
CHAPTER 1

How *Do* Fathers Influence Children's Development? Let Me Count the Ways

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IT IS OFTEN claimed that psychology became a science in the second half of the 19th century, led in part by continental (mostly German) research on perception, psychophysics, and memory, Galton's attempts to measure intelligence and establish the importance of heredity, and William James's efforts to create a coherent theoretical edifice, which might guide the derivation of empirical answers to age-old philosophical questions. For those who study the development of personality and social behavior, however, the key figure was Freud, who pioneered the close study of pathology as a medium through which to elucidate psychological functioning and spawned a plethora of admirers and critics who constructed much of the popular and scientific psychology we encounter in books such as this. For example, we owe Freud credit for the proposition, now widely viewed as an article of faith, that childhood experiences shape subsequent personality and behavior, although Freud himself only shifted the focus from late childhood and early adolescence to infancy very late in his life. Similarly, it was Freud who placed special emphasis on the formative importance of parent-child relationships, although the specific mechanisms he considered have since been widely discredited. Furthermore, although Freud (and the cohort of psychoanalysts and psychodynamic theorists he inspired) published prodigiously from just before the turn of the nineteenth century to the time of the Second World War, the scientific study of social, personality, and developmental psychology really took off in the postwar period, initially dominated by social learning theorists who rejected Freud's theoretical architecture even as they embraced many of the related beliefs and concepts, including those regarding the importance of parent-child relationships, although neo-analysts played a central role in the construction of attachment theory, which dominates parts of developmental psychology to this day.

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Developmental psychology changed from a discipline dominated by theoretical analysis to one dominated by empirical research, much of it initially conducted in North America, in the years following World War II. This is often viewed as a politically conservative era, dominated by policies designed to put into the past the rigors and horrors of both the Depression and the two world wars by creating a new age of affluence and opportunity. In practice, this involved championing the "traditional" nuclear family, dominated by a breadwinning father and a home-making, child-rearing mother, often housed some distance from either parent's biological or metaphorical roots. Not surprisingly, psychologists embraced these values of the society in which they were reared and lived, so their initial empirical forays into research on children's early development were dominated by mothers—as informants, as the cofocus of observations, and as the "socializing" figures about whom they theorized. Where fathers did enter the picture, their roles were often represented through the eyes and voices of their partners, or they were judged against the models of family function developed by family theorists who shared similar societal assumptions. In such a context, it was easy (if exaggeratedly provocative) to entitle my first essay on the subject: "Fathers: Forgotten Contributions to Child Development" (Lamb, 1975).

Three and a half decades later, the scholarly landscape has changed dramatically. Thousands of professional articles have explored the ways in which fathers affect their children's development, and the contributors to this anthology provide a thorough and readable summary of our contemporary understanding. My goal in this introductory chapter is to sketch some of the overarching themes that dominate the book.

FATHERS AND THEIR ROLES

WHAT DO FATHERS DO?

It seems logical to begin this anthology by examining definitions and descriptions of fathering. What roles do fathers play in family life today? What taxonomies might effectively characterize fathers' activities with and commitments to their children? *What* do fathers do when they are available to their children, and *why* they do what they do? In this regard, a fuller conceptualization of fathers' roles and the origins of their "prescribed" responsibilities is warranted. As several contributors illustrate in this volume, historical, cultural, and familial ideologies inform the roles fathers play and undoubtedly shape the absolute amounts of time fathers spend with their children, the activities they share with them, and perhaps even the quality of the relationships between fathers and children.

In earlier times, fathers were viewed as all-powerful patriarchs who wielded enormous power over their families (Knibiehler, 1995) and vestiges of these notions continued until quite recently. According to Pleck and Pleck (1997), for example, Euro-American fathers were viewed primarily as moral teachers during the colonial phase of American history. By popular consensus, fathers were primarily responsible for ensuring that their children grew

up with an appropriate sense of values, acquired primarily from a study of the Bible and other scriptural texts. Around the time of industrialization, however, the primary focus shifted from moral leadership to breadwinning and economic support of the family. Then, perhaps as a result of the Great Depression, which revealed many hapless men as poor providers, social scientists came to portray fathers as sex role models, with commentators expressing concern about the failures of many men to model masculine behavior for their sons. Throughout the 20th century, fathers were urged to be involved (Griswold, 1993), and following feminist and scholarly critiques of masculinity and femininity, there emerged in the late 1970s a concern with the “new nurturant father,” who played an active role in his children’s lives. As Elizabeth Pleck (2004) explained, however, popular and scholarly discussions of fatherhood have long dwelled on the importance of involvement—often defined by successful breadwinning—and the fear of inadequate fathering. In contrast to earlier conceptualizations of fathers’ roles, often focused quite narrowly on breadwinning, and later discussions focused narrowly on “involvement,” researchers, theorists, and practitioners no longer cling to the simplistic belief that fathers ideally fill a unidimensional and universal role in their families and in their children’s eyes. Instead, they recognize that fathers play a number of significant roles—companions, care providers, spouses, protectors, models, moral guides, teachers, and breadwinners—whose relative importance varies across historical epochs and subcultural groups. Only by considering fathers’ performance of these various roles, and by taking into account their relative importance in the socio-ecological contexts concerned, can fathers’ impact on child development be evaluated. Unfortunately, theorists and social commentators have tended in the past to emphasize only one paternal role at a time, with different functions attracting most attention during different historical epochs.

Focusing on fathers’ behavior when with their children, much of the observational and survey data collected by developmental and social psychologists in the 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., Lamb, 1977) suggested that mothers and fathers engage in rather different types of interaction with their children, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries like the United States (see Chapter 4). These studies have consistently shown that fathers tend to “specialize” in play, whereas mothers specialize in caretaking and nurturance, especially (but not only) in relation to infants.

Although such findings seem quite reliable, the results have often been misrepresented, and have led to overly stereotypical and unidimensional portrayals of fathers as play partners. Compared with mothers, fathers indeed spend a greater proportion of their time with children engaged in play, but they still spend most of their time with children engaged in other activities. In absolute terms, most studies suggest that mothers play with their children more than fathers do, but because play (particularly boisterous, stimulating, emotionally arousing play) is more prominent in father–child interaction, paternal playfulness and relative novelty may help make fathers especially salient to their children (Lamb, Frodi, Hwang, & Frodi, 1983). This enhanced salience may increase fathers’ influence more than would be expected based on the amount of time they spend with their children.

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However, comparative studies, in which fathers' interactions are contrasted with those of mothers, typically focus on mean level differences in parenting activities, and often obscure other common patterns of parent-child interaction. By highlighting the predominant qualities of fathers and mothers, they may promote narrow views of fathers' and mothers' roles, thereby failing to capture similarities in the meaning or degree of influence parents exert on their children. In fact, both fathers and mothers encourage exploration during play with their infants (Power, 1985), alter their speech patterns to infants by speaking slowly and using shorter phrases (Dalton-Hummel, 1982; Golinkoff & Ames, 1979; Rondal, 1980), respond to their infants' cries and smiles (Berman, 1980), even when otherwise engaged (Notaro & Volling, 1999), and adjust their behaviors to accommodate developmental changes in their infants' competencies (Belsky, Gilstrap, & Rovine, 1984; Crawley & Sherrod, 1984). Sensitive fathering—responding to, talking to, scaffolding, teaching and encouraging their children to learn—predicts children's socio-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic achievements just as sensitive mothering does (e.g., Conner, Knight, & Cross, 1997; Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984; Shannon, Tamis-LeMonda, London, & Cabrera, 2002; Van IJzendoorn & De Wolff, 1997). Such findings suggest that fathers can and do engage with their children in many different ways, not only as playmates, and that they are more than role models for their children.

The broader, more inclusive conceptualization of fathers' roles recognizes the appreciable variation that exists both within and between fathers. Most individual fathers assume numerous roles in their families (including breadwinner, playmate, guide, caregiver), although fathers differ with respect to the relative importance of these diverse roles.

FATHERS' INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN

A second line of research on fatherhood examines fathers' effects on children and the pathways through which those effects are exerted. Which aspects of child development are influenced most, at what ages, under which circumstances, and why? Three types of studies have been designed to explore this topic: correlational studies, studies of father absence and divorce, and studies of involved fathers. Here, we review these research methods and then examine direct and indirect effects of fathering on child development.

Correlational Studies Many of the earliest studies of paternal influences were designed to identify correlations between paternal and filial characteristics. The vast majority of these studies were conducted between 1940 and 1970, when the father's role as a sex role model was considered most important; as a result, most studies were focused on sex role development, especially in sons (for reviews, see Biller, 1971; Lamb, 1981). The design of these early studies was quite simple: Researchers assessed masculinity in fathers and in sons, and then determined how strongly the two sets of scores were correlated. To the great surprise of most researchers, however, there was no consistent correlation between the two constructs, a puzzling finding because it seemed to violate a guiding assumption about the crucial

function served by fathers. If fathers did not make their boys into men, what role did they really serve?

It took a while for psychologists to realize that they had failed to ask: Why should boys want to be like their fathers? Presumably, they should only want to resemble fathers whom they liked and respected, and with whom their relationships were warm and positive. In fact, the quality of father–son relationships proved to be a crucial mediating variable: When the relationships between masculine fathers and their sons were good, the boys were indeed more masculine. Subsequent research even suggested that the quality of the father–child relationships was more important than the masculinity of the father (Mussen & Rutherford, 1963; Payne & Mussen, 1956; Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957). Boys seemed to conform to the sex role standards of their communities when their relationships with their fathers were warm, regardless of how “masculine” the fathers were, even though warmth and intimacy have traditionally been seen as feminine characteristics. A similar conclusion was suggested by research on other aspects of psychosocial adjustment and on achievement: Paternal warmth or closeness appeared beneficial, whereas paternal masculinity appeared to be irrelevant (Biller, 1971; Lamb, 1981; Radin, 1981). By the 1980s, it had thus become clear that fathers and mothers influence children in similar ways by virtue of nurturant personal and social characteristics (see Chapter 4). Research summarized in this volume by Golombok and Tasker (Chapter 11) goes even further, indicating that the sexual orientation of homosexual fathers does not increase the likelihood that their children will be homosexual, effeminate, or maladjusted.

As far as influences on children are concerned, in sum, very little about the gender of the parent seems to be distinctly important. The characteristics of the father as a parent rather than the characteristics of the father as a male adult appear to be most significant, although some scholars and social commentators continued to underscore the crucial importance of distinctive maternal and paternal roles into the late 1990s (Biller, 1994; Blankenhorn, 1995; Popenoe, 1996).

Studies of Father Absence and Divorce While the whole body of research that is here termed *correlational* was burgeoning in the 1950s, another body of literature comprising studies in which researchers tried to understand the father’s role by examining families without fathers was developing in parallel. The assumption was that, by comparing the behavior and personalities of children raised with and without fathers, one could—essentially by a process of subtraction—estimate what sort of influences fathers typically had on their children’s development. The early father-absence and correlational studies were conducted in roughly the same era; not surprisingly, therefore, the outcomes studied were very similar and the implications were similar and consistent with popular assumptions as well (see Adams, Milner, & Schrepf, 1984; Biller, 1974, 1993; Blankenhorn, 1995; Herzog & Sudia, 1973; Whitehead, 1993, for reviews): Children—especially boys—growing up without fathers seemed to have “problems” in the areas of sex role and gender-identity development, school performance, psychosocial adjustment, and perhaps in the control of aggression.

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Two related issues arising from the father-absence research must be addressed when evaluating these conclusions. First, one must critically examine the concept of father absence when applied to children whose parents have separated or divorced: Fathers cannot be assumed to be psychologically and emotionally absent just because the parents are separated/divorced and the men no longer live with their partners. Second, even when researchers accept the conclusion that there are differences between children raised in families with the father "present" and those raised in families with the father "absent," they must ask *why* those differences exist and how they should be interpreted. Second, it is important to remember that the existence of differences between groups of children growing up with and without fathers does not mean that every child growing up without a coresident father has problems in the aspect of development concerned, or that all children whose fathers live with them develop appropriately. One cannot reach conclusions about the status of individuals from data concerning groups simply because there is great within-group heterogeneity. This again forces us to ask why such heterogeneity exists among children in father-absent families: Why do some children appear to suffer deleterious consequences as a result of father absence, while others do not? More broadly, the question is: What accounts for group differences between children in father-absent and father-present contexts, and what accounts for the impressive within-group variance?

Researchers and theorists first sought to explain the effects of father absence on boys by noting the absence of male sex role models in single-parent families. In the absence of a resident male parental model, it was assumed that boys could not acquire strong masculine identities or sex roles and would not have models of achievement with which to identify (Biller, 1974, 1993). The validity of this interpretation is weakened by the fact that many boys without coresident fathers seem to develop quite normally so far as sex role development and achievement are concerned. Clearly, some factors other than the absence of a male sex role model may be at least as important as (if not more important than) the availability of a sex role model in mediating the effects of father absence on child development. What might these factors be?

In a conceptual and empirical extension of research on the effects of father absence, many researchers initiated studies in the early 1980s designed to explore more carefully the ways in which divorce might influence children's development. The results of these studies have underscored the many ways in which the absence of coresident fathers influences children (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). First, there are the cancerous effects of predivorce and postdivorce marital conflict (Kelly, 2000; see also Chapter 5). Because most single-parent families are produced by divorce, and since divorce is often preceded and accompanied by periods of overt and covert spousal hostility, parental conflict may play a major role in explaining the problems of "fatherless" children. Second, there is the absence of a coparent—someone to help out with child care, perhaps participate in tough decisions, and to take over when one parent needs a break from the incessant demands of child care. Following divorce, children consistently do better when they

are able to maintain meaningful relationships with both parents unless the levels of interparental conflict remain unusually high (see Chapter 7; Kelly, 2000; Lamb & Kelly, 2009). Children of divorce are often affected by the perceived, and often actual, abandonment by one of their parents and the reduced availability of the other (see chapter 7; Lamb, 1999; Lamb & Kelly, 2009; Thompson & Laible, 1999). Third, there is the economic stress that frequently accompanies single motherhood (Pearson & Thoennes, 1990). The median and mean incomes of single women who head households are significantly lower than in any other group of families, and the disparity is even larger when one considers per-capita income rather than household income (Glick & Norton, 1979; Horn, 1995; O'Hare, 1995). Fourth, the tremendous economic stress experienced by single mothers is accompanied by emotional stress occasioned by a degree of social isolation and continuing (though diminished) social disapproval of single or divorced mothers and children (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982). Amato and Dorius (Chapter 6) provide a succinct and exceedingly clear summary of the most recent survey research on the effects of divorce on children, Carlson and McLanahan (Chapter 8) examine the characteristics and dynamics of fragile families, and Marsiglio and Hinojosa (Chapter 9) explore the little studied role of stepfathers.

In sum, the evidence suggests that paternal nonresidence (previously known as "father absence") may be harmful not because a sex role model is absent, but because many paternal roles—economic, social, emotional—are inadequately filled in these families. Once again, the evidence suggests that recognition of the father's multiple roles as breadwinner, parent, and emotional partner is essential for understanding how fathers influence children's development. Similarly, the evidence suggests that the absence of a male sex role model is not important when explaining the effects of fatherhood or father absence (see Chapter 2).

Research on Involved Fathers. In the 1980s, several researchers sought to identify the effects of increased paternal involvement on children. In most of these studies, researchers compared the status of children in "traditional" families with that of children whose fathers either shared or took primary responsibility for child care (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985; Radin, 1994; Russell, 1983, 1986); other researchers examined the correlates of varying levels of paternal engagement (Koestner, Franz, & Weinberger, 1990; Mosely & Thomson, 1995). The results were remarkably consistent. Children with highly involved fathers were characterized by increased cognitive competence, increased empathy, fewer sex-stereotyped beliefs, and a more internal locus of control (Pleck, 1997; Pruett, 1983, 1985; Radin, 1982, 1994). Again, the question that has to be asked is "Why do these sorts of differences occur?"

Three factors are probably important in this regard (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985). First, when parents assume less sex-stereotyped roles, their children have less sex-stereotyped attitudes themselves about male and female roles. Second, particularly in the area of cognitive competence, these children may benefit from having two highly involved parents rather than just one. This assures them the diversity of stimulation that comes from

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interacting with people who have different behavioral styles. A third important issue has to do with the family context in which these children are raised. In each of the studies cited above, a high degree of paternal involvement made it possible for both parents to do what was rewarding and fulfilling for them. It allowed fathers to satisfy their desires for closeness to their children while permitting mothers to have adequately close relationships with their children and to pursue career goals. In other words, increased paternal involvement may have made both parents feel much more fulfilled. As a result, the relationships were probably much warmer and richer than might otherwise have been the case. One can speculate that the benefits obtained by children with highly involved fathers is largely attributable to the fact that high levels of paternal involvement created family contexts in which the parents felt good about their marriages and the child care arrangements they had been able to work out.

In all of these studies, fathers were highly involved in child care because both they and their partners desired this. The effects on children appeared quite different when fathers were forced to become involved, perhaps by being laid off from work while their partners were able to obtain or maintain their employment (Johnson & Abramovitch, 1985). In such circumstances, wives may have resented the fact that their husbands could not support their families while the husbands resented having to do "women's work" instead of providing for their families financially (Johnson & Abramovitch, 1988; Russell, 1983). Not surprisingly, this constellation of factors appeared to have adverse effects on children, just as the same degree of involvement had positive effects when the circumstances were more benign. Evidently, the extent of paternal involvement may have been much less significant (so far as the effects on children are concerned) than the reasons for high involvement and the parents' evaluations thereof.

Direct and Indirect Effects. Research on paternal influences has also moved beyond correlational studies and studies of "absence"/divorce or enhanced involvement to explore the pathways through which fathers ultimately affect their children. Fathers affect their children directly and indirectly, and both pathways are key to a comprehensive understanding of fatherhood, as Lamb and Lewis elaborate in Chapter 4.

Fathers influence their children directly through their behavior and the attitudes and messages they convey. The direct effects of fathering are especially salient when fathers' and mothers' interactions differ. Because fathers typically spend less time with their children, for example, many are less familiar with their children's language competencies and thus more likely to speak in ways that "challenge" children's linguistic and pragmatic abilities. Specifically, when talking to their young children, fathers use more directives, requests for clarification, *wh-* questions, references to past events, imperatives and contentless utterances than mothers do (e.g., Leaper, Anderson, & Sanders, 1998; Tomasello, Conti-Ramsden, & Ewert, 1990). Because these more complex forms of speech place greater linguistic demands on children, fathers are thought to serve as a "bridge to the outside world" (Ely, Berko-Gleason, Narasimhan, & McCabe, 1995; Mannle & Tomasello, 1987). Thus, fathers'

unique communicative styles *directly* teach children about the linguistic and communicative demands of social exchanges.

Much of the research described in this book is concerned with the ways in which children are directly affected by caretaking, teaching, play, maltreatment, and neglect by their fathers, even though fathers obviously play multiple roles and affect their children's development in many ways other than via direct interaction as well. Specifically, fathers affect children *indirectly*, through their effects on other people and social circumstances that bear on children's development. For example, economic support of the family constitutes an indirect but important way in which fathers contribute to the rearing and emotional health of their children. Furthermore, economic support (or the lack of it) is one of the ways in which noncustodial fathers influence their children's development (see Chapters 6 and 7).

A second important indirect source of influence stems from the father's role as a source of emotional and instrumental support to the other people, principally mothers, involved in the direct care of children (see Chapter 4). The father's function as a source of emotional support tends to enhance the quality of mother-child relationships and thus facilitate positive adjustment by children. Conversely, when fathers are unsupportive and marital conflict is high, children may suffer (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Raymond, 2004; see also Chapter 5). Fathers can also affect the quality of family dynamics by being involved in child-related housework, thus easing the mothers' workloads (Pleck, 1983, 1984). Paternal involvement in housework exemplifies another manner in which fathers influence children—by providing models of behavior that children can either emulate or eschew. Many of the behavior patterns acquired in childhood are the result of lessons derived from observing others and adjusting one's behavior accordingly.

Recognition that indirect patterns of influence are pervasive and perhaps more important than direct learning represents another of the major conceptual revolutions marking the 30 years of scholarship since the first edition of this anthology was prepared. Whereas some contributors to the first edition provocatively proposed that some paternal influences might be mediated indirectly (the chapter by Lewis and Weinraub, 1976, was especially noteworthy in this regard), the extraordinary importance of indirect influences is now recognized universally. Indeed, almost every contributor to this volume underscores the extent to which fathers and children must be viewed as parts of complex social systems (notably, the family) in which each person affects each other reciprocally, directly, and indirectly. From this vantage point, of course, appraising the father's impact is much more difficult, both conceptually and statistically, but the newer perspectives promise much greater validity and, ultimately, generalization.

Also of importance in the quest for understanding direct and indirect pathways is a focus on *how* different aspects of father involvement codetermine developmental outcomes in children. As yet, researchers have done a better job of exploring single paths of influence than at modeling interrelations among multiple aspects of fathering and child outcomes (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 2002). For example, Graham and Sellers (2002) attempted to disentangle the beneficial effects of child support payments

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and other potential influences on children's academic achievement. They noted that child support payments predicted child outcomes better than other sources of income did, but did not account for all of the variance, suggesting that the payment of child support does not simply have a direct impact on child development. Rather, fathers who pay child support may be more committed or dedicated to their children, may have better relationships with their children's mothers, may visit their children more often, or may have the capacity and therefore the tendency to support them. Only by exploring these potential pathways will researchers be able to explain better when, why, and how fathers matter to their children and families.

THE ESSENCE OF FATHERHOOD?

Most chapters in this book focus on the ways in which fathers affect child development, and on the ways in which their influences can be optimized. In Chapter 2, however, Pleck probes the "essential" features of fatherhood, particularly the assumption that, because fathers are by definition male parents, their masculinity must be of defining significance. Many scholars have emphasized paternal masculinity in their analyses of fatherhood and father-child relationships (Biller, 1971, 1994; Blankenhorn, 1995; Popenoe, 1996; but see Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999), but Pleck shows convincingly not only that the identification of fatherhood with masculinity is ill-convinced, but also that the two constructs are effectively orthogonal. As mentioned several times in the present chapter, there is no evidence that children "do better" psychologically when they have more masculine fathers, or that gender differences between mothers and fathers are of great psychological significance to children. As Pleck makes clear, the continuing focus on masculine features of fatherhood in both scholarly and popular articles and books says more about the need to create unique role for men in the family than about well-documented empirical research. Of course, unlinking the concepts of masculinity and good fathering does not in any way diminish the fact that fathers can have major influence, for good or ill, on their children's development; the other chapters in this book powerfully document the extent to which fathers affect their children's development in numerous contexts and cultures. In some contexts, paternal masculinity is important because it is so defined by the individuals and communities involved, but as Pleck concludes, we should not decide from this that fathers' masculinity is necessarily an important factor of what makes them significant to their partners and children.

SUMMARY

Viewed together, the research and scholarship summarized here have significantly advanced our understanding of paternal influences. First, fathers and mothers seem to influence their children in similar rather than dissimilar ways. Contrary to the expectations of many developmental psychologists, the differences between mothers and fathers appear much less important than the similarities. Not only does the description of

mothering largely resemble the description of fathering (particularly the version of “involved” fathering that has become increasingly prominent in the late 20th century), but the mechanisms and means by which fathers influence their children appear very similar to those that mediate maternal influences on children. Stated differently, students of socialization have consistently found that parental warmth, nurturance, and closeness are associated with positive child outcomes regardless of whether the parent involved is a mother or a father. The important dimensions of parental influence are those that have to do with parental characteristics rather than gender-related characteristics.

Second, as research has unfolded, psychologists have been forced to conclude that the characteristics of individual fathers—such as their masculinity, intellect, and even their warmth—are much less important, formatively speaking, than are the characteristics of the relationships that they have established with their children. Children who have secure, supportive, reciprocal, and sensitive relationships with their parents are much more likely to be well adjusted psychologically than individuals whose relationships with their parents—mothers or fathers—are less satisfying. Likewise, the amount of time that fathers and children spend together is probably much less important than what they do with that time and how fathers, mothers, children, and other important people in their lives perceive and evaluate the father–child relationship.

Third, it is clear that fathers play multifaceted roles in their children’s lives and thus influence their children in diverse ways that may vary from family to family, depending on the aspirations and expectations of individual parents, their communities, and their cultures (see Chapters 12 through 15). When studying fathers’ influences on children, therefore, it is important not to focus narrowly on any single facet of paternal behavior or on narrow conceptions of fathering or fatherhood.

Finally, we have come to see that the family context is often at least as important as the individual relationships within the family. Fathers must thus be viewed in the broader familial context; positive paternal influences are more likely to occur not only when there are supportive father–child relationships, but when the fathers’ relationships with their partners, ex-partners, and presumably other children, establish and maintain positive familial contexts.

FATHERS AND SOCIAL POLICY

For more than two decades, scholars have bemoaned the extent to which policy makers have ignored fathers when developing policies and programs designed to enhance children’s opportunities (Lamb, 1986). While social (especially family) policies remain matricentric in most countries, we can observe significant changes in the amount of attention paid to fathers, and these changes have profoundly affected the contents of this book. By way of illustration, note that policy making was almost unmentioned in the first edition of this anthology (Lamb, 1976), which likely attracted the attention of few policy makers. By contrast, applied and policy issues are discussed in

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almost all of the chapters that follow, and are the focus of several (Chapters 18 through 20).

In part, the increased attention paid to fathers by policy makers can be attributed to growing awareness of the ways in which fathers directly and indirectly affect children's development. Indeed, policy makers have probably been more attentive to the importance of indirect effects than most developmental and clinical psychologists. Specifically, they have recognized that single mothers often live in economically precarious circumstances, with many at least partially dependent on government programs. In that context, many policy makers have sought to emphasize fathers' breadwinning responsibilities in the hopes of shifting economic costs from the state to individual men. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many nonresident fathers proved elusive, impecunious, or evasive of their responsibilities, leading policy makers to better recognition of the fact that fathers were more likely to embrace their breadwinning responsibilities if they were more psychologically committed to their children. Coupled with changing popular emphasis on the psychological benefit of greater paternal nurturance, the importance of harmonious partner relationships, and the benefits of warm father-child relationships, promote closer relationships between fathers and their children. These policies and programs are quite diverse: They range from opportunities for fathers to be involved in prenatal courses and present at childbirth to the provision of parental and paternal leave schemes that allow (even promote) fathers' involvement in the direct care of their children, and other legal practices that seek to keep fathers psychologically and financially involved in their children's lives even when they (no longer) live together. Interestingly, similar policies have been embraced by governments of quite different political persuasions, although the more costly schemes, especially those that involve income replacement while fathers are caring for young or sick children, have been embraced only by countries (especially in Europe) with strong social democratic traditions; the Nordic countries have blazed a trail in this respect for more than three decades (Lamb & Levine, 1983; see also Chapter 19). By contrast, more conservative countries such as the United States, Japan, Korea, and China have yet to develop apparently costly programs, although the grassroots pressure may be building in some of these countries, where the age-old emphasis on the distinction between family and societal responsibilities is beginning to blur a little (see Chapters 12 and 18). In this regard, recent policy changes in Australia are significant because they were promoted by a politically conservative government on the grounds both that existing practices were manifestly unfair to fathers, mothers, and children and that new programs would ultimately pay for themselves by reducing the need for economic support of children whose fathers had financially abandoned them and for special services for children who had been psychosocially and educationally damaged by their adverse family experiences (see chapter 20). To date, no other countries have been persuaded by Australia's experiences, but it may still be too early to tell.

Apart from government programs and policies, many of the contributors describe changing practices in various sectors, all responsive to an increasing

emphasis on the significance of father–child relationships. For example, Cummings and his colleagues (Chapter 5) documented the harmful effects of marital conflict on children’s psychosocial adjustment and emphasize, as do Phares and her colleagues (Chapter 16), the need to provide adequate clinical support to both couples and children, mindful of the evidence that such services are more likely to be beneficial when fathers (as well as mothers) are fully engaged. Indeed, the need to include fathers appropriately is a constant refrain, whether talking about marital distress (Chapter 5); marital dissolution (Chapters 7 and 20) and the establishment of new child-rearing households (Chapter 9); fragile and low-income families (Chapters 8 and 10); immigrant fathers and families (Chapter 15); psychological pathology or distress (Chapter 16); the stresses of raising children who have mental, educational, or physical disabilities (Chapter 17); or government policy more generally (Chapters 18 and 19). Even in Africa, where the ravages of disease and poverty are still prominent, governments increasingly recognize the need to reinforce traditional beliefs in the social and economic roles played by fathers (Chapter 13).

Of course, hunter-gatherers and members of other small-scale cultures do not have government policies, and the roles played by fathers vary widely (Chapter 14). Noting that father absence appears to pose a significant risk to children in industrialized countries but not to those in small-scale cultures, Hewlett and MacFarlane wonder whether this can be attributed to the declining importance of kith-and-kin relationships in industrial countries. If true, this would suggest that policy makers will need to continue placing emphasis on father-friendly and father-focused policies in the years ahead.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

In Chapter 2, Joseph Pleck carefully analyzes the widespread belief that fathers’ roles and patterns of influence on children’s development are intricately linked to their masculinity. As Pleck shows, the concepts of both fatherhood and masculinity are complex, but the basic notion implicit in most discussions of “the essential father” posit rather generally that children benefit from uniquely male contributions to their early experiences. As earlier editions of this book have made clear, and as Pleck systematically demonstrates, there is little empirical support for any of six interlinked ideas, including the central beliefs that there are systematic and formatively important gender differences in parenting, and that both the patterns of paternal involvement and fathers’ effects on their children are attributable to their maleness or masculinity. Instead, Pleck opines, “good fathering” is one of several factors promoting positive child adjustment, but is not essential, unique, or specifically masculine.

Pleck’s conclusion is wholly consistent with views of fathers, fatherhood, and paternal influences that have been increasingly apparent from the third edition of this anthology, but Pleck’s magisterial and systematic analysis of once-dominant notions conclusively documents the fatal weaknesses of the assumptions, many of Freudian or psychodynamic origin, that guided a generation of scholarship and popular thought about fatherhood and the

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significance of father-child relationships. As Pleck points out in his conclusion, our improved understanding of fatherhood highlights a number of questions, many quite novel, that need to be addressed as we pursue a fuller understanding of the ways in which fathers influence their children's development.

Pleck then turns his attention, in Chapter 3, to paternal involvement, a concept to which Pleck and his colleagues first drew attention 25 years ago (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985, 1987). Here, too, years of intensive research have made necessary revisions of the ways in which scholars conceptualize paternal involvement; Pleck explores both the reasons why the concept was originally conceived and operationalized and the pressing need, given changes in both society and scholarly traditions, to understand paternal involvement differently in the future. In particular, the chapter articulates a broader vision of paternal involvement that places emphasis on participation in the types of activities and interaction that promote child adjustment and well-being and makes explicit references to the concepts of warmth, responsiveness, or sensitivity and supervision/control that are also central to the broader body of research on parenting. This updated notion of paternal involvement has emerged unheralded in the literature over the past several years as researchers have shifted from asking how much parenting fathers and mothers do to questions about the ways in which they influence children's development. Pleck's reconceptualization of paternal involvement also provides a framework within which paternal involvement is viewed less as a commodity and more as a facet of broader family processes and relationships, within which fathers both influence and are influenced by their children.

Similar questions about what fathers do with and for their children are at the heart of Lamb and Lewis's chapter on father-child relationships in two-parent families (Chapter 4). As made clear in this chapter, there is increasing evidence that the transition to fatherhood is a profound experience for many new fathers that triggers fascination about the new children and considerable introspection about the associated new roles and responsibilities, not only in relation to the newborns, but also in relation to their partners and other family members. For a variety of reasons, both social and psychological, most fathers spend less time relating to their infants than mothers do, becoming somewhat less sensitive as a result, but almost all infants in two-parent families nevertheless develop emotional attachments to both of their parents at about the same time. Consistent with the literature reviewed by Pleck in Chapter 2, the same features of mothering and fathering (especially warmth, sensitivity, involvement, and—increasingly with age—control) affect the quality and psychological significance of the two child-parent attachments. Likewise, although many researchers initially emphasized differences between the behavioral styles of mothers and fathers, subsequent research has made clear that many of these differences (including the "special" identification of fathers with playful companionship) are not universal, have been exaggerated even in societies where they do occur, and are not "essential" features of unique father-child relationships. Indeed, the nature and extent of fathers' influences on children's development and

well-being are determined by the same factors that determine the nature, extent, and impact of mother–child relationships, and there is substantial evidence that paternal influences need to be viewed in the context of a network of family relationships, as noted earlier in this chapter, as well as in later chapters (e.g., Chapter 5).

Interestingly, however, whereas mothers appear to play more significant roles during childhood and adolescence, with filial adjustment and well-being influenced more by the qualities of mother– than of father–child/adolescent relationships, fathers continue to have significant influences on adjustment that, for reasons that are not well understood, become increasingly important as offspring move into adulthood, underscoring the need to view relationships in dynamic life-span perspective.

The value of viewing fathers in the context of a network of relationships within the family system is the central focus of Chapter 5, which revisits and further elaborates a framework introduced in the third and fourth editions of this anthology. Each revision of the model has been informed by a burgeoning body of evidence, much of it conducted by Cummings and his colleagues, documenting the ways in which fathers influence children's development and adjustment, depending on the nature and quality of their marital or partner relationships. This view is consistent with increasing recognition of the extent to which influences on child development can be both direct (e.g., father to child) and indirect (e.g., father influences mother, who in turn influences the child), a notion articulated by Lewis and Weinraub (1976) in the first edition. More broadly, however, Cummings and his colleagues illustrate the ways in which child development must be viewed in the context of multifaceted family systems, within which dyadic relationships are part of transcendent and broader systems of relationships. Using sophisticated statistical procedures to analyze data gathered in longitudinal studies, the chapter not only documents the harmful effects of marital conflict (and, by corollary, the beneficial effects of marital harmony), but also explores the effects of fathers' psychological functioning on family systems and, subsequently, on child adjustment. Such findings nicely underscore the recognition that a considerable proportion, perhaps the majority, of the influence that fathers have on children's development is mediated via complex social systems such as the family.

When marital or partner conflict becomes intolerable, it remains common for parents to separate, and there is a voluminous literature on the extent to which divorce or parental separation affects children's adjustment. As Amato and Dorius point out in Chapter 6, there is considerable evidence that children who have experienced the separation of their parents appear less well adjusted than peers whose parents are still together on a variety of dimensions, although it is much less clear exactly why these differences emerge. I have argued elsewhere (Lamb, 2002a, 2002b; Lamb & Kelly, 2009) that the differences are attributable to a variety of factors, including economic hardship; partner conflict before, during, and after separation; and stresses on or disruptions of important child–parent relationships. Amato and Dorius discuss a considerable amount of evidence, mostly obtained from the sophisticated analyses of data derived from representative surveys, documenting

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the importance of such factors. Amato and Dorius also go considerably beyond previous discussions, underscoring the complexity of the processes involved, noting that divorce can have positive effects on child adjustment when partner conflict is especially intense and intractable, for example, and that the association between continued paternal involvement and child adjustment may be bidirectional, with involvement being promoted by good adjustment and vice versa. Consistent with the conceptualization of paternal involvement advanced by Pleck in Chapter 3, furthermore, Amato and Dorius note that children's postdivorce adjustment is not reliably affected by whether they have contact with their nonresident fathers but is influenced by the extent to which fathers actively participate in child rearing, both before and after the separation.

Paternal separation and divorce are also the focus of Chapter 7, in which the focus shifts from a sociological analysis of large representative surveys to the more intensive examination of smaller numbers of families. As with the other contributors to this book, Fabricius and his colleagues recognize the need to view children's development and adjustment in the context of a complex network of psychologically important relationships. More than most other researchers, however, Fabricius and his colleagues have sought children's views of their parents, and their studies have poignantly documented the extent to which many children and adolescents experience psychological pains as a result of separations that attenuate the youths' ability to maintain close and meaningful relationships with both of their parents. Recognizing these experiences and their often enduring effects on adjustment, Fabricius and colleagues have conducted a number of important studies exploring the policies and practices that can minimize the extent to which fathers disengage from their children after separation as well as the benefits that follow when, instead, divorced or separated fathers maintain psychologically significant roles in their children's lives. Such findings, are of course, entirely consistent with the effects documented by Amato and Dorius in their analyses of survey data.

Whereas previous chapters have focused either on two-parent families or their aftermath, the fragile families examined by Carlson and McLanahan in Chapter 8 occupy a different, if somewhat amorphous, demographic space. Specifically, the parents they have been studying over time were not married when the study began, although almost all were romantically involved and many were living together. During the next few years, many of the couples married (arguably consolidating their commitment to one another) while others broke off their relationships, and the researchers have been at pains to identify predictions of transitions of either type. Carlson and McLanahan show that early indicators of parental health checks or childbirth predicted both the presentation of the parental dyad and continued paternal involvement even when the parents' relationship deteriorated, although coresidence remained the most reliable correlate of paternal involvement.

Studies such as Carlson and McLanahan's Fragile Family Study are especially important in light of evidence that, throughout the developed world, increasing proportions of children are born to unmarried mothers. In such contexts, it is crucially important to understand the diverse roles

that fathers can play in their children's lives in such circumstances. Such studies may be informative regarding the design of policies that promote children's well-being and adjustment in the varied contexts in which many are raised today.

When parents separate or divorce, it is very common for one or both of them to repartner, creating situations in which their children live at least part of the time with parents as well as step parents. As noted especially by Amato and Dorius (Chapter 6), Fabricius et al. (Chapter 7), and Carlson and McLanahan (Chapter 8), most children tend to reside primarily with their mothers following separation, and therefore it is men who are most likely to be coresident stepfathers while stepmothers host shorter visits by their new partners' children from previous relationships. As Marsiglio and Hinojosa (Chapter 9) observe, however, increases in the numbers of stepfathers have not been matched by increases in our scholarly understanding of their roles and importance, notwithstanding Marsiglio's own pioneering work on this topic (Marsiglio, 1995, 2004a, 2004b, 2005). In part, the slow scholarly progress may be attributable to a lack of clarity about the definition of stepfatherhood, particularly when, as in increasing number of cases, the men may not be married to the women whose children are in question, or when the two adults are no longer romantically involved. From the men's point of view, furthermore, stepfatherhood involves understanding and fitting into a complex web of competing relationships, loyalties, and routines that can constitute a psychological and social minefield. Those who navigate these complexities successfully can establish psychologically significant and supportive relationships with their stepchildren while also helping to maintain harmonious and better resourced households that are themselves beneficial. However, stepfamilies can be both unstable and problematic child-rearing environments, with many stepfathers remaining uncertain of their responsibilities with regard to their stepchildren. Clearly, considerably more research is needed to elucidate the key conceptual issues.

Both Amato and Dorius (Chapter 5) and Carlson and McLanahan (Chapter 8) point out that unmarried, divorced, and/or single mothers and their children tend to live in households that are less affluent or even impoverished. Nevertheless, Tamis-LeMonda and McFadden (Chapter 10) take issue with the popular presumption that, in light of these demographic differences, low-income fathers are necessarily much less involved with or committed to their children. In reality, they argue, there is compelling evidence that low-income fathers (members of a heterogeneous category indeed!) are no more likely to shirk their parental responsibilities than more affluent peers, although they certainly face more challenges discharging these responsibilities; that many seek to avoid inflicting on their children some of the harsh conditions they experienced as children; and that as a result, many delay or avoid marriage because they feel uncertain of their ability to support their families economically, rather than because they do not value marriage and the associated commitments. Tamis-LeMonda and McFadden's chapter is all the more powerful because they reveal how easy it is for policy makers, clinicians, and scholars to have their interpretations and conclusions distorted by biased beliefs and assumptions.

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Pervasive negative beliefs about low-income fathers are dwarfed by the prejudices faced by gay fathers, as Golombok and Tasker point out in Chapter 11. As these authors observe, it is hard to know how many gay fathers there are, in part because, until recently, gay men typically became fathers in heterosexual relationships before "coming out" as homosexual, following which many had limited contact with their children. Although there has been relatively little research on gay fathers, it is clear that their situation has changed greatly in recent years, with increasing number of gay men becoming fathers after acknowledging their sexual orientations, in part because there is increasing acceptance of same-sex lifestyles and same-sex parenting in many but by no means all societies today. To date, few researchers have been able to study the relationships between gay fathers and their children, but there is compelling evidence, from studies of lesbian mothers and their children, that same-sex parenting is not associated with psychological maladjustment in children, and that children's adjustment in same-sex households is affected by exactly the same factors—the quality of parent-child relationships, the degree of partner harmony or conflict, and the amount of social and economic support and security—as the adjustment of children with heterosexual parents. And just as there is evidence that children do not need masculine or male-typed parents in order to thrive psychologically, furthermore, it seems clear that they do not need heterosexually oriented parents of either or both genders.

Most of the research on fathers, fatherhood, and father-child relationships has been conducted in Western industrial countries, particularly in North America and western Europe, even though the majority of fathers in the world do not live in such societies. In the next few chapters, therefore, the focus shifts to the direct and indirect effects of culture on fathering and its impact. In the first of these chapters, Shwalb, Nakazawa, Yamamoto, and Hyun (Chapter 12) discuss fathers in East Asia. Their focus falls on fathers in three quite different cultures/countries (China, Japan, and Korea) whose combined population (1.5 billion) comprises nearly a quarter of the world's current population. Entanglements between the three cultures over many centuries have created some shared traditions, not least the impact of a Confucian ideology, which placed father-son relationships at the centre of the family. The strict Confucian father dominated Shwalb's and his colleagues' accounts of these three cultures in the fourth edition of this anthology, but major changes now seem to have taken place throughout the region. Some of these changes reflect the adoption of Western researchers' questions and approaches, while others reflect the broader impact of Western cultural influences in an increasingly global culture, where televised media and the omnipresent Internet have affected the beliefs and presumptions of many East Asian societies. In particular, the studies described by Shwalb and his colleagues portray cultures in which fathers are adjusting to changing demands and expectations, as well as demographic trends that may make daughters, rather than sons, more valuable in the long run. As in the Western countries discussed in other chapters, modern fathers in China, Japan, and Korea are encouraged to become more directly involved in their children's

lives, although there is, as yet, little objective or reliable evidence of the extent to which fathers' behavior has changed in this direction.

Even less systematic research has been conducted on African as on East Asian fathers, as Nsamenang makes clear (Chapter 13), even though Africa accounts for a fifth of the world's population and was, quite literally, the place where humans, and the human way of life, evolved. Contemporary Africa of course comprises more than 50 countries within which hundreds of cultural groups continue to exist with varying degrees of contact and varying degrees of exposure to colonizing cultures or religions. Despite this considerable diversity, fatherhood is highly regarded and respected in most societies, with infertility lowering the status of men in society. Beyond fecundity, however, there has been little research on the behavior and responsibilities of African fathers, who are often recognized as the head of their families, even though widespread unemployment ensures that many are unable to provide for their families adequately. In his chapter, Nsamenang calls, not only for considerable research on the diverse perceptions and performances of fathering and fatherhood throughout Africa, but also for attempts by policy makers, including international nongovernmental agencies, to design their interventions in ways that recognize and enable men's commitment to and involvement in their families.

The focus on African fathers continues in Chapter 14, in which Hewlett and MacFarlane examine fathers' roles in hunter-gatherer and other small-scale cultures, many of which are in Africa and Oceania. Many of the studies reviewed here have adopted adaptationist perspectives, especially on the biological or reproductive bases of father involvement and the extent to which context dramatically shapes paternal behavior—topics that have received little attention in the preceding chapters. Other cited studies focus on core cultural ideologies, and beliefs and practices that powerfully influence perceptions of fatherhood. Indeed, the extent to which these factors affect parental roles and expectations is easy to overlook when researchers focus only on their native cultures; their importance becomes more clearly apparent when different cultures and societies are examined. For that reason, Hewlett and MacFarlane's discussion of small-scale cultures has wide import. Following this analysis, these authors also ask why fathers' presence and involvement appears to be so important to the psychological well-being of children in affluent industrialized countries while children in small-scale cultures appear to thrive psychologically despite wide variation in the behavioral styles and availability of their fathers. Their provocative conclusion is that father involvement is important in those affluent societies precisely because they are characterized by family contexts that, because children are reared in relative isolation, removed from extended networks of kin and family, deviate dramatically from those experienced, not only by children in most cultures, but also throughout most of our species' history (Hrdy, 2009).

Questions about core cultural values and beliefs also play a central role in Strier and Roer-Strier's analysis of fatherhood in the context of immigration (Chapter 15). In our increasingly integrated world, immigration has

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become a way of life for millions, with one or both parents frequently moving from one country to another in search of better economic opportunities and/or greater freedom. Studies of immigrant fathers have frequently compared them unfavorably to peers who do not migrate, but Strier and Roer-Strier underscore the strengths demonstrated by many of these men as they encounter and overcome a range of barriers impeding their progress in new host countries. Clearly, immigration has diverse effects on men, depending on both their initial and subsequent circumstances, and as a result, the effects on father-child relationships and children's adjustment are poorly understood.

We do know, of course, that considerable numbers of children experience such a degree of psychological maladjustment, whether or not their parents or families migrate, and the roles that fathers play in clinical interventions for these children and adolescents are the focus of Chapter 16. As Phares and her colleagues observe, children are more likely to have psychological difficulties when either of their parents have psychological problems, although there has been much more research on the association with mothers' than with fathers' psychopathology. In some cases, the similarities between parents and children are genetically mediated, whereas in other cases the parents' psychopathology affects the quality of their parental behavior, which in turn affects the children's problems. The latter mechanism is important because (as many researchers have now demonstrated; see Gunlicks and Weissman, 2008), treatment of the parents' problems can bring about improvements in their children's behavior.

Fathers are much less likely than mothers to be involved in clinical interventions for their children and adolescents, and there is some evidence that interventions are more effective when both parents are involved. Phares and her colleagues argue that the incremental value of paternal involvement is less than might have been expected because many of the family- or parent-based interventions were developed with mothers in mind. In addition to this problem, researchers need to address the reasons why men appear less willing to be involved in clinical interventions, as well as the reasons why many practitioners are less successful in doing so. Phares and colleagues discuss the existing research and offer several suggestions about ways in which these problems could and should be overcome.

Techniques that might help promote fathers' participation in the lives and treatment of their children are also at the heart of MacDonald and Hastings's discussion of children with developmental disabilities (Chapter 17). Here, deinstitutionalization and the increased popularity of family systems theory have fostered efforts to ensure that fathers' play significant roles in caring for children with disabilities, promoting a number of studies examining the ways in which fathers respond to diagnosis by recognizing the impact on their roles and responsibilities' as well as on the psychological stresses recognized by these men. Overall, the evidence suggests that the most effective interventions are those that support each parent as an individual, as a partner, and as a member of the family; begin as soon as possible after diagnosis; and pay explicit attention to each parent's emotional responses. Like Phares et al.,

MacDonald and Hastings also note that female-dominated professions often appear insensitive to the specific concerns that fathers may have, underscoring the need for professionals to examine the unintended messages they may be communicating to their clientele.

Policies and services for wider groups of fathers, not only those whose children have psychological problems or developmental disabilities, are the focus of the last three chapters. In the first of these, Cabrera (Chapter 18) focuses on public policies and programs in the United States and Canada. As she points out, policy makers in North America appeared to discover fathers in the 1990s, and, as a result, there have been significant changes over the past decade and a half. Progress was initially slow because fathers (as opposed to men) had been invisible for so long, but once efforts were made to identify the specific needs and barriers faced by fathers in diverse circumstances, policies were reexamined. Perhaps the most important realization has been the fact that children in poverty are disproportionately unlikely to live with their fathers; this has in turn promoted many efforts (accompanied by varying degrees of ideological baggage) to promote fathers' commitment to and involvement in the lives of their children on the grounds that this may promote children's well-being, directly and indirectly. The most important relevant policy initiatives of the Clinton and Bush administrations are critically examined and evaluated by Cabrera. She also highlights differences between the United States, where married and unmarried, resident and nonresident fathers have all been the focus of some policies, and Canada, where policies have tended to focus on men who are or have been married to the children's mothers. In both cases, evaluations have been disappointing, especially because the focus has been on individual policies, rather than the network of policies and practices.

Family policies in Europe then came under scrutiny in Chapter 19. Here, O'Brien and Moss report that the European Commission has promoted several policies to promote fathers' active involvement in their children's lives while also promoting gender equality at home and at work. In many countries, parental leave schemes have been especially important, with recent years witnessing a shift from policies that allow parents to divide generous paid leave benefits between the two parents to policies, pioneered in the Scandinavian countries, that offer targeted benefits to mothers and fathers as well as some months that can be taken by either parent. Such arrangements have understandably led to increased take-up by fathers, but long-term effects on paternal involvement or gender equality have yet to be assessed. In addition, as O'Brien and Moss observe, paternal leave and flexible work schemes must be viewed and promoted as a part of a more holistic suite of policies that include high-quality and affordable child care as well as regulation of the amounts of paid work that can be demanded, so that some men, especially those in low-income families, are not forced to work such long hours that their family time is unnecessarily constricted.

In the final chapter, Parkinson (Chapter 20) discusses the dramatic policy initiatives introduced by the Australian government between 2003 and 2008. Perhaps no other country has attempted so complete an overhaul of an entire

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suite of policies and programs in an attempt to create a coherent set of policies designed to promote the welfare and well-being of children whose parents are contemplating separation. Changes were prompted by concerns that existing policies did not serve the interests of children, mothers, or fathers because they did not limit the amount of acrimony or violence, while disenfranchising and alienating many fathers and impoverishing many mothers and their children. The new policies thus seek to provide support and guidance from early in the process (ideally reducing acrimony and perhaps even averting some separations), while insisting on continued financial contributions to children's support from both parents *and* one ensuring that, wherever appropriate, children have opportunities to maintain meaningful relationships with both of their parents. The evolutionary (or revolutionary) process described by Parkinson might be a model for many other countries particularly because, as Parkinson observes, the initial findings suggests that the new system is considerably better for children than the system it replaced (Parkinson & Cashmore, 2009).

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