UCD SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE
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WORKING PAPER SERIES
2015

Fathers, Fathering, and Fatherhood across Cultures: Convergence or Divergence?

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WP40

May 2015

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
Coláiste Ollscoile Baile Átha Cliath
BELFIELD DUBLIN 4

Fathers, Fathering, and Fatherhood across Cultures: Convergence or Divergence?

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F = Fathers Fathering and Fatherhood across Cultures: Convergence or Divergence 2015 May 1 Paper

Abstract: Parenting research in large-scale societies initially focused on White, North American, and middle-class mothers and fathers. Building on these roots, interest in and research on fathers, fathering, and fatherhood became more catholic and spread worldwide. Extant research is now available from cultures in every continent, but the coverage within and between societies varies widely. Uneven coverage makes cross-cultural comparisons difficult but when possible they often challenge previous assumptions made in Western cultures. For instance, physical play as an essential hallmark of father interactive style is not found in Taiwan, India, Africa, and Thailand and few differences are found in play activities between mothers and fathers or by gender. Approaches to fathering vary widely from a primary concern with being a disciplinarian and provider to those focusing on nurturing child care with many possible types and combinations occurring in between. Moreover, national variances in Western approaches to fathering, and especially to father involvement in the early years post-partum, are increasingly mediated by the availability and non-availability of 'father-friendly' social policies, such as paid parental leave (Rush and Seward, 2014). Non-Western fathering varies more dramatically than fathering practices in the Western world, which has in the main, albeit not uniformly, dismantled the patriarchal power of fathers over the course of the 20th century (Therborn, 2004) and replaced kinships or familial based responses to child welfare and social protection with welfare state arrangements (Sommestad, 1998). Almost all research findings on fathers across cultures since 1990 suggests some change in fatherhood in the direction of expecting greater involvement by fathers, yet changes in fathering or the conduct of fathers has been slower and lagged behind. Although, in some Western countries, especially the Nordic countries, the gap between social expectation and actual father involvement is lessening because of the introduction of father-friendly parental leave policies (Rush, 2015). The history, tradition, economy, and geography for each culture play important roles in this change and the uneven rates of change across cultures or lack thereof. For fatherhood evidence suggest a growing convergence of expectations but fathering practices are still very diverse or exhibiting a convergence to divergence.
Word count = 350

Keywords: Fathers, Fathering, Fatherhood, Global Fathering, Parenting, Culture, Cultural diversity

Although parents, parenting, and parenthood have been common themes in historical and classical literature (Adams & Steinmetz, 1993), the systematic study by social scientists of parenting began relatively recently with a focus on mothers. Studies of fathers (men), fathering (behavior), and fatherhood (cultural expectations) began even more recently (Seward & Stanley-Stevens, 2014). Benson's (1968) *Fatherhood: A sociological perspective* was the first comprehensive treatment on fatherhood and fathering. Lamb's (1976) edited book *The role of the father in child development* charted the explosion of academic and practical advice books and articles on and for fathers. Lamb's following four editions continued to provide a comprehensive overview of the fatherhood and fathering literature. The emerging theme in later editions of cultural context was the exclusive focus of Lamb's (1987) work, *The father's role: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Fatherhood expectations and fathering research from twelve societies beyond the previous focus on research in the United States and Canada were presented. Besides Western industrialized societies, chapters on China, Japan, West Africa, and the Aka Pygmies of central Africa were included. Lamb's (2004) 4th edition of the role of the father series expanded even more the cross-cultural perspective beyond "White, North American, middle-class" fathers (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004, p. 15). The appearance in Lamb's (2010) 5th edition of several cross-cultural comparative chapters was another research advance (e.g., Hewlett & Macfarlan, 2010). The most inclusive book by Shwalb, Shwalb, and Lamb (2013a) is a compendium of extant cross-cultural research on fathers in multiple cultures from every continent on the globe. Selin (2014) provides new details for some of the same cultures plus covers some additional cultures. Differences and similarities across cultures are documented and in many cases differences within cultures are documented as well. To better understand fatherhood and fathering, different cultural levels must be taken into consideration From a global perspective it is possible to locate differing cultural understandings of fatherhood within fatherhood as a social institution, which remains highly patriarchal in many parts of the world including first "South Asia, and especially its northern Hindu and Muslim parts"; second; "West Asia/North Africa, with Turkey a significant but far from complete exception and including with some reservations, Central Asia; third, most of sub-Saharan Africa, with partial exceptions on the West Coast and in the South" (Therborn, 2004:107).

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FAMILY CULTURES, SOCIETAL SUBCULTURES, SOCIETAL AND REGIONAL SUPRACULTURES AND PARENTING

Initial and most past studies of fatherhood typically focused on cultural differences between nation-state societies (Shwalb et al., 2013a). As more fathers were studied in societies an awareness of internal variations between subcultures such as social class increased. Ultimately it became clear that fatherhood and fathering varied by a family's culture, which was based on its location in the larger social structure (Seward, 1991). A more comprehensive understanding of fatherhood and fathering hence requires a consideration of multiple cultural levels within societies starting with family cultures.

Every family's culture consists of the interrelated norms shared by its participants, including their common values, rules, and expectations. Together these define the family's boundaries and direct its members' behavior (Hess & Handel, 1959, 1994). The norms are largely a consequence of the family's cultural and subcultural contexts within the larger social structure (macro level) and the distinctive social histories that each member brings to his or her family relationships (micro level). The family links the social order to its members. Parents tend to teach their children the norms of the larger culture and encourage compliance to these norms. The intimacy, frequency, and continuity of family interactions provides the major means by which culture gets transmitted and social order is maintained.

A family's gender and generation distributions results in compositional differences that help define its culture. The family's culture is also affected by its stage in the family life cycle and the dynamics for each set of interpersonal relationships. A family's social class, ethnicity, and community provide its social address or coordinates, locating it in the social structure according to their particular standing (Seward, 1991). Different social classes, ethnic groups, and communities usually represent particular, unique, and substantially unequal subcultures. Hence, cultural norms (fatherhood) from both the macro and micro levels in society proscribe how each man should go about enacting his family roles including fathering. Fatherhood and fathering approaches can vary a great deal between families and subcultures. These differences have and will increase with growing divergence between families and subcultures (cf. Cherlin, 2013; Therborn, 2004).

Due to growing globalization of production and skill-biased technological changes across most world economies, a nation-state focus has become too narrow (Cherlin, 2013, p.578-579). For example, as a political entity with the power to set legally enforceable supra-national standards across 28 countries and with a combined population in excess of half a billion people; the European Union has established "an international politics" of maternity and parental leave "where countries with very different welfare regimes have to try for a common ground" (Fusulier, 2009:243). Moreover, as capital, labor, and information increasingly move on a global scale, supranational cultures need to be considered when studying fathers (cf., McHale, Dinh, & Rao, 2014). These supranational cultures include regional areas containing multiple nation-states and beyond. For example, globalization has provided various and growing economic opportunities for transnational migratory labor which often results in prolonged absence of fathers (or mothers) from their children. While this is not a new pattern the magnitude of it today is much greater and more complex (Landesman & Seward, 2013). Important gender, educational, occupational skill, and social class difference all have implications for parenting. Hence, cultures of various levels have received attention in the research on fathers.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ONFATHERS, FATHERING, AND FATHERHOOD ACROSS AND WITHIN CULTURES IN SELECTED WORLD REGIONS

Interest in and research on fathers, fathering, and fatherhood had spread worldwide (Seward & Richter, 2008), yet extant fatherhood and fathering research varies widely between nations and regions. In some societies like Japan the research is broad and deep but in many societies like Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Turkey (cf. Sen, Yavuz-Muren, & Yagmurlu, 2014, p. 186) the coverage is nascent and narrowly focused. Further many nations still lack any coverage as is the case in most of Africa. Also missing is current coverage of fathers in surviving indigenous populations in many parts of world that were colonialized (cf., Davis, Dionne, & Fortin, 2014).

The gap between the amount of research on fatherhood and fathering in Western versus non-Western societies is narrowing. For example, Selin's (2014) book *Parenting across cultures: Childrearing, motherhood and fatherhood in non-Western cultures*, provides details on fatherhood and fathering that complements available information from many societies plus some

information on societies not previously covered. But the research gap still exist and is substantial (Shwalb et al., 2013b, p. 386). Despite the expansion of research on fatherhood and fathering internationally, the United States, Canada, and the nations of Western Europe still provide the most in-depth and inclusive coverage, with North American perspectives on the role of the father in child development providing the impetus for garnering 'global perspectives' (Russell, 2001:52). What follows is an attempt to present a summary of much of the current research on fatherhood and fathering.

East Asia: Japan, China, and Korea

Changes in Asian fatherhood and fathering have received less attention than other family changes (Yeung, 2013) but research related to fathers in East Asia has increased dramatically over the last decade especially in Japan, China, and Korea (Shwalb, Nakazawa, Yamamoto, & Hyun, 2004; 2010). Earlier research related to fathers in these nations focused on Asian cultural traditions' implications for fatherhood. The expectations emphasized that the role of the father consisted of being a hard working provider but emotionally distant from children. Despite a common East Asian heritage including Confucian and Buddhist beliefs, Japanese fathers seemed to have departed from the traditional "strict father, affectionate mother" ideology sooner than Chinese and Korean fathers (Nakazawa & Shwalb, 2013). The Confucian creed of "strict father, affectionate mother" and related laws were replaced in Japan by the 1947 Constitution, which emphasized democracy and egalitarianism. Traditional Japanese emphasis on emotion-focused and permissive fatherhood provided a base for the contemporary accounts of nurturing and friendly Japanese fathering (Holloway & Nagase, 2014, pp. 69-72).

Ishii-Kuntz (2013) found that employment related factors significantly influenced fathers' involvement in child care of preschool children. Availability of parental leave, shortened work hours, and flextime plus autonomy in work hours and workloads were associated with more involvement for fathers employed in medium and small companies. Job stress reduced fathers' involvement, especially in large companies. Greater work and commuting times posed the greatest constraint on fathers' involvement. Younger and better educated fathers, whose own fathers were involved with them, had greater involvement.

On the other hand, popular rhetoric encouraging Japanese fathers' involvement in childcare was not matched by parallel changes in the practice of fathering for many years. Decades of pro-fathering government policies probably have contributed to the present generation of fathers in Japan being the first where fathering has changed dramatically. For example, in 1999 the Ministry for Health and Welfare launched a poster-campaign with the slogan "A man who does not participate in childrearing is not a man" (Shwalb et al 2004: 168). This campaign and on the basis of *Work-Life Balance* (WLB) *Charter*, with "targets for men's participation in housework and childrearing" (Seeleib-Kaiser and Toivonen, 2011: 350), it was asked "whether elements of Nordic-style family policy" had "begun to emerge in Japan". (Toivonen, 2007:2). Nakazawa and Shwalb (2013) optimistically note the positive impact of non-profit organizations and the Internet on fathering. However, the power of Japanese firms and corporations has so far undermined the combined efforts of government, trade union, women's groups and the media to revolutionize the practice of fathering in Japan because "hierarchical Japanese corporate culture, which is deeply rooted in traditional Japanese culture, does not support men taking paternity leave" (Rush and Seward 2014, Sano and Yasumoto 2014: 324).

China's larger and more heterogeneous population plus dramatic urban and rural differences compared to Japan and Korea make it difficult to generalize about fatherhood and fathering (Shwalb et al., 2010). Recent research focuses on the diversity in Chinese families and fathering (Xu, Zhang, & Hee, 2014, pp. 15-17). Xuan and Lamb (2013) documented diverse family structures including trends toward smaller nuclear families and the existence of a "floating population" of over 100 million men who leave their families (or never marry) to find work in major cities.

Xu and Yeung (2013) examined father and daughter relationships in one of China's largest and most modern cities, Shanghai. In contrast to the Confucian family doctrine that stressed father and son relationships, Shanghai fathers held very high aspirations for their daughters regardless of their own socioeconomic status. The high value fathers placed on their daughters' educational attainment was a crucial aspect of their involvement. The measure of their daughters' success has shifted from marrying a good husband to academic achievement. These fathers and daughters also reported valuing and enjoying emotional closeness.

These changes in Shanghai and related changes throughout China need to be understood in historical contexts. After China's shift from a feudal system to a communist society, the government instituted many marriage and labor laws reforms. The reforms promoted more egalitarian parent–child and gender relationships. In the late 1970s, China's One Child policy and economic reforms help bring about a transformation to a market based economy. Growing and rapid privatization and globalization, especially since 2000, have resulted in many parents putting all their resources and hopes on their only child, regardless of gender, to help them compete for better life chances.

Taken together, it is worth noting that according to Therborn, Japan and Communist China were at the 'actual centre' of the decline of patriarchy in the post WWII era (Therborn, 2004: 74). This was from a starting point where East-Asia was understood to have "the most elaborate patriarchy in the world" (Therborn, 2004: 108). Therborn suggested that legacies of the rule of father or patriarchy in China remained rooted in patrilocalism powers before and after marriage, filial obligations and the idea of a bride price, which was understood to be rising (p. 122). Similarly, Therborn argued that in Japan, "a considerable amount of patriarchal and/or parental weight" remained, despite the dimunition of the "post-war salaryman father" (p. 123).

In Hong Kong, growing urbanization and Westernization has gradually weakened Chinese cultural beliefs. This trend continues even though Hong Kong has been a part of the People's Republic of China since 1997 as a Special Administrative Region after 156 years under British governance. Over time a substantial shift has occurred from traditional Chinese Confucian creed about parental roles of "strict father, affectionate mother" (Shek & Sun, 2014, p. 30). The two replacements are "strict mothers, affectionate fathers" and "involved mothers, detached fathers."

Less is known about Korean fathers with most of the available research focusing on men in South Korea. South Korean middle and working class fathers, according to Kwon and Roy (2007) had to negotiate among three contradictory sets of cultural expectations: traditional Confucian fatherhood, paid work success as an indicator of good fathering, and the new view of fatherhood embracing caregiver roles. Fathers used different strategies to deal with the gap between conflicting cultural expectations and low levels of involvement with their children. The most common strategies included delaying becoming a father, lowering expectations, and

segregating roles. Korean fatherhood and fathering appears to have changed less than in China or Japan, with a continuing focus on the provider role and supporting mothers' activities rather than involvement in daily activities with children (Shwalb et al., 2010). The continuing focus on providing financially promoted by the growing economic crisis since 1997 has threatened the "job-for-life" concept and forced many workers to devote more time to paid employment.

Southeast Asia: India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, and others

Like China, India is a very large and heterogeneous population in regard to culture and religion. This is reflected in the immense diversity among Indian fathers or what Chaudhary (2013) labeled an "incredible variety". Yet one frequent theme is that Indian fathers distance themselves and are awkward with their children, avoiding open expressions of emotion in order to maintain their authority as family patriarchs. Fathering roles are often shared with a wide network that may include relatives, neighbors, friends, and household helpers. Ironically, fathers that are usually aloof and unemotional toward their children typically become openly loving and affectionate as grandfathers. Increasing global interaction and movement to urban areas are pressures bringing about changes in Indian fatherhood expectations toward more closeness and care giving (Tuli, 2012).

Noteworthy changes in involvement with children have been documented by Sriram and Sandhu (2013), among well-educated middle-class Indian fathers from the vibrant city of Baroda. Located in western India, Borada has experienced substantial growth in educational and economic opportunities for several decades. The opportunities have helped the nuclear family become more dominant and reduced the need for and support from extended family members. Still traditional Hindu parenting beliefs shape fathering among these Indian men. Hindu fathers are expected to fulfill fatherhood duties and perform good deeds (karma) to earn merit and pave the way to their salvation. These Indian fathers reported being highly involved in providing moral guidance, correcting bad behavior, and monitoring the habits of their children. Almost all fathers reported being involved in planning their children's future. Fathers' involvement was positively associated with mother's involvement. As in Western societies, fathers wanted to pass on to their children the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive global environment.

In predominantly Muslim Bangladesh and Malaysia, fathering is as diverse as in India (Hossain, 2013). Another similarity between fathering in India, Bangladesh, and Malaysia is the combined complementary influences over thousands of years of culture, strong extended families, patriarchy, and especially religion. Traditional Quranic verses and traditional customs (adat) call for involved fathering. Hossain (2013) claims both Islamic traditions and Westernization convey similar messages to fathers. Together they provide pressure for greater father involvement. But the impact of poverty on Bangladeshi and Malay fathers has in part countered these pressures.

In Bangladesh, fatherhood has changed little except in urban nuclear families where expectations of fathers' participation in parenting and childcare alongside mothers has increased (Hamadani, & Tofail, 2014, pp. 140-141). These type of families were studied to assess the impact of fathers' taking employment leave on their involvement with their children. The results were similar to a comparable study in the United States (U.S.) (Jesmin & Seward, 2011). Bangladeshi fathers who took leave participated more in all child care tasks than fathers who did not take parental leave, which was also the pattern in the U.S. Bangladeshi fathers are in worse financial shape than U.S. fathers and averaged shorter leaves than the U.S. fathers. Bangladeshi families faced a similar situation to U.S. low-income families. Lower income U.S. fathers often do not take any unpaid leave in conjunction with the birth of their children because they cannot afford it (Stanley-Stevens, 2012).

Malay-Muslim fathers' involvement with their adolescent children in the state of Selangor was studied by Juhari, Yaacob, and Talib (2013). Malaysia, like India and China, has experienced rapid socioeconomic development. Like Hossain (2013; 2014; pp. 81-84), Jahri and colleagues (2013) argue that Malay fatherhood and fathering is embedded both in the Islamic religion and Malay culture. The proscribed mission of Muslim parents is to guide children to lead good, god-fearing lives. The focus of fathers is on equipping children with worldly and religious knowledge to benefit their children's future as adults and in the life hereafter. More and positive involvement from their own fathers was associated with studied fathers' greater involvement with their children. The more fathers were satisfied with their marriages and the more education they completed were associated with more involvement with their children. Muslin fathers

desired greater involvement based on the teachings of Islam, particularly religious teachings and coaching for academic success.

In nearby Singapore, fathers in a national survey reported wanting more involvement with their children and to participate more in parenting duties (Quek, 2014, pp. 150-151). Despite these changes in fatherhood, responsibility for childcare still rest primarily with mothers. More sharing was reported with fathers who valued greater equality with mothers and restructured their paid work to accommodate parenting (p. 154).

Vietnam is another rapidly developing country in the region. Yet despite globalization, expansion of mass media, and policy initiatives aimed at altering gender and intergenerational relationships, including getting fathers more involved, little has changed, according to Jayakody and Phuong (2013). The slow pace of change is attributed to Vietnam's strong Confucian heritage and strength of kinship structures. These have worked against fathers becoming equal co-parents with mothers. Fathers still symbolize power in the family and are expected to carry out authoritarian and disciplinarian roles. This stability is surprising in light of Vietnam's turbulent history.

The Vietnam wars split the nation into two governments and Vietnamese fathers were likely to be absent from their children's lives for extended periods during this time. In North Vietnam feudal vestiges were abandoned including Confucian principles plus marriage and labor laws were reformed to promote gender equality. In contrast, the southern government sought to reinforce Confucian principles plus maintain traditional gender and generational distinctions. The country was reunited into a socialist Republic in 1975. In 1986, Vietnam initiated economic reforms (Đổi Mới or renovation policy) with the goal of creating a socialist-oriented market economy. Jayakody and Phuong (2013) using retrospective data assessed changes over time for three birth cohorts, with each one representing the family formation stage during the historical periods of the war, reunification, and renovation. Despite the changes, reforms, and concentrated efforts, fatherhood and fathering changed very little over these three cohorts. Vietnamese fathers' involvement in child care tasks was very low and did not increase over time. Traditional gender distinctions and ideology persisted. Relatives in the extended family system, especially grandmothers or older female siblings, continued to be important providers of child care, hence freeing Vietnam fathers from child care. However, fathers' education was positively associated

with greater involvement. Hence more education and migration might reduce extended families members' availability for help and promote fathering in the future.

In the Philippines, fathers in most families are still considered the dominant authority and the provider role is still primary with little involvement with children expected (Alampay, 2014, pp. 115-117). Many Filipino families have been affected by transnational migratory labor patterns. Globalization has provided various economic opportunities for migratory labor, which often results in prolonged absence of fathers (or mothers). The impact of long term migration on fathering in Southeast Asian countries is just starting to be assessed in many societies but has a longer history in the Philippines.

The impact of Filipino fathers working abroad on parent–child relationships was accessed by Harper and Martin (2013). Around 2 million Filipinos leave their homes to become overseas workers each year. The Philippine economy relies heavily on remittances from these transnational migrants. Fathers' remittances and frequent contact were positively related to the mothers' warmth toward children. Increased paternal warmth during home visits was positively associated with higher quality marital and father–child relationships. On the other hand, mothers' negative attitudes toward fathers' contact was associated with a decline in the quality of marital and father–child relationships. Increased mother warmth when fathers were abroad contributed to an increase in relationship quality between father and child. Fathers working abroad had a pronounced effect on sons but not on daughters. Absent fathers still play an important role in developmental outcomes of children by providing financial and emotional support for mothers. Mothers emerged as vital players in mediating father-child relationships.

The impact of fathers' migration on children has been rarely studied despite the fact that millions of children currently live in transnational families. The psychological wellbeing of left-behind children in the Southeast Asian countries of Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines were studied by Graham and Jordan (2011). They found that children of migrant fathers in Indonesia and Thailand were more likely to have poor psychological wellbeing, compared to children in non-migrant households. But no differences were found among children in Vietnam or the Philippines.

McHale, Dinh, and Rao (2014) summarized changes in co-parenting in the supraculture of East and Southeast Asia. Shared cultural beliefs have contributed to slow and uneven changes

regarding fatherhood and fathers. Expectations have changed more than behavior with the greatest increases in father involvement in Asian occurring primarily in nuclear, urban, more educated and dual earner families (p. 170).

Australia

On the island continent nation of Australia, fathers have been largely overlooked in the past (Smyth, Baxter, Fletcher, & Moloney, 2013). Surprisingly, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) founded in 1980 has not focused on fatherhood or fathering. One potential data source is the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, of which AIFS is a partner. While a good deal of data gathered relates to fathering it has yet to be analyzed and published, which is true for some other research studies as well. This situation led Smyth and colleagues to lament the general 'dearth' of systematic research on fathering. The diversity and mobility of the Australian population contribute to the challenges of studying fathers. Over 44% of Australians report being born overseas or having a parent born overseas, in other words, since 1945 almost one-third of the population has immigrated to Australia from more than 185 countries (p. 362).

Like in many other Western nations, employment conditions affect Australian fathering. In the 1980's, Russell (1987, p. 354) described Aussie fathers as primarily being economic providers and playmates to their children. Despite shifting expectations toward more sharing of child care with mothers, Russell predicted very slow change in practices. Smyth et al. (2013, p. 376) acknowledge Russell's comments were 'somewhat prophetic' but contend that some changes have occurred at a faster paced than predicted. At the same time they note how hard current Australian fathers must work to pay for the high costs of living. Hence existing working conditions for men make it likely that traditional fathering practices are less susceptible to change. Smyth et al. (p. 363) even explored how climate and geography may affect the father's role. For example, the temperate climate encourages outdoor play activities with children while great distances between families and non-resident fathers make regular contact difficult. Like other large and mobile societies, father absence is a serious problem in Australia, requiring more attention via social policies and legislation to continue to address the responsibilities of separated fathers (Parkinson, 2010).

Middle East: Arab Societies and Israel

Ahmed's (2013) review of the literature on fathers in Arab societies found information on twenty-two different societies but coverage was uneven. Most of the research cited dealt with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Jordan. Ahmed's portrayal of Arab fathers emphasized negative social trends and the adverse effects on fathers of immigration, death, and divorce. For example, Ahmed contends that many Arab fathers and even some Arab mothers lack the parenting skills necessary to raise children appropriately (p. 126). Most of deficiency in parenting skills was attributed to fathers living apart from their family.

Also related to the negative view is the concept of neo-patriarchy ascribed almost exclusively to Arabic fathers and their families (Saharabi, 1988). In essence Saharabi argued that the 19th century Arab awakening (nahda) not only failed to dismantle patriarchy, instead it produced a distinct form of neo-patriarchal Arab societies and cultures. Neo-patriarchal Arab societies were understood to reflect neither modernism nor tradition, but rather a distorted form of Arab modernism. Instead of being eroded by the Arab awakening, the private patriarchy of fathers' in families was reinforced by public-hybrid forms of patriarchy and patrimony. Kharouf and Weir (2008: 309) considered the concept of neo-patriarchy as a little too "blunt" to be applied readily to Arab societies. Instead they preferred to think of Arab societies as existing on a patriarchal continuum. At one end fathers are ascribed power because of their familial and intergenerational tribal or clan memberships and at the other end fathers gain private power through accelerated access to personal resources. Thereby denoting "an absence of 'genuine' traditionalism or 'authentic' modernity" (2008: 309)

In Jordan, Takash and AI-Hassan (2014) acknowledge, as in other Arab societies, Islam beliefs are the source of fatherhood and fathering views, with an emphasis upon fathers expected to be the undisputed head of extended families. But they argue that Jordan does emphasize more gender equality than most other Arab nations (p. 208). Faqir (2001) presents a very different view in her article on honour killings in Jordan or 'intra-family femicide.' She presented a much less nuanced view of neo-patriarchy and on the contrary she made a direct link between 'neo-patriarchy and gender violence in Jordan' and concluded that "Honour killings should be considered within a context of a neo-patriarchal, tribal and traditional society, based on the subordination of the poor, the working class and the weak" (2001:78). Faqir embraced the term

"neo-patriarchal" to describe inter-generational and gender relations in Arabic societies in general and in Jordanian families in particular and argued that sexual violence was used to maintain male dominance and female subordination within the "patriarchal social order" of most Arab countries (2001:66)

Israeli fathers have not been studied in depth even though Jewish tradition assigns fathers a major role in their children's education and moral development (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005). Sagi, Koren, and Weinberg (1987) in an early assessment of fathering in Israel concluded that Israeli men were a very heterogeneous group and that early intervention seemed to have little influence on later involvement with children (p. 202). In contrast, Rimmerman and Sheran (2001) argued that better preparation was needed for the transition of Israeli men to fathering. The growing number of Israeli fathers involved in job related long distance extended commuting to other nations poses new challenges to staying involved with their children (cf. Landesman & Seward, 2013). While Israeli fathers in many ways are like those in other Westernized and industrialized nations, immigration, religion, commuting, and national security issues plus the kibbutzim have contributed to some uniqueness and enhanced striving by many fathers for greater involvement (Sagi et al., 1987). Immigration stands out as an important aspect.

The constant influx of immigrants from Jewish communities throughout the world have played a major role in Israel's cultural ethos, that is, the reunification of the Jewish nation (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005). Since its independence in 1949, Israel has absorbed more than half of its population through immigration. Strier and Roer-Strier (2005) studied a small sample of fathers with preschool children from two significant and contrasting immigration groups: Russian or former Soviet Union immigrants and Ethiopian immigrants. The former make up almost one-fifth of the Israeli population and are more highly integrated into Israeli society. The latter are a much smaller group that has been largely segregated in Israeli society due to lack of job skills and racial differences.

The Ethiopian immigrants viewed fathering in their country of origin with nostalgia and even veneration, while the former Soviet Union (FSU) fathers were more ambivalent toward fatherhood views they had left behind. But both groups agreed that the expectations inherited from their own fathers and homeland needed to be or were being modified in Israel. Both groups considered immigration a major life transformation. Ethiopian fathers viewed immigration as

posing a rigorous challenge to fathering, while FSU fathers interpreted the changes as chances for personal and family growth. As in most societies, an adequate and stable income was regarded as the prerequisite for successful fathering in both host and cultures of origin. FSU fathers with more formal education and professional training were more easily incorporated into the Israel labor force. Ethiopian fathers, on the other hand, struggled with high levels of unemployment and minimal wage job opportunities, which undermined their breadwinner and family leader position. The manifestations of racism "challenged the historical role of the Ethiopian fathers as responsible for preserving the honor and pride of the Ethiopian family and community" (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005, p. 130).

Europe: Russia, Scandinavian Societies, United Kingdom, Ireland, and Slovenia

Russian fathers provide a stark contrast to views of fathers in most other nations according to Utrata, Ispa, and Ispa-Landa (2013). Their dismal portraits of fathering in contemporary Russia are based on the "negative discourse on men" (p. 295) that goes back over a millennium in Russian history. Fathers' disconnect from their families has increased during the Post-Soviet era. The significant transition to this new era allowed fathers to become "objectively freer to opt out of" paternal involvement (p. 297). Utrata and colleagues observed more challenges than opportunities for fathers. These challenges include alcoholism, inability to earn an adequate income as a provider, and negative public images of fathers. Russian fathers appear to be making few positive transitions toward more involvement with their children.

Studies of Scandinavian fathers, especially in Sweden, have blazed the trail for other studies in Europe and the world (Almqvist, 2008, Haas & Hwang, 2008; Seward, Yeatts, & Zottarelli, 2002). The Scandinavian countries are a good example of a supraculture where a group of nations overlap in terms of expectations, policies, and behavior. Changes toward involved fathering have led the way as well, starting dramatically in the 1970s (Haas & Hwang, 2013). The changes, which have been more rapid than in other nations, responded to a series of social welfare and family policies. The rapidity of the changes is partially explained by results from one of the most significant Swedish studies on fathers that analysed parenting roles (n=128 families) in low to middle income neighbourhoods in Stockholm and Goteberg (Sanqvist, 1996). The Stockholm-Goteberg study illustrated that male and female gender identities were less

polarised in Sweden than in the U. S. The most significant findings were first: that stern, critical authoritarian fathers were rare or non-existent in the Stockholm-Goteberg sample and modern Swedish parents were mild disciplinarians and second: that gender impacted positively on children when parents acted as if gender didn't matter (Rush, 2015, Sanqvist, 1996:169).

In Sweden and other Scandinavian nations policies related to fathers reflected political priorities and ideologies (Almqvist & Dahlgren, 2013). Policy makers and fathering researchers, especially in Sweden, successfully worked together to change fathering. A key component was paid parental leave, which was first initiated in Sweden in 1974. Paid leave was part of a political attempt to get fathers more involved with their children. Evaluation studies have found that fathers taking leave and for longer periods increased their involvement with children (Haas & Hwang, 2008) plus they more equally shared housework and childcare with mothers (Almqvist & Duvander, 2014).

Studies of fatherhood and fathering also has a rich history in the United Kingdom, i.e., England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. British fathering is both diverse and in transition according Lewis (2013), which is a common theme in most nations. He states that the "the hallmark of paternal roles … has long been the individual variations between men in their involvement" (p. 344). Evidence from several disciplines indicates that many UK fathers spend at least some time living apart from their children. This pattern is similar to that found among fathers in other places including the Caribbean, Asia, Southern Africa, Israel, and the U.S. Some changes in British fathering are due to the recent influx of immigrants from many commonwealth nations and former colonies.

The first treatment of fathers published in the Republic of Ireland was by Kiely (1995) using data gathered from urban mothers. Funded by the Irish Commission on the Family (1995-1998), McKeown, Ferguson, and Rooney (1999) provided greater breadth and depth on Irish fatherhood and fathering. Irish fathers have been increasingly scrutinized since these early works (Canavan, 2012, p. 23) "both at a general level and, more specifically, in terms of the rights and responsibilities of fathers who do not live with their children." As in other nations, social and economic shifts including globalization have contributed to a new view of fatherhood. Challenges to the old views of fathers and changes toward a new view were particularly evident

during the Celtic Tiger period of rapid expansion of the Irish economy between 1995 and 2008 (Seward, Igoe, Richardson, & Cosimo, 2006).

Before and during the Celtic Tiger era, Irish social policies related to father involvement were influenced more by U.S. political views rather than those of the Scandinavian societies, especially Sweden (Rush, 2011). With membership in the European Union the influence of the U.S. has weakened. As elsewhere, attitudes regarding expectations for fathers have changed more than behavior. Canavan (2012) concluded that the traditional division of labor in family households had not change much since Kiely's (1995) study. Mothers, even those employed, devote more time to child care than fathers even if they are unemployed. The impact of the dramatic reversal of the economy in 2008 into a recession is not clear. However, the 2011 census documented trends suggesting a possible shift towards away the traditional division of labor (Central Statistics Office, 2012). The number of men looking after their home or family including minding children had increased since 1981 (p. 14) along with male unemployment rising dramatically after 2006 (p. 15) and further declines in men's labor force participation while women's participation increased.McGinnity and Russell (2008) argue that gender-role differences persisted in Irish families but concluded that: "the level of non-participation among men accounts for a large part of the gender difference in the allocation of time to housework tasks. Among those who actually participate in cooking and shopping the gender differences are much narrower" (2008:47).

In Slovenia, Švab and Živa (2013) found that expectations of more and equal involvement by fathers with children have also changed more than practices. The new fathering mainly takes the form of supporting mothers who still reign as the primary parent. The majority of fathers take the first fully compensated 15 days of the recently implemented paternal leave. But leave taking fathers typically have little direct contact with newborns. They are most likely to help with supportive tasks, like shopping, while mothers are in charge of the newborns. The greatest and most equal involvement between parents occurs for the emotional aspects of child care.

Africa: East, Central, and Southern Regions

The lack of studies on fathers by nations in Africa is noteworthy. This is in part a consequence of the invasion, occupation, colonization, and annexation of African territory by European powers that set up boundaries for nation irrespective of native tribal groups. Available data have primarily come from African regions and is based almost exclusively on research of smaller societies and tribes. A notable exception is Selin's (2014) *Parenting across cultures: Childrearing, motherhood and fatherhood in non-Western cultures*, which contains chapters on Ghana (Nyarko, 2014), Nigeria (Babatunde & Setiloane, 2014), Cameroon (Yovsi, 2014), and Kenya (Wadende, Fite, & Lasser, 2014). But even in these chapters the focus is often on one or more tribal culture.

In the small-scale societies of East and Central Africa, Fouts (2013) asserts that genetics and evolution plus cultural belief systems and values must be considered to understand fatherhood. Biology and culture interplay is seldom mentioned by fatherhood scholars but Gray and Anderson (2010), Hewlett (2004), and Hewlett and Macfarlan (2010) have argued that both factors must always be considered. Fouts' (2013) theoretical focus offers informative comparisons between fathers from foraging, pastoral, farming, and other communities. The comparisons underscore the diversity that exists even within some of the world's smaller nation states. Hewlett (2004) notes that low population density and less stratified societies lend themselves to higher father involvement. Males in these types of societies typically start taking care of children when they are young. As the children they take care of age, they in turn start caring for other children. This contrasts with Western fathering where men were often not involved in childcare until they have their own children. In the less dense and less stratified societies, parents share activities and women contribute significantly to subsistence. In contrast fathers in farming and pastoral cultures, characterized by polygamy and warfare, are distant from their children.

Townsend's (2013) depicts Southern African fathers as diverse, migrating, and separated. The diversity is acknowledged by Roman's (2014) reference to South Africa as a rainbow nation. Almost half of fathers are separated from families (p. 222) due to migration. Apartheid and its lingering effects are an important historical context. Townsend (2013) noted that fathers are often forced by dire economic circumstances to separate from their children. Marriage is usually not the typical path to fatherhood in Southern Africa.

Black Southern African men, in addition to biological fathers, are often assumed, even required, to be significant figures in the lives of children (Townsend, 2013). Several men share aspects of what is considered by Westerners to be the father's role. The men's magnitude of responsibilities varies by age and life stage. At the same time, these men are not considered as possible alternatives to biological fathers. Hewlett and Macfarlin (2010) referred to this pattern as "multiple" fathering. Nsamenang (2010) noted that these men's unique cultures and religious creeds contribute to the 'internal working models' that spawned and perpetuate this pattern.

North America: Canada and United States

Research on fathering in the U.S. and Canada had been "emulated around the world" hence "the priorities reflected in [North] American ideology, research topics, and policy goals help us to understand why certain assumptions, issues, and policies are also common in work on fathering in other societies" (Shwalb et al., 2013b, p. 391). McFadden and Tamis-LeMonda's (2013, p. 251) overview of the U.S. identified three converging and overlapping forces that have impacted fatherhood and fathering: shared ideals of equality and freedom, economic opportunities, and cultural diversity. The long standing ideals of equality and freedom in U.S. have been the basis for both the shared and unique aspects of fathering. Fathers are more likely to share childcare with mother on a more equal basis and a few fathers are even the primary providers of care. But the freedom of choice means that parents often negotiate a division of responsibilities somewhat unique to them (Seward, Yeatts, Amin, & De Witt, 2006). Fathers who are economically successful in their careers or occupation are the most likely to be involved fathers. Often men who are under or unemployed are the least involved with their children. Being a land of almost all immigrants since its founding has contributed to a great deal of cultural diversity including subcultural variation in fathering and fatherhood (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004).

These elements have not only influenced fathering but the focus of research and the goals of policy makers in both the U.S. and Canada (Allen & Daly, 2007) and beyond (Jacobson & Seward, 2011). Some of the issues emphasized include father presence versus absence, roles within families, father–child relationships, and fathers from diverse backgrounds. Fathers in the U.S. reflect a "kaleidoscope of cultures" and with only some melting of differences, in other

words more like a 'tossed salad' than a 'melting pot.' Consequently U.S. men vary much more in their views and practices than in more homogeneous societies like Sweden and Japan (Jones & Mosher, 2013, McFadden & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013, p. 269).

Caribbean Societies

African Caribbean fathers' educational and work status affected their involvement and their perceptions of involvement in parenting (Roopnarine, 2004). "Progressive mating" [mate shifting] is the norm, so the relationship with the children's mother often determines father involvement. The least involved fathers have only visiting relationships with the mothers. Fathers in cohabitating and common law marriages are more involved but the fathers formally married are the most involved. These variations have also been noted in other settings as well (cf., Arendell, 1992). Anderson, & Daley (2014) focus on Jamaican fathers and emphasize the importance of fathering to these men.

Roopnarine (2013) further stressed the diversity of Indo Caribbean and African Caribbean fathers. Many fathers never marry the mother of their children. Similar to the pattern found in Africa, social fatherhood is a common practice. Typically a large number of Caribbean men act as fathers to other men's biological offspring. This practice occurs in an environment where most men's lives diverge dramatically from men in middle-class, two-parent, co-residing families. A clear conceptual separation exist between the means to being a good father and having a committed relationship with a woman. The long history of Caribbean immigration and emigration has had a negative impact on fathers' involvement.

South America: Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina

Among the Bari of Venezuela it is believed that children may have multiple biological fathers or partibility of paternity (Beckerman & Valentine, 2002). Men having intercourse with a woman around the beginning of her pregnancy and all through her pregnancy are believed to share biological paternity of her child. The repeated contributions of semen are thought to contribute to the growth of the fetus. According to Beckerman and colleagues studies on the Bari and work by others on the Ache of eastern Paraguay, children with multiple fathers were more likely to survive to their adolescent years when compared to children born to a single father.

Brazil is similar to the Caribbean context due to a long history of colonization and patriarchy, according to Bastos, Volkmer-Pontes, Brasileiro, and Serra (2013). One contrast is the much lower divorce rate in Brazil. Fatherhood continues to be associated with masculinity beliefs that include a connotation of power and control over wives and children. Contemporary Brazilian fathers appear to be on a quest for a new identity including the right to fathering as an important part of one's life experience (Martínez, Camino, Camino, & Cruise, 2014, p. 298). But the patriarchy and colonial past still cast a shadow over current Brazilian fathers. Bastos and colleagues (2013) concluded that current socialization practices of boys are not supportive of the emergence of a new father identity.

In Chile, as in Brazil, expectations for fathers are ambiguous but do appear to be changing more rapidly, especially in the younger generations (Bush, & Peterson, 2014). Despite the persistence of patriarchal values, younger working class men are expected to be more involved in childcare and housework (p. 319). But egalitarian fathering clashes with generations of patriarchal focused socialization.

In Argentina traditional fatherhood expectations still are strong with fathers emphasizing the provider role (Cristina, de Minzi, Lemos, & Rubilar, 2014, p. 282). As more women have taken on paid work, farther involvement has increased. Still most women stop working when they have a baby especially in the lower economic classes.

In summary, fatherhood expectations and fathering behavior varies across regional and national cultures but similarities also emerge. Some trends suggest growing similarities and convergence of fatherhood and fathering patterns worldwide but others differences, diversity, and even divergence.

GLOBAL FATHERING PATTERNS: CONVERGENCE OR DIVERGENCE?

Debates about the course of family changes have gone on forever (cf. Adams & Steinmetz, 1993). During the last half of Nineteenth Century several large scale comparative studies attempted to chart a social Darwinian view of these changes (Christensen, 1964, p. 7). These efforts, which emphasized evolution, progress, and moralizing, soon were largely rejected and replaced by a focus on contemporary family status based on empirical data. Over fifty years later William J. Goode (1963) in *World revolutions and family patterns* took a large scale

comparative approach based on available empirical evidence. Goode (1963, p. 1) contended that family patterns were converging in six major world cultures. He argued that the influences associated with industrialization and urbanization were bringing about families with "fewer kinship ties with distant relatives and a greater emphasis upon the 'nuclear' family unit of couple and children." This "conjugal family system," which had been evident for some time in the West, was becoming more widespread. Available evidence pointed to the emergence of the conjugal family system in Arabic Islam, Sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, and Japan. Most Non-Western families were typically portrayed as changing from being stable, patriarchal, multigenerational, and large to more independent and democratic, smaller, and less stable. This shift has implications for fatherhood and fathering patterns and raises the question of possible converge for these patterns as well.

Convergence:

Goode did not address fathering specifically but some convergence would be expected as part of predicted changes in family patterns. In the conjugal family being the provider was the major family role for men. This complemented the homemaker and child care responsibilities for wives and mothers. Provider fathers were portrayed as being mostly distant from their children with the exception of being the ultimate disciplinarian. Cherlin (2013, p. 579-580) in an assessment of Goode's convergence hypothesis suggests this portrayal is incomplete as it fails to acknowledge the emotional foundation for conjugal families. The emotional component results from these families being based on companionship marriages unlike kinship obligations in the distant past. As Burgess (1948, p. 418) noted companionship marriage were based on "consensus, common interest, democratic relations and personal happiness of family members." These characteristics may be considered supportive of fathers getting more involved in child care, sharing more child care with mothers and taking pride in filling the role of father (p. 580).

Cherlin (2013, pp. 577-579) closely considered Goode's contentions after fifty years and concluded that the main hypothesis, that family patterns around the world would come to resemble the mid-twentieth-century Western conjugal family (WCF) was incorrect. Goode considered the WCF to be firmly in place and to be a stable model for the rest of the world. But individualistic marriage and related family patterns replaced the WCF's companionship

emphasis. Unexpected changes included cohabitation, delays in and fewer marriages, fertility declines, and higher divorce rates. As Cohen (2014) noted in the U.S., family diversity has become the new normal. Many challenges have emerged to the convergence hypotheses in the West.

Outside the West some of Goode's subsidiary hypotheses were supported (Cherlin, 2013, pp. 579, 586-594). In many regions of the world extended kinship ties have weakened and parents' control over children's family lives has declined. Further, the spread of the conjugal family ideology with its emphasis on companionship and romantic love has occurred even in societies without extensive industrialization. With these changes some convergence in fatherhood and fathering would be expected.

Some general differences between fathering in West and non-Western cultures appear to be fading. Hewlett (2000) relates these differences in the past to the "people making" approach to child development. Western cultures tended to emphasize intimate fathering due the belief in the need for intensive socialization to achieve good "people making." Non-western cultures emphasis on distant fathering was compatible with the common assumption that children develop autonomously. In the past, the physical play considered an essential hallmark of the Western father's interactive style was not found in Asian. Arab, and African countries.

Available evidence on fathering suggests lessening of these differences and limited convergence (cf., Shwalb et al., 2013b, pp. 398-399). Japanese fathers from the 1950s until around 1990 demonstrated they loved their children by being good providers not by direct involvement with them at home. The paid worker status and the father status almost completely overlapped as wives and children's respect was gained via sacrifice and diligence in paid work. The same point can be made about Arab and Bengali fathers, isolated South African fathers, non-resident Australian fathers, and many Chinese floating fathers, who leave their children's home to be a provider for them.

But in Japan and many other societies, fatherhood and fathering changes have occurred since 1990. Expectations for greater involvement with and responsibility for children independent of the provider role has grown internationally. Although in many cases the changes have been more in cultural expectations for fathers than in men's conduct or fathering (LaRossa, 1997). Changing cultural expectations for fatherhood are being followed by changes in fathering

but delayed and at a slower pace (Kaufman, 2013; Shwalb et al., 2013b). These changes in turn have an impact on other family aspects. For example, the policies encouraging and supporting father involvement expectations has been associated with increased family satisfaction levels consistently across 31 countries including many non-Western nations (Forste & Fox, 2012). As these policies are adopted by more nations as a result of globalization, the expectation is that eventually fathers in societies will make fathering changes including spending more time with their children.

While a good deal of support exists worldwide for fathers to become more involved with their children and to take more responsibility for them, public support for the "rhetoric of paternal essentiality" is far from universal (Pleck, 2013). What is acceptable in one culture may be frowned upon in another. Yet, worldwide some actions have been directed at reducing cross-cultural differences (cf., United Nations, 2011). In many societies, pressure groups and legislatures have pushed for the passage of laws and regulations plus the implementation of programs to increase fathers' involvement. Efforts have included interventions, programs, laws, and social policies to promote more opportunities for involved fathering and more equality between fathering and mothering. Implemented social policies and laws have had profound effects in some societies like Sweden but little impact in other countries like Brazil and India (Shwalb et al., 2013b).

Globalization over the last few decades has resulted in the movement of capital, labor, and information more freely across countries and regions of the world (Cherlin, 2013, p. 596). As media have become ubiquitous worldwide, they have become a force to promote the convergence or homogenization of fathering. Still, resistance to this trend continues and varies a good deal between societies.

Divergence:

Even Goode (1963, p.25) acknowledged divergence as well as convergence. Due to different baselines and varied rates, amounts, and directions of change between societies a great deal of diversity was noted and was expected to continue to be evident. Even within nations some divergence was noted between subcultures based on social class and ethnic differences. Some have argued that the evidence appears to indicate more a convergence to divergence than

convergence to a common pattern (cf. Therborn, 2004). Therborn, like Goode, attempted to take a worldwide view of family changes. He argued that globalization and government actions have contributed to the growing diversity of family pattern since the 1950s. The "historical complexity' of past family patterns had returned (p. 314) by the end of the 20th century. But as Cherlin (2013) notes it is "not the same kind of complexity as in the more distant past" (p. 597).

Therborn (2004:8). focused specifically on the trajectory of the rights and powers of fathers and the epochal nature of the erosion of patriarchy or "rule of the father" Therborn divided the world into two big regions of post-patriarchal regions. One covering about 30% of global societies included Western Europe, the Anglophone nations, Russia, Korea, Japan and to some extent Eastern Europe and Southern America. The other patriarchal region where the hierarchy of husband and fathers still govern covers about 40% of global societies. The regions where patriarchal fatherhood persists and where disadvantages for daughters are institutionalised include South Asia , West Asia, North Africa most of sub-Saharan Africa except parts of southern Africa and the West Coast. At the end of the day building a cross-cultural knowledge requires scholars to embrace internationalization and international perspectives that acknowledge global diversity reigns supreme now well into the 21st century. Despite some convergence in the West around new ways of thinking about the social and cultural institution of fatherhood, divergence in the development of 'father-friendly' social policies provides testimony to the lasting significance of the role of the Western nation states and their divergent political, social and cultural pathways (Rush, 2015).

Among Asian societies complex diverse fatherhood and fathering are still evident according to Yeung (2013, pp.142-143). The diversity among Asian "cultures, socioeconomic and political structures, and policies and programs" have shaped families, fatherhood, and fathering in ways distinct from the West. Rich and diverse religious and cultural traditions including Confucian, Hindu, and Islamic teachings are still powerful influences on Asian families. Although families are smaller they are still more likely to co-reside with extended kin than in Western countries. Also, patriarchy still remains the dominant ideology in many Asian societies despite dramatic increases in the education levels and labor force participation among women. Further recent rapid urbanization and globalization had resulted in large numbers of fathers (and mothers) migrating for employment to other regions or countries, leaving behind

children with one parent or other relatives. These transnational families are especially evident in Philippines, China, and Sri Lanka. In Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong dramatic declines in marriage and fertility rates are altering fathers' expectations and behavior. For example, the pro-natal policies in Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore encourages different fathering than China's one-child policy. Yeung (2013, p.143) concludes that these and other "differences suggest that findings in Western societies about fathers may not be directly transferable to Asia."

This view of Asian families and fathers challenges the contention of recent dramatic transitions from traditional distance fathers to more involved fathering. It is very much in agreement with Shwalb and colleagues' (2013b, p.385) contention that recent and remote "historical events and the evolution of cultures over generations, centuries, and even millennia" in many cultures repeatedly challenge these transitions. The importance of history, tradition, and geography cannot be underestimated and results in uneven rates of change. In some Asian societies and elsewhere the provider role for fathers will remain the essence of their involvement for a long time. Cultures clearly have long reaching influence over fathers. Fatherhood and fathering have changed worldwide but the pace has been slow and uneven across societies (McHale, Dinh, & Rao, 2014). McHale and colleagues noted that the trends toward greater father involvement in Asian has occurred primarily in nuclear, urban, more educated and dual earner families (p. 170).

Some of the complex diversity is due to subcultural differences. An appreciation of subculture diversity within a given culture is essential to better understand fatherhood and fathering across cultures (Shwalb et al., 2013a). Even in cultures once presumed to be homogeneous like Japan both involved and uninvolved fathers have been documented (Nakazawa & Shwalb, 2013). Further, new immigrant populations in Japan and elsewhere have brought with them variations in paternal behavior from many parts of the world. In addition to immigration initiated variation, important differences often exist between social class, ethnic, and other population groups.

Many claim that the ongoing efforts to make changes, and globalization in general, is reducing may inter and intra cultural differences. But the evidence is far from clear. As Shwalb and colleagues (2013b) concluded, fathering approaches appear to be as diverse as ever worldwide. Cherlin (2013) and Therborn (2004) see no end to this complex diversity. Cherlin

(2013, p. 600-601) argues that a major flaw of convergence hypotheses is assuming a common endpoint of change, when over and over it has been demonstrated that many changes are new or unusual and clearly unanticipated.

STATUS OF CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON THE FATHERS

The cross-cultural research label of has often been misapplied. Most past studies of fathers have focused on one society and were considered cross-cultural if they focused on societies other the main stream or were gathered together in a journal or book with other one society studies. Single society studies can be valuable building blocks but do not qualify as cross-cultural. Matsumoto and Yoo (2006) provide a useful classification of studies into four types that can be associated with the "phases" in the development of cross-cultural research (cf., Shwalb et al., 2013b, pp. 394-395). During the first or "cross-cultural comparisons phase" two or more cultures, usually nations, are compared with respect to participants' responses on the same measures. Most of these so called cross-cultural studies do not directly compare different cultural groups or show how culture affects fathers.

The second or "identifying meaningful dimensions of cultural variability phase" of cross-cultural research compares different cultures, focusing on aspects of cultures rather than nationality. Most studies have utilized measures derived from Western research. When differing results from Western expectations are found, they were often attributed to something about culture.

The third or "cultural studies phase" of cross-cultural research compares relationships among variables across two or more cultures and strives to account for how these variables function differently in each cultural contexts. Few of these studies on any topic can be found in the so called cross-cultural literature. A few exceptional studies include Fouts (2013) studies on East and Central African fathers, Hossain (2013) studies of Bangladesh and Malaysia fathers, and Roopnarine (2004, 2013) studies of African American and Caribbean fathers.

Matasmoto and Yoo's (2006) final or "linkage studies phase" involves trying to connect population differences in fathering to objective measures of cultural aspects. This type of study is very rare. Many published books and studies that use the term cross-cultural study in their title or text would better be described as international case studies because they lack appropriate

comparisons. In other words, most of the extant research has been concerned with fathering and not with culture.

Hopefully the next generation of research on fathering across cultures will focus more on culture. Shwalb and colleagues (2013a; pp. 395-399) and Selin (2014) provide greater insights, details, examples, and directions for future researchers and further research. Some specific suggestions include the following:

The gaps in geographical coverage need to be filled (cf. Seward & Stanley-Stevens, 2014). Research on fathers still needs to be initiated in many countries but will require that cultural and language barriers be broken. Studies within regions will allow direct comparisons between fathers, who share a common heritage. Both subcultural and sub-regional differences need to be explored further.

Researchers need to explore and deal with differences in definitions for culture, fatherhood, and fathering. This is essential to moving beyond descriptive and correlational research and focusing more on explanatory research. Aboim's (2010) study of gender relations in the West provides a possible starting point for explanatory research based on the suggestion that individual attitudes function to some extent "as a mediator between culture and practice" and that the "dual-earner-dual carer norm" has become "rooted strongly in gender arrangements that have promoted welfare policies orientated towards an 'equal gender contract" (p. 174). Aboim reviewed theorizations that emphasized the cultural, material and ideological basis of gender difference including; theorizations of 'the gender contract' (Hirdman, 1998), theorizations of patriarchy as the material basis of gender inequality (Walby, 1990, 1997) and theorizations of 'hegemonic masculinity' and a global gender order (Connell, 2003). These theorizations on the contemporary persistence of non-egalitarian gender relations introduced ways of analyzing gender regime variations without "reducing the analysis to structural factors (such as the economy or welfare policies) or solely focusing on culture" (Aboim, 2010:176). Not surprisingly, Aboim identified Finland and Sweden as countries where "the strong influence of welfare state policies" had encouraged strong societal support for the dual breadwinner dual carer model (p. 177-188).

While Aboim (2010:192) concluded that "the resilience of gender inequality" required investigation from a "multi-level perspective", she conceded that macro-social factors such as

welfare states and political economies of welfare played an important role in mediating between "cultural frameworks and gender power." Locating the social institution of fatherhood within cultural frameworks will require embracing multi-disciplinary perspectives from sociology, psychology, gender studies, and comparative social policy, in order to focus on the way culture combines with political economy to shape family, gender, and inter-generational relations. However, it is becoming increasingly clear, whether it be in relation to cultural or political economy frameworks, that the concept of patriarchy is gaining fresh significance for research into fatherhood (Rush and Seward 2014, Therborn, 2004). Indeed, Therborn (2004:107) argued that the freedom to choose a marriage partner outside paternal or parental influence marked "the difference between autonomy and heteronomy." In addition, Therborn emphasised the importance of religion and the concept of "neo-patriarchal movements, usually with religious argumentation" that have appeared in the contemporary era. But ultimately, Therborn (pp. 305-310) argued that despite "a strong Islamic religious revival…and…surges of Christian, Jewish and Hindu fundamentalism…the prospects for patriarchy are certainly far from bright."

This explanatory research will require going beyond standardized and more objective type measures and when appropriate incorporating indigenous measures. Multi-method and multi-disciplinary approaches will bring the strengths of triangulation to cross-cultural studies of fathers. Selin (2014), Shwalb et al. (2013a), Cabrera & Tamis-LeMonda, (2013), Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera (2002), and Yeung (2013) demonstrate the promise and value of multi-disciplinary tradition of fathering research, but challenges remain to integrate respective research approaches and literatures even more cohesively. Ideally, researchers need to learn from one another while building a cross-cultural knowledge foundation on fathers worldwide to move forward.

Word count = 10,400

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