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## Paternal Involvement in Child Care and Its Relation to Gender-Based Relational Styles in Young Adolescents: A Test of Chodorow's Theory

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Paternal Involvement in Child Care  
and its Relation to Gender-Based Relational Styles  
in Young Adolescents:  
A Test of Chodorow's Theory

by

Lisa A. Jewell

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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1992

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## VITA

The author, Lisa Ann Jewell, was born January 14, 1962 in Santa Monica, California.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between paternal involvement in child care and the relational styles of children. In particular, this study will test several hypotheses about the results of increased paternal involvement, derived from Nancy Chodorow's (1974, 1978) theory concerning the effects of exclusive mothering on children's relational styles. Chodorow's theory suggests that traditional family roles, in which the mother is the primary caretaker of the children while the father is a more distant parenting figure, lead to differences in styles of relating to others in boys and in girls. Specifically, it suggests that this traditional constellation of parenting roles leads boys to be more well-differentiated, but more rejecting of women and femininity, than girls, while girls are more empathic than boys. The hypotheses derived from this theory are based on the assumption that changing these parental roles so that the father is more involved in child care will mitigate these differences, such that their sons will be more empathic and less rejecting of women and femininity, while

their daughters will be more well-differentiated.

### Statement of the Problem

The role of the father in child development is a topic that has received an increasing amount of attention, both from theorists and in empirical investigation, over the last two decades; prior to this, the paternal role was largely neglected and devalued in the literature (Lamb, 1981). The reasons for both the initial neglect and the recent interest are discussed at length by Lamb (1981), who describes the cultural and economic forces that first removed the father from the domestic sphere, the exclusivity of emphasis placed on the mother's role in early human development by theorists across disciplines, and the current trend toward a more active paternal role both in theory and in fact.

The most influential early theorist describing the father's role in child development was Sigmund Freud (1925, 1933). For Freud, the child's first and most important early relationship is with that caretaker who fulfills the child's oral needs, the mother. The father, though a secondary object of cathexis and identification from infancy, becomes especially important during the Oedipal period (roughly, from the third to the fifth year of age) (Lamb, 1981). Freud's writings on the father's role in the oedipal development of boys and girls are summarized extensively in the literature (see, for example, Machtlinger, 1981). According to Lamb, "Since Freud's time,

theorists of all persuasions have followed his lead in assuming that the mother-infant relationship has a disproportionately significant impact on psychological development" (1981, p. 7).

With the growing trend in psychoanalytic thought toward an emphasis on object relations, preoedipal development has come under close scrutiny. Margaret Mahler (1968; Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975) has been particularly influential in describing the development of object relations from the undifferentiated or merged state experienced in infancy to a more mature state of separation and individuation from the caretaking other. While this emphasis on preoedipal development initially served to keep theoretical attention focused on the mother-infant dyad, in recent years the father's role in preoedipal development has come under consideration as well (Abelin, 1971, 1975, 1980; Burlingham, 1973). Muir (1989) summarizes the various object relations theorists' views of the father's role in child development as follows:

1. The mothering dyad is "held" by the father.
2. He provides an alternative and differently responding attachment figure (object).
3. Having two parents ensures there is someone to love when the other parent is hated.
4. He is a stimulus for individuation.
5. He offers an oedipal challenge and thus the initiation into group relations.
6. He contributes to the group relational patterns of the family, which are internalized by the child. Out of these internalizations role functions will be recreated in adulthood.

(Muir, 1989, p. 47-48)

The term "held," in the first listed view of the father's role, is used in the sense of Winnicott's (1958) "holding environment."

The father's role in children's development has also been considered within other theoretical frameworks than psychoanalysis. Foremost among these are attachment theory (Bowlby, 1958, 1969; Ainsworth, 1973), interactive role theory (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Parsons, 1970), and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Mussen, 1967) (see Lamb, 1981, for a summary of these perspectives). These alternate theoretical perspectives share with psychoanalysis the assumption that whatever the father's role in child development, it is second to that of the mother in both importance and chronological appearance.

Research examining the father's effect on child development has usually concentrated on traditional families in which the father has limited involvement in child care, but primary responsibility for economic security, with nonworking mothers assuming responsibility for child care and the home. It is only in recent years that attention has turned from the effects of paternal characteristics in traditional families to the effect of increased paternal involvement on child development (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). Hypotheses in high vs. low father-involvement studies tend to have been generated based on expectations that follow from traditional-family findings, or, if theory

based, emanate again from the attachment theory, interactive role theory, and social learning theory paradigms.

### Chodorow's Theory of Exclusive Mothering

Nancy Chodorow's theory, which describes the effects of exclusive mothering, is one which makes implicit predictions about the effect of increased father involvement in child care from an object relations perspective. These predictions are implicit because her theory concentrates not so much on the father's role in child development, as on the psychological consequences that result from being raised in the traditional family structure in which only women mother. Chodorow proposes that certain gender differences, particularly those involving "relational needs and capacities," arise from the fact that males and females are raised in different "interpersonal environments." Specifically, girls are raised from infancy by a same-sex parent, while the boy's primary caretaker is an opposite-sex parent:

Culture and personality theory has shown that early experiences common to members of a particular society contribute to the formation of typical personalities organized around and preoccupied with certain relational issues. To the extent that females and males experience different interpersonal environments as they grow up, feminine and masculine personality will develop differently and be preoccupied with different issues. The structure of the family and family practices create certain differential relational needs and capacities. . . . (Chodorow, 1978, p. 51; emphasis mine)

Implicit in this proposition is the expectation that males and females raised in more similar interpersonal environments will exhibit fewer relational differences. The purpose of this paper is to make this expectation explicit and to test it by comparing children raised in the traditional family structure to those raised in families where both fathers and mothers are actively involved in child care. Its hypotheses derive from the belief that relational gender differences will be mitigated by a family environment in which children are raised by both a same-sex and an opposite-sex parent.

Chodorow, working within the psychoanalytic paradigm from a developmental object relations perspective, shares with other object relations theorists the view that "the child's social relational experience from earliest infancy is determining for psychological growth and personality formation" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 47). Further, she agrees that these theorists' depiction of the mother's and father's respective roles accurately reflects the present predominant Western childrearing arrangement, in which "infant and child care has become the exclusive domain of biological mothers, who are increasingly isolated from other kin, with fewer social contacts and little routine assistance during their parenting time" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 5).

However, Chodorow finds fault with psychoanalytic theory for its failure to apprehend and address the social

context within which psychological development takes place. In particular, she points out that

Psychoanalysis assumes that "the family" is nuclear, and that an intense mother-child bond and parenting by the mother alone, possibly aided by one other woman, is natural and even necessary to proper development. There is little recognition of the historical specificity of this family form. (1978, p. 53)

Chodorow asserts that, though psychoanalysis assumes the psychic structures and processes it describes are universal, they are in fact a product of the particular family structure in which development occurs--a family structure Chodorow argues is based on a "social and cultural translation of (the woman's) childbearing and lactation capacities" (1978, p. 30) rather than on biological necessity.

Chodorow points out that object relations theorists have largely neglected the question of developmental gender differences, and seems to suggest that this is at least in part due to their neglect of the socio-historical family context in which development occurs:

I apply object-relations theory and the theory of the personal ego to our understanding of masculine and feminine development. This development is systematic, an outcome of family structures in which women mother. The object-relations reformulation has not been brought to bear upon the question of gender. Object-relations theorists. . . have hardly begun to address questions concerning differences in female and male ego development, gender differences in object-relational experiences, and the effect these have on the differential constitution of mental structure and psychic life. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 54)

According to Chodorow, the fact that the male's earliest, most intense relationship is with an opposite-sex parent, while the female's is with a same-sex parent, leads boys and girls to take different routes toward developmental goals such as gender identity and heterosexual object choice. These early differences in developmental object relationships are eventually internalized as enduring personality features, such that masculine and feminine personalities come to have basic differences, particularly in terms of their ways of relating. Specifically, Chodorow asserts that "feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does" (1974, p. 44).

Infants begin their lives in a state of absolute dependence, and lack the cognitive capacities necessary to differentiate themselves from their environment. This earliest period is characterized by a "primary identification" with the caretaking other:

The infant experiences itself as merged or continuous with the world generally, and with its mother or caretakers in particular. Its demands and expectations (not expressed as conscious wants but unconscious and preverbal) flow from this feeling of merging. Analysts call this aspect of the earliest period of life primary identification, aptly emphasizing the infant's object cathexis of someone it does not yet differentiate from its self. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 61)

When childcare is provided exclusively or predominantly by the mother, children of both sexes begin their lives in a state of primary identification with a female other.

For both boys and girls, the key issues of the next few years--in psychoanalytic terms, the preoedipal period--involve breaking off this primary identification and beginning to develop a separate sense of self. (Chodorow's view of this process derives from that articulated by Margaret Mahler--see, for example, Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975.) According to Chodorow, mothers provide less help to girls than to boys in this individuation process. Due to their biological and role similarities (a mother has been the daughter of a mother), mothers tend to identify more with their female children, and to experience and treat their daughters as extensions of themselves. A mother will identify less with her male children, and will help a son to differentiate himself from her "by emphasizing his masculinity in opposition to herself and by pushing him to assume. . . a sexually toned male-role relation to her" (Chodorow, 1974, p. 48). Thus, as early as the preoedipal years, the exclusive mothering arrangement provides a different relational context for boys and for girls.

From about the age of three, or the beginning of the oedipal period, the differences between male and female development due to exclusive mothering become even more acute. Because the primary object of identification and attachment has been a female for both sexes, the major goal of this period for the boy is to shift his identification to a male in order to achieve a masculine gender identity,

while for the girl it is to shift her attachment to a male in order to attain a heterosexual object choice. "It is at this stage that the father, and men in general, begin to become important in the child's primary object world" (Chodorow, 1974, p. 49). The way in which they become important, however, is different for boys and for girls, and this difference has important implications for the future relational stance of each.

From about the age of three, it becomes important for the boy to shift his identification from his mother to his father or another adult male in order to form a masculine gender identity. According to Chodorow, the relative unavailability of the father tends to make this a difficult task for the boy. Whereas his identification with his mother has been what Chodorow terms a "personal" identification--one based on a real, affective relationship with a well-known other--a boy's male gender identification will often be, by necessity, a "positional" one, in which the boy identifies "with aspects of his father's role, or what he fantasies to be a male role, rather than with his father as a person involved in a relationship with him" (Chodorow, 1974, p. 50).

In his attempt to achieve a masculine gender identity in the absence of an accessible model, the boy will often come to an understanding of masculinity by contrasting it with femininity:

A boy, in his attempt to gain an elusive masculine identification, often comes to define this masculinity largely in negative terms, as that which is not feminine or involved with women. There is an internal and external aspect to this. Internally, the boy tries to reject his mother and deny his attachment to her and the strong dependence upon her that he still feels. He also tries to deny the deep personal identification with her that has developed during his early years. He does this by repressing whatever he takes to be feminine inside himself, and, importantly, by denigrating and devaluing whatever he considers to be feminine in the outside world. (Chodorow, 1974, p. 50)

Achievement of a masculine gender identity by this circuitious route has several implications. First, it results in an anti-feminine attitude which, according to Chodorow, "explains the psychological dynamics of the universal social and cultural devaluation and subordination of women" (1974, p. 50). Second, it involves a denial and repression of the boy's most primary early attachment, that to his mother.

The boy receives further assistance in differentiating himself from his mother, as well as motivation to abandon his maternal attachment, through the dynamics of the classic oedipal crisis. First, as his attachment begins to take on sexual overtones, "a boy's relation to his mother soon becomes focused on competitive issues of possession and phallic-sexual oppositeness (or complementarity) to her" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 96). Then, as the boy begins to experience his father as a rival with the power to castrate him, "the boy must radically deny and repress his attachment to his mother and replace it with an identification with his

loved and admired, but also potentially punitive, therefore feared, father" (Chodorow, 1974, p. 50).

According to Chodorow, this period of development proceeds quite differently for girls. Achievement of gender identity is a much more straightforward matter for the girl:

femininity and female role activities are immediately apprehensible in the world of her daily life. Her final role identification is with her mother and women, that is, with the person or people with whom she also has her earliest relationship of infantile dependence. The development of her gender identity does not involve a rejection of this early identification. . . . (Chodorow, 1974, p. 51)

While the boy needs to reject his maternal identification to form a masculine gender identity, the girl lacks this need, and thus her preoedipal attachment to her mother continues much longer than the boy's. Furthermore, the nature of this attachment differs. One reason is the mother's identification with her daughter, as discussed above. Another reason is that the girl's attachment to her mother does not become sexualized in the same way that the boy's does:

The content of a girl's attachment to her mother differs from a boy's precisely in that it is not at this time oedipal (sexualized, focused on possession, which means focused on someone clearly different and opposite). The preoedipal attachment of daughter to mother continues to be concerned with early mother-infant exclusivity and the intensity, ambivalence, and boundary confusion of the child still preoccupied with issues of dependence and individuation. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 97)

According to Chodorow, the result of the extended length and

the intense nature of the girl's preoedipal attachment to her mother is that "there is a tendency in women toward boundary confusion and a lack of separateness from the world" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 110).

While the girl does eventually enter the oedipal stage, she does not so much replace her attachment to her mother with one to her father, as add her attachment to him in a triangular way. The father becomes important to the girl not only due to her heterosexual cathexis of him, but also in reaction to the intensity of her relationship with her mother:

a girl's father is likely to become a symbol of freedom from this dependence and merging. A girl is likely to turn to him, regardless of his gender or sexual orientation, as the most available person who can help her to get away from her mother.  
(Chodorow, 1978, p. 121)

At the same time, the girl experiences the father as a rival for the mother's love, and turns to him out of envy for his special relationship with the mother: "She wants from him both the special love which she cannot get from her mother and a penis which will allow her to get this love--she wants her father and wants her mother too" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 125). According to Chodorow, the complexity of this female oedipal configuration results in a feminine personality particularly well-suited for preoccupation with issues of self-in-relationship:

. . . girls do not "resolve" their oedipus complex to the same extent as do boys. They neither repress nor give up so absolutely their preoedipal and oedipal attachment to their mother, nor their oedipal attachment to their father. This means that girls grow up with more ongoing preoccupations with both internalized object-relationships and with external relationships as well. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 168)

Chodorow's theory, then, predicts that several important sex differences--as well as the devaluation of women and femininity by men--result from exclusive maternal caretaking. These sex differences are distinct, but related, as they involve various aspects of relatedness with others. Specifically, Chodorow suggests that daughters of exclusive mothering are more empathic, but have less of a sense of self-other differentiation, than sons, due to their differences in object relationships during the preoedipal and oedipal developmental stages. Because they have had a longer and more intense preoedipal relationship with their mothers, and an oedipal configuration in which attachment to the father never quite supersedes this primary relationship,

Girls emerge from this period with a basis for "empathy" built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not. Girls emerge with a stronger basis for experiencing another's needs or feelings as one's own. . . . From very early on, then, because they are parented by a person of the same gender. . . girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object world. . . . (Chodorow, 1978, p. 167)

The developmental experiences of boys, however, are of a

nature that some of their relational capacities are curtailed:

Boys are more likely to have been pushed out of the preoedipal relationship, and to have had to curtail their primary love and sense of empathic tie with their mother. A boy has engaged, and been required to engage, in a more emphatic individuation and a more defensive firming of experienced ego boundaries. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 167)

According to Chodorow, the result is that boys come to have a less empathic stance toward others, but have a more fully differentiated sense of self, than have girls.

Although Chodorow originally based her predictions on clinical case material and sociological observations, there is a growing body of research that supports her hypotheses about relational sex differences. That women score higher on measures of empathic tendency than men is a consistent and well-documented finding in the literature (see Mehrabian, Young, & Sato, 1988). In addition, recent studies suggest that men "show a more separate sense of self" (Olver, Aries & Batgos, 1989) on a measure of self-other differentiation than women. Finally, the work of Carol Gilligan (1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988) explores these relational sex differences in light of their impact upon moral development, suggesting that women are more apt to consider the relational context of moral conflicts than are men.

The purpose of the present study is investigate Chodorow's assertion that these sex differences, and the

devaluation of women and femininity by men, are due to a parenting arrangement in which child care is provided exclusively or predominantly by the mother. This investigation proceeds from the premise that outcomes caused by one parenting arrangement will be attenuated or reversed by a different parenting arrangement--specifically, one in which the father plays an active caretaking role.

If the father, a man, is accessible, involved, and affectively available to his son, then a masculine gender identity may be achieved by a direct, personal identification, rather than primarily through rejection of femininity and denial of maternal attachment. Further, if from the time of infancy a boy's primary identification includes a male parent who meets his dependency and attachment needs, development of a gender identity will not require the curtailment of this primary empathic tie that occurs when he must reject his mother and femininity to achieve this identity.

For the girl, exclusive mothering leads to boundary confusion and a lack of self-other differentiation. Under this arrangement,

A girl's father does not serve as a sufficiently important object to break her maternal attachment, given his physical and emotional distance in conjunction with a girl's desperate need to separate from her mother but simultaneous love for her.  
(Chodorow, 1978, p. 128)

The girl's use of her paternal relationship to break with her mother is apt to meet with more success if this paternal relationship is one in which her dependency and attachment needs are met in a consistent way. Also, if the girl's father was actively involved in child care, his anatomical and gender-role differences would serve as a foil for her development of a differentiated sense of self in much the same way the mother's differences do so for her son under the current arrangement.

This analysis suggests several hypotheses regarding children raised in a parenting arrangement in which the father is actively involved in child care, in contrast to those parented in the traditional exclusive-mothering arrangement. Specifically, it suggests that boys whose fathers are more involved will have higher empathy and less devaluation of women and rejection of femininity than boys whose fathers are less involved, while girls whose fathers are more involved will have a more differentiated sense of self than girls whose fathers are less involved.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Until very recently, empirical research has examined the father's effect on child development almost exclusively in the context of the traditional father-breadwinning/mother-caretaking family structure (Lamb, Pleck & Levine, 1985). This research has been primarily of two types. The first, proceeding from the attachment theory paradigm, has focused on the infant's attachment to its father, where attachment involves "trustful, focused relationships to specific people," and is assessed by observing "to whom infants turn for comfort when distressed, from whom they protest separation, whom they greet most enthusiastically upon reunion, and by whom they prefer to be held" (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). While it was initially believed that infants formed attachments only to their mothers (or another single primary caretaker), recent research suggests that infants form attachments to both parents, and that both attachments are formed at approximately the same age, though infants tend to be preferentially attached to their mothers (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985; see also Wolfson, 1981).

The other typical class of research on paternal influences in traditional families has examined how paternal

characteristics such as nurturance and masculinity affect aspects of child development such as sex role development, achievement and achievement motivation, moral development, and psychological adjustment (Lamb, Pleck & Levine, 1985). Frequently cited findings in this area of research include the following: Paternal masculinity tends to be associated with filial masculinity when the father is also nurturant, and highly feminine girls tend to have fathers who accept and encourage their sex-typed behavior (Biller, 1981). The cognitive competence of boys is more closely associated with paternal nurturance than that of girls (Radin, 1981), though "warm encouragement" from fathers seems to have been an important factor in the backgrounds of high-achieving women (Lamb, Pleck & Levine, 1985). Fathers appear to have less influence on their children's moral development than do mothers, though fathers may play an indirect role by reinforcing the mother's credibility with their children (Hoffman, 1981). Finally, though psychological maladjustment tends to be associated with father absence, it is more strongly associated with marital hostility and discord (Lamb, Pleck & Levine, 1985).

Of the studies in this area, those most pertinent to the present study are those investigating the effect of paternal characteristics on relational skills. Based on his review of the literature, Lamb (1981) reached the conclusion "that warm and sensitive fathers help lay the basis for

social competence in the child and establish a better capacity for interpersonal relationships" (Sagi, 1982, p. 219). In particular, paternal characteristics and child-rearing practices seem to have some impact on the development of empathy in their offspring, although there are inconsistencies in the findings. For example, Kalliopuska (1984) found a stronger association between father and child empathy than mother and child empathy, but this finding varied across the ages studied (9-12 years of age). However, Barnett, King, Howard, and Dino (1980), in their study of 4- to 6-year-olds, found girls' empathy scores to be positively correlated with maternal empathy, but negatively correlated with paternal empathy, affection, and emphasis on the feelings of others; no relationships were found between sons' empathy and any of these measures for either parent.

Adams, Jones, Schvaneveldt, and Jenson (1982) found both father's support and father's rejection-control to be positively correlated with son's empathy scores; no significant correlations were found between daughters' empathy and any of the five paternal dimensions measured (support, rejection-control, withdrawal, companionship with the child, and physical affect shown toward the child). In a study of 6- to 8-year-olds, Feshbach (1975) found empathy in boys to be negatively correlated with paternal competitiveness scores; again, there was no significant

correlation between any paternal variable and empathy in girls. Although these findings paint a rather mixed picture, it seems clear that paternal characteristics are associated with empathy in children, although this association may be stronger between fathers and sons than between fathers and daughters.

It is only in recent years that research attention has turned from the effects of paternal characteristics in traditional families to the effect of increased paternal involvement on child development. The fact that the results of these studies are mixed and, at times, counterintuitive can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the limited number of studies has not yet allowed for the appearance of general trends. In addition, as pointed out by Lamb, Pleck, & Levine (1985), comparisons of the effect of the overall level of paternal involvement are likely to be confounded with factors such as those leading to and resulting from the level of involvement. For example, the father may increase his involvement for reasons as disparate as having a desire for a closer relationship with his child or being unemployed; further, his increased involvement may either enhance or detract from his satisfaction with his role as a father and a husband. Thus, increased paternal involvement cannot be expected to have a positive effect on child development in all cases.

In her study of paternal involvement in the care of 3- to 6-year-old children in intact, middle-class families, Radin (1982) found a strong association between increased father involvement and children's internal locus of control, or "belief that they control the contingencies in the world about them" (p. 510), especially for girls. In addition, various indices of father involvement (overall involvement for girls, and involvement in decision-making for boys) were positively associated with higher scores on a measure of verbal intelligence in children of both sexes.

Contrary to their expectations, Lamb, Frodi, Hwang, and Frodi (1983) found 8- and 16-month-old infants of highly-involved fathers to be no more attached to their fathers than children of traditionally less-involved fathers. They offer several possible explanations for this finding. The study observed Swedish families, and revealed that Swedish father engaged in less playful involvement with their children than do American fathers. This lack of playfulness may reduce the fathers' salience to their children. The study also showed that even the traditional fathers in this sample were more involved with their children than are American traditional fathers; thus, the difference in involvement between high- and low-involvement fathers may not have been great enough to produce an effect.

The effect of increased father involvement on empathy in children has been examined in several studies, with mixed

results. Radin and Sagi (1982) conducted parallel studies in Israel and in the United States examining increased involvement of fathers with 3- to 6-year-old children. In the Israeli sample, there was a strong positive correlation between various measures of paternal involvement and empathy in both boys and girls; however, no such relationship was found between these variables in the United States sample. In addition, Abraham, Kuehl, and Christopherson (1983) failed to find a relationship between paternal involvement and empathy in preschool-aged children.

Each of these studies, however, used a different operational definition of empathy than that used in the current study. Mehrabian, Young, and Sato (1988) point out that empathy has historically been defined as either a cognitive task involving the correct identification or prediction of emotional responses in others, or as an emotional task involving "an individual's vicarious emotional response to perceived emotional experiences of others" (p. 221). In both the Radin and Sagi and the Abraham et al. studies, empathy was assessed with the Borke Interpersonal Awareness Test (Borke, 1971), a measure of cognitive empathy. In contrast, all but one of the traditional-family studies of paternal characteristics and childhood empathy cited above used measures of emotional empathy, as does the present study. This is not to suggest that either definition of empathy is more "correct" than the

other, but only that the emotional empathy definition is more in keeping with Chodorow's use of this term.

It has been predicted by some theorists that increases in paternal involvement in child care will have an effect--possibly adverse--on sex role development in children, and particularly in sons (see Carlson, 1981; Radin, 1982; Russell, 1982). Sex role development in children is usually assessed with the "It" scale (Brown, 1956, 1957), in which the child chooses stereotypically masculine or feminine clothing, activities, and hairstyle for a gender-ambiguous figure drawing. The child's sex-role orientation, labeled "masculine" or "feminine," is assessed by the number of stereotypically masculine vs. feminine items chosen. While this scale may or may not assess the child's "masculinity" or "femininity" in a way usefully related to psychological adjustment (see Lamb et al., 1985), it seems to have little meaningful association with these terms as Chodorow uses them.

For Chodorow, the terms "masculine personality" and "feminine personality" are used to describe the personality styles characteristic of males and of females, particularly as they concern relational differences. Chodorow (1974) draws parallels between her use of these terms and the terms "agency" and "communion," as used by Bakan (1966), and the "autocentric" and "allocentric" ego styles described by Gutmann (1965). It is unclear whether masculinity/

femininity as measured by the "It" scale has any conceptual relationship to the dimensions proposed by Bakan or Gutmann. However, the most commonly used adult measures of sex-role orientation, the Bem (1974) Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), have in recent years been hypothesized to measure two important aspects of the masculinity/femininity dimension, specifically those of dominance and nurturance/warmth, often labeled instrumentality and expressiveness (see Spence, 1983). To the extent that this dimension is related to the agency/communion and the allocentric/autocentric concepts (the determination of which is beyond the scope of the present paper), these adult measures may have more relevance to Chodorow's conception of masculinity and femininity than does the "It" scale. However, they have only recently begun to be used to assess the effects of paternal involvement.

With these limitations in mind, studies of the impact of increased paternal involvement on sex-role orientation in offspring may be reviewed. In a recent study, Stevenson (1991) found that daughters reporting a closer relationship with their fathers received higher Masculinity scores on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). Sagi (1982) found that daughters of intermediate- and high-involvement fathers had higher It-scale masculinity scores than daughters of low-involvement fathers, though still falling within the

femininity range. In contrast, Radin (1982) found no difference between children of primary caregiving and traditional fathers on It-scale scores. Further, Carlson (1981) found no relationship between the decision-making aspect of father involvement and boys' masculinity scores on the It-scale; other aspects of father involvement and girls' femininity scores were not addressed in this analysis.

Although the effect of increased paternal involvement on boys' attitudes towards women has not been addressed directly, Carlson (1985) found boys of highly-involved fathers to be no different than boys of low-involvement fathers in their stereotyping of the maternal role. In addition, high father-involvement in decision making was found to be associated with increased stereotyping of the maternal role by girls in the Radin (1982) study. However, both studies found that boys of high-involvement fathers show less stereotyping of the father's role than boys of low-involvement fathers. The relationship between attitudes toward parental roles and attitudes toward women and femininity in general is unclear at this time.

The effect of increased paternal involvement on self-other differentiation in girls has also not been directly addressed in the empirical literature. However, several of the findings discussed above suggest that increased paternal involvement may have an effect on related

constructs. For example, Radin's finding of an association between father involvement and internal locus of control in girls has implications for girls' autonomy. In addition, the finding reported by Lamb, Pleck, & Levine (1985) that high-achieving women have often had "warm encouragement" from their fathers may imply a relationship between paternal involvement and differentiation, to the extent that differentiation can be assumed a prerequisite for high achievement. Finally, Sagi's (1982) finding of an association between increased paternal involvement and higher "It" masculinity scores in girls may have implications for girls' self-other differentiation, to the extent that this is a "masculine" trait.

#### Model and Hypotheses

Chodorow's theory and the prior empirical research suggest a number of hypotheses about relational gender differences and their relation to paternal involvement in child care. Specifically, they suggest that boys whose fathers are more involved are more empathic and less rejecting of women and femininity than boys whose fathers are less involved, and that girls whose fathers are more involved have a more differentiated sense of self than girls whose fathers are less involved. In evaluating these hypotheses, it is important to consider other factors that have an impact upon assessment of the relationship between paternal involvement and relational gender differences.

Among these are the quality of paternal involvement and of the parent-child relationship, as well as other, non-paternal factors influencing relational gender differences, such as pubertal status and, in the case of girls' differentiation of self, maternal intrusiveness.

The most important of these factors is the quality of the paternal involvement, and of the resulting parent-child relationship. Both Chodorow's theory and the empirical research discuss paternal involvement in light of its affective quality--described with such terms as "warmth" and "nurturance"--as well as the resulting affective bond between father and child, referred to as "attachment." Any discussion of non-pathological sequelae of paternal involvement must necessarily presuppose a non-pathogenic, or adequate, parenting style and parent-child relationship. In this study, this qualitative aspect of paternal involvement is addressed by including affective aspects of involvement--nurturance and empathy--as well as non-affective aspects--availability to child, time spent with the child, responsibility for child care tasks--among the paternal involvement measures.

In addition to the quality of parenting per se, the quality of the resulting relationship between parent and child has been cited as important to non-pathological child development; this quality of relationship is frequently referred to as "attachment," a word used to denote

"trustful, focused relationships to specific people" (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). For the purpose of this study, assessment of the attachment between the child and father, independent of the father's involvement per se, is considered important for several reasons. The measures of father involvement are completed by the father and the mother, and thus assess this involvement from the point of view of the parents, but not of the child. The child's view of paternal involvement may differ from that of the parents for any number of reasons: parents might view their own or their partners' involvement through the rose-colored glasses of good intentions (or the gray ones of guilt); or, the aspects of the relationship most salient to the parents may differ from those most salient to the child. Another reason it is important to assess the quality of the relationship from the child's point of view is that children may differ in their inherent capacity for forming attachments. Thus, the child's experience of the paternal relationship may vary imperfectly with the quality of fathering proffered.

In several important ways, then, assessing the quality of the attachment from the child's perspectives provides an opportunity to assess the extent to which the "message sent" is congruent with the "message received." As the "message received" by the child about the affective relationship with the parent is viewed by object relations theorists as at least as influential for child development as the "message

sent" (see Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Chodorow, 1978), it is expected that the child's report of attachment to the father will mediate the relationship between paternal involvement in child care and gender-linked relational styles in children. Thus, the hypothesized relationships between increased paternal involvement and the relational variables cited below are expected to occur only when the quality of the paternal relationship, from the child's point of view, is also adequate.

Two factors other than paternal involvement in child care that are expected to have an impact on the gender-linked relational variables are pubertal status (in both boys and girls), and maternal intrusiveness (in girls). Both Hill and Lynch (1983) and Richards and Larson (1989) cite extensive research support for the "gender-intensification hypothesis," which suggests that "an intensification in gender-related role expectations occurs during adolescence" (Hill & Lynch, 1983, p. 201), in connection with the development of secondary sexual characteristics at puberty. Thus, pubertal status may have an impact on the young adolescent's willingness to display gender-role-incongruent attitudes or behaviors, which may in turn mask the relationship between paternal involvement and gender-linked relational variables. In this study, pubertal status will be treated as a covariate in order to statistically control for the possible influence of pubertal

development on the dependent variables of empathy, rejection of women and femininity, and differentiation of self.

In a similar fashion, maternal intrusiveness may be expected to have an impact on differentiation of self in girls that may mask the latter's relationship to paternal involvement. As discussed above, Chodorow argues that one factor which leads to the lack of differentiation between self and other in girls is the tendency of mothers to identify with their female children and treat them as extensions of themselves. Although increased paternal involvement with daughters is expected to attenuate against this overidentification, assessing the extent to which it does so is complicated by the fact that the degree of overidentification is not a constant: some mothers identify with their daughters more, or are more intrusive, than others. Thus, in the case of girls, maternal intrusiveness will also be treated as a covariate in this study.

Based on Chodorow's theory and the review of the related research, three hypotheses are tested in the present study. Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic overview of these hypotheses in the context of the mediating variable and covariates described above. The hypotheses are as follows:

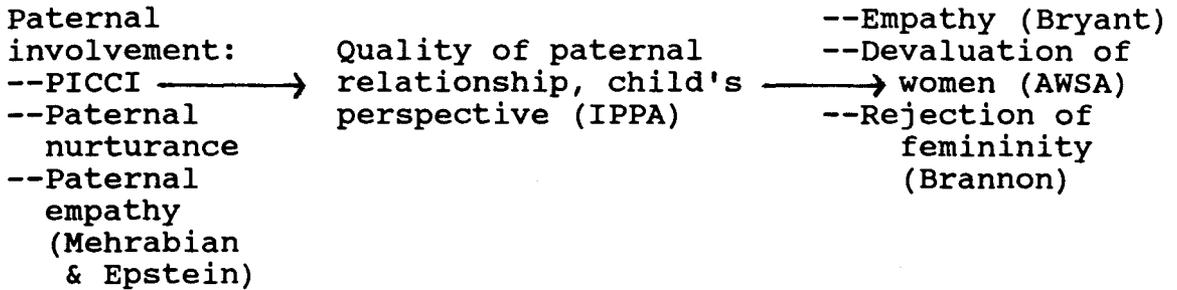
1. Boys whose fathers are more involved, when this involvement is associated with greater attachment, are more empathic, as measured by the Bryant Scale for Children and Adolescents (1982), than boys whose fathers are less

involved, or whose involvement is associated with less attachment.

2. Boys whose fathers are more involved, when this involvement is associated with greater attachment, show less devaluation of women, as measured by the Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents (Galambos et al., 1985), and less rejection of femininity, as measured by the Avoiding Femininity subscale of the Brannon Masculinity Scale (1984), than boys whose fathers are less involved, or whose involvement is associated with less attachment.

3. Girls whose fathers are more involved, when this involvement is associated with greater attachment, have a more differentiated sense of self, as measured by appropriate subscales of the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence (Levine et al, 1986), than girls whose fathers are less involved or whose involvement is associated with less attachment.

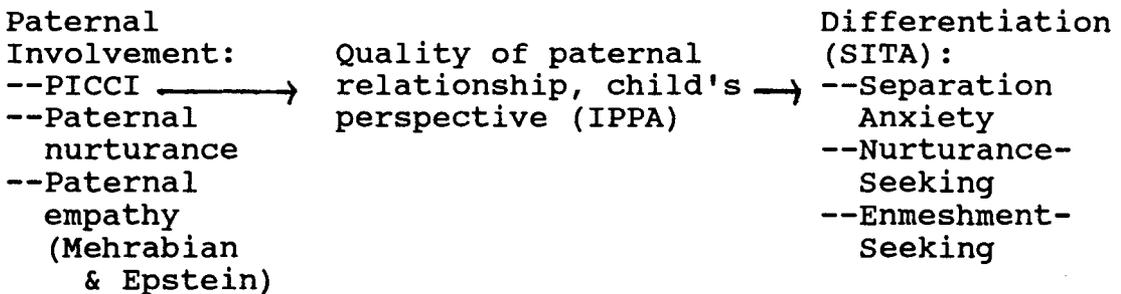
These hypotheses are summarized in the path model presented in Figure 1.

BOYS:

## Covariates:

--Pubertal status

---

GIRLS:

## Covariates:

--pubertal status  
 --maternal intrusiveness

Figure 1: Proposed path-analytic model of the relations between paternal involvement and attachment, and child relational style. Child relational style refers to empathy, devaluation of women, and rejection of femininity in boys, and differentiation in girls. Covariates in this model are listed.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Subjects

Participants in this study were seventh- and eighth-grade students at a small, private school affiliated with a large midwestern metropolitan university, and their parents. All students in the seventh and eighth grades were invited to participate. Criteria for inclusion in the final sample were that students be from intact families and that completed questionnaires be received from the student and from both of the student's parents. Twenty-seven male and 15 female students and their parents were included in the final sample. Students ranged in age between 12 and 14 years, with a mean age of 12.5. The mean age for fathers was 47 years, and, for mothers, 43.3 years. These families had an average of 2.14 children, including the child in the study. The majority of the families (66.7%) were white, with 14.3% Asian, 9.5% black, and 9.5% other. The cultural diversity of this sample is also reflected in the religious orientation of its members, which included: 28.6% Jewish, 19.0% Protestant, and 9.5% Roman Catholic. The 14.3% of respondents falling into the category of "Other" included Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus; 28.6% reported no formal

religious orientation. The group as a whole tended to be well-educated, with 83.3% of the fathers and 69.0% of the mothers having completed a graduate or professional degree. One hundred percent of the fathers and 81.0% of the mothers were employed.

### Procedure

Families were initially contacted by a letter to the student's parents from the director of the school, describing the study and what participation would entail, and asking them to participate. Parents were given the opportunity to decline on their own or their child's behalf at this time, and told that they may withdraw from participation at any time during the study. After receiving this letter, parents received a research packet through the mail containing a cover letter from the investigator and several pencil-and-paper self-report questionnaires to be filled out by each parent. Parents were asked to have their child return the completed, sealed packets to the school, but were also given the option of mailing the packets directly to the investigator.

At about the time their parents receive the research packets, the students were addressed in groups in their homeroom classrooms by the interviewer, who described the study and what participation would involve, and asked them to participate. Students were told that participation was voluntary, that they may withdraw without penalty at any

time, and that they need not answer any questions they find too personal or private. An incentive to participate was offered: students were told that one child, randomly selected from families completing the study, would receive a gift certificate to a local record store. They were also given the opportunity to ask any questions they might have. Packets were then distributed to all students who agree to participate. The packets included a number of pencil-and-paper self-report questionnaires, as well as a statement of informed consent to be signed by both the student and a parent. Students were given classroom time to complete the questionnaires at their teachers' discretion, and were asked to return the completed, sealed packets to the school.

### Materials

#### Measurement of Parent Variables

Each parent was asked to complete a questionnaire exploring the three following areas both in terms of present parenting and parenting at the time the child was 3 to 5 years old: 1) extent of own and spouses's involvement in parenting tasks and availability to the child; 2) own nurturant behaviors toward the child; and 3) satisfaction with own involvement and spouse's involvement in parenting tasks. Each parent was also be asked to complete a standardized empathy measure. In addition, parents were asked to make a global assessment of how own and spouses's

involvement from child's birth through age two compared to involvement from age three to five. Finally, parents were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire which included a question about the hours each parent worked outside the home; this question was used as a global estimate of the parents' overall availability to their child.

#### Paternal Involvement

Paternal involvement in child care was assessed by the Radin (1981) Paternal Involvement in Child Care Index (PICCI), and by a version of this index modified for use with junior-high-school aged children. (The PICCI was altered such that each involvement question was also asked in regard to the mother, to elicit a comparable rating of maternal involvement in child care.) The PICCI consists of questions assessing the following areas: (a) overall involvement in caring for the child physically and emotionally; (b) participation in childcare tasks, e.g., bathing and dressing the child; (c) participation in socialization tasks, e.g., punishing the child; (d) responsibility for making decisions regarding the child, e.g., when the child is old enough to try new things; and (e) availability to the child, e.g., frequency of having breakfast with the child. The PICCI was to be filled out by each parent, who rated both self and spouse in each of the above areas.

Reliability and validity data for the PICCI are provided by Radin (1985). Although test-retest reliability has not been assessed per se, Radin administered similar versions of the PICCI (adjusted for age appropriateness) to families at an interval of four years. The Pearson product-moment correlation of Grand Total Scores at time 1 and time 2 was .52 ( $p < .001$ ). In addition, one-week test-retest reliability was assessed for a short form of the instrument consisting of the components "statement of involvement," "decision-making," and "availability." Correlation coefficients between time 1 and time 2 ranged from .60 (statement of involvement, mother) to .99 (decision-making, both father and mother), and were all significant at the  $p < .001$  level. Internal consistency of the five component scores was computed for Mother and Father Total Scores at times 1 and 2 using Cronbach's alpha, which ranged from .67 (Father Score, time 1) to .75 (Mother Score, time 1).

Concurrent validity of this measure is supported by high correlations found between Mother's Total Scores and Father's Total Scores in a study of families with preschool-aged children, with an initial correlation of .76, and a correlation at four-year follow-up of .74. Construct validity is also suggested by significant correlations of the PICCI with the Cognitive Home Environment Scale (Radin & Epstein, 1975; Radin & Glasser, 1972), and by a positive

relationship between PICCI scores and good peer relations in four-year-old boys, found by Nietfeld (1984).

#### Paternal Nurturance

Paternal nurturance, another aspect of paternal involvement, was assessed by asking the father to indicate on a five-point scale the frequency with which he engages in six nurturant behaviors, such as trying to help the child with problems, and hugging or kissing the child goodnight. This scale follows that used by Carlson (1984), which was adapted from Reuter and Biller (1973), which in turn was a modification of one developed by Schaefer (1965a, 1965b). Although reliability data is not available for this measure, the original Schaefer measure was developed through factor analysis. Construct validity is supported by the Reuter and Biller (1975) finding that the combinations of high paternal nurturance and at least moderate paternal availability, and high paternal availability and at least moderate nurturance, were most predictive of high scores on measures of personality adjustment in college-age males.

#### Paternal Empathy

Paternal empathy, also an aspect of paternal involvement, was assessed with the Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) Empathy Scale, a 33-item measure consisting of statements such as "Seeing people cry upsets me" and "I often become very involved when I watch a movie." The

respondent indicates on an eight-point scale the extent of agreement with these statements.

Reliability and validity data for this measure are provided by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972). Split-half reliability for the Empathy Scale is .84. Content validity is suggested by test construction, in which items were chosen through factor analysis from a larger pool of items. The low correlation (.06) between scores on this measure and scores on a measure of social desirability (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960) suggests discriminant validity. Construct validity is suggested by a positive relationship between empathy scores and aggression inhibition with a visible victim, and by a positive relationship between empathy and helping behavior (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972).

#### Measurement of Child Variables

##### Child Empathy

Child empathy was assessed with the Bryant Scale for Children and Adolescents (Bryant, 1982), a 22-item self-rating scale based on the Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) Empathy Scale, adapted for use with children and adolescents. Respondents indicate on a five-point scale the extent of their agreement with statements such as "Seeing a girl who is crying makes me feel like crying" and "It makes me sad to see a boy who can't find anyone to play with."

Reliability and validity data for this measure are provided by Bryant (1982). Two-week test-retest reliability

coefficients ranged from .74 for first graders using a two-point response format, to .83 for seventh graders using a nine-point response format. Internal consistency, assessed by Cronbach's alpha, showed coefficients ranging from .54 for first graders to .79 for seventh graders. Convergent validity was assessed by correlating Bryant scores with two other emotional empathy scales, the Feshbach and Roe (1968) measure of child empathy (general scoring system), and with the Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) Empathy Scale, with convergent validity supported for all grades. Discriminant validity was evaluated by correlating Bryant scores with scores of reading achievement for all three age levels, with a measure of cognitive empathy for first graders (Feshbach & Roe, 1968; specific scoring system), and with social desirability for fourth and seventh graders (Crandall, Crandall, & Katkovsky, 1965), with nonsignificant correlations supporting discriminant validity in all cases.

#### Devaluation of Women

Devaluation of women was measured using the Galambos, Petersen, Richards, and Gitelson (1985) Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents (AWSA), an adolescent measure based on the short form of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). Respondents indicate their agreement on a five-point scale with statements such as "On the average, girls are as smart as boys," and "In general, the father should have greater

authority than the mother in making family decisions."

Reliability and validity data are reported by Galambos et al. (1985). Test-retest reliability was assessed at one and two year intervals, with one-year correlations ranging from .46 (girls, seventh to eighth grade) to .73 (boys, sixth to seventh grade) and two-year correlations ranging from .57 (boys, sixth to eighth grade) to .62 (girls, sixth to eighth grade). Assessment of internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha resulted in alphas ranging from .62 to .86, with an average alpha of .72 for girls and .78 for boys. Construct validity was supported by the following findings: (a) adolescent boys reported significantly more traditional attitudes toward women than did girls, a pattern found in previous research with adult samples (Helmreich, 1982); (b) lower-to-middle-class rural adolescents demonstrated significantly more traditional attitudes toward women than middle-class suburban adolescents; although an effect for urbanicity has not been demonstrated among adults, a similar class effect was found by Spence and Helmreich (1978); (c) more egalitarian attitudes toward women were associated with masculinity in girls, with femininity in boys, and with androgyny in both boys and girls, replicating the moderate correlation between sex-role orientation and attitudes towards women found in previous adult research (Helmreich, 1982; Lamke, 1982); (d) egalitarian attitudes toward women were consistently associated with better self-images in

girls; and (e) egalitarian attitudes toward women were associated with more egalitarian attitudes toward division of labor in the home in all age levels for both sexes.

#### Rejection of Femininity

Rejection of femininity was evaluated using the Avoiding Femininity subscale of the Brannon Masculinity Scale (1984), adapted for use with adolescents by the investigator. Respondents indicate their agreement on a five-point scale with 11 statements, such as "It bothers me when a boy does something that I consider feminine" and "I would not object if a brother of mine wanted a doll."

Reliability and validity data about the Brannon Masculinity Scale and the Avoiding Femininity subscale are provided by Brannon (1984). The four week test-retest reliability correlation coefficient for the full scale was .92. Internal consistency of the subscale, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .87. Construct validity for this subscale is supported by differences in mean scores between those who have and those who have not reportedly engaged in stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine activities within the past five years; all of these differences were in the expected direction, and all of those for stereotypically feminine activities were statistically significant at the  $p < .001$  level.

#### Self-Other Differentiation

Self-other differentiation was evaluated using three

subscales from the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA; Levine, Green, & Millon, 1986): Separation Anxiety, Nurturance Seeking, and Enmeshment Seeking. Sample items for these three subscales are "Being alone is a very scary idea for me" (Separation Anxiety); "Sometimes I think how nice it was to be a young child when someone else took care of my needs" (Nurturance Seeking); and "One of my friends knows me so well I feel he/she can practically read my mind" (Enmeshment Seeking). Respondents rate the extent of their agreement with the 25 total items from these subscales on a five-point scale.

Reliability and validity data for the SITA are provided by Levine, Green, and Millon (1986). Items for this measure were generated with the goal of representing the key dimensions of Mahler's separation-individuation model (Mahler, 1968; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975); these items were then factor-analyzed, and retained or discarded based on the strength of their correlation with their intended subscale and the lack of such correlation with other subscales. External criterion validity is supported by comparisons between scores on these subscales and scores of personality type on the Millon Adolescent Personality Inventory (MAPI; Millon, Green, & Meagher, 1982). Construct validity is suggested by findings of sex differences in scores on these subscales, with females receiving higher scores (Lapsley, FitzGerald, Rice, & Jackson, 1989).

### Quality of Paternal Relationship

The quality of the relationship between child and parent, from the child's perspective, was assessed with the Armsden and Greenberg (1987) Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA). As discussed above, the child's view of the quality of his or her paternal relationship is a potential mediator of the relationship between paternal involvement and empathy, devaluation of women/rejection of femininity, and differentiation. Only the "mother" and "father" versions of this measure were used, each of which consists of 25 self-report items, identical but for parental reference, rated on a five-point scale ranging from "almost never or never true" to "almost always or always true." Sample items include "My mother accepts me as I am," and "My father helps me to understand myself better."

Some reliability and validity data for the IPPA are provided by Armsden and Greenberg (1987); however, test-retest reliability data were not provided. Internal reliability of the instrument was assessed with factor analysis using principal factoring with iteration and varimax rotation, and was found to be adequate. Construct validity was supported by findings that securely attached adolescents receive higher scores on measures related to well-being, such as self-esteem and life satisfaction. In addition, securely attached adolescents were found to be

more likely to seek out social support, and to show less symptomatic response to stressful life events.

#### Maternal Intrusiveness

Maternal intrusiveness, as perceived by the child, was measured with the Permeability of Boundaries Scale (POBS; Olver, Aries, & Batgos, 1989). This 17-item scale was developed for "assessing the degree of involvement and intrusiveness in the domains of body and personal appearance, property, space, thoughts, and relationships" (Olver et al., 1989, p. 314). Although the original scale developed by Olver et al. measured only maternal intrusiveness, this study used an additional version of the scale, which was identical but used the father as the referent parent. In addition, very minor changes in wording were made to enhance readability for this young adolescent population. Maternal intrusiveness was treated as a covariate, as described above.

Validity data for this measure is provided by Olver et al. (1989). Construct validity is supported by findings that (a) mothers were more intrusive into the lives of daughters than of sons; (b) mothers were more intrusive into the lives of first-born daughters than later-born daughters, and (c), subjects whose mothers were less involved scored higher on a measure of self-other differentiation than subjects with more-involved mothers.

No reliability data for this measure is available at this time.

### Pubertal Status

Finally, pubertal status was measured with the Petersen, Crockett, Richards, and Boxer (1988) Pubertal Development Scale. Pubertal status, as discussed above, was treated as a covariate. Boys and girls completed separate, gender-appropriate versions of this form, which consists of seven items related to physical development, such as the appearance of facial hair in boys, menarche in girls, and body shape in both sexes. Respondents indicate the extent of development on a four-point scale, ranging from "not started" to "development already past."

Reliability and validity data for this measure are reported by Petersen et al. (1988). Internal consistency was assessed with coefficient alpha, which ranged from .68 to .83, with a median of .77. Reliability was also assessed by analyzing regressions, or ratings of decrease in development from one assessment time to the next (assessments were made in the spring and fall from sixth grade to eight grade). For boys, 9.8% of their ratings involved regressions, and for girls, this number was 6.4%. Most of these regressions involved the rating of skin change, i.e., appearance of pimples or acne, which does tend to "regress" again after its appearance. Validity of this measure was assessed in a study by Brooks-Gunn, Warren,

Rosso, and Gargiulo (1987), which found correlations ranging from .61 to .67 between adolescent self-ratings using this scale and physician ratings of pubertal development.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

To test the hypotheses suggested above, it was first necessary to combine the various paternal involvement measures in a meaningful way. Taken together, the measures of parental involvement provided a rather unwieldy array of data: The version of the Paternal Involvement in Child Care Inventory used for this study resulted in five subscale scores, each reported by both parents and for two time periods: the present, and the ages from three to five. (An additional global score was calculated for the father's involvement during infancy, based on an overall rating of involvement relative to that during the three-to-five age period, on a five-point scale ranging from "much less involved" to "much more involved.") Thus, this measure resulted in twenty-one separate involvement scores for the father alone, in addition to scores of nurturance and empathy. In addition, these scores were calculated for the mother's involvement as well, in order to test the hypothesis that the father's involvement is a better predictor of the child's relational style than that of the mother. The result was 48 scores of parental involvement--an unwieldy array indeed.

Several methods of data reduction were considered. One such method was to combine each parent's self-reported scores with the scores reported for them by their spouse. Another was to combine a parent's scores for time one with their scores for time two. Or, simply adding the PICCI subscale scores to form a PICCI total score would have reduced the data significantly. However, correlations between the self-report and spouse-report of a given subscale score, of a parent's report of a subscale score at time one and at time two, and of subscale scores with the sum of these scores, were in most cases not high enough to warrant these intuitive methods of data combination.

Instead, the combination of subscale scores into larger, more meaningful units was accomplished by calculating Cronbach's alpha for clusters of scores which seemed related in a statistically and theoretically meaningful way. In this method, subscale scores of the PICCI, as well as other measures of parental involvement such as nurturance, empathy, hours worked outside the home, etc., were treated as individual scale items. Items having a low correlation with the scale totals were dropped, resulting in several homogenous involvement scales for each parent (see Table 1). Further analyses were based on these scales.

For the father, involvement variables were combined to form three scales: Accessibility, Authoritarianism, and

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Levels and Variables Comprising Parental  
Involvement Scales

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Father Involvement Scales

Accessibility

Hours worked outside the home  
 Overall involvement, reported by father and by spouse  
 for present time and from ages 3 to 5  
 Availability, reported by father and by spouse for  
 present time and from ages 3 to 5  
 Involvement in child care tasks, reported by father and  
 by spouse for present time and from ages 3 to 5  
 Involvement at infancy, reported by father and by  
 spouse

Girls: Alpha = .74

Boys: Alpha = .78

Authoritarianism

Involvement in decision-making, reported by father and  
 by spouse for present time and from ages 3 to 5  
 Involvement in socialization tasks, reported by father  
 and by spouse for present time and from ages  
 3 to 5

Girls: Alpha = .81

Boys: Alpha = .85

Nurturance

Nurturance, reported by father for present time and  
 ages 3 to 5

Girls: Alpha = .66

Boys: Alpha = .92

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(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

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Mother Involvement Scales
Accessibility

Overall involvement, reported by mother and by spouse  
for present time and from ages 3 to 5

Availability, reported by mother and by spouse for  
present time and from ages 3 to 5

Girls: Alpha = .70

Boys: Alpha = .83

Child Care

Involvement in child care tasks, reported by mother and  
by spouse for present time and from ages 3 to 5

Involvement in socialization tasks, reported by mother  
and by spouse for present time and from ages  
3 to 5

Involvement in decision-making, reported by mother and  
by spouse for present time and from ages 3 to 5

Girls: Alpha = .78

Boys: Alpha = .80

Nurturance

Nurturance, reported by mother for present time and  
ages 3 to 5

Girls: Alpha = .53

Boys: Alpha = .60

---

Nurturance. In addition, the paternal empathy score, which did not correlate well enough to be included in any other scale, was retained for further analyses. For the mother, three similar but distinct scales were created, which were called Accessibility, Child Care, and Nurturance. Both the mother's empathy score and the number of hours the mother worked, which did not fit in with any other scale, were retained for further analyses.

### Predictions

The predicted model of relational style for the variables measured in this experiment is shown in Figure 1. The first two predictions were that, for boys, when higher scores on the paternal involvement variables led to greater attachment of the boys to their fathers, this in turn would lead to 1) higher empathy, and 2) more positive attitudes toward women and less rejection of femininity. Pubertal development is a covariate in this model.

The third prediction was that, for girls, when higher scores on the paternal involvement variables led to greater attachment of the girls to their fathers, this in turn would lead to greater differentiation of self in the girls, or less Separation Anxiety, Nurturance Seeking, and Enmeshment Seeking. Pubertal development and maternal intrusiveness are covariates in this model.

The hypotheses were tested using a series of hierarchical multiple regressions, based on the path

analysis (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975) presented in Figure 1, to determine significant patterns of covariance between variables. However, preliminary analyses suggested that this path analysis be slightly modified. Specifically, correlational data failed to indicate the predicted relationship between maternal intrusiveness and any of the differentiation measures for girls; thus, this variable was dropped from its status as a covariate in the path model.

The general method used to test a path model of the type  $a \rightarrow b \rightarrow c$  is to test each of three causal paths:  $a \rightarrow b$ ,  $b \rightarrow c$ , and  $a \rightarrow c$ . The causal path  $a \rightarrow b$  is direct, and is tested directly. The causal paths  $b \rightarrow c$  and  $a \rightarrow c$  are indirect, and thus the effect of the third variable must in each case be partialled out in order to test these relationships. This model is supported when it is found that the paths from a to b and from b to c are significant, but that the path from a to c is not.

Thus, the method used to test the proposed path model was as follows: First, the parent variables were entered in a regression equation with Attachment as the dependent variable, to determine whether any parent variables predicted attachment. Second, Attachment was entered into regression equations, with each child outcome variable as the dependent variable and with the parent variables entered first to partial out their effect, to determine whether

Attachment in turn predicted any child variables. Finally, again with the child outcome variables serving as dependent variables, the parent variables were entered into regression equations, with Attachment entered first to partial out its effect. This was done to determine whether any of the parent variables predicted the child outcome variables directly. In each of the equations listed above, pubertal status was entered as a covariate. Only path coefficients with a  $p < .05$  will be reported.

### Results

For boys, the hypothesized path model was unsupported. The dependent variables, Empathy, Attitudes Toward Women, and Rejection of Femininity, were not predicted by Attachment, nor by any paternal or maternal involvement variable.

For girls, the hypothesized path model received only moderate support. Two of the dependent differentiation variables, Nurturance Seeking and Separation Anxiety, were not predicted by any paternal or maternal involvement variable for girls. The predicted mediating variable, Attachment, was also not predicted by any parent involvement variable. However, Attachment was found to be the best predictor of the differentiation subscale Enmeshment Seeking ( $p < .001$ ,  $\beta = 0.61$ ), though not in the hypothesized direction: girls who were more attached to their fathers

reported more enmeshment seeking, and thus less differentiation.

In addition, two father-involvement variables were directly related to differentiation in girls. The variable, Father Nurturance, was related in the hypothesized direction (negative) to the differentiation subscale, Enmeshment Seeking ( $p < .05$ ,  $\beta = -0.35$ ). That is, girls whose fathers were more nurturant were less prone to seek enmeshment, and thus can be seen as more differentiated. However, the regression equation that best predicted Enmeshment Seeking also included a father involvement variable, Authoritarianism, which was positively related to Enmeshment Seeking ( $p < .005$ ,  $\beta = 0.46$ ). Girls whose fathers were more involved in their lives in an authoritarian way were more inclined to seek enmeshment with others.

Finally, Pubertal Status ( $p < .05$ ,  $\beta = 0.33$ ), a covariate in the original path model, was found to have a significant influence on Enmeshment Seeking: girls who were more physically developed showed more Enmeshment Seeking.

For girls, the maternal involvement variable Child Care ( $p < .05$ ,  $\beta = -0.47$ ) was also found to directly predict Enmeshment Seeking. However, when entered into a regression equation with the significant paternal involvement variables noted above, this maternal variable became non-significant. Thus, as hypothesized, paternal involvement better predicts

this aspect of differentiation in girls than does maternal involvement.

#### Additional Findings

Correlational data provided some additional support for the hypothesized relationship between paternal involvement and differentiation in girls. For example, Paternal Nurturance showed a trend toward a negative relationship with Nurturance Seeking in girls ( $r = -.41$ ,  $p < .10$ , one-tailed). Thus, girls whose fathers were more nurturant tended to demonstrate less nurturance-seeking, or more differentiation. In addition, the negative relationship between paternal authoritarianism and girls' differentiation, demonstrated above, received further support from correlational data: the father involvement variable, Authoritarianism, had a significant, positive correlation ( $r = .59$ ) with Separation Anxiety in girls ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed).

Additional evidence for the importance of the father's role in girls' development was provided by correlational data. For example, these data showed a significant correlation between paternal empathy and empathy in girls ( $r = .60$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed). The data demonstrated no correlation between maternal empathy and empathy in girls ( $r = .00$ ). In fact, the only maternal variable correlated with girls' empathy was the number of hours the mother worked outside the home ( $r = .71$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed).

Further, the importance of the father-daughter relationship for girls is demonstrated by a positive correlation between the girl's attachment to the father and her acceptance of nontraditional gender roles ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed). Although no such relationship between girls' gender attitudes and maternal attachment was found, girls' acceptance of nontraditional gender roles was significantly correlated with maternal empathy ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed) and a trend toward significance was found with the number of hours the mother worked outside the home ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .10$ , two-tailed).

The results for boys are notable for the overall lack of relationship between paternal involvement variables and any of the outcome variables. In the case of maternal involvement, the only significant correlation was that between boys' Empathy and the number of hours the mother works outside the home ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed). To test for the possibility that the relationship between parental involvement variables and the boys' outcome variables was curvilinear, rather than linear as predicted, regressions were run on each of the dependent variables, entering first the parental involvement variable, and then the square of that parental involvement variable. None of these regressions was found to be significant.

Table 2 provides a summary of the findings presented in this section.

Table 2

Additional Findings

	Nurturance Seeking	Separation Anxiety	Empathy	Gender-Role Flexibility
<b>GIRLS</b>				
Paternal Nurturance	$r = -.41$ $p < .10$ , one-tailed	---	---	---
Paternal Authoritarianism	---	$r = .59$ $p < .05$ , two-tailed	---	---
Paternal Empathy	---	---	$r = .60$ $p < .05$ , two-tailed	---
Paternal Attachment	---	---	---	$r = .58$ $p < .05$ , two-tailed
Maternal Empathy	---	---	---	$r = .58$ $p < .05$ , two-tailed
(continued)				

Table 2 (continued)

	Nurturance Seeking	Separation Anxiety	Empathy	Gender-Role Flexibility
Maternal Work Hours	---	---	r = .71 p < .05, two-tailed	r = .56 p < .10, two-tailed
-----				
BOYS				
Maternal Work Hours			r = .46 p < .05, two-tailed	

Note. The purpose of this table is to present a visual overview of the correlational findings discussed under the heading "Additional Findings." It does not provide an exhaustive summary of the correlational data generated in this study.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

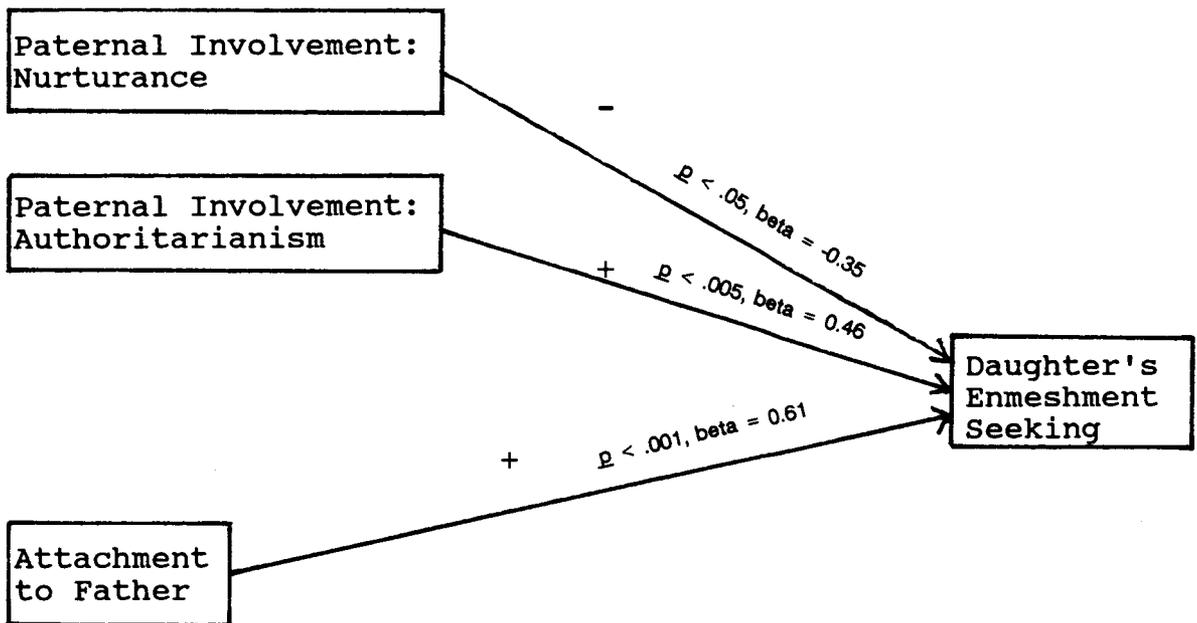
The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between paternal involvement in child care and the relational styles of children. Specifically, this study tested several hypotheses suggested by Nancy Chodorow's theory regarding the effects of traditional parenting on children's relational styles. Based on this theory, it was hypothesized that increased involvement of fathers with their children would be associated with higher empathy and less rejection of femininity in boys, and with greater self-other differentiation in girls.

The results provide, at best, only partial support for the proposed model of the influence of father involvement on children's relational styles. For boys, the hypothesized path model was unsupported. For girls, this model was found to be in need of modification. As predicted, paternal nurturance was found to be positively related to differentiation of self in girls: girls whose fathers were more nurturant showed less enmeshment-seeking and nurturance-seeking than girls whose fathers were less nurturant. However, another aspect of father involvement--authoritarianism--was related to girls'

differentiation of self in the opposite direction from that originally hypothesized: girls whose fathers were more authoritarian showed more enmeshment-seeking and separation anxiety than girls whose fathers were less authoritarian. Both of these aspects of paternal involvement, nurturance and authoritarianism, were related to enmeshment seeking in girls directly, rather than through the mediation of attachment as had been originally hypothesized.

Attachment was also found, for girls, to be related to differentiation of self, though in the opposite direction from that which was predicted: girls who were more attached to their fathers showed more, rather than less, enmeshment-seeking. Surprisingly, the father's involvement did not seem to be related to the girls' attachment to him. Pubertal development was found to be related to differentiation of self in the hypothesized direction: girls who were more physically mature were more inclined to seek enmeshment. The revised path model depicting the relationship among paternal involvement, attachment, and enmeshment-seeking in girls is presented in Figure 2.

The lack of support for the model for boys is puzzling. Not only was the hypothesized path model unsupported, but correlational data revealed no significant relationship between any parent involvement variable and empathy, attitudes toward women, or rejection of femininity in boys. One possible explanation for the absence of the predicted



Covariate: Pubertal Development ( $p < .05$ ,  $\beta = 0.33$ )

Figure 2: Final path-analytic model of the relations between paternal involvement and attachment, and differentiation in daughters. Significant paths ( $p < .05$ ) are presented, with probabilities and beta weights. The direction of all effects is noted.

relationship between paternal involvement and these three variables in boys is that the relationship is not linear, as predicted, but curvilinear. This alternative hypothesis, however, was also unsupported by the data.

It is possible that a lack of representativeness in the sample may have contributed to the lack of significant findings for boys. The children in this sample come from families in which the parents were atypically well-educated in comparison to national norms. It is possible that the education level of parents has an impact upon empathy and gender role attitudes which masks the impact of parental involvement upon these variables.

This possibility is supported by the fact that the average score on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents (Galambos et al., 1985) was 3.40 for the boys in this study. This score is considerably higher than the average scores found in a sample of middle-class suburban seventh- and eighth-grade boys tested by Galambos et al. (1985), which were 2.75 (seventh-grade) and 2.71 (eighth-grade). In addition, the average score on the Bryant Empathy Scale (Bryant, 1982) for a large sample of seventh grade boys reported by Bryant (1982) was 13.07 out of 22 possible points, or 59.4% of the total score. In the present sample, which used a three-point scale instead of the yes/no format used by Bryant, the average score for boys was 45.11 out of 63 possible points, or 71.6% of the total

score. Again, scores for the present sample are considerably higher than those reported in the literature. Age norms for the Avoiding-Femininity subscale of the Brannon Masculinity Scale (Brannon & Juni, 1984) are unavailable.

The exact relationship between a boy's educational environment and his empathy and gender-role attitudes is unclear, and is beyond the scope of the present study. However, given the unusually high AWSA and empathy scores of the boys in this sample, it is certainly safe to say that the relationship between paternal involvement and boys' relational styles must be explored with a more representative sample before conclusions can be drawn.

The findings for the girls are somewhat more easily understood. It seems clear that, for girls, it is not only the quantity of paternal involvement that is important for the development of differentiation, but also the quality of the involvement. When the father is more involved with the girl in a nurturant way, the result is consistent with Chodorow's theory: the girl is less prone to seek merger with and nurturance from others, presumably because the father has proven to be an important enough object to divert her from the enmeshed relationship with her mother, and has been trusted to meet the girl's emotional needs as she made this emotionally risky break.

However, there are other ways in which a father can be

involved with his daughter. We have chosen to call the construct that reflects this involvement "authoritarianism," as this quality seems to best represent the scale upon which this construct was based. This scale contains subscale items reflecting the father's involvement in making decisions about the girl's development--specifically, "when the child should be punished," and "when the child is old enough to try new things." It also contains items reflecting his involvement in punishment and limit-setting, as well as in other socialization tasks. This scale seems to reflect the father's involvement with his daughter in a more stereotypically masculine, or authoritarian, way than that reflected by the other father involvement scales.

When the father is more involved with his daughter, but this involvement is of a traditionally masculine nature, the daughter seems to respond by being more stereotypically feminine, or less well-differentiated: she shows more enmeshment-seeking and separation anxiety than girls whose fathers are less involved in this way. While this pattern of paternal involvement and differentiation in girls is not inconsistent with Chodorow's theory, it is perhaps better accounted for by Parsons's reciprocal role theory (Parsons, 1955, 1970). Parsons suggests that relational styles are acquired through the process of interaction in reciprocal, or complementary, social roles, rather than through identification. In this theory, a role acquires meaning

only through this process of interaction with other roles. Thus, it would be expected that the daughter of a stereotypically masculine father would respond with a stereotypically feminine relational style.

The relationship between pubertal status and differentiation was as predicted: girls who were further along in their pubertal development were more inclined to seek enmeshment, and thus were less well-differentiated. As discussed above, the gender intensification hypothesis (Hill & Lynch, 1983; Richards & Larson, 1989) suggests that youngsters exhibit more traditional gender-role expectations as they become pubertal. Thus, to the extent that enmeshment-seeking falls within the stereotypical feminine gender-role, the relationship we found between puberty and differentiation in girls is predicted by the gender intensification hypothesis.

In the original path model, it was predicted that paternal involvement in child care would predict differentiation in girls not directly, but indirectly through attachment: high paternal involvement was hypothesized to lead to high differentiation only when this involvement resulted in high attachment. Our expectation was that some highly-involved fathers would be involved in a negative way, which would weaken the attachment bond between father and daughter, and that this would not result in higher differentiation in the daughter. Our expectation

that negatively-involved fathers would not have highly differentiated daughters was supported: in fact, the style of negative involvement that we have called "authoritarianism" was found to result in less differentiation in the daughters.

What was unexpected was the fact that this negative involvement style did not result in lower attachment for the girls toward their fathers, and that high attachment was found to be associated with more enmeshment-seeking in the girls. The explanation for these findings may have to do with the tendency for girls whose fathers are traditionally involved to idealize their fathers and their relationship to them. According to Chodorow,

. . . a daughter looks to her father for a sense of separateness and for the same confirmation of her specialness that her brother receives from her mother. She . . . is willing to deny her father's limitations. . . as long as she feels loved. She is more able to do this because his distance means that she does not really know him. The relationship, then, because of her father's distance and importance to her, occurs largely as fantasy and idealization, and lacks the grounded reality which a boy's relation to his mother has. (Chodorow, 1978, p. 195)

This explanation does have some limitations in relation to our findings, as it fails to spell out the expected relationship between the father's relational style and idealization in detail. Are fathers who are more involved, but in an authoritarian way, likely to be idealized? This seems quite possible. The father's authoritarian involvement with the daughter would surely lead her to feel

that he is an important person in her life. In addition, this type of attention is likely to allow the girl to feel that she is loved by her father, while at the same time creating a feeling of emotional distance conducive to idealization.

The tendency of girls to idealize their relationship with their fathers received some support from the correlational data. For boys, attachment to the father was positively related to paternal empathy ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed), and negatively related to perceived paternal intrusiveness ( $r = .54$ ,  $p < .01$ , two-tailed). For girls, however, attachment to the father was not related to any variable reflecting the nature of his involvement with her. These findings seem to suggest that the girl's attachment to the father is less reality-based than the boy's attachment, and thus perhaps more influenced by idealization or fantasy.

Attachment to the father was found to be the best predictor of enmeshment seeking in girls. If attachment can be viewed as, at least in part, a measure of idealization of the relationship with the father, it would make sense that it would be associated with higher enmeshment-seeking: a father who was not idealized, but provided the girl with a real, positive, affective relationship, would provide a foil for differentiation, whereas an emotionally distant, fantasy-based figure would fail to do so.

In each of these findings relating father involvement

to differentiation in girls, the strongest relationship was that between father involvement and Enmeshment Seeking: only this differentiation variable was significantly predicted by the linear regression line including Attachment, Paternal Nurturance and Paternal Authoritarianism, though both Nurturance Seeking and Separation Anxiety received correlational support for their relationships with paternal involvement. Of these aspects of differentiation--Enmeshment Seeking, Nurturance Seeking, and Separation Anxiety, why might Enmeshment Seeking be most strongly related to paternal involvement?

It may be that this variable most accurately reflects that aspect of differentiation emphasized by Chodorow's theory. Chodorow discusses differentiation largely in terms of emerging from a primary identification with the mother; in this primary identification the child "experiences itself as merged or continuous. . . with its mother or caretakers" (1978, p. 61). In describing the girl's traditional relational stance as less differentiated, Chodorow again emphasizes this sense of merger or continuity between self and other: ". . . girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object world" (1978, p. 176). Of the three subscales of the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence used to measure differentiation, Enmeshment Seeking seems to reflect this sense of merger or continuity

the best. While the Separation Anxiety variable emphasizes issues of loss and abandonment, and Nurturance Seeking taps into issues of dependency, the Enmeshment Seeking subscale includes such statements as "I know some of my friends so well it seems like I can read their minds," and "There's a certain sense of oneness that I feel with other people"-- statements that reflect a sense of merger or continuity with others.

In addition to the findings listed above, several findings from the correlational data are of interest, particularly those concerning the father's role in his daughter's development. The positive relationship between paternal empathy and empathy in girls is not suggested by Chodorow's theory, but does support Kalliopuska's (1984) finding that child empathy is more strongly associated with paternal than maternal empathy. However, it also conflicts with the finding of Barnett, King, Howard, and Dino (1980) that empathy in girls is most strongly associated with a sex-typed pattern of empathy in the parents, where mothers are more empathic and fathers are less so. The difference in findings between their sample of 4- to 6-year-old girls and the present 12- to 14-year-old sample suggests that the relationship between parental empathy and empathy in girls may change in the course of the girl's development.

The positive correlation between attachment to the father and girls' acceptance of non-traditional gender roles

is also of interest: it is consistent with both Chodorow's theory and the current finding that girls whose fathers are more nurturant tend to exhibit greater differentiation, which is usually considered a more "masculine," or instrumental trait. It is also consistent with Stevenson's (1991) recent finding that perceived closeness to the father is associated with greater instrumentality in girls.

A warm, close relationship with the father seems to be an important factor in both the girl's attitude and her behavior in regard to gender role enactment. In the context of such a relationship, the girl shows more acceptance of a non-traditional female role, and also demonstrates a more "masculine" style on self-report measures of her gender-linked behavior, where the term "masculine" refers to such socially-valued traits as differentiation and instrumentality. At the same time, she retains the positive "feminine" trait of empathy--in fact, this trait is enhanced in the context of such a paternal relationship.

One unexpected finding was the significant ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed, in both cases) correlation between the hours of employment of the mother and empathy in both boys ( $r = .46$ ) and girls ( $r = .71$ ). This finding is difficult to interpret in light of Chodorow's theory, but may suggest a relationship between maternal autonomy and empathy in children. Of course, the number of hours the mother works is likely to be influenced by any number of factors,

including purely economic ones. It is also possible that this correlation reflects no true relationship between these variables, but is a spurious finding specific to the current sample: with the large number of variables included in this study, such "relationships" between variables are likely to appear. In this case, the finding is reported because of the relative strength of the correlation, as well as its consistency across genders, and because those who study empathy in children may wish to explore this relationship further.

#### Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several areas for future research are suggested by the present study. First, like any researcher with scarce monetary, time, and personnel resources, the current researcher would wish to see a replication study done, in which several of the limitations of the present study are corrected. The most serious of these limitations seems to be the self-report method employed to assess paternal involvement in child care. The problems of accuracy associated with any self-report measure of behavior are magnified in the current study due to the use of retrospective data (see, for example, Bernard, Killworth, Kronenfeld, & Sailer, 1984).

In addition, correlations between the self-report and spouse-report Total Scores on the PICCI suggest that fathers and mothers have different perceptions of the father's

current involvement with their child. As discussed above, each parent's involvement was reported by themselves (self-report) and by their spouse (spouse-report). Correlations between these reports were quite low compared to those reported by Radin (1985). Using the PICCI in an interview format, Radin found correlations of  $\underline{r} = .76$  and  $\underline{r} = .74$  for self- and spouse-reports of the father's involvement. Although the current study, using a pencil-and-paper version of the PICCI, found a correlation in this range for reports of the mother's current involvement ( $\underline{r} = .72$ ), self- and spouse-reports of the father's current involvement were only correlated at  $\underline{r} = .33$ . Correlations between self- and spouse-report for early childhood involvement were slightly higher for both the mother's involvement ( $\underline{r} = .84$ ) and that of the father ( $\underline{r} = .47$ ).

In assessing the effect of early paternal involvement on child relational styles, a prospective longitudinal study would, of course, be the most accurate method. In addition, behavioral observation would be likely to provide a more accurate assessment of parental involvement than would the current self-report method. Another method which would seem to show promise for collection of this type of behavioral data is the Experience Sampling Method used by Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1987), in which subjects carry beepers and report on their activities at the time they are

beeped. Finally, the original use of the PICCI as an interview measure seems to be more accurate than the pencil-and-paper format used in the current study, to the extent that higher correlations, or greater similarity, between self- and spouse-reports can be seen as reflecting greater accuracy.

This study also had limitations in terms of the sample used. As discussed above, the current sample seemed particularly unrepresentative of American families with regard to the education level of the parents. A sample more diverse in parental education levels would provide a better test of the hypotheses investigated in this study. Another limitation was the size of the sample. Although completed questionnaires which met the inclusion criteria were received from 23% of the families invited to participate, the original pool from which these families were drawn included the families of only 180 children. A larger sample would, again, provide a better estimate of the relationship among the variables studied.

The sample size for girls, in particular, was small. The difference in sample size between the girls and the boys seems to have been due to the participation of the parents, rather than the children: completed parent questionnaires were received for 42% of the boys who participated, but from only 25% of the girls who did so. It is not clear whether this difference in parental participation applied equally to

mothers and fathers, as parents tended to return questionnaires only when both had completed them. It is interesting, though, that the parents of girls were apparently less willing to participate in the study than were the parents of boys; this, in itself, may reflect differing levels of parental involvement for sons and for daughters.

Another area for future research suggested by this study is the relationship between the dependent variables, empathy and differentiation of self. In this study, the empathy variable was derived from a measure of the respondent's emotional empathy, or "responsiveness to another's emotional experience" (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). Differentiation of self, on the other hand, is a construct which seems to contain within it the ability to retain one's sense of self in the face of another's emotional experience. For the boys in this sample, there was a rather high correlation between Empathy and Enmeshment Seeking, a measure of low self-other differentiation, ( $r = .68$ ,  $p < .001$ , two-tailed). This correlation suggests that, for boys, there may be a negative relationship between empathy and differentiation of self, such that more empathic boys are less well-differentiated. No such relationship was found for the girls.

The ability to respond to the emotional experiences of others, and the ability to maintain one's own responses in

the face of others' emotional experiences, both seem to be capacities important for healthy emotional functioning. A question that arises is whether these abilities are mutually exclusive--or whether, perhaps, the current measures used to assess these abilities are based on the assumption that they are. An in-depth exploration of the theoretical assumptions underlying currently used measures in this area would be a sensible first step in exploring the relationship among relational constructs, and one which would enhance the validity of future studies of relational gender differences. Furthermore, a detailed study of the relationship among these constructs would ideally result in greater theoretical precision in the use of relational terms, and help to explicate the relationship between relational styles and adaptive interpersonal functioning.

#### Implications for Chodorow's Theory

Given the present findings, what conclusions can be drawn about those aspects of Chodorow's theory explored in this study? The present work began with the premise that Chodorow's description of the effects of exclusive parenting by a female caretaker on the relational styles of children could be tested by examining the effects of a different caretaking arrangement--one in which the father was more actively involved. Thus, increased paternal involvement was hypothesized to be associated with an amelioration of several of the differences in relational styles between

girls and boys: girls were expected to be more well-differentiated, while boys were expected to exhibit more empathy and less devaluation of women and rejection of femininity.

The results of this study suggest that, for girls, paternal involvement in child care does seem to be an important factor in the development of a differentiated sense of self, but that the quality of this involvement can lead to different outcomes. An increase in the father's overall availability and involvement in the activities of his daughter's life does not seem to be as important to the development of differentiation as the affective quality of his involvement. Higher levels of paternal nurturance were associated with more differentiation in daughters, but increased paternal authoritarianism was associated with less differentiation.

Although Chodorow's theory does not make explicit which aspects of paternal involvement are essential for the development of differentiation in girls, she does suggest that physical and emotional closeness are among the important factors. The finding of an association between increased paternal nurturance and higher differentiation in girls provides Chodorow with the most direct support, as the relationship between this aspect of paternal involvement and differentiation is in the predicted direction. In addition, the finding that paternal authoritarianism is associated

with less differentiation in girls can also be construed as consistent with her theory, to the extent that an authoritarian father can be viewed as emotionally inaccessible: though his involvement is increased, its affective quality precludes providing the emotional support necessary to sustain a break from her sense of merger with her mother.

The failure to find an association between increased paternal availability and involvement in child care tasks and differentiation in girls is more problematic for Chodorow's theory. However, more than discrediting the theory, this finding may be viewed in light of its utility in bringing into focus which aspects of paternal involvement are most important for differentiation in daughters. Before this utility can be seriously considered, of course, it is first necessary to replicate the finding in a study employing a larger sample; the possibility that the current study was simply not rigorous enough to detect an effect must not be overlooked.

In regard to the influence of paternal involvement on relational development in boys, the current study fails to support Chodorow's theory: no association was found between any aspect of paternal involvement and those relational variables--empathy, rejection of femininity, and devaluation of women--predicted by Chodorow to be related to the father's involvement. However, as with any null finding,

the failure to find an association between these variables does not demonstrate that no association exists. Several of the limitations of the current study, such as the small sample size and the atypically high education level of the parents, have been discussed above. In addition, it is possible that the highest levels of paternal involvement found in this study do not approach those necessary to influence a boy's relational development.

No one study, standing alone, provides sufficient test of a given theory that the results may be viewed as conclusive. The current study, modest in size but ambitious in scope, could from its inception only be hoped to begin to explore the implications of Chodorow's theory, to contribute to its conceptualization as a topic for research, and to report preliminary findings. The theory itself, which has been received with widespread interest, both supportive and dismissive, among developmental theorists as well as in feminist and conservative sociopolitical circles, has barely begun to receive the research attention warranted by such interest. The findings reported in this study, which do provide preliminary support for Chodorow's view of relational development in girls, underscore the need for more extensive research addressing this prominent theory.

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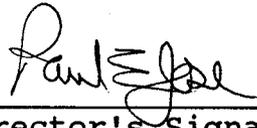
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

12/9/91

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