior research because it is thought to shape status and resources as well as norms and values. More highly educated parents of school-aged children generally spend more time in cultural capital building activities than parents with lower levels of education, both because they can afford to and because they feel these activities are important to their children's development (Altintas, 2016; Kalil, Ryan, & Corey, 2012; McLanahan, 2004). Furthermore, studies of fathers of young children consistently show educational attainment to be a reliable predictor of both the quantity and quality of father involvement, with more highly educated fathers spending more time with their children in activities that further child development (Gauthier et al., 2004). Highly educated parents give more to adult children (Davey, Janke, & Savla, 2004; Fingerman et al., 2015) and highly educated adult children receive more emotional support (Lawton, Silverstein, & Bengtson, 1994; Pillemer & Suitor, 2002) compared to less well-educated parents and children.

Although educational attainment as such may be a strong predictor of parental support and advice, we believe that focusing only on the educational attainment of the "sending" or "receiving" party will not be sufficient in understanding why some children receive more support and advice than others. Prior research on parental support of adult children identified several characteristics of intergenerational dyads that drive support, including residential propinquity, relationship quality, and



past support (Davey et al., 2004). The lack of attention to educational similarity is conspicuous given that educational attainment itself has repeatedly been shown to affect parental advice and interest and that other dyad characteristics such as gender similarity and value similarity have been linked to closeness in intergenerational relationships (Pillemer & Suitor, 2002).

Thus, we build on prior literature by considering the way in which educational similarities between parents and children are associated with parental support. Do parents give more advice and interest to “apples who fall close to the tree” or to adult children who differ more strongly from their parents, and are there differences between mothers and fathers? In other words: *is the difference in educational attainment in parent-adult child pairs linked to receipt of parental advice and interest by adult children, and if so, how do the mechanisms vary for mothers and fathers?*

## Educational similarities and differences

In order to test the relationship between educational similarity and parental advice and interest, we consider four types of parent child dyads: dyads where both parent and child have a low level of education (low-low); the parent has a high level of education and the child a low level (parent high-child low or downwardly mobile children); the parent has a low level of education and the child a high level (parent low-child high or upwardly mobile children); and both parent and child have a high level of education (high-high). These four types of dyads not only provide a parsimonious description of the educational similarities and differences between parents and children, but also distinguish between cases where both parents and children are highly educated from those where both have low educational attainment.

By studying the relationship between educational similarity and intergenerational solidarity we hark back to Parsons' (1951) idea that social mobility and intergenerational solidarity are antithetical. According to Parsons, whereas social mobility implies that individuals can attain a different status than that ascribed to them at birth, intergenerational solidarity implies that statuses ascribed to one member are inferred to all family members. Thus, an increase in social mobility would be accompanied by a decrease in intergenerational solidarity. At the time, empirical research that tested this theory mostly failed to support Parsons' hypothesis by concluding that upward mobility did not weaken intergenerational ties (Blau, 1956; Litwak, 1960). As a result, this line of inquiry went through a period of relative inactivity. Nonetheless, there was some attention to the role of educational mobility in intergenerational relationships in the intervening decades. Suitor (1987) studied mothers' reactions to their daughters'

return to school, and found that mothers' own level of education had no effect on either the amount of instrumental support they provided nor frequency of contact, though well-educated mothers were more positive regarding their daughters' educational choices. In the present study we return to examine the relationship between (a lack of) educational mobility and intergenerational support, but with different assumptions derived from more recent developments in the intergenerational support literature. Whereas Parsons and followers posited that status differences between family members would lead to tensions which would in turn lead to decreased support, we now know that intergenerational support, and in particular parental support of adult children, is not in danger of disappearing (Albertini et al., 2007). Given the overall high levels of parental support and improved survey data, one line of current research has turned to investigating why some parents provide more support than others (c.f. Suitor et al., 2016). In this vein, we ask whether it is educational similarity or difference that affects the amount of advice and interest parents give to their adult children. In the following sections we describe three mechanisms and hypothesize how a link between educational similarity or difference and parental support can be interpreted as support for each mechanism. The mechanisms of homophily, off-script, and long-term reciprocity are described below.

### **Homophily hypothesis**

Homophily, or the principle that similarity breeds connection (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001), is a term developed from social network research to describe why peers tend to select friends based on similarity in background characteristics such as age, religion and gender. Various studies reveal that one of the strongest forms of homophily by which individuals choose both friends and romantic partners is educational attainment, due to the influence educational institutions assert in shaping individuals' preferences as well as opportunities to make social contact (e.g. McPherson et al., 2001). Assuming parents provide emotional support to adult children in part because they enjoy doing so, it may be that parents prefer involvement with educationally similar children because educational institutions have imparted similar interests to both parent and child. Furthermore, because parental interest is linked directly to the mechanism driving the relationship between educational homophily and parental support, namely preferences, we expect that educational homophily will be more predictive of parental interest than advice. Using the same data as in our present study, Kalmijn (2006) found that parents and children with more similar educational attainment have a higher frequency of face-to-face contact, but that this effect disappears after controlling for residential propinquity.

In short, we hypothesize that *children with the same educational attainment as their parents will receive more parental advice and interest (H1)*. If this hypothesis is confirmed, the dyads with the same level of education will have higher levels of parental advice and interest than either the upwardly (parent low-child high) or downwardly (parent high-child low) mobile dyads (Table 3.1). Given that parental interest is linked directly to the mechanism driving homophily, we also expect that *Hypothesis 1 will be stronger when measuring parental interest than advice (H1a)*.

### Off-script hypothesis

The second mechanism explaining a possible relationship between educational (dis)similarity and parental advice and interest comes from research on life course expectations. Within the life course paradigm, well-being and status of all members of a family are interconnected. As a result, the inability of a child to meet social scripts can cause feelings of guilt and inadequacy not only in the child, but notably, also in a parent (Hagestad, 1986a). Given the educational expansion of the last century (Canton & de Jong, 2005), one of the social scripts in modern Dutch society is that children will be more highly educated than their parents (Van den Broek, Bronnenman-Helmers, & Veldheer, 2010). If children never meet this social script, parents may try to help them achieve success in other arenas by giving those children more emotional support and advice. Given that this hypothesis presupposes that parents want to help their children succeed, we propose that parents see advice as a more concrete way to help than showing interest in their children's lives. Thus we expect the off-script mechanism to particularly drive parental advice.

Based on the off-script mechanism, we posit that *children with a lower educational attainment than their parents will receive more parental advice and interest than children with the same or higher levels of education (H2)*. We consider our findings to support this hypothesis when parents give the most advice and interest to downwardly mobile children (i.e. children in parent high-child low dyads) and the least to upwardly mobile (parent low-child high) children, with dyads having similar levels of education (parent low-child low and parent high-child high) falling somewhere in between (Table 3.1). Furthermore, we expect that *Hypothesis 2 will be stronger when measuring parental advice than interest (H2a)*.

### Long-term reciprocity hypothesis

The final mechanism we test with regard to educational (dis)similarity is long-term reciprocity. The concept of reciprocity is often used in the intergenerational solidarity literature to explain why parents differentiate between their children with regard to parental support (Swartz, 2009). According to some scholars, parents give more

support to the children who live closer by with the idea that these children will be able to perform practical care tasks when the parents are too frail to do the chores themselves (Grundy, 2005). Parents may also consider educationally successful children as future potential caregivers because successful children are most likely to have the resources to provide care or pay for care services (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann, et al., 2012). In particular, parents with low levels of education themselves may value children with high levels of education. Thus, we assert that parents will be likely to consider children as potential caregivers when the children are upwardly educationally mobile relative to the parents. Theoretically, this mechanism should be linked to both advice and interest.

According to these principles, we hypothesize that *children with a higher educational attainment than their parents will receive more parental advice and interest (H3)*. If this hypothesis is supported, upwardly mobile (parent low-child high) children will receive the most parental advice and interest and downwardly mobile (parent high-child low) children the least. Dyads where parents and children both have low or high levels of education will fall somewhere in between (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1.** Predicted ranking of advice and interest by educational difference according to each hypothesis, Where 4 = most advice and interest and 1 = least.

Educational difference <sup>a</sup>	Homophily (H1)	Off-script (H2)	Reciprocity (H3)
Parent low-child low	4	2.5	2.5
Parent high-child low	1	4	1
Parent low-child high	1	1	4
Parent high-child high	4	2.5	2.5
Advice or interest	Interest (H1a)	Advice (H2a)	Both

<sup>a</sup>Educational difference between parent and child first describes the parent's educational status (low or high) and then the child's. Thus, low-high refers to an upwardly mobile dyad where the parent's status is low and the child's is high.

## Gender hypothesis

One critique of the social mobility literature and to a lesser extent of the literature on intergenerational support is that gender differences have often been neglected or overlooked. Because men's employment rates have always exceeded those of women, studies of social mobility compared children's occupational status to their father's rather than their mother's status (Beller, 2009). Thus, particularly in older mobility studies, "parent" is implicitly equated with "father". Paradoxically, the opposite tended to occur in the literature on determinants of intergenerational support, where

studies have been quick to equate “parent” with “mother”. Prior research would often focus on only mothers (Pillemer & Suitor, 2002). Other studies examined both parents (e.g. Fingerman, Miller, Birditt, & Zarit, 2009; Grundy, 2005; Kalmijn, 2006), assuming that similar mechanisms drive fathers’ and mothers’ support. Furthermore, there has been some initial research on gender differences in parental support of adult children. One study revealed that mothers with positive relationships with their children were more likely to provide higher levels of support, whereas fathers were likely to provide lower levels of support, preferring instead to help the children who need it the most (Swartz, Kim, Uno, Mortimer, & O’Brien, 2011). However, to our knowledge, no study has yet examined gender differences in association between educational similarity and parental support.

In general, we expect educational similarities to have more of an impact on advice and interest from fathers rather than mothers. This is because women are socialized to value relationship quality whereas men are socialized to value success and status (Chodorow, 1978; Kahn et al., 2011). Given that educational similarity is a measure of both success and status, we expect fathers to be more responsive to it than mothers. Prior empirical research supports the idea that mothers may not distinguish between their children based on educational attainment. For example, Carr (2004) found that mothers’ self-esteem is not greatly affected by their daughters’ relative success. If mothers’ self-esteem is not affected by their offspring’s relative success, then mothers would also not distinguish between more and less successful children in the amount of advice or interest they provide. The previous considerations bring us to hypothesize that *the relationship between educational similarity and parental advice and interest will be stronger for fathers than mothers (H4)*. If this hypothesis is supported we expect to see (1) a significant homophily, off-script, or long-term reciprocity effect for fathers, (2) a weaker effect or no association between educational similarity and parental support for mothers, and (3) a statistically significant difference between fathers and mothers.

## Controls

A number of characteristics of the child, parent, dyad, and family may be related both to educational difference as well as to the frequency of advice and interest parents show adult children. *Child’s* and *parent’s* age may influence educational difference in the sense that children in recent cohorts are less likely to be more highly educated than their parents due to the dramatic increase in educational attainment following the Second World War (Canton & de Jong, 2005). Age is also linked with support exchanges: support from parents to adult children decreases as children age due to a decrease in children’s need and a decrease in ability of the parent to provide (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). It is also important to control for child’s health as poor health may indicate need of

emotional support (Grundy, 2005), just as poor health is related to lower educational attainment (Pincus & Callahan, 1994). Daughters may be more likely to have lower educational attainment, particularly in older cohorts (Statistics Netherlands, 2007), and same-gendered dyads have been shown to exchange more emotional support (Pillemer & Suitor, 2002). We control for birth order and number of children because first born children have been shown to receive more support as do children with fewer siblings (Emery, 2013; Suitor & Pillemer, 2007). Birth order and sibship size may also affect parental resources allowing children to pursue higher education (Black, Devereux, & Salvanes, 2005). Geographical distance between parent and child may be an indirect result of educational difference, where higher educated children move farther away from parents (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Although distance is not an obstacle to providing emotional support or advice, proximity may provide more opportunities for parents to give advice and interest (Kalmijn, 2006). Parents who live farther from adult children may provide less emotional support because they have less frequent contact. By virtue of seeing each other less often, parents will have fewer opportunities to give advice and show interest in their children's lives. Thus, research suggests that distance is an important control variable by which educational similarity affects intergenerational support. By controlling for distance as a structural barrier to parental support, we are able to perform a more robust test of the role of the homophily, off-script, and long-term reciprocity hypotheses. Finally, we also control for whether the parents were married or cohabiting. Cohabiting parents in our sample (parents born on average before the second World War), were a select group who may have held particularly gender egalitarian and progressive views, reflected perhaps in their educational attainment and their emotional support to adult children.

## Data

Our analyses were conducted using the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS), a longitudinal, multi-actor survey collected in the Netherlands designed to measure solidarity within family relationships (Dykstra et al., 2005). The survey is generally considered to be representative of the Dutch population, although respondents in the NKPS are slightly more likely to be female, middle aged, and have children living at home. The survey has a primary respondent (this can be either a parent or adult child in our selection) and up to five survey alters consisting of the current partner, up to two randomly selected children, one parent, and one sibling. We used the first wave, gathered between 2002 and 2004 for our analysis ( $N = 8,161$  families), selecting families with data from at least one parent and one child and excluding 45 families where both children surveyed were born in the same year ( $N = 8,071$ ). After selecting families with children between 25 and 50 years old, we were left with  $N = 2,415$  families.

We further selected only families where the parents were heterosexual, lived together at the time of the survey, and had been together since before the child's birth ( $N = 1,729$ ). In this way we are able to assume that the partner of a biological parent is also a biological parent of the reference child. This is important because research in the Netherlands suggests that stepparents have poorer relationships with their adult children than do biological parents, even after controlling for the time that stepparents cohabited with children (Kalmijn, 2013a). If families had two children who participated in the survey, we selected those families where the parents had been together since before the birth of the older child. Of all families in our final selection, 98.5% of the parents were married and 1.5% were cohabiting but never married.

As we are interested in educational similarity as a driving mechanism of parental advice and interest, we selected only children who were not participating in education at the time of the survey and thus presumably have completed their education ( $N = 1,694$ ). Our final selection was to exclude the 44 families where children and parents live together, leaving us with a total of 2,444 adult children in 1,629 families. Approximately 7% of cases are missing information on the dependent variables, 9% of cases are missing information on educational similarity, and less than 5% of all cases are missing information on our control variables. After listwise deleting cases with missing values on any of the variables, we are left with varying sample sizes for each of our four analyses on advice and interest from the father and mother. Final sample sizes are visible in the regression models in Table 3.3.

The structure of our data is complex, with up to two children nested in up to two dyads (one with the mother and one with the father), nested in families. The primary respondent was a parent in 59% of cases and an adult child in 41% of cases. Alternate analyses available upon request show that results are unaffected by whether the parent or child was the primary respondent. In just over three fourths of families (77%), we have reports from children about both parents and reports from more than one child in 67% of families. Across our sample, mother-child dyads were slightly more prevalent (reported on in 84% of families) than father-child dyads (81% of families), and children were as likely to report on parental advice as interest. All variables, with the exception of the dependent variable, were created based on the relevant respondent's self-reported information. Thus, educational similarity was based on both the parent and child's self-reported level of educational attainment. Likewise, age and gender were self-reported by the parent and child. When self-reports from the parents were not available, we used information on the parent as reported by the child to supplement missing data. We used advice and interest from parents as reported by the child in order to avoid social desirability bias (Mandemakers & Dykstra, 2008).

## Dependent variables

*Paternal* and *maternal advice* are the child's responses to "Did you get council or good advice from [father's/mother's name] in the past 3 months?" with responses coded as: 0 = "not at all", 1 = "once or twice", 2 = "several times". *Paternal* and *maternal interest* are the child's responses to "Has [father's/mother's name] shown an interest in your personal life in the past 3 months?" Responses were coded as: 0 = "not at all", 1 = "once or twice", 2 = "several times". Means and number of observations for all variables are visible in Table 3.2, broken down by dyad type. Parental advice and interest were posed as single-item measures for parsimony in the questionnaire and are commonly used this way in other studies (Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe, Birditt, & Zarit, 2012; Grundy, 2005; Suitor et al., 2016). Although single-item measures may be seen as less robust than multi-item measures, there are two strengths of the way these questions were asked. First, the focus on the last three months provides a short time frame, reducing respondent burden to remember advice and interest from parents. Second, the questions are reliable across respondents because they ask about behavior rather than subjective satisfaction with parental support.

**Table 3.2.** Means and observations of variables in analysis by father-child and mother-child dyads

	Father-child dyads				Mother-child dyads				N	Range
	Low-Low*	High-Low	Low-High	High-High	Low-Low	High-Low	Low-High	High-High		
Parental Support										
Advice	1.59	1.65	1.66	1.78	1.74	1.78	1.84	1.86	2309	0-2
Interest	0.91	1.08	0.88	1.06	1.02	1.11	1.05	1.08	2307	0-2
Family characteristics										
Number of children	3.07	2.81	2.89	2.90	2.98	2.87	2.88	2.92	2444	1-17
Parents married	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98	2444	0-1
Dyad characteristics										
Prevalence of dyad <sup>+</sup>	0.33	0.21	0.17	0.29	0.43	0.11	0.26	0.20	2444	0-1
Distance	16.86	25.49	36.50	50.25	18.17	28.07	41.36	51.98	2428	0-278.83
Child characteristics										
Age	36.34	34.62	35.62	35.39	35.93	34.50	35.76	35.02	2444	25-50
Gender	0.64	0.65	0.62	0.58	0.64	0.63	0.60	0.59	2443	0-1
Health	3.17	3.28	3.31	3.38	3.22	3.18	3.37	3.34	2313	0-4
Parity	2.05	1.92	1.96	1.89	2.00	1.99	1.92	1.91	2444	1-11
Parent characteristics										
Age	65.98	63.89	65.42	65.65	63.04	61.51	63.58	63.23	2444	40-92

\* note: Labels can be read as parents educational attainment-child's educational attainment. Thus, low-low is parent low-child low, low-high is parent low-child high (upwardly mobile), etc.

<sup>†</sup> note: prevalence of dyad is not a variable in the model, but refers to how frequently the dyad is present in the data.



## Independent variables

*Educational similarity between parent and child* is our main independent variable. This is a four category variable at the dyad level, where dyads are characterized as 0 = “low-low”: both parent and child have a low level of education; 1 = “parent high-child low”: the parent has a high level of education but the child’s education is low (downwardly mobile); 2 = “parent low-child high”: parent is low but child is high (upwardly mobile); or 3 = “high-high”: both parent and child are highly educated. Because children had systematically higher levels of education than their parents, we defined high and low education differently for parents and children. High education for parents is a three or higher on an ISCED 7 scale (*completed high school*) whereas high education for children is a four or higher on the same scale (*post-secondary education*). We conducted robustness checks on this operationalization of education, which we describe in the conclusion (results available upon request).

## Controls

We used a number of control variables to capture characteristics of the child including age, gender, health, and birth order. *Age* is the child’s age in years at time of interview created by subtracting the birth year from the year of survey; *gender* is a 0 if the child is “male” and a 1 if she is “female”; *health* is the self-reported health on a 5 point scale where 0 = *very bad* and 4 = *excellent*; and *parity* is the birth order within the family, including adopted children but excluding step-children. We also control for age of the parent as it may influence both educational attainment and parental support. *Age* is the parent’s age in years at time of interview, created by subtracting the year of birth from the year of the survey. *Geographical distance* from parent to child is measured in kilometers according to the formula suggested in the NKPS codebook (Dykstra et al., 2005). If one or both members of the dyad were living outside of the Netherlands, distance was coded to 250 kilometers. *Number of children* is the number of biological or adopted children that parents had together excluding stepchildren. *Married* is a measure of whether the parents were married where 1 indicates “married” and 0 indicates “registered partnership or cohabiting unmarried”.

## Method

We tested our hypotheses with a two-step analysis. First, we performed four ordered logistic regressions on father’s and mother’s advice and interest separately, testing the homophily, off-script, and long-term reciprocity hypotheses, and then we compared regressions on fathers and mothers to test the gender hypothesis using Seemingly Unrelated Estimation. All analyses were conducted in Stata 14.

The ordered logistic regression was conducted using the `ologit` command with robust standard errors. One assumption of ordered logistic regression is that the odds of falling in each category are proportional, in the sense that the odds of receiving no advice or interest are lower than the odds of receiving advice (or interest) once or twice, which are in turn lower than the odds of receiving advice (or interest) several times in the past three months; and furthermore, that the logarithm of these odds is linear. If this assumption is violated, the results of our regression are not reliable. We tested this assumption with a likelihood ratio test on each of the four models using the user-written package `omodel` (Wolfe & Gould, 1997) in Stata. The tests were not significant, meaning that we did not violate the proportional odds assumption. Thus, we treated this as an ordinal rather than a multinomial regression. Results were as follows:  $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{father advice}}(11) = 10.37, p = .50$ ;  $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{mother advice}}(11) = 13.02, p = .29$ ;  $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{father interest}}(11) = 6.73, p = .82$ ;  $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{mother interest}}(11) = 12.63, p = .32$ .

Once ordered logistic regressions were conducted, we turned to Seemingly Unrelated Estimation to test the gender hypothesis. Similar to Seemingly Unrelated Regression, SUE can be used to compare the effects of any independent variable on two different dependent variables (for an example, see Mandemakers & Dykstra, 2008). SUE allowed us to test whether belonging to a particular dyad (low-low, for example), is linked to greater advice (or interest) from mothers or advice (or interest) from fathers. This method assumes that observations in both models are related, which is a reasonable assumption when analyzing mother-child and father-child dyads in the same family. In order to compensate for any unmeasured correlation between observations, this estimation technique calculates separate ordered logistic regressions for mothers and fathers given a common variance-covariance matrix (StataCorp, 2013). A Wald test with a chi-squared distribution is then used to compare coefficients across models. A significant test indicates that the strength of a given coefficient is different across Models 1 and 2 or Models 3 and 4 in Table 3.3.

Our data are hierarchically structured with individuals nested in dyads nested in families, thus violating the assumption of independence of observations necessary for a generalized linear model. As a result, standard errors were likely to be inflated and we ran the risk of committing type 1 error. We corrected for this by using robust standard errors to calculate the confidence intervals. Because we were not interested in analyzing mechanisms at the family level, we did not need to conduct a multilevel analysis. For ease of interpretation, we also present the marginal predicted probabilities of the likelihood of receiving frequent advice and interest by parent-child dyad, for a fictive “average” child in our data (e.g. who is 35 years old, in good health, the second oldest child, has a father who is 65, a mother who is 63, lives 30 kilometers

away from married parents, whose health is neither good nor poor, and who comes from a family with 2.9 kids on average). Predicted probabilities are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

## Results

The results of our ordered logistic regression and SUE models are shown in Table 3.3. The low-low dyad serves as the reference category. The superscripts (a), (b), (c), and (d) indicate whether a given dyad is significantly different from the low-low dyad, the parent high-child low dyad, the parent low-child high dyad, and the high-high dyad, respectively. For example, the superscript (b) indicates that the coefficient for that dyad is significantly different from that for the parent high-child low dyad. In this section we discuss our results in order of the hypotheses.

### Homophily hypothesis

The homophily hypothesis (H1) proposed that children in dyads where parents and children have the same level of education (i.e. high-high or low-low) receive more advice and interest than children in dyads where parents and children have different levels of education (parent low-child high or parent high-child low). Our analyses as shown in Table 3.3 confirmed this hypothesis for father interest (Model 1) but not for father advice or any kind of support from the mother. Model 1 reveals that dyads where fathers show the most interest are those where both father and child have a high level of educational attainment ( $\beta_{\text{high-high}} = 2.36, p < .01$ ). In substantive terms, fathers have a factor of 2.36 higher odds of showing frequent interest in children when both they and their child are highly educated compared to low-low dyads. The superscripts in Table 3.3, Model 1 indicate that children in the high-high dyad receive significantly more interest than children in all other types of dyads. Figure 3.1 presents the same information, but as predicted probabilities rather than odds ratios. Here we see that, given mean values for all control variables, children in high-high father-child dyads have on average an 81% chance of their fathers showing frequent interest in their lives compared to the on average 68% chance of receiving frequent interest for children in each of the three other dyads. Interestingly, homophily in this case only seems to apply for the highly educated, not children in low-low dyads.

Hypothesis 1a predicted that the homophily effect would be stronger for parental interest than parental advice. This is indeed what we found as evidenced by the significant effect of homophily for advice but not for interest, with the added caveat that the homophily hypothesis appears to only apply for fathers.

### Off-script hypothesis

The off-script hypothesis (H2) proposed that parents give the most advice and interest to downwardly mobile children (i.e. in parent high-child low dyads) and the least advice and interest to upwardly mobile children (i.e. in parent low-child high dyads). Support given in low-low and high-high dyads would fall somewhere in between. This hypothesis was not supported, as evidenced by Table 3.3. In no analysis did we see that children in parent high-child low dyads receive significantly more support than in other types of dyads. The model that came the closest to confirming the off-script hypothesis is Model 3 on father advice. Here we see that dyads where fathers give the most advice are those in which the father is more highly educated than the children ( $\beta_{\text{parent high-child low}} = 1.51, p < .01$ ) and in high-high dyads ( $\beta_{\text{high-high}} = 1.60, p < .01$ ). The superscripts indicate that these levels of support are significantly higher than those for children in the low-low and father low-child high dyads. The same information is presented in the form of predicted probabilities in Figure 3.2, revealing that children in father high-child low and high-high dyads have an approximately 26% chance of having received paternal advice three times or more in the past three months compared to the 18% chance for children in other father-child dyad types. Although children in father high-child low dyads receive paternal advice significantly more frequently than children in low-low dyads, this cannot be interpreted as support of the off-script hypothesis given that the “high-high” coefficient is also significant. Rather, it suggests that the level of education of the father is the relevant factor in determining paternal advice.

Hypothesis 2a predicted that the off-script effect would be stronger for parental advice than parental interest. As there is no evidence supporting Hypothesis 2, there is likewise no evidence supporting Hypothesis 2a.

### Long-term reciprocity hypothesis

The long-term reciprocity hypothesis (H3) predicted that upwardly mobile children in parent low-child high dyads would receive the most advice and interest and downwardly mobile children (parent high-child low) the least. Support exchanges in homophilous dyads would fall somewhere in between. This hypothesis is not supported by the data in Table 3.3. The model that came the closest to providing some evidence of a long-term reciprocity effect is Model 2. Here we see that children in mother low-child high (upwardly mobile) and high-high dyads have higher odds of receiving frequent interest from their mothers than children in mother high-child low (downwardly mobile) and low-low dyads ( $\beta_{\text{parent low-child high}} = 1.87, p < .01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{high-high}} = 1.94, p < .01$ ). The same finding is reflected in Figure 1 where we see that children who are more highly educated than their mothers (mother low-child high) or who share a high level of education (mother high-child high) have an 87% chance of receiving frequent

maternal interest compared to a 78% and 80% chance respectively for children in low-low and mother high-child low dyads. Although upwardly mobile children are significantly more likely to receive maternal interest, the long-term reciprocity hypothesis is not supported given that the high-high coefficient in this model is also significant. Taken together, these findings provide evidence that the level of education of the child is the relevant factor in determining maternal interest. There was no empirical support for the long-term reciprocity hypothesis with regard to mothers' provision of advice, or fathers' provision of either interest or advice.

### Gender hypothesis

Finally, the gender hypothesis (H4) predicted that the mechanisms described in the homophily, off-script, and long-term reciprocity hypotheses were more likely to be found for fathers whereas mothers would be less likely to distinguish between children based on educational similarity. Support for this hypothesis would have entailed (1) a significant homophily, off-script, or long-term reciprocity effect for fathers, (2) a weaker effect or no association between educational similarity and parental support for mothers, and (3) the difference between fathers and mothers being statistically significant. This hypothesis was tested with two Seeming Unrelated Estimations (SUE), one comparing Models 1 and 2 and another comparing Models 3 and 4. In both cases, we can only partially confirm the gender hypothesis. We did find a significant difference in the comparison of Models 1 and 2 on mother and father interest as well as in Models 3 and 4 on mother and father advice, though neither of these gender differences is completely in line with expectations.

Specifically, the SUE analysis and Wald tests comparing Models 1 and 2 on parental interest show that the difference in interest received between father low-child high and father low-child low dyads is significantly smaller than the difference in interest received between mother low-child high and mother low-child low dyads ( $\chi^2(1) = 6.07, p < .01$ ). In other words, the pattern observed regarding interest received from fathers indicates a homophily effect, where children in the father high-child high dyads receive significantly more interest than children in all other dyads. By comparison, maternal interest was higher when the child's educational attainment was higher, regardless of the mother's own educational attainment (see also Figure 3.1). These findings can only partially confirm the gender hypothesis. On the one hand, the significant difference is in line with the gender hypothesis because it shows that educational homophily drives interest from fathers but not mothers. On the other hand, it would seem that mothers do differentiate between their children based on educational attainment, thus violating the assumption of the gender hypothesis that mothers would show unconditional interest in their children.

**Table 3.3.** Ordered logistic regression predicting advice and interest from mothers and fathers to adult children (odds ratios) and seemingly unrelated estimation comparing mother-child and father-child dyads

	1: Dad interest		2: Mom interest		SUE	3: Dad advice		4: Mom advice		SUE
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Chi <sup>2</sup>	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Chi <sup>2</sup>
Parent-child education										
Low-low <sup>+</sup> (ref)	1.00 <sup>d</sup>		1.00 <sup>c,d</sup>		---	1.00 <sup>b,d</sup>		1.00		---
High-low	1.18 <sup>d</sup>	0.17	1.14 <sup>c,d</sup>	0.23	0.02	1.51 <sup>a,c</sup>	0.18	1.11	0.16	3.15 <sup>c</sup>
Low-high	1.28 <sup>d</sup>	0.19	1.87 <sup>a,b</sup>	0.28	6.07 <sup>a,d</sup>	0.94 <sup>b,d</sup>	0.12	1.12	0.12	1.92 <sup>b,d</sup>
High-high	2.36 <sup>a,b,c</sup>	0.33	1.94 <sup>a,b</sup>	0.33	1.48 <sup>c</sup>	1.60 <sup>a,c</sup>	0.19	1.17	0.14	6.41 <sup>a,c</sup>
Family characteristics										
Number kids	0.83 <sup>**</sup>	0.04	0.83 <sup>**</sup>	0.05	0.00	0.85 <sup>**</sup>	0.04	0.86 <sup>**</sup>	0.04	0.3
Married	3.22 <sup>*</sup>	1.65	1.12	0.65	2.71	1.72	0.90	0.51	0.28	3.54
Dyad characteristics										
Distance	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.66	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	3.54
Child characteristics										
Child's age	1.01	0.02	0.94 <sup>**</sup>	0.02	11.37 <sup>**</sup>	0.97 <sup>*</sup>	0.01	0.94 <sup>**</sup>	0.01	3.32
Daughter	1.33 <sup>**</sup>	0.14	1.87 <sup>**</sup>	0.22	14.76 <sup>**</sup>	0.98	0.09	1.70 <sup>**</sup>	0.15	66.43 <sup>**</sup>
Child's health	1.15	0.09	1.08	0.10	1.01	0.99	0.07	0.93	0.06	1.23
Parity	1.17 <sup>*</sup>	0.08	0.98	0.07	7.94 <sup>**</sup>	1.13 <sup>*</sup>	0.06	1.01	0.06	5.12 <sup>*</sup>
Parent characteristics										
Parent's age	0.98	0.01	1.01	0.02	4.70 <sup>*</sup>	0.97 <sup>**</sup>	0.01	0.98	0.01	1.35
cut 1	0.07 <sup>**</sup>	0.06	0.01 <sup>**</sup>	0.01		0.02 <sup>**</sup>	0.01	0.01 <sup>**</sup>	0.00	
cut 2	0.67	0.53	0.09 <sup>**</sup>	0.08		0.24 <sup>*</sup>	0.17	0.05 <sup>**</sup>	0.04	
Model diagnostics										
AIC	2785.86		2146.18			3905.99		4091.04		
BIC	2858.47		2219.29			3978.57		4164.13		
N	1969		2046			1965		2044		

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ 

+ Educational difference between parent and child first describes the parent's educational status (low or high) and then the child's. Thus, low-high refers to an upwardly mobile dyad where the parent's status is low and the child's is high.

a Coefficient is significant when reference group is parent low-child low dyads. Superscripts denote significant differences within the column.

b Coefficient is significant when reference group is parent high-child low dyads. Superscripts denote significant differences within the column.

c Coefficient is significant when reference group is parent low-child high dyads. Superscripts denote significant differences within the column.

d Coefficient is significant when reference group is parent high-child high dyads. Superscripts denote significant differences within the column.

Similarly, the gender hypothesis can only be partially confirmed with regard to parental advice. The SUE analysis comparing Models 3 and 4 in Table 3.3 revealed that the difference in advice received between high-high and low-low father-child dyads is greater than the difference in advice received between high-high and low-low mother child dyads ( $\chi^2(1) = 6.41, p < .01$ ). This difference between mothers and fathers is likewise visible in Figure 2, where we see that the predicted probability of receiving frequent maternal advice is more or less the same for all educational combinations, whereas pronounced differences in the probability of frequent paternal advice exist across father-child dyads. Thus, the father's education appears to be a driving mechanism of paternal advice but mothers, by comparison, appear to give advice to all children at the same rate, regardless of educational achievement or similarity. The significant difference between mother-child and father-child advice is in line with the gender hypothesis in so far as it shows that mothers do not differentiate between their children with regard to educational similarity, and that mothers are significantly different from fathers in this regard. However, the hypothesis also proposed fathers would be more likely to differentiate between their children based on educational similarity, yet the results with regard to advice do not support this part of the hypothesis. Rather, we found that educational attainment of the father drives paternal advice. Although neither of the findings regarding mother-father differences in parental support completely confirmed the gender hypothesis, they do indicate that different mechanisms drive mothers' and fathers' interest and advice.

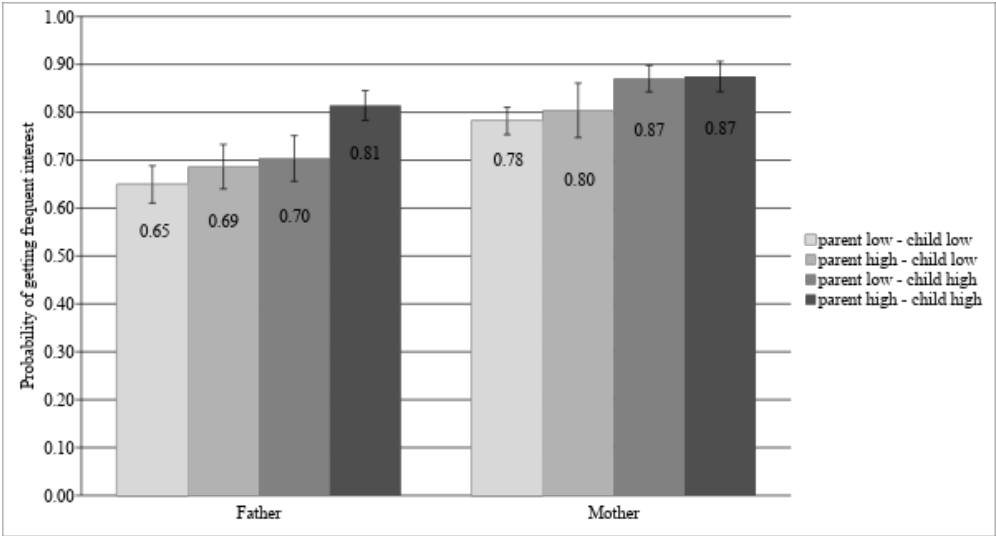


Figure 3.1. Predicted probabilities for frequent parental interest

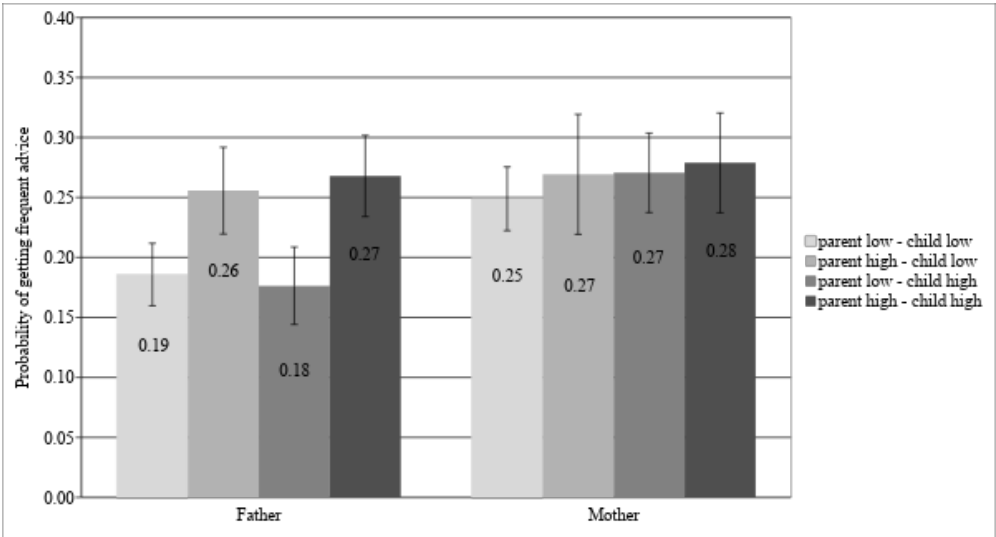


Figure 3.2. Predicted probabilities for frequent parental advice



## Discussion

In this section we will discuss the findings regarding the association between educational similarity and parental support in mother- and father-child dyads. Our study revealed that parent-child educational similarities are an important yet often overlooked predictor of parental support. We have two main findings. First, fathers show the most interest in their offspring in highly educated homophilous dyads; in other words, to apples who have fallen close to the tree, education-wise. Second, we found that mothers and fathers give support for different reasons.

### *Educational homophily in parent-child dyads*

Our findings regarding the homophily hypothesis go beyond what one would expect based on the individual influence of either father's or child's educational attainment and reveal the importance of considering the way educational attainment of parent and offspring interact. As one of the few articles to examine the effects of educational similarity between parents and children on parental support, our study suggests that research which fails to account for educational similarity underestimates the effect of education on the level of interest that fathers give to their children. In keeping with prior research we confirmed that higher educated parents give more support to their adult children (Davey et al., 2004; Fingerman et al., 2015) and that higher educated children receive more support (Lawton et al., 1994; Pillemer & Suitor, 2002), but our study is the first to show that, at least in regard to interest from the father, this is only true when both occur together. We posit that this is because highly educated fathers and children have more interests in common, and therefore are more interested in each other. Homophily as a phenomenon is most often used to explain how people choose their friends (McPherson et al., 2001). Our research reinforces prior studies that show it is also a useful construct to explain interactions in ascribed, familial relationships (Voorpostel, 2007). Homophily is perhaps particularly applicable to familial relationships in an individualistic country like the Netherlands where intergenerational relationships are driven more by choice than by normative prescriptions (Komter & Vollebergh, 1997; Pahl & Spencer, 2004).

It was unexpected that this homophily effect would only hold for highly educated pairs. In the present study we show that both homophily and educational attainment are important drivers of parental support. Observing such a marked difference between high-high and low-low dyads appears consistent with the concept of diverging destinies, which describes how higher educated parents are more involved and participate in more developmentally appropriate forms of involvement than parents with lower levels of education (Kalil et al., 2012; McLanahan, 2004). Parents who are

highly educated and have been successful at giving developmentally appropriate support to their children over the course of their lives, may in turn be more likely to have children who are highly educated. Showing interest in one's adult children may be the developmentally appropriate equivalent of reading to preschool aged children, and prior research does show that highly educated individuals exchange more intergenerational support (Davey et al., 2004; Fingerman et al., 2015).

### ***Differences between mothers and fathers in provision of support***

The second main finding as described above is that mothers and fathers give advice and interest for different reasons. Fathers give the least advice when they have low levels of educational attainment, and the most when they are highly educated regardless of the child's educational attainment. Mothers, by comparison, give advice equally to all their children regardless of their own and their children's educational attainment or similarity, and they do so at rates equal to what highly educated fathers give. As for interest, we saw that fathers show more interest in children based on educational homophily whereas mothers show more interest in highly educated children, regardless of their own educational attainment. These findings suggest that there is continuity across the life course in that gendered parenting patterns continue into late adulthood. Just as different mechanisms motivate men's and women's involvement with young children (Rob Palkovitz et al., 2014), so too do different mechanisms motivate mothers and fathers in their interactions with adult children. We hypothesized that fathers would be more likely to distinguish between children based on educational similarity whereas mothers would be likely to support all children equally. Specifically, fathers would be concerned with status enough to give more emotional support to children based educational similarity whereas mothers would not differentiate between their children based on educational similarity, because they are socialized to be more concerned with relationship quality than status (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982). The gender hypothesis was supported with regard to father's interest, in that the data indicate a homophily effect, and mother's advice, in that the data show mothers do not differentiate between their children, but not with regard to father's advice, where we found only an effect of educational attainment but not educational similarity, nor mother's interest, where we found that mothers do differentiate between their children. Because the findings regarding father's advice and mother's interest were not in line with expectations, we briefly explore alternate explanations.

With regard to fathers' advice, the finding that highly educated fathers more frequently give advice to their children may be due not so much to fathers' actual behavior, but to adult children's perception of their father's behavior. Adult children may simply be

more likely to rate advice from highly educated fathers as “good”, regardless of how much advice is actually given. This explanation is plausible because (1) our measure of advice asked specifically about “good” advice, and (2) we measured the child’s report of advice received rather than the father’s report of advice given. A qualitative study of young adults by Carlson (2014) revealed that children were more likely to implement advice if the advice giver was perceived as being a legitimate authority. Following this logic, it could be that in the domain in which fathers give advice, highly educated fathers are more likely to be considered to have the authority to give good advice whereas the advice from fathers with lower educational attainment is less well respected. This may explain why we see an effect of fathers’ educational attainment on advice, but no effect of educational similarity.

The findings with regard to mothers’ interest are inconsistent with the gender hypothesis because if mothers were socialized to be more concerned with relationship quality than child status, we would not expect them to show more interest to highly educated children. One potential explanation for why we see that mothers do not distinguish between their children when giving advice but do when giving interest could be because advice is an instrumental form of support but interest is not (Burleson, 2003). Whereas advice is given with the idea that it will have some effect on the recipient’s behavior, interest tends to reflect the quality of the relationship. Prior research suggests that mothers do have favorite children to whom they are emotionally closer or in whom they show more pride (Suitor et al., 2016), and this favoritism may manifest itself in the form of maternal interest. In particular, our findings suggest that mothers may prefer children with high educational attainment. Because these children are their favorites, mothers show more interest in their lives. However, despite having favorites, when it comes to helping their children in concrete ways such as providing advice, our study reveals that mothers give to all children equally. Literature on intergenerational solidarity suggests that there is a norm of equality dictating that parents dedicate the same amount of resources to each of their children (Kalmijn, 2013b). For example, research shows that parents feel the need to distribute inheritances equally among children (McGarry, 1999). Thus although mothers do seem to show favoritism when they give more interest to highly educated adult children, when it comes to actually helping their children by providing advice, they do so unconditional on educational attainment or similarity.

### ***Limitations and avenues for future research***

We acknowledge data limitations that might have influenced our conclusions. First, we dichotomized educational attainment in an attempt to simplify the many possible educational similarities and differences between parent and child. In so

doing we lost information about the complexity of educational attainment, however we believe these choices are justified in the spirit of parsimony. Furthermore, parents were considered highly educated if they had graduated from high school (ISCED 3 or higher), but children were only considered highly educated if they had followed any post-secondary schooling (ISCED 4 or higher) in order to accommodate the educational expansion of the last century. We tested the appropriateness of these choices with four alternate measures of educational similarity (analyses available upon request): (1) education was dichotomized into high and low education, but the cutoff point was the same for parents and children; (2) a three-category formulation of educational attainment where the cutoffs were different for parents and children according to frequency distributions; (3) a three-category formulation of educational attainment where cutoffs were the same for parents and children; and (4) a linear interaction term between the seven-category ISCED scores for parents and children. Although results vary somewhat depending on how education is measured, these additional analyses reinforce our conclusions and, in the case of fathers' advice and mothers' interest, deepen our understanding of the relationship between parent and child's educational attainment. Specifically, it appears that the tendency of highly educated fathers to give advice to children with low levels of education is driven primarily by fathers who have completed secondary education only (ISCED score 3). The highest educated fathers do not give significantly more advice to lower educated children. Additionally, there is some indication of a homophily effect for mothers' interest where the highest educated children with the highest educated mothers receive more interest.

Our second limitation is that we ran our analysis on cross-sectional data, and as such ran the risk of reversed causality. It could be that parental advice and interest remain stable over the course of one's life. Although the survey questions are asked about advice and interest in the last three months explicitly, they could be representative of advice and interest prior to the child completing his or her education. As such, it would be advice and interest that drive educational similarity or dissimilarity, rather than the reverse. In particular, this may provide an alternate explanation for why highly educated children receive more maternal interest than children with low levels of educational attainment. It could be that maternal interest helped children to achieve a high level of educational attainment in the first place. However, reversed causality does not explain why fathers give more advice to children who are educationally downwardly mobile (parent high-child low dyad), as one would expect advice to be beneficial to educational attainment. Neither does reversed causality explain the homophily mechanism driving paternal interest. If paternal interest explained children's high educational achievement, then we should see an additional significant

effect of being upwardly educationally mobile (parent low-child high dyad). Although the NKPS is longitudinal in design, determining causality requires collecting data from childhood until late 20s or early 30s, a time frame which we are not yet able to cover. It is an interesting question for future research, however, to what extent parental support changes over the course of children's lives and its impact on educational attainment.

## Implications

In addition to our main conclusions and limitations, there are some implications brought to light by our findings. First, the finding that parents never give more advice or interest in parent low-child low dyads than in high-high dyads suggests that parental support may play a role in the reproduction of disadvantage for individuals with low educational attainment. Prior research suggests that parental support to adult children can help buffer against negative life events by providing psychological benefits (Amato, 1994; Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann, et al., 2012; Ratelle et al., 2013). In addition to other economic and health advantages of being highly educated, highly educated children with highly educated parents will receive more emotional support, which will in turn make them more resilient to negative life events. As our research shows that highly educated fathers give more advice to adult children, we can also expect that the highly educated sons in our study will in turn give more advice to their children once they reach adulthood, thus compounding the benefits of parental support over generations.

Despite the implication that a gradient in parental support may cause cleavages in society, these findings are not as dire as they seem. Although highly educated children with highly educated parents receive more parental support on average than children in low-low dyads, all children receive quite high levels of support from their parents, and they receive more now than in the past (Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe, et al., 2012). In our study, the adult children who receive the least amount of support from either parent are children in low-low dyads, yet even they have a 65% chance of having received interest three or more times in the past three months from their fathers and a 19% chance of having received frequent paternal advice in the same time period. It is also important to note that these numbers refer specifically to support from either the mother or the father and say nothing of total support received from either parent, let alone support from the myriad of kin and nonkin in their lives. Likely, the chance of having received any parental advice or interest is even higher than these probabilities would suggest.

This study was conducted within the context of the Netherlands, where communication and travel infrastructure is well developed, and correlations between advice and interest from mothers and fathers was quite high (.75 for advice, .71 for interest). This could affect our results in two ways, and as such, it would be interesting to see research in other contexts for comparison. First, not only do relatively high proportions of aging parents live less than 25 kilometers away from their adult children (63.6% compared to 43.3% European average based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (Hank, 2007)), but communication is affordable and easy for the 12% of adults living more than 25 kilometers away. Yet in countries with poor communication infrastructure in rural areas, or large proportions of adult children who live very far from their parents, for example, individuals with a lower socioeconomic status may be unable to afford to communicate with family members. This could create even more dramatic differences in support exchange between high-high and low-low parent child dyads. However, technological advances such as video chat and reliable internet access make physical proximity increasingly irrelevant, thus suggesting that findings in the Netherlands may be generalizable to other settings in the near future if they are not already.

Second, the high correlation between support from mothers and fathers may indicate that parents often speak with their children together or in tandem. Indeed, one Dutch study revealed that mothers act as kinkeepers for fathers, helping to keep them connected with adult children (Kalmijn, 2007). In more traditional gender societies where fathers are less involved with their children (Hook, 2006), the association between emotional support from mothers and fathers might be much lower, simply because fathers are less involved.

Returning to the question we posed at the beginning, “Does it matter how far the apple falls from the tree?”, our answer is: Yes, our study suggests so, but only to some extent; to fathers and only in highly educated father-child dyads.







# Class differentiated norms as drivers and barriers of father involvement

Brett Ory & Nina Conkova

4

Highly educated fathers tend to do more childcare compared to fathers with lower educational attainment, a phenomenon which contributes to the diverging destinies of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. We ask if men's norms of father involvement and gender equality can explain their educational gradient in age-appropriate childcare, examining both how frequently fathers are involved and how they share childcare with their spouses across five different types of activities. Using data from the understudied context of Bulgaria (N=332), we find that more highly educated men are more involved in most types of childcare, regardless of its age-appropriateness for children. Gender norms, but not norms of father involvement, mediate the relationship between education and both absolute and relative involvement. These findings underscore the importance of gender equality as a major driver of educational differences in social inequality.

Father involvement with children can have a positive effect on children's social, emotional, and intellectual development (Cabrera et al., 2007). Children benefit directly from contact with their fathers, and indirectly through the improved wellbeing of both of their parents when mothers and fathers share childcare more equally (D. L. Carlson et al., 2016). Because of the benefits of father involvement for children, men's childcare can be a source of inequality, advantaging children who receive much childcare from their fathers and disadvantaging children whose fathers are less engaged; a phenomenon known as diverging destinies (McLanahan, 2004). Moreover, father involvement is a source of inequality that may compound existing socioeconomic inequality, as fathers with low educational attainment are less involved than highly educated fathers (Gauthier et al., 2004). In the present study, we investigate one of the most common explanations for why fathers with high educational attainment are more involved with their children, both in terms of how often they perform specific

tasks (absolute father involvement) and in how they share childcare with mothers (relative father involvement).

Scholars generally attribute high levels of both absolute and relative father involvement to normative factors; absolute involvement to the belief that fathers should invest in their children's development and actively cultivate children's capital (Guryan, Hurst, & Kearney, 2008; Lareau, 2002; Sayer, Gauthier, et al., 2004) and relative involvement to a dedication to equality within marriage (Gracia, 2014). In the present study we refer to the belief that fathers should spend time with their children as *norms of father involvement*, and we refer to the system of beliefs regarding gendered roles in the public and private spheres as *norms of gender equality*. Scholars also acknowledge that structural constraints such as access to telework and flexible working hours can enable highly educated men to spend more time in childcare than men with low educational attainment, regardless of norms (Hoff et al., 2002). Though we acknowledge the importance of structural constraints, the current study focuses on normative explanations. We do so because the labor market in Bulgaria is highly inflexible (Tomev, 2009) and thus there is not enough variation in working hours to study its effect on father involvement. Furthermore, normative mechanisms are widely assumed in the literature (e.g. Gauthier et al., 2004; Gracia, 2014) yet, to our knowledge, no study has directly tested whether and to what extent either norm mediates the relationship between education and father involvement. This lacuna represents a potential blind spot for both researchers and practitioners. For practitioners, interventions aimed at increasing father involvement such as parent education programs may be less effective if they do not also target men's norms. For researchers, understanding the role norms play in the association between educational attainment and father involvement can lead to a better understanding of the drivers of children's diverging destinies. Thus we add to theoretical and practical knowledge on father involvement by testing whether norms mediate the relationship between education and involvement.

In doing so, we acknowledge that childcare encompasses a diverse set of activities by making two distinctions with regard to father involvement. First, we examine men's absolute and relative involvement, adding complexity to the understanding of the way father involvement influences the whole family. Measuring absolute father involvement frames involvement in terms of a resource that can benefit children while relative father involvement frames involvement as a source of support for his spouse. Because family members' lives are interdependent (Elder, 1994), the whole family benefits from fathers being absolutely and relatively more involved (Allen & Daly, 2007; Deutsch et al., 2001). While some prior research on father involvement has

considered both relative and absolute involvement together (e.g. Keizer, 2015; Raley et al., 2013), the focus of research on the educational gradient in father involvement has until now been on absolute involvement, and thus dedicated to outcomes related to child development at the expense of outcomes related to gender equity.

Second, we distinguish between involvement in different types of childcare. In particular, we use a framework of childcare activities which consists of (1) basic care (such as feeding, bathing, and putting to bed); (2) play (playing with child, going to the cinema); (3) teaching (helping with homework, talk about career); (4) managing (arranging doctor's appointments or staying home with the child when sick); and (5) monitoring (talking, praising, scolding) (Kalil et al., 2012). Each type of childcare has been shown to be important at different stages in a child's life, with basic care and play being particularly important for child development in infancy and toddlerhood, and teaching and managing childcare tasks gaining importance as children enter school and adolescence (Gracia, 2014; Kalil et al., 2012). Monitoring is important throughout childhood (Dishion & McMahon, 1998). We ask whether more highly educated men are more involved in age-appropriate childcare, and whether this gradient exists for both absolute and relative father involvement.

Finally, we contribute to the literature in one additional way; by measuring father involvement and testing the mediating effect of norms using nationally representative data from Bulgaria. Bulgaria is an interesting case study for exploring the educational gradient in father involvement not only because of the country's recent normative shift encouraging father involvement in childrearing (Shachbazyan, 2012), but also because of the inflexibility of its labor market (Tomev, 2009). Highly educated men in Western Europe often benefit from flexible work hours and opportunities to telework that allow them to better balance work and family compared to fathers with low SES (Hoff et al., 2002). By comparison, such work-life balance schemes are not common in Bulgaria, with 73% of workers having fixed working times and countrywide virtually no possibility of telework (Tomev, 2009). These conditions result in a labor market that is inflexible for all workers, including those with high educational attainment. Prior father involvement research has been located almost entirely in North America and Western Europe and thus in the context of a labor market which is flexible for some workers and not for others. By conducting our research in Bulgaria, we control for one of the structural explanations for the educational gradient in father involvement, allowing for a refined examination of normative explanations.

## The case of Bulgaria

Until the fall of the Berlin Wall, fathers in Bulgaria were perceived as the ‘head of the family’, meaning that they had to provide financially and exercised extensive decisive power and authority, whereas mothers had the responsibility to bring security by providing financially for the family and by taking care of the children and the household (Kravchenko & Robila, 2015; Shachbazyan, 2012). Hence, in the socialist family mothers and fathers had an equal obligation to contribute to the family income, but the household and child rearing were almost exclusively a responsibility of the mother (Hofäcker et al., 2013; Lobodzinska, 1996; Staykova, 2004). After the fall of the Berlin Wall mothers have continued to be simultaneously engaged in (seeking) full-time employment and child rearing (Hofäcker et al., 2013), though it is more often accepted that fathers assume a certain amount of household chores and childcare activities (Shachbazyan, 2012). In other words, work behavior has remained the same while norms of father involvement and gender equality have become more highly diffused (see also Spéder & Kapitány, 2012). At the same time as these norms spread, access to higher education increased (Bieri, Imdorf, Stoilova, & Boyadjieva, 2016; European Commission, 2016). Together these phenomena may suggest a link between education and men’s norms.

## Theoretical framework

The normative explanation for the educational gradient in father involvement is based on the idea that more highly educated men will hold stronger norms of father involvement and gender equality, which will in turn motivate them to be more involved in childcare. This explanation relies on two assumptions: 1) that educational institutions socialize men into believing in the importance of gender equality and father involvement with children, and that 2) men will act on their norms.

Socialization happens when people learn which attitudes and behaviors are acceptable within specific contexts, and it is a process that continues throughout the life course (Moen, 2016; Yoshida, 2011). In the childhood home men may observe and adopt norms from their parents regarding father involvement and gender equity. However, socialization is not the purview of parents alone; peer groups and educational institutions can play a role in teaching and reinforcing their own set of norms (Biesta, 2010; Levine & Moreland, 1994). Tertiary education has historically been a nexus for promoting progressive ideas (Gumport, 2007), and peer groups formed in school or which are educationally homophilous may reinforce the progressive norms acquired in educational institutions. Given that norms of gender equality and father

involvement are also progressive in that they favor social reform, we can expect that more time spent in educational institutions and in particular having attended tertiary education will be associated with stronger norms of gender equality and father involvement.

We use rational choice theory to explain why men with stronger norms of gender equality and father involvement will be more involved in childcare. According to rational choice theory, individuals base their actions on their internal beliefs, choosing the course of action which will bring the greatest benefit to themselves. What is a 'benefit' is defined by the individuals themselves however and is constrained by individuals' bodies, minds, and environments (Parsons, 1935; Simon, 1955). If we extend this theory to father involvement, we can expect that it is rational for men to act on their norms, provided they are able to do so. As such, we expect that both men's relative and absolute involvement will be in line with their norms of father involvement and gender equality.

4

### **Age-appropriate childcare**

Kalil, Ryan, and Corey (2012) posit that highly educated mothers are more aware of their children's age-specific needs than lower educated mothers are. Gracia (2014) hypothesizes that the educational gradient in age-appropriate childcare is true not only for mothers but also for fathers. In line with this hypothesis, we expect that only age-appropriate childcare will be linked to men's educational attainment. Prior research suggests that children benefit the most from basic care when they are under 3, play is important to the development of preschoolers (ages 2-4), and teaching and managing are most important for school-aged children (Gracia, 2014; Kalil et al., 2012). Monitoring is appropriate for all ages. Given the Bulgarian context, we focus exclusively on fathers of children ages 3-13. Many Bulgarian mothers take maternity and parental leave for the first two years of their children's lives (Blum et al., 2017), thus father involvement may be low prior to age three. At age 14, Bulgarian children typically enter secondary school and become more independent, likewise lowering the need for father involvement. Because our sample consists of fathers of preschool and school-aged children, we expect to find results similar to the findings in the studies described above for the same age groups, with one caveat. We study recreational activities that fathers can do with older children (called "play" for reasons of parsimony), such as going to the movies or taking walks with their children. Thus, we also expect that play will be an age-appropriate form of childcare for the children in our sample.

## Hypotheses

Combining the notion that norms mediate the link between educational attainment and father involvement with the notion that highly educated fathers are more involved in age-appropriate childcare, we form the following expectations.

- Hypothesis 1: Gender norms mediate the link between men's educational attainment and their relative (H1a) and absolute (H1b) involvement in play, teaching, managing, and monitoring, but not basic care.
- Hypothesis 2: Norms of father involvement will mediate the link between men's educational attainment and their relative (H2a) and absolute (H2b) involvement in play, teaching, managing, and monitoring, but not basic care.

## Empirical background

Although to date there have been no direct empirical tests of whether norms of gender equality and father involvement mediate the association between educational attainment and father involvement in age-appropriate childcare, two studies have examined this hypothesis indirectly, by first testing the link between educational attainment and norms and later testing the link between norms and father involvement (Bronte-Tinkew, Carrano, & Guzman, 2006; Levtov et al., 2014). Both studies conclude that more highly educated men are more likely to hold gender egalitarian and father involvement norms, and are also more likely to be involved in a variety of childcare activities. However, without conducting mediation analysis these studies are unable to conclude whether the educational gradient in father involvement can be explained by highly educated men's higher propensity to hold more progressive norms.

Within the specific context of Bulgaria, Dimova's qualitative study of father involvement in Sofia can also shed some light on expectations regarding whether norms mediate the educational gradient in father involvement. Dimova (2009) found that there exist three types of fathers in Bulgaria. The first type is represented by the *traditional father* who works long hours and rarely engages in household chores and childcare. There is no educational gradient in father involvement among these men. The second type of father in Bulgaria includes highly educated men who *hold strong norms of father involvement* while at the same time feel that they are responsible for financially providing for the family. These fathers often assume childcare tasks before and after work and on the weekends. The third type of father in Bulgaria is comprised of highly educated men who *hold strong norms of gender equality* and often prioritize their children over their career. Fathers in this type assume an equal or even greater share of childcare compared to mothers, tasks that include basic care, play, teaching, managing as well as monitoring.

Dimova's work provides mixed evidence for whether norms of father involvement and gender equality mediate the educational gradient in father involvement. While there seem to be traditional fathers across the educational spectrum, the second and the third type of father suggest that some more highly educated men are more involved because they hold stronger norms of father involvement and gender equality respectively. Depending on the size of these groups and their prevalence in the larger Bulgarian society, we may expect to see either 1) no educational gradient in father involvement, 2) one which is mediated by norms of father involvement, and/or 3) one which is mediated by norms of gender equality.

## Controls

We control for three additional characteristics of the father and child that might also affect the association between educational attainment and father involvement: *ethnicity of the father*, *gender of the child*, and *age of the child*. Ethnic Bulgarians compared to Turkish and Roma, tend to be more highly educated and embrace progressive norms (Dimitrova et al., 2012; Metodieva et al., 2008; Tomova, 1998). Fathers may adopt more gender egalitarian practices when they have daughters (Gerstel & Gallagher, 2001), but they have been found to spend more time with boys (Raley & Bianchi, 2006). Finally, younger children require fathers to spend more time in childcare (Gracia, 2014) and age of the child is also directly related to the type of activities children are able to participate in with their fathers.

## Data

We test these hypotheses using the survey on 'Attitudes, practices, and barriers to active father involvement in Bulgaria' (MenCare, 2014); the first nationally representative survey on father involvement conducted in the country. The data were collected in 2014 within the national campaign "Being a father", part of the global MenCare initiative. The sample is based on the Bulgarian 2011 census, with a sampling frame that is random, multi-stage and stratified. The stratification is based on provinces (NUTS 3) and type of residence. The method of data collection was face-to-face interviews with an average duration of 45 minutes; a random sub-sample was drawn and a number of interviews were repeated by means of CATI. The response rate is 64%.<sup>1</sup> In total, 1100 parents were interviewed, consisting of 500 mothers and 500 fathers with at least one child under 18 in the household, and an additional 100

<sup>1</sup> The report outlining the details of data collection (in Bulgarian language) is available upon request. The data collection and handling was performed by Market Links.

fathers with non-resident children. The respondents' selection criteria included that parents – be they biological or stepparents – are in the age range 18-59 and are in a relationship - either married or cohabitating (with the exception of non-resident fathers). For the purposes of this study, we select fathers living with children (N = 501) whose children are ages 3-13 (N = 332).

### **Dependent variables**

*Relative and absolute father involvement in basic care, play, teaching, managing, and monitoring* are latent concepts created from 19 items out of an original 23 and 24 items respectively. Possible answer categories for relative involvement ranged from (0) always the mother to (2) always the father. Answer categories for absolute involvement ranged from (0) yearly to (6) daily after recoding. Following prior research (Kalil et al., 2012), basic care was defined by involvement in feeding, bathing the child, and putting the child to bed. Play included playing with the child and going to the movies or into nature together. Teaching included all activities surrounding formal education: helping with homework, taking the child to school and to school activities, and talking about future career options. Managing the child included going online with the child because of the potential to monitor for age appropriate web use, taking the child to doctor and therapy appointments, and staying home with the child when sick. Monitoring included aspects of adequate parental control such as scolding and protecting the child as well as aspects of emotional support such as praising, hugging, and talking to the child (Boudreault-Bouchard et al., 2013).

We excluded a few items because it was statistically and theoretically ambiguous which type of father involvement they might represent. Reading to the child should theoretically be a form of teaching, but it is so strongly correlated with bringing the child to bed ( $r = .63$ ;  $p < .01$  for absolute involvement and  $r = .46$ ;  $p < .01$  for relative involvement) that statistically it fit better with basic care. We therefore chose to eliminate it from the data. We also excluded talking about child's friends, lifestyle, and talking about rules because these could be considered both forms of managing and monitoring, and indeed are probably used by parents both to monitor children and to show interest in their lives. Finally, we excluded father's involvement in decision-making regarding children because it was only available as a relative measure.

Categories of involvement are thus basic care, play, teaching, managing, and monitoring, which we derived based on Kalil and colleagues' (2012) study of the educational gradient in developmentally appropriate childcare for mothers. We tested this framework statistically by means of confirmatory factor analysis in Stata 14 using the *sem* package (StataCorp, 2015). We found the factors fit the data satisfactorily.



Goodness of fit statistics and standardized factor loadings for the confirmatory factor analysis can be seen in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1.** Formation of dependent variables measuring father involvement

Factors	Items	Relative Father Involvement		Absolute Father Involvement	
		Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Loading	Cronbach's alpha
Basic Care	Feed	1		1	
	Bathe	1.66**	0.76	1.05**	0.82
	Bed	1.22**		0.72**	
Play	Play	1		1	
	Cinema	0.65**	0.57	1.19**	0.66
	Nature	0.82**		1.25**	
	Homework	1		1	
Teach	Take to school	1.09**	0.60	0.95**	0.75
	Take to extracurriculars	0.45**		0.87**	
	Talk about career	0.24**		0.76**	
Manage	Online	1		1	
	Doctor	2.45**	0.55	0.84**	0.56
	Therapy	1.66**		0.70**	
	Stay home when sick	1.91**		0.75**	
	Praise	1		1	
Monitor	Scold	0.23**		0.44**	
	Talk	1.46**	0.61	0.36**	0.59
	Hug	1.23**		0.41**	
	Protect	0.82**		0.70**	
Goodness of fit statistics	RMSEA	0.05		0.06	
	CFI	0.94		0.93	
	BIC	7603.56		25267.72	

## Independent variables

*Educational attainment* is coded as 1 = having attended any tertiary education, or 0 = having attended up to secondary or primary education. All men in our final sample had attended at least some primary education.

*Gender norms* are measured by men's agreement with five items on the role of men and women in paid and unpaid work (e.g. The most important role of the woman is to take care of the household and the children). After recoding, answer categories range from (0) totally agree to (3) totally disagree, with high values indicating more

egalitarian gender norms. A factor variable was created from these items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$ ).

*Norms of father involvement* are measured by men's level of agreement with the statement "Fathers in Bulgaria should be more actively involved in childcare." Answers range from (0) totally disagree to (3) totally agree, such that higher answers indicate more normative support for father involvement in Bulgaria.

## Controls

We included three control variables: *ethnicity*, where 0 = ethnically Bulgarian (72%) and 1 = Turkish (15%), Roma (12%), or other (1%); *age of the reference child* in years; and *gender of the reference child* where 0 = male and 1 = female. Descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2.** Descriptive statistics from Attitudes, practices, and barriers to active father involvement in Bulgaria, N = 332

	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
<b>Relative father involvement</b>				
Basic care	0.60	0.44	0	2
Play	0.93	0.40	0	2
Teach	0.87	0.37	0	2
Manage	0.67	0.37	0	2
Monitor	0.99	0.31	0	2
<b>Absolute father involvement</b>				
Basic care	1.92	2.03	0	6
Play	3.38	1.58	0	6
Teach	1.66	1.68	0	6
Manage	1.27	1.17	0	6
Monitor	3.96	1.30	0	6
<b>Independent variables</b>				
Education	0.23		0	1
Gender norms	1.07	0.71	0	3
Norms of father involvement	2.48	0.69	0	3
<b>Controls</b>				
Non-Bulgarian	0.28		0	1
Age of child	7.72	3.14	3	13
Daughter	0.49		0	1

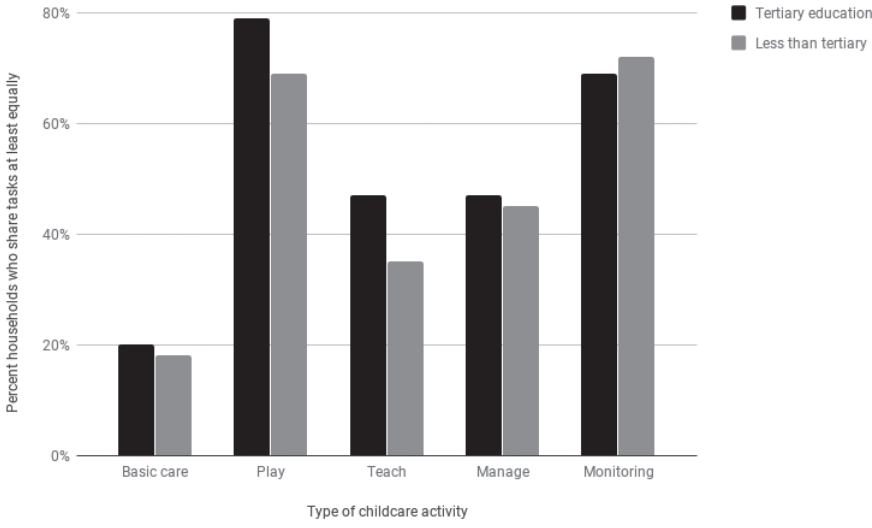


Figure 4.1. Distribution of relative father involvement by education

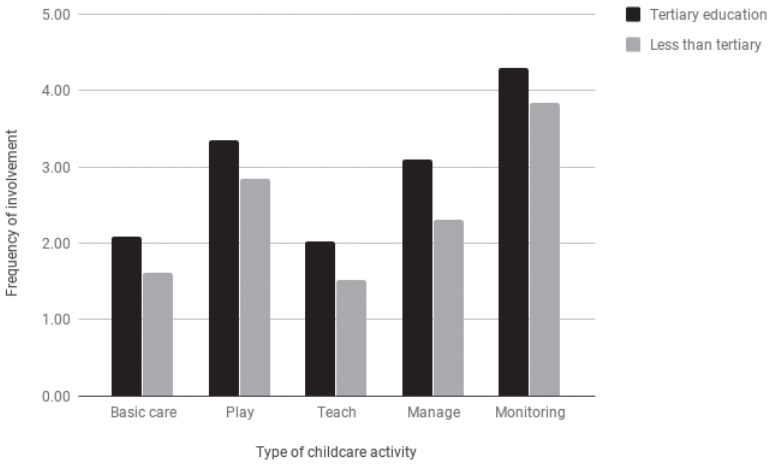


Figure 4.2. Distribution of absolute father involvement by education

## Method

Two mediation analyses were conducted using structural equation modeling: one on relative father involvement and the other on absolute father involvement. In each analysis we tested whether norms of gender equality and/or father involvement mediated the effect of educational attainment on father involvement in basic care, play, teaching, managing, and monitoring. Our measurement model, made up of latent variables representing father involvement in each different type of childcare and men's level of gender norms, was estimated simultaneous to the mediation model. Structural equation modeling is a useful method for mediation analysis because it allows us to test the direct and indirect relationships between variables simultaneously, while also including latent variables (StataCorp, 2017, p. 436). Cases with missing values were included in the analysis using the estimation method maximum likelihood with missing values (MLMV). We allowed for a correlation between all latent dependent variables because it is possible that father involvement in one type of task co-occurs with involvement in the other.

## Results

### Descriptive results

We start by examining the distribution of father's relative (Figure 4.1) and absolute (Figure 2) involvement in different types of childcare activities by educational attainment of the father. Both figures show evidence of an educational gradient in father involvement, though overall levels of both relative and absolute involvement are quite low. In Figure 1 we have plotted the percentage of households where fathers share tasks equally with their partners or perform them more often, i.e. score a 1 or higher on a scale of 0-2. Here we see that highly educated fathers are more relatively involved in play and teaching children, but are not more involved in basic care, managing, or monitoring. With regard to absolute involvement (Figure 4.2), despite that many of these tasks must be performed daily, highly educated men only do basic care and teaching on average several times a year and men with less than tertiary education do them even less frequently.

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 present the distributions of norms by education and here we see an indication that more highly educated men are more progressive in their norms. In Figure 4.3 we see that the vast majority of fathers in Bulgaria hold traditional gender norms regardless of educational attainment. Though gender traditionalism is common among all fathers, those with less than tertiary education are even more traditional than more highly educated fathers ( $t_{df(330)} = -5.85$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Figure

4.4 modeling the distribution of norms of father involvement reveals that Bulgarian men are much more progressive in their norms of father involvement. Yet here, too, there appears to be a statistically significant educational gradient in norms of father involvement, with fathers with some tertiary education being more likely to support progressive norms ( $t_{df(322)} = -2.08; p < 0.05$ ).

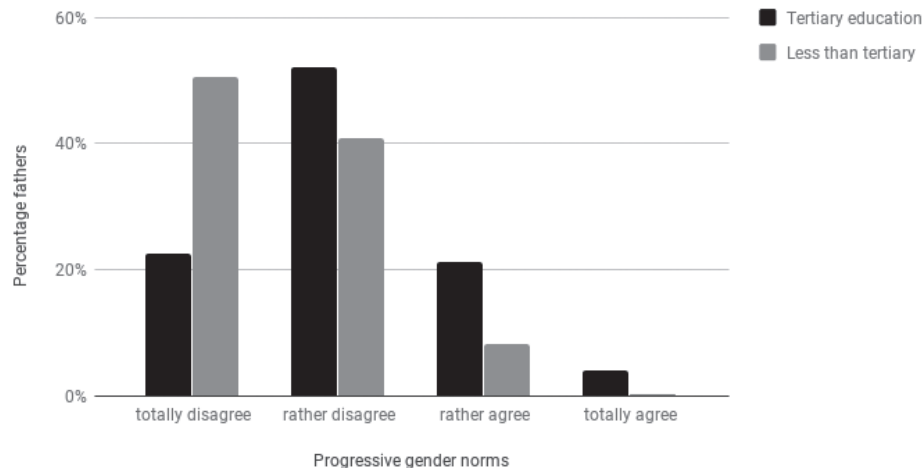


Figure 4.3. Distribution of gender norms by education

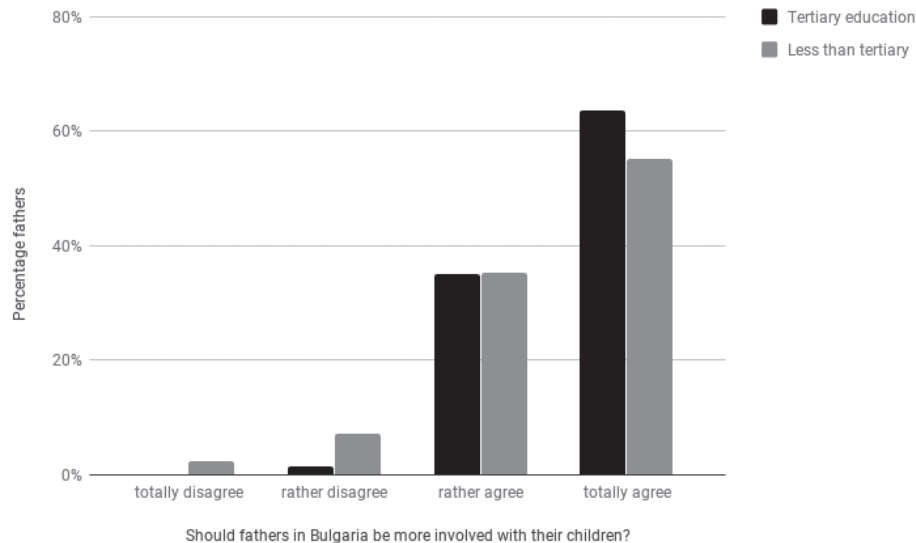


Figure 4.4. Distribution of norms of father involvement by education

Mediation results

The results of our mediation analysis can be seen in Figures 4.5 and 4.6 below. Figure 4.5 depicts the results of the analysis on relative father involvement while Figure 4.6 shows the results of the analysis on absolute father involvement. In both figures, the estimated coefficients for direct effects are denoted by D and indirect effects by I. When the type of effect is not specified, it is a direct effect. Connecting lines between variables are solid when significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level, dashed when marginally significant ( $p < 0.1$ ), and absent when not significant. Finally, the rectangles indicate observed variables and the ovals indicate latent variables. We discuss results in order of our hypotheses.

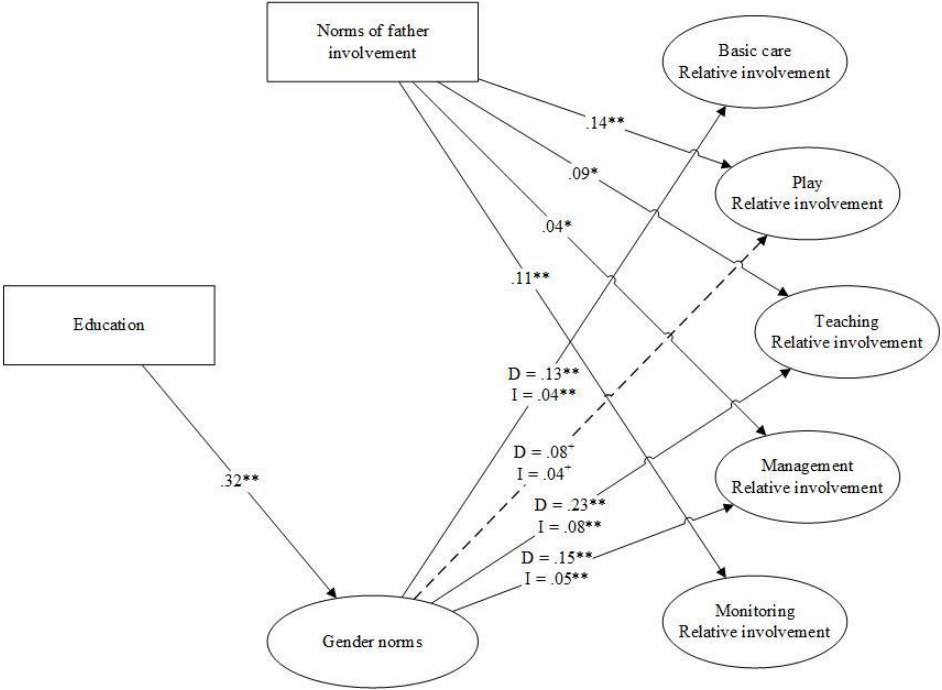


Figure 4.5. Mediation results for relative father involvement

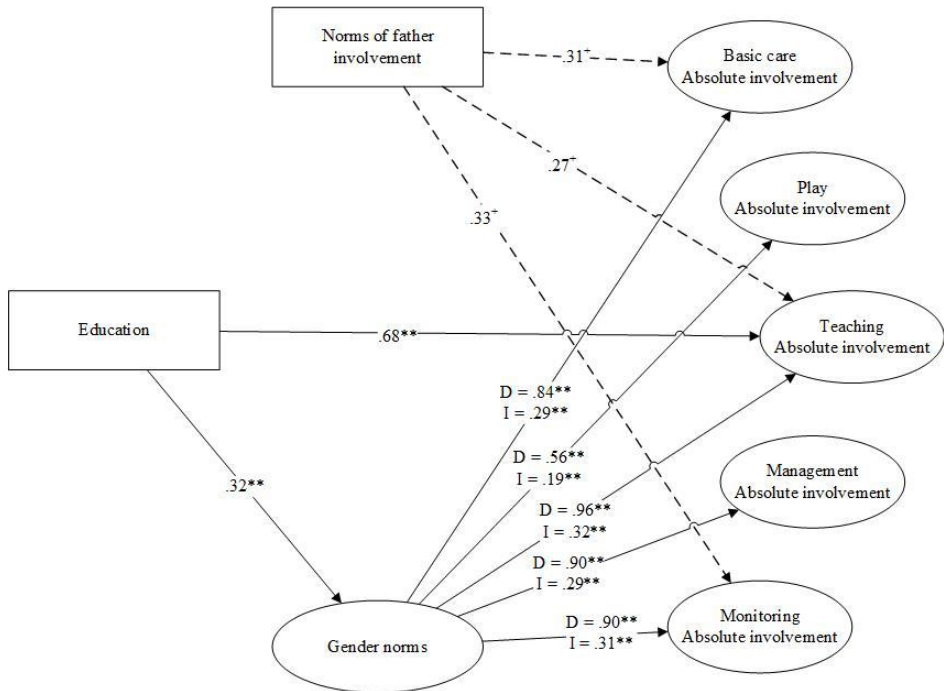


Figure 4.6. Mediation results for absolute father involvement

### Gender norms as mediators

Our first hypothesis (H1a) was that norms of gender equality would mediate the relationship between education and relative father involvement in play, teaching, managing, and monitoring but not basic care. Turning to Figure 4.5, we see indeed that education has a positive, direct effect on gender norms ( $B = .32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and that gender norms in turn have a positive and direct effect on relative involvement in basic care ( $B = .13$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), teaching ( $B = .23$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), managing ( $B = .15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and a marginally significant effect on relative father involvement in play ( $B = .08$ ,  $p < 0.10$ ). Additionally, education has no direct effect on any form of relative father involvement. The indirect effects of education on basic care ( $B = .04$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), play ( $B = .04$ ,  $p < 0.10$ ), teaching ( $B = .08$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and managing ( $B = .05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) are also significant, thus confirming that norms of gender equality mediate the association between education and relative father involvement. Though, it is important to note that these effects are smaller than the direct effects of gender norms would indicate. With regard to our hypothesis, although we do find that norms of gender equality mediate the link between educational attainment and relative father involvement in childcare, we cannot conclude that Hypothesis 1a is fully supported, given that there is no educational gradient in age-appropriate childcare.

Hypothesis 1b posited that gender norms would mediate the relationship between education and absolute father involvement in childcare. In Figure 4.6 we see the same significant association between educational attainment and gender norms as previously described. Gender norms are in turn significantly, positively, and quite strongly associated with all forms of absolute father involvement, including basic care ( $B = .84, p < 0.01$ ), play ( $B = .56, p < 0.01$ ), teaching ( $B = .96, p < 0.01$ ), managing ( $B = .90, p < 0.01$ ), and monitoring ( $B = .90, p < 0.01$ ). Again, the indirect effects of education for basic care ( $B = .29, p < 0.01$ ), play ( $B = .19, p < 0.01$ ), teaching ( $B = .32, p < 0.01$ ), managing ( $B = .29, p < 0.01$ ), and monitoring ( $B = .31, p < 0.01$ ) are significant, though smaller than the direct effects of gender norms. We conclude that gender norms do mediate the relationship between educational attainment and absolute father involvement. Yet again, we cannot fully support Hypothesis 1b because there is no educational gradient with regard to age-appropriate childcare.

### ***Norms of father involvement as mediators***

Hypothesis 2a posited that norms of father involvement mediates the relationship between education and relative father involvement in childcare. Turning to Figure 4.5, we see this is not the case. We do see a positive association between men's norms of father involvement and their relative involvement in age-appropriate childcare, including play ( $B = .14, p < 0.01$ ), teaching ( $B = .09, p < 0.05$ ), managing ( $B = .04, p < 0.05$ ), and monitoring ( $B = .11, p < 0.01$ ). However, this hypothesis cannot be supported because there is no link found between men's educational attainment and norms of father involvement.

Finally, hypothesis 2b predicted that norms of father involvement would mediate the relationship between educational attainment and absolute father involvement (Figure 4.6). There is little support for this hypothesis at all. Not only is there no link between men's educational attainment and their norms of father involvement, there is very little evidence of a link between norms of father involvement and any kind of absolute father involvement, much less age-appropriate childcare. Norms are marginally significantly influential on men's absolute participation in basic care ( $B = .31, p < 0.10$ ), teaching ( $B = .27, p < 0.10$ ), and monitoring ( $B = .33, p < 0.10$ ), but not at all influential on their participation in play or management.



## Discussion

### Do norms explain the educational gradient in father involvement?

Given the importance of father involvement for children's social, emotional, and intellectual wellbeing (Allen & Daly, 2007), children who receive little absolute or relative father involvement may be disadvantaged later in life compared to children who spend much time with their fathers. Moreover, father involvement can exacerbate existing social class differences because highly educated fathers are more frequently involved (McLanahan, 2004) and are more likely to be involved in better quality, age-appropriate childcare (e.g. Gracia, 2014). Although scholars often rely on differences in men's gender and fathering norms to explain the educational gradient in father involvement, normative explanations have not previously been tested.

In the present study, we thus tested whether norms of gender equality and father involvement explain the educational gradient in father involvement in age-appropriate childcare. We found that gender norms, though not norms of father involvement, explain the gradient in absolute and relative father involvement. However, there was no evidence that highly educated men are more involved in age-appropriate activities with their children.

### Gender norms vs. norms of father involvement

It was not possible based on prior literature to form different expectations about why gender norms but not norms of father involvement might explain the educational gradient in father involvement. Both norms are progressive, in that supporting them means that men also support a change to the existing system of family behavior, thus we expected that both would be more strongly held by higher educated men. It was therefore contrary to our expectations that more highly educated men were not more likely to hold more progressive norms of father involvement. To put this finding in the context of Dimova's (2009) typology of Bulgarian fathers, we find evidence of the third type of father—a highly educated man who holds strong norms of gender equality and is frequently involved with his children.

This unexpected finding might be explained substantively by the importance of the family in the Bulgarian context. It may be that we see no difference between high and low educated fathers in the belief that fathers should be involved with their children because the family is a universally important value for both women and men (Lobodzinska, 1996; Milenkova & Pejcheva, 2016). Norms can be imparted in many different circumstances and are therefore subject to change throughout the life course, yet scholars consider values to be less mutable and to be conveyed prior

to entering educational institutions (Ester, Mohler, & Vinken, 2006). Because norms of father involvement are based on early-life socialization they may not be susceptible to an educational gradient.

Alternatively, the absence of a link between educational attainment and norms of father involvement might be due to methodological rather than substantive reasons. Because the statement is about fathers in general, men can agree with it yet not feel that they need to change their own behavior. Although the statement appears to advocate for change, it may not be a good measure of how progressive men are if it does not capture their own willingness to change. Such issues of response validity are difficult to parse out in quantitative analyses. We recommend that future research turn to qualitative interviews to better understand the link between education and norms of father involvement.

### **Age-appropriate childcare**

Based on studies of fathers in Spain (Gracia, 2014) and mothers in the US (Kalil et al., 2012) we hypothesized that the educational gradient in father involvement would hold only for men's involvement in age-appropriate childcare—i.e. playing, teaching, managing, and monitoring but not basic care, given the age range of the children in our study. This is not what we find. Contrary to previous studies we find that more highly educated men are more involved in most types of father involvement, and that this holds true for both absolute and relative involvement.

The unexpected finding that education is not linked to age-appropriate childcare may be explained by the fact that Bulgarian men's overall absolute and relative involvement in childcare is quite low, as evidenced by the findings in the present study as well as from prior cross-national studies (Kravchenko & Robila, 2015). It could be that the educational gradient in age-appropriate childcare begins after a certain minimum level of father involvement in all types of childcare is achieved.

### **Relative vs. absolute involvement**

One strength of this study is that we conduct our analyses on absolute and relative father involvement with children. Most prior research on how parental involvement contributes to children's diverging destinies focuses on the absolute time parents spend with children in different types of childcare (Gracia, 2014; Kalil et al., 2012; McLanahan, 2004), yet the relative time fathers spend with their children is also important to their children's wellbeing (Deutsch et al., 2001). We find that gender norms can explain the educational gradient in both absolute and relative involvement, thus illustrating the robustness of the educational gradient in father involvement.

### Limitations and avenues for future research

In addition to the issues of validity and reliability of our measure of norms of father involvement, we acknowledge one additional limitation of our study. We discuss the link between education, father involvement, and gender ideology as if it were causal, but it may be reciprocal. For the purposes of this study, we assume that educational attainment influences gender norms and that gender norms influence father involvement. However, some research suggests that gender ideology may affect educational attainment (Davis & Greenstein, 2009), and research on domestic responsibilities and gender ideology describes how they mutually influence each other (D. L. Carlson & Lynch, 2013; Doucet, 2013). The present study was the first to examine the relationship between education, norms, and father involvement in Bulgaria, though replication is needed to confirm our findings.

### Implications

This study was the first to test whether norms of father involvement and gender equality mediate the relationship between educational attainment and father involvement in age-appropriate childcare. We did so both with regard to men's absolute and relative involvement with children and using unique data from Bulgaria, a country that has been understudied in terms of father involvement.

Norms of father involvement are often—intentionally or not—mixed up with gender norms in discussions of men's intrinsic drivers of involvement with children. Many studies discuss both but do not distinguish between them, or they treat norms of father involvement as a subset of norms of gender equality (e.g. Doucet, 2013; Plantin, Månsson, & Kearney, 2003). In the present study we treat norms of father involvement and norms of gender equality as distinct motivators of men's childcare, and in doing so we add to knowledge about the educational gradient in father involvement in the following ways. First of all, while researchers often assume that more highly educated men are more involved in childcare because of a difference in norms or attitudes towards father involvement (Gracia, 2014; Sayer, Gauthier, et al., 2004), perhaps the most interesting finding of this paper is that we can debunk this myth, at least within the Bulgarian context. It is true that men who hold stronger norms of father involvement are more involved with their children, thus supporting the arguments made by some researchers (Gaunt, 2006; Keizer, 2015) that both norms of father involvement and gender equality should be considered equal and separate determinants of men's involvement with children. Yet, norms of father involvement cannot explain the educational gradient in either absolute or relative childcare. Rather, men's gender norms almost entirely explain the link between educational attainment and father involvement—not only relative to mothers as one might expect, but also, and quite strongly, in absolute terms.

This finding underlines the importance of gender norms in the study of father involvement. It reinforces theoretical arguments that describe how, in doing housework and childcare, men are also “doing” gender by reproducing their normative beliefs about domestic duties (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Moreover, this finding changes the implications of the phenomenon of diverging destinies from one which implies that more highly educated men are more oriented towards the family to one which implies that they are more oriented towards gender equality. As a result, we could expect that if norms of gender equality spread throughout Bulgarian society, the educational gap in men’s childcare would decrease.

The second main way in which we add to knowledge about the educational gradient in father involvement is our revelation that more highly educated men are not doing different types of childcare than men with lower educational attainment. This is in contrast to findings from other cultural contexts (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Gracia, 2014) and would seem to indicate that there is a low(er) risk of diverging destinies due to an educational gradient in father involvement in Bulgaria. However, it remains to be seen whether these findings represent a modern trend in multiple regions or if they are specific to the Bulgarian and post-communist context.

## Footnotes

The report outlining the details of data collection (in Bulgarian language) is available upon request. The data collection and handling was performed by Market Links.





# Parents and partners as drivers and barriers of father involvement

## Background

Research shows a direct effect of early socialization on men's involvement in housework and childcare. Yet prior research typically treats intergenerational transmission of domestic work as constant across all men; it is currently unknown to what extent transmission may be shaped by ongoing negotiations with the partner regarding the division of tasks or how mechanisms of transmission might differ for housework and childcare.

## Objective

We investigate how men's involvement in housework and childcare is driven by their own fathers' involvement and whether their partners' attachment to the labor market can moderate this effect.

## Methods

Using OLS regression on the 2016 Dutch IMAGES survey ( $N=520$ ) we test for main effects of own fathers' involvement and possible moderating effects of partner's work hours on men's share of housework and childcare.

## Results

Men are more involved in housework when their own fathers were more involved but early socialization to childcare is moderated by their current partners' labor market behavior. Early socialization is at its most influential when men's current partners work full-time.

## Contribution

By separating housework and childcare we show that different mechanisms drive different types of domestic work. Men's self-selection into partnerships, which reflect the division of labor in their family of origin, explains the intergenerational transmission of housework. Task specialization explains why men are not free to act on their early socialization into childcare when their partners are disengaged from the labor market.

There has been much scientific and media attention regarding the increase of men's involvement in the home in recent decades (Dermott & Miller, 2015). In the Netherlands, where our study is situated, the time men spent in housework and childcare increased by 38% from 1975 to 2005, though men continue to do less around the home than their partners (Portegijs & Merens, 2010). Based on these trends some researchers claim that the gender revolution that began in the '60s with women's participation in the labor market is slowly starting to extend to men's involvement in the home (Goldscheider et al., 2015). Others lament the slow progress in closing the gender gap in unpaid labor and declare the gender revolution "stalled" (England, 2010), "incomplete" (Esping-Andersen, 2009), and "unfinished" (Gerson, 2010). At their core these perspectives reflect a debate on whether the gender revolution can and will be completed (Cherlin, 2016). Central to this debate is the question of what drives men to be involved in housework and childcare (collectively called domestic work for parsimony).

In an attempt to answer this question, prior scientific research has mostly taken one of three perspectives: an individualistic perspective focusing on characteristics of men themselves (e.g. Gaunt, 2006; Keizer, 2015); a couple perspective focusing on, for example, maternal gatekeeping and partner's work hours (e.g. Esping-Andersen et al., 2013; McBride et al., 2005), or a country perspective focusing on leave arrangements (e.g. Noonan, 2013). Less attention has been paid to the role of parents, i.e. an intergenerational perspective, despite that parents have been shown to be important figures in the transmission of many other attitudes and behaviors to their children (Degner & Dalege, 2013; Glass, Bengtson, & Dunham, 1986; Liefbroer & Elzinga, 2012; Verhage et al., 2016), yet parents are important because in many cases they are our first exposure to gendered behavior surrounding caregiving and housekeeping. Furthermore, it is even rarer for research to consider how early socialization may be constrained by other characteristics. In the present study we merge the intergenerational and couple perspectives within a life course framework by asking whether men's partners can moderate the intergenerational transmission of father involvement in housework and childcare. In doing so, we tap into the relative importance of early socialization during formative periods in men's youths and the socialization that continues throughout the life course within the marital relationship, while acknowledging the influence of societal changes over time in the acceptance of men's domestic work.

To our knowledge this is the first study to test the interaction between spouse's labor market participation and own father's role model. Understanding how the partner and the father structure men's involvement is especially important to predicting how



men's involvement in the home will change over time. The very nature of the gender revolution suggests that more men experienced gender traditional childhoods than currently live in gender traditional homes, thus the intergenerational influence cannot fully explain father involvement. Nonetheless, the slow progress of the gender revolution might be partially due to the effect of the labor market participation of the spouse being able to override a gender-traditional childhood home. Furthermore, men may choose partners modeled on their mothers, suggesting there will be convergence in many cases between the involvement of the father in their youth and their wife's participation in the labor market and domestic work (Farré & Vella, 2013; Fernández et al., 2004).

We further contribute to the literature by distinguishing between men's share of housework and childcare. Although both are forms of unpaid labor, they are also qualitatively different. While participation in childcare has been redefined as central to masculine identity and being a "good" father, perhaps to a fault according to Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001), the perception of men's involvement in housework has not evolved in the same way. Housework continues to be seen as women's area of expertise and is considered by many to be unenjoyable (Hook, 2006; Raley et al., 2013). At the same time, housework can, for the most part, be left undone whereas there are some time-structuring childcare tasks that are much more urgent (Craig, 2006a). Given the critical theoretical differences between housework and childcare, we distinguish between men's participation in both. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between housework and childcare because even if men and women achieve parity in one dimension of unpaid work, without equal sharing of all types of involvement in the home, the gender revolution will remain stalled. For example, in homes where most childcare and housework responsibilities are outsourced, there are always responsibilities that are impossible to outsource, such as planning and managing the outsourcing of domestic work. We focus specifically on how housework and childcare are shared between domestic partners rather than men's absolute frequency of involvement because we are concerned with issues of equity.

Finally, we focus specifically on the intergenerational transmission of involvement from father to son because of the implications that men's involvement in domestic work has for the gender revolution. Additionally, father-son relationships may be particularly interesting given that some research on life course transitions suggests a greater degree of intergenerational continuity between fathers and sons than mothers and daughters (Liefbroer & Elzinga, 2012).

We test these research questions using 2016-2017, multiactor Dutch data from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) with a sample of 520 fathers living with a female partner and at least one child under age 13. We have information on primary respondents' involvement in housework and childcare, their recollections of their own fathers' involvement in housework and childcare when they were young, and their spouses' self-reported work hours. We test whether father involvement in housework and childcare and spouses' work hours affect men's involvement in housework and childcare in four regression models.

## Empirical background

Prior research with an intergenerational perspective on men's domestic work tends to focus on the transmission of ideologies and attitudes (Cardoso et al., 2010; D. L. Carlson & Knoester, 2011; Filler & Jennings, 2015; Levtoev et al., 2014; Min, Silverstein, & Lendon, 2012; Ruitenberg, 2016) rather than behaviors. Yet, one of the fundamental aspects of social learning theory is that children can learn specific behaviors from their parents. A downward intergenerational focus can bring new insights to the study of men's domestic work (Elder et al., 2015; Levy & the Pavie Team, 2005; Settersten, 2002), because parents are the very first others with the potential to influence men's later involvement in housework and childcare. Parents are the "fellow life travelers" (Hagestad, 1986a) whose lives intersect with their children the longest, typically from the child's birth until the parent's death. In their youth, men see their fathers doing (or not doing) housework and childcare, and their first ideas about appropriate gendered behavior are formed.

There is limited prior research on the intergenerational transmission of familial behavior such as childcare and housework. With regard to the transmission of childcare, studies in the U.S. (Hofferth, 2003) and Japan (Ishii-Kuntz, 2012) provide evidence that men are more involved in some types of childcare when their own fathers were more involved. However, other research sometimes shows fathers have little influence on their progeny's involvement with children when they are very young (Madden et al., 2015). These mixed findings may be explained by age of children and type of father involvement being measured. For example, Hofferth (2003) found that own father involvement was associated with men's share of responsibility but not hourly engagement. In other words, greater own father involvement may affect what men do, but not necessarily how much time they spend doing it. In the present study we are concerned with what men do rather than how long it takes them to do it, thus we expect to find a positive relationship with own father involvement.

Prior findings are similarly equivocal with regard to the intergenerational transmission of housework. Recent household economic studies point to a possible intergenerational transmission effect by showing that parents with a more egalitarian division of housework were shown to allocate chores to their children more equally, and that men's chores in their youth influence how much housework they later do (Álvarez & Miles-Touya, 2012; Gimenez-Nadal, Molina, & Zhu, 2017). In the same vein, a longitudinal, multiactor study in Germany revealed that men had a higher likelihood to participate in housework when their parents had a more equitable division of labor (Cordero-Coma & Esping-Andersen, 2018). Though in contrast, a longitudinal study of Norwegian fathers and sons found no relation between how fathers divided housework in the 1970s and how sons did in 2005 (Bjørnholt, 2009, 2010). However, the longitudinal Norwegian study was qualitative and relied on men's own reports of whether their fathers were role models for their current behavior. Given that men's fathers may have influenced their housework subconsciously or indirectly, we expect to find that men do a greater share of housework when their own fathers were more involved despite some mixed evidence in this regard.

Thus prior research mostly suggests that domestic work is transmitted from father to son. Furthermore, we know from theoretical investigations into the life course that men's lives are linked to multiple others (Elder et al., 2015). With respect to domestic work, this means that the influence of early socialization on men's domestic work cannot be considered in a vacuum—it may be constrained or empowered by other family characteristics. Nonetheless, empirical models testing the intergenerational transmission of domestic work often assume that all men are equally influenced by their own fathers' involvement in childcare and housework. Men's own fathers' involvement in domestic work may lay the groundwork for their later involvement, but on top of that groundwork comes numerous other drivers and constraints of father involvement. In the present study we focus on the role of spouses' labor market attachment because this has been shown to be a strong and consistent driver of men's involvement in childcare across a number of contexts (Craig & Mullan, 2011; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015). The influence of spouses' work hours may constrain men's early socialization because they are more immediate (Cunningham, 2001). Spouses share a household, and thus need to negotiate the division of childcare, housework, and paid labor. As a result, their demands may be able to “override” the influence of own father involvement.

With regard to the association between partner's labor market attachment and men's involvement in childcare, scholarship mostly confirms the positive relationship (Pleck, 1997). The link has been found in the Netherlands (Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009),

Spain (Gracia, 2014), the UK (Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015; Norman et al., 2014), and the US (Coltrane et al., 2004), to name a few. However, some literature does show that men are not always more involved in childcare when their partners work more hours (Germany: Cooke, 2007), or more commonly, that the strength of this relationship is stronger in countries that encourage father involvement with children (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Gracia & Esping-Andersen, 2015).

Prior literature also supports the link between partner's work hours and men's involvement in housework. Making a distinction between dual-earner and dual-career couples, Fahlén (2016) shows women's greater work hours are associated with men's greater involvement in housework in some cases, but that the strength of this association can be mitigated by the level of institutional support for work-family reconciliation.

Evidence for a possible interaction between the intergenerational transmission of domestic work and the partner's work hours is scant. Bernier and Miljkovitch (2009) find that father-son intergenerational transmission of attachment is most likely to occur when the mother is absent, specifically when men are raised by single fathers. This suggests that own mothers' presence moderates intergenerational transmission, though it remains an open question whether the partner's presence would moderate intergenerational transmission. Another study shows that fathers' non-traditional child-rearing values were positively related to their childcare only when the wife was unemployed or worked part time (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000). The authors reason that when wives were employed full time their employment placed constraints on men's involvement, forcing them to be involved regardless of their values. If values are formed in part in the childhood home, we might also expect the intergenerational transmission of domestic work to be moderated by the wife's employment.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Mechanisms of intergenerational transmission**

Two main mechanisms have been posited to explain why father involvement in housework and childcare might be transmitted from father to son. First, the behavior itself might be transmitted through observation, as suggested by role modeling and social learning theory (Platt & Polavieja, 2016; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Putney & Bengtson, 2002; Settersten, 2002; Solaz & Wolff, 2013; Van Putten, Dykstra, & Schippers, 2008). Rather than having to learn everything through first-hand experience, humans have the capacity to learn from watching other people, and then observing the

consequences of their actions (Bandura, 1971). Thus, men who observe their fathers being involved in domestic work at home and then observe positive consequences of that behavior will learn that being involved in housework and childcare can be beneficial. They will in turn be more involved in domestic work as adults. This theory describes the way individuals learn about specific rather than more generalized behavior.

The second mechanism explaining the intergenerational transmission of domestic work is that any apparent correlation of behaviors may simply be a byproduct of a variety of correlated ideologies, norms, preferences, and values (Filler & Jennings, 2015; Platt & Polavieja, 2016; Solaz & Wolff, 2013), which we refer to collectively as attitudes. If fathers and mothers believe in the egalitarian sharing of domestic work, they will do their best to instill their children with these attitudes. If attitudinal transmission is successful, their sons (and daughters) will share domestic tasks more equally with their partners when they are adults. Unlike the transmission of specific behaviors, we expect that the transmission of attitudes will lead to similar generalized behaviors; in this case, intergenerational correlation of all forms of domestic work.

5

### **Mechanisms of partner's work hours**

In the present study we consider that the share of domestic work men perform is a function of how much work needs to be done (total work to be done = total household work – outsourced work) and how much is done by their partners (men's share of domestic work = total work to be done – partners' share). We assume that the total work to be done is always positive because there are always aspects of domestic work that cannot be outsourced. For example, at the very least, parents will still need to manage nannies and cleaners, show affection to children, and plan family meals. Furthermore, while outsourcing may reduce the overall amount of domestic work that couples need to do, we have no reason to think it will change how couples divide housework and childcare. Remaining tasks, no matter how few, are presumably still negotiated between core family members. Any negotiation will include men's and women's work hours outside of the home and unpaid domestic work at home. Prior literature relies on four mechanisms to explain why partner's greater labor market attachment would drive men to take on a greater share of domestic work.

First, the time availability hypothesis suggests that couples allocate the time spent in paid and domestic labor such that when one spouse spends more time in paid work he or she would spend less time in domestic work (Hook, 2006). Thus, if the partner works full time, the husband might be more involved in housework and childcare than if she only works part-time. This mechanism might be especially effective in explaining

men's increased participation in childcare because many aspects of childcare are time sensitive and must be performed at a certain time of day. If one parent is working, it falls to the other to perform the task.

Task specialization (Becker, 1991) is another commonly posited mechanism, which suggests that men and women have invested time in becoming specialized in paid work and domestic work, thus, it is more efficient for the family for one parent to engage in paid work and the other solely in domestic work. Following this mechanism, the more hours a woman works in paid labor the less specialized she will be in domestic work. Therefore, the less she, and the more her partner, might perform domestic work. This mechanism should apply to childcare as well as housework.

The third commonly used mechanism to explain why men are more involved in housework when their partners work more hours is relative resources (Bittman et al., 2003; Vierling-Claassen, 2013). According to this mechanism, women who work more may use their increased income as a resource to bargain out of unpleasant tasks. This may be particularly applicable to housework, as housework is often considered unpleasant, and thus something individuals might try to get out of doing.

Finally, although not often mentioned, the correlation between women's work hours and men's involvement in housework and childcare may be spurious, driven by assortative mating rather than bargaining, specialization, or time availability. That is, men and women may choose their partners based on their preferences for the division of labor. More traditional men may select partners who work less while men who want to be more involved in childcare and housework will select partners who work more (Farré & Vella, 2013).

## **Linked lives hypotheses**

To summarize, research suggests that men's involvement in housework and childcare will be greater when their own fathers were more involved and when their partners work more hours. However, it is less clear what to expect when these influences act together. Will their joint influence be stronger than their individual influence, or will they crowd each other out? In statistical terms, will the interaction be positive or negative, or will there be no interaction at all? The answer to these questions depends on which of the four posited mechanisms explains the association between partners' work hours and men's involvement in domestic work.

### Early socialization moderated by time availability hypothesis

If the time availability or bargaining mechanism explains why men are more involved in domestic work when their partners work more hours, we would expect that more hours the partner works, the more she is able to crowd out the influence of the father, though each mechanism would predict involvement in a different type of domestic work.

To start, the time availability mechanism would suggest that men's ability to model their behavior after their fathers is limited by the structural constraints of their partner's work hours. This is because women's work hours determine the time they, and by extension, their husbands, have available to spend on domestic work. If women work more outside the home, their husbands will have to help them out by taking over at least the bare minimum of time-sensitive tasks. For example, if the partner is not able to pick up the child from school because she is working, the father may have to transport the child, regardless of his early socialization to childcare. This hypothesis may particularly apply to childcare because childcare is more time-sensitive than housework (Hook, 2006). Thus, the time availability hypothesis predicts that *the more hours the partner works, the weaker the influence of the father's involvement in domestic work on men's involvement in childcare* (H1).

### Early socialization moderated by bargaining hypothesis

By contrast, the bargaining mechanism may especially moderate men's early socialization into housework, because housework is more often deemed unpleasant than childcare (Hook, 2006; Raley et al., 2013), and hence is more subject to bargaining. If couples determine the division of labor by bargaining, then a woman who works full time will have a good enough bargaining position to get her husband involved, even if he did not grow up seeing involvement modeled in the childhood home, and perhaps has different personal preferences about the division of housework. Thus the bargaining hypothesis describes that *the more hours the partner works, the weaker the influence of father's involvement in domestic work on men's involvement in housework* (H2).

### Early socialization moderated by specialization hypothesis

Unlike the bargaining and time availability mechanisms, if early socialization is moderated by the specialization mechanism, then the influence of the father and the influence of the partner are strongest in combination. Specialization may apply to men's involvement in either housework or childcare. If the association between partners' work hours and men's involvement in domestic work is due to specialization, we would expect that the more women work the more men have room to act upon

early socialization influences, hence the more influential their own father's involvement might be. By the same token, when a man's partner does not work at all, she is considered to be fully specialized and it would be inefficient for him to be involved in domestic work regardless of his own attitudes and the influence of his father. Thus, specialization predicts that *the more hours the partner works, **the stronger the influence** of father's involvement in domestic work on men's involvement in **housework** and **childcare*** (H3).

### Early socialization is not moderated: Self-selection hypothesis

Finally, if the association between partner's work hours and men's involvement in domestic work is due to self-selection, there would be no interaction between partner's work hours and father's involvement. Selection may explain why men whose fathers were highly involved choose partners who work more hours, but it would not be able to explain why men with more or less involved fathers are more or less influenced by their partner's labor market participation. This is because if men were able to perfectly recreate the division of labor observed in their childhood home, a situation would never occur where a man whose father was never involved in domestic work would be partnered with a woman who was fully committed to the paid work, financial circumstances permitting. Thus, the selection mechanism predicts that *the partner's work hours **will not moderate** the influence of the father's involvement in domestic work on men's involvement in **housework** or **childcare*** (H4).

## Controls

We control for a number of variables that may affect men's involvement in domestic work, partners' work hours, and the division of labor observed in the childhood home. In keeping with the idea of linked lives, children themselves are important actors in influencing their parents' behavior. Because couples with a more egalitarian division of labor have been shown to have more higher order births in some countries (though to our knowledge not in the Netherlands) (Duvander & Andersson, 2006; Neyer, Lappegård, & Vignoli, 2013), number of children might be positively associated with a more equal division of housework and childcare. Having many children may also raise household expenses (Bargain & Donni, 2009), thus making the *number of children* an important factor potentially influencing the need for men's involvement in childcare and housework as well as the need for mothers to be involved in paid work. We also control for *age of the child* as older children will be more independent, diminishing the need for housework and childcare (Gershuny & Sullivan, 2014), and women often take career breaks when children are young but return to the labor market full time once they reach school age (Arun, Arun, & Borooah, 2004; Kahn, García-Manglano, &



Bianchi, 2014). Our final control for characteristics of the youngest child is to control for whether the *youngest child is a son*. Men are thought to spend more time with boys (Raley & Bianchi, 2006), but have been found to be more egalitarian behaviors when they have girls (Gerstel & Gallagher, 2001).

With regard to potentially confounding characteristics of the respondent, we control for *education and age*. Education has been shown to be transmitted intergenerationally (van Doorn, Pop, & Wolbers, 2011) and to be linked to gender norms (Levtov et al., 2014), thus a correlation between involvement of the father and involvement of the son in domestic work may be spurious due to the intergenerational transmission of education. Additionally, men's education is linked to spouse's education (Kalmijn, 2015), and spouse's work hours are likely to be dependent on her level of education (Ruitenberg & de Beer, 2014). Older men are likely to have had more traditional fathers due to an increasing acceptance of gender norms over time (Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015), and to be more involved in childcare (Sayer, Bianchi, et al., 2004).

## Data

We test these hypotheses using nationally-representative, multiactor Dutch data from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) collected in 2016 and 2017. This survey is the first Western European extension of an international survey that has been conducted in Bosnia, Brazil, Chili, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Croatia, India, Mexico, Rwanda, and South Africa (Barker et al., 2011; Levtov et al., 2014). Topics vary somewhat across surveys but they all concern men's involvement in family life. In the Dutch survey, 4000 partnered men with at least one child age 0-13 were contacted, ending up with a total response rate of 44.8% or 1792 fathers (GfK & Rutgers Kenniscentrum Sexualiteit, 2017). In order to include information about partner's work hours, we consider only men whose female partners also participated, for a total of 564 respondents. In doing so we excluded 15 men with male partners who participated in the survey. An additional 41 cases were excluded for missing data on the father's involvement in childcare, and three cases were excluded for missing data on other variables, leaving us with a sample of 520 fathers living with a female partner and at least one child under age 13. Descriptive statistics for the variables in our dataset are available in Table 5.1.

## Dependent variables

*Men's share of involvement in housework and childcare* are mean-centered averages of men's share of participation in a number of activities. For housework these were: grocery shopping, cleaning the house, cleaning the bathroom, cooking, laundry,

and administration. For childcare these were: daily care, staying home with the child when sick, playing outside with the child, picking the child up from school, and playing at home with the child. Men whose youngest child was under five years old were additionally asked about changing diapers and reading to their child while men whose youngest child was over five were asked about talking to their child, helping them with homework, and taking them to extracurricular activities. Men's participation in each activity was measured on a scale of 0 to 4, recoded such that 0 = the mother always does it and 4 = the father (respondent) always does it. Final scores on men's participation in housework and childcare were created by averaging activities together and then centering averages around the mean. If answers for any given activity were missing, the final score was an average of the nonmissing values.

**Table 5.1.** Descriptive statistics from International Men and Gender Equality Survey,  $N = 520$

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Dependent variables				
Childcare respondent	1.73	0.46	0	4
Housework respondent	1.66	0.66	0	4
Father of the respondent				
Childcare father	1.73	0.78	0	3
Housework father	0.91	0.78	0	3
Partner				
Work hours	21.76	14.08	0	60
Controls				
Age respondent	41.33	6.81	25	68
Tertiary edu respondent	0.57		0	1
Number of children	2.16	1.00	1	11
Age youngest kid	5.76	4.17	0	13
Youngest child son	0.49		0	1

Scales for childcare are reliable, as the Cronbach's alpha for childcare measures when children are under 5 is  $\alpha = 0.76$  and when children are over 5 is  $\alpha = 0.78$ . The Cronbach's alpha for housework is  $\alpha = 0.68$ . The lower Cronbach's alpha for housework can be explained by the inclusion of administrative tasks as a form of housework. While the other tasks are mostly feminine-typed tasks, men and women tend to share administrative tasks more equally, thus the inter-item correlation is not as high as it would be if administrative tasks were not included. Nonetheless, as administrative tasks contribute to the overall burden of domestic work we chose to include these in the final accounting of men's share of housework. Information on men's share of involvement in each specific activity can be seen in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2.** Respondent housework and childcare

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
<b>All children</b>					
daily care	518	1.62	0.60	0	4
sick	490	1.49	0.92	0	4
play outside	451	2.06	0.69	0	4
pick up from school	404	1.55	0.97	0	4
play inside	493	1.81	0.58	0	4
<b>Only children under 5</b>					
change diapers	221	1.70	0.60	0	4
read	208	1.88	0.61	0	4
<b>Only children over 5</b>					
talk	294	1.77	0.58	0	4
homework	245	1.88	0.72	0	4
extracurriculars	267	1.77	0.84	0	4
<b>Division of housework</b>					
groceries	519	1.87	1.00	0	4
clean house	514	1.45	0.89	0	4
clean bathroom	505	1.34	1.11	0	4
cook	517	1.62	1.01	0	4
laundry	520	1.10	1.02	0	4
administration	519	2.57	1.18	0	4

Note: Some childcare measures have low N's because they were only asked of men whose reference child was under five (change diapers, read) or over five (talk, homework, extracurriculars)

## Independent variables

*Father's involvement in housework and childcare* were men's mean-centered averages of how frequently their fathers or male father-figures were involved in a number of activities. Housework consisted of: grocery shopping, cleaning the house, cleaning the bathroom, cooking, and doing the laundry. Childcare consisted of two items: caring for children and playing with children. Scores were reverse coded and rescaled such that 0 = never and 3 = often. Final scores were created by averaging nonmissing values and then centering the averages around the mean. Again, scales are reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 for childcare and 0.88 for housework. Information on father's frequency of involvement in each specific activity can be seen in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3.** Father housework and childcare

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
<b>Frequency of childcare</b>					
care for	515	1.65	0.89	0	3
play	518	1.81	0.85	0	3
<b>Frequency of housework</b>					
groceries	517	1.44	1.08	0	3
cook	519	1.10	1.03	0	3
clean house	519	0.85	0.95	0	3
laundry	520	0.55	0.83	0	3
clean bathroom	518	0.61	0.86	0	3

*Partner's work hours* is measured as the number of hours the female partner reports working in an average week, centered around the mean. Women who are self-employed were not asked about hours worked, but in order not to exclude them we coded them as working 28 hours per week. This was the average number of hours worked for self-employed women in the Netherlands in 2016, according to national statistics (Statistics Netherlands, 2017). Given the popularity of part-time work for women in the Netherlands (Plantenga, 1996; Roeters & Craig, 2014), this average is quite believable. Additional sensitivity analyses reveal similar results when self-employed women were coded as working 40 hours per week (available upon request).

## Controls

*Age of the respondent* is the self-reported age in years of the respondent. *Education* is the respondent's education where 1 = respondent attended higher professional education or university and 0 = did not attend tertiary education. *Number of children* is the number of children in each family and *age of the youngest child* is the age of the youngest (reference) child in years as reported by the father. *Gender of the youngest child* is coded such that 0 = girl and 1 = boy.

## Method

We use four linear regressions to test our hypotheses. Two focus on men's participation in housework, and two on men's participation in childcare. Of the two regressions on men's participation in each type of domestic work, one includes an interaction with partner's work hours and own father's participation in housework and the other is for the interaction between partner's work hours and father's participation in childcare.

Fathers' involvement in housework and childcare is highly correlated ( $r = 0.56$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but VIF scores for the analyses remain low, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem.

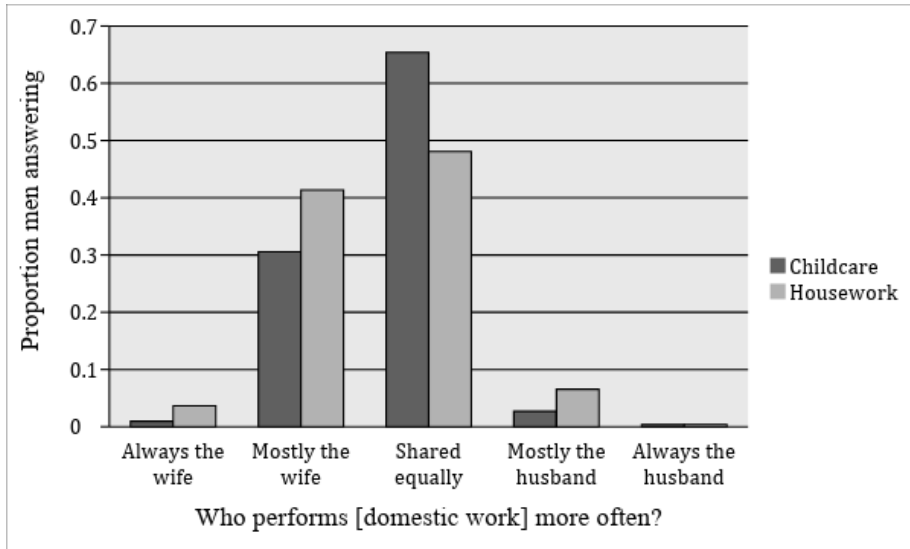
## Results

Table 5.4 below shows the results of four regression models on the determinants of men's involvement in domestic work. In general, we are better able to predict men's involvement in childcare than their involvement in housework using the partner's work hours and the father's involvement, as evidenced by the AIC ( $AIC_{Model1} = 582.50$ ;  $AIC_{Model2} = 583.16$ ;  $AIC_{Model3} = 939.38$ ;  $AIC_{Model4} = 939.45$ ) and BIC scores ( $BIC_{Model1} = 625.04$ ;  $BIC_{Model2} = 625.70$ ;  $BIC_{Model3} = 981.92$ ;  $BIC_{Model4} = 981.99$ ). We discuss the findings in order of our hypotheses, referring to the models in Table 5.4 for reference.

**Table 5.4. Regression results,  $N = 520$**

	Childcare respondent				Housework respondent			
	Childcare father Model 1		Housework father Model 2		Childcare father Model 3		Housework father Model 4	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Father								
Childcare father	0.034	0.030	0.018	0.029	0.005	0.042	0.000	0.041
Housework father	0.061*	0.029	0.074*	0.030	0.175**	0.041	0.179**	0.042
Partner								
Work hours	0.012**	0.001	0.012**	0.001	0.010**	0.002	0.010**	0.002
Interactions								
Childcare father*work partner	0.004*	0.002			0.001	0.002		
Housework father*work partner			0.003*	0.002			0.001	0.002
Controls								
Age respondent	0.007	0.004	0.008*	0.004	0.008	0.005	0.009	0.005
Tertiary edu respondent	0.025	0.038	0.025	0.038	0.023	0.053	0.023	0.053
Number children	-0.034	0.019	-0.036	0.019	-0.054*	0.026	-0.055*	0.026
Age youngest child	0.006	0.006	0.005	0.006	-0.019*	0.009	-0.019*	0.009
Youngest child son	0.045	0.037	0.049	0.037	0.000	0.052	0.001	0.052
Constant	1.501**	0.142	1.482**	0.142	1.574**	0.200	1.567**	0.199
AIC	582.498		583.159		939.378		939.448	
BIC	625.036		625.698		981.916		981.986	

Before turning to the results of our hypotheses testing, we first present some descriptive information about men's involvement in domestic work in the Netherlands. According to our data, men share domestic work relatively equally with their female partners, though women do continue to do more than men. Over 60% of respondents claim to share childcare equally and just under 50% share housework equally (Figure 1)<sup>1</sup>. The rest, with few exceptions, assist their partners in domestic work, but do not take on the majority of responsibility for these tasks.

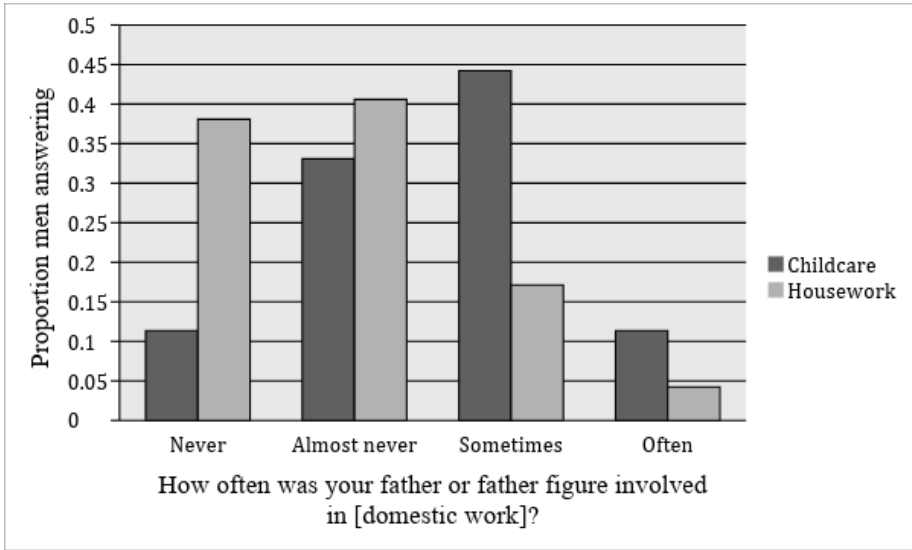


**Figure 5.1.** Division of domestic tasks between men and their female partners

It was less common for men's fathers to have participated in domestic work. Although we do not have information about how fathers in the past divided domestic responsibilities with their female partners, we do have information about how frequently they were involved. It was uncommon for men to help with housework, with almost 80% doing nothing or almost nothing around the house (Figure 5.2)<sup>2</sup>. Men reported slightly more father involvement in childcare, but even so, less than 15% of respondents recalled that their fathers often played with or cared for children.

<sup>1</sup> This figure was created by binning average responses to the questions about men's participation in a variety of forms of housework and childcare, such that an average of <0.5 = always the wife; 0.5-1.49 = mostly the wife; 1.5-2.49 = equal; 2.5-3.49 = mostly the husband; >3.5 = always the husband

<sup>2</sup> As with Figure 1, this figure was created by binning average responses, such that <0.5 = never; 0.5-1.49 = almost never; 1.5-2.49 = sometimes; >2.5 = often



**Figure 5.2.** Frequency of own father's involvement in domestic work

5

Finally, men's own father involvement in housework, but not childcare, is significantly correlated with their partner's work hours ( $r = .10$ ,  $p < .05$ ). That is, we already see that men whose own fathers were more involved in domestic work in their youth are more likely to be in a relationship with a woman who is more engaged in the labor market, hinting at a possible selection effect. We now turn to the results of our regression analysis, discussing each hypothesis in order.

### Intergenerational transmission

Using the role model and generalized behavior mechanisms, we predicted that men's involvement in housework and childcare would be influenced by their fathers' involvement in housework and childcare. We find that own father's housework is directly linked to men's childcare ( $B_{\text{Model1}} = 0.061$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and  $B_{\text{Model2}} = 0.074$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and housework ( $B_{\text{Model3}} = 0.175$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and  $B_{\text{Model4}} = 0.179$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but own father's involvement in childcare is not directly linked to either son's involvement in housework or childcare.

### Partner's work hours

In keeping with prior literature, we find that men are more involved in both childcare ( $B_{\text{Models 1 \& 2}} = 0.012$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and housework ( $B_{\text{Models 3 \& 4}} = 0.010$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) the more their partners work. Across all models we see that the influence on men's share of both childcare and housework is an additional .01 on 5-point scale per hour their partner

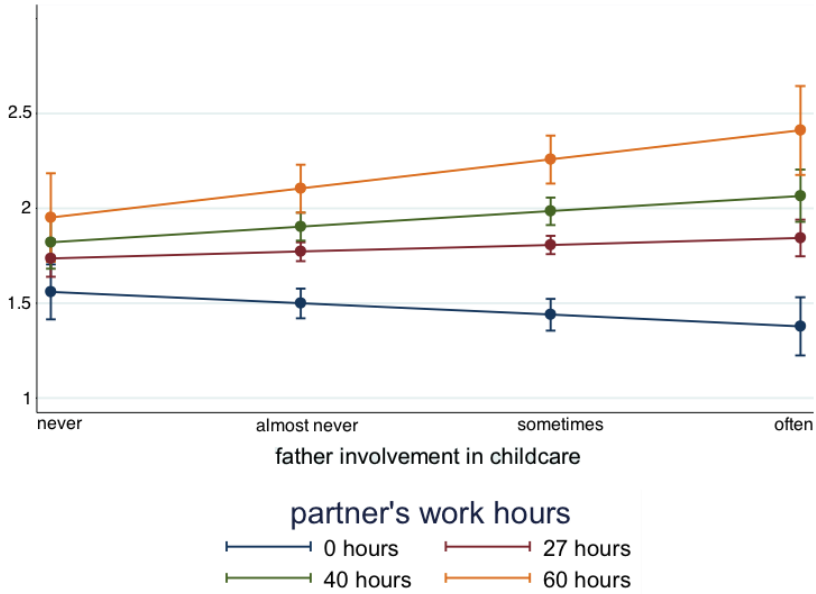
worked. This robust finding can be interpreted substantively as meaning that men whose wives work 40 hours per week will score .40 higher than men whose wives work 0 hours per week. In other words, when men's partners work 40 hours per week, men will come close to sharing housework (1.84 on a scale of 0-4) and childcare (1.91 on a scale of 0-4) equally, though their partners will still perform more.

### Linked lives hypotheses

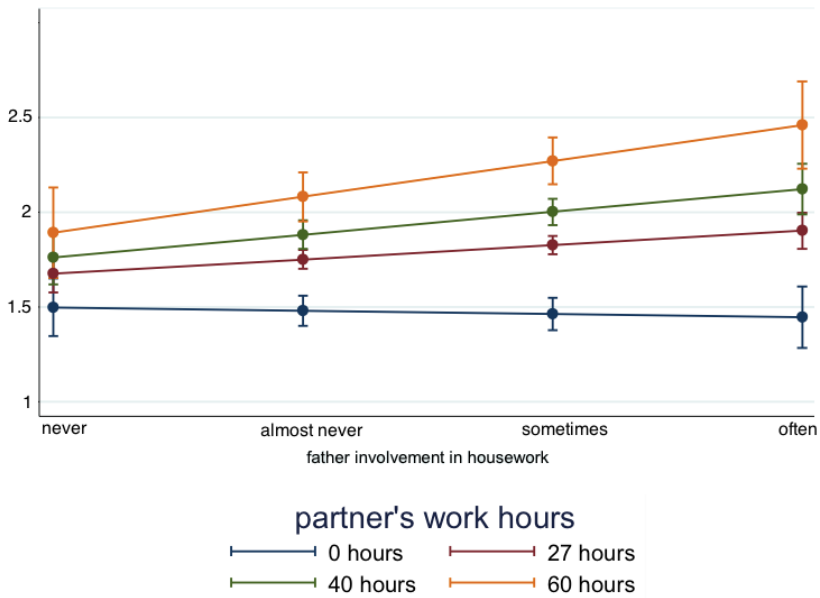
We hypothesized that the influence of father's involvement in domestic work would be moderated by partner's work hours. We formulated various competing expectations based on different mechanisms governing the association between partner's work hours and men's involvement in domestic work. Results are partially consistent with the specialization hypothesis (H3) and the selection hypothesis (H4). Consistent with the specialization mechanism, we find a significant and positive effect of the interaction between the partner's work hours and the father's involvement in both childcare ( $B_{\text{Model1}} = .004, p < 0.05$ ) and housework ( $B_{\text{Model2}} = 0.003, p < 0.05$ ) on men's involvement in childcare. These findings are also presented visually in Figures 5.3 and 5.4. Essentially, our data suggest that with regard to men's involvement in childcare, father's involvement in domestic work matters more when men's partners work more hours. There is hardly any evidence for the intergenerational transmission of childcare when partners do not work. But when partners work the influence of the father is visible, and the more the partner works, the stronger the influence of the father. However, this hypothesis can only be partially confirmed as it is only found with regard to childcare.

The selection hypothesis (H4) seems to explain the relationship with regard to men's involvement in housework. As predicted according to the selection mechanism, the partner's work hours do not moderate the effect of father's involvement in domestic work on men's participation in housework. These non-significant interactions are visualized in Figures 5.5 and 5.6 for contrast. We discuss this and possible alternate explanations in the discussion.

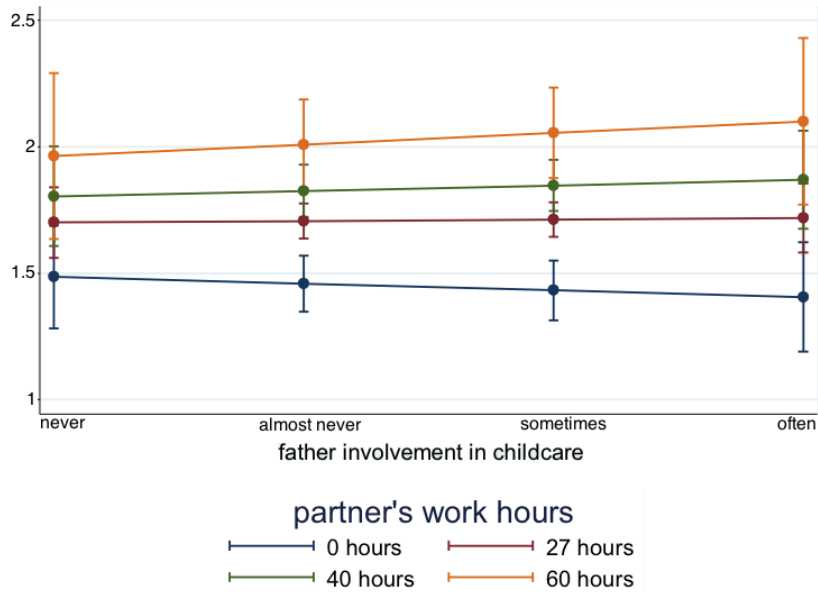




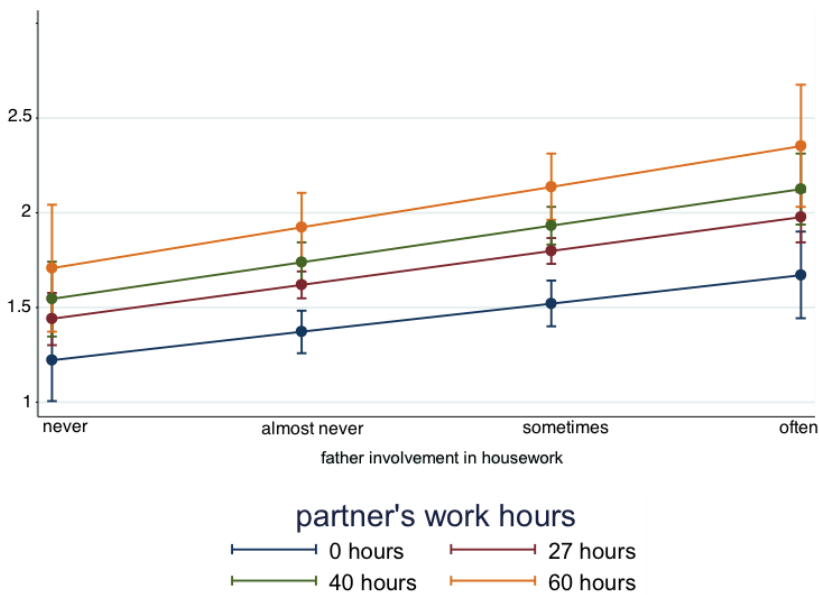
**Figure 5.3.** Interaction between father's involvement in **childcare** and partner's work hours on men's involvement in childcare: Support of specialization hypothesis (Model 1)



**Figure 5.4.** Interaction between father's involvement in **housework** and partner's work hours on men's involvement in childcare: Support of specialization hypothesis (Model 2)



**Figure 5.5.** Interaction between father's involvement in childcare and partner's work hours on men's involvement in housework: No effect of early socialization (Model 3)



**Figure 5.6.** Interaction between father's involvement in housework and partner's work hours on men's involvement in housework: Support of self-selection hypothesis (Model 4)

## Discussion

The present study revealed that own father's involvement in housework but not childcare has a direct and positive effect on men's involvement in housework and childcare for all levels of partner's work hours (Models 2 and 4). Additionally, when men's partners work more hours, the effect of own father's involvement in housework on their performance of childcare is greater (Model 2). Own father's involvement in childcare has no direct effect on either men's housework or childcare (Models 1 and 3), but does have a positive effect on men's childcare when men's partners work (Model 1).

### Intergenerational transmission of domestic work

Our findings support evidence of an intergenerational transmission of domestic work, yet neither the role model mechanism nor the attitudinal transmission mechanism is fully supported as we had articulated them. We find evidence of role modeling in that men are more involved in housework when their fathers' were more involved in housework (Model 4), and we find evidence of the transmission of attitudes in that men were more involved in childcare when their fathers were more involved in housework (Model 2). As a result, we conclude that both mechanisms work together to explain the intergenerational transmission of domestic work.

### Role model mechanism

The role model mechanism explains why men are more involved in housework when their fathers were more involved in housework, yet we do not find that men are more involved in childcare when their fathers were more involved in childcare, at least not in the case where men's partners are not employed. One possible interpretation of this finding can be found by keeping in mind the historical context of our study. Given how uncommon it was for fathers of respondents in our data to be involved in housework at all (Figure 5.1), it could be that respondents' mothers rewarded any participation on behalf of the fathers, whereas childcare, being more common, was less noticeable when it was performed. Men saw their fathers' housework but not childcare being rewarded, and adopted this behavior in their own households.

### Attitudinal transmission mechanism

Thus the role model mechanism may explain why there is a direct association between men's and their fathers' housework, yet it cannot explain the intergenerational link between father's housework and men's childcare. For that we turn to the attitudinal transmission mechanism. This mechanism explains how a father's behavior in a specific activity influences his son's attitudes, which in turn influence his son's behavior in a wide variety of activities, all of which fit within a larger behavioral pattern

(Liefbroer & Elzinga, 2012). Following this reasoning, it could be that own father's involvement in housework influences sons' attitudes towards gender equality, which in turn influences sons' involvement in both housework and childcare. Attitudes towards gender equality may be in particular strongly linked to men's share of both housework and childcare—as opposed to how frequently he performs these tasks—since men's share of domestic work relative to their partners is a direct measure of gender equity in the home.

By contrast, own father's involvement in childcare may have been a reflection of his attachment to his spouse rather than a commitment to gender equality. For example, one study found that men derive happiness from being in partnerships but not from having children, whereas women derive happiness directly from fertility (Kohler, Behrman, & Skytthe, 2005). If this is the case, it might also follow that men are more involved in childcare in order to derive more utility from the partnership rather than from involvement with children per se. Thus, when men see their own fathers being involved in childcare, they may adopt attitudes related to maintaining marital harmony but not necessarily housework or childcare.

We conclude that parental attitudes and behaviors both play important roles in the intergenerational transmission of domestic work. Indeed, similar conclusions were reached with regard to housework and women's labor market participation in the UK (Platt & Polavieja, 2016). Using a longitudinal design the authors determined that both attitudes and behavior are influential to the intergenerational transmission of housework and work hours. Future research should consider measuring attitudinal and behavioral measures over time in order to fully account for the intergenerational transmission of domestic work.

### **Linked lives: Childcare**

Finally, we also asked whether the partner's work hours moderate the influence of early socialization. With regard to men's share of childcare, our findings suggest that partner's work hours and father's involvement in domestic work do interact. Specifically we found that the more men's partners work, the more men's childcare reflects the housework and childcare example of their fathers. While prior research in the American context has noted an interaction between men's attitudes and partner's work hours, this interaction was negative (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000), whereas the interaction in the present study is positive. In the American context it appears that the more men's partner's work, the weaker men's values are in driving their own involvement in childcare. By contrast, in our study, we conclude that when women “specialize” in childcare by not participating in the labor market, it effectively

crowds out the potential for men's equal participation in childcare. Only when women work outside the home do men have the room to act on the example provided by their own father's involvement in domestic work. The more their partners work, the more men are free to follow their fathers' examples.

The fact that own father's participation in childcare has no effect on men's childcare when their partners do not work may suggest that more traditional women—as evidenced by their labor market behavior—might be gatekeeping their partners from involvement with children (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Mothers might be driven to dominate childcare because of the high standards they set for it, and this might be particularly the case for women who do not work or who work fewer hours. In this context gatekeeping can be seen as an extreme form of specialization.

With regard to whether gatekeeping specifically and specialization more broadly is realistic in the Dutch context, some research suggests that it is. It has been found that Dutch women hold higher standards for childcare than men do (Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009), which could lead mothers to being unsatisfied with their partner's childcare and preferring to do it themselves. When compared to other Europeans, the Dutch are the least likely to support women's fulltime employment (Haas, Steiber, Hartel, & Wallace, 2006; Plantenga, 1996). Given the lack of support for maternal employment and the traditional attitudes regarding family forms (Hiekel & Keizer, 2015), there may very well be a tendency towards specialization or even gatekeeping in some households.

5

### **Linked lives: Housework**

With regard to men's involvement in housework, we found no evidence of an interaction between father's involvement in domestic work and partner's work hours. The lack of an interaction formally supports the selection hypothesis; men's share of housework is higher when their fathers were more involved in housework, and when their partners work more hours, but the influence of the partner and the father have an independent rather than an interdependent effect on men's cleaning, cooking, and other forms of housework. We hypothesized that this would be because men form preferences for a certain division of labor in the childhood home. The more involved their fathers were in domestic work, the more sons want to be involved in domestic work within their own marital relationships. Thus, men seek out partners who are willing to give them the room to be involved. As a result, despite a correlation between own fathers' involvement in domestic work and partner's labor market engagement, there is no interaction between these factors.

An alternate interpretation of the lack of interaction is that different mechanisms govern the intergenerational transmission of housework and the association between partner's work hours and men's domestic work. This could particularly be the case if both associations are spurious, due to, for example, socioeconomic status. Prior research suggests that social class can explain father's domestic work and son's domestic work (Höfner, Schadler, & Richter, 2011) and wife's working hours (Ruitenberg & de Beer, 2014). We tried to control for this spuriousness by including men's educational attainment in the regression models, nonetheless we cannot completely rule out the role of class. Additionally, in alternate analyses we included household income as a control variable, but this is not significant in the model, nor is household income correlated with either father's or men's housework (analyses available upon request). Class is made up of more than just income and educational attainment, thus we cannot rule out the possibility that some other aspect of class drives each relationship such as income of the man himself or occupation prestige. Yet to the extent that we were able to measure it, we find selection to be the better explanation for the intergenerational transmission of housework than spuriousness due to social class.

## **Limitations and avenues for future research**

We qualify our conclusions with four additional limitations, which also provide avenues for future research. First, our sample may be selective as we run our analysis on only men with partners who also participated in the survey. Households where both partners participated in the survey may experience a higher level of relationship quality (Kalmijn & Liefbroer, 2011), and relationship quality may be linked to a more equal division of household labor both in deed (D. L. Carlson et al., 2016) and perception (Lavee & Katz, 2004). This may bias our sample such that we have more examples of egalitarian couples than exist in the general population. More studies are needed on other subsamples in order to confidently generalize our findings.

Second, our hypotheses are specifically tailored to traditional families, where men and women behave according to typical male and female roles in pregnancy and the first months of child's life (Doucet, 2009; Höfner et al., 2011). As a result, our results are most generalizable to these families, and may not be suited for single or repartnered fathers, or for fathers in same sex partnerships (Cherlin, 2016). Future research should consider the role of intergenerational transmission and partner's work hours in complex and non-traditional families as well.

Third, the questions regarding own father's involvement in domestic work are phrased in such a way that they ask about fathers or any male father figure. As a result, effect sizes may be underestimated if the male father figure did not live with the child, as is more likely to occur when he is not the father. Future research might benefit from replicating these findings on a larger sample, which allows researchers to distinguish between traditional and more complex families, and biological and social father relationships.

Finally, the data on men's early socialization is based on a single source, namely men's retrospective reports of their own fathers' involvement. The risk of collecting data from a single source is that men who are strongly involved in housework might adjust their memories of their own fathers' involvement to match what they themselves are currently doing. A better measurement approach would be one where data collection spans multiple generations, such as the approach taken by Cordero-Coma and Esping-Andersen (2018) using the German Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP). However, existing longitudinal datasets such as SOEP are limited—in some cases severely—by attrition over time, and given their broad focus, are often not good sources of detailed information on domestic work. For example, respondents were asked how much time per typical weekday they spent in total housework, as defined by washing, cooking, and cleaning. Unlike in the IMAGES data on which the current study was based, it was not possible to examine activities separately. Furthermore, the type of stylized estimate used in the SOEP relies on respondents' self-reports of total hours, a measurement method which is notoriously subject to over-estimation (Bianchi et al., 2000; Robinson, 1985; Robinson, Martin, Glorieux, & Minnen, 2011).

## Conclusion

When Bianchi et al (2000) asked "Is anyone doing the housework", they concluded that time availability and relative resources (bargaining) best explain time spent in housework based on the way men's and women's characteristics contribute to couples' division of labor. The present study concluded that these mechanisms do not cover it all when we take into account the fathers' early socialization and how that interacts with partner's work hours to influence men's domestic work. By taking a linked lives perspective we are able to reach a more nuanced understanding regarding the mechanisms driving men's involvement in housework and childcare.

Our research underscores the importance of distinguishing between housework and childcare. While housework is strongly transmitted from father to son, the intergenerational transmission of childcare is dependent on the partners' work hours.

Finally, we find that partner's work hours are a strong determinant of father involvement and that children tend to follow the example provided by their parents. That is, how couples divide tasks is important not just for children's well-being, but also for how their children will divide tasks when they are adults. Men may even seek spouses based in part on their own preferences as formed in the childhood home. We encourage future studies to continue to consider lives in context and how that influences men's involvement in domestic work. Only by studying the effect of interactions between important others can we understand the overall way in which they exert forces on men's lives.







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# Summary

Men and women share childcare more equally now than at any time in the recent past (Bianchi et al., 2000; Craig, Mullan, & Blaxland, 2010; Hall, 2005). Nonetheless, women across Europe spend significantly more time caring for children than men do (Hook, 2006), even when both parents also work full time outside the home. Furthermore, when men spend time with children, they do more of the rewarding tasks and less of the tedious, time demanding tasks (Craig, 2006a). This may have negative consequences for women who feel pressured to do it all (Hill & Jeffrey, 2005), for children who have slower cognitive and language development when their fathers are less involved (Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007), and for men whose relationships and personal well-being have been shown to suffer from lack of contact with their children (Allen & Daly, 2007; Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001).

Many governing bodies recognize the importance of father involvement and have tried to design paternity leave and other father-friendly legislation in response, such as the European Commission's directive to make paternity leave an individual and non-transferable right (Eurofound, 2019; European Commission, 2010; Janta & Stewart, 2018). Yet these measures might be met with limited success, for example when men's career trajectories are inhibited by taking leave (e.g. Williams, 2001) or when men's partners are already heavily involved (e.g. Craig & Mullan, 2011). Because factors outside the control of either fathers or government can influence the effectiveness of paternity leave policy, it is important to reach a better understanding of drivers of men's involvement, so that better policies can be developed. For this reason, this dissertation tries to understand why some fathers are more involved with their children than others. Specifically, by asking how men's family characteristics, social class, and country context can act as drivers and barriers of their involvement in childcare.

These factors are important because together they encompass some of the strongest, most studied, and most policy relevant drivers of father involvement. Family is a greater source of support than non-kin (Conkova, Fokkema, & Dykstra, 2017), and thus potentially a greater source of influence; national context has been shown to be a stronger driver of individual behavior than sub-national context (Friedrichs, Galster, & Musterd, 2003), and social class influences a wide range of individual-level behavior (e.g. Barr, 2014).

Focusing on the way family characteristics interact with country context, **Chapter 2** tests whether partner's work hours are a stronger driver of father involvement in countries with more generous paternity leave, a higher level of gender empowerment, and a lower gender wage gap. This chapter assesses father involvement by distinguishing between repetitive, time consuming tasks and those with more flexibility. Results show that men are more involved across 16 European countries and Australia—particularly in less flexible tasks—when their partners work more. These findings tell a story of gender equality. When men and women share breadwinning more equally, they also share childcare more equally, particularly on tasks which normally fall disproportionately to women. The national appetite for equal share of work and care varies across countries, but variation is too small to be explained. I conclude that there is more similarity across countries than difference. In all the countries in scope in this chapter, mothers' work hours are a strong driver of father involvement.

In addition to country context, this dissertation also asks how social class drives or constrains father involvement with children. Mid-century scholars researched whether upward social mobility in families would cause adult children to abandon their aging parents (Blau, 1956; Litwak, 1960; Parsons, 1951), but little attention had been paid to downward support from fathers to adult children, despite that most support flows downward from parent to child. **Chapter 3** asks whether parental advice and interest is driven by the interplay between social class of fathers, mothers, and adult children, as measured by educational attainment. Results indicate that men show more interest in their adult children when the apple falls close to the (highly educated) tree, but when it comes to giving advice, highly educated fathers give more advice across the board than fathers with less schooling. Fathers' advice giving can be interpreted through a lens of gender conformity; they give more advice when they hold higher educational status in keeping with the socialization of men to value success and status. By contrast, mothers give advice to all children equally in keeping with the gender-typical behavior of women to value harmony over status (Chodorow, 1978; Kahn et al, 2011).

Research on the educational gradient in parenting behavior done in the context of the West often concludes that parenting norms differ across social class (e.g. Laureau, 2002). However, there are many confounding factors such as the need for lower class parents to work more which might also explain their lower father involvement. **Chapter 4** revisits mechanisms explaining the educational gradient in father involvement in the context of Bulgaria, where the inflexibility of the labor market allows for little difference in work hours between high and lower educated

fathers. In keeping with research in other contexts (Gracia, 2014; Kalil, Ryan, & Corey, 2012), I also find that highly educated men are more frequently involved and perform a greater share of basic care, leisure, teaching, managing, and monitoring childcare activities. However, more highly educated men are not more likely to hold stronger norms of father involvement. The educational gradient appears to be due to more egalitarian gender norms among the highly educated rather than more strongly held convictions that father involvement is important.

Finally, family characteristics as drivers of father involvement are usually studied in isolation, yet in reality fathers are simultaneously exposed to drivers from multiple family members. **Chapter 5** asks what the joint influence is of men's early socialization and their partners' work hours on father involvement with children. I find that men are more involved with their children when they were socialized into caregiving by their own fathers, but only when their wives work. When their wives do not work, men's preferences--as inferred from early socialization--are trumped by their partners' physical presence in the home. Together with **chapter 2**, this chapter reinforces the conclusion that men's partners are strong drivers of their involvement in childcare.

Together the empirical chapters contribute to a number of overarching conclusions. First, men's family members, specifically their children, their own fathers, and their partners may drive and constrain father involvement. Of these family members, men's partners have the greatest power to drive father involvement, even overriding the influence of early socialization when they are less engaged in the labor market. Second, social class in the form of higher educational attainment drives father involvement throughout their own life course and that of their children. Though the observed pattern of behavior is the same throughout the life course, the mechanism driving this observation differs depending on the age of the children. Highly educated fathers of young children are more involved because they hold less traditional gender norms; highly educated fathers of highly educated adult children give more advice and show more interest in their children in part because their status allows them to do so. Third, father involvement is a highly complex concept to study due in part to its theoretical and operational multidimensionality, and what one studies determines what one finds. Father involvement can be measured (a) as a share of mothers' involvement, (b) in absolute terms, and (c) as different types of tasks and activities, ranging from hugging one's children to giving advice to staying home when the child is sick. Each of these dimensions has different drivers and constraints, and scholars can learn more by distinguishing between them. And finally, by approaching father involvement from a life course perspective, this dissertation allows for the influence of important others during different stages of adulthood to interact.

Men are ushered into fatherhood when their partners give birth, and likewise they are driven to be more or less involved through constraints imposed by other people. This dissertation asked why some fathers are more involved with their children than others and finds that not only fathers themselves, but also their parents, their partners, and their children can all drive involvement, as can men's social class and national context.





# Samenvatting

De wijze waarop mannen en vrouwen kinderverzorging verdelen gebeurt tegenwoordig meer gelijkwaardig dan ooit (Bianchi et al., 2000; Craig, Mullan, & Blaxland, 2010; Hall, 2005). Toch besteden vrouwen in Europa aanzienlijk meer tijd aan de zorg voor kinderen dan mannen (Hook, 2006), zelfs als beide ouders nog een fulltimebaan hebben. De tijd die mannen doorbrengen met kinderen gaat daarbij meer naar de dankbare taken en minder naar de vervelende, tijdrovende klusjes (Craig, 2006a). Dit kan negatieve gevolgen hebben voor vrouwen die de druk voelen om alles op zich te nemen (Hill & Jeffrey, 2005), voor kinderen bij wie het leidt tot een tragere cognitieve ontwikkeling en taalontwikkeling als hun vaders minder betrokken zijn bij de opvoeding (Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007) en voor mannen bij wie is aangetoond dat hun relatie en persoonlijk welbevinden lijden onder een gebrek aan contact met hun kinderen (Allen & Daly, 2007; Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001).

Veel bestuursorganen erkennen het belang van de betrokkenheid van vaders bij de opvoeding en hebben geprobeerd om het vaderschapsverlof en andere wetgeving gericht op vaders in te voeren, zoals de richtlijn opgesteld door de Europese Commissie om het vaderschapsverlof een individueel en niet-overdraagbaar recht te maken (Eurofound, 2019; European Commission, 2010; Janta & Stewart, 2018). Niettemin is het mogelijk dat deze maatregelen beperkt succes hebben, bijvoorbeeld in het geval wanneer de carrière van de man gehinderd wordt bij het opnemen van verlof (e.g. Williams, 2001) of als de partner van de man al zeer nauw betrokken is bij de opvoeding (e.g. Craig & Mullan, 2011). Aangezien factoren die buiten de controle van de vader of de overheid vallen invloed hebben op de doeltreffendheid van het beleid op vaderschapsverlof, is het van belang dat er meer inzicht komt in de drijfveren van mannen in hun betrokkenheid zodat er een beter beleid kan worden ontwikkeld. Dat is dan ook de reden dat in dit proefschrift onderzoek wordt gedaan om inzicht te krijgen waarom sommige vaders meer betrokken zijn met hun kinderen dan andere vaders. Hier wordt specifiek op ingegaan door te vragen hoe factoren als de gezinskenmerken van de man, zijn sociale status en de context van het land waarin hij woont de betrokkenheid in kinderverzorging bevorderen of belemmeren.

Dit zijn belangrijke factoren omdat ze samen de sterkste drijfveren omvatten die het meest onderzocht worden en relevant zijn voor het opstellen van een beleid voor de betrokkenheid van vaders. Familie is een belangrijkere bron van steun dan niet-verwanten (Conkova, Fokkema, & Dykstra, 2017) en kan daarmee meer invloed hebben; nationale context is een sterkere drijfkracht voor individueel gedrag dan

sub-nationale context (Friedrichs, Galster, & Musterd, 2003), en sociale status heeft invloed op veel soorten gedrag op individueel niveau (e.g. Barr, 2014).

In **Hoofdstuk 2** wordt de nadruk gelegd op de relatie tussen gezinskenmerken en het land waarin men woont; hiermee wordt onderzocht of de werktijden van de partner een sterke drijfveer zijn voor de betrokkenheid van vaders in landen met een langer vaderschapsverlof, een hogere mate van emancipatie en lagere loonverschillen tussen mannen en vrouwen. In dit hoofdstuk wordt de betrokkenheid van vaders beoordeeld door onderscheid te maken tussen de herhaalde, tijdrovende taken en de meer flexibele taken. Onderzoek wijst uit dat in 16 Europese landen en in Australië mannen meer betrokken zijn, met name in de minder flexibele taken, als hun partners meer werken. Deze bevindingen tonen een gendergelijkheid. Als mannen en vrouwen in gelijke mate kostwinnaar zijn, verdelen zij de kinderverzorging ook eerlijker, met name de taken die normaal een onevenredige belasting zouden vormen op vrouwen. Het nationaal verlangen voor een gelijke verdeling van werk en zorg verschilt van land tot land, maar de verschillen zijn te klein om op in te gaan. Mijn conclusie is dat er meer overeenkomsten zijn tussen de landen dan verschillen. In alle landen die in dit hoofdstuk zijn opgenomen zijn de werktijden van de moeder een sterke drijfveer voor de betrokkenheid van de vader.

Naast de factor van het land waarin men leeft wordt in dit proefschrift ook onderzocht hoe de sociale status de betrokkenheid van de vader in de opvoeding bevordert of belemmert. In de jaren '50 en '60 is onderzocht of opwaartse sociale mobiliteit in families als gevolg kon hebben dat volwassen kinderen hun ouders zouden verlaten (Blau, 1956; Litwak, 1960; Parsons, 1951), maar er is weinig aandacht besteed aan de neerwaartse zorg van vaders aan hun volwassen kinderen, ondanks het feit dat de meeste zorg gegeven wordt van ouders aan kinderen. In **Hoofdstuk 3** wordt bekeken of ouderlijk advies en belangstelling bevorderd worden door het samenspel van de sociale status van de vaders, moeders en de volwassen kinderen op basis van hun opleidingsniveau. De resultaten geven aan dat mannen meer interesse tonen in hun volwassen kinderen wanneer de appel niet ver van de (hoogopgeleide) boom valt, maar als het op advies aankomt geven hoogopgeleide vader over het geheel genomen meer advies dan vaders die minder onderwijs hebben genoten. Het advies dat vaders geven kan geïnterpreteerd worden door een lens van genderconformiteit; ze geven meer advies als ze een hogere opleidingsstatus hebben wat overeenstemt met de socialisatie van mannen om waarde te hechten aan succes en status. Moeders daarentegen geven alle kinderen in dezelfde mate advies, in overeenstemming met het geslachtstypische gedrag van vrouwen om meer waarde te hechten aan harmonie dan aan status (Chodorow, 1978; Kahn et al, 2011).



Onderzoek naar de opleidingsgradiënt in opvoedingsgedrag in een Westerse context toont vaak aan dat er verschil is tussen sociale klassen over de normen in opvoeding (e.g. Laureau, 2002). Er zijn echter veel verstoringen, bijvoorbeeld de noodzaak voor ouders in een lagere sociale klasse om meer moeten werken, wat ook een lagere betrokkenheid van vaders kan verklaren. In **Hoofdstuk 4** wordt gekeken naar het mechanisme dat de opleidingsgradiënt in de betrokkenheid van de vader verklaart in Bulgarije, waar een starre arbeidsmarkt weinig verschil mogelijk maakt tussen werktijden van hoog en laagopgeleide vaders. In overeenstemming met onderzoek gedaan in andere contexten (Gracia, 2014; Kalil, Ryan, & Corey, 2012), ben ik ook van mening dat hoogopgeleide mannen vaker betrokken zijn en een groter deel van de taken in kinderverzorging op zich nemen die te maken hebben met basiszorg, vermaak, leren, begeleiden en toezicht houden. Hoogopgeleide mannen zijn echter niet meer geneigd om vast te houden aan een strengere norm in de betrokkenheid van vaders. De opleidingsgradiënt lijkt meer het gevolg te zijn van egalitaire rollenpatronen onder hoogopgeleiden dan van de sterke overtuiging dat de betrokkenheid van de vader belangrijk is.

Ten slotte, gezinskenmerken als drijfveer voor de betrokkenheid van de vader worden meestal apart onderzocht, maar in werkelijkheid worden vaders vaak tegelijkertijd beïnvloed door meerdere familieleden. In **Hoofdstuk 5** wordt behandeld in hoeverre de eerdere socialisatie van de man en de werktijden van hun partner gezamenlijk invloed uitoefenen op de betrokkenheid van de vader in de opvoeding. Naar mijn mening zijn mannen meer betrokken met hun kinderen als zij in kinderverzorging gesocialiseerd zijn door hun eigen vader, maar alleen als hun vrouw werkt. Als de vrouw niet werkt wordt de voorkeur van de man, zoals ook blijkt uit hun eerdere socialisatie, overtroffen door de fysieke aanwezigheid van hun partner in huis. Samen met **Hoofdstuk 2** wordt in dit hoofdstuk de conclusie versterkt dat de partner van de man een sterke drijfveer is voor hun betrokkenheid in de opvoeding.

De empirische hoofdstukken dragen zo bij aan een aantal algemene conclusies. Ten eerste kunnen de familieleden van de man, met name hun kinderen, hun eigen vader en hun partner de betrokkenheid van de vader bevorderen en belemmeren. De partner heeft daarbij de grootste invloed op de betrokkenheid en overtreft zelfs de invloed van eerdere socialisatie van de man als zij minder betrokken is op de arbeidsmarkt. Ten tweede is de sociale status in de vorm van een hoog opleidingsniveau een sterke drijfveer voor betrokkenheid gedurende het hele leven van zowel de man als dat van zijn kinderen. Het geobserveerde patroon in gedrag is hetzelfde gedurende de levensloop, maar het gedrag is afhankelijk van de leeftijd van de kinderen. Hoogopgeleide vaders van jonge kinderen zijn meer betrokken omdat ze minder vasthouden aan

de traditionele rollenpatronen; hoogopgeleide vaders van hoogopgeleide kinderen geven meer advies en tonen meer interesse in hun kinderen, onder meer omdat hun status hen dit toe laat. Ten derde is de betrokkenheid van de vader een ingewikkeld concept om te onderzoeken, deels omdat het theoretisch en in de praktijk veelzijdig is en welk aspect men onderzoekt heeft invloed op de bevindingen. De betrokkenheid van de vader kan bepaald worden (a) als deel van de betrokkenheid van de moeder, (b) in absolute termen en (c) als verschillende soorten taken en activiteiten die kunnen variëren van een kind knuffelen tot advies geven tot thuisblijven als het kind ziek is. Elk van deze aspecten hebben verschillende drijfveren en belemmeringen en door meer onderscheid te maken tussen deze aspecten kunnen onderzoekers meer te weten komen. En tot slot, door in dit proefschrift de betrokkenheid van vaders te benaderen vanuit een levensloopperspectief kunnen de verschillende invloeden van belangrijke andere personen gedurende de verschillende fases van volwassenheid op elkaar inwerken.

Mannen worden bij de bevalling van hun partner het vaderschap ingeleid en worden in hun betrokkenheid als vader in eenzelfde mate aangedreven door de belemmeringen die door andere mensen worden opgelegd. In dit proefschrift wordt de vraag gesteld waarom sommige vaders meer betrokken zijn met hun kinderen dan andere vaders en de bevindingen wijzen uit dat de betrokkenheid niet alleen beïnvloed wordt door de vaders zelf, maar ook door hun ouders, hun partners, hun kinderen en ook de sociale status van de man en de nationale context spelen hierbij een rol.





## About the Author

Brett Ory holds a bachelor's degree in literature from Occidental College in Los Angeles, where she wrote an honors thesis on Ralph Ellison's fiction as a precursor to several mid-century black social movements (*cum laude*). After graduation, Brett joined the editorial department at Corwin Press (SAGE Publications) where she developed an interest in sociology.

In 2013 Brett completed a masters in Sociology and Social Research at Utrecht University in the Netherlands (*cum laude*). There she wrote two peer-reviewed, published research articles on drivers of historical maternal mortality and cross-national exploration of widows' well-being. As a PhD candidate at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Brett focused her research on drivers of men's involvement with children which resulted in one peer-reviewed published article in a top family sociology journal and several conference papers and professional publications.

During her graduate school work, Brett came to appreciate hypothesis testing and the scientific method as a means to answering research questions. She now happily applies both in her career as a data scientist.



# Curriculum Vitae

**Brett E. Ory**

(Summer 2019)

## Education

2003-2007	Occidental College, English and Comparative Literary Studies, B.A.
2010-2011	University of Texas at Dallas, Sociology
2011-2013	Utrecht University, Sociology and Social Research, M.Sc.
2013-2017	Erasmus University Rotterdam, Sociology

## Dissertation

*Drivers and barriers of involved fatherhood: Family characteristics, social class, and country context.* Supervisors: P. A. Dykstra & R. Keizer. Department of Public Administration and Sociology. Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2019.

## Honors

- B.A. *cum laude*, Occidental College, 2007
- Honors thesis, *Ralph Ellison and the responsibilities of a black writer*, 2007
- M.Sc. *cum laude*, Utrecht University, 2012
- Poster prize, *Fathers' Involvement across the Life Course*, Berlin, 2015
- Poster prize, *Mothers' work hours and fathers' share of childcare in cross-national perspective*, Vienna, 2015

## Current positions

- Sr. Data Scientist, Instacart (since 2018)
- R-ladies co-organizer Rotterdam and San Francisco local chapters (since 2017)

## Professional experience and employment

2018	Quantitative User Experience Researcher, Uber, San Francisco
2013-2016	Teaching Assistant, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam
2012-2013	Research Assistant, Utrecht University, Utrecht
2012	Internship, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, Den Haag
2007-2009	Editorial Assistant, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA

## Publications

### *Refereed articles*

- Ory, B., Keizer, R., & Dykstra, P.A. (2017). Does Educational Similarity Drive Parental Support? *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79 (4), 947-964
- Ory, B. & Huijts, T. (2015). Widowhood and well-being in Europe: the role of national and regional context. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77 (3), 730-746
- Ory, B. & van Poppel, F. (2013). Trends and risk factors of maternal mortality in late-nineteenth-century Netherlands. *The History of the Family* 18 (4), 481-509

### *Professional publications*

- Conkova, N. & Ory, B. (2016). Fathers in Context: Comparative Analysis of Father Involvement in Bulgaria and the Netherlands
- Ory, B. (2016). Bridging the gender gap at home?
- Ory, B. & Conkova, N. (2016). Cultural determinants of father involvement in Bulgaria
- Ory, B., Keizer, R. & Dykstra, P.A. (2016). Understanding variations in parental advice and interest: A focus on differences and similarities in educational attainment between parents and their adult children