Introduction

Barbara Hobson and David Morgan

The very title of this book, *Making Men into Fathers*, suggests the weak bonds between men and fatherhood. Men father but do not necessarily assume the responsibilities of fatherhood. This is more true in recent decades; fewer men enter fatherhood and more leave it, according to studies on both sides of the Atlantic (Jensen 1998a; Oláh, Bernhardt and Goldscheider in this volume). The growing number of solo mother families also is an outcome that reflects the decoupling of fathers from fatherhood. But this is only part of the story. There are visible actors seeking to forge the links between manhood and fatherhood, as seen in the strident men's movements affirming men's rights to father and their responsibilities to fatherhood. The Million Man march in the United States in 1995 was perhaps the most dramatic statement of a grass roots mobilization of African American men connecting manhood and fatherhood. The message leaders articulated was that poor black men were not allowed to play their normal roles as family leaders and breadwinners because they were excluded from educational and labor market opportunities (Messner 1997). Not to be ignored in this discussion is the emergence of men's groups claiming father's rights for custody of children after divorce.

The making of men into fathers is also obvious in media representations of men's involvement with fathering. A host of films in the 1990s are narratives of fathers who become reconciled to their sons, such as *Liar Liar* (the absent father) or *The Full Monty* (the failed provider). There is a positive and confident imaging of solo fathers in films, which mirrors changing perceptions around the ability of fathers to be primary caregivers, in effect undermining the naturalized relationship of mother and child. Nevertheless, it is through policy discourse, new laws and practices that the most conscious and purposeful attempts have been made to connect men to fatherhood – fathers both inside and outside of marriage.

Policy makers have turned their gaze on men as fathers, most often expressed as a "crisis of fatherhood." In some respects this is old wine in new bottles. Throughout the twentieth century, there have been

1

laments and jeremiads about the decline of the family and marriage, and
anxieties about divorce and single-parent families. These accounts most
often blamed mothers for "family breakdowns," but fathers were also
culpable as Jane Lewis's study in this volume illustrates.

In the current discourse, the crisis in fatherhood is woven into the warp
of the crisis in welfare states. We find a tendency in nearly all Western
welfare states to reduce, or even withdraw, support for solo mothers. One
rationale for these policies is a sense that the state is picking up the tab for
never-married fathers and divorced fathers, by supporting solo mothers.
This perception has led to the coining of new epithets, such as "deadbeat
dads" as well as the increased policing of them by state bureaucracies
(see Lewis; Municio-Larsson and Pujol Algans; Orloff and Monson in
this volume).

There is also a new content to the debates on fatherhood in our era,
which is not only the result of high divorce rates and single-parent
families, but also reflects the fractal-like complexity in family forms, with
competing claims of mothers, biological fathers and social/household
fathers.[1] Divorced fathers who are seeking custody often are at odds
with repartnered fathers claiming rights over children who are not
their biological children. These conflicting claims involve both cash and
care.

In policy discourse, the question of who pays for the kids is now paired
with who cares for the kids. This is also visible in the reconfigurations of
family law that reflect a greater recognition of fathers' rights to shared
custody. Joint custody is feasible in most legal systems in Western wel-
fare states, and it is a norm in the Scandinavian countries. Sweden has
the highest levels, where 91 percent of divorced couples agree to joint
custody. Not only the principles of law in many countries – the acknowl-
edgement of fathers' claims in custody cases and the rights of children
to be cared for by two parents – but also the legal terminology in divorce
mirror a change in the assumptions about fatherhood. For example, in
legal discourse, "residential parent" has replaced the term of guardian;
parental responsibility is a phrase that often appears in formal texts on
custody cases (Berns 2000).

Despite these shifts in discourses, and even changes in court practices,
with more men now being awarded shared custody, fathers' responsibil-
ities as defined in law and policy are still largely directed toward cash,
not care. Consider the increased surveillance and interventions against
fathers who do not assume financial responsibility for children. These
include attachment of wages and, in rare instances, US judges in some
localities sentence fathers to prison who fail to make support payments.

There is no law or policy as of yet that penalizes non-residential fathers
who fail to maintain contact with their children.

The social politics of fatherhood: cash and care

This book is about the social politics of fatherhood looking across time
and space. We ask why and in what context fatherhood came on the
agenda in different countries. Our comparative perspectives allow us to
unpack the rhetorical layers in the crisis in fatherhood as well as to track
the importance of policy legacies, political constellations and mobilized
constituencies. We also turn our lens toward global processes that con-
tribute to the sense of crisis, but appear amorphous in their consequences.
The point of departure in this book is that what is perceived as a crisis in
fatherhood involves competing and conflicting social politics that revolve
around the dimensions of cash and care, the obligations and rights of fa-
therhood. Our purpose is to situate these politics in the broader context
of policy regimes, ideological and cultural frames of family and gender,
and structural changes in post-industrial globalizing economies.

To say that fatherhood and motherhood are socially constructed is
commonplace in the social sciences. But what is interesting about the so-
cial politics of fatherhood are both the convergences in policy and prac-
tices as well as the diverse interpretations of these changes and policy
responses. As for convergences, we can see that, over the last decade
in Western Europe and the United States, the two-earner family is be-
coming the norm. More mothers are labor-force participants, rather than
housewives, in most European and North American countries, and, in the
Netherlands, one of our cases, the turn around has been dramatic over the
last ten years. Nevertheless, time budget studies show that, while men's
involvement in unpaid carework has increased slightly in some countries,
it is a drop in the bucket in relation to the loss in women's full-time
carework. This shift in valences of greater women's employment with
little or no change in the division of unpaid work is characterized in pub-
lic discourse as a care deficit (Hochschild 1995) which affects not only
childcare, but the care of the elderly and disabled.

Two of our cases, Sweden and the Netherlands, have adopted proactive
policies for increasing a father's caregiving. Sweden has introduced the
most direct policy formula in the mandated month of parental leave,
known as the daddy month. Although the policy is gender neutral, it
requires that each parent take at least one month's leave or lose the full
benefit for that month, it was aimed at fathers (see Bergman and Hobson
in this volume). The Dutch government has spearheaded a policy to

create options for couples seeking a more equal division of family and work by instituting flexible work and parental sharing schemes in the Netherlands (see Knijn and Selten in this volume).

With the European Union Directive on parental leave in 1996, all European fathers now have the right to fourteen weeks of parental leave. The 1993 US care leave law gives parents (and others) who work for large employers (with 50 or more employees) unpaid leave. The European Directive does not mandate a level of payment either and several countries, including three of our cases, Britain, Spain and the Netherlands, do not have a national policy with a paid benefit.[2] Obviously these formal rights do not necessarily lead to a change in father practices. With the exception of the Scandinavian countries, the number of men who take any leave remains minuscule; most fathers are unable to shoulder the loss of income or feel entitled to make claims upon their employers, particularly in an era of market competitiveness and job insecurity.

Another set of convergences can be seen in the rising number of divorces and single-parent families alluded to previously. Among our cases, the United States represents the most dramatic case in which 40 percent of children do not live with their biological fathers; by age eighteen, almost half will have lived apart from their fathers for some part of their lives (Gillis 2000). However, studies show that divorce does not always result in absent or marginalized fathers. In a survey of non-resident fathers in Britain (Bradshaw et al. 1999) found that only 3 percent of the fathers had no contact with their children after separating from or divorcing the mother; 45 percent had contact at least once a week (Bradshaw et al. 1999: 81). Smart and Neale in their study in Britain, *Family Fragments?* (1999), maintain that, after divorce, fathers can have strong bonds and frequent contact with their children. Although nearly one half of children have no personal contact with non-residential fathers in the United States (Stephens 1996), non-residential fathers with joint legal custody tend to have more frequent contact (Seltzer 1998). The Swedish data show that there are fewer and fewer fathers who lose contact with children after divorce, and there has been a rise in joint residential custody (see Bergman and Hobson in this volume).

What we find in our five cases are parallel discourses on fatherhood concerning divorced and never-married men's failure to meet economic responsibilities as well as the importance for fathers to stay involved with children. But there are diverse interpretations of the causes and different measures and policy options being considered. In US and British policy discourse, terms such as "delinquent fathers" (in the United States) and "problem fathers" (in Britain) reflect the emphasis on the moral framing of the absent and marginalized father. These interpretative frames

carry coercive measures to combat fatherlessness that appear backward-looking, such as mandated paternity in which women who do not name the father risk losing state benefits, currently a policy in the United States and Britain. Policy proposals in the United States put forward by conservative groups include restricting divorce, though this does not appear to be a very feasible option given the widespread acceptance of no-fault divorce. However, not all policy interventions to revitalize fatherhood in an era of high divorce have been retrogressive. We are not surprised that our cases suggest the following pattern: when the discourse in absent fatherhood is framed in more structural terms, such as precarious employment and unemployment in a post-industrial economy, it tends to produce policies with positive incentives rather than penalties, and a greater emphasis on care rather than the economic obligations of fatherhood.

Masculinity politics

The social politics of fatherhood cannot be divorced from masculinity politics. Men's authority in the family and male breadwinning are at the core of masculinity politics. This is particularly true of the new religious men's movements, such as the Promise Keepers in the United States, which affirm traditional gender roles and men's decision-making in families. Though not concerned with men's role in the family *per se*, mythopoetic men's groups, inspired by Robert Bly and the cult of homosociality, also seek to reinvigorate essentialist notions of manliness and return to gender distinctiveness. Some scholars in men's studies argue that these movements are driven by fear of feminization and a changing gender order (Kimmel 1996; Muesse 1996; Messner 1997).[3] Anna Gavanas' study (in this volume) presents a complex picture of contesting claims and competing masculinities, a mosaic of politics within masculinity politics. For example, African American men's radicalized masculinity politics is primarily understood in terms of the lack of economic and political power, rather than as a response to women's achievements. Gavanas maintains that organizations representing poor and minority men within fatherhood politics do not pit themselves against women or feminists, but against white male privilege. Other scholars challenging the thesis of a unitary crisis of masculinity, such as Griffen (1990) and Connell (1995, 1998), argue that men are not necessarily on the defensive, and that the changes in gender relations can produce different responses. In our cases, we find examples of men's collectivities advocating a more encompassing egalitarian family model (Bergman and Hobson; Knijn and Selten in this volume) in which men carve out a space for their fathering.

6   *Barbara Hobson and David Morgan*

The crisis in fatherhood and male breadwinning

Discussions of the crisis in fatherhood are often linked to the demise of
the male breadwinner role. Scholars writing about men and masculini-
ties emphasize that it is important to take along a long-distance lens when
making these connections. The father as the family provider emerged as
a norm in the wake of the industrial revolution as fathers were removed
from the practical work of the household (Gillis 1997; Griswold 1992).
Nevertheless, the single-male breadwinner norm was not possible for
most working-class men, many of whom never married. And working-
class men who did marry enlisted their children and wives to contribute
to the family economy. The single-male breadwinner family among white
families across classes existed for only a short period, peaking in the
1950s, with high rates of marriage and full-time housewives in Western
Europe and North America, while for non-white families it has seldom
been an operative – much less feasible – goal. By the 1980s and 1990s,
the statistics told another story: rises in women's labor-force participa-
tion accompanied by high rates of unemployment and underemployment
for men undermined the possibilities for sustaining a male breadwinner
family. The shift from industrial to service sector jobs has meant that
working-class men most committed to a single-earner family model have
had the least likely chances of obtaining it. In the United States, structural
changes have had the greatest impact on African American men, where
class interacts with racial stratification (Majors and Gordon 1994; Wilson
1996). Faludi (1999), turning her attention to men and masculinities in
her book, *Stiffed*, characterizes the collapse of men's economic authority,
from shipyard closures to the downsizing and consolidations of corpora-
tions, as the most visible layer in the masculinity crisis. It is important to
keep in mind that, although structural economic changes in the United
States and across the developed world have had most impact on unskilled
workers, who are disproportionately people of color, they are not limited
to this group (Esping-Andersen 1999).

Fatherhood: a global crisis?

Alongside the growing numbers of men who lack resources to be bread-
winners for their families, there is a group of men who are cut off from
fatherhood because they are wedded to a work culture that does not al-
low them the time for emotional involvement. Bob Connell (1998) has
coined the phrase, "trans-national business masculinity," to characterize
men in the highest income brackets (the top 20 percent), whose upward
mobility is contingent on their geographical mobility and wholehearted

commitment to financial success. According to the findings of Oláh, Bernhardt and Goldscheider (in this volume), the United States appears to be the country in the forefront of this trend, where there is a significant proportion of upper-middle-class educated men who have opted not to father.

Although work cultures in different societal contexts can be more or less sensitive to parenting, the tendency is toward greater time pressures on working parents in a globalizing economy (see Hearn in this volume). Low fertility rates, expressed in women's birth strikes and more couples deciding to be childless, are the most visible signs. But there are more subtle effects within the daily practices of parenting, what Arlie Hochschild (1996) refers to as the "emotionally downsized family," that involves both men and women in the corporate workplace who feel more at home at work than at home.

Globalizing processes penetrate families in direct and indirect ways. As Jeff Hearn argues in his essay, globalization is not a distant phenomenon but is experienced locally. Individual fathers lose jobs as a result of the restructuring of work, and employment and unemployment policies are governed by transnational organizations, both corporations and governmental. Models of welfare move across the Atlantic and within Europe, carrying with them models of fatherhood that reconstitute the relationships within the state, market and family. The most obvious set of relationships can be seen in the extent to which the state actively supports fathers to provide for their children and care for them. European Union debates and Directives seeking to limit working hours are connected to discourses on fatherhood. But the countervailing tendencies, the growth of unlimited hours contracts, and performance-related and/or commission-based systems, undermine these initiatives.

Fatherhood and welfare policy regimes

The social politics of fatherhood naturally takes us into the theoretical terrain of states and supra-states, welfare regimes and social policy. In shifting our focus toward men as subjects in social policy, we also embrace a body of theory on gender and welfare states. The basic critique of feminist research to the models of welfare policy regimes was that they were "gender blind," that dominant theories ignored women's experiences as mothers, wives, workers and citizens. This meant leaving out the dimensions of care, sexuality and reproduction, which shaped the contours of women's social and political rights. But missing in this dialogue on welfare states and policy regimes has been an analysis of gender that considered how men were embedded in policy. Nor does

the comparative welfare regime literature investigate men's gendered positions in social policy; men are seen as members of particular classes, status groups or as citizens (Orloff and Monson in this volume).

In fact, gendering the welfare state has produced a wide literature on models of motherhood and care (Leira 1992; Knijn and Kremer 1997; Lewis 1998). Because men were center stage in mainstream comparative research – as the average worker or citizen with or without social rights – feminist researchers did not see men, masculinities and fatherhood as part of the gendering project. Rather, men in mainstream welfare state research were viewed as gender-neutral citizens who happened to be men. When men were treated as subjects, they were working-class men mobilizing power resources (Korpi 1989) or men as heads of households who should be protected against the vagaries of the market. Gendering of welfare states entails incorporating the experiences of men – not only as earners, but also as fathers, and as heterosexual or homosexual partners.

Men as fathers and their fatherhood have been implied in, but not integrated into, the theorizing on gender logics in welfare states. In the studies of solo mothers and social policy, the research has addressed the degree to which the state compensated women for their caring roles in terms of services, care allowances and income support after divorce (Hobson 1994; Hobson and Takahashi 1997; Lewis 1997b; Winkler 2001). The right to form an independent household without the risk of poverty was bound together with a range of policies that allowed women to be decoupled from dependence on a husband's wage or being forced to marry or enter into familial relationships, the process Ruth Lister (2000) referred to as defamilization. In their recent study, O'Connor et al. (1999) include men in their analysis of the social right to form autonomous households.

Lewis (1992) in conceptualizing the gender regime typology, based on strong, moderate and weak breadwinner ideologies, focuses on variations in policy formulas around the division of unpaid and paid work. This division reflects different policy logics around women's access to the labor market: their ability to combine paid work and carework either through state supports or the market. Variations in gender regimes also mirror the extent to which benefits are organized around a single-earner family and male breadwinners are privileged through tax subsidies for dependent wives. If we turn the lens toward men as fathers and the construction of fatherhood, we find the meaning and content of what a strong, moderate and weak breadwinner society is may have to be reconceived, since men as fathers are embedded in family law and social policy, with different economic responsibilities for their fatherhood. This entails paying attention to divorced and never-married fathers and their financial obligations to support wives and children. It also involves considering what the rights

of fathers are to custody and decision-making over a child's welfare in
non-marital families.

Theoretical framework of the book

The idea that men are made into fathers recognizes the extent to which
fatherhood is bound up with institutions, embedded in law and shaped
by policy. Though the case studies in this book challenge dominant wel-
fare regime typologies, they nevertheless build upon them, beginning
with the assumption that the social politics of fatherhood is connected
to state and market institutions. As the discussion above reveals, this
model assumed that the family was a unit with degendered subjects, a
way of organizing welfare or structuring the eligibility of benefits. How to
analyze the competing claims of mothers, fathers and children together
with the role of states and markets in shaping them requires other mod-
els reflecting these complex interrelations. As a basis for conceptualizing
our various cases, we imagined these relationships as three interfacing
triangles as seen in Figure 1: the welfare regime institutional triangle,
the domestic/relational triangle of wife, husband and parent/child, and
the fatherhood triangle. Suppose we begin with the familiar institutional
welfare state triangle of state, market and family. It is important to keep in
mind that this is a heuristic device, which provided the building blocks for
policy regime typologies: the extent to which states governed the market
enabled workers to be less dependent upon market forces, illustrated in
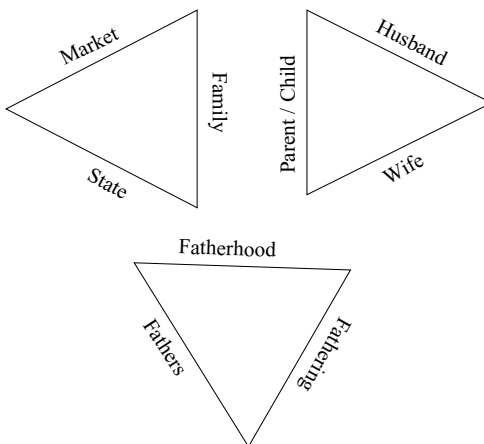the connecting state/market sides of the triangle. Turning to the family at

Figure 1 Institutional, domestic and fatherhood triangles.

the base of the triangle (see Figure 1), policy regimes reflect differences
in the degree to which the state provides benefits and services or relies
on the family as a form of welfare (the state/family sides) and the extent
to which the market is the source of benefits and services for families,
the family/market sides (Esping-Andersen 1990; O'Connor et al. 1999;
Taylor-Gooby 1996).

By incorporating the domestic triangle into the analysis,[4] we are track-
ing feminist insights on the dynamic interplay between states and markets
and the power relations within the family that result from economic de-
pendency on a male breadwinner. Among the countries analyzed in this
book, we can see variations in social policy incentives and disincentives
for perpetuating a male breadwinner norm, for example in high mar-
riage subsidies (tax advantages given to men who are the sole earners
in families) in Germany and the Netherlands; disincentives in Sweden
with family members being taxed as individuals; and tax penalties for
dual-earner couples in the US and Britain. Everyday practices of parent-
ing reflect the interfacing of the relational and institutional triangles. For
instance, couples who espouse egalitarian family norms before children
are born come up against a host of constraints when faced with the ac-
tual decisions around caretaking responsibilities, for example whether the
parental leave is to be shared or not. This involves not only income loss,
as men are the higher earners in most families, but rigid policy formulas,
and, for fathers, the prejudice of male co-workers and bosses toward men
who want to exercise their rights as fathers.

We have included the additional triangle of fatherhood, fathering and
fathers in order to capture the complex interplay between institutions
and practices. Since these different categories are often conflated, which
obscures the distinctions between the construction of fatherhood through
laws, policies and discourses, and the practices of fathers, we define them
in greater detail below.

Fathers

In the case of the term "Father" we are concerned with processes by
which this term becomes attached to a particular individual. We reveal
the distinction between the biological and the social father and analyze
the ways in which societies privilege the biological fathers.

Fatherhood

If fathers are seen in relational terms to mothers and children and as ele-
ments of social structure, fatherhood can be seen as the cultural coding