Fathers across Cultures
The Importance, Roles, and Diverse Practices of Dads

Jaipaul L. Roopnarine, Editor

Foreword by Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda
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Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda

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Major shifts in gender cultures, policies, and practices in Portugal have brought about substantial changes in fathers’ roles and practices over the last few decades. In contrast to a still-strong male breadwinner model in other southern European countries, public policies since the transition to democracy in 1974 have promoted gender equality in employment and in the care of young children. This has made for a public gender culture that has eroded the male provider–female caregiver model, even if the patriarchal ideology of the right-wing dictatorship, in place for five decades until the early seventies, has also left its mark (Aboim & Marinho 2006; Torres 2004; Wall 2011).

Despite recent policy shifts and growing numbers of fathers caring for young children, gender equity in family life remains uneven and proceeds in different ways and rates across families, generations, and social classes. Moreover, culturally, a pathway emphasizing a strong orientation toward children and extended family ties is an important shaping factor of parenting cultures. It produces some normative ambiguity regarding the questioning of female primacy, both of mothers and grandmothers, in the nurturing of children (Aboim 2010a; Wall & Amêncio 2007; Wall & Gouveia 2014).

The complex nature of the changes that are under way means that our understanding of fathers and fathering in Portugal must carefully examine the processes and factors shaping the new and diverse profiles of fathers. Against a backdrop of changing social and policy contexts, the aims of this chapter are threefold: to describe men in work and family life in Portugal by drawing on existing secondary data, both national and comparative; to present an overview of the research literature on fathers drawing on recent, mostly qualitative, studies to outline the issues and approaches underpinning research; and to examine implications for future research and policy on Portuguese fathers.
specifically targeting fathers and their involvement in family life (Wall & Escobedo 2009). By 1995, the right to gender sharing of entitlements had been introduced for the thirty days to care for a sick child younger than 10, the two-hour daily work-time reduction during the first year of the child's life and parental leave (which could be divided between parents by mutual agreement after the first six weeks reserved for the mother). By 1997, the right to work–family balance for all individuals, both men and women, was written into the constitution.

Individual and nontransferable well-paid leave entitlements for fathers were only introduced in the late 1990s: two days of unpaid paternity leave implemented in 1995 was extended to three weeks of fully compensated paternity leave for fathers in 1999 and to four weeks in 2009. Additionally, a "sharing bonus" was introduced with the aim of promoting gender equality in parental care for a young baby: an extra month of fully compensated leave is available if the father takes four weeks or more of parental leave on his own when the mother returns to work. With the new policy measures, fathers' leave periods have become longer, and fathers' use of both paternity leave and parental leave have increased steadily. In 2013, four out of five fathers entitled to leave took paternity leave for at least two weeks, and 24 percent shared the five- to six-month initial parental leave by staying home to care for their child at least one month after the mother returned to work (up from 0.6% of fathers who shared parental leave before the reform) (Wall 2014).

Changes in conjugal and divorce regulation represent a second set of measures seeking to establish equality between partners and between fathers' and mothers' rights. Family law in the late 1970s established equality and mutual obligations between conjugal partners and abolished the husband's power and authority as "head of family" and main provider, as well as the inequality between paternal and maternal authority over children. It also recognized cohabiting couples and eliminated all previous differences in the rights of children born inside and outside of marriage.

Legislative reform since the 1970s has eased the process of divorce and highlighted new concepts such as no-fault divorce and shared parental responsibilities after divorce. The number of divorces has increased steadily since the 1970s, with the crude divorce rate rising above 2 divorces per thousand population since 2002 (2.5 in 2011). Divorce by mutual consent has also increased, with the percentage of litigious divorces dropping from 38 percent in 1980 to 6 percent in 2006. From the point of view of fathers, a major shift in legislation is related to post-divorce parental responsibilities.

Until the late 1990s, the custodial responsibility was usually given to the mother with whom the child lived, but if they wished parents "could agree to share paternal power." In contrast, the 1999 law established that paternal power must always be shared between both parents, the exception being cases in which the parents do not agree on joint paternal power, in which case the court decides to whom custody and power are entrusted. Recent legislation passed in 2008 replaced the concept of shared paternal power with the concept of shared parental responsibilities. However, it distinguishes between the obligation to share parental responsibility in the case of important decisions regarding the child's life and those concerning "daily life," with the latter considered the responsibility of the parent with whom the child "usually lives." Because the equal alternate residence of the child is not often implemented and the courts tend to consider mothers the primary caregivers and custodial guardians of very young children, this last reform has continued to fuel public debate on the issue of parental equality in postdivorce families. Over the last decade, fathers' associations have been voicing men's difficulties in gaining access to children after divorce, emphasizing that men have to struggle for a place as fathers if they want to share nurturing roles in daily life.

WORK-RELATED ISSUES AND FATHERING

This brief overview of some significant policy developments shows that there has been considerable change over the last few decades in the norms and practices regarding men's roles in families and gender cultural models in general. To capture the main changes, it is important to examine data on men and women in paid and unpaid work in the context of changing labor market dynamics and family living arrangements in Portuguese society.

Table 7.1 shows that the characteristics of male economic activity have changed little over the last few decades. In contrast to the rising activity rates of women, the male activity rate has remained relatively constant; men work full-time and long hours (even if only slightly longer hours than women, thanks to a sharp increase in Portuguese women's full-time employment since the 1970s), and overall they occupy more stable, top-level, and well-paid jobs than women (in 2012, women's average salary was 81.5 percent of men's average salary). Men also tend to have slightly lower rates of unemployment than women, but the recent economic crisis has affected men more than women.

We can also see that in the age groups in which men are more likely to belong to households with dependent children (ages 30–49), men's activity rate is much higher, and working hours also increase for men aged 35–44, who, in 2012, worked an average of forty-three hours per week compared to a weekly average of thirty-nine hours for all men; women's activity rate and working hours are also very high but stay close to the thirty-nine average weekly working hours of the total active population. According to the 2011 census, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of men aged 30–49 live in simple
### TABLE 7.1 Labor market indicators by gender and age group, Portugal, 1991–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity rate (%)</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Total (active pop/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total pop.)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years, all</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44 years, all</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Unemployment rate (%) | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 | 2012 |
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years, all</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44 years, all</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average number of weekly working time, all employed | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 | 2012 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference M-F</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years, all</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-F (Difference%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44 years, all</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-F (Difference%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part-time employment (% of total employed persons) | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 | 2012 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Source: Eurostat; EU-LFS.
3. As there is no information for 2001, the data for this indicator refer to the year 2002.

Family households of couples with children: only a very small proportion live in lone father families (1.7 percent), and the remainder live in couples (10 percent), alone or in no-family households of various persons (10 percent), and in complex family households (12 percent) (Delgado & Wall 2014). In comparison with men, a higher proportion of women in this age group are living in lone mother households (10 percent) and lower proportions in one-person or no-family households (7 percent).

The growth of lone parent and reconstituted families, alongside the gradual decrease in households of couples with children and the increase in one-person households, is thus a major new trend in family living arrangements. Nevertheless, lone mothers are still the predominant pattern in lone parent families: Lone fathers have increased in absolute numbers but continue to represent only 13 percent of all lone parents. The characteristics of lone fathers having dependent children also reveal some specific characteristics: Compared to lone mothers, lone fathers tend to be older (older than 35), to have one rather than two or more living-in children, and to care more frequently for older children, aged 10–18 (Marinho 2014).

The above mentioned trends have led to a predominant full-time adult worker model in Portugal over the last few decades. Although women have more precarious jobs and the wage gap has persisted over time, the majority of men and women in Portugal work full-time (Table 7.2) and have continuous
work trajectories, with the exception of breaks related to parental leave and other breaks, which tend to be short and are taken more by women than men. In contrast with many other European countries, this means that in Portugal, the full-time dual-earner model has become generalized in both norms and practices.

Findings from a national survey in 2002 (Family and Gender Roles Survey—International Social Survey Programme) show that interviewees overwhelmingly agree (93%) that both the man and the woman should contribute to household income and a majority (67%) disagree with the ideal of a housewife supported by a male breadwinner (“a man’s job is to earn money, a woman’s job is to look after the home and family”) (Wall & Amâncio, 2007). The proportion who disagree with this gender role model is only slightly higher for women (68%) than men (65%) but is considerably higher for individuals in younger age groups and those belonging to qualified or intermediate occupations (in fact, only 51% of men and 57% of women in manual occupations disagree with this gender role model). In a repeat of this question in a 2010 national survey on family trajectories and the life course, the proportion of those disagreeing with the male breadwinner model had risen to 77 percent.

Practices have followed the same trend. In 2002, 93 percent of couples having at least one child younger than 6 were full-time dual-earner couples (close to proportions in Norway, France, and Denmark). This stands apart from other European countries where the one-earner model is still the prevalent model for families with children (Germany, Luxembourg, Greece, Spain, and Ireland) or those, such as the UK and the Netherlands, where the one- and-a-half earner model is the prevalent form thanks to high levels of female part-time work when children are young (Aboim, 2010a).

Norms and practices related to men’s roles in the private sphere have changed less and more gradually than women’s involvement in paid work over the last few decades. At the normative level, in the 2002 survey, nearly all individuals (85%) agree that men should participate more in household tasks (82% of men and 88% of women) and in the care of young children (82% of men and 90% of women) (Wall, 2007). However, agreement with fathers’ participation in care is one thing, but agreement with the idea of fathers as equally competent caregivers is another. In this domain, there is considerable hesitation in relation to men’s parenting skills: In the 2010 survey, only 30 percent of all individuals agree that a lone father can raise a child as well as a lone mother. The proportion who agree is lowest in the older generation aged 70–75 (22% of men and 18% of women), slightly higher for middle-aged individuals aged 50–55 (28% of men and 26% of women), and much higher (50%) in the younger generation of adults aged 35–40, with 59 percent of men and 45 percent of women agreeing with this statement. Interestingly, the attitudinal gender gap widens as we move across the three generations. It seems to indicate that in the context of a general increase in more favorable attitudes to men’s caring skills, there is currently more acceptance on the part of men than of women regarding men’s role as a primary caregiver of children.

Nevertheless, there is a difference between expectations and practices. The actual time division of housework and care between men and women is unequal, even if the gender gap has gradually decreased. Measuring weekly hours of housework across the EU, the European Quality of Life Survey shows that employed women in Portugal spend an average fifteen hours on household tasks (down from seventeen hours in 2007), whereas employed men spend eight hours (up from seven hours in 2007) (Table 7.2). The time that Portuguese men allocate to domestic work is slightly below the European average (nine hours), whereas the time allocated by women is slightly higher than the EU average, indicating a still strong norm of female domesticity and dedication to housework.

National surveys have also shown significant differences between occupational groups and levels of education. Women who have low levels of education and who have manual occupations spend the highest number of hours in domestic work, well above the national average, whereas qualified women’s hours of housework are well below average and many of them, specifically when they care for young children or dependent elderly persons, are likely to have some paid domestic help (Lyonnette, Crompton, & Wall, 2007). A survey on families of couples that have children conducted in 1999 revealed three main patterns of gender division of housework: the female housework pattern (59.2%), in which women do the majority of household tasks; the joint division pattern (30.4%), in which fathers’ participation is above average, with 6 percent of couples sharing on an equal basis; and the delegation pattern (10.4%), in which some tasks are carried out by a third person, usually a paid employee. Among couples in which women are highly qualified, one in every two women belongs to the delegation pattern (Wall, 2005).

At the same time, men are more involved in childcare, indicating a slow but steady transformation in the ideals and practices of fathering. According to the European Quality of Life survey, employed men in Portugal spend an average fifteen hours caring for children, whereas women spend twenty-two hours (Table 7.2). In a European comparative perspective, the gender gap of seven hours is below the EU average gap of ten hours. As fathers, however, they tend to be more involved than mothers in playing with the child and less in personal care activities. Data from the 1999 time-use survey showed that among those who participate in childcare, men spent fifty-one minutes and women forty-three minutes “playing” with children during the average day, whereas men spent forty-six minutes and women an hour and twenty-seven minutes in activities related to personal or “physical” care.
Recent studies measuring father involvement in Portuguese families using frameworks within developmental and social psychology underline similar trends and some additional findings (e.g., Monteiro, Fernandes, Veríssimo, Costa, Torres, & Vaugn 2010; Arsénio & Vieira Santos 2013). Exploring fathers’ perceptions of their level of involvement in five areas of parental care.

### TABLE 7.2 Hours spent weekly cooking and/or doing household tasks and caring for and educating children, for employed men and women, by country—EU 27 (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hours cooking and doing household tasks</th>
<th>Hours caring for and educating children</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Difference M-F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Difference M-F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>4</td>
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In summary, changing normative and policy contexts have led to a combination of old and new trends in family forms and gender roles. Simple family households of couples and couples with children have decreased but together still represent the predominant family form (61% of all households), whereas lone parent, single person, and reconstituted households have increased. In couples with children, the dual-earner model is the predominant pattern, with almost all men and women in full-time paid work. Female activity rates are high, in particular in the age groups in which the majority of men and women live in households with children, and changes in both the attitudes to and the economic behavior of women have led to the continuing decline of the male breadwinner model. Men’s involvement in private life has been much slower to evolve, especially among older age groups and those with lower educational levels. Although, as in midwestern and northwestern European countries, men’s participation in unpaid work has increased and women’s has decreased, the gender gap is still considerable.

As a result, Portugal displays an average and distinctive overall performance in the European Union Gender Equality Index (Plantenga, Remery, Figueiredo, & Smith 2009). It combines high scores on participation in the labor market, unemployment, and income, with medium scores on political power and low scores on “care intensity” (number of hours spent on providing care for children by men and women aged 20–49), generating a medium score on the overall gender (in)equity index, with a rank of 12 out of twenty-five EU member states. Interestingly, it ranks close to countries such as France and Slovenia but is a clear outlier when compared to other southern European countries, such as Spain and Greece, where public policy underscoring that gender equality must be achieved foremost by women’s participation in the public sphere has been less marked.
PAST RESEARCH ON FATHERS: MAIN APPROACHES AND FINDINGS

There has been a considerable amount of research on men’s roles in gender equality, mainly over the last fifteen years, even if, as in policymaking and public discourse, research has been more focused on women than on men. An overview of the recent literature shows that the theoretical background draws from different disciplines and combines five main fields of theory: gender studies and feminist thought (e.g., Delphy & Leonard 1992; Wallby 1997; Butler 2004); scholarship on men and masculinities, in particular research highlighting hegemonic masculinity in transition and the blurring of gender boundaries and sexualities in a late modern world (Fleck 1981; Morgan 1992; Connell 1995; Hean et al. 2002); scholarship bridging the issues of gender, work and family, and welfare states, mainly from a comparative social policy perspective (e.g., Hochschild & Machung 1989; Fraser 1994; Orloff 1996; Pfau-Effinger 2000; Gornick & Meyers 2001; Lewis 2001; Crompton 2006); scholarship in the fields of psychology and sociology of fatherhood (e.g., Marsiglio 1995; Bjernberg & Kollind 1996; Coltrane 1996; Palkovitz 1997; Castelain-Mennier 2002; Modak & Palazzo 2002; Hobson 2002; Day & Lamb 2004; Dermott 2008; O’Brien 2013); and family studies highlighting change in family functioning and dynamics, conceptualized within processes such as the pluralisation of family interactions and trajectories, individualisation, changing intimacies and meanings of family (e.g., Allan 2002; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Ciddens 1992; Jamieson 1998; Kellerhals et al. 2004; Singly 1996; Widmer 2010).

Different research issues have been raised regarding the role of men in families and gender equality, all revolving around the need to understand how the policy and cultural transformations have paved the way for the emergence of new forms of gender division of labor and, most important, of new models of masculinity and fatherhood underpinned by a renewed vision of the gender contract. The quantitative findings described above reveal the emergence of new attitudes and practices, with men’s participation in housework and care responsibilities changing slowly but steadily. This has challenged research to seek to understand the changes from the perspective and lived experiences of men themselves: How are men negotiating old and new masculinities? How are policy changes impacting how fathers and mothers live and perceive their family lives and care responsibilities? How diverse are the pathways and models of fatherhood? What is the effect of individual agency, of family and conjugal patterns, and of structural and life course factors such as education, employment, religion, or contrasting generational cultures? What is happening to men who live in new family forms such as reconstituted families, lone parent families, transnational families, or same-sex families? Most of this research has relied strongly, though not exclusively, on qualitative methods.

A first important set of findings concerns the changing subjective perceptions and cultural models of fatherhood in Portuguese society. There is a generalized consensus around the idea of a caring and involved father, as a number of qualitative and quantitative studies with fathers have been able to show (Aboim & Marinho 2006; Monteiro et al. 2010; Wall 2011; Wall, Aboim, & Marinho 2007). Most men vehemently reject the old ideal of a distant and authoritarian father, criticize former generations of fathers, and value the norm of the involved “hands-on” father who participates in the daily responsibilities of parental care, education, and emotional involvement. Fatherhood also emerges as a key dimension in the building of new forms of masculinity. To a great extent, the reconfiguring of the father figure has been a powerful driving force in challenging traditional masculinities in Portuguese society (Aboim & Marinho 2006). Men’s discourses and perceptions reveal the enormous centrality of fatherhood in the negotiation of old and new masculinities, with children representing fundamental sources of identity both for women and men.

Moving beyond this general trend, research also shows the social construction of a diversity of fatherhood models and practices (Aboim & Marinho 2006; Monteiro et al. 2010; Wall, Aboim, & Marinho 2007; Wall, Cunha, & Marinho 2013). An exploratory study on men in families of couples with children, drawing on in-depth interviews with twenty-five fathers, revealed findings on the pluralisation of fatherhood as well as new results on men’s reproductive projects and experiences of work–family stress (Wall, Aboim, & Marinho 2007). Drawing on the analytical linkages between fatherhood, work, and conjugal functioning (e.g., gender models in paid and unpaid work, type of conjugal interactions), seven main profiles of fatherhood were identified: traditional provider, helper, companion-ships, career-oriented, egalitarian, stay-at-home, appropriate.

”Provider” fathers still identify with female domesticity and traditional masculinity involving male breadwinning and the father’s educational role, even if they seek to participate in their children’s daily lives more than their own fathers by playing with them or taking them along—particularly their sons—to activities such as sporting events. “Helper” fathers see themselves as secondary, less competent, caregivers who help mothers in the parental routines, relying on their guidance and mediation in parental responsibilities and tasks, whereas “companionship” fathers emphasize the importance of togetherness in conjugal life, seeing themselves as involved fathers who “share,” not necessarily on an equal basis, all parenting tasks. Rather than equal parenting, these fathers emphasize the importance of doing things jointly and always being beside/with the mother.
Career-oriented, egalitarian, stay-at-home, and appropriative fathers underscore the importance of gender equality and symmetry in men's and women's roles in both private and public spheres, but their work–family strategies and agency develop along different lines. "Career-oriented" fathers give priority to their professional careers, thereby seeking to be involved in parenting tasks at certain times and through intensive fathering providing "quality time" with children. "Egalitarian" fathers tend to build up their involvement on a more fifty-fifty basis, making a point of being autonomous and competent in all parenting and household tasks. Contrary to expectations, this profile of fatherhood was found in different social classes, not only in highly qualified couples.

"Stay-at-home" fathers are those who, constrained by job or career instability, hand over breadwinning to the mother and try to "invent" a new place for men in the domestic sphere, whereas "appropriative" fathers see themselves as more competent than mothers and take on a larger share of household tasks, caregiving, and overall parental responsibility for children's well-being and education. In this case, it is mothers who become secondary housekeepers and caregivers.

A major conclusion is thus that fatherhood is evolving into plurality as there seems to be diversified strands of change. But, as Aboim stresses in her book on plural masculinities (Aboim 2010b), the findings point not only to the hybrid nature of these changes, but also to how some men may be recreating power through these changes. Rather than a continuous and linear movement toward gender equality, the decline of the male breadwinner model has promoted hybrid features combining different values and practices (such as incorporating the idea of a caring man into the ethics of traditional masculinity), as well as possibly building up new forms of male domination, in particular when men and fathers establish supremacy in the private sphere by appropriating femininity and defining themselves as better at female tasks than women. Following a simple view of hegemonic masculinity, we may say that the latter draws on power as the product of traditional responsibility, breadwinning, and protective. Aboim's perspective helps us to recall that hegemonic masculinity may also be defined as a flexible power structure, thereby challenging research to examine how men are re-creating power when they appropriate or define themselves as better than women.

The aforementioned study (Wall, Aboim, & Cunha 2010) also revealed interesting findings on men's views of family planning and reproduction. Compared to women who, early on in life, know whether and how many children they would like to have (Almeida 2004), men's reproductive ideals seem to develop later in life, usually when they had a stable partnership, and are less well defined regarding the timing of the transition to parenthood. Negotiation of the number and timing of children is perceived as an essential aspect of a balanced and longstanding conjugal relationship, leading men whose wives decided unilaterally to have another child to question the conjugal relationship (Cunha 2010). Building on this point, Cunha's work on the reproductive trajectories of men and women has also shown that despite gender-neutral childbearing ideals (both men and women idealize a two-child family), the trajectories have distinct features; men wish to have children later on in life, postponing the transition to parenthood more than women. In middle adulthood (older than 35), they are highly receptive to being fathers for the first time or having additional children, whereas women tend to begin to withdraw their reproductive intentions. In short, there seems to be a childbearing agenda mismatch in couples today (Cunha 2012).

A second important set of findings concerns men's work–family balance. Several studies have shown that men also feel that work life is acutely affecting their role as fathers and have difficulty reconciling family and work when there are young children. In fact, men's work–family stress, not only women's, is particularly high in Portuguese society (Terres 2004). The key factor in men's stress is long working hours and lack of time to be with the family and children, making it difficult for men who feel an obligation and a need to spend more time at home to find their place in parenting and family routines (Aboim & Marinho 2006). Men in manual or low-paid occupations also underscore shift work and the need to put in extra hours to provide a better life for their children. Highly qualified men underscore the idea of a totally career-invested and time-flexible male worker, thus finding it difficult, particularly in the private sector, to ask for more family-friendly schedules and leaves or to reduce overall work demands. Overall, the findings underline that employers and families still have strong expectations, despite the predominant dual-earner model, that men in families will assume the role of primary provider and secondary caregiver—meaning that they will be available for work and long hours, less likely to take leave, and more invested in their careers.

Additional findings related to work–family stress emerged in a qualitative study of children's perceptions of family life in times of crisis carried out in 2013 (Wall et al. 2015. Children (aged 8–17) perceived the economic crisis as strongly affecting their parents' work schedules, due to the fear of losing their jobs and pressure from employers to work long hours. They are particularly sensitive to new tensions related to money problems, which are revealed in their parents' frequent arguments on these topics and difficulty in talking about other things. They express their wish—not necessarily for more time with parents, for they understand the pressure to work—merely for the social and psychological conditions that would allow mothers and fathers to be able to relax when everyone is at home together, which is what they say makes them happy.
A third set of important findings is related to fathers in specific types of families, such as reconstituted, lone parent, or same-sex families. Owing to the rise in these types of families and new legislation promoting co-parenting and shared parental responsibilities after divorce, men frequently have to negotiate their role as fathers in a postdivorce situation and also to take on the role of stepfather in the care and education of young children (Lobo 2009; Marinho 2011; Atalaia 2012; Correia 2013). Analysis of men’s experiences in the last two decades reveals that in many cases, the biological father becomes an absent figure after divorce, sometimes because of conjugal conflict, other times because of maternal gatekeeping and court orders giving him only minimal visiting rights and because of personal life choices or traditional views on fatherhood and motherhood. In many cases, though, men do not want to be absent or distant fathers not actively involved in parenting after a divorce. They sometimes negotiate an active role as fathers in the daily lives of their children, but they may also have had to struggle for a place as fathers, competing with women with a view to sharing the nurturing roles that have traditionally been associated with motherhood.

Many men living in postdivorce situations interviewed in the aforementioned studies on men in families (Aboim & Marinho 2006; Wall, Aboim, & Cunha 2010) expressed their dissatisfaction with the legal arrangements established in court and the forced absence from their children’s daily lives. By comparison, fathers living in arrangements involving the alternate residence of children felt that they were involved in the daily lives of their children. Further analysis based on an exploratory qualitative study of fathers in alternate residence families (Marinho 2011) showed that the internal dynamics of fatherhood are shaped by two main social processes in this type of living arrangement, indicating some diversity of fathering styles postdivorce. On the one hand, fathers have to reconfigure their autonomy. Before divorce, they were usually caring fathers who had built up their own parenting skills and individualized relationship with their children. But in postdivorce living arrangements, this autonomy is renegotiated and may move either in the direction of an independent style of fathering, with low levels of interaction with the mother, or toward autonomy embedded in strong interdependency with the mother or reconfigured in the context of support from a new partner.

On the other hand, a process of negotiation of the specificity of male parenting may be perceived as similar or equal to that of the mother or may be seen as complementary to or even totally different from the mother’s role.

In-depth analysis of men in reconstituted families reveals some diversity in the social construction of their roles as stepfathers. Rather than the dichotomy proposed in the 1980s and 1990s by sociologists of the family between stepfathers who replace the biological father, thus taking on all the responsibilities and activities of a father, and those who build up a complementary role to the biological father (Martin 1997), recent qualitative data reveal a more complex reality and greater diversity. Complementarity may take on various forms, depending not only on the presence or absence of the biological father, but also on the agency and pro-active behavior of the stepfather himself and the attitudes of the mother, who may want to mediate the relationship rather than share the parental role. Thus, besides stepfathers who are “substitute” fathers, there are stepfathers who negotiate their role and the trust of the mother over time; stepfathers who see themselves as secondary parental figures, acting under the guidance of the mother; stepfathers who actively pursue a role as a friend rather than a father figure, investing in relationships with their stepchildren but keeping their distance in relation to parental responsibilities; and frustrated stepfathers who have not succeeded in building up a fathering role, because the mother has occupied the parental space (Atalaia 2012).

The issue of stepfatherhood and the absence of legal regulation regarding the role of stepfathers have also been the focus of recent research on men in same-sex couples with children. Same-sex marriage was legally approved in Portugal in 2010, but adoption was left out of the legal package. In fact, attitudes to adoption and co-adoption by same-sex couples, although changing, are far from reaching a generalised consensus in Portuguese society. Even among younger adults aged 35–40, only 34 percent of women and 37 percent of men (36% for all) in 2010 agreed that “same-sex couples should have the same rights as other couples, including adoption,” whereas among the older generations, only 8 percent and 12 percent of all individuals expressed favorable attitudes. A qualitative study that interviewed men in same-sex couples (Aboim & Vasconcelos 2012) highlighted foremost a strong wish for fatherhood and expectations related to future equal rights. Another issue raised by the interviewees was the problem of the recognition of shared parental responsibilities by both partners in same-sex couples. In the absence of legal regulation of adoption and co-adoption, this often leads to situations in which the fathering of the partner’s children over many years (e.g., of the partner’s biological children from a previous heterosexual marriage) is never recognized, since the stepfather cannot be considered as a parental figure and legally share parental responsibilities.

A fourth set of findings is related to the effects of recent policy developments (2009) in paternity and parental leaves on fathers’ experiences in caring for a baby. As mentioned above, in 2009 an extra month of fully compensated leave (“sharing bonus”) became available if the father takes at least four weeks of the initial parental leave on his own after the mother goes back to work. Within this changing policy environment, the lived experiences of fathers on “home alone” leave were explored through a qualitative study of fourteen Portuguese fathers who took full-time leave alone for at least thirty
days (Wall 2014). Six key social processes related to the experience of leaving alone were identified: negotiating, doing activities, learning, bonding, undoing gender roles, and experiencing emotions. Findings reveal social experiences of “fast time,” “hard work,” and “parental care” rather than “slow time” and “masculine care” focusing on the educational dimensions of fathering. Fathers stressed the strengthening of father–child bonds, the importance of leave alone for enhancing responsibility and autonomy and creating empathy with their partner, and the discovery of new and individualized skills promoting fathers’ self-confidence in the interchangeable competences of fathers and mothers when caring for a baby. These two dimensions of lived experiences seem to be uniquely related to taking “home alone” leave. It is in the context of a break with female mediation that the father’s self-definition as a capable, independent, or primary caregiver emerges with some strength and puts previous gender roles in question, such as the idea that the mother is the primary and natural caregiver. It is also through being alone with a baby that fathers describe a process of integration of traditionally feminine psychological traits, such as emotional literacy.

The experiences of fathers are not always similar or equally transgressive from a gender perspective. In a profile associated with critical discourses and practices, “innovative–deconstructive” fathers openly question traditional gender role models. At the opposite end of gender undoing, the study revealed profiles in which change is seen as transitional (while the father is on leave). Fathers also see themselves as acquiring new skills and autonomy, with some going through the experience of a “fundamental breakthrough” in conjugal gender roles that seemed unequivocally cemented in inequality. From a policy perspective, the study suggests significant differences between leave policies promoting family time and those encouraging father’s time alone with a newborn child.

**FINAL REMARKS**

A key aim in this chapter was to explore the situation of fathers in Portugal and to understand how changing policies and social contexts are shaping norms and practices related to men’s roles in families. An important issue was to understand the current research agenda on this topic and to examine the main findings on the negotiation between old and new masculinities and to what extent they confirm or challenge a traditional model of fatherhood. Drawing on this overview, a further step was to identify some gaps and challenges for future research and to reflect on the policy implications of the analysis.

Overall, as shown in this chapter, we can say that in policies, norms, and practices, fathering in Portugal has evolved from a dominant model emphasizing the role of men in families as distant, providers, and authoritarian father figures toward a model highlighting the role of men as caregiving, close fathers who support or share parental routines and responsibilities. Alongside the new ideal of involved fatherhood and a narrow gender gap in paid work based on a dual-earner model, norms and practices still reveal gender inequalities. The questioning of the primacy of mothers as nurturers and housekeepers is not clear-cut, whereas the opposite also seems to be true—i.e., expectations of a strong investment in breadwinning and protection are still more associated with fathers, when there are young children, and with male workers in general. In conjunction with other shaping factors such as age, occupation, and maternal and paternal agency, this is contributing to considerable pluralization of fathering norms and practices. It also leads to stress and tensions in couples regarding the negotiation of family life and parental roles, and represents important challenges for fathers seeking to incorporate old and new dimensions of masculinity and fatherhood.

Research has focused on these trends by combining different theoretical and methodological approaches. The “undoing” of previous gender cultural models in paid and unpaid work and the reconfiguration and pluralization of fatherhood emerges as the central focus of recent studies. Research on the outcomes of these processes for the social actors themselves has, however, remained underdeveloped. Despite some work on the subjective perceptions and lived experiences of fathers, there is, for example, a gap in research regarding the effects of new fathering norms and practices on children. For some issues, such as the consequences of alternate residence living arrangements in postdivorce families, this gap is making for a heated societal debate that lacks evidence-based research on which to draw. Even case studies of adults who experienced different types of postdivorce living arrangements in their childhood have not emerged. Legal studies are also a missing dimension of research in this area that are important to assessing and reforming existing norms and policies on parental responsibilities as they relate to fatherhood and stepfatherhood in new family forms such as reconstituted families and same-sex families.

Knowledge of the negotiation of fatherhood and motherhood in couples, drawing on interviews with both members of the couple, is also incipient (Wall, Cunha, & Marinho 2013). Methodologically, this type of research design is difficult and lengthy to implement. For the present research agenda, emphasizing the complex social processes of negotiation and pluralization, it represents a crucial viewpoint on how the new trends in masculinities and femininities, fatherhood and motherhood, are in the process of reconfiguration and how couples are managing to deal with this.

The effect of the current economic crisis and developments in labor market dynamics driven by high levels of unemployment and new pressures on
employees to work long hours or to be flexible about their labor market participation is a third strand of research that has yet to receive more attention. Given the emphasis that is still sometimes given to male primacy in paid work, it is important to understand how pressure in the workplace, as well as increasing precariousness in male employment, may be creating some polarization between men who become highly involved fathers owing to structural constraints such as unemployment or precarious forms of work and those who, to invest in their careers, build up a weaker involvement in fathering. The recent rise in couples having children in which the mother is the only main breadwinner signals the importance of such a research agenda.

At the policy level, it is important to recognize and highlight the barriers currently restraining the achievement of gender equality in parenthood and fathers’ involvement in family life. They concern the labor market structure; the internal dynamics of family; policies relating to gender, family, and fatherhood; and the persistence of traditional features of masculinity and femininity, not only in families and individuals, but also in social institutions (e.g., family courts, firm and workplace cultures, governmental bodies responsible for ensuring fathers’ entitlements, professional groups such as pediatricians). Raising awareness and debate on how the intersection of these factors generates and reproduces inequality in parental roles, despite the profound changes that have been taking place in Portuguese society, is a first step. For example, the gender structure of the labor market is still an important variable to recognize and take into account. Men tend to work a large number of weekly hours, more so than fathers of young children. Professional overload increases among qualified men, especially those who work in the private sector. Thus employment barriers are affecting fathers and are also generating problems of stress in work–family balance. Additionally, leave policy architecture, though promoting the involvement of fathers in leave, does not establish totally gender-neutral entitlements. The acceptance of male employees missing work and taking leave is still difficult to achieve. Furthermore, the decline in the male breadwinner model does not always mean a shift away from former male and female attributes. Financial responsibility, protection, and education are dimensions of good parenting that men and women still often connect primarily to masculinity.

Evaluating existing policies and their effects on fathers and outlining proposals for furthering these policies or ensuring their implementation and consistency are other crucial and necessary next steps. For example, evaluating the difficulties men have taking leave or understanding why the majority still does not share parental leave is as important as analyzing the effects of leave-taking on fathers’ involvement in family life. Likewise, assessing consistency and coherence in existing policies is an important objective to keep in view in times of economic crisis and of lessened state support for families. Ideologies and practices, especially in the domain of family life (and fatherhood is not an exception), change slowly and over long periods. Conversely, they may also respond rapidly to inconsistent or weakly defined policy objectives by shifting back to previous cultural models. This is likely to reinforce the overburdening of mothers in the private sphere and the overburdening of fathers in the public sphere. Policies promoting involved fatherhood thus must strike a delicate balance between the public and private spheres, between policies focusing on fathers and on mothers.

ASSOCIATIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL BODIES DEALING WITH FATHERING ISSUES


REFERENCES


African American fathers are positioned prominently in research, practice, and policy discussions on fathers, fatherhood, and responsible fathering. There is little question that work in these areas has increased significantly over the past twenty years, with growth in the number of studies, breadth of contexts and populations studied, and depth of analysis. Despite this expansion of research and perspectives, attention to African American fathers continues to focus primarily on low-income fathers. Most often, it is limited to fathers’ absence in children’s lives, paternity establishment, and financial contributions, as well as to single mother-headed households in African American families. However, not all African American fathers encounter the same parenting obstacles experienced by low-income fathers (Beckett, Strom, & Strom 2006). With a few notable exceptions, research across disciplines has emphasized statistical patterns of behavior and demographic shifts. These studies add to our understanding of issues related to nonmarital births, household composition, living arrangements, economic and emotional support of children, and changes in family life over time (see Mcloyd, Hill, & Dodge 2005) but leave open a range of complex questions about how fathers assume and represent their conceptions of fathering.

Relatively absent from research studies and complementary programmatic and policy discussions about families and child well-being is a close examination of the cultural domains of fathering and of fathers themselves (Gadsden, Fagau, Ray, & Davis 2004). Such examinations typically require the deeply analytic, sustained, long-term commitment unique to ethnographic research that interrogates African American fathers’ identities and the effects of economic and class differences (see Furstenberg 2007). How, when, and with

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African American Fathers and Families within Cultural and Historical Perspective

Vivian L. Gadsden, James Earl Davis, and Cleopatra Jacobs Johnson

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