

**“He Doesn’t Realize That He Has To Be a
Parent As Well As Someone Who Brings
Home The Money”: Boys Talk about
Their Parents’ Paid and Unpaid Labor**

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Abstract

In this paper I use teenage boys' discussions of their parents to provide insight into debates about gender, families, and work. This paper explores ways in which relationships between fathers, mothers, and sons are mediated by talk about work and by changing discourses of fatherhood. I explore the implications of this mediation for sons' conceptions and enactments of masculinity. Specifically I argue that teenage boys' perceptions of their parents indicate that rigid definitions of masculinity, although linked structurally to positions of power, may lead to these sons' feeling disappointed and dissatisfied with their fathers and their relationships with them. I conclude that boys are experiencing a fundamental shift in beliefs about parenting in which they do not see as necessary a gendered division of labor in families, but envision a future family in which they can be both nurturers like their mothers *as well as* wage earners like their fathers.

Coming of Age in a “Stalled Revolution”

Both families and workplaces have altered substantially during the past several decades as women have entered the paid workforce in unprecedented numbers. Hochschild (1989) notes that this movement has resulted in a “stalled revolution” in which men’s commitment to domestic physical and emotional labor has not kept pace with women’s increasing participation in the paid workforce. She examines the main participants in this stalled revolution – working fathers and mothers. My project examines perspectives on these changes of another set of household participants – teenage sons.¹ Polatnick (1999) and Kaplan (1999) have both addressed middle-school children’s perspectives on their employed parents, household divisions of labor, and processes of care. My project brings in the voices of high school aged children of working- and middle-class, working parents. Because definitions of masculinity are central to tensions around domestic and paid labor, I concentrate on sons’ experiences of being parented with a specific focus on how their interactions with their parents and experiences of household divisions of paid and unpaid labor shapes their understandings of gender and ideas about their own futures as fathers.

My focus on teenage boys’ experiences of the second shift highlights the generational dimensions of gender and family ideologies. By generational I refer to Mannheim’s (1997:48) definition of “participants in the cultural process” who inhabit a similar temporal and cultural location and as such share a “common destiny.” Generational membership is key to shaping one’s identity and sense of self (Chodorow 1999). The youth I studied are coming of age at time when in the U.S. men and women have equal rights (for the most part) under the law and are moving toward relative equality culturally, but also in a time in which this equality is constantly threatened by conservative backlash and “culture wars” over gendered behaviors, ideologies, and rights. The parents of these youth came of age themselves during a time of intense contestation of gender ideologies and practices through the late 1960s, 70s, and early 80s. They experienced, among other things, the second wave of the feminist movement and debates over the Equal Rights Amendment and the legalization of abortion, all of which put the state of gender relations and previously accepted gendered behavior into flux.

I focus on boys because experiences and enactments of masculinity are central to the perpetuation of their parents' stalled revolution. The movement toward full gender equality, with men and women participating equally in both paid and unpaid labor, has been stalled in part by "traditional" concepts of masculinity. Part of the reason men are not doing their share of the second shift (Hochschild 1989) is that historically paid work has been central to definitions of American masculinity (Kimmel 1996; Morgan 1992). Jobs are so tied to definitions of manhood that regardless of the actual nature of a job – be it welding, cooking, or teaching kindergarteners – if men perform it, it becomes defined in terms of "masculine" traits (Leidner 1993; Milkman 1987; Williams 1989).

While Hochschild's argument about the second shift focuses primarily on physical domestic labor, certainly emotional labor is a part of this shift. The child care portion of the second shift is comprised of both physical and emotional labor. She documents that fathers do not spend as much time as mothers with their children and when they are primarily responsible for child care, they often view it as "babysitting." It is precisely this physical and emotional availability that the boys I interviewed posit as central to good parenting. The boys do not address disparities in the physical labor within the household; instead they draw the division of labor lines along paid work done by their fathers and emotional work done by their mothers.

Teenage boys' discussions of their parents provide useful insight into debates about gender, families, and work. In detailing their experiences of families, especially of their parents' paid and unpaid work, and what it means to be a "man" and a "father," the boys I interviewed revealed, enacted, and negotiated changing and contradictory definitions of masculinity. This paper explores ways in which relationships between fathers, mothers, and sons are mediated by talk about work and by changing discourses of parenthood. I also explore the implications of this mediation for sons' conceptions and enactments of masculinity. Specifically I argue that teenage boys' perceptions of their parents indicate that rigid definitions of masculinity, although linked structurally to power, may lead to these sons feeling disappointed and dissatisfied with their fathers. I conclude that boys are experiencing a fundamental shift in beliefs about parenting in which they do not see as necessary a gendered division of labor in families, but envision a future

family in which they can be nurturers like their mothers *as well as* wage earners like their fathers.

Sample

This paper is a part of a larger dissertation study of the ways in which a group of American teenagers negotiate, enact, and resist meanings of masculinity. In 1999 I interviewed 20 boys between the ages of 15 and 18 whom I met through fieldwork in two northern California high schools I call Pine Tree and Independence.² Pine Tree is a 1,200 student public high school in a middle- to upper-middle- class suburb of San Francisco. The school is well-funded and socially progressive, with a predominantly white student body and small student: teacher ratios (1:20). Independence is a high school of 2,066 students located in a quiet community in a Sacramento suburb with a student: teacher ratio of 1:24. Up until the early 1990s the region was primarily a farming community, but it is rapidly transforming into a bedroom community for commuters to nearby cities. Although Independence is more racially diverse (67% white and 26% Hispanic) than Pine Tree (97% white), it is not as socially progressive. Pine Tree's social stance is evidenced, among other things, in the school's support of a gay/straight alliance student group and a girl's support group. Independence does not have student groups outside of the traditional academic or student body government organizations.

I recruited boys for interviews by giving a talk about my dissertation in classes selected to reach a diverse group of students. The boys I interviewed are from a range of socioeconomic class backgrounds. Some have parents who work as lawyers and nurses; others have parents who work as bus drivers and construction workers. The parents of 14 of the boys are married; 3 of the boys' parents are divorced; 3 divorced and remarried. The boys are from a range of racial/ethnic backgrounds; 13 identified as "white," 4 as "Latino and white," one as "Latino," 1 as "Chinese and white" and 1 as "Persian." Please see the appendix for demographic information about the boys I interviewed.

I conducted the interviews at a cafe or a diner within walking distance of each school. The interviews lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours. Some boys were reticent to share ideas with me, answering each question or comment with a shrug or "I dunno," but most were

excited to be asked questions and have someone listen intently to what they had to say. The interviews focused on their experiences as “guys” in high school and growing up. I asked them questions about their friends, families, hobbies, and experiences of changing bodies. I also asked them specific questions about what it means to become a man.

Millennium Masculinities

These boys paint a mixed portrait of modern masculinity. They recognize both economic and emotional aspects of what Connell (1995:77) calls “hegemonic masculinity” or “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy.” But they also indicate a shift in behaviors they define as acceptably masculine. Given that American masculinity has historically been defined in reference to the marketplace (Kimmel 1996), boys’ assertions that being a man revolve around earning money and having a job came as no surprise.

When I asked the boys, “What does it mean to be a man?” most of them answered with a reference to jobs and the ability to earn money. Lance, a freshman whose mom is a caterer and whose dad is a farmer, said, “You are supposed to get a good job. A good paid job.” Mark, an athletic junior, made a similar comment: “Society has expectations of guys to be the financial support.” Commented Erik, a dark-haired senior, “According to the ideal Americanism, a guy has to be strong; he has to be a provider; he has to be able to support people.” Isaac, a quiet, artistic junior, however, recognized the disparity of changes in the gender order: “Guys are also expected to, even though it’s like the 90s and equal rights and all that stuff, they are still expected to pull in the big bucks and take care of women.”

Boys also noted that, in effect, being a man entails strict “feeling rules” (Hochschild 1983). Commented Kevin, a linebacker at Pine Tree, “I think they [society] expect that we still be like this tough [guy]...it’s frowned upon to be a wuss.” Boys are supposed to be physically and emotionally strong. As Greg, a Pine Tree senior, said, “Guys are supposed to be more dominating, louder, more obnoxious, less emotional.” Erik recognized the performative aspect of this expectation, saying that a guy “can’t be too emotional, or *at least he can’t show* his

emotions.” So although boys may *feel* emotions, it is taboo to *show* them. He seemed to indicate that this isn’t the way boys “really” are, but this is the way they are expected to act.

I found that this discourse of the stoic provider exists alongside a competing discourse of social change. These boys noted that women’s participation in the paid workforce affects expectations about men’s work. As Shane, a laid-back senior at Independence, observed, “Nowadays women are doing a lot more stuff too. Women are working and stuff. So it’s not really like the man has to work any more and earn all the money and stuff. There’s becoming less and less expectations.” Zach, a blond surfer, also noticed the degendering of work and parenting when he talked about what it means to be a man: “I think things are starting to blend more. Like 50 years ago I would definitely say taking care of the wife and kids. But I think it’s still to provide for the family. But that is also the wife’s responsibility, both the parents’ responsibility.” What is most interesting here is that these boys place themselves at a historic juncture in the gender order. *They* sense that gender beliefs and relations are changing.

Boys also noted a change in the emotional expectations of masculinity. As Adam, the raven-haired homecoming king at Pine Tree, stated, “I think that society is changing its perspective on guys. Guys don’t have to be the macho people ‘cause that’s not all that girls want. They don’t want just a big guy there. They want someone who can relate to them.” Although heterosexuality and romantic success with girls were cited as the driving force for this change, Adam’s comment indicates that overall understandings of being a man might be changing.

Fathers: A Work Model but not a Role Model?

Boys’ discussions of their parents mirror these competing discourses of gender. Their attitudes toward their fathers are revealing with regard to issues of work and family life in two ways. These boys are very proud of and thankful for the hard work that their fathers do to support their families. But these boys are also disappointed in their fathers because they do not have the relationship with them the boys imagine they should have.

The work status of their fathers was the first thing 15 of the 20 boys noted when I asked them to “tell me about your father.” Erik’s response is typical. He spoke admiringly of his consultant father’s business ability:

He's a great guy. He's a businessman. He's really, really good at networking, at, you know, selling things. He's good at making people want certain things. One thing that I've learned is business is a lot like your social life. If you are able to sell yourself really well and network with people well in your social life that's definitely a plus for being what is considered a businessman or businesswoman. Because business and social life are related in terms of skills and those kinds of characteristics.

Erik has emulated his father's entrepreneurial spirit, producing and recording his first CD at age 17. Dan, a baseball player of few words, also described his father in terms of work: "He's a good salesman 'cause that's what he has been doing. Right now he gets sponsorships and stuff for the team [the professional sports team for which he is a salesman]."

As we sat in the food court of a local mall, Justin, an amiable sophomore decked out in Nike gear, talked to me about his father, a human resources manager: "He's someone I respect and look up to. He likes his job. He hates the commute to his job; he goes to San Jose all the time and Utah and stuff like that." Brian described his father with a tone of pride that belied his sometimes negative words:

My dad has several jobs. When my mom met him, he was a lawyer. Then he had a blackout because he was working too much. He was doing six-hour road trips like every single day. He was going to Modesto every day and coming back and forth to San Francisco, coming home at one in the morning and then waking up at seven a.m. to go back to the office. So then he had a blackout, and now he works for a [another] firm, and he's the main computer technician guy. When he joined that firm, he started off as a night worker. He got promoted three times in the course of a year with four raises. He's a complete workaholic.

Brian smiled as he referred his father's four raises.

Regardless of how proud they were of their fathers' paid labor, 12 of these boys said they felt left in an emotional lurch by their fathers. Some boys pointed out that paid work actually interferes with what they see as the emotional duties of fathering. For example, 17 year-old Isaac said of his father, a manager in the credit card industry:

He's a very practical person who is concerned about my sister and myself, wants to be sure we are happy and successful. But he is sort of caught up in the whole successful capitalism thing. For me I think it is more important to be happy than wealthy. He's very stressed. He drinks, but not to excess. We're trying to get him to stop it.

Although Isaac could not spell out the relationship between “the whole successful capitalism thing” and how it impeded his father’s ability to ensure that his children are happy, it seems that either his father’s job or his dedication to making money interferes somehow in his family life.

Adam also expressed ambivalence about his father’s caring practices. He began to answer my question, “Tell me about your father,” by describing his father, an attorney, positively: “It’s hard to remember. He’s done so many good things, like in the way that he has provided us with good housing, brought home money.” Then Adam spoke slowly and hesitantly: “Yet it’s almost like he wasn’t as good of a father as I hoped he’d be. I’m learning from him of what not to do. I guess he doesn’t realize that he has to be a parent as well as someone who brings home the money.” Financial support is not the full definition of being a father for Adam. It seems that fathers, while good examples as workers, are not necessarily the best examples as parents. Justin, whose father loves his job but hates the commute, is

hardly ever home. Especially now that he works in San Jose he sleeps up there. Especially on the weekends he wants to spend time with us. He really wants to spend time with us now that he can’t. He always asks me if I want to go out to lunch and stuff like that. He cares a lot about what’s going on with us, like a typical, I guess, father, you could say.

Justin’s last statement is particularly interesting: “Like a typical, I guess, father, you could say.” A father is, in this definition, someone who works a lot to earn money and as a result does not get to see his family often. Even Brian, who had spoken glowingly about his father’s promotions at work, describes his father as “just the guy who lives in my house; that’s the way I see it,” because his father spent so much time in his bedroom working on the computer.

The boys’ frustrations with their fathers’ dedication to paid work and lack of emotional and relational fathering reflect the discourse of the “new father” that appeared in the late 1970s. Changing ideologies about fatherhood accompany changing family structures (LaRossa 1997), and new ideas of what it actually means to be a father are emerging (Daly 1993; Marsiglio 1993). Bringing home a salary is no longer seen as sufficient fathering. The new father is expected to be actively involved in the child-rearing process, instead of simply being a remote, stoic provider (Pleck 1987). These boys express competing expectations of their fathers as well as varied discourses of masculinity. On the one hand they are impressed with their fathers’ hard work and

earning ability. In fact some of the boys experience this as a form of love. Yet on the other hand they sense that masculinity is changing, and they expect their fathers to conform to these new rules as well. It seems that their fathers, in their professional role, are work models, but not role models for the boys to emulate as parents or as men.

Mothers: A Model for Fatherhood?

Some developmental literature (for instance Blos 1985; Chodorow 1978) indicates that adolescence is the time in which children solidify their identity and relationship with the same sex parent, but this did not seem to be the case for the boys I interviewed. Instead these boys have more satisfying emotional relationships with their mothers than their fathers. Most of them spoke warmly and fondly of their mothers, often with a grin or smile. Unlike in their discussions of their fathers, only two boys mentioned their mothers' careers or professional lives, but these boys were short on the subject. Erik noted that his mother, a speech pathologist, was a "hard worker," and Chad reported (although he apologized for his crudeness) that his mother, a school bus driver, could "be a bitch" to get her point across at work.

However, not all boys reported satisfying relationships with their mothers. In fact two of the boys had no hesitation in expressing their dislike. Isaac commented,

My mom has got issues. I think she has an inferiority complex when it comes to me because she'll constantly yell about how she's constantly dealing with men in the house. She will use anything and everything she can against you. If you get into a fight she'll just sort of yell at you and use anything she can to hurt you and win.

Kevin also describes his mother in strikingly negative tones: "She's really self-centered. Her personality just pisses me off."

The remaining 16 boys shared quite different stories about their mothers. These boys talked about how their moms are "cool," how they can "talk" to them. For example, Brian, the boy who described his father as "just the guy who lives in my house," described his mother: "My mom is damn cool. See I can joke with her. Like we can joke about sex and the other person won't feel offended by it and stuff like that. She buys me my cigarettes. On my 18th birthday she plans to get me hammered. I have a really cool mom."

Boys described their mothers, but not their fathers, as someone they could talk to. When I asked Chad, “What’s your relationship like with her?” Chad answered: I’m *really* close with her.” He even compared their bond to what he imagined a father/son relationship should be, saying they are “as close as a normal dad and son are close, just about.” Even Greg, who had described his mom as more overprotective than his father, claimed that he was closer to his mother: “My mom is definitely easier to talk to than my dad.”

The majority of the boys I interviewed were closer emotionally with their mothers than with their fathers:

I can tell my mom more than my dad. I can talk with her easily just about anything. She’s been awesome during my life. She’s always been taking me someplace, doing stuff for us. In times of distress, (she’s) always there. I don’t think I’ve ever been asked this question, it’s fun thinking about it...I’m more like my mom in the fact that I can talk to her and I can talk to other people about problems. (Adam)

Zach also reported having a great relationship with his mother: “I couldn’t imagine a better mom than her. She’s totally giving of her time and all that stuff. All positive things you could say about a mom, you could say about her.” He described his relationship with her as “just great.” He also said that he could share a lot more “personal issues” with her than with his father.

Shane, a star wrestler at Independence, in talking about how he liked to spend time with his mom, painted a picture of the sacrifices moms make to raise sons. He initially described her as “a nice person” to whom he can relate: “we’ll sit there and just play cards and talk about stuff all the time.” He described another time they spent together:

I have a good relationship with my mom. We do a lot of stuff together. When *Jurassic Park* came out, my mom took me out of school and took me to watch *Jurassic Park*. She hates scary movies and she took me anyway. Like half the time she was hiding in her purse, acting like she was looking for a stick of gum or something! Since the beginning of the movie when they pulled the dude out and sucked him in, she was hiding in her purse until the very end, when the credits came on. She hated it. But I thought it was fun.

I’m not sure if it was as much fun for his mother as it was for him, but this story illustrates the appreciation some boys expressed for the concerted emotional work their mothers do for them.

Two of the boys explicitly described their mothers as role models. Best friends Peter and Robbie were raised primarily by their mothers (their fathers have been in and out of prison during their lives). Peter says, “I want to be like my mom...’cause she raised me really good. She don’t make that much money, but she takes care of me.” Peter also described his mother as “independent and understanding.” Robbie discussed his mom in similar terms, saying she is his role model because she is a “survivor.” “She had to be my mom and my dad ‘cause my dad’s never really been there for me. She’s a tomboy...independent but more like nurturing.” Perhaps mothers, as women and single parents, are given more freedom than fathers when it comes to gendered parenting expectations.

A mother, in these examples, can be a tomboy, talk about sex with her son, hang out, play cards and even watch violent movies. Mothers, here, can participate in behaviors often associated with fathers or at least men – such as playing sports, watching gross-out movies, and discussions of sex. Mothers, in these examples, can cross or are allowed to cross gendered parenting lines in a way that fathers cannot. A mother can be a pal (much like one boy imagined a father should be), a kind ear and confidante. However, the boys did not describe their fathers in a reciprocal manner – for instance as a parent who works really hard but is dedicated to and who can listen and sympathize with his children.

Paid work rarely enters into these boys’ discussions of their mothers, apart from a cursory answer to my inquiry about her job. Instead they elaborated on the emotional aspects of their relationships, what they can talk about, why they are thankful for her, and what activities they do together. These findings indicate that masculinity may be at the center of these boys’ problems with their fathers as both workers and parents. The boys’ answers suggest that those things that are central to being a man – earning money and emotional unavailability – are those very things that impede relationships with their fathers. Because of these different gendered behaviors associated with mothers and fathers boys are able to forge relationships with their mothers in a way they are not able to do with their fathers.

Degendering Fatherhood

When the boys talked about their futures as men and sometimes as fathers, they drew upon current relationships with their parents. Projected lives, of course, have a strong element of fantasy. However, fantasy provides important insight into the construction of gendered selves and tensions around gendered identities (Chodorow 1995). As indicated by their discussions of what it means to be a man, these boys certainly value work and the idea of a “strong” man, but when they describe their desired future, they also address a different way of being that seems to grow out of their impressions of their fathers’ lives. Instead of describing families and careers in which they will be the emotionally distant breadwinner, most of the boys describe a future in which family and children take precedence over or are at least as important as their careers.

This is not to say that these boys want to eschew professional success for child rearing and homemaking. When asked to describe their lives “15 years from now,” some boys certainly anticipated market-based success. Dan, for example, said, “I want to be a good businessman. Make a lot of money, very successful. Hopefully I’m a millionaire. I’m married.” Erik also emphasized money: “I want to do something prestigious. My uncle was a lawyer, so I’m learning about law. Something that earns a lot of money and also does a good service for people.”

When talking about their own future fathering practices (all of these boys said they wanted to get married and have children), 15 of the 20 boys suggested a desire to father in a way fundamentally different than the way they were fathered. The boys indicated that they didn’t want to work as much as their fathers do and would like to spend more time with their families. Isaac, whose father is a manager in the credit card industry, envisioned his own future career as a naturalist or social activist. As he described this projected future, Isaac said, “I would try to spend more time with my kids, less time on work.” Brian, who, like his father, wants a job working with computers, asserted that he wants to be a man whose “life actually doesn’t revolve around work; that’s the way I see myself. There is no way in hell my life is going to revolve around work.” Justin, whose father is a computer programmer who works and sleeps in San Jose most of the week, offered a dramatic scenario of his future career as a computer programmer:

[I would] actually care about my family more. Put my family ahead of everything else. Say I’m a computer programmer and the deadline was tomorrow and they asked me to come in. I think I would tell them about my family even if I risked

getting fired. Especially if it's been five to seven days since I've seen them. I think I've earned the right to spend time with my family. They [fathers] should not just, like, care about their jobs because that just leads to divorce or an affair or some bad marital thing. So if you have one chance finally to spend with your family and you've been working so hard, take that, no matter what someone else says. Go take care of their family rather than just stay at work, and maybe their kid dies or something. 'Cause if something happens to them, they're gonna feel a lot worse in the end.

Justin was speaking about his own desires to put his family first. But it also seemed that he felt deeply sad about his father *not* putting his own family first, even though Justin claimed at other points in the interview that his father wanted to spend more time with his children. Adam also saw a negative connection between paid work and familial happiness, saying of his father, "He's a lawyer, and I don't want to be a lawyer 'cause I want to have a happy marriage." Interestingly, none of these boys sees a contradiction between his imagined careers and his imagined fathering practices, even when the desired career is the same or similar to that of his father. It seems that the actual careers are not the problem, but the identification with a career versus their attention to their family that is problematic.

These boys also talked about how they would like to have a stronger emotional tie with their children than their fathers had with them. Adam, a football player, used sports to illustrate his point: "My dad influenced us in the fact that only the three sports he played we played and we couldn't play any other sports. And I'd like to have my kids have the choice on what they want to do and what they desire most." Kevin, the only boy who didn't have a satisfying emotional relationship with his mother or his father, also talked about how he would like to be more emotionally available to his children: "My dad, I'm not really comfortable going to him and saying, 'Hey dad, what's up?' You know? I want to be accessible. You know?" Oliver stated that his "biggest fear" was that he might become, like his father and uncles, "a cold man who doesn't love his kids or whatever." Chad also claimed he wants to be more emotionally accessible to his children, saying he won't be as "anal" as his own dad and that he will be "more open" with his own kids than his dad has been. Isaac asserted that he wants to "spend more time with" his own kids than his dad spent with him. Each of these boys in some way wanted to nurture his children more than he perceives he was nurtured by his father.

The boys' discussions of their own future relationships with work and children are strikingly different from how they describe their fathers' current relationships with them. They believe that work will not be the organizing dynamic of their lives. This is true even for boys who aspired to middle- or upper-middle-class lifestyles; all but one (who said he wants to be "a millionaire") did. While "new father" ideologies may come into conflict with some financial realities in their futures, the changing ideologies, if not realities, of fatherhood create a space where these boys see who their fathers are and begin to construct who they want to be. As certain ideas of fatherhood come into conflict with these boys' experiences of being fathered, they begin to craft new ideas and imagine new ways of being fathers themselves. It is in this space that new understandings of what it means to be a man and a father are emerging. Certainly the cultural representations of financial success and "traditional" masculinity are still powerful for these boys. But this ideology is coming into conflict with some of their own hurt about their fathers' absences and satisfaction with their more satisfying and accessible relationships with their mothers.

Rethinking Masculinity, Work, and Fatherhood

What these boys' discussions show is that a changing vision of what it means to participate as a father in a family may be emerging alongside and as a part of new visions of public and private masculinity. When describing their fathers and relationships with them, the boys invoked competing discourses of fatherhood. These discourses emerge both through the boys' longing for a certain type of father now, as sons, and through their descriptions of the way they want to be in their futures as fathers. The sons portrayed their own fathers as operating under an "old" fatherhood model in which fathering consists of being a strong, dependable provider. The boys feel entitled to a "new" father who emphasizes "quality time" and the importance of family.³ Although their fathers may be perfectly competent under the old rules of fatherhood, somewhere along the line the rules changed, and as a result sons expect a father who is more like their mother. According to these boys, being a modern father involves more than financially supporting a family; it requires both emotional and temporal availability. They resent the fact that paid work is the organizing dynamic of their fathers' lives. However they also recognize the

necessity of paid work and express appreciation for their fathers' paid labor. Interestingly, with the exception of Adam, who confronted his father about how his alcoholism was destroying the family, not one of the boys indicated that he had spoken to either parent about his dissatisfaction with his father.

Experiences of being mothered seem to be especially influential in boys' visions of their futures as parents. When they do describe themselves as parents, it is not in terms of being the breadwinner, but in terms of being a parent who talks with, listens to, and spends time with his children. This is the way these boys describe their mothers, but not their fathers. However, it is these qualities that boys say they would like in relationships with their fathers.

It is possible that these conversations about mothers and fathers indicate that these boys do not see being a parent as gender-divided activity. Much like women's discussions of "having it all" in the 1980s, these boys paint a future in which they can be career men like their fathers *and* nurturing parents like their mothers. These boys do not evaluate their fathers' behavior as a trade-off between a privileged masculine identity and a devalued nurturing parental self. Rather it seems that one can be, in their minds, acceptably masculine⁴ *and* relational. This may be a next step in the stalled revolution, in which participating as a man in a family has the possibility of being less laden with rigid expectations of gender. However this is only a potentiality because research on workplaces indicates that they influence workers' senses of self (Casey 1995; Halle 1984; Hochschild 1997), including men's understandings of themselves as fathers (Cooper 2000). It may be that as these boys exit this life stage to enter into adult forms of masculinity, these forces will compete with the emotional needs of their families.

The comments of these boys indicate a shift in notions of what it means to be a man from being unemotional and making money to being emotionally accessible and family oriented. The one thing that the boys did not address, however, is the more physical side of the second shift – the cleaning, cooking, and other housework. Instead the boys' talk shows how, on an intensely emotional level, these definitions of masculinity affect their current and imagined familial relationships and how relationships with both their fathers and mothers give rise to a new vision of their future men, as workers and as fathers.

Notes

1. Not all the boys I interviewed came from dual-income families. Three of the mothers were not working for pay at the time of the interview – although they had all worked for pay at some time during the rearing of their sons.
2. The data used in this study come from the pilot phase of a larger study of teenagers and masculinity is the focus of my forthcoming dissertation: “Negotiating Masculinities: teenagers in an unsettled gender regime.”
3. However, it must be noted that this is not necessarily a new form of fatherhood. LaRossa (1997) argues that what we think of as “modern fatherhood” is really not modern at all, but echoes forms of fatherhood common earlier in the century.
4. Please see Pascoe, 2001 for a discussion about the importance for teenage boys of being seen as masculine by oneself and others.

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