

Gender and Generativity Issues in Parenting: Do Fathers Benefit More Than Mothers From Involvement in Child Care Activities?

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This study explored fatherhood from an Eriksonian developmental perspective and proposed parenting as a key stimulus for fathers' societal generativity. The aims of the study were to examine (1) whether parental generativity (greater time spent in child care activities and higher levels of psychological involvement in the role of parenting) was related to higher levels of societal generativity in fathers, (2) which kinds of child care activities were related to the development of societal generativity in fathers, and (3) whether the same relationships applied to mothers. A total of 134, predominantly White, middle class, Australian cohabiting parents completed questionnaires. Results indicated that parental generativity was related to fathers' societal generativity, but not to mothers. However, particular child care activities that promoted children's social-emotional development were related to fathers' societal generativity, whereas activities that promoted children's academic-intellectual development were related to mothers' societal generativity.

The increased interest in parenting, and in particular, fathering, has been driven by a number of factors, including demographic changes in the modern family, changing workforce patterns, the division of household labor (Marsiglio, 1993), the breakdown of traditional role models (McBride & Darragh, 1995), and fathers' increasing feminism (Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis,

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1993). Societal expectation for paternal involvement in child caring, has increased, yet conceptualization of the psychological aspects of fathers' changing role has remained stagnant (Marsiglio, 1993). Much of the literature portrays fathers as incumbents of a societally driven role change and has neglected to examine fatherhood from a developmental perspective (Hawkins, Christiansen, Sargent, & Hill, 1993). The predominant portrayal of fatherhood in terms of "fairness" or domestic democracy, within exchange, conflict, and resource theories has drawn attention away from the important developmental changes that men and women undergo within the family life cycle (Hawkins et al., 1993). Research indicates that men's participation in child care activities may be increasing (Snarey, 1993) and even underinvolved fathers do recognize as positive, the changing expectations of the fatherhood role (McBride & Darragh, 1995).

An alternative framework in which to examine parenting, and in particular fatherhood, is from a developmental perspective, in particular, generativity (Marsiglio, 1993). The concept of generativity has its foundations in Erikson's classical eight-stage conceptualization of life-span development. Erikson's life-span model incorporated critical stages where psychosocial adjustment occurred in response to meeting the challenges and crises these life stages presented. In the first two decades of life, there are six stages: trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt, initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, identity vs. confusion, and intimacy vs. isolation (this stage continuing on into the next decade of life). The final stages are generativity vs. stagnation (middle adulthood) and ego integrity vs. despair (old age).

Briefly, generativity, the seventh stage, is the primary developmental tension of middle adulthood, and is a process of learning to care for others and "an interest in establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). Although generativity encompassed wider societal concerns of making the world a better place for the next generation, Erikson believed that caring for one's children was the ultimate expression of this particular developmental task (Hawkins et al., 1993). Although empirical research into generativity is in its infancy, there is support for Erikson's concept that having a child and caring for that child facilitates generativity (McAdams & de St Aubin, 1992; Snarey, Son, Kuehne, Hauser, & Valliant, 1987).

Hawkins et al. (1993), in their study of fathering, described the familial processes that facilitate the development of generativity. After the birth of a child, fathers often feel confused about their new parental role (Hawkins et al., 1993). This confusion arises because of the father's perception of changing societal expectations regarding fatherhood (Palm & Palkovitz, 1988) and many feel unprepared for an active parental role (Meyers, 1993). Men are also confronted with the fact that a more egocentric and instrumental phase

of their lives is ending. These experiences are not easily assimilated and are likely to result in developmental disequilibrium (Lewis, 1986), which from a developmental perspective, is necessary for stimulating individuals to achieve higher levels of functioning. Hawkins et al. suggested that "fathers can accommodate this disequilibrium by creating new cognitive structures" (Hawkins et al., 1993, p. 536), which generally include elements of an "ethic of care." Hence, involvement in child care becomes a potential stimulus of fathers' development of generativity. Hawkins et al. (1993) emphasized the reciprocal nature of generativity, in that the presence of the child, and the nurturing and child care involved, serve as potent developmental forces, facilitating generativity in the adult, just as the presence of the adult serves to develop the child.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN GENERATIVITY

Although Erikson's model has been criticized as being defined by the experiences and perspective of men, generativity reflects the experience of women as well as of men (Kotre, 1995). However, there may be gender differences in levels and facilitation of generativity. McAdams and de St. Aubin's (1992) cross-sectional study found that men who had children had higher levels of generativity than men without children did, although the same difference was not found in women, suggesting the possibility that having children is more intimately linked with generativity for men than for women. Furthermore, young females were already significantly more generative than males of their age group, and it was proposed that cultural forces, which emphasize a nurturing role for women, may explain the generativity difference. Snarey (1993) concedes that gender differences may occur in the expression and scheduling of generativity, especially if men are shielded from the responsibilities of parenting.

CONCEPTUALIZING GENERATIVITY

Research examining a causal relationship between parenting and adult development have been troubled by conceptual problems and too few empirical studies (Palkovitz, 1996). First, the Eriksonian view that generativity is a discrete stage has been challenged by McAdams and de St Aubin (1992) who proposed that the strict Eriksonian discrete stage of generativity is not borne out by their findings and that a gradual infusion of generativity, driven by cultural demand, may be more appropriate. Furthermore, they stated that Erikson's stage model relies on substantive structural change in

adult personality development, which is not supported by most contemporary experts or empirical studies. Another study by McAdams, de St Aubin, and Logan (1993) also refutes Erikson's discrete stage concept of generativity with its peaking and then decline of generativity within the stage. Using measures of generativity such as generative concern, commitment, narrative, and action, McAdams and de St Aubin (1992) found that young, midlife, and older men expressed different levels of generativity according to the measure used. They proposed a model of generativity, which linked the person with the social world, rather than the Eriksonian concept of a single construct located within the individual.

Palkovitz's concerns regarding establishing a causal link between parenting and adult development (Palkovitz, 1996) are answered in part by Snarey's longitudinal study of intergenerational fatherhood (Snarey, 1993). The structural–developmental view of generativity as proposed by Snarey (1993), links the developing adult within the structural influences of parenthood, and proposes a model of generativity, which supports a causal relationship between parenting and generativity. Furthermore, Snarey reconceptualizes generativity and parenting, which extrapolates on an issue raised in an earlier study by Snarey et al. (1987), that parenting was similar, but not identical to generativity. In a conceptual refinement, Snarey (1993) defines generativity as having three distinct yet overlapping stages: biological, parental, and societal. It is Snarey's conceptualization that will be used in this study.

BIOLOGICAL, PARENTAL, AND SOCIETAL GENERATIVITY

Biological generativity is seen as the initial stage of a process that is followed by parental generativity, which, in turn, is followed by societal generativity. Biological generativity is that period following conception until the first year of a child's life where parents provide the sustenance necessary to ensure the survival of their child. Overlapping the end of the first year, a parent begins to undertake the constructive tasks involved in what Snarey defines as parental generativity.

Parental generativity, which precedes societal generativity, describes the constructive tasks involved in parenting, which lead to a child developing his/her full potential in terms of a balance of autonomy, initiative, industry, and identity (Snarey, 1993). By this definition, it is obvious that not all parenting is generative, even though parenting may be "the prime generative encounter" for many people (Erikson, 1964, p. 130). Parental generativity requires commitment and sacrifice, and requires ethical reflection on the question "Am I a good parent?" Thus, parental generativity may promote the moral character of adults who become focused on and focused by "the generative ego strength of care" (Snarey, 1993, p. 22). Parental generativity

remains throughout a parent's life, whereas societal generativity generally corresponds to the stage beginning around the midlife of the parent and continues until late adulthood. The parent, now with adult children, and with waning parental responsibilities, incorporates an enlarged, more encompassing generative concern, which includes not only the parent's adult children, but also other young adults, and the well-being, strength, and continuance of the next generation.

Societal generativity is predominantly conceptualized as an ethic of care and involves, for example, caring for young adults, serving as a mentor or leader, and being involved with processes that care for the well-being of subsequent generations. Such roles could involve serving on local community groups, coaching an athletic team, and political/social action for the betterment of the next generation. It is proposed that midlife existential anxiety about the finitude of life can stimulate questions about the quality of one's contribution to society and one's legacy to the next generation. The Eriksonian dichotomy of generativity vs. stagnation highlights the failure to become societally generative in that the absence of care, commitment, and productivity threatens future generations (Snarey, 1993).

PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLE INVOLVEMENT AND GENDER

Although controversy remains as to whether men and women express generativity in different ways, there is ample evidence, which demonstrates that men and women as parents, differ in their experience and expression of psychological role involvement. In the transition to parenthood, men and women appear to become increasingly different from one another in a variety of other domains, including sense of self, marital relationship, child-parent interactions, and in activities outside the family (Cowan et al., 1985). Parenthood appears to be associated with a traditionalization of role behavior in that mothers take on a greater proportion of the daily family work and fathers redirect time and energy to occupational pursuits (Cowan et al., 1985). Furthermore, fathers report less marital satisfaction when engaged in "feminine" rather than "masculine" type domestic duties (Goldberg, Michaels, & Lamb, 1985). It is proposed that differential role involvement in parenting by mothers and fathers offers complementary benefits to children (Mowder, Harvey, Moy, & Pedro, 1995).

CHILD CARE AND GENDER

Gender differences in parental interaction with children indicate that fathers tend to view "play" as a more important part of their child caring activities with their children than do mothers (Dienhart & Daly, 1997). Fathers'

play with their infants differs from that of mothers' and involves more physically stimulating activities, whereas mothers are more involved with verbal interaction (Lamb, 1981). Mothers and fathers also differ in their styles of communication with, and discipline of, their children (Palm, 1997). The benefits of using a developmental model in examining child care involvement allows not only a constructive look at the different roles mothers and fathers play, but also allows the identification of those types of child care that have reciprocal benefits for adult development (Snarey, 1993). However, there has been vigorous debate on operationalizing child care involvement (Palkovitz, 1997). Most contemporary models such as Lamb's tripartite involvement of interaction, accessibility, and responsibility are based on the traditional analytical tripartite breakdown of social-emotional, intellectual-academic, and physical-athletic human functioning (Lamb, 1986). For example, Snarey's classic study of generative fathering classified involvement in child care activities in terms of the activity's primary function rather than simply according to content: accompanying a child to baseball (social-emotional), teaching how to pitch a baseball (physical-athletic), and teaching baseball strategies (intellectual-academic). Snarey's study found reciprocal benefits for adult development in that the primary catalyst of fathers' societal generativity was the fathers' support of their children's social-emotional development in both the first and the second decades of their children's life. Although Snarey found no gender preference for fathers in the amount of time they spent in child care activities with sons or daughters, he did concede that among studies of infants, there was consistent evidence that fathers showed more interest in sons than in daughters.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Drawing on a developmental conceptualization of fathers' involvement in child care, the present study aims to investigate whether parental generativity, measured by child care involvement and psychological role involvement, is related to societal generativity in fathers.

1. First, it is predicted that after controlling for the effects of the pregenerativity stages, greater time spent in child care activities and higher levels of psychological involvement in the role of parenting will be related to higher levels of societal generativity in fathers.
2. The second aim is to examine which kinds of child care activities are related to the development of societal generativity in fathers. Based on the findings of Snarey (1993), it is hypothesised that activities that support the social-emotional development of the child will be those most strongly related to societal generativity in fathers.

3. The third aim is to explore the differences between mothers and fathers in the above relationships.

METHOD

Recruitment and Procedure

Parents were recruited through an independent Brisbane school (Australia), which contained a high school and an elementary school, and through two university on-campus kindergartens. The school and preschool centers were chosen because of their similar socioeconomic parental populations. The kindergartens, elementary, and high school populations were selected to ensure a range of parental ages.

All cohabiting parents at the kindergartens and at the elementary school, with at least one child of age 2 years or above in the family, were presented with a questionnaire by the kindergarten director or classroom teacher. The criteria of recruiting parents with children at least 2-year old was based on Hawkins et al.'s suggestion that parenting is more voluntary for a father, especially during the very early stages of a child's life (Hawkins et al., 1993). Fathers require more time, than do mothers, to become fully involved in the parenting role. Only questionnaires returned from parents currently living in a cohabiting relationship were included in the study. Each package contained two questionnaires, each containing the same six scales, and two stamped, return addressed envelopes to promote confidentiality of response between mother and father. The questionnaire scales were presented in a random order. The response rate was 19% for the school population and 32% for the kindergartens.

Characteristics of the Participants

A total of 134, predominantly White, middle class, cohabiting parents returned a fully completed questionnaire, including 58 fathers and 76 mothers. The sample of fathers included fathers of preadolescent children only ($n = 36$) and fathers of adolescent children ($n = 22$), some of whom also had preadolescent children ($n = 9$). These 22 fathers were grouped together and only the child care activities pertaining to their adolescent children were analyzed because of the small sample of nine fathers with both adolescent and preadolescent children. Furthermore, from a developmental perspective, these 22 fathers had been exposed to the effects of both preadolescent and adolescent child care and can be considered as one group, in the sense that a person does not "lose" a certain amount of generativity because the person

is now only caring for adolescent children. This group of fathers is subsequently referred to as the fathers of adolescent children.

The mothers sample ($n = 76$) contained mothers of only preadolescent children ($n = 44$) and mothers of adolescent children ($n = 32$), some of whom also had preadolescent children ($n = 12$). Again, these 32 mothers were considered as one group and only those activities pertaining to their adolescent children were analyzed. This group is subsequently referred to as the mothers of adolescent children. The characteristics of all mothers and all fathers of preadolescent and adolescent children are summarized in Table I.

Measures

Descriptive and psychometric data for the measures are presented in Table II. In all cases, the levels of observed reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficients) were satisfactory.

Societal Generativity

Societal generativity was measured by the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) developed by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992). Because of the controversy over whether generativity is a discrete stage, or more of a continuous, multifaceted construct, this study uses the LGS, because it reflects the Eriksonian concept of generativity, but allows an application to a broader age group without the disadvantages of an Eriksonian discrete stage model. Furthermore, the LGS measures generative concern, a predecessor of generative action. Some younger fathers, while expressing parental generativity in their parenting behavior, may not have advanced, for practical reasons, to socially generative acts, yet, still exhibit societally generative concern (to be acted on in the future). The McAdams and de St Aubin study found that generative acts were significantly and positively related to LGS scores. The scale consists of 20 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, and has a low correlation (.17) with social desirability (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). In a series of studies conducted by the authors, the LGS was shown to have high internal consistency (Chronbach's alpha = .83), and good validity indicated by significant correlations above .65, with two other generativity measures: Ochse and Plug (1986) and Hawley (1985). Another reason for choosing this scale was that, unlike earlier generativity scales, there are no items on the LSG that explicitly dealt with raising children. Thus, parenting could be conceptually separated from societal generativity, as this study's tripartite model of generativity requires. Examples of items are "I feel as though I have made a difference to many people," "I have important skills that I try

Table I. Characteristics of Participants

Variable	All Mothers (n = 76)	Parents of Preadolescent Children		Parents of Adolescent Children		
		All Fathers (n = 58)	Mothers (n = 44)	Fathers (n = 36)	Mothers (n = 32)	Fathers (n = 22)
Age ^a	37.7 (8.1)	41.1 (7.4)	34.3 (5.4)	37.9 (6.5)	43.9 (5.2)	46.8 (5.2)
Number of children ^a	2.5 (1.1)	2.6 (1.3)	2.0 (0.8)	2.2 (1.2)	3.3 (1.0)	3.5 (1.2)
Age at birth of first child ^a	26.0 (4.4)	29.9 (5.1)	28.1 (5.0)	30.2 (5.0)	25.3 (3.0)	28.3 (5.7)
Occupation (%)						
Administrative	7	21	7	14	6	32
Professional	33	55	41	67	22	36
Para professional	9	12	9	11	9	14
Clerical/trade	23	10	14	5	41	18
Student/home maker	28	2	29	3	22	0
Gender mix of children						
At least one male child	50	60	55	36	44	100
All female children	50	40	45	64	56	0

^aValues of these variables represent M (SD).

Table II. Reliabilities, Means and Standard Deviation of all Scales, for Mothers' and Fathers' Samples

Scale	No. of Items	Mothers			Fathers		
		α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Loyola generativity scale	20	.85	39.5	8.9	.85	38.7	8.9
Modified Erikson psych. scales inventory							
Trust	10	.75	41.4	4.4	.77	39.8	5.3
Autonomy	10	.77	39.9	5.2	.73	40.8	4.9
Initiative	10	.78	41.3	4.6	.86	41.5	6.3
Industry	10	.84	42.8	5.2	.75	41.8	4.7
Identity	10	.87	42.5	5.8	.77	40.5	5.4
Intimacy	10	.61	40.1	4.6	.71	35.2	5.3
Psychological role involvement	1	a	36.7	12.5	a	22.9	12.1
Preadolescent child care scale	18	.77	84.4	8.6	.88	69.1	14.3
Adolescent child care scale	18	.89	61.5	15.5	.87	47.5	13.3

Note. a: single measure.

to teach others," "I have made many commitments to many different kinds of people, groups, and activities, in my life."

Parental Generativity

Two measures of parental generativity were used. The first, a behavioral measure, assessed involvement in child care activities and was measured using two age specific scales adapted from a list of child care activities that Snarey (1993) considered relevant to parental generativity. Using Snarey's list as a guide, and deleting or culturally adapting items not particularly relevant to Australian parenting (such as baseball), two 18-item, child care activities scales were compiled: one for parents of preadolescent children (i.e., up to 12-year old) and the other for parents of adolescent children (13-year old or more). For the complete list of child care activities used in the questionnaire and each activity's classification, see Appendixes A and B. On the questionnaire, an extra item was included to allow parents to indicate any additional child care activity not listed. However, only eight mothers and two fathers added an extra activity; hence, the scales covered a comprehensive range of child care activities.

Parents rated the extent to which they engaged in each child care activity on a 6-point rating scale from 1 (*never or rarely*) to 6 (*almost every day*). A frequency rating was considered a desirable measure, as most of the child care activities listed were more than just basic requirements for sustaining life. Consequently, the frequency of activities indicated parents who were prepared to expend more than minimal effort in parenting. Mean

intercorrelations among the three subscales (socioemotional, intellectual–academic, and physical–athletic subset) for each of the four parent groups ranged from .42 to .75. Thus, given the high correlations among the three subscales, total child care activity scores were used in the analyses.

The second measure of parental generativity, psychological role involvement, assessed psychological involvement in the parenting role, using a modified version of the self-report instrument, the “pie,” developed by Cowan et al. (1985). This measure assessed a person’s sense of the relational self—the self in one’s major life roles and interpersonal transactions. Respondents are required to “cut up the pie” to represent the four major roles (parent, partner/lover, worker/student, and leisure) in their family lives. The area of each slice, scored as a percentage of the whole pie, indicates the importance (salience) of each role to the individual. Only the salience of the parent role was used in analyses. The score on the parental role involvement item indicated level of psychological involvement in parenting. Cowan et al. (1985) demonstrated a 1-year test-retest reliability for role of parent was .92.

The Modified Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (MEPSI)

This scale, developed by Darling-Fisher and Leidy (1988), was designed to measure psychosocial attributes in the adult population. The MEPSI was developed by modifying the Erikson Psychological Stage Inventory (EPSI) (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981) and was used in this study to measure resolution of the conflicts associated with the six psychological stages of development (trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, and intimacy), which precede generativity as described by Erikson (1964). Each subscale has 10 items, five of which represent successful and five unsuccessful, resolution of the “crisis” of the stage. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*hardly ever true*) to 5 (*almost always true*). Examples of each of the subscale statements and their reliability as measured by Darling-Fisher and Leidy (1988) are as follows: trust vs. mistrust (.82)—“I think the world and people in it are basically good,” autonomy vs. shame and doubt (.84)—“I know when to please myself and when to please others,” initiative vs. guilt (.78)—“I like to assume responsibility for things,” industry vs. inferiority (.88)—“I’m trying hard to achieve my goals,” identity vs. confusion (.85)—“I know what kind of person I am,” and intimacy vs. isolation (.78)—“I find it easy to make close friends.”

RESULTS

Evaluation of descriptive univariate data revealed acceptable levels of skew and kurtosis, indicating normality, linearity, and homoscedascity of

residuals. Cook's distances, studentized deleted residuals, and Mahalanobis distances on multivariate data revealed no outliers of concern. An adjusted alpha of $p < .01$ was used to determine level of statistical significance in preliminary and primary analyses.

Comparison Between Fathers of Preadolescent Children and Fathers of Adolescent Children, and Between Mothers of Preadolescent Children and Mothers of Adolescent Children

For sample combination purposes, preliminary analyses were conducted to examine differences between fathers of preadolescents and fathers of adolescents, and differences between mothers of preadolescents and mothers of adolescents, on demographic variables (age, age at birth of first child, and number of children), independent variables (trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, and parental role involvement), and the dependent variable (societal generativity). Child care activity was not included in the analysis because the scales for preadolescents and adolescents were similar but not identical. One-way ANOVAS were conducted on continuous variables, and chi-square tests were conducted on categorical variables.

The two groups of fathers differed significantly, of course, in terms of fathers' age, $F(1, 56) = 29.60$, $p < .0001$, and number of children, $F(1, 56) = 18.90$, $p < .0001$. Concerning the gender mix of children, of the fathers of preadolescent children, 13 had families with at least one boy in them and 23 had families of all girls. However, of the fathers of adolescent children, all had at least one boy (there were no fathers with families of all girls). The two groups of mothers differed on three demographic variables: mothers' age, $F(1, 74) = 48.05$, $p < .00001$; number of children, $F(1, 74) = 37.30$, $p < .00001$; and mothers' age at birth of first child, $F(1, 74) = 6.80$, $p < .01$.

The two groups of mothers, or the two groups of fathers, did not differ on the dependent or main independent variables. However, it was decided to be prudent, combining the mother groups and combining the father groups, to enter those demographic variables on which they did differ into subsequent analyses, given the infancy of empirical research into generativity and previous studies' correlations between these demographic variables and psychosocial development. Thus, the two mother groups were combined, and mothers' age, number of children, and mothers' age at the birth of the first child were covariates in the hierarchical regression performed on the combined mother group. The two father groups were combined, and fathers'

age, number of children, and gender mix of children were covariates in the hierarchical regression performed on the combined father sample.

Relationships Between Demographics and Both the Independent and the Dependent Variables on the Combined Mother Group and the Combined Father Group

Results indicated that fathers' age was inversely related to child care activities, $r(58) = -.43, p < .0001$, suggesting that younger fathers appeared to be more involved in child care activities than older fathers did. Mothers' age, $r(76) = -.52, p < .0001$, and age at birth of first child, $r(76) = -.30, p < .001$, were both inversely related to child care activities. That is, younger mothers and mothers who had their first child at a younger age were more involved in child care activities than older mothers. Hence, fathers' age, mothers' age, and mothers' age at the birth of first child were entered into the respective regressions as covariates.

Correlations Between the Pregenerativity Erikson Stages and the Dependent Variable

For data reduction purposes, correlations were conducted between the pregenerativity Erikson stages and the dependent variable. Results for the mother group indicated that all the pregenerativity Erikson stages were significantly and positively correlated with societal generativity, and hence, were entered as covariates in the hierarchical regression analysis performed on the mother group. Results for the father group indicated that three of the pregenerativity Erikson stages, autonomy, $r(58) = -.35, p < .001$; initiative, $r(58) = .50, p < .0001$; and industry, $r(58) = .47, p < .0001$, correlated significantly with societal generativity. Thus, only these three stages were included as covariates in the hierarchical regression analysis performed on the father group.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

In order to test the first hypothesis of the study that level of parental generativity is related to societal generativity in fathers and to examine whether mothers and fathers differ in the extent to which parental generativity is related to societal generativity, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted for fathers and mothers separately. In each hierarchical regression, relevant demographics were entered first. The pregenerativity

Table III. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Effects of Fathers' Age, Number of Children, Gender Mix of Children, Pregenerativity Erikson Stages, and Parental Generativity on Fathers' Societal Generativity (*n* = 58)

Variables	Demographics		Pregenerativity		Parental Generativity	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Demographics	.02					
Fathers' age		.03		-.03		.15
Number of children		-.11		-.15		-.12
Gender mix of children		-.07		.07		.10
Pregenerativity			.31**			
Autonomy				-.22		-.37
Initiative				.47		.44
Industry				.30		.47**
Parental generativity					.19**	
Psychological role involvement						.12
Child care activities						.45***

** *p* < .001. *** *p* < .0001.

Erikson stages were entered second, followed by the parental generativity variables. Results of the hierarchical regressions conducted on the fathers and mothers are summarized in Tables III and IV, respectively.

Results of the hierarchical regression analysis conducted on the fathers' data, indicated that when all variables were in the equation, a significant

Table IV. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of the Effects of Mothers' Age, Age at Birth of First Child, Number of Children, Pregenerativity Erikson Stages, and Parental Generativity on Mothers' Societal Generativity (*n* = 76)

Variables	Demographics		Pregenerativity		Parental Generativity	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Demographics	.02					
Mothers' age		-.07		-.01		.09
Number of children		-.07		-.08		.06
Age at birth of first child		.08		.07		-.12
Pregenerativity			.43***			
Trust				-.12		.07
Autonomy				-.02		-.06
Initiative				.06		.04
Industry				.25		.26
Identity				.29		.31
Intimacy				.33*		.31*
Parental generativity					.02	
Psychological role involvement						-.04
Child care activities						.16

* *p* < .01. *** *p* < .0001.

amount (49%) of the variance in societal generativity was accounted for, $F(8, 49) = 6.01, p < .001$. The demographic variables failed to account for significant variance in societal generativity. The pregenerativity Erikson stages accounted for a significant increment (31%) in the variance in societal generativity, although none of the pregenerativity stages emerged individually as significant predictors. However, industry emerged as a significant predictor of societal generativity when parental generativity was added to the equation. The marked change in the beta weights for industry, from .30 (at step 2) to .47 (at step 3), indicated a possible confounding with the demographics or the other pregenerativity stages, and thus, it was clearly important to adjust for these possible confoundings by including these variables in the regression. As predicted, parental generativity accounted for a significant increment (19%) in the variance in societal generativity. Child care activity emerged as the significant predictor: the more time fathers spent in child care activities, the higher their level of societal generativity.

Results of the hierarchical regression analysis conducted on the mothers' data indicated that when all variables were in the equation, a significant amount (47%) of the variance in societal generativity was accounted for, $F(11, 64) = 5.09, p < .001$. The demographic variables failed to account for significant variance in societal generativity. However, the pregenerativity Erikson stages accounted for a significant increment (43%) in the variance in societal generativity. Intimacy emerged as a significant independent contributor to the variance in societal generativity. Parental generativity failed to account for a significant amount of variance in societal generativity for mothers.

Correlations Between Individual Child Care Activities and Societal Generativity

The second aim of the study was to examine which child care activities were associated with societal generativity in fathers and to determine any differences between mothers and fathers regarding these relationships. Correlations were conducted between all items on the preadolescent and adolescent child care scales and societal generativity for mothers and fathers separately. Results of these correlations are summarized in Appendixes A and B.

For fathers of preadolescent children, Item 3 ("takes child about with you on routine jobs") was positively correlated with societal generativity, $r(36) = .58, p < .001$. For mothers of preadolescent children, Item 8 ("consults teacher/monitors homework") was positively correlated with societal generativity, $r(44) = .48, p < .001$; Appendix A. For fathers of adolescent children, Item 4 ("supervises parties, dances, sleep-overs"),

$r(22) = .66$, $p < .001$, and Item 5 (“encourages friends over”), $r(22) = .60$, $p < .001$, were positively related to societal generativity, Appendix B. For the mothers of adolescent children, all child care activities were unrelated to societal generativity. The child care activities associated with fathers’ societal generativity are those items supportive of social–emotional development in the child. The one child care activity associated with societal generativity in mothers was related to fostering intellectual–academic development in the child.

DISCUSSION

The results confirm the utility of the developmental approach in examining fatherhood. A father’s parental generativity (in particular, his involvement in child care activities) was related to societal generativity. Specifically, it is the social–emotional child caring, such as a father taking his child with him on routine jobs, which is most strongly related to fathers’ societal generativity. The same findings did not apply to mothers.

Results supported the prediction that parental generativity was related to societal generativity in men. However, it was level of child care activity, which was associated with societal generativity, whereas psychological role involvement was unrelated to societal generativity. The present study also found that the pregenerativity Erikson stage of industry was a significant predictor of societal generativity, indicating that industrious fathers were the most societally generative. This finding also confirms the results of Snarey (1993).

The second aim of the study was to examine which kinds of child care involvement were related to the development of societal generativity in fathers. Results confirmed the hypothesis that activities that supported the social–emotional development of the child would be related to societal generativity in fathers. These results also concur with Snarey findings that this type of child activity is the most strongly related to societal generativity in fathers (Snarey, 1993).

The third aim of the study was to explore the differences between fathers and mothers regarding the relationships between parental generativity and societal generativity and between specific child care activities and societal generativity. Results indicated that mothers and fathers did indeed differ in the relationship between parental generativity and societal generativity. Mothers’ parental generativity, unlike fathers’, was not significantly related to societal generativity. However, mothers’ level of intimacy was a significant predictor of societal generativity, suggesting that their level of

intimacy may be a factor in their attainment of societal generativity. One explanation for these differences between mothers and fathers in the relationship between parental generativity and societal generativity is that mothers' parenting may not be particularly generative because their involvement in child care is traditionally more involuntary than that of fathers. As Snarey et al. (1987) pointed out, not all parenting is generative parenting. Alternatively, it may be that having children (and caring for them) is more linked to a man's generativity than to a woman's (McAdams & de St Aubin, 1992).

Mothers differed from fathers on the type of child care activity that is related to their societal generativity. Mothers' societal generativity was not related to any of the adolescent child care activities, but was related to one preadolescent child care activity that supports the intellectual–academic development of the child.

Mothers may differ from fathers on the type of child care that is related to societal generativity because the child care activity scale used in this study is possibly more “father friendly.” The scale was based on Snarey's list of child care activities (Snarey, 1993), developed for fathers. However, few mothers added another child care activity to the list of activities suggested, when given the option on the questionnaire. Therefore, if the child care activities do in fact cover an extensive range of activities undertaken by both mothers and fathers, there may in fact be gender differences in the expression of parental generativity (Snarey, 1993).

Another possible explanation for the gender differences is that the type of parenting which is particularly generative to the father is the parenting which crosses the more traditional boundaries of gender-based parenting (e.g., fathers who take on the more feminine type of parenting, traditionally associated with the social–emotional caring of the child). These fathers may be more challenged to deal with the disequilibrium of the transition to a more feminine type of parenting, and this developmental process may stimulate these individuals to a higher level of functioning (Lewis, 1986), promoting a more generative personality.

For both men and women, results indicated that psychological role involvement, the second measure of parental generativity, did not predict societal generativity. The study used one of the measures within the Cowen et al. (1985) scale, salience of role, as a measure of psychological role involvement. One explanation for psychological role involvement, not being related to societal generativity, is that the Cowan et al. (1985) scale should be used in its entirety as a measure of psychological role involvement. An alternative explanation is that psychological role involvement's validity as a measure of parental generativity is questionable.

Correlational analyses indicated that psychological role involvement was strongly positively correlated with involvement in child care activities scores for mothers but not for fathers. One explanation for this finding is that role involvement is conceptually similar to child care activity for women and confirms the gender differences suggested by Mowder et al. (1995) regarding role involvement. That is, women related to their mother role in a more demonstrative and involved way than did men. It may be that fathers show their involvement in parenting by “doing” rather than through psychological role involvement, and this would concur with the findings of De Luccie (1996). De Luccie found that measures of behavior (frequency of child care involvement and task sharing) were better indicators of fathers’ involvement in parenting than were the psychological measure of role satisfaction, a similar, but not identical, concept to psychological role involvement. Furthermore, it has been contended that many men have not been exposed to an adequate parental role model by the previous generations of fathers, and thus, have an underdeveloped, and ill-defined psychological involvement in the father role themselves (Daly, 1993). It is also argued that many men’s psychological role model of fatherhood is fragmented because, with little access to a comprehensive role model of fatherhood from their own fathers, they have selected particular behaviors from various sources to incorporate into their roles (Daly, 1993).

However, the particular behaviors exhibited by the fathers who have high levels of societal generativity in this study are the social–emotional child care activities. It is possible that through particularly generative actions, fathers may, over time, define their role more clearly. Overall, the different findings for men and women suggest that the developmental model does offer a new theoretical perspective in which to frame fatherhood through generativity, but may have limited application for women.

Given the cross-sectional design of the present study, the causal relationship between parental and societal generativity remains ambiguous. Another limitation was the nonrandom sampling method used, which resulted in a predominance of fathers in administrative and professional positions. It is possible that fathers in the lower end of the socioeconomic scales may have a different culture of involvement in parenting (Harris & Marmer, 1996) and that the pregenerative Erikson stage, industry, may not predict societal generativity in populations of high unemployment. Furthermore, it may be the industrious nature of the fathers in this study, which prompted them to respond to the survey, despite their administrative and professional responsibilities. Another limitation of the study is that the three types of child care activities (emotional, intellectual, and physical) are intercorrelated, and may require refinement to more clearly differentiate each type of child care

activity. However, possibly the major limitation of the study resides in the coarseness of instruments used to test the subtlety of generativity theory, which reflects the infancy of empirical research in this field.

The findings of the present study support the utility of an adult developmental perspective of fatherhood, and have implications for clinical and psychoeducational programs. For example, parenting programs could emphasize that increased paternal involvement in child care activities, especially in those activities that involve social-emotional caring of the child, has benefits for the child, and also for the father in terms of promoting adult development. Future studies could explore the role of the Erikson stage of industry and its relationship with the development of societal generativity in fathers. It is possible that there may be a link between father's role as "worker," a role that is more clearly defined for him than his role as a parent, and the development of societal generativity in fathers (Dollahite, Hawkins, & Brotherson, 1997).

Appendix A: Correlations Between Mothers' and Fathers' Societal Generativity and 18 Preadolescent Child Care Activities

Child Care Activity (Preadolescent)	Fathers' Societal Generativity, Γ ($n = 36$)	Mothers' Societal Generativity, Γ ($n = 44$)
Social-emotional		
1. Puts child to bed	0.30	-0.04
2. Comforts when upset	0.17	0.28
3. Takes child about with you on routine jobs	0.58***	0.29
4. Encourages child to invite friends home	0.21	0.21
5. Accompanies child to sport, social occasions, church	0.09	0.08
6. Attends child-care/kindy/school functions with child	0.12	-0.20
Intellectual-academic		
7. Reads to/with child	0.22	0.22
8. Consults teacher/monitors homework	0.04	0.48**
9. Takes to library/museums, etc.	0.35*	0.17
10. Answers questions/instructs child on new concepts/values	0.14	0.12
11. Provides extras eg music sport, cultural activities, educational toys	0.00	0.19
Physical-athletic		
12. Plays games at home	0.25	0.11
13. Feeds/prepares food	0.34*	-0.21

(Continued)

Appendix A: (Continued)

Child Care Activity (Preadolescent)	Fathers' Societal Generativity, Γ ($n = 36$)	Mothers' Societal Generativity, Γ ($n = 44$)
14. Takes to doctor/dentist	0.17	-0.09
15. Teaches how to swim/ride a bike/other physical activity	0.13	0.19
16. Dresses/arranges clothing for child	0.18	-0.18
17. Bathes/monitors bathing	0.20	0.16
18. Checks teeth	0.05	-0.50

* $p < .05$ (approaching significance). ** $p < .001$. *** $p < .0001$.

Appendix B: Correlations Between Mothers' and Fathers' Societal Generativity and 18 Adolescent Child Care Activities

Child Care Activity (Adolescent)	Fathers' Societal Generativity, Γ ($n = 22$)	Mothers' Societal Generativity, Γ ($n = 30$)
Social-emotional		
1. Talks about personal problems	0.26	0.16
2. Accompanies to sport/games/church	0.37	0.30
3. Spends special time with child	0.47*	0.21
4. Supervises parties, dance, sleep-overs	0.66**	0.04
5. Encourages friends over	0.60**	-0.7
6. Attends school functions with child	0.04	0.03
Intellectual-academic		
7. Discusses/checks school work	0.36	0.32
8. Attends P&F meetings	0.42	-0.12
9. Visits library/museum, etc.	0.26	-0.08
10. Provides extras e.g., music, sport, cultural activities	0.04	0.12
11. Discusses new concepts (e.g., Politics, values) with child	0.26	0.24
12. Provides sex and relationship education	0.44*	0.27
Physical-athletic		
13. Do household jobs together	0.43*	-0.10
14. Monitors personal hygiene/health	0.36	0.27
15. Takes shopping for clothes books, etc.	0.41	0.13
16. Arranges appointments for doctor/dentist/school, etc.	0.18	-0.13
17. Monitors diet	0.44*	0.03
18. Instructs/plays sport with child	0.08	-0.21

* $p < .05$ (approaching significance). ** $p < .001$.

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