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0521809274 - Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood

Edited by Barbara Hobson

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Making Men into Fathers

Fatherhood is on the political agenda in many countries, often cast in terms of crisis. One side of the policy debate focuses on fathers as deadbeat dads who do not provide financial support and care for their children. The other revolves around making men into active and engaged fathers. However, these policies are often at odds with the employers' reluctance to accommodate work schedules to fathers' needs. In *Making Men into Fathers*, prominent scholars in gender studies and the critical studies of men consider how varied institutional settings and policy logics around cash and care contour the possibilities and constraints for new models of fatherhood, determining the choices open to men. From different historical and societal perspectives, the authors provide new insights into the studies of men as gendered subjects, including the role of transnational and global issues of fatherhood, and the emergence of men's movements, contesting and reimagining fatherhood.

BARBARA HOBSON is a Professor of Sociology and holds a chair in Sociology and Gender Studies at Stockholm University. She is also director of the Advanced Research School in Comparative Gender Studies, a program for international research exchange and advanced doctoral studies. Her most recent book publications include an edited collection, *Gender and Citizenship in Transition* (2000) and a co-edited collection, *Contested Concepts. Gender and Social Politics* (2001).

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Preface

There is a chapter missing from this book, a chapter about the making of *Making Men into Fathers*. It would begin in 1995 in Stockholm in a conference room on the twenty-fifth floor overlooking the harbor. The chapter would try (most likely in vain) to recapture those first three days of intense conversations between the authors of this book, several of whom are central figures in the international debates on gender and welfare states, and two of whom are among the leading figures in the critical studies of men.

Over the next four years the authors of this book met many times, sometimes in the heart of the dark Swedish winter. Our conversations continued; our friendships developed. Our dialogues cut across borders, both geographic and disciplinary. We challenged and energized each other, particularly the junior scholars, Anna Gavanoas, Helena Bergman, and Livia Oláh, who brought new perspectives and ideas to our discussions. The original title of the project, *Fathers and the State*, was discarded since it did not capture the dynamic and complex processes we were writing about. Nor did it encompass the multidimensional views of the authors or of the book, which were being continuously reconfigured and recast in our discussions, through our heuristic triangles. Trudie Knijn presented her rotating and overlapping triangles (the institutional and domestic); David Morgan his inspirational third father triangle. Ann Orloff kept up the provocative questions about men's interests. My scholarship has been enriched by the making of this book. In addition I developed a deep sense of what collaboration meant in terms of the framing of a book, its theories and core concepts. I feel privileged to have been able to bring together this excellent group of scholars and to learn so much from them.

By providing generous program grants designed to develop new research areas, the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond made possible this kind of creative and exciting endeavor. I acknowledge the important role played by the director, Dan Brandström. The many books and theses that have resulted from this research program are indebted to his strong support

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for comparative gender studies (CGS). His deep commitment to interdisciplinary and international research in the social sciences has been crucial for the emergence of new research agendas. I would also like to thank Kerstin Stigmark at the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond for her administrative support.

The extraordinary team of doctoral students in the CGS research program has constituted an invaluable resource for testing ideas, for perceptive and critical readings of the manuscripts, and for locating obscure references. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude to Michelle Ariga, Sanja Magdalenic, Livia Oláh and Maria Tornqvist as well as two guest researchers, Roisín Flood and Katrin Kriz. Finally, I wish to express a special additional thanks to Michelle Ariga, who is both my doctoral student and administrator for our journal. Without her boundless energy and amazing editorial and computer skills, we would not have been on time for our production schedule.

I am grateful also to Ann Orloff for her comments on drafts of the Introduction and to David Morgan for his theoretical insights, which appear in the Introduction and Epilogue. Finally I would like to thank Jacob Von Post and Reijo Ruster for allowing us to use their photographs.

I dedicate this book to Joe De Pierre, who is a real new father – as opposed to the virtual ones that appear in policy discourse. He made me realize how much bonding and caring for one's own children increases one's capacity for emotional contact and empathy with others.

Barbara Hobson