

STAY AT HOME FATHERS: THE NEW GENDER BENDERS

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Jessica Fischer

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Chair: Veanne Anderson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology

Indiana State University

Committee Member: Virgil Sheets, Ph.D.

Professor of Psychology

Indiana State University

Committee Member: Thomas Steiger, Ph.D.

Professor of Sociology

Indiana State University

ABSTRACT

This study compared the gender roles and attitudes toward women's and men's social roles of stay at home fathers and employed fathers recruited on the Internet. The relationship between gender roles and attitudes toward women's and men's social roles on reasons for becoming a stay at home father were also investigated. It was predicted that stay at home fathers would endorse more traditionally feminine characteristics for themselves and would have more nontraditional attitudes toward men's and women's social roles than employed fathers. In addition, it was predicted that fathers who choose to stay at home for practical reasons (i.e. lost job) would be more traditional in their gender role attitudes than fathers who choose to stay at home for other reasons (i.e. really wanted to care for the children). Although stay at home and employed fathers reported having similar feminine and masculine characteristics, stay at home fathers reported having less traditional gender role attitudes than employed fathers. Biosocial theory (Eagly & Wood, 1999) suggests that stay at home fathers may have less traditional attitudes about gender roles because the gender role they are acting out is a non-traditional role for men. Stay at home fathers reported that they really wanted to stay home with their children more than any other reason, whereas the least reported reason for choosing to stay home was having a child with special needs. Contrary to a prediction based on evolutionary psychology, stay at home and employed fathers also reported that their children resembled them to the same degree. The results of this study will contribute further information about a group of fathers that

have been under-studied and may also provide helpful information to support groups for stay at home and employed fathers.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
Biosocial Theory	2
Evolutionary Psychology	6
Fathering Research	7
Stay at Home Father Research	10
Current Study	15
METHOD	17
Participants	17
Materials	18
Procedure	21

RESULTS	23
Background Information.....	23
PAQ and SRQ Subscales	23
Reasons Questionnaire.....	25
Evolutionary Psychology Prediction.....	26
DISCUSSION.....	27
Gender Role Characteristics	27
Gender Role Attitudes.....	29
Reasons for the Decision to Become a Stay at Home Father	30
Evolutionary Psychology Theory	33
Additional Findings and Limitations	34
Conclusions.....	36
REFERENCES	39
APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE	44
APPENDIX B: REASONS QUESTIONNAIRE.....	47
APPENDIX C: PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES QUESTIONNAIRE.....	49

APPENDIX D: SOCIAL ROLES QUESTIONNAIRE	51
APPENDIX E: WEBSITE LETTER	54
APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT	55
APPENDIX G: EXPLANATION OF AMAZON.COM DRAWING	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Correlations among PAQ and SRQ Subscales	59
Table 2 Means and Standard Errors for Stay at Home Fathers and Employed Fathers on the PAQ and SRQ Subscales	60
Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations for the Reasons Stay at Home Fathers Chose to Stay Home.....	61
Table 4 Correlations among the Reasons Stay at Home Fathers Chose to Home and PAQ and SRQ Subscales	62

INTRODUCTION

Stay at home fathers are becoming more visible in Western societies due to several reasons, including their increase in number and their representation of an alternative family lifestyle. Stay at home fathers could be increasing in number because of the sluggish economy, they choose to do so, or it is becoming more socially acceptable for fathers to stay at home and become the primary caregivers for their children. However, questions still remain as to what factors influence fathers to stay home, including the importance of and attitudes toward gender roles. In this research study, I investigated the reasons fathers choose to stay home with their children, the influence of gender roles on those reasons, and whether attitudes toward gender roles differ between stay at home fathers and other fathers.

Previous research into parenting focused on working mothers and the effects on childhood development. More recently, father involvement has become a topic in the research on parenting. However, many of the studies involving fathers neglected to look at fathers who stay at home and become the primary caretakers of their children. This study focuses on stay at home fathers and factors associated with being a stay at home father. Two theories will be discussed that may help explain why some fathers choose to stay home and become the primary caregivers for their children, including biosocial theory and evolutionary psychology theory. A review of the research on fathers and stay at home fathers will follow.

Biosocial Theory

Gender can be thought of as a set of “psychological characteristics and social categories that human culture creates” (Matlin, 2008, p.4). Sometimes gender is used interchangeably with sex; some researchers assume that biology determines these psychological characteristics. More specifically, the assumption is, if one has biological characteristics of a female, they should act and feel like a female, and if one has biological characteristics of a male, they should act and feel like a male. However, it has been proposed that gender is performed by women and men (Kimmel, 2004). For example, according to biosocial theory (Wood & Eagly, 2002), society has specific expectations for women and men; if women and men perform the roles associated with their gender, they are performing traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles produce social behaviors; for example, caretaking for women and financial providing for men.

Biosocial theory (Wood & Eagly, 2002) proposes both biological and social origins for traditional gender roles. One reason for the development of traditional gender roles is the physical attributes of men and women. Men are typically larger in stature and have more upper-body strength, whereas women must bear children and in most cases breast feed. Before daycare and baby formula, it would have been difficult for women to be away from the home and from their young children for extended periods of time, therefore men were more likely to perform work outside of the home and women were more likely to perform work inside of the home or at least closer to home. Thus, men became associated with the provider role because they were more likely to provide resources such as food, and later money for the benefit of the family. Women became associated with the caregiving role because they were more likely to provide caregiving duties for their young children and complete most of the household duties. Even in

hunter/gatherer societies, although women provided most of the calories by foraging, men provided rare and more prestigious calories, for example meat. This division of labor tended to allocate more power and status to men than to women (Wood & Eagly, 2002). It has been suggested that money is equal to power and the power dynamics at work in the American family can be attributed to men, on average, making more money than women (Deutsch, Roksa, & Meeske, 2003).

The power and status associated with the male gender role led to more dominant and agentic characteristics (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Dominant behavior and agentic characteristics can be thought of as being controlling, assertive, and rational; these are good characteristics to have when working outside of the home. On the other hand, women's social role led to more communal characteristics, such as being nurturing, emotional, and communicative, seemingly good characteristics to have when raising children. Biosocial theory proposes that these characteristics developed because men were better suited to perform work outside of the home, and women were better suited to perform work inside and close to the home. The social roles that men and women adhered to, led to the development of agentic versus communal characteristics. Other researchers believe that these gendered characteristics led to the development of social roles and the division of labor. However, biosocial theory proposes that men and women developed these gendered characteristics because they tended to benefit their social roles (Wood & Eagly, 2002).

According to biosocial theory (Wood & Eagly, 2002) traditional gender roles then developed out of the division of labor between women and men. The characteristics that became associated with the provider role (men) and the caregiving role (women) have become

stereotypic of each sex (Eagly & Wood, 1999). The sex-typed characteristics can even be integrated with a person's self-concept and personality. As individuals become aware of societal expectations to adhere to traditional gender roles, they regulate their behavior to be congruent with their specified gender role. The gender roles become further internalized when individuals start to acquire specific skills needed for their social role (Eagly & Wood, 1999). For example, when men and women become parents, they tend to become more traditional in their socialized gender roles (Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo, & Scaringi, 2008).

One of the most prominent places that gender roles are acted out is in marriages. Researchers have identified two types of marriages that are prevalent in American society, although most would argue that the distribution of power within marriages, which is associated with gender roles, is better understood as being on a continuum. In traditional relationships, men have most of the power, and therefore they control the family. In these marriages traditional gender roles are the rule, men work outside of the home, and regardless of whether women are employed outside of the home or not, they still perform most of the household duties. In egalitarian relationships, the power is distributed more equally and men and women share the decision making about the family, they share household duties, and even childcare duties (Kaufman, 2005). Most marriages within the United States fall somewhere between traditional and egalitarian. For example, women may work outside of the home and have some power, but they still perform most of the household duties and the men still have more power.

In American society, men are still associated with the provider role and women with the caregiving role; however, workforce trends over the last century have led to more and more women working outside of the home either for the production needs of the country during WWII

or for the economical needs of her family. Presently, for most families, the American economy requires that both parents work outside of the home for the financial stability of the family. As of 2007, 59% of women were employed outside of the home, as compared to 43 % in 1970 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008b). However, women employed full-time still earn less money than men employed full-time, only 80% of what men will make in one year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008c). Some say that this is caused by 'occupational segregation' (Hoffman & Averett, 2005). Occupational segregation is the concept that men are employed in men's work (auto mechanics and electricians), and women are employed in women's work (nurses and secretaries). As biosocial theory proposes, the jobs that men hold have more power and status than women's jobs, therefore they pay more money. This is evidence that gender roles are still at work in the employment of men and women outside of the home.

It seems that gender roles are still at work in the home, as well. As biosocial theory predicts, women still perform most of the household duties. Some of these duties include meal preparation, dishes, childcare, shopping, laundry, and paying the bills. In recent years, American men have increased the amount of time spent on household duties, but research still shows that women spend more time on housework than men. It is estimated that working mothers spend three times as many hours on housework than their husbands (Zimmerman, 2000). Also, working men spend an average of 50 minutes per day caring for their children, whereas working women spend 105 minutes per day engaged in childcare (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008a). Fathers are more likely to engage in childcare activities if requested by the mother, making it seem as though mothers are still responsible for the care of the children, whereas fathers are simply 'helping out' (Zimmerman, 2000).

Evolutionary Psychology

An alternative theory to the biosocial theory of the development of traditional gender roles is offered by evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary theory holds that men and women have different natural dispositions due to genetic makeup. These natural dispositions have evolved over human existence and influence psychological characteristics and behavior (Archer, 1996). Instead of social roles leading to gendered characteristics, evolutionary theory proposes that gendered characteristics lead to social roles.

Evolutionary psychology theorizes that gender roles are a product of different adaptive problems that males and females have faced over the existence of humans (Buss, 1995). The adaptations to these evolutionary problems are referred to as evolved psychological mechanisms (Buss, 1995; Eagly & Wood, 1999). Reproductive problems experienced by women include finding men who have the ability and the willingness to invest resources in their family. Reproductive investments, or the amount of time and resources needed to produce offspring, are different for men and women (Kilmartin, 2007). For men, reproductive investment can be limited to one sexual encounter. For women, reproductive investment involves nine months of pregnancy and many more months of breast-feeding (Buss, 1995). During this critical period of child-rearing for future mothers and new mothers, it is beneficial for the mother to have a partner that has access to resources (food, finances, healthcare) and is willing to share those resources with her and her children. One of men's adaptive problems involving reproduction includes paternity uncertainty (Buss, 2007). Although women are 100% certain that they are genetically related to their biological offspring, men are not. Without modern technologies, including DNA

testing, one of the ways men judge whether they are the father of their partner's children is by comparing their own physical characteristics with the child's physical characteristics.

Fathers choosing to stay at home to become the primary caregivers of their children cannot be easily explained by biosocial or evolutionary psychology theory. In terms of biosocial theory, stay at home fathers would seem to be violating traditional gender roles, so it is possible that they would have less traditional attitudes towards gender roles and act out less traditional gender roles. In terms of evolutionary psychology theory, the high paternal investment of stay at home fathers would seem to be affected by whether the children are biologically related to them and/or whether the children resemble them. Physical resemblance is just one way that paternal investment can be assessed.

Fathering Research

In research, literature, television, and movies, fathers have typically been classified as being good fathers or bad fathers (Marks & Palkovitz, 2004). Marks and Palkovitz (2004) expanded on these two father-types to include four classifications. Type 1 fathers are good fathers because they are involved with their children. This type of father is likely to engage in caretaking activities for their children including changing diapers, nurturing, and household chores. These fathers tend to be middle to upper-middle class and well-educated. According to biosocial theory, Type 1 fathers seem to have less traditional gender roles. Type 2 fathers are the other good fathers because they provide economic resources for their children. Many of these fathers are working-class and may invest many hours working to provide for their families. Some of these fathers may put more focus on the economic well-being of their families than engaging in caretaking activities for their children. According to biosocial theory, Type 2 fathers seem to

have more traditional gender roles. Type 3 fathers are sometimes referred to as ‘deadbeat dads’ in popular media. These men are either physically or psychologically missing, or both, from their children’s lives. These fathers may fail to provide financial, emotional, and/or social support for their children. Type 4 men neglect to become fathers and are completely uninterested in becoming a father. Marks and Palkovitz (2004) note that fewer men are becoming fathers now than at any other time since the Great Depression. They suggested that an uncertain economy has influenced some men to forego creating a family that was modeled by earlier generations (Marks & Palkovitz, 2004).

One of the main areas in research on fatherhood focuses on parental identity (Mauer, Pleck, & Rane, 2001). Parental identity is to what degree an individual sees parenting behaviors as being important to themselves. Mauer et al. (2001) examined parental identity in terms of how an individual’s spouse evaluates parental behaviors performed by that individual, which was termed ‘partner’s reflected appraisals’ and how that individual perceives they are being evaluated by their spouse, which was termed ‘perceived reflected appraisals’. Mauer et al. (2001) examined these evaluations in the context of traditional and nontraditional gender roles. For fathers, the traditional gender and parenting role was that of ‘breadwinning,’ or working outside of the home and providing finances for the family. For the purposes of their research, breadwinning was seen as a gender congruent role, whereas the traditional parenting role for mothers, ‘caregiving,’ was seen as a gender incongruent role for fathers. They found that the fathers who perceived their partners as evaluating their fathering abilities positively had a stronger caregiving identity than fathers whose partners were more negative. In addition, fathers’ breadwinning identities predicted their breadwinning behavior, or the more they identified with breadwinning, the more

they attempted to provide for their families. Fathers' own caregiving identity did not predict their caregiving behavior. Considering the results, it is clear that fathers are identifying with the gender congruent role of breadwinning much more than the gender incongruent role of caregiving, and that mothers are influencing fathers' caregiving identity and behavior.

An important aspect of parental identity is a concept known as parental salience (Bruce & Fox, 1999). Each individual has many different identities; these identities occupy positions on a hierarchy, with certain identities being more important than others. Parental salience is the commitment the individual has to their parental identity. When parental salience is high, an individual will actually seek out situations that will allow them to act out their parental identity. Bruce and Fox (1999) found that father role salience was positively correlated with father involvement suggesting that men who were high on father role salience also placed their father identity high on their hierarchies of identities.

Some researchers propose that traditional gender roles become an important factor when examining fathers' participation in childcare activities (Mauer et al., 2001; Wood & Repetti, 2004). Although mothers' roles have expanded to include being the primary caretaker for the children and working outside of the home for financial resources, fathers' roles have remained focused on providing financial resources for the family and have not expanded to include caretaking activities for the children (Wood & Repetti, 2004). Nonetheless, an area of research into fatherhood focuses on how involved the fathers are in direct, hands-on caretaking activities of their children. Wood and Repetti (2004) reported that gender and age of the children and mothers' hours of employment outside of the home all factored into how much time fathers spent engaged in childcare activities. The higher the percentage of male children in the family and the

older the youngest child was in the family, the more time spent by fathers in childcare activities. In addition, the more hours the mother spent working outside of the home, the more time the father spent on childcare. Interestingly, fathers also engaged in more childcare activities on the weekends (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008c), suggesting that when work was not a priority, as it is during the week, fathers were more involved with their children.

Although many fathers spend less time with their children than mothers, research shows that children whose fathers engage in a high proportion of childcare have greater cognitive skills, better social adjustment, and less traditional attitudes about gender roles (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). These children also have higher self-esteem, fewer behavioral problems, and less psychological distress. Interestingly, the more childcare fathers perform, the healthier they are. It would seem that father involvement in childcare is beneficial for both children and fathers (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004).

Stay at Home Father Research

Stay at home fathers are men that choose to become the primary caregivers for their children. This group of men is diverse, including men that have lost their jobs, men that work out of their home, and men that work part-time outside of the home (Doucet, 2004). Stay at home fathers have increased in number, almost doubling from 76,000 in 1994 to 140,000 in 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Stay at home fathers also seem to violate traditional gender roles and their behavior seems to be the exception to the rule for both the biosocial theory and evolutionary psychology theory.

In a study examining attitudes towards parents, stay at home fathers were perceived more negatively than fathers in the traditional breadwinning role (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2005).

Furthermore, stay at home fathers were perceived to be the worst parent when compared to employed mothers and fathers and stay at home mothers. Stay at home fathers are sometimes assumed to be claiming to provide primary care for their children when they are really simply unemployed (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2005).

In contrast to Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005), Bridges, Etaugh, and Barnes-Farrell (2002) found evidence of positive ratings for stay at home fathers. The biosocial theory predicts that a person's gender influences their stereotyped traits; however, it also predicts that stereotyped traits are influenced by the social role being performed. Bridges et al. (2002) found that for employed and stay at home parents, gender stereotypes are associated with the social role being performed. Specifically, stay at home parents were viewed as having more communal traits, regardless of gender. Also, stay at home parents were judged to be better parents, to provide more physical care, emotional care, and stimulation than employed parents. Interestingly, these judgments were true for stay at home fathers, as well as stay at home mothers. Shpancer et al. (2009) also reported positive ratings for stay at home fathers. In comparison to an employed mother and an employed father, a stay at home father was rated as being more competent, and no differences in ratings were found between stay at home fathers and stay at home mothers. The stay at home father was also rated as more likable than the employed father and employed mother.

The sample of participants in the Brescoll and Uhlmann, (2005), Bridges et al. (2002), and Shpancer et al. (2009) studies may explain the differences found for attitudes towards stay at home fathers. Specifically, the participants in the Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) study varied in age (17-79 years) and were sampled from a public park. In contrast, the participants in the

Bridges et al. (2002) and Shpancer et al. (2009) studies were college students whose average ages were 19.2 and 19.5 years, respectively. It is possible that attitudes towards stay at home fathers may be more positive in the younger generation. Older individuals may have more traditional views about the social roles for mothers and fathers, whereas younger individuals may be more liberal about expectations for mothers and fathers.

Expectations about social roles assume that mothers should focus solely on their children by staying home to be a primary caregiver; this expectation is known as the 'motherhood mandate' (Riggs, 1997). Riggs (1997) also suggests that fathers have a mandate as well, to be the primary breadwinner for their family. To examine these parental mandates, approval ratings (admiration, liking, impression, and respect) were assessed for employed and stay at home parents. Results indicated that stay at home fathers received high approval ratings only if staying home did not interfere with their duty of providing for their family. If the family did not need finances provided by the father, then it was acceptable for him to be a stay at home father. Interestingly, the participants in Riggs (1997) study were also college-aged.

Zimmerman (2000) conducted interviews with stay at home fathers. Most of the 26 stay at home fathers that were interviewed reported feeling satisfied with their marriage and having high self-esteem; however, they also reported being lonely. The stay at home fathers expressed that the situation of being home with the children full-time was temporary. The reasons for the father staying home included the mother's income and benefits, the father's personality versus the mother's personality, and personal choice. Fewer stay at home fathers were involved in community projects than stay at home mothers and the stay at home fathers received less support from family and friends for their decision to stay at home full-time than stay at home mothers.

In one of the few quantitative studies to date, Colombo (2008) examined the psychological well-being and masculine identity of 30 stay at home fathers and 30 breadwinning fathers. Due to the inability to locate the dissertation, the abstract (Colombo, 2008) was examined and indicated that stay at home fathers and breadwinning fathers had similar scores on a measure of psychological well-being. However, significant differences were found on three measures of masculinity, suggesting that stay at home fathers were less influenced by the traditional masculine gender role than breadwinning fathers

In another quantitative study, Rochlen, McKelley et al. (2008) recruited 213 stay at home fathers via the internet. Results indicated that stay at home fathers reported a higher level of relationship satisfaction with their wives than men in other relationship satisfaction studies. They received less support from family and friends than fathers in other studies, but still reported a high level of well-being and life satisfaction. They were as confident in their parenting ability as other parents. Interestingly, they also reported less conformity to traditional masculine gender roles than employed fathers.

Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, and Scaringi (2008) examined stay at home fathers and their gender roles further by conducting interviews with 14 stay at home fathers. Although the stay at home fathers seemed to be flexible in terms of what characteristics and behaviors classified someone as masculine, they did have interests in traditionally masculine activities, such as fixing the car and mowing the grass. Merla (2008) found a similar pattern with Belgian stay at home fathers having interests in masculine activities. The stay at home fathers in the Rochlen, Suizzo et al. (2008) study did not feel pressure to conform to the traditional masculine gender role, however, and described their own masculinity as something they created without the help of

society. Most did not agree with the use of a dichotomous gender role system, and some even responded very negatively to gender role stereotypes, stating that they were proud to have taken on more traditional feminine characteristics, for example becoming more affectionate, emotional, and nurturing.

The traditional masculine gender role is strongly connected with paid work (Eagly, Eastwick, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009). However, after interviewing stay at home fathers, Doucet (2004) argues that stay at home fathers may make connections with unpaid work through hobbies and activities, which may substitute for paid work. Doucet (2004) also proposes that stay at home fathers actually create new masculinities by incorporating aspects of femininity into their identity. Masculinities are acted out in different social settings and there are as many masculinities as there are social situations. Many individuals associate masculinities with men; however, masculine characteristics can be expressed by women as well as men (Doucet, 2004). Stay at home fathers are acting out forms of gender that include masculine and feminine characteristics. An integration of masculinities and femininities is optimal for the caregiving of children and stay at home fathers seem to be integrating various gender characteristics in their role as primary caregivers. It is possible that stay at home fathers have integrated masculine and feminine characteristics before becoming the primary caregivers to their children, which may have influenced their decision to stay home. However, it is also possible that stay at home fathers have integrated masculine and feminine characteristics as a result of becoming the primary caregivers of their children.

Current Study

Most of the research to date on stay at home fathers used qualitative methodology with small samples, with the exception of one quantitative internet study by Rochlen, McKelley et al. (2008). The current study aims to compare gender identities and gender role attitudes of stay at home fathers and employed fathers using quantitative methodology via the internet. Internet data are demographically diverse, generalizable to the population, and similar to data collected by more traditional methods (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). Also, with a population of 140,000, stay at home fathers are a difficult population to locate. Targeting stay at home father and general father websites is a convenient way of gathering a large sample to conduct the type of analyses needed to make comparisons between the two groups.

In line with biosocial theory, I predicted that stay at home fathers would report more non-traditional gender roles than employed fathers. More specifically, stay at home fathers will report a higher level of feminine characteristics for themselves than employed fathers, whereas employed fathers will report a higher level of masculine characteristics for themselves than stay at home fathers. I also predicted that stay at home fathers would have less traditional attitudes about masculine and feminine gender roles than employed fathers.

The second aim of this study was to explore the reasons why stay at home fathers choose to become the primary caregivers for their children. According to biosocial theory, stay at home fathers who become primary caregivers for 'choice' reasons (i.e. really wanted to be a primary caregiver) should have even less traditional gender roles and gender role attitudes than stay at home fathers who rate 'choice' reasons as being less important. In addition, stay at home fathers who rate choosing to become primary caregivers for 'practical' reasons (i.e. cost of daycare) high

will have more traditional gender roles and gender role attitudes than stay at home fathers who rate 'practical' reasons as being less important.

Although biosocial theory is the focus of this study, I included two questions that explored parenting through the lens of evolutionary psychology theory: (1) How many step-children are in the family? and (2) How much do you think your children resemble you? Evolutionary theory predicts that stay at home fathers have different parental investments than employed fathers. If men decide that the child looks like them, they will be more willing to provide resources for the child (Buss, 2007). In the situation of stay at home fathers, it would seem that fathers would be more willing to stay at home if they knew the child was theirs and if the child resembled them. If evolutionary theory is correct, stay at home fathers will report that their children resemble themselves more than the employed fathers. In contrast, biosocial theory predicts that there will be no difference in stay at home fathers and employed fathers in how much they report their children resemble them. According to evolutionary psychology, fathers would also be less willing to become the primary caregivers for step-children than for biological children. If evolutionary theory is correct, there will be fewer stay at home fathers that report having step-children than employed fathers. If the social role perspective is correct, the number of step-children will not be related to whether the father stays home or not.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Multiple sampling techniques were used. Participants were recruited from fathering and university websites, as well as by sending out a survey link to the friends and family of researchers. The friends and family of researchers did not participate in the study, however, they did send out the survey link to possible participants that were unaware of the details of this study. Out of 114 fathers who started the online survey, data were analyzed for 84 fathers, 35 stay at home fathers and 49 employed fathers. Data were excluded for 30 fathers due to incomplete responses, fathers not fitting the criteria of the study (i.e. not married or living with a female partner), and fathers reporting the same answer to questions on the questionnaires. Ages ranged from 26 to 51 years, with an average age of 35.8 for stay at home fathers and 36.1 years for employed fathers, $t(82) = -.25, p = .80$. The ethnicity of the participants was primarily White/Caucasian (92.9%), with only six fathers being Black/African American, Asian/Asian American, or Hispanic/Latino. All participants were married to women; however, two participants self-identified as being bisexual. The range of household incomes was from under \$20,000 per year to more than \$100,000 per year. Household incomes for stay at home fathers and employed fathers were similar with the exception that 8 stay at home fathers reported having incomes greater than \$100,000, whereas 16 employed fathers reported the same. Education level

may explain this difference in household income. Stay at home fathers and employed fathers reported having similar levels of education in the categories of ‘Some College,’ ‘Bachelor’s Degree,’ and ‘Some Graduate School;’ however, 22 employed fathers had Graduate Degrees, whereas only 4 stay at home fathers reported the same. This difference in education levels was significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 83) = 6.7, p = .01$. The participants’ spouses’ education level ranged from having a high school diploma or GED to having a Graduate Degree, with most spouses having either a Bachelor’s Degree (27 spouses) or a Graduate Degree (31 spouses). Of those responding to the question about the number of hours worked outside of the home for pay ($n = 66$), stay at home fathers worked an average of 3.5 hours ($SD = 8.9$) outside of the home for pay, and their spouses averaged 45.4 hours ($SD = 10.6$). Employed fathers worked an average of 43.6 hours ($SD = 17.2$) outside of the home for pay with their spouses working an average of 19.8 hours ($SD = 19.5$). These differences were significant: $t(64) = -11.5, p < .001$ for fathers, and $t(79) = 6.9, p < .001$ for spouses/partners. All fathers had at least one child under the age of 10. Most fathers had two children (15 for stay at home fathers and 17 for employed fathers), with 28 having one child (13 stay at home fathers and 15 employed fathers), 13 having three children (4 stay at home fathers and 9 employed fathers), 8 having four children (1 stay at home father and 7 employed fathers), and 3 having five children (2 stay at home fathers and 1 employed father).

Materials

Background information. Demographic information was collected (see Appendix A). Additionally, fathers were asked who takes care of the children when both parents are home, the ages and sex of each of their children, whether any of the children are disabled or require special needs, and how long they have been the primary caregivers of their children. Stay at home

fathers were also asked how long they have been a stay at home father, how long they plan to be a stay at home father, and how much they enjoy being a stay at home father (1 = Do not enjoy at all and 6 = Enjoy a lot). To explore evolutionary psychology theory predictions, all fathers were asked to indicate how many step or adopted children they have and how much each of their children resembled them, physically and in terms of personality (1 = Does not resemble me at all and 6 = Resembles me a lot).

Reasons. A list of possible reasons for choosing to become the primary caregivers of their children was completed by stay at home fathers only (see Appendix B). Stay at home fathers rated the importance of each reason on a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being not important and 6 being very important. It was expected that the reasons would cluster into two categories, choice reasons (really wanted to be a primary caregiver, friend or family influences) and practical reasons (lost job, partner makes more money, cost of childcare). However, this was not the case. There were too few participants to run a principal components analysis, so correlations among the reasons were examined. There was a .58 ($p < .001$) correlation between being unemployed and being disabled, so these two reasons were combined by taking the average of the scores ($\alpha = .702$). Additionally, the partner related reasons were combined; correlations were .43 ($p < .01$) for ‘my partner makes more money than me’ and ‘my partner is more career-oriented than me,’ .53 ($p < .001$) for ‘my partner makes more money than me’ and ‘my partner encouraged me,’ and .19 ($p = .29$) for ‘my partner is more career oriented than me’ and ‘my partner encouraged me’ ($\alpha = .65$).

Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). The Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) was designed to assess gender role characteristics. The short

version of the PAQ (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) was used for this study. It contains 24 items, 8 for each subscale; however, only the masculine (i.e., 4 = very competitive and 0 = not at all competitive) and feminine (i.e., 4 = very emotional and 0 = not at all emotional) subscales were included (see Appendix C). Alpha coefficients for the short version were .85 for the masculinity subscale and .82 for the femininity subscale (Spence & Helmreich). The short version also demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity. Scores could range from 0 to 32 with higher scores indicating a stronger masculine or feminine identity. In the current study, the averages of the scores for the eight items for each subscale were used and alpha coefficients were .73 for the masculinity subscale and .79 for the femininity subscale.

Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ). The Social Roles Questionnaire (Baber & Tucker, 2006) was developed to assess attitudes towards gender roles (see Appendix D). It measures individuals' attitudes towards subtle gender inequality while using non-dichotomous terminology. Participants rate their attitudes about the social roles of men and women on a percentage scale (0% = strongly disagree and 100% = strongly agree). The short version of the SRQ was used and it consists of 13 items with two subscales, including Gender Transcendent and Gender-Linked. The Gender Transcendent subscale has 5 items (i.e., "People should be treated the same regardless of their sex") and seeks to measure how participants think about gender non-dichotomously. The Gender-Linked subscale has 8 items (i.e., "Mothers should work only if necessary") and seeks to measure individuals' belief that certain tasks and roles are associated with a certain gender. Chronbach's alphas were .65 for the Gender Transcendent subscale and .77 for the Gender-Linked subscale (Baber & Tucker). The SRQ also demonstrated good face, content, convergent, and discriminant validity. The items for the Gender Transcendent

subscale are reverse coded, and then the items of the subscales are summed and averaged. Scores for each subscale can range from 0 to 100 with higher scores on the SRQ subscales indicating more traditional attitudes towards gender roles. Eleven additional items from the long version that explicitly addressed attitudes toward employed work and domestic work were also included for exploratory analyses (i.e., “It is difficult for women to be good wives and mothers while working outside the home”). In the current study, averages for each subscale were used and alpha coefficients for the Gender-Linked subscale (.80) and Gender-Transcendent subscale (.63) indicated acceptable reliability.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from fathering websites (see Appendix E for sample of letter sent to websites); websites included specialized stay at home father websites to target stay at home fathers and general father websites and a university website to target employed fathers. Additionally, the survey link was sent out to the friends and families of the researchers. The link was either posted on fathering and university websites that fathers had the option to click on to take the online survey or the link was sent in an email and participants could click the link to take the survey. The online survey was developed using Qualtrics. After clicking on the link, fathers were routed to an Indiana State University webpage where they read an informed consent form (see Appendix F) and agreed to the parameters of the study. Participants then clicked continue to participate in the study. After being routed to the Indiana State University webpage, participants completed the demographics questionnaire, the reasons questionnaire (stay at home fathers only), the PAQ, and the SRQ. Representations of the questionnaires are included in the Appendices; however, the format of the questionnaires changed when using Qualtrics to publish

them online. Upon completing the questionnaires, participants had the opportunity to enter a drawing to win a \$25 gift card to Amazon.com. If participants decided to enter the drawing, they entered their email address into a separate Qualtrics database (see Appendix G for explanation of drawing to participants). The drawing database had no connections to the participants' answers on the questionnaire in order to ensure anonymity. After data collection was completed, four email addresses were randomly selected from the drawing database and drawing winners were contacted via email. The Amazon.com gift cards were electronically delivered to their email accounts.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Background Information

Most fathers indicated that they were primary caregivers for their children (100% of stay at home fathers and 65.3% of employed fathers); however, all 17 of the fathers who indicated they were not primary caregivers were employed fathers, $\chi^2(1, N = 84) = 15.2, p < .001$. Most fathers were also likely to say that both parents equally cared for the children when both parents were home (74.3% of stay at home fathers and 83.7% of employed fathers). However, stay at home fathers were more likely than employed fathers to say that they were the primary caregiver (22.9% versus 4.1%) and employed fathers were more likely than stay at home fathers to say that the mother was the primary caregiver (12.2% versus 2.9%) when both parents were home, $\chi^2(2, N = 84) = 8.4, p = .015$.

On average, stay at home fathers enjoyed their position, $M = 5.3, SD = .8$. Stay at home fathers reported an average of 3.8 years of being a stay at home father ($SD = 3.1$; range of .2 to 11.5 years).

PAQ and SRQ Subscales

Correlations between the PAQ subscales (masculine and feminine) and SRQ subscales (Gender Transcendent and Gender Linked) are in Table 1. Higher scores on femininity were correlated with higher scores on masculinity and less traditional gender role attitudes (SRQ

Gender Linked subscale). The two SRQ subscales were significantly and positively correlated with each other. In addition, the more stay at home fathers enjoyed their position, the less traditional their scores on the SRQ Gender Transcendent subscale, $r(33) = -.34, p = .05$. The length of time a stay at home father was at home with the children did not correlate with the PAQ subscales nor the SRQ subscales.

Two one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were conducted to test the hypotheses that employed fathers would report having more masculine characteristics and fewer feminine characteristics (PAQ subscales) and more traditional gender role attitudes (SRQ subscales) than stay at home fathers. The independent variable was the type of father (stay at home or employed) and the dependent variables were the PAQ subscale or the SRQ subscale scores. Because employed fathers had higher education levels than stay at home fathers, education level was entered as a covariate in the MANOVAs involving the PAQ and the SRQ. Results of the multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs) were similar to the results of the MANOVAs, so only results of the MANOVAs are presented below.

Multivariate results indicated a non-significant effect for the type of father on the PAQ scores, $F(2,81) = 1.49, p = .23, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .036$. The univariate analyses also indicated that stay at home fathers and employed fathers did not differ significantly on the PAQ masculinity subscale, $F(1,80) = 1.31, p = .26, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .016$, and the PAQ femininity subscale, $F(1,82) = .50, p = .48, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .006$. See Table 2 for means and standard errors.

Multivariate results indicated a significant effect for the type of father on the SRQ scores, $F(2,81) = 3.76, p = .03, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .085$. The univariate analyses also revealed significant effects for the Gender Linked subscale, $F(1,82) = 5.33, p = .023, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .061$, and the Gender

Transcendent subscale, $F(1,82) = 5.21, p = .025$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Thus, employed fathers had more traditional attitudes about gender roles than stay at home fathers. See Table 2 for means and standard errors.

Reasons Questionnaire

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the reasons stay at home fathers chose to stay home (see Table 3). Wanting to be a stay at home father was rated the most important reason, $M = 4.37, SD = 1.66$. Being influenced by their partners' career, amount of money made, and encouragement was also reported as an important reason for choosing to stay home, $M = 4.04, SD = 1.24$.

Correlations were calculated between the reasons stay at home fathers chose to stay home and PAQ and SRQ subscales scores (see Table 4) and how much they enjoyed being a stay at home father. Stay at home fathers who scored high on masculine characteristics on the PAQ were less likely to rate partner reasons as being important than the other stay at home fathers, $r(33) = -.42, p = .013$. Higher scores on the PAQ femininity scale were significantly correlated with higher ratings for the importance of friends' encouragement, $r(33) = .42, p = .013$, and insufficient childcare in the area, $r(33) = .39, p = .021$. However, the latter correlation became non-significant after two outliers on the insufficient childcare variable were removed, $r(33) = .233, p > .05$. Stay at home fathers who scored higher on the SRQ Gender Linked scale were more likely to rate insufficient childcare in the area, $r(33) = .40, p = .016$, having a special needs child, $r(33) = .395, p = .021$, and being disabled or unemployed, $r(33) = .358, p = .035$ as important reasons for becoming a primary caregiver. However, all three of these correlations with the Gender Linked scale became non-significant after removing two outliers for each of the

reasons variables, $r(32 \text{ to } 33) = .176 \text{ to } .278, p > .05$. Additionally, the more a stay at home father enjoyed his position and the longer he had been a stay at home father, the more likely he was to rate partner variables as influencing his decision to stay home, $r(33) = .35, p = .037$ and $r(33) = .375, p = .027$, respectively.

Evolutionary Psychology Predictions

There were too few participants with step or adopted children (only 5 fathers) to test the hypothesis that employed fathers would report having more step and adopted children than stay at home fathers, so this hypothesis was not tested. Both stay at home and employed fathers rated the physical and personality resemblance of their children to themselves; however, we were interested in the physical resemblance ratings only for the purposes of examining evolutionary psychology predictions, so personality resemblance ratings were not analyzed. An average physical resemblance score for each father's biological children was calculated and then compared between stay at home and employed fathers. Stay at home fathers ($M = 4.6, SD = .9$) and employed fathers ($M = 4.2, SD = 1.0$) rated their children similarly on physical resemblance, $t(82) = 1.19, p = .24$.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Biosocial theory (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Wood & Eagly, 2002) makes predictions about gender identities and social roles for men and women, but it does not specifically address men who take on the traditional social roles of women, such as being a primary caregiver. In addition, evolutionary psychology (Archer, 1996; Buss, 1995; Buss, 2007) makes predictions about why women and men have particular social roles, but it does not make any predictions about why an individual would choose to violate those predicted social roles.

Gender Role Characteristics

The hypothesis that stay at home fathers would report higher levels of stereotypically feminine characteristics and lower levels of stereotypically masculine characteristics and that employed fathers would report higher levels of stereotypically masculine characteristics and lower levels of stereotypically feminine characteristics was not supported. Instead, stay at home and employed fathers scored similarly on the PAQ femininity and masculinity subscales. Robertson and Verschelden (1993) reported the same finding; their sample of stay at home fathers had masculine and feminine characteristics that were similar to employed fathers. This finding supports neither biosocial theory nor evolutionary psychology theory. Instead, these results suggest that gender role characteristics may no longer need to be thought of as being dichotomous, either masculine or feminine, as both biosocial theory and evolutionary

psychology theory propose, because stay at home and employed fathers both scored relatively high on masculine and feminine characteristics. Interestingly, stay at home fathers in the Rochlen, Suizzo et al. (2008) study mentioned the uselessness of dichotomizing masculine and feminine characteristics, as well.

Stay at home fathers may also be ‘hanging on’ to their masculine gender role characteristics by engaging in traditional male activities. Doucet (2004) and Merla (2008) both reported that their samples of stay at home fathers emphasized their participation in such male activities (i.e. home and car repair, yard work, coaching children’s sports teams). Just as employed fathers act out their masculine identities by providing financial resources for their families, stay at home fathers may act out their masculine identities by providing traditionally masculine services for their families. This may explain why stay at home and employed fathers scored similarly on the PAQ masculinity subscale in this study.

Stay at home fathers also mentioned that the way others defined masculinity was not important to them (Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008). It seems that stay at home fathers are creating new gender identities by incorporating masculine and feminine characteristics into their role as primary caregivers, just as Doucet (2004) suggested. Stay at home fathers reported that incorporating feminine characteristics into their gender identities is a process that began after becoming the primary caregivers for their children (Rochlen, Suizzo, et al., 2008). It is possible that feminine characteristics developed for these stay at home fathers after making the decision to stay at home with their children. However, it is also possible that the stay at home fathers became more aware of feminine characteristics that were already part of their gender identity

after choosing to stay home with the children. It is hard to speculate on the development of gender role characteristics, especially if and when they have changed.

It would also seem that employed fathers are mixing masculine and feminine characteristics into their gender identities. The results of this study suggest that the gender role characteristics of the stereotypic father (highly masculine and definitely not feminine) are different than what we have traditionally thought, regardless of whether they are employed outside of the home or a primary caregiver.

Gender Role Attitudes

The second hypothesis of this study, that stay at home fathers would report less traditional gender role attitudes than employed fathers was supported. Stay at home fathers scored lower on the SRQ Gender Linked and Gender Transcendent subscales than employed fathers, indicating less traditional attitudes about gender roles. Since stay at home fathers are acting out non-traditional gender roles by being the primary caregiver for their children it makes sense that their behaviors and their attitudes would coincide. This research finding supports the biosocial theory (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Wood and Eagly, 2002). Biosocial theory proposes that gender roles developed out of the division of labor. More specifically, the division of labor happens before gender roles develop. This same concept can be applied to stay at home fathers and their partners. Stay at home fathers and their female partners are dividing labor and developing attitudes and behaviors that are atypical for the traditional heterosexual couple. Thus, stay at home fathers' non-traditional attitudes can be explained by biosocial theory as developing out of the division of labor within their unique households.

What cannot be answered by the results of this study is whether the non-traditional gendered behaviors or the non-traditional attitudes came first, as suggested by Merla (2008). More specifically, did stay at home fathers have less traditional attitudes before they became stay at home fathers or did their attitudes change after they became stay at home fathers? Most likely, there is not a clear cause and effect relationship between these gendered behaviors and non-traditional attitudes. One possibility is that a reciprocal relationship between the behaviors and attitudes exists. More specifically, stay at home fathers may have already had less traditional attitudes about gender roles, which impacted their decision to become a stay at home father and act out a traditionally female gender role; acting out this non-traditional gender role may then have led to even less traditional attitudes about gender roles. Future research may explore this reciprocal relationship in more detail, while also examining stay at home fathers' partners' gender role attitudes and how they influence the attitudes of the stay at home fathers.

Reasons for the Decision to Become a Stay at Home Father

Stay at home fathers are breaking traditional gender role norms and this study sought to understand why by having the fathers rate certain reasons that influenced their decision to stay home and become the primary caregivers for their children. Doucet and Merla (2007) found that there are usually many reasons that influence a stay at home father's decision to become a primary caregiver. The present study found that the highest rated reason for choosing to stay home was that they really wanted to be a primary caregiver. Rochlen, Suizzo et al. (2008) emphasized two aspects of wanting to become a primary caregiver; both the mother and father believing that one parent should stay home with the children rather than put them in daycare and that the father had the better fitting personality to stay at home with the children. As one stay at

home father in this study stated, “Given our unique circumstances, and our belief that a child needs unconditional love and a strong, stable nourishing environment that only a parent can give...staying home to raise our children was by far our best solution.” Another simply said, “I like kids.” Merla (2008) indicated another aspect of wanting to be a stay at home father; that of wanting to have a fulfilling relationship with their children. One stay at home father in this study emphasized that he wanted “to know who my children were.” The stay at home fathers in this study may have been rating several aspects of wanting to be a primary caregiver when they rated the reason of wanting to stay at home as being an important reason for making their decision. Investigating these different aspects of wanting to be a primary caregiver is an area for future research.

The second highest rated reason for choosing to stay home with the children was being influenced by their partners’ career dedication, money making potential, and encouragement. A stay at home father in this study explains, “When I took my wedding vows, I knew I would do everything in my power to make my partner’s life as fulfilling as possible. When she had the opportunity to advance in her career, I followed along. Didn’t find work in my field and when kids came along, it made the most sense for me to stay at home, as we both believe that is important.” Rochlen, Suizzo et al. (2008) also found that stay at home fathers’ partners’ career dedication and earning potential were highly reported reasons for choosing to stay at home with the children. The results of this study also indicated that stay at home fathers who were influenced by their partners scored lower on the PAQ masculinity subscale. Stay at home fathers with fewer stereotypical masculine characteristics may make a more cooperative decision with their partners about staying home, compared to stay at home fathers with more stereotypical

masculine characteristics. Kaufman (2005) discussed two types of marriages prevalent in our society today, traditional and egalitarian. In egalitarian marriages, power is distributed equally and most of the household and relationship decisions are made by a couple together. The combination of less traditional gender roles and fewer masculine characteristics may lead certain stay at home fathers to seek out egalitarian marriages from the start, which leads to more cooperative partnerships in general, especially when it comes to making decisions about such important issues as childcare.

The two least reported reasons for making the decision to stay at home were having a child with special needs and being encouraged by friends. This sample of stay at home fathers may not have had many children with special needs. Being encouraged by friends was the second least reported reason for choosing to stay home. However, high scores on the PAQ femininity subscale were associated with rating their friends' influence as being an important reason for becoming a stay at home father. Bowmen (2008) found that men who have more feminine characteristics also self-disclose more within their same-sex friendships; and that self-disclosure can lead to a feeling of closeness within friendships. Bowman (2008) also reported that self-disclosure within same-sex male friendships may be directly related to not only having more feminine characteristics, but to having a combination of more feminine characteristics and more masculine characteristics. Maybe stay at home fathers with more feminine characteristics are more easily influenced by their friends or maybe they have closer relationships with their friends than stay at home fathers who are lower in feminine characteristics.

Another interesting finding associated with the reasons stay at home fathers choose to stay home with their children is that although almost all stay at home fathers enjoyed their

position, they were more likely to enjoy being at home with their children when they had been influenced by their partner. In their sample of male homemakers and female providers, Robertson and Verscheldon (1993) found that the female providers were most happy with the decision for their male partners to stay home because it allowed them to have a fulfilling career without worrying about their children. Robertson and Verscheldon (1993) also found that both male homemakers and female providers in their sample were more satisfied with their lives, when compared to more traditional couples. It seems that if stay at home fathers' partners are happy with the decision for these fathers to stay at home, then these fathers are more likely to be happy being at home. Interestingly, Rochlen, Suizzo et al. (2008) found that most of the stay at home fathers in their sample really enjoyed their position of staying home with the children, as well.

Evolutionary Psychology Theory

Unfortunately, there was not a large enough sample to explore both evolutionary psychology research questions. There were only five participants who had step or adopted children, so a comparison between stay at home and employed fathers was not possible. However, a comparison between stay at home and employed fathers was made on physical resemblance. Evolutionary psychology predicts that fathers will be more likely to invest resources in their children if they are sure that the children are theirs (Buss, 2007); having children with strong physical resemblances to themselves is one way of being sure that the children are theirs. Therefore, if evolutionary psychology predictions are correct, stay at home fathers would report higher physical resemblances for their children. However, the results of this study found no difference between stay at home and employed fathers on reporting the physical

resemblance of their children to themselves. Thus, the prediction based upon evolutionary psychology theory was not supported.

Both employed and stay at home fathers rated the physical resemblance of their children to themselves relatively high. Also, employed and stay at home fathers are both providing resources for their children, just different resources which are both imperative for their children's survival and success. Employed fathers are providing financial resources and stay at home fathers are providing caretaking resources. Future research could compare involved fathers and un-involved fathers on ratings of physical resemblance for their children; this type of research could directly compare fathers who are providing resources with fathers who are not providing resources on a measure of perceived physical resemblance of their children.

Additional Findings and Limitations

Almost all of the fathers in this sample, with the exception of 17 employed fathers, indicated that they were the primary caregivers for their children. It is possible that the term 'primary caregiver' was interpreted in different ways. Stay at home fathers seemed to have identified the term to mean someone who stays home and gives care to their children. Employed fathers may have identified the term to mean being the only male in their children's lives to be providing care or being the sole financial provider in their children's lives. Interestingly, when both parents are home, more employed fathers reported that their partner does most of the childcare.

Employed fathers reported having higher household incomes and being more educated than the stay at home fathers in this sample. It is possible that there was a sampling bias in an attempt to locate participants. Most of the stay at home fathers were sampled from websites with

a wide range of members. However, some of the employed fathers were recruited from a university newsletter targeted at faculty members who most likely have a higher earning potential and have high levels of education. When education level was entered as a covariate in the primary analyses, it did not change the results, however. The sampling bias that may have occurred is one limitation of this study. In future research, it will be important to recruit both types of fathers from the same sources, whether through posting survey links on websites or approaching fathers at public parks.

Another limitation is the overall size of the sample, particularly the number of stay at home fathers. Stay at home fathers were targeted on stay at home fathering websites with thousands of members. However, getting these busy fathers to take part in an online survey proved to be difficult, even with the incentive of possibly winning a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. Some of the stay at home fathers seemed apprehensive about participating in the study, as observed on the comment boards; some negative comments on the message boards may have hindered other stay at home fathers from participating. Stay at home fathers may also be protecting their work and identity for fear of being scrutinized or ostracized by the public. Research done by an outsider may be a threat to this protection. The stay at home fathers who did participate in the study seemed very motivated about their position and they wanted to share their experiences. Also, most of them enjoyed and chose their position; very few stay at home fathers in this study reported being home with the children because they were unemployed or disabled. Gaining access to stay at home fathers who don't enjoy what they are doing, feel stuck in their role as a primary caregiver, and didn't make the choice to stay home with the children will also be important for future research. It might be difficult for stay at home fathers to talk

about such negative experiences in face to face interviews with researchers, so targeting them online through their email accounts or by distributing surveys at play groups or doctor's offices to be mailed in to researchers may be the best way to obtain a more representative sample of stay at home fathers.

Both stay at home and employed fathers were overwhelmingly White/Caucasian in this sample (almost 93%), as well. Interestingly, much of the research conducted with stay at home fathers has included samples with an overrepresentation of White/Caucasian men (Doucet, 2004; Rochlen, Suizzo et al., 2008). Maybe these samples are representative of the population of stay at home fathers, maybe White/Caucasian men are more likely than men of different ethnicities to voluntarily participate in research, or maybe the recruiting techniques of researchers are targeting White/Caucasian stay at home fathers. Future research may want to focus on whether the samples in current research are representing the population of stay at home fathers.

Lastly, although the quantitative methodology allowed for a direct comparison between stay at home and employed fathers, it did not allow narratives or explanations about their experiences as fathers. Integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies, such as the approach taken by Robertson and Verschelden (1993) in their research on male homemakers, would have been optimal for comparing and understanding the gender role characteristics, gender role attitudes, and reasons to become a primary caregiver of these stay at home and employed fathers.

Conclusions

Biosocial theory was used to make predictions about stay at home and employed fathers' gender role characteristics and attitudes about gender roles. Although the prediction about gender

role characteristics differing between stay at home and employed fathers was not supported in this research study, the prediction about gender role attitudes differing between the two groups of fathers was supported. Biosocial theory continues to be a useful theory in creating hypotheses for current research on gender roles and gender role attitudes associated with families and their distribution of household tasks and childcare.

Evolutionary psychology theory was used to make predictions about parental investments differing for stay at home and employed fathers. My study used physical resemblance to measure parental investment. The prediction that stay at home fathers would report a higher degree of physical resemblance to their children was not supported. However, the other prediction driven by evolutionary psychology theory, that stay at home fathers would report having fewer step and adopted children than employed fathers was not tested due to very few fathers having step and adopted children. Larger samples are needed to test these predictions in future research.

The findings from this study can be applied to the everyday lives of stay at home and employed fathers. Fathering support groups, websites, and books could all benefit from the knowledge gained from this study. These support systems for fathers could become more targeted and sensitive to the gender role characteristics and attitudes of stay at home fathers and employed fathers. For example, the finding that stay at home fathers have less traditional attitudes about gender roles than employed fathers could be used to make websites for stay at home fathers more friendly by including topics about equality in partnerships and egalitarian relationships. Additionally, based upon the finding that employed fathers have high levels of masculine and feminine characteristics, websites targeting employed fathers could become more friendly by including ways for employed fathers to integrate more feminine characteristics into

their identities as fathers, therefore possibly increasing their ability to communicate with and nurture their children.

This study provided empirical evidence that stay at home fathers are similar on gender role characteristics when compared to employed fathers, but differ in their gender role attitudes. Exploration of the reasons stay at home fathers choose to stay home also provided another interesting finding that most stay at home fathers simply wanted to stay home and take care of their children. To understand a more complete picture of stay at home fathers, future research could focus on studying their female partners' gender role characteristics, gender role attitudes, and reasons they choose to be employed. Stay at home fathers are becoming an important social group within our society and more research is warranted to understand these modern day gender benders.

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APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

Age:

Sexual Orientation:

- 1) Heterosexual
- 2) Homosexual
- 3) Bisexual

Sex of spouse partner:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

Relationship Status:

- 1) Married
- 2) Divorced
- 3) Widowed
- 4) Living with Partner
- 5) Not Married, Dating

Ethnicity:

- 1) White/Caucasian
- 2) Black/African-American
- 3) Hispanic/Latino
- 4) Asian/Asian-American
- 5) Native American/American Indian
- 6) Other

How many hours do you work outside of the home for pay?

How many hours does your partner work outside of the home for pay?

Household Income:

- 1) Less than \$ 20,000
- 2) \$20,000 –\$ 30,000

- 3) \$30,000 - \$40,000
- 4) \$40,000 - \$50,000
- 5) \$50,000 - \$60,000
- 6) \$60,000 - \$70,000
- 7) \$70,000 - \$80,000
- 8) \$80,000 - \$90,000
- 9) \$90,000 - \$ 100,000
- 10) More than \$100,000

Your Education:

- 1) Less than High School
- 2) High School Diploma/GED
- 3) Some College
- 4) Bachelor's Degree
- 5) Some Graduate School
- 6) Graduate Degree (i.e. Masters, Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

Partner's Education

- 1) Less than High School
- 2) High School Diploma/GED
- 3) Some College
- 4) Bachelor's Degree
- 5) Some Graduate School
- 6) Graduate Degree (i.e. Masters, Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

Previous or Part-time Occupation:

Are you a primary caregiver?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

If yes, are you a stay at home father?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

If yes, how long have you been a stay at home father?

How long do you plan to be a stay at home father?

Who takes care of the children when both parents are home?

- 1) Mother
- 2) Father

APPENDIX B: REASONS QUESTIONNAIRE

Below is a list of reasons that may have influenced your decision to become a stay at home father. Use the scale below to indicate how important each reason was in your decision to become a stay at home father.

Please indicate your response on a scale from 1 to 6.

Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very Important

- 1) I cannot work because of a disability or injury:
- 2) I really wanted to become a primary caregiver:
- 3) I lost my job and am currently unemployed:
- 4) I work out of my home:
- 5) The cost of childcare is too much for our household income:
- 6) There is not sufficient childcare in my area:
- 7) My partner makes more money than me:
- 8) My partner is more career-oriented than me:
- 9) My friends encouraged me:
- 10) My partner encouraged me:
- 11) My extended family encouraged me:
- 12) I have 1 or more children with special needs:
- 13) Other (please type):

14) How much do you enjoy being a stay at home father?

Do not enjoy at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Enjoy very much

APPENDIX C: PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES QUESTIONNAIRE

Each pair of words below describes contradictory characteristics, that is, a person cannot be both at the same time, such as very artistic and not very artistic. The numbers form a scale between 2 extremes. You are to choose a number which describes where you think you fall on the scale. For example, if you think you have no artistic ability, you would choose 0. If you think you have pretty good artistic ability, you would choose 3. If you think you have medium artistic ability you would choose 2, and so forth.

1) Not at all independent	0	1	2	3	4	Very independent
2) Not at all emotional	0	1	2	3	4	Very emotional
3) Very passive	0	1	2	3	4	Very active
4) Not at all able to devote self completely to others	0	1	2	3	4	Able to devote self completely to others
5) Very rough	0	1	2	3	4	Very gentle
6) Not at all helpful to others	0	1	2	3	4	Very helpful to others
7) Not at all competitive	0	1	2	3	4	Very competitive
8) Not at all kind	0	1	2	3	4	Very kind
9) Not at all aware of feelings of others	0	1	2	3	4	Very aware of feelings of others
10) Can make decisions easily	0	1	2	3	4	Has difficulty making decisions

11) Gives up easily	0	1	2	3	4	Never gives up easily
12) Not at all self-confident	0	1	2	3	4	Very self-confident
13) Feels very inferior	0	1	2	3	4	Feels very superior
14) Not at all understanding of others	0	1	2	3	4	Very understanding of others
15) Very cold in relations with others	0	1	2	3	4	Very warm in relations with others
16) Goes to pieces under pressure	0	1	2	3	4	Stands up well under pressure

APPENDIX D: SOCIAL ROLES QUESTIONNAIRE

We are interested in the ways that people think about different social roles. The following statements describe attitudes different people have towards roles for men and women. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. Please express your personal opinion about each statement. Think about your opinions now and indicate how much you agree with each statement with 0% meaning you strongly disagree and 100% indicating you strongly agree with the statement.

Strongly Disagree 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100% Strongly Agree

1) Even if both husbands and wives work, women should have primary responsibility for the housework (e.g. washing the dishes, doing the laundry, and cleaning the house).

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

2) Only some types of work are appropriate for both men and women (e.g. it is silly for a woman to do construction and for a man to do sewing).

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

3) It is difficult for women to be good wives and mothers while working outside the home.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

4) Both boys and girls should be raised to expect to be breadwinners as well as caregivers.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

5) For many important jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

6) A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

7) Boys should do jobs around the house like washing dishes and cleaning the bathroom.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

8) Men are more sexual than women.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

9) Girls should not be expected to do jobs around the house like mow the lawn and shovel snow.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

10) Some types of work are just not appropriate for women.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

11) Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

12) People are limited by traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

13) Mothers should work only if necessary.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

14) Having a full-time mother is best for children.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

15) Girls need to be protected and watched over more than boys.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

16) People can be both aggressive and nurturing regardless of their sex.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

17) It is more important that young women take child development and family relations courses in school than it is for young men.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

18) People should be treated the same regardless of their sex.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

19) It is better for boys to learn to do outside tasks and for girls to learn to do housekeeping and childcare.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

20) The freedom that children are given should be determined by their age and maturity level and not by their sex.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

21) Regardless of what people say, mothers are more important to children's development than are fathers.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

22) If husbands and wives disagree, husbands should have the final word on important decisions in families.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

23) Tasks around the house should not be assigned by sex.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

24) We should stop thinking about whether people are male or female and focus on other characteristics (e.g. kindness, ability, etc.).

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

APPENDIX E: WEBSITE LETTER

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jessica Fischer. I am a graduate student at Indiana State University working on my Master's degree in Experimental Psychology. I am conducting a research study for my thesis with the help of my advisor, Veanne Anderson.

We are interested to see if there are any differences between employed and stay at home fathers on gender identity and attitudes towards gender roles. We are also interested in looking at demographic information and possible reasons why stay at home fathers choose to stay home and become the primary caregiver to their children. This research study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees all research with human subjects that is affiliated with the University, and found to adequately safeguard the participants' privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. Also, all information obtained from participants will be kept confidential.

We were hoping that you would be willing to post a link on your website that fathers could click on, be directed to an Indiana State University website, and take a short questionnaire. We are planning for the survey to be ready to be posted in July or August. We anticipate that the questionnaire would take less than 30 minutes to complete. I received a \$100 research grant from the School of Graduate Studies at ISU, so participants would have an opportunity to win one of four \$25 gift cards to Amazon.com.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Jessica Fischer
MA candidate
Indiana State University
jfischer14@indstate.edu
(612) 801-8159

Veanne Anderson, Ph.D.

Indiana State University
vanderson1@isugw.indstate.edu
(812) 237-2459

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT

Stay at home dads: The new gender benders

You are being asked to participate in a study on characteristics of fathers. This research is being conducted by a master's student, Jessica Fischer, and Dr. Veanne Anderson of the Psychology Department at Indiana State University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the following information carefully.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

To participate in this study, you must be at least 18 years old, heterosexual, and married or in a committed relationship. You must also satisfy one of the following conditions (1) employed father with at least 1 child under the age of 5 and working at least 32 hours outside of the home for pay, or (2) a stay at home father with at least 1 child under the age of 5 and working fewer than 20 hours outside of the home for pay and a female partner who works at least 32 hours outside of the home for pay.

PROCEDURE

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will click on a link below that says "I agree" and you will be routed to an Indiana State University website where you will be asked to answer questions about your attitudes toward social roles for men and women. You will also be asked questions about your age, ethnicity, household income, non-identifying information on your children, and reasons why you became a stay at home father, if you are a primary caregiver. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept in a secure database and we will not be collecting any identifying information. Only the researchers will have access to this database and it will be secured with a password.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

After completing the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. If you choose to enter the drawing, you will be asked for your email. Your email address will be kept in a secure database and will not be seen by any other party. We will contact you directly to notify you if you won and the gift card information will be sent to

your email account. If you do not win the drawing, you will not be contacted by us and your email address will be deleted from the database. The questionnaire response database will be separate from the email address database so that your responses cannot be connected to your email address.

PARTICIPANT RISKS

Risks of participation are minimal and not expected to be greater than what you encounter in everyday activities. You may experience some mild anxiety when completing some of the questions due to examining your own attitudes and identities. There are no direct benefits to you; however, you will be contributing to the understanding of fatherhood.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time without consequence. Your responses will not be entered into the database until the end of the survey, when you click “Submit”. If you decide to withdraw in the middle of the survey, you may do so. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This project has been reviewed and determined to be exempt, due to minimal risk to you as a participant, by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Indiana State University. The study has been determined to adequately safeguard the participant’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact the project supervisor, Veanne Anderson, in the Department of Psychology at (812) 237-2459, or by email at vanderson1@isugw.indstate.edu. You may also contact the primary researcher, Jessica Fischer at (812) 237-2445, or by email at jfischer14@indstate.edu.

Please print a copy of this form for your records and click “I agree” below to begin the study.

APPENDIX G: EXPLANATION OF AMAZON.COM DRAWING

Thank you for participating in this study. You now have an opportunity to enter a drawing to win a \$25 Amazon.com gift card. The gift card will be sent electronically via email, so if you would like to enter the drawing, you will need to provide an email address. The email addresses will be entered into a database that is separate from that of your responses to the questionnaires. None of your responses to the questionnaires will be connected to your email address. At the end of the study, four email addresses will be randomly selected from the email database. If your email address is selected, you will be contacted via email and the gift card information will be sent to your email account. Your email address will not be given out to any other parties; as stated above, we will be contacting you directly to notify you of your winning, you will not be contacted by a third party. If you do not win, your email address will be deleted from the database and we will have no further contact with you. If you would like to participate in the Amazon.com gift card drawing, please click below to enter your email address. Thank you and good luck.

Table 1

Correlations among PAQ and SRQ Subscales

<u>Subscale</u>	<u>PAQ</u>		<u>SRQ</u>	
	<u>Masculinity</u>	<u>Femininity</u>	<u>Gender Linked</u>	<u>Gender Transcendent</u>
PAQ Masculinity		.261*	-.040	-.052
PAQ Femininity			-.260*	-.067
SRQ Gender Linked				.423**

Note. Higher scores indicate more masculine and feminine characteristics (PAQ) and more traditional gender roles (SRQ).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 2

Means and Standard Errors for Stay at Home Fathers and Employed Fathers on the PAQ and SRQ Subscales

Subscale	Type of Father	Mean	Standard Error
PAQ Masculinity	Stay at Home	3.693	.092
	Employed	3.778	.078
PAQ Femininity	Stay at Home	3.936	.087
	Employed	3.785	.073
SRQ Gender Linked	Stay at Home	21.430	3.216
	Employed	31.151	2.718
SRQ Gender Transcendent	Stay at Home	12.514	2.907
	Employed	21.200	2.457

Note. Higher scores indicate more masculine and feminine characteristics (PAQ subscales) and more traditional gender roles attitudes (SRQ subscales).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the Reasons Stay at Home Fathers Chose to Stay Home

Reason	Mean	Standard Deviation
Disabled and/or Unemployed	1.60	1.18
Influenced by Partner ^a	4.04	1.24
Really Wanted to Stay Home	4.37	1.66
Work from Home	1.97	1.76
Cost of Childcare	3.54	1.96
Insufficient Childcare	1.71	1.32
Friend's Encouragement	1.40	.85
Family's Encouragement	2.34	1.57
Special Needs Child at Home	1.38	1.13

Note. Scores could range from 1 to 5 with higher scores signifying greater importance for that particular reason.

^aCombined and averaged responses to “my partner makes more money than me,” “my partner is more career-oriented than me,” and “my spouse/partner encouraged me.”

Table 4

Correlations among the Reasons Stay at Home Fathers Chose to Stay Home and PAQ and SRQ Subscales

Reason	PAQMasc	PAQFem	SRQGenLink	SRQGenTrans
Disabled and/or Unemployed	.201	.194	.358*	.206
Influenced by Partner Variables	-.417*	.103	.041	-.254
Really Wanted to Stay Home	-.008	.218	-.047	-.044
Work from Home	.074	.268	.254	.005
Cost of Childcare	-.008	.213	.083	-.142
Insufficient Childcare	.199	.390*	.404*	.147
Friend's Encouragement	.216	.415*	.269	-.125
Family's Encouragement	.223	.106	-.064	-.205
Special Needs Child at Home	-.006	.275	.395*	-.007

Note. Higher scores indicate more masculine or feminine characteristics (PAQMasc and PAQFem), more traditional gender roles attitudes (SRQGenLink and SRQGenTrans), and more importance for the reasons.

* $p < .05$.