

**SELF-EFFICACY, CO-PARENTING RELATIONSHIP, AND PARENT
SATISFACTION:
VARIABLES THAT PREDICT PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT BY NON-
CUSTODIAL FATHERS**

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Based on the traditions of role theory (Biddle and Thomas, 1979; Longres, 2000; Mead, 1934; Sarbin and Allen, 1954) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), this study examined non-custodial fathers and their involvement with their child. Using a convenience sample ($n = 72$) recruited from men enrolled in the Erie Family Center for Child Development Fatherhood Initiatives Programs, survey participants completed a questionnaire designed to assess their level of self-efficacy, the co-parenting relationship with the custodial mother of their child, and their parenting satisfaction, each posited to be determinants of their paternal involvement. Path analysis was used to assess the effects of these relationships on paternal involvement. Moreover, this study tested the hypothesis that paternal involvement would co-vary with child custody status and marital status.

Study results suggest parent satisfaction had the largest direct effect on paternal involvement while co-parenting relationships had the smallest effect on paternal involvement. Controlling for the effects of child custody status and marital status were not statistically significant. The magnitude of parent satisfaction and the minor effect of co-parenting relationship on paternal involvement may have been moderated by the non-custodial fathers' participation in fatherhood programs. Implications for social work practice and social welfare policy are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2.	IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY	5
2.	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1.	DEFINITION OF PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT.....	8
2.2.	FATHERHOOD	12
2.3.	NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS	14
2.4.	AFRICAN-AMERICAN FATHERS.....	16
2.5.	CO-PARENTING RELATIONSHIP	19
2.6.	PARENTING SATISFACTION	21
2.7.	CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT	23
3.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ROLE THEORY AND SELF-EFFICACY	27
3.1.	ROLE THEORY	27
3.2.	SELF-ROLE CONGRUENCE	31
3.3.	ROLE AMBIGUITY	33
3.4.	ROLE CONFLICT.....	35
3.5.	LIMITATIONS OF ROLE THEORY	37
3.6.	SELF-EFFICACY	38
3.7.	METHODOLOGICAL CRITICISMS OF THE EXISTING RESEARCH ON NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS AND PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT	41
3.8.	RESEARCH DESIGN, DATA COLLECTION, AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE.....	42
3.9.	RESIDENTIAL STATUS AND RACE	45
3.10.	MEASUREMENT ISSUES.....	46
4.	METHODS	49
4.1.	SAMPLE.....	49
4.2.	RISKS AND BENEFITS.....	52
4.3.	DATA COLLECTION	53
4.4.	PILOT STUDY OF QUESTIONNAIRE.....	53
4.5.	INSTRUMENT: THE STUDY OF NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS AND PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE	55
4.5.1.	Section One: Screening of Participants.....	56
4.5.2.	Section Two: Background Information	56
4.5.3.	Section Three: Child Custody Arrangements	56
4.5.4.	Section Four: Self-Efficacy (SE)	56
4.5.5.	Section Five: Co-parenting Relationship (CPR).....	57
4.5.6.	Section Six: Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale.....	60
4.5.7.	Section Seven: Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI).....	61
4.5.8.	Section Eight: Parenting Barriers.....	62
4.6.	ADMINISTRATION.....	63
4.7.	DATA ANALYSIS.....	63
4.8.	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS.....	63
4.9.	PATH ANALYSIS	64

4.10.	RATIONALE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED PATH MODEL.....	64
4.11.	PREDICTOR VARIABLES.....	65
4.12.	HYPOTHESES.....	66
4.13.	CONTROL VARIABLE.....	67
4.14.	REPRODUCED CORRELATIONS.....	67
4.15.	EXCLUDED PATHS.....	69
4.16.	INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD.....	70
5.	RESULTS.....	71
5.1.	DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE.....	71
5.2.	EXOGENOUS AND ENDOGENOUS VARIABLES.....	76
5.3.	GROUP COMPARISON: CHILD CUSTODY STATUS, MARITAL STATUS, AND RACE.....	77
5.4.	PATH ANALYSIS.....	81
5.5.	PARENTING BARRIERS.....	87
5.6.	ADVERSARIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.....	87
5.7.	PARENT ALIENATION.....	88
6.	DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	89
6.1.	RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	89
6.2.	REVIEW OF METHODOLOGY.....	90
6.3.	LIMITATIONS OF STUDY.....	90
6.4.	SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE.....	91
6.5.	LIMITATIONS OF PATH ANALYSIS.....	91
6.6.	MEASUREMENT ERROR.....	92
6.7.	MODEL SPECIFICATION ERROR.....	92
6.8.	AGE OF CHILDREN.....	93
6.9.	DISCUSSION.....	93
6.10.	CO-PARENTING RELATIONSHIP.....	93
6.11.	EMPLOYMENT.....	95
6.12.	IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY.....	96
6.13.	SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS.....	96
6.14.	SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY IMPLICATIONS.....	98
6.15.	FUTURE RESEARCH: NON-CUSTODIAL FATHER PARENT SATISFACTION AND FATHER INVOLVEMENT.....	100
APPENDIX A.....		103
RECRUITMENT FLYER.....		103
APPENDIX B.....		105
THE STUDY OF NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS AND PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT.....		105
APPENDIX C.....		116
INFORMED CONSENT.....		116
APPENDIX D.....		121
FORM A.....		121
APPENDIX E.....		122
REVISED FORM A.....		122
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		123

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1:	Non-custodial Fathers and Minor Children ($N = 72$)	52
Table 4.2:	Path Decompositions for the Initial Path Model (Paternal Involvement).....	69
Table 5.1:	Age, Education, and Total Number of Children.....	72
Table 5.2:	Marital Status, Employment Status, and Annual Income.....	73
Table 5.3:	Non-custodial Fathers and Child Custody Status	74
Table 5.4:	Comparison of Means of Participants Reporting Don't Know Child Custody Status.....	75
Table 5.5:	Marital Status of Non-custodial Father at the Birth of Minor Child	76
Table 5.6:	Descriptive Data on Principal Variables.....	77
Table 5.7:	Analysis of Variance for Marital Status ($N = 72$)	78
Table 5.8:	Analysis of Variance for Shared Custody Status ($N = 72$).....	79
Table 5.9:	Analysis of Variance for Race $N = 72$	80
Table 5.10:	Observed and Reproduced Correlations for Initial Path Model Paternal Involvement	82
Table 5.11:	Excluded Paths Initial Path Model – Paternal Involvement	83
Table 5.12:	Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Paternal Involvement	84
Table 5.13:	Summary of Causal Effects for Path Model Paternal Involvement.....	85
Table 5.14:	Parenting Barriers ($N = 53$)	87

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Path Diagram for Initial Model Paternal Involvement.....	48
Figure 4.1: Path Diagram for Initial Model Paternal Involvement with Excluded Paths.....	70
Figure 5.1: Path Diagram for Initial Model Paternal Involvement with Non-significant Excluded Paths	86

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

According to the 2000 United States Census Bureau, American children have a higher probability of living with one parent (typically the mother) than children in any other industrialized country. In fact, approximately one quarter (23.4 percent) of all American children reside in single parent homes, with the poorest children most often residing with their single mothers (DiNitto, 2005). The majority of these poor children are African-American or Hispanic (Becerra et al., 2001).

An estimated 11 million fathers in the United States do not have physical custody of their children (Sorensen and Zibman, 2001) due to separation, divorce, unmarried fatherhood, incarceration, military duty, and abandonment (Bernard and Knitzer, 1999; Blankenhorn, 1995). “Non-custodial fathers”¹ are defined as men who are the legal father (biological or adoptive) of a minor child whose parental rights to legal and physical custody have been altered through judicial action (Arditti, 1990; Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated or P.A.C.S.A., 2001) and whose child generally reside full-time with their mother or legal guardian (Hamer, 2001, Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Seltzer, 1998). While there is no reason to believe non-custodial fathers “love their

¹This dissertation focuses exclusively on heterosexual non-custodial fathers, families, and relationships.

children less”, little is understood concerning their motivations for involvement with their children (Lamb, 2002).

To better understand non-custodial fathers and their involvement with their children this study, guided by the traditions of role theory (Biddle and Thomas, 1966; Mead, 1934; Sarbin and Allen, 1954) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), was designed to address two interrelated research questions: (1) Do a set of psycho-social variables exist that predict paternal involvement of non-custodial fathers with their children? and (2) What are the direct, indirect, and total effects of on paternal involvement? Growing numbers of non-custodial fathers have stated the challenge of becoming or remaining involved with their children is controlled by custodial mothers and child custody workers, which they perceive as adversarial and non-supportive (Seltzer, 1998; Seltzer, Schaeffer, and Charng, 1989; Stone & McKenry, 1998).

Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson and Zill (1983) evaluated the incidence of divorce and subsequent parent contact and concluded, “close to half of all children living in the United States today will reach age 18 without living continuously with both biological parents and that the majority of (those) children... (will have) had no contact with their non-custodial parent in the previous calendar year” (p. 667). Characteristically, the non-custodial parent is the father (Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Lamb, 2002; Schwartz and Finley, 2005; Sorensen and Zibman, 2000). According to Furstenberg and Cherlin, (1991) this trend is expected to continue into the first quarter of the twenty-first century. In fact, it has been projected in African-American homes that 85 percent of all children born during the decade of the 1990s will not live with their biological father at some point in their childhood (Hamer, 2001).

Given the increased numbers of children who live apart from their fathers (particularly African-American children), it has become necessary to develop broader conceptualizations of the status of “father” and the role he is expected to play vis-à-vis his children (Bozett and Hanson, 1991; Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb, 2000; Lamb, 2002). From the point at which parents separate, even involved non-custodial fathers have decreasing contact and involvement with their children (Dudley and Stone, 2001; Furstenberg et al., 1983; Nord and Zill, 1996; Laakso, 2004). A limited amount of research suggests reasons why fathers withdraw from their children (Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, and Buehler, 1993; Leite and McKenry, 2002; Maldonado, 2005; Nelson, 2004). Some non-custodial fathers decrease contact with their children to gain relief from emotional stress associated with separation from them (DeLuccie, 1995; Dudley, 1994; Kruk, 1994; Minton and Pasley, 1997; Parke, 2000; Schwartz and Finley, 2005; Spillman, Deschamps and Crews, 2004). Changes in role identity and role expectations may create greater role ambiguity for the non-custodial father and indirectly contributes to less father involvement (McBride and Rane, 2000). With father-child contact no longer secured through co-residency, restructuring father involvement in this new parenting environment may be difficult and redefining role relationships between parents who are separated or legally divorced is generally complex and conflicted (Leite and McHenry, 2002; Maldonado, 2005; Manning et al., 2003; McBride et al., 2005).

Determining when non-custodial fathers can be involved with their children, under what conditions, and how much time will be allotted for visits is usually determined by the courts and regulated by the custodial mother (Insabella, Williams, and Pruett, 2003; Lamb, 2002; Palkovitz, 1997; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 2002). Children who do not

live with two parents are less likely to spend time with the non-custodial parent, typically the father (Schwartz and Finley, 2005; Sorensen and Zibman, 2000). For some non-custodial fathers gaining child custody or visitation is difficult due to continuing conflicts with the custodial mother (Arditti, 1991; DeLuccie, 1995; Seltzer, 2000) combined with feelings of dissatisfaction with their performance as a parent (Dudley, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001; Furstenberg, Sherwood, & Sullivan, 1992; Kruk, 1994).

To negotiate co-parenting relationships high in conflict and low in support, non-custodial fathers' may need a high level of self-confidence, known in the behavioral literature as "self-efficacy". Bandura (1997) defined "self-efficacy" as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations." (p. 2). Higher levels of self-efficacy may supply the motivation necessary for non-custodial fathers to overcome the challenges presented in highly conflicted co-parenting relationships or unsatisfying child custody arrangements that may have inhibited greater paternal involvement.

Positive co-parenting relationships (Ahrons and Miller, 1993; Arditti, 1995; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2000; Dudley, 1996; Edin et al., 2000; Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; McBride et al., 2005) and parenting satisfaction (Dudley and Stone, 2001; Furstenberg et al., 1992; Pleck, 1997) have also been cited as intervening variables in the prediction of parental involvement. A "positive co-parenting relationship" is defined as a cooperative, non-conflicted, and mutually supportive relationship (Ahrons, 1981; Dienhart, 1998). Hence, a positive co-parenting relationship established between a non-custodial father and the custodial mother could be expected to improve paternal involvement with children. Co-parenting relationships high in conflict may reduce levels of parenting

satisfaction experienced by non-custodial fathers and negatively impact involvement with their children.

Moreover, prior studies of divorced and non-custodial fathers have suggested child custody arrangements are also an important predictor of paternal involvement (Arditti, 1992; Insabella et al., 2003; McBride et al., 2005; Seltzer, 1998). Child custody arrangements, such as shared custody and visitation (Arditti, 1995; Jury, Bourdais, and Marcil-Gratton, 2005; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Pearson and Thoennes, 1997; Seltzer, 1998; Seltzer et al., 1989) may improve self-efficacy as well as the co-parenting relationship, thereby increasing parenting satisfaction and, ultimately, the non-custodial parent's involvement with his child.

1.2. Importance of the Study

Since the early 1980s a growing body of research has examined the relationship between a father, his children, and his involvement with them (Furstenberg et al., 1983; Harris, Furstenberg, & Marmer, 1998; Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; Lamb, Pleck, Charnov & Levine, 1987; Nord & Zill, 1996; Palkovitz, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 2002). “Breadwinning” (economic provision to help sustain families) continues to emerge as the dominant role expectation of fathers (Marsiglio, 1995; McAdoo and McAdoo, 1998; Pleck and Pleck, 1997). However, it is becoming clearer that, beyond the role of economic provider, paternal involvement is important because it impacts a child's development and sense of well being (Featherstone, 2004; Lamb, 2002; Seltzer, 2000). Moreover, men themselves have begun to redefine fatherhood to include greater

involvement with as well as nurturance of their child (Cooksey and Craig, 1996; Dowd, 2000; Greif, 1994).

Currently, there are no definitions of fatherhood or paternal involvement that capture fully the varied cultural scripts or lived experiences of fathers (Griswold, 1993; Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio, 1995; Mintz, 1998; Palkovitz, 2002; Henley and Pasley, 2005; Rotundo, 1985). Nor is there a definition of fatherhood that delineates the role expectations for paternal involvement (Marsiglio et al., 2000; Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, and Ho, 2004). Men themselves have stated that beyond breadwinning, the status of non-custodial father is ambiguous and lacks clear expectations for the role (Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 2001; Kruk, 1994). Broader conceptualizations of paternal involvement result from our increased understanding of father identity (Palkovitz, 1997; Hawkins et al. 2002). Moreover, “successful fatherhood must surely be defined relative to the specific socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, and historical niches in which individual men and women together define their needs and roles, whether in or out of enduring relationships” (p. 50).

Only recently have judicial, family practice, and research communities related to non-custodial fathers outside the traditional role expectation of child support compliance and acknowledged that beyond their financial contributions, father presence is important in child development (Curran and Abrams, 2000; Halle et al., 1998). The bulk of father research was focused on child support and the effects of father absence, particularly with African-American fathers.

There is much to learn about the effects of limiting father-child contact. Obviously there are circumstances which warrant limiting contact between a father and his children.

However, when there is no threat of harm children who are restricted in their contact with their fathers are disadvantaged relative to their peers who reside in two-parent homes. Children who grow up separated or absent from their father usually have common characteristics. They are more likely to drop out of high school, become teen-parents, suffer poor psychosocial adjustment, have earlier and increased involvement with juvenile corrections systems, and experience health-related problems (Bernard and Knitzer, 1999; Lamb, 2002).

Studies which addressed father-child contact, reported men feeling less efficacious in child custody hearings (Dudley, 1996; Kruk, 1994; Pearson and Thoennes, 1998). Moreover, fathers who had well-established and involved relationships with their children prior to divorce reported experiencing depression, a sense of loss and grief, and feeling powerless to change or influence the situation (Kruk, 1994). Over time these non-custodial fathers, according to Kruk, had no contact with their children. However, a growing number of non-custodial fathers have reported they want to be more involved with, more nurturing toward, and viewed as more than just the economic provider for their children (Dudley, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001; Featherstone, 2004; Furstenberg, et al., 1992; Kost, 2001).

While a father's motivation to remain (or to become) involved with his children appears to be varied and not well understood (Leite and McKenry, 2002; Marsiglio et al., 2000), explanations may exist for paternal involvement. This study becomes important because it will contribute information to the emerging literature on non-custodial fathers and those variables which predict (even facilitate) their involvement with their children.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins by examining the conceptual challenges to defining and operationalizing paternal involvement (Hawkins and Palkovitz, 1999; Lamb, 1997; McBride and Rane, 1998; Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 1997; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 1999). This is followed by a brief review of American fatherhood specifically focusing on the non-custodial father and includes a discussion of the construction of father status and the role expectations inherent in this status. This review especially focuses on African-American fathers and the possible effects of race on paternal involvement with children.

Next, research reporting the effects of shared legal custody (Juby et al., 2005; Maldonado, 2005; Seltzer, 1998) and marital status (Dudley and Stone, 2001) on father involvement is presented. The definition and description of role theory (Biddle and Thomas, 1979) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) are presented along with a rationale for using both in this study. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of several methodological criticisms of existing research concerning non-custodial fathers and their involvement with their children.

2.1. Definition of Paternal Involvement

During the 1980s research attention shifted from the investigation of a one-dimensional perception of fathers as merely providers of child support to a multidimensional picture of fathers that included the expectation they be involved with their child given the impact father involvement has on child well-being (Lamb, 1997; McBride and Rane, 1998;

Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 1997; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 1999). The participants in this research were generally residential and ever-married fathers. Less attention was paid to non-custodial and never-married fathers (Furstenberg et al., 1983; Insabella, et al., 2003; Lamb, et al., 1987; Nord and Zill, 1996; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 1999). In the former studies, paternal involvement was defined as the amount of time shared between a father and his children with little attention paid to the quality of these interactions or the motivation for these interactions (Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio, et al., 2000).

The use of term “involvement” has proven to be problematic because it has multiple meanings and has been inadequately defined. Researchers have used many synonyms for involvement that have multiple meanings. In fatherhood literature “involvement” has referred to interaction, participation, engagement, investment, and enactment (Pleck, 1997). Few researchers have agreed on a conceptual definition of involvement (Palkovitz, 1997). Involvement is defined more often as a temporal and directly observable interaction between fathers and their children (Featherstone; 2004; Hawkins and Palkovitz, 1999; Palkovitz, 1997). However, this definition of involvement is limited, particularly when examining non-custodial fathers (Hawkins and Palkovitz, 1999; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004). The problem of using interchangeable terms and the lack of a precise definition of involvement predictably leads to difficulties in measurement. These difficulties with measurement are addressed in chapter three.

Because the children of non-custodial fathers typically reside with the custodial mother, Hawkins and Palkovitz (1999) suggest it is erroneous to assume non-custodial fathers are uninvolved with their children based on the amount of physical time they share with them or based on specific observable interactions. To capture the “real” lived

experiences of non-custodial fathers, instruments must be designed to measure the different ways fathers are involved with their children. In other words, measurement of father involvement may be aided by research designs which integrate qualitative as well as quantitative data and explore cultural factors that may impact father-child interaction (Pleck, 1997; Roggman et al., 2002).

Currently, there is no widely accepted conceptual framework for father involvement that captures fully its array of functions and roles, let alone acknowledges cultural variability (Lamb, 2000; Palkovitz, 1997). Moreover, it is important to note that all types of father involvement are *not* equivalent (Parke, 2000). Parke (2000) highlights the importance of differentiating the domains of paternal involvement. Advanced by Lamb and colleagues (1987) a tripartite categorization of paternal involvement was developed which distinguished three domains of paternal involvement. These include:

1. Interaction - the most encouraging type of involvement; involves actual one-on-one interaction between the father and his child. This is measured by observation of the father's direct contact with his child through caretaking and share activities.
2. Availability - a more indirect form of involvement; implies the father is physically available or accessible to the child and can easily be reached or approached whether or not direct interaction is occurring.
3. Responsibility - reflects the extent to which the father oversees total child well-being and caregiving activities. The father's role is to determine how the child is to be taken care of and that necessary resources are available to the child. This form of involvement requires more non-physical interactions.

Over the past two decades this model has been widely used to increase our understanding of paternal involvement (Palkovitz, 1997). Building on the research of Lamb and colleagues, Palkovitz (1997) hypothesized a continuum of involvement that expanded paternal involvement from Lamb's three domains to 15 categories. These categories include communication, teaching, monitoring, thought processes, errands, caregiving, child-related maintenance, shared interests, availability, planning, shared activities, providing, affection, protection, and emotional support. Palkovitz (1997) believed paternal involvement encompasses three domains of functioning: behavioral, cognitive, and affective. He argued research of paternal involvement has been singularly focused on the behavior of fathers. To better understand fathers' behavior regarding involvement with his children cognitive and affective domains must be assessed as well. Conceptions of paternal involvement must include the thought processes and emotional experiences of fathers.

Conceptualizing paternal involvement also involves redefining the term "father" (Marsiglio, et al., 2000; Roggman et al., 2002). Several scholars have gone on to identify the need to broaden the conceptualization of father to include his involvement with his child (Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 2002; Hawkins et al., 2002; Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 1997). Black's Law Dictionary (1999) defines a father simply as the male parent, but also further defines "parent" as the lawful father or mother of someone (p. 1137). In ordinary usage, the term parent commonly includes (1) the biological father or the natural mother of a child, (2) the adoptive father or adoptive mother of a child, (3) a child's putative blood parent who has expressly acknowledged paternity, and (4) an individual or agency

whose status as guardian has been established by judicial decree” (p. 1137). In other words, fathers are men who have a legally recognized role vis-à-vis their child.

2.2. Fatherhood

When surveyed, men indicate experiencing a sense of role ambivalence related to the culture and conduct of fathering (Coltrane, 1995; Griswold, 1993; Hewlett and West, 1998). Griswold (1993) asserts, “perhaps the most significant change in the reorganization of men’s lives is not their flight, but their confusion” (p. 247). This state of ambivalence exists because, over time, the meanings attributed to fatherhood in American culture have fluctuated (Marsiglio et al., 2000; Rotundo, 1985). These meanings are modified through social interactions between men and their social environment, shaping the culture and conduct regarding who fathers are and what fathers do (Doherty et al., 1998; Dollahite and Hawkins, 1998; Lamb, 1997; LaRossa, 2000).

Women and men receive differentiated societal messages about family-role expectations that are based for the most part on social construction of gender (Griswold, 1993). Gender role socialization continues to support the function of women as the primary caregiver; domestic and nurturing and men as the breadwinner and secondary caregiver. This distinction remains dominant in Western culture (Mintz, 1998; Willis, 2000). Moreover, Western culture assumes fathers willingly accept the role of economic provider or breadwinner. Breadwinning is an important function that contributes enormously to the development of a father’s role-identity (Griswold, 1993; McBride et al., 2005) and his acceptance of responsibility for this role is a critical milestone (Betcher and Pollack, 1998).

Using Martindale's (1969) definition of function – “a system-determined and system-maintaining activity” (p. 445) – the function of breadwinning and therefore the status of father in traditional families were critical in maintaining family systems. Maintaining financial responsibility for one's child has been a longstanding behavioral role expectation of men who become fathers (Marsiglio, 1995). It was felt that the father-role expectation of breadwinning promoted less physical involvement between fathers and their children and reinforced the role expectations of mothers as nurturer and child care providers (Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

In 1975, the Child Support Enforcement Program, Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, was signed into law. The primary objective of this program was to hold non-custodial parents financially responsible for child support (Garfinkel et al., 1998). The Child Support Amendments of 1984, The Family Support Act of 1988, and the child support legislation contained in the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) supported and enhanced the spirit of this federal initiative. Initially, child support legislation directed aggressive attention to “deadbeat dads” – irresponsible fathers who could afford to pay child support but refused to do so, regardless of whether or not it was legally required (Chambers, 1979; Mincy and Sorensen, 1998).

During the 1990s the concept of “responsible fathering” emerged as an expectation of the father-role (Doherty et al., 1998). Responsible fathering places greater emphasis on the provision of economic support of children by fathers. This concept was viewed as a lifelong commitment for all fathers, regardless of child residency. The goals of Section 300 - Child Support of the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity and Reconciliation

Act of 1996, were to locate non-custodial fathers, establish legal paternity of children, establish child support orders and improve collection and distribution of child support awards

Responsible fathering, according to Doherty et al. (1998), suggests “a set of desired norms for evaluating fathers’ behavior” (p. 278). Hence, normative responsible fathering communicates some fathering behaviors may actually be inappropriate or inadequate (Roy, 2000). This perspective ignores or de-values non-traditional forms of fathering (Hamer, 2001). Moreover, a number of researchers believe the label of “irresponsible father” has been disproportionately and inappropriately attached non-custodial and African-American fathers (Hamer, 2001; Marsiglio, 1995; Marsiglio et al., 2000; McAdoo, 1998; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1998; Roberts, 1998; Roy, 2000).

2.3. Non-custodial Fathers

Contemporary definitions of family and the father’s role set in the family are evolving rapidly (Ahrons, 1981; Arditti, 1995; Daly, 1993; Eggebeen and Knoester, 2001; Dienhart, 1998; Doherty, et al., 1998; Lamb, 1997; Manning et al., 2003). Nearly 50 percent of marriages in the United States result in divorce and approximately one third of all live births occur to unmarried mothers (Thorton, et al., 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Continued high rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirths increase the number of non-custodial fathers and the number of female-headed households. Many divorced men remarry or co-habit, have additional children and blend families, all of which require father involvement across households (Manning, Stewart, & Smock, 2003). These shifts in family structure present new challenges to fulfilling the traditional role of father, including his breadwinning.

While men in two-parent homes indicate experiencing ambivalence and confusion regarding their role-identity as father (Marsiglio, 1995; McBride and Rane, 2000), non-custodial fathers experience this role ambivalence and confusion more acutely (Arditti, 1995; Bowman & Sanders, 1998; Fox and Blanton, 1995; Madden-Derdich & Leonard, 2000). Legislators, judges, court representatives, family practitioners, custodial parents and children tend to define the status and role expectation of non-custodial fathers (Cancian and Meyer, 1998; Maldonado, 2005; Seltzer, 1998) and these definitions often find their way into legal paternity, child support and child custody hearings.

Moreover, non-custodial fathers who have poorly assimilated these definitions struggle to perform their expected role as father (Dudley, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001; Kruk, 1994). These non-custodial fathers have argued that role expectations regarding father involvement with their children are unclear (Dudley, 1996; Seltzer, 1991) lack social and legal support, and that child custody agreements need a level of legal accountability for both custodial and non-custodial parents (Arditti, 1995; Pearson and Thoennes, 1998). Non-custodial fathers tend to believe custodial mothers possess enormous power to control or influence court representatives, family caseworkers, and their children (Dudley, 1996; McBride et al., 2005). Hence, it is not surprising non-custodial fathers have commonly expressed a decreased sense of personal efficacy in child custody proceedings (Dudley, 1996; Kruk, 1994; Maldonado, 2005).

Much of the frustration experienced by non-custodial fathers who attempt to remain involved with their children appears to derive from their relationship with the mother (s) of their children (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Arditti, 1995; Dail and Thielman, 1996; DeLuccie, 1996; Hamer, 1998, 2001; Laakso, 2002). On-going disputes between the

custodial mother and the non-custodial father regarding the payment of child support, new romantic relationships, unemployment, and work schedules create conflicts that reduce further the connection between fathers and their children (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Edin and Lein, 1997; Hamer, 2001; Sorensen, 1997). Several researchers (Ahrons and Miller, 1993; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2000; Juby et al., 2005) have suggested the custodial mother's level of support of a father's physical, social, and financial involvement is crucial in predicting paternal involvement.

Non-custodial fathers have fewer opportunities than residential fathers to be involved with their children on a day-to-day basis (Schwartz and Finley, 2005; Seltzer, 1998). However, non-custodial fathers with shared custody arrangements are more involved with their children than non-custodial fathers with alternative custody arrangements (Arditti, 1992; Seltzer, 1998). It appears that where the child physically resides is important in facilitating father-child involvement. Therefore non-custodial fathers must become concerned with the type of child custody arrangement they agree to.

2.4. African-American Fathers

The African-American father is presented in the media as an invisible figure, either absent from the home of his child, tangential to the daily functioning of the family, or irresponsible and incapable of managing a family (Coley, 2001; Dowd, 2000). In 1972, the Temptations recorded the Grammy winning single, "Papa was a Rollin Stone". The chorus of this song seemed to capture well the public sentiment on African-American fathers:

Papa was a rolling stone. Wherever he laid his hat was his home.

And when he died. All he left us was alone.

Indeed, the perception of African-American men has been painted as a picture of extremes ranging from portrayals of unintelligent, uncaring and insensitive hustlers and criminals to irresponsible, uninvolved, absent fathers (Hamer, 2001; Hewlett and West, 1998; Johnson, 1993; Poussaint, 1996). Yet, the impact of race on paternal involvement is inconclusive. In some studies African-American non-custodial fathers were found to visit their children more frequently than non-custodial white fathers (Clayton et al., 2003; Pleck, 1997). This finding is consistent with large-scale studies that suggest African-American fathers have higher paternal engagement than white fathers (King, 1994; Lamb et al., 1987; Seltzer, 1991). However, in other studies, race was not found to be statistically significant in predicting paternal contact or involvement (Furstenberg et al., 1983; Fox, 1991; Pleck, 1997).

For many African-American fathers the role of breadwinner has proven difficult in a society that has a history of slavery, discrimination, and racism (McAdoo and McAdoo, 1998; Sudarkasa, 1997; Wilson, 1996). Given this historical backdrop, it may not have been possible or reasonable for low-income African-American fathers to meet the normative father role expectations of breadwinning (Black, 1997). It can be argued the long-term effects of not regularly performing the expected role of breadwinning reduced the likelihood this role behavior was recognized, valued, and associated with a positive father identity among African-American men (Allen and Connor, 1997).

Beginning in the 1960s, welfare workers, attempting to decrease the number of welfare recipients, implemented “man-in-the-house policies” and conducted “midnight house raids” in the hopes of finding men who could replace welfare as the fiscally responsible party (Trattner, 1999). These efforts disproportionately targeted minority

mothers who received welfare benefits. Unfortunately, the net effect of this approach was to reduce the involvement of non-residential (and non-custodial) African-American fathers with their families (Daniels, 1998; Katz, 1996). Faced with the choice of losing welfare benefits by keeping the father of her children in her home, many low-income African-American mothers made the pragmatic choice to continue the receipt of welfare benefits and lose father presence (Billingsley, 1968; Cabrera and Evans, 2000; Berry and Blassingame, 1982; Sorensen, 1999). Presently, many women face the same pressures to choose — pressure stemming from a strengthened welfare system that demands cooperation from mothers in identifying and locating fathers by establishing their legal paternity as a contingency of benefit reciprocity (Bartfeld, 2003; DiNitto, 2005; Hays, 2003).

In 1965, the African-American father, his role performance as father and his contributions to family functioning were documented in a treatise entitled *The Negro Family: the Case for National Action*, later referred to as the *Moynihan Report*. In this report, Senator Daniel Moynihan described the African-American family as “the tangle of pathology.” Ignoring the impact of social structures like institutionalized racism, discrimination, and economic oppression, the *Moynihan Report* suggested African-American fathers, due to their chronic absence, were primarily responsible for the deplorable economic condition of many African-American families in the United States (Daniels, 1998; Hill, 1993; Rainwater, 1967).

Because social structural barriers have inhibited normative father-role performance, African-American men have developed and utilized fathering styles that differ from traditional Western models (Clayton et al., 2003; Hamer, 2001; McAdoo, 1997). Instead

of attempting to perform the role of economic provider, African-American fathers tend to place greater priority on “being there” for their children (Allen & Doherty, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001; Hamer, 2001).

In several qualitative studies Hamer (1997, 2001) reported African-American non-custodial fathers believed spending time with their children was their most meaningful and important function as a father. According to Hamer (2001) these fathers perceived their primary objective as “being there” – that is, being physically, socially, or emotionally available to their child rather than being the economic provider. This contrasts the traditional Western notion suggesting economic provision constitutes responsible fathering behavior (Hamer, 1997; Roy, 2004). Recognizing both social and financial support of children as important, African-American, never-married, custodial mothers tend to place more significance on social support (“being there”) and accept proxies such as disposable diapers and baby clothes in place of traditional child support (Hamer, 2001; Roy, 2002).

2.5. Co-parenting Relationship

Characteristics of the co-parenting relationship influence father involvement for both ever-married and never-married fathers (Ahrns, 1981; Ahrns and Miller, 1993; McBride et al., 2005; Leite and McKenry, 2002). Co-parenting relationships with low conflict and high support of father involvement by the custodial mother are predictive of greater paternal involvement on the part of non-custodial fathers (DeLuccie, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001; Hamer, 2001; Madden-Derdich and Leonard, 2002; McLanahan and Carlson, 2002). DeLuccie (1995) reported father involvement could be predicted by

knowing the custodial mother's perception of the importance of, and satisfaction with, father involvement.

Parents who do not share the same residence must define, redefine, and negotiate their co-parenting relationship (Madden-Derdich and Leonard, 2002). Co-parenting suggests each parent participates in child development activities despite divorce, separation, or having never formed a household with one another (Ahrons, 1981; Dienhart, 1998). However, guidelines are unavailable for developing normative co-parenting role behaviors for non-residential, non-custodial fathers (Madden-Derdich and Leonard, 2000; McKenry, et al., 1992).

In this scenario, custodial mothers are viewed as mediators or “maternal gatekeepers” of the father-child relationship (Arditti, 1995; DeLuccie, 1996; Hoffman and Moon, 1999). Maternal gatekeeping is defined as the unwillingness of mothers to give up certain responsibilities of parenting to fathers by establishing rigid, sometimes unrealistic, standards for them (Allen and Hawkins, 1999; DeLuccie, 1995). Following divorce, separation, or the disruption of a never-married household, the majority of children reside with their mother. Hence, paternal involvement is highly dependent on the custodial mother (Insabella et al., 2003; Lamb et al., 1987; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992) with custodial mothers being considered significant in regulating father-child involvement (Hoffman and Moon, 1999; Pullman and Hamer, 1998).

When unmarried and never married non-custodial fathers are studied, differences are found in the association between the co-parenting relationship and paternal involvement. Unmarried fathers become involved with their newborn children, but have diminishing amounts of involvement as these children reach school age (Coley, 2001; Insabella et al.,

2003). Paternal involvement also diminishes when either parent remarries (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1997; Furstenberg et al., 1983; Seltzer, 1991). Kruk (1994) found non-custodial divorced fathers who had a high degree of involvement with their children prior to divorce experienced high levels of distress, a sense of loss, and hopelessness when contact was interrupted, discontinued, or significantly reduced (also see Spillman et al., 2004). Thus the majority of non-custodial fathers decreased or discontinued involvement with their children (Leite and McKenry, 2002; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Schwartz and Finley, 2005; Seltzer, 1998).

Dudley (1996) reviewed five qualitative studies assessing the perceptions and attitudes of divorced non-custodial fathers and reported that fathers who were dissatisfied with their visitation, child custody, and child support arrangements felt the divorce process was unfair. Moreover, they experienced ongoing conflicts with their former spouses. Several researchers have suggested reduced parenting satisfaction for non-custodial fathers was mediated by the amount of conflict with custodial mothers (DeLuccie, 1995; Hoffman and Moon, 1999; McBride et al., 2005).

2.6. Parenting Satisfaction

Limited research exists with a focus on developing conceptualizations and psychometric measurements of parenting satisfaction. A review of the literature addressing parenting satisfaction produced numerous studies that have examined parenting satisfaction test scales, but none appears to adequately define the term (Coles, 2001; Guidubaldi and Cleminshaw, 1985; James et al., 1985; Johnston and Mash, 1989). Researchers interested in parenting satisfaction have not investigated the parenting satisfaction of fathers

(Rogers and White, 1998). Rather they have speculated this through assessing mother's view of the father's satisfaction with parenting (Jackson, 1999). Greater attention has been directed toward understanding the correlates of marital satisfaction and marital dissolution (McBride and Rane, 1998). Parenting satisfaction tends to vary with marital happiness, gender of the parent, family structure, and the type of child custody arrangements (Leite and McKenry, 2002).

Upon divorce or separation from the mother of their children, the status of most men changes from resident father to non-resident, non-custodial father, requiring reorganization of family role expectations, gender role definitions, and authority within the family structure (Fox and Blanton, 1995). At this point non-custodial fathers experience lower levels of parenting satisfaction when compared with their residential counterparts (Leite and McKenry, 2002; Minton and Pasley, 1996). Minton and Pasley (1996) report divorced, non-custodial fathers feel less competent and are less satisfied with parenting than non-divorced, residential fathers.

Non-custodial fathers have reported dissatisfaction in performing their role as a father due to the loss of control they feel over access to their children (Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 2001). Both mothers and fathers report greater parenting satisfaction when father involvement in decision-making about family and child matters is high (Russell and Radojevic, 1992). Limited research has reported greater parenting satisfaction with non-custodial fathers who have shared custody arrangements with their children (Insabella, et al., 2003; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Seltzer, 1998).

2.7. Child Custody Arrangements and Their Relationship to Paternal Involvement

Child custody is the legal relationship between a parent and child. Child custody arrangements are designed to preserve as much of the parent-child relationship as possible when the family system is separated (Statsky, 1997). According to Statsky (1997) in any legal proceeding questioning the residence and care of a child, the court determines the legal and practical relationship between parents and children. Like most aspects of family law, the state rather than the Federal government has jurisdiction in these matters (Luppino and Miller, 2002).

In Pennsylvania, the best interests of the child standard are used to determine child custody (PA.C.S.A., 2001). Yet, Pennsylvania law presently contains no definition of the child's "best interests." Judges in Pennsylvania may consider a number of factors when making a custody determination including assessing the appropriateness and disposition of the parents, the condition of the proposed custodial environment, and the abilities of each parent to provide for the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well being of the child. PA.C.S.A. (2001), Title 23, Domestic Relations 5301 stated, "The General Assembly declares that it is public policy of this Commonwealth, when it is in the best interest of the child, to assure a reasonable and continuing contact of the child with both parents after a separation or dissolution of the marriage and the sharing of the rights and responsibilities of child rearing by both parents and continuing contact of the child or children with grandparents when a parent is deceased, divorced or separated." (p. 35).

There are five discrete categories of child custody defined by PA.C.S.A. Statute 5302 (2001):

1. Legal custody - refers to the legal right to make major decisions affecting the best interest of a minor child, including, but not limited to, medical, religious, and educational decisions.
2. Partial custody - refers to the right of the non-custodial parent to take possession of a child away from the custodial parent for a certain period of time.
3. Physical custody - refers to the actual physical possession and control of a child.
4. Shared custody - refers to an order awarding shared legal or shared physical custody, or both, of a child in such a way as to assure the child of frequent and continuing contact with and physical access to both parents.
5. Visitation - refers to the right to visit a child. The term does not include the right to remove a child from the custodial parent's control.

Child custody arrangements may have an important effect in predicting paternal involvement (Koball and Principe, 2002; Pearson and Thoennes, 1998; Seltzer, 1998; Seltzer, Schaeffer, & Charng, 1989). As previously discussed, over time non-custodial fathers tend to become less involved with their children, particularly when the parents were never married (Laakso, 2004). Little is known about the behavior of unmarried couples seeking judicial resolve in child custody matters (Huang, et al., 2003). Unmarried non-custodial fathers appear to have more obstacles to overcome regarding visitation and their involvement than divorced non-custodial fathers (Dudley, 1996; Insabella, et al., 2003).

Greater father-child involvement is achieved through shared custody, also referred to as joint legal custody (Arditti, 1992; Huang, et al., 2003; Insabella et al., 2003; Seltzer, 1998). Seltzer (1998) reports fathers who have shared custody are more involved with their children. They see their children more frequently and have more overnight visits than fathers with other types of child custody arrangements. Shared custody formalizes the relationship between a non-custodial father and his children (Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992) and offers more opportunities to perform other father roles beyond economic provision (Henley and Pasley, 2005; Insabella et al., 2003; Leite and McKenry, 2002).

In recent years, the probability that divorced parents will agree to shared custody arrangements has increased (Huang, et al., 2003; Seltzer, 1998; Wilcox et al., 1998). Divorced non-custodial fathers are now more likely to have acquired physical custody (Insabella, et al., 2003) and be more involved with their children (Arditti, 1992; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Pearson and Thoennes, 1998; Seltzer, 1991; Seltzer, Schaeffer, & Charng, 1989). However, in the vast number of child custody disputes, legal and physical custody is still awarded to mothers (Insabella et al., 2003; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992), requiring the court to determine child visitation.

Visitation refers to the right of the non-custodial parent to visit their children (P.A.C.S.A., 2001). Family courts are increasingly faced with the burden of deciding when, how, and how often divorced, never married or remarried non-custodial fathers can be involved with their children (Insabella, et al., 2003). Pollack and Mason (2004) argue that to maximize the involvement of both parents, visitation rights (except for circumstances that might be harmful to children) should be viewed as an obligation owed

by non-custodial parents to their children and protected or enforced by the court (see Dowd, 2000).

The legalization and protection of father-child relationships is extremely important for non-custodial fathers. When non-custodial fathers experience conflict in the co-parenting relationship, it is not uncommon for custodial mothers to restrict or reduce visitation with children. These fathers feel they have little control over decision-making regarding their children; hence, they are less likely to remain involved with their child (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1997; Nelson, 2004). The perception by non-custodial fathers, of having little control or influence with their children, appears to create conditions that promote role disengagement (Kruk, 1994) or role distance (Goffman, 1961) and less paternal involvement (Dudley, 1996; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992).

In court hearings the change in status from father to non-custodial father is abrupt and ambiguous. Non-custodial fathers argue that, in an instant, their status with their children is changed from father to visitor which creates feelings of discouragement and impotence (Kruk, 1994; Spillman et al., 2004). The term visitor reinforces the role ambiguity already experienced by men in the status of father (Leite and McKenry, 2002).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ROLE THEORY AND SELF-EFFICACY

The theoretical frameworks guiding this research are role theory (Biddle and Thomas, 1979; Sarbin and Allen, 1954) and the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). A description of role theory and self-efficacy theory and how each informs this study is now presented. Whether referring to residential or non-custodial fathers, the theoretical models of role theory and self-efficacy theory provide a useful framework that may improve our understanding of the status of father, remove some role ambiguity, and reduce role conflict associated with father-role expectations, thereby increasing father involvement with children. The integration of both theories used in this study is necessary based on the limitations of role theory.

In this chapter a description of the field of role (Biddle and Thomas, 1966), also referred to as role theory, along with an important distinction between status and role are provided. The discussion of role is expanded to include the concepts of role expectations and role performance. Finally, the principle of self-role congruence, the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflict and the limitations of role theory to address the sociological, cognitive, and emotional motivations of human behavior are reviewed.

3.1. Role Theory

Biddle and Thomas (1966) assert there is no grand theory of role. Given the difficulty in devising a typology for the field of role, role perspective or the theory of role the researchers nonetheless state role theory is a particularly useful framework for observing factors that influence (or are perceived to influence) human behavior. Role theory is a

social psychological perspective used to explain the construction of roles in society and to describe role relationships in social statuses (Longres, 2000).

Advanced by theorists such as George Mead, Jacob Moreno, and Ralph Linton, role theory suggests that social structures are designed, created, and sustained by socially engineered expectations found in statuses (Biddle and Thomas, 1979; Turner, 1991). Statuses are social positions designed by society and occupied by individuals, whereas role is the performance of the expectations or behaviors associated with the status (Berger, Ridgeway, and Zelditch, 2002; Linton, 1936). Linton (1936) defined a social status as simply as “a collection of rights and duties distinctive from the individual who may occupy it” (pp. 113-114). An individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it in relation to other statuses. A “right” is a socially normative expectation that allows the anticipation of behavior, in relation and context, by a person in one position relative to a person in another position (Linton, 1936; Biddle and Thomas, 1979).

Conceptually, roles represent the operational aspect of a status and the expressed expectations of a society for the regulation of individual conduct and action (Biddle, 1986). As men occupy the status of father; Western society expects *all* fathers to financially support their children (Doherty et al., 1998). For some men the father status varies from residential father to non-custodial father. However, regardless of residency status, Western society maintains that every father assumes financial responsibility for his children.

The role expectations for an individual are first provided by society (Collins, 1988; Mead, 1934). In other words, Western society defines one role of father as economic provision or breadwinning with the expectation that every father voluntarily contributes

financially to the needs of his children (Doherty et al., 1998). Although the status of non-custodial fathers is poorly defined, society's expectation of non-custodial fathers maintains the financial support of children. Role performance (or role enactment) is the observable implementation of required action or behavior (Biddle and Thomas, 1979) associated with a status. Role expectations are the behaviors (role performances), attitudes, and cognitions that can be anticipated by role partners (Collins, 1988), primary group members (Cooley, 1902), and the broader society (Ritzer, 2000).

The concept of role or role theory utilizes the traditions of theatre (Biddle, 1979; Biddle and Thomas, 1979). The term "roll" (changed to "role") was taken from the Latin word *rotula*, a small wooden spindle where pages of parchment were wound and stored. In Greece and Rome, theatrical parts were written on these rolls and were read to audiences and memorized by actors. In the 16th and 17th century these rolls became associated with the language of theater to designate theatrical parts or roles. The transition to the term role, from its usage in theater to a social psychological theoretical framework, did not occur in the United States until the 1930s (Biddle and Thomas, 1979).

The conceptual underpinning of role theory is that on-stage theater performances are primarily successful because the theatrical participants – the actors, the director and the stage crew – all agree and adhere to a script (Biddle, 1979). The theatrical script, along with the stage directions, act as a guide for actors, providing instruction to perform specific behaviors within the context of their roles. The actor receives information and instructions concerning the role expectations prior to the actual performance of the role. Because the expectations of roles are shared with the entire stage production crew, the on-stage action is structured and predictable (Biddle and Thomas, 1979).

In like fashion, individuals in society occupy social statuses with corresponding roles. An individual enters each social situation with numerous social statuses (Linton, 1936). The role performance of each social status is shaped by established social norms, social demands, obligations and rules, by prior role performances of other people in the same or similar social positions, by the response of others in society, and by the beliefs about the capacities of the person in the social position to perform the role (Berger et al., 2002; Biddle and Thomas, 1979). These social norms are the agreed upon ways of behaving that give order and purpose to social institutions and a social system (Longres, 2000). The sharing of these social norms occurs through a process called socialization. Socialization is the method of teaching a person the roles associated with their social position and how to perform those roles appropriately in society (Collins, 1988; Ritzer, 2000).

Although a multidimensional construct of “father” is understood and accepted, the status of father in Western society has greater emphasis placed on the role expectation and performance of economic provision, to the near exclusion of promoting other role expectations such as nurturer (Dowd, 2000; Griswold, 1993). This becomes problematic for men who are not sure of father-role expectations (role ambiguity), are unable or unwilling to perform the role expectation (role conflict) of economic provision, or are faced with limited role choices (self-role congruency). Later in this chapter a more fully developed discussion of role ambiguity, role conflict, and self-role congruency is offered.

Variations of father status, such as non-custodial father, step-father, or adoptive father, have received less research attention; therefore we know little about how men become involved with their children in those statuses. Moreover, clearly defined role

definitions and expectations for the variations of fatherhood have not yet been developed (Griswold, 1993; Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio, et al. 2000). Some research suggests men have experienced a sense of role ambivalence and role confusion concerning fatherhood (Griswold, 1993; Mintz, 1998; Leite and McKenry, 2002). Griswold (1993) asserted, “(p)erhaps the most significant change in the reorganization of men’s lives is not their flight, but their confusion” (p. 247).

This sense of role ambivalence and role confusion exists because the status of father, which provides men with information and instruction regarding who fathers are and what fathers are expected to do, have been poorly defined by society (Lamb, 1997; McBride and Rane, 2000). When the individual finds the role expectations confusing, vague, or ambiguous, rejects the role, is incapable of performing the role, or has few role choices available, the result is disharmony and conflict (Mead, 1934, Montgomery, 2005; Ritzer, 2000; Turner, 1991). Disharmony leads to frustration and a loss of satisfaction with the role. Self-role congruence becomes important to the fulfillment of role expectations by role incumbents.

3.2. Self-role Congruence

The principle of “self-role congruence” assumes there is a harmonious interaction between the individual and his negotiation of the role expectations inherent in a social status (Mead, 1934; Montgomery, 2005). “Self-role congruence” addresses the relationship between role expectations and the personal requirements needed to fulfill those expectations (Berger et al., 2002; Sarbin and Allen, 1954). According to Sarbin and Allen (1954), “when self characteristics are congruent with role requirements, role

enactment is more effective, proper, and appropriate than when role and self are incongruent” (p. 524).

The assumption of self-role congruency is two-fold (Sarbin and Allen, 1954; E Sites, personal communications, January 26, 2007). First, the individual must perceive the role expectations to be consistent and equitable. When role expectations are perceived by the person in the status as unfair or unreasonable the role expectations move from unaccepted responsibilities to coerced obligations. Experiencing this sense of coercion the person may withdraw and detach from performing behaviors that affirm and validate the role.

In relationships where men believe they have been unfairly treated, experienced high levels of conflict while performing the role of non-custodial father, and are continually threatened with coercive tactics to comply with child support orders non-custodial fathers have withheld child support payments, in part, to demonstrate their frustration with a child support enforcement system that does not provide methods to ensure father-child access and visitation (Pearson and Thoennes, 1998). The behavior of withholding child support payments may be more of an attempt to exercise control and make a statement to the judicial system than a reflection of a father-child relationship. Goffman (1961) refers to this process of withdrawal and detachment as role distance defined as “separateness between the individual and his acknowledged role” (p. 108).

Second, the individual must have the capacity to perform all role expectations appropriated to their occupied status. Non-custodial fathers have suggested their ability to perform appropriate fathering role behaviors is restricted due to the challenges of parenting in multiple households (Arditti, 1995; Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 2001; Insabella et al., 2003). Also, ongoing conflicts regarding role expectations between the custodial

mother(s) and the non-custodial father (Ahrons and Miller, 1993; Allen and Hawkins, 1999; Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 2001; Kost, 2001) appear to decrease satisfaction with parenting for non-custodial fathers (Kruk, 1994; Leite and McKenry, 2002). Moreover, pathways to acquiring shared child custody or child visitation may be limited due to social structural barriers, such as the "best interests of the child" standard, which does not assist, support, strengthen, or sustain men in their role as involved non-custodial fathers (Arditti, 1995; DeLuccie, 1995; Insabella et al., 2003; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Seltzer, 1998). Sarbin and Allen (1954) assert a precipitous passage or transition from one status to another, such as the separation or divorce of a spouse, can produce a lack of clarity regarding role expectations of the new or modified status and create confusion and role ambiguity for the role occupant. Consensus, self-role congruency, and therefore predictability in role performance are accomplished when role expectations are not ambiguous; that is roles are clear, specific, and agreed to by the actor.

3.3. Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is defined as an inconsistency between available information and the absence of sufficient information necessary for a person to adequately perform a role (Kahn, 1964). When role expectations are unclear or unknown compliance with role expectations, that is performing the expected role between and producing the corresponding attitudes when occupying a specific social status, may be difficult and unpredictable. Individuals who experience role ambiguity express frustration, conflict, and a loss of satisfaction with the role (Kahn, 1964; Sarbin and Allen, 1954).

In child custody hearings men argue that, in an instant, their status and therefore their relationship with their children is changed from father to non-custodial father and in some cases “visitor” (Kruk, 1994; Spillman et al., 2004). The term “visitor” reinforces role ambiguity already established in the status of father (Leite and McKenry, 2002). A growing number of non-custodial fathers struggle with the notion of conforming to social role expectations that effectively eliminate their impact in the lives of their children and reduce their paternal involvement to *only* paying child support (Dudley, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001, Lamb, 2000). This group of men has unwillingly accepted the label “visitor” which redefines father-role expectations, who they are as fathers and what they can do with their children. When men become non-custodial fathers they experience a level of role ambivalence related to the type and amount of authority and influence they have and can express with their children (Cooksey and Craig, 1998).

It has been well documented that separated, divorced, non-custodial, and non-residential fathers have diminishing amounts of contact with their biological children (Bernard and Knitzer, 1999; Coley, 2001; Furstenberg and Cherlin, 1991; Furstenberg et al., 1983; Hamer, 2001; Kruk, 1994; Smock and Manning, 1997). Dudley (1996) reported that many non-custodial fathers voiced a sense of hopelessness and despair regarding their ability to gain custody of or establish contact with their children due to the influence of the courts and the maternal gatekeeping of the custodial mother. In that same study men also reported feeling a sense of loss and confusion regarding their parent identity.

3.4. Role Conflict

When consensus regarding role expectations cannot be achieved, one consideration is that there are conflicting sets of legitimized role expectations that cannot be performed or fulfilled by the individual (E. Sites, personal communications, January 26, 2007). Role conflict occurs when there are two or more distinct and different expectations for compliance in role enactment (Biddle, 1986; Longres, 2000; Sarbin and Allen, 1954). Sarbin and Allen (1954) identified inter-role and intra-role conflict as two types of role conflict. Inter-role conflict occurs because a person occupies two or more statuses at the same time with each position competing for the fulfillment of role expectations. Because the role expectations for each status are conflicting the individual generally experiences difficulty satisfying the role expectations of one or both statuses.

Low-income non-custodial fathers experience inter-role conflict in unique ways. One role expectation for *all* fathers in American society is that each father financially supports their children. This role expectation is significantly affected by periodic shifts in the national economy and the availability of family sustaining employment (Mintz, 1998). Family sustaining employment provides full-time, stable work and wages and typically offers health benefits for the entire family. Our national economy is currently transitioning from providing employment that sustains families to one that sustains individuals (Mintz, 1998; Wilson, 1996). An individual wage economy is typically low paying, temporary, unstable, and lacks benefit packages that make it difficult to support a family. This type of employment is erratic, generally requiring employees to work varied shifts, primarily during the evenings and weekends. The number of opportunities for father involvement with children is significantly reduced for men who work in these

employment settings and without co-residency fathers are conflicted in how to be involved with their children.

Lack of family sustaining employment severely restricts the capacity of fathers to become involved with their children and has a profound impact on their ability to fulfill the role expectation of financial support of children (Sorensen and Zibman, 2001). Child support “reforms”, generally punitive in nature, place undue financial hardships on low-income non-custodial fathers (Garrison, 2000; Mincy and Sorensen, 1998; Nelson, 2004; Roy, 2004). For some non-custodial fathers, being the economic provider of a family may be an unrealistic role expectation. For example, low-income non-custodial fathers, defined as those men with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty threshold, may experience problems paying child support when their average annual income is approximately \$7,000 (Sorensen and Lerman, 1998).

Curran and Abrams (2000) assert an individual wage economy along with stringent child support enforcement policies exert pressure on non-custodial African-American fathers in ways that impede responsible fathering and father involvement. Confronted with pressures to become the economic provider, some African-American men engage in role choices (such as participating in criminal activities) that further reduce or eliminate family contact or father-child involvement (McAdoo, 1993; McAdoo and McAdoo, 1998; Wade, 1994; Wilson, 1996).

Intra-role conflict exists when expectations for a specific position, as perceived by two or more groups, are nonconsensual. Typically the role expectations are opposed or contradictory to one another and make it difficult to satisfy either role expectation. Role expectations for the custodial parent (generally the mother) and non-custodial parent

(generally the father) are not well defined in American society (Madden-Derdich and Leonard, 2000; McKenry, et al., 1992). Hence, role expectations are highly dependent on how well roles for each parent status are defined in family court (Insabella et al., 2003; Lamb et al., 1987; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992). The dominant role expectation for fathers, including non-custodial fathers, remains economic provision for their children (Doherty et al, 1998; Dowd, 2000; Griswold, 1993). Although greater paternal involvement is desired by more non-custodial fathers, contact with children is mediated by custodial mothers.

For varied reasons custodial mothers may reduce the amount of contact and involvement non-custodial fathers have with their children. This intra-role conflict has a direct effect on parent satisfaction (DeLuccie, 1995; Hoffman and Moon, 1999; McBride et al., 2005) and an indirect effect on father involvement (Ihinger-Tallman, et al., 1993; McBride, et al., July 2005). Non-custodial fathers become dissatisfied with parenting as an outgrowth of their dissatisfaction with the actions of custodial mothers and family court systems that demand child support compliance, but become listless when responding their request for more involvement with their children.

3.5. Limitations of Role Theory

Almost to the exclusion of other possible explanations of human behavior role theory primarily focuses on the interpersonal dynamics and social structures of social interaction. Biddle (1979) asserts, “(r)ole theory is ‘weak’ on motivation...” (p. 345). In general, proponents of role have ignored concepts of motivation as antecedents to behavior. Thomas and Biddle (1966) conclude the term “role” is often used

prescriptively, with no agreed upon index of motives for behavior or action. The concepts of role are not integrated to form a coherent theory nor do the concepts incorporate psychological or emotional states of humans to explaining or predicting behavior. One strategy offered by role theorists for this shortcoming is to introduce and integrate additional concepts or theories that address motivational processes.

3.6. Self-Efficacy

In this study self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) addresses the issue of personal motivation and will be integrated with role theory. Briefly described in this section is the definition and types of self-efficacy, how one's level of self-efficacy can affect behavior and the application of self-efficacy theory to improving our understanding of non-custodial fathers and the amount of involvement they have with their children.

Faced with overwhelming obstacles and adversities, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can” is the motivating message found in the childhood classic *The Little Engine that Could* by Bragg and Lenski (1930). This timeless classic described what could be achieved by one's determination and will-to-do. A train loaded with important items for children broke down at the base of a mountain and no other engines would provide help to get the train to the other side. Then along came a little blue engine, who initially said, “I'm not very big. And I have never been over the mountain”, but believed, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can”, ultimately successfully delivering toys to the children on the other side of the mountain. The enduring message captured in this childhood classic provides the underpinnings of self-efficacy theory.

Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 2). Bandura (1997) suggested the belief in one’s capacity to produce specific and valued outcomes is a significant motivator of human behavior. The basic premise underlying self-efficacy theory is in the belief that personal effort will lead to successful or desired outcomes. Bandura (1997) asserted that motivation to produce particular role behavior or “if one can muster whatever it takes to succeed” (p. 80) is found in one’s belief in their ability to achieve certain desired outcomes. The magnitude of one’s belief determines whether an individual will perform a particular role. According to Bandura there are two types of expectations, an outcome expectation and an efficacy expectation, which emerge from one’s belief in personal effort. An outcome expectation is a person’s belief about the outcomes that result from the enactment of a given action. Efficacy expectations are found in the confidence in one’s capacity to initiate a particular action or behavior.

Self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by four sources of information that can develop or increase one’s self-efficacy. These sources include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and psychological and emotional states. Mastery experiences, the most effective method of developing a perception of self-efficacy, are achieved by repeatedly producing desired and valued outcomes (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). Bandura (1997) asserted, “[e]nactive mastery experiences...provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. After people become convinced they have what it takes to succeed, they persevere in the face of adversity and quickly rebound from setbacks” (p. 80).

Through mastery experiences, the individual also develops a belief in his ability to reproduce the same desired outcomes in the future (Bandura, 1997; Bray, Brawley, & Carron, 2002). Conversely, the individual's failure to reproduce desired outcomes undermines this sense of personal efficacy. Lowered self-efficacy happens when there are repeated failures before a level of personal efficacy has been established (Bandura, 1997). Low self-efficacy (or the perceived inability to affect outcomes) makes life unpredictable, and produces a sense of dread, unresponsiveness, and despair (Elder, 1997).

Over time, significant numbers of non-custodial fathers reduce contact with their children (Bernard and Knitzer, 1999; Blankenhorn, 1995; Furstenberg and Cherlin, 1991; Furstenberg, et al., 1983; Hamer, 2001; Kruk, 1994; Smock and Manning, 1997). In qualitative studies to assess non-custodial fathers' perceptions of their parental role Dudley (1996) reported many men voiced a sense of hopelessness and despair regarding their ability to gain custody of or to establish contact with their children. These men reported a loss of control linked to their parental identity, their decision-making influence, and their limited ability to visit their children. Hence, these fathers decreased contact with their children to reduce or avoid emotional pain (Arditti, 1995; Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 1997; Kruk, 1994; McKenry & Price, 1992).

Non-custodial fathers are now challenged to find innovative ways to establish or maintain involvement with their child. As non-custodial fathers seek involvement with their children, they typically must negotiate the type and amount of involvement with the custodial mother (Arditti, 1995; DeLuccie, 1995; Hoffman and Moon, 1999; Seltzer, 1991). As stated earlier, the support of father-child involvement is believed to be mediated by custodial mothers (Cabrera and Evans, 2000; McBride et al., 2005; Hoffman

& Moon, 1999). The existing literature suggests custodial mothers act as gatekeepers of father-child involvement (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; DeLuccie, 1995). For this reason, their support or lack of support for a father's involvement typically determines whether or not access and visitation is granted (Lamb et al., 1987; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992).

Fathers who have greater involvement with their children have reported high levels of self-efficacy (Arditti, 1992; Greif, 1979). As Greif (1979) affirmed, "the more opportunity fathers have to act as fathers, the more they see themselves as fathers and seek to continue that involvement" (p. 313). Therefore, it becomes important for non-custodial fathers to enter into negotiation with custodial mothers with the belief he can become involved with their children. It would be reasonable to predict, following self-efficacy theory, that non-custodial fathers who believe, with personal action and effort, they can make a difference in the lives of their children would have increased paternal involvement. Although the dominant role expectation for fathers remains economic provision for their children, greater paternal involvement is desired by more non-custodial fathers (Dowd, 2000; Hamer, 2001; Kruk, 1994; Leite and McKenry, 2002) and is being acknowledged by American society (Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1997; McBride and Darragh, 1995).

3.7. Methodological Criticisms of the Existing Research on Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement

There is a growing body of literature focused on non-custodial fathers and their involvement with their children. However, the literature from which these two discussions were drawn includes a number of methodological problems. These problems can be divided into three categories:

1. Research Designs, Data Collections, and Sampling Procedures
2. Residential Status and Ethnicity of Sample Participants
3. Measurement Issues

3.8. Research Design, Data Collection, and Sampling Procedure

Recent fatherhood research has suffered due to poor study designs, inadequate data collection procedures and methods used to identify representative samples of fathers (Marsiglio, et al., 2000; Roggman, et al., 2002). Much of the existing research on non-custodial fathers has utilized study designs that were quantitative and cross-sectional. However, because research on fathers, fathering, and fatherhood is emerging, combining quantitative and qualitative methods and examining father-child development over time provides multiple ways to improve our understanding. Mixed methodological approaches allow researchers to study the development of fathers, their relationship with the mother of their child and relationships with the child themselves. Critical variables such as co-parenting relationship and the non-custodial father's satisfaction with parenting may be better understood when examined longitudinally. Co-parenting relations and parenting satisfaction are not constants, but are developmental. Longitudinal studies allow researchers to observe the interaction effects of the age and maturation of father, mother and the children in diverse family formations. For example, over time non-custodial fathers involved in co-parenting high in conflict tend to reduce their involvement with their children (Henley and Pasley, 2005; Laakso, 2004; McLanahan and Carlson, 2002).

One advantage offered by qualitative designs is the opportunity to learn from the fathers themselves. Historically, much of the data collected and much of what we know

about non-custodial fathers has come from mothers – divorced or separated mothers, single and poor mothers, and unmarried or never married mothers (Arditti, 1995; Cabrera et al., 2000; Dudley, 1996; Furstenberg et al., 1992; Jackson, 1999; Smock and Manning, 1997). Early research focused on fathers and fathering behaviors relied heavily on the custodial mother to provide information. Because these data came from custodial mothers they could not accurately represent the perceptions, cognitions, and motivations of fathers. The initial assumptions that guided research regarding father involvement were paternal involvement was limited to certain specific activities, it was temporal and a directly observable interaction between fathers and their children, and data collection methods used with mothers could simply be altered (such as replacing the pronoun she with he) to “fit” fathers. We have learned that all involvement is not equivalent; that father involvement with children is not the same as mother involvement, father involvement with one specific child is not the same for all children, and residential and custodial father involvement can be vastly different from non-residential and non-custodial father involvement.

Yet, locating and surveying a representative sample of non-custodial fathers is difficult for a number of reasons. Non-custodial fathers are typically under-represented in empirical research (Nelson, 2004; Sorensen, 1997). Estimates suggest between 22 to 44percent of non-custodial fathers are absent in nationally representative surveys (Marsiglio, et al., 2000; Sorensen, 1997). Certain sub-populations of non-custodial fathers, such as African-American and Latino males, are undercounted in the U.S Census (Fox, 1991; Hernandez and Brandon, 2002; Sorensen, 1999). Non-custodial fathers are more likely to belong to subgroups that are jailed or enter the military; sampling

strategies often neglect fathers who are in prison, jails, or the military (Marsiglio, et al., 2000). Hence, this under-representation of non-custodial fathers makes it difficult to estimate their presence, let alone their social and human needs.

Also, in order to remain “invisible” to various legal and governmental systems, African-American men, more than white men, are less likely to self-identify as non-custodial fathers (McAdoo, 1993; Sorensen, 1997) and are very difficult to recruit as research participants (Hamer, 2001; Sorensen and Zibman, 2001). Based on their history, African-American men have developed distrust for governmental systems such as public welfare, child support, and child custody (Hamer, 2001; Roy, 2002).

Nationally representative studies have done little to address the issues articulated by non-custodial fathers regarding father-child involvement (Arditti, 1995; Kruk, 1994; Marsiglio, 1995; Nelson, 2004; Pleck, 1997). Large national data sets typically measure father involvement with respect to time spent performing observable activities. Little attention is given to the quality of involvement or the different dimensions of involvement (Cabrera et al., 2000; Lamb, 2000; Palkovitz, 1997).

Smaller cross-sectional studies have addressed the physical presence or absence of fathers and the correlation between involvement with their children and child support (Sorensen and Zibman, 2001; Veum, 1992). However, the results from these smaller studies lack generalizability (McAdoo, 1993; Roy, 2000). McAdoo (1997) acknowledges that studies focusing on white fathers typically draw samples from middle-class residential groups and studies that concentrate on African-American fathers draw samples from improvised father-absent communities. The literature on African American fathers has almost exclusively sampled low-income men from economically challenged

communities (McAdoo, 1997; Marsiglio et al., 2000; Mintz, 1998; Wade, 1994). These study samples are not representative of all African-American fathers, thus limiting the generalizability of study results (McAdoo, 1997) and perpetuating stereotypes about low-income men.

3.9. Residential Status and Race

Discussions surrounding fatherhood and paternal involvement have assumed fathers are a homogeneous group (Palkovitz, 1997; Tamis-LeMonda and Cabrera, 2002). Much of the existing fatherhood literature addressing paternal involvement is derived from samples of white middle-class men who were residential fathers, typically living in intact families (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, and Lamb, 2000). Changes in family structure challenge our current definitions of father, mother, and family (Marsiglio, 1995; Pleck and Pleck, 1997). Presently, there are insufficient empirical data concerning non-custodial fathers, particularly those who were never married (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2000; Mandell, 1995; Sorensen and Zibman, 2000).

Early researchers of African-American fathers limited their examination to the study of absent father's financial support of his child (Cochran, 1997; McAdoo, 1981, Roberts, 1998). Contemporary research of African-American fathers continues to use a deficit model to examine issues of child support and father-child relationships (Hamer, 2001; Marsiglio, 1995; McAdoo, 1993). This methodological approach may suppress or skew the realities of economic deprivation and discrimination that make it difficult for African-American fathers to successfully perform their roles. For example few studies examined the effects of "father-*presence*" in African-American homes (Coley, 2001; Cochran,

1997; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1998) and even fewer solicited the perception of African-American men themselves (Hamer, 2001; Kost, 2001).

3.10. Measurement Issues

Measurement of paternal involvement has proven difficult given the varied ways the term has been conceptualized (Lamb, 2000; Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 1997). The lack of a consistent and inclusive definition has contributed to questionable or mixed results regarding the effects of predictor variables with paternal involvement (Harris, et al., 1998, Hawkins and Palkovitz, 1999; McBride and Rane, 1998; Pleck, 1997; Schoppe-Sullivan, et al., 2004). The existing study will address the following research questions:

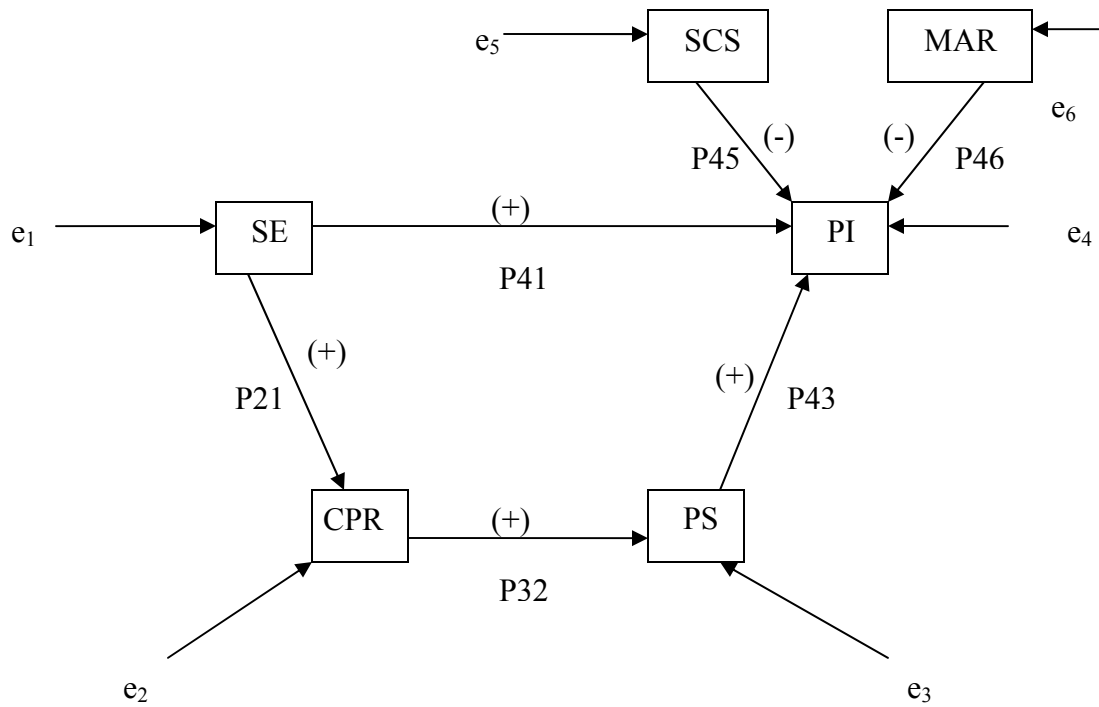
1. Do a set of psycho-social variables exist that predict paternal involvement of non-custodial fathers with their children?
2. What are the effects of self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, and parenting satisfaction on paternal involvement?

To address these research questions an initial path model (see Figure 3.1) was developed to test the following hypotheses:

1. Based on self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) the variable self-efficacy has a direct positive effect on co-parenting relationship. In this path model self-efficacy functions as an exogenous variable.
2. Based on self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) the variable self-efficacy has a direct positive effect on the endogenous variable paternal involvement.

3. The co-parenting relationship has a direct positive effect on the endogenous variable parenting satisfaction² (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; Minton & Pasley, 1996; Pleck, 1997).
4. Parenting satisfaction has direct positive effect on the endogenous variable paternal involvement .
5. When the effect of the variable “shared custody” is controlled, the level of paternal involvement will decrease for those participants who reported having shared child custody status.
6. When the effect of the variable “married” is controlled, the level of paternal involvement will decrease for those participants who reported they are presently married.

²Because there is a high probability that each participant has fathered children with more than one woman the level of conflict/support is measured with each mother.



SE = self-efficacy
 CPR = co-parenting relationship
 PS = satisfaction with parenting
 PI = paternal involvement
 SCS = shared custody status
 MAR = married
 e = error

Figure 3.1: Path Diagram for Initial Model Paternal Involvement

4. METHODS

Chapter One outlined the purpose of this study and identified a set of psycho-social variables posited to predict involvement between non-custodial fathers and their children. In Chapter Two a contextual backdrop was provided for the examination of the construct paternal involvement and fatherhood. The methods used in this study, the recruitment and screening of participants, data collection, and data analysis are detailed in Chapter Three. This research study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. Do a set of psycho-social variables predict paternal involvement of non-custodial fathers with their child?
2. What are the effects of self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, and parenting satisfaction on paternal involvement?

4.1. Sample

A convenience sample of non-custodial fathers was drawn from men enrolled in the Erie Family Center for Child Development Fatherhood Initiatives Programs. Participants were recruited from three Fatherhood Initiatives Programs: (1) Foundations of Fatherhood, (2) Dr. Dads, and (3) Access and Visitation Program.

Non-custodial fathers were recruited during the final week in July and throughout the month of August, 2005. Flyers requesting the voluntary participation of non-custodial fathers were distributed in all five facilities where father support groups were held (see Appendix A). The flyer briefly explained the purpose of the study, provided assurance of participant confidentiality and identified the principal investigator as a doctoral student.

During July and August, 2005, 107 non-custodial fathers were enrolled in one of three fatherhood programs. Every father who attended a father support program was offered an opportunity to complete The Study of Fatherhood and Paternal Involvement questionnaire (see Appendix B). To determine if a father was eligible for the study, the following inclusion criteria were read aloud at all five group meetings:

1. non-custodial father, who is 18 years or older.
2. fathered at least one minor child who is currently 17 years or younger.
3. have at least one minor children living with someone else.

Of the 107 men enrolled in the fatherhood programs, 72 fathers self-reported they understood and met the inclusion criteria. An Informed Consent form was given and read to each participant (see Appendix C). Contained in the Informed Consent form and in Section One of the questionnaire were six screening questions. Non-custodial fathers who identified themselves as currently being on active military duty, incarcerated or on work-release, having a warrant for detainment, or being a patient in a mental health or mental retardation treatment facility were excluded from the study. Participants signed the informed consent form and were offered a copy.

Although the observation unit — the unit of data collection — was non-custodial fathers, the unit of analysis was *all* minor children under age 18 who were fathered by participating non-custodial fathers. The 72 eligible non-custodial fathers provided information about 135 children. However, because several errors were discovered in the design and implementation of the survey instrument *only* data related to the oldest minor child were used. When designing the origin questionnaire Form A was developed to collect information on all the children, fathered by the participant, who were less than 18

years and the custodial mother for each child (see Appendix D). In an effort to reduce the amount of information contained on one form it was decided that Form A would be revised. The revised Form A was used to collect and report information for *only* one child and their custodial mother (see Appendix E) individually. However, during the interview information was only collected for one child and one custodial mother. Other children fathered by the participant were not collected. Fortunately, the child was identified as the oldest minor child because the instructions given each participant were:

1. How many children have you fathers?
2. What are their names and ages? Start with the oldest child (Record response on Form A).

This reduced the sample size of children in the analysis from $N = 135$ to $N = 72$. To determine the appropriate sample size necessary for testing individual predictors Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) recommend using the following equation:

$$N \geq 104 + m$$

The letter m represents the number of predictor variables. In this study there were three predictors. Given this equation a minimum of 107 children were needed. This reduction in sample size will increase the size and magnitude of the standard errors of the sample distribution, limiting the reliability of data analysis. These limitations are described and discussed in detail in chapter six. Characteristics of the sample are described in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Non-custodial Fathers and Minor Children (N = 72)

<u>American</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Native</u>
Non-custodial fathers & their minor children	30	9	32	1
Child's Gender ³				
Male (n = 35)	17	5	12	1
Female (n = 37)	13	4	20	

As a “thank you” every father who was screened received several items. These items included a gift certificate for their children from Burger King Restaurants, a guest pass for the non-custodial father and his minor child to attend an Erie SeaWolves baseball game, and guest passes from Gannon University, permitting the participant and one guest admission to one football and one basketball game.

4.2. Risks and Benefits

In this study the risks to participants were minimal. Each participant signed and was offered a copy of their Informed Consent form. All records and collected data are stored in a locked filing cabinet at the Erie Family Center for Child Development for five years. Only aggregate results of the study are being shared with the staff of Erie Family Center for Child Development and representatives of Erie County Domestic Relations Section, Office of Child Support Enforcement and Office of Child Custody. To protect

³ Child gender was identified during participant interview.

confidentiality no individual survey responses were made available to any social service entity or court agency.

There were no direct benefits to research participants. However, several benefits or contributions were made to the research on non-custodial fathers. Outside of the economic provider role, the status of the non-custodial father remains ambiguous, lacking clear societal expectations for the role (Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 2001; Kruk, 1994; Maldonado, 2005). It is believed non-custodial fathers contribute to their children's development and well being (Featherstone, 2004; Lamb, 1997; Seltzer, 2000). This study may provide greater insight regarding the motivations of non-custodial fathers to become involved with their children.

4.3. Data Collection

The survey instrument for this study, *The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement*, was constructed by this researcher. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with participants. A pilot study was held prior to the administration of the questionnaire to assess face validity of the instrument. All pilot study participants were interviewed by this researcher.

4.4. Pilot Study of Questionnaire

Five men living in Northwestern Pennsylvania voluntarily participated in the pilot study. Four of five pilot study participants were fathers. Two of the participants fathered four children and two participants fathered one child each. The fifth participant, who did not have children, was instructed to answer the questions by evaluating the relationship

between and with his parents, who were divorced at the time of the pilot study. Two participants were residential fathers and two were non-residential, non-custodial fathers. Of the four participants who were fathers, one was married, one was cohabitating with the mother of his children, and the other two fathers were single, never-married, non-custodial fathers.

The age range of pilot study participants was 21 to 55 years. Four of the five participants (80 percent) reported making less than ten thousand dollars in the prior 12 months. Three men were African-American, one was white and the other reported he was Jewish. Of the five participants, four were unemployed, two completed high school and three were students attending a small Catholic university.

The questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Pilot study participants reported the questionnaire was comprehensive and easy to understand. They offered the following suggestions to improve the questionnaire:

1. The participants felt a hand-held chart outlining categories for the level of education and annual income would help fathers more accurately identify and report this information.
2. The participants considered it important to say the first name of the custodial mother when asking questions about the mother of a child. According to the participants saying the name of the mother “made her real”, making it more likely participants would answer questions honestly.
3. The participants suggested including an additional response item, “not applicable” in Section Four, Co-parenting Relationship. Pilot study participants identified several scenarios (such as fathers who received

Protection from Abuse orders {PFA}) that made necessary the response category “not applicable”

The questionnaire was modified according to these suggestions.

4.5. Instrument: The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to measure self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship with the mother (s) of their minor child, parenting satisfaction, and paternal involvement. Information that identified the principal investigator as a doctoral student, attending the School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh appeared on the questionnaire. The instrument was constructed by this researcher and was composed of eight sections including:

Section 1: Screening of Participants

Section 2: Background Information

Section 3: Child Custody Arrangements

Section 4: Self-Efficacy Mastery Scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978)

Section 5: The Quality of Co-parenting Communications Scale (Ahrons, 1981)

Section 6: Kansas Parental Satisfaction, (Schumm and Hall, 1985)

Section 7: Inventory of Father Involvement, (Hawkins, Bradford, Palkovitz, Christiansen, Day, Call, 2002)

Section 8: Parenting Barriers. Participants will be asked to identify the factors that effect their involvement with their child.

4.5.1. Section One: Screening of Participants

Non-custodial fathers were asked a series of six screening questions to determine their eligibility for the study. The interview was terminated if the participant answered “yes” to any of the exclusion criteria. Excluded participants were informed that they had completed the study and given a “thank you”.

4.5.2. Section Two: Background Information

In Section Two demographic and family data were collected. Respondents were asked their present age, age when first became a father, race, number of children fathered, number of women who are the biological mothers of their children, present marital status, employment status, and annual income.

4.5.3. Section Three: Child Custody Arrangements

Non-custodial fathers were asked to provide information regarding child custody arrangements legally established with the mother of their minor child, defined as a child 17 years and younger. Participants were asked to describe the type of custodial relationship he had with his minor child.

4.5.4. Section Four: Self-Efficacy (SE)

The Self-Efficacy Mastery Scale, constructed by Pearlin and Schooler (1978) was used to measure self-efficacy. The Self-Efficacy Mastery Scale was designed to measure the degree to which the participants believed they had control over the events in their life. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) reported a Cronbach’s Alpha of .70 finding the Self-Efficacy Mastery Scale to have fairly good construct and convergent validity.

This instrument has seven items and uses a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 4 = *strongly disagree* to assess self-efficacy mastery. Items one through five were reverse-scored so that higher scores would indicate higher self-efficacy expectations and greater sense of mastery and personal control. The scores for all seven items across the sample had valid values (no missing data). These scores were summed to obtain a total score and divided by seven to obtain mean scores. Sample items from the instrument include: “I have little control over the things that happen to me” and “I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.”

4.5.5. Section Five: Co-parenting Relationship (CPR)

The co-parenting relationship between the participant and the custodial mother of his minor child were measured using the Quality of Co-parental Communications Scale (Ahrons, 1981). The scale was used to assess the co-parenting relationship for each minor child. The scale was developed to measure perceptions of divorced parents’ adjustment to their co-parenting relationship. Ahrons (1981) stated, “(t)he components of a high quality co-parenting relationship have been described as a combination of low interpersonal conflict and high mutual support” (pp. 418-419). An assessment of convergent validity revealed a Pearson Correlation of $r = .58$ for women and $r = .43$ for men. This correlation inferred the participant’s self-report data provided a valid indicator of the quality of the co-parenting relationship (Ahrons, 1981). This instrument has 10 items and used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. Higher scores indicated low conflict and high support.

The Quality of Co-parental Communications Scale combines two sub-scales, Conflict and Support. The Conflict subscale was reverse-scored. The subscale had four

items with a coefficient alpha of .88 for women and .89 for men. Sample items from the Conflict sub-scale include “When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues, how often does an argument result?” “Do you and your former spouse have basic differences of opinion about issues related to child rearing? The Support subscale had six items and produced a coefficient alpha of .74 for women and .75 for men. Sample items from the Support sub-scale include: “When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your former spouse?” “Do you feel that your former spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a non-custodial parent?”

There were four modifications to this instrument. First, the term “former spouse” was replaced with, “mother of your child”. A notation in the questionnaire instructs the interviewer to say the first name of the custodial mother. Second, the sample item, “Do you feel that your former spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a non-custodial father?” is a double-barreled question and was separated into two individual questions:

1. Do you feel that the mother of your child understands your special needs as a non-custodial father?
2. Do you feel that the mother of your child is supportive of your special needs as a non-custodial father?

This modification increased the number of items from 10 to 11. Third, the language of several questions was modified replacing potentially difficult words or phrases with more commonly used ones, such as “child rearing” to “how to raise”. Four, based on feedback from pilot study participants, a sixth response category, “not applicable” was added. Examples of situations which warranted a response of “not applicable” were

parents who were involved with mediation or conciliation counseling or had an existing PFA order against one of the parents.

To control for the unequal denominators created by those participant who checked “not applicable” in the subscales Conflict and Support, mean scores were individually computed and imputed for NA answer. For each item in the CPR scale all valid values (no missing data) found in the response categories one through five were summed to obtain a total score. Response category six, “not applicable” was not used in calculating the mean. These modifications did not alter content or construct validity of the measure. Creating two questions eliminated participant confusion associated with double-barred questions. Literature addressing non-custodial father needs (Kruk, 1994; Maldonado, 2005) and co-parenting relationships (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2000; Insabella et al., 2003; Juby et al., 2005; Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992) suggest non-custodial fathers would perceive custodial mothers as more understanding, *but* less supportive of their special needs.

An additional question was included in this section which was not part of the Quality of Co-parental Communications Scale. Pleck (1997) and other researchers (Coley, 2001; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2000), suggest the assessment of paternal involvement should distinguish between ever-married and never married fathers. Therefore, participants were asked to respond to the following question: “What was your martial status with [name of the child’s mother] when [child’s name] was born?”

4.5.6. Section Six: Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale

Developed by Schumm and Hall (1985), the Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS) is a three-item instrument designed to measure an individual's satisfaction with self as a parent, the behavior of their children, and the relationship with their children. The KPSS was constructed using data collected from two samples. The first sample were composed of primarily white, Protestant, and middle-class respondents. The second sample involved 78 married fathers and 137 married mothers who were participating in a Parents' Enrichment Program sponsored by the Family Ministry Department of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The KPSS was chosen because it could be administered quickly and the instrument addressed issues non-custodial fathers reported to be important to them (Dudley, 1996; Hamer, 2001; Ihinger et al., 1993; Kruk, 1994; Madden-Derdich and Leonard, 2000). Although the KPSS was not used with African-American or Latino sample groups, the instrument was tested with a racial minority group (Korean-Americans). The majority of the participants (75%) in the Schumm and Hall study (1985) were in their twenties (24 %) and thirties (51%), ages similar to the proposed sample participants.

The Cronbach's Alpha in the 1980 sample was .84. The 1984 sample Cronbach's Alpha distinguished between parents reporting an alpha of .85 for fathers and .78 for mothers. The KPSS was reported to have good concurrent validity (Schumm and Hall, 1985). A seven point Likert response scale was used with 1 = *extremely dissatisfied* and 7 = *extremely satisfied*. A score of four indicates "mixed feelings". The scores for all seven items were summed to obtain a total score and mean. Higher scores denote greater satisfaction with parenting overall.

4.5.7. Section Seven: Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI)

The Inventory of Father Involvement was designed to provide a reliable and valid multidimensional measure responsive to cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of paternal involvement; one that conceived father involvement as more than quantifiable time and observable interactions and was short enough for inclusion in large-scale surveys (Hawkins, et al., 2002). The IFI measures both direct and indirect involvement and can be used with married, unmarried, or divorced fathers. There are two versions of IFI. The long version has 43 items and the short version has 26 items. Both assess nine dimensions of father involvement.

Hawkins and his colleagues (2002) identified the shorter version, used in this study, as more parsimonious, with solid factor loadings, robust correlations, and demonstrated strong face validity. Confirmatory factor analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .95 (long version) and .94 (short version) for Global Father Involvement. The short version maintained strong internal consistency reliability coefficients. Construct validity revealed the instrument performed according to theoretical assumptions.

The IFI short version uses a six-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *very poor* to 6 = *excellent*, with NA (not applicable) as a response choice. Higher scores indicate greater paternal involvement. For participants who choose "not applicable" as a response to one or more of the 26 items, individual mean scores were computed and imputed. For each item in the IFI scale all valid values (no missing data) found in the response categories one through six were summed to obtain a total score. Response category seven, "not applicable" was not used in calculating the mean. These individual mean scores were then summed to obtain a total score and compute the mean.

The instructions for completing the IFI measure were modified from their original form in the following ways:

1. the amount of time designated for father's to reflect on experiences with their minor child was reduced from 12 months to 4 months.
2. the administration of the instrument was changed from self-administered to an interview format.
3. father involvement was changed from the evaluation of fathering involvement with *all* children to evaluating fathering involvement with *each* individual child.

4.5.8. Section Eight: Parenting Barriers

As stated earlier, much of what we know about non-custodial fathers has been reported by custodial mothers. The observations of non-custodial fathers gathered through a qualitative process can provide a deeper, more enhanced understanding of paternal involvement, identify some barriers that inhibit or restrict involvement with their children and lead to potential solutions for encouraging and increasing paternal involvement. Therefore, survey participants were asked two open-ended questions designed to identify factors that effect paternal involvement. These were:

1. Are there things that effect your involvement with [child's name listed above]?

If you answered yes to the question, then answer the following question:

2. What are some of the things that effect your involvement with [child's name listed above]?

4.6. Administration

The entire questionnaire, *The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement*, was read to each participant by this researcher. The questionnaire and scripts are contained in the Appendix B. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes. All participants were encouraged to respond to every item in the questionnaire.

4.7. Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 13.0. Particular attention was given to data entry, the treatment of missing data and outliers, and tests of the assumptions of multiple regression and path model procedures. Qualitative data collected from Section Eight were sorted into categories, themes, and descriptive patterns. Analysis of these data followed a process known as content analysis. Relationships among categories were explored and analyzed contextually, using demographic information collected in this study.

4.8. Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and ranges were presented for the following univariate data: age of participant, age, total number of children, level of education, and annual income. Frequency distributions were presented for race, present marital status; marital status with custodial mother at birth, employment status and. T-tests and ANOVA procedures were used to determine if there were group differences in self-efficacy, co-parenting relationships, parenting satisfaction, and paternal involvement by shared custody status, marital status, and race. The bivariate correlation matrix is presented in a table summary.

Statistically significant path coefficients between self-efficacy, co-parenting relationships, parenting satisfaction and paternal involvement were noted.

4.9. Path Analysis

Path analysis is, “a method of measuring the direct influence along each separate path in such a system and thus of finding the degree to which variation of a given effect is determined by each particular cause” (Wright, 1921, p. 557). According to Wright (1921), path analysis provides a method of testing all proposed hypotheses developed from a theory explaining causal relationships among a set of variables. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, this is accomplished by placing each proposed hypothesis into explicit multicausal frameworks.

Three conditions, covariation, time order, and nonspuriousness, must be satisfied when establishing the causal order among variables. Support for the set of psycho-social variables included in the initial path model is based on the theories of role and self-efficacy, literature addressing the endogenous variables, co-parenting relationships, and paternal information, and the practice experience of this researcher. When the initial path model was constructed, all variables were screened for missing data, outliers, and tested for violation of the assumptions of multiple regression and path model procedures.

4.10. Rationale for Construction of Proposed Path Model

For the non-custodial father involvement with his children begins with his relationship with the non-custodial mother (Ahrons and Miller, 1993; McKenry et al., 1992). To become involved with his children it is believed non-custodial fathers will need high

levels of self-efficacy to engage and confront potentially uncooperative custodial mothers (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). In her role as a maternal gatekeeper it is the custodial mother's belief and support of father involvement that provides a non-conflicted pathway to children (Allen and Hawkins, 199; Arditti, 1995; DeLuccie, 1995). Ongoing conflicts with custodial mothers decrease parent satisfaction while co-parenting relationships with low conflict and high support promote parenting satisfaction with non-custodial fathers (DeLuccie, 1996; Dudley and Stone, 2001; Hamer, 2001; Madden-Derdich and Leonard, 2002; McLanahan and Carlson, 2002).

Role theory suggests that when men are compliant with child support they have achieved self-role congruency; that is; they have met the father-role expectations (Huang et al, 2003). However, the satisfaction with parenting that may be experienced by the non-custodial father is mitigated because his children do not reside with him. Beyond economic provision the father-role expectations are ambiguous which lead to greater confusion and loss of satisfaction with the role (Maldonado, 2005). Without co-residency with children men are conflicted in how to become involved with their children (Cooksey and Craig, 1998; Manning et al, 2003). The degree of dissatisfaction experienced in his parenting role may cause the non-custodial father to withdraw from becoming or remaining involved with his children (Kruk, 1994). Greater parent satisfaction is predictive of higher levels of father involvement (Leite and McKenry, 2002).

4.11. Predictor Variables

The predictor variables in this study are self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, and parenting satisfaction. In the path model self-efficacy, marital status, and child custody

status were treated as exogenous variables. The variability of an exogenous variable remains unexplained and unanalyzed in the path model (Mertler and Vannatta, 2002).

4.12. Hypotheses

Co-parenting relationship, parenting satisfaction, and paternal involvement were treated as endogenous variables. Endogenous variables have a portion of their variability explained by the exogenous variables included in the path model (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

To test each hypothesis, separate multiple regression analyses were performed for the following structural equations:

Hypothesis 1: Self-efficacy has a direct positive effect on co-parenting relationship

Endogenous variable: co-parenting relationship

Independent variable: self-efficacy

Structural equation: $CPR = SE + e_2$

Hypothesis 2: Co-parenting relationship has a direct positive effect on parenting satisfaction.

Endogenous variable: parenting satisfaction

Independent variable: co-parenting relationship

Structural equation: $PS = CPR + e_3$

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy has a direct positive effect on paternal involvement.

Endogenous variable: paternal involvement

Independent variable: self-efficacy

Structural equation: $PI = SE + e_4$

Hypothesis 4: Parenting satisfaction has a direct positive effect on paternal involvement.

Endogenous variable: paternal involvement

Independent variable: parenting satisfaction

Structural equation: $PI = PS + e_4$

4.13. Control Variable

Agresti and Finlay (1997) stressed the importance of including appropriate control variables when assessing path models. According to Agresti and Finlay (1997), a variable is statistically “controlled” when its influence or impact on other variables is removed. If an association between two variables disappears or diminishes considerably when the effects of specific variables are controlled, then a direct causal relationship does not exist. In this study shared custody status and marital status were used as control variables. To determine the effects of each control variables hypothesis, separate multiple regression analyses were performed for the following structural equations:

Hypothesis 5: When the effect of the child custody status “shared custody” is controlled, paternal involvement will decrease.

Endogenous variable: paternal involvement
Control variable: shared child custody status
Independent variables: self-efficacy and parenting satisfaction
Structural Equation: $PI = SCS + SE + PS + e_4$

Hypothesis 6: When the effect of the marital status “married” is controlled, paternal involvement will decrease.

Endogenous variable: paternal involvement
Control variable: married
Independent variables: self-efficacy and parenting satisfaction
Structural Equation: $PI = MAR + SE + PS + e_4$

4.14. Reproduced Correlations

“Reproduced correlations” are the bivariate correlations that would be produced if the causal model were correctly specified (Mertler and Vannatta, 2002). They are determined in a process called path decomposition. Path decomposition obtains a bivariate correlation coefficient for each legitimate path leading to an endogenous variable by

summing all coefficients in the path for each endogenous variable in the model (see Table 4.2). The paths may be direct, indirect, or spurious (reversed directional effects).

The reproduced correlations are compared to the observed correlations in the initial path model. Differences between the observed and reproduced correlations larger than .05 indicate the initial model is inconsistent and should be revised (Mertler and Vannatta, 2002; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). The observed coefficients from the initial model and the reproduced coefficients were compared and analyzed. A table detailing the variable determinants, the direct, indirect, and total causal effects for each endogenous variable in the path model, including the variance explained by each determinant and a table summary of the observed and reproduced correlations used in the initial path models, along with the direct and indirect effects is presented in chapter four.

Table 4.2: Path Decompositions for the Initial Path Model (Paternal Involvement)

Reproduced Correlations	Path Decomposition	Endogenous Variable
\check{r}_{12} (direct)	(P21)	co-parenting relationship
\check{r}_{13} (indirect)	(P21)(P32)	parenting satisfaction
\check{r}_{14} (direct) + (indirect)	(41) + (P21)(P32)(P43)	paternal involvement
\check{r}_{23} (direct)	(P32)	parenting satisfaction
\check{r}_{24} (indirect) + (spurious)	(P32)(P43) + (P21)(P41)	paternal involvement
\check{r}_{34} (direct) + (spurious)	(P43) + (P32)(P21)(P41)	paternal involvement

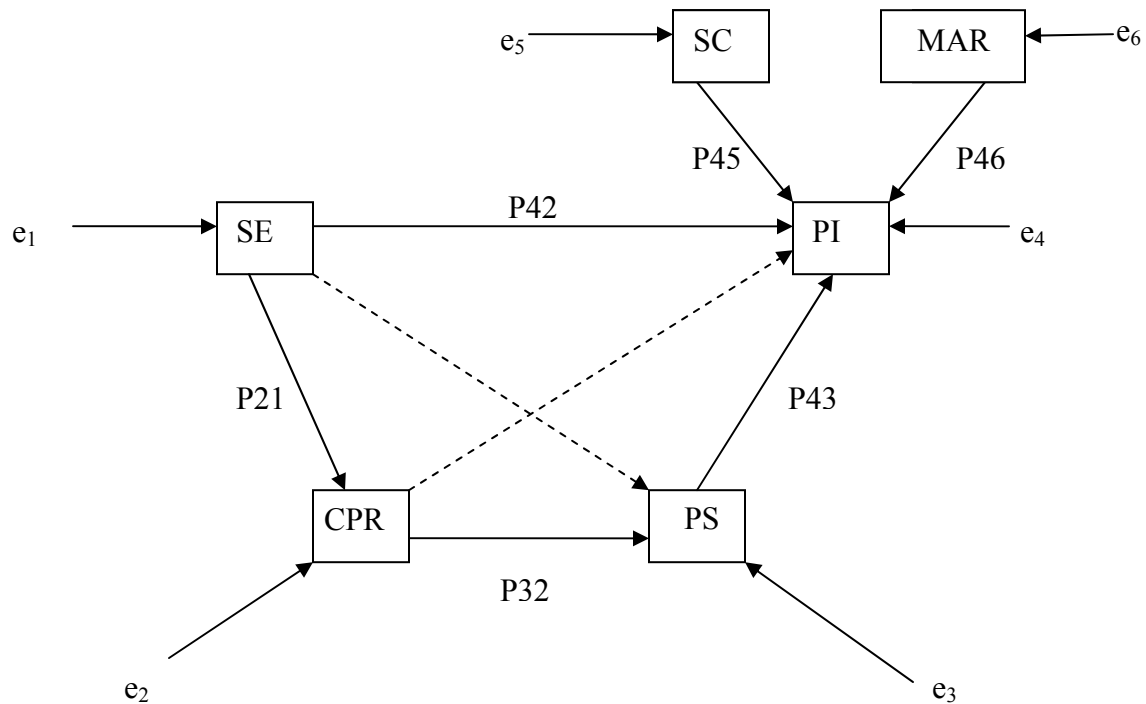
\check{r} = reproduced correlation

4.15. Excluded Paths

The paths between self-efficacy and parenting satisfaction, z_1 to z_3 and co-parenting relationship and paternal involvement, z_2 to z_4 have been excluded from the path model (see Figure 4.1). The decision to exclude these paths is consistent with theories presented in this study and follow literature on paternal involvement. Reasons to exclude path z_1 to z_3 (self-efficacy to parenting satisfaction) is based on the hypothesis that non-custodial fathers' parenting satisfaction is mediated by the state of their co-parenting relationship with the custodial mother(s) and that paternal involvement is highly dependent on the custodial mother. The reason to exclude path z_2 to z_4 , is based on qualitative research indicating that beyond performing the role expectation of breadwinning, the non-custodial father's experience of parenting satisfaction contributes significantly to his level of involvement with his children.

4.16. Institutional Review Board

In accordance with requirements issued by the Institutional Review Board, University of Pittsburgh, this study was submitted for approval on May 19, 2005. The research proposal, IRB #0506125: The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement received expedited review and approval effective July 18, 2005.



SE = self-efficacy
 CPR = co-parenting relationship
 PS = satisfaction with parenting
 e = error

PI = paternal involvement
 SC = shared custody status
 MAR = married status

The excluded paths SE to PS and CPR to PI are illustrated with broken lines.

Figure 4.1: Path Diagram for Initial Model Paternal Involvement with Excluded Paths

5. RESULTS

Research findings presented in this chapter are organized according to the process used to conduct path analysis. Demographic characteristics of the sample for the unit of observation, the non-custodial father and the unit of analysis, the oldest minor child included in the study, are presented first. The non-custodial fathers' child custody status and marital status are also illustrated. Second, descriptive information is presented for each variable in the path model. This is followed by the results of t-tests and one-way ANOVA, conducted to test for possible mean differences by child custody status, marital status, and race. The chapter concludes with a presentation of outcomes for the proposed hypotheses, including a description of empirical and reproduced correlations and a table summary of the empirical and reproduced correlations with the direct, indirect, and total effects of each endogenous variable. The impact of controlling the effects of shared custody status and marital status on paternal involvement is presented. The participant's responses to the qualitative questions regarding parenting barriers that effect paternal involvement were reviewed.

5.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Table 5.1 presents demographic characteristics of the study participants. Forty-four percent of the sample was white (32), 42 percent African-American (30), 13 percent Hispanic (9), and one percent Native American (1). Participants ranged in age from age 18 to age 59, with a mean age of approximately 35 years ($\bar{x} = 35.12$). African-American participants ($\bar{x} = 37$ years) were slightly older than white and Hispanic non-custodial fathers, whose average age was 35 and 32 years respectively.

Seventy-five percent of the sample ($n = 54$) reported completing 12th grade education or less. The mean number of completed years of school by participants was ($\bar{x} = 12.13$ years; range 7 – 14 years). Overall, participants fathered an average of three children ($\bar{x} = 2.64$; range 1 – 6 children). Hispanics and African-American respondents fathered approximately three children ($\bar{x} = 2.89$ and $\bar{x} = 2.77$ respectively) and white respondents fathered approximately two ($\bar{x} = 2.34$).

Table 5.1: Age, Education, and Total Number of Children

	<i>N</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Frequency of Children</i>
Non-custodial Fathers	72			
Mean		35.21	12.13	2.64
Median		35	12	2
Race				
African-American	30			
Mean		37	12.13	2.77
Median		38	12	3
Hispanic	9			
Mean		32.22	12.33	2.89
Median		33	12	3
White	32			
Mean		34.56	12.06	2.34
Median		32	12	2

As illustrated in Table 5.2, 16 participants (22%) were married when they completed the survey. Forty-six non-custodial fathers (63.9%) reported they were employed on the date of the interview. Fifty-one percent of participants (35) earned less than \$10,000 and 74 percent (65) reported earning less than \$20,000 in the calendar year 2004. Thirty-six percent of the participants (n = 26) were unemployed on the date of the interview. This unemployment percentage is slightly more than seven times higher than the national (5.0%) and state (5.0%) unemployment rates and six times higher than the municipality rate (5.6%) recorded in 2005 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). This demographic will be discussed more fully in chapter six.

Table 5.2: Marital Status, Employment Status, and Annual Income

Participants	<i>N</i>	Married	Employed	Annual Income ⁴	
				≤ \$10K	≤ \$20K
	72	16 (22.2 %)	46 (63.9 %)	35 (50.7 %)	16 (23.2 %)
Race					
African-American	30	6 (20.0 %)	21 (70.0 %)	16 (55.2 %)	4 (13.8 %)
Hispanic	9	4 (44.4 %)	5 (55.6 %)	3 (37.5 %)	1 (12.5 %)
White	32	6 (18.8 %)	20 (62.5 %)	15 (48.4 %)	11 (35.5%)

Eleven participants (15.3 %) reported that their child custodial relationship was a shared custody (see Table 5.3). Nearly half of the non-custodial fathers (n = 35) reported

⁴ Three participants did not report their annual income.

their child custody status as “visitation only”. Slightly more than 25 percent of the participants (19) acknowledged “don’t know”, indicating they did not know the child custody arrangement established with the minor child and the custodial mother. Of the 19 participants who reported they did not know their child’s current custody status, seven were African-American and 11 were white. Eleven participants were employed and eight were unemployed. The majority of these non-custodial fathers ($n = 14$) earned less than 10 thousand dollars annually.

Table 5.3: Non-custodial Fathers and Child Custody Status

	<i>n</i>	African-American	Hispanic	White
Legal custody	3	2	0	1
Partial custody	4	1	0	3
Shared custody	11	4	0	7
Don't know	19	7	1	11
Visitation only	35	16	8	10

Eight participants had less than a high school education and three some had education beyond college. Compared to other study participants, the non-custodial fathers who reported “Don’t Know” as child custody status also stated they were less efficacious, experienced more conflict with and less support by the custodial mother (s), had mixed feelings regarding their satisfaction with parenting, and were less involved with their children.

Table 5.4: Comparison of Means of Participants Reporting Don't Know Child Custody Status

Principle Variables	Don't Know (n = 19)	Other (n = 53)
	\bar{x}	\bar{x}
Self-efficacy	2.92	3.22
Co-parenting relationship	2.80	3.10
Parenting Satisfaction	4.10	5.30
Paternal Involvement	4.07	4.5

Eleven participants (15.3%) reported they were married to the custodial mother at the birth of the minor child included in this study (see Table 5.5). Twelve non-custodial fathers reported “living together” with the custodial mother at the birth of the minor child. At the time of the interview thirty-one participants (43.1%) reported their marital status living together. The response categories “married” and “living together” were combined to create a new variable “married-residential”. Grouping participants by married and living together status was designed to capture possible variance contained in father involvement possibly explained by the participants’ residential status at the time of the child’s birth. Combining the two categories also increased the sample size of the test variable. The variable “married-residential” replaced the variable “married” as a control variable.

Table 5.5: Marital Status of Non-custodial Father at the Birth of Minor Child

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum. Percent</i>
Non-custodial Fathers (N = 72)			
Married	11	15.3	
Living together (not married)	31	43.1	58.3
Divorced	2	2.8	61.1
Single, never married	28	38.9	100.0

5.2. Exogenous and Endogenous Variables

Table 5.6 provides descriptive data for the predictor variables in this study: self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, and parenting satisfaction. The mean for self-efficacy was $\bar{x} = 3.13$, with a standard deviation of .59. Cronbach Alpha was statistically significant at .806. Co-parenting Relationship had a mean was $\bar{x} = 3.05$, standard deviation of .89, and Cronbach's Alpha of .870. The mean for parenting satisfaction was $\bar{x} = 4.99$, standard deviation of 1.50, and Cronbach's Alpha of .758. Cronbach's Alpha is a coefficient of reliability that indicates how well a set of items measure a single, one-dimensional latent construct (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). It is generally accepted that reliability coefficients under .70 indicate the data may be multidimensional. The principle variables all appeared to be one-dimensional constructs.

The endogenous variable of primary interest was paternal involvement. Prior to data analysis, paternal involvement was transformed by squaring the sum of scores to correct a negatively skewed distribution (skewness = -1.102). This transformation improved the shape of the distribution (skewness -.369). The mean for paternal involvement was $\bar{x} = 4.07$, standard deviation of .20, and Cronbach's Alpha was statistically significant at .982.

Table 5.6 Descriptive Data on Principal Variables

Variables	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i># of scale items</i>	<i>α</i>
Self-efficacy	3.14	.59	1 to 4	7	.806
Co-parenting Relationship	3.05	.89	1 to 6	11	.870
Parenting Satisfaction	4.99	1.50	1 to 7	3	.758
Paternal Involvement	4.07	.20	1 to 7	26	.982

5.3. Group Comparison: Child Custody Status, Marital Status, and Race

T-tests were conducted with the four variables: self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, parenting satisfaction, and paternal involvement, to determine if there were differences in the sample, based on child custody status, marital status, and race. Child custody status was re-categorized to form the dichotomous variable “shared custody” status and “other custody” status. Data were also grouped according to the participant’s marital status to the custodial mother at the time of birth of the minor child. The categories married (n = 11) and living together (n = 31) were combined to create the variable “married-residential” (n = 42). The categories separated, divorced (n = 2), and single, never married (n = 28) were combined to create the new variable “not married” (n = 30). The racial groups, white, African-American, Hispanic, and Native American were re-categorized as dichotomous subgroups; white and nonwhite. A second t-test was conducted for race that re-examined group scores for white and nonwhite, eliminating the score of one Native American participant. This score was dropped from the analysis because there was only one Native American participant in the study.

T-test results indicate that paternal involvement differs for participants with shared custody; $t = -2.133$, $df = 70$, $p \leq .05$ when equal variances are assumed. The principal variables were examined by the marital status “married-residential”. The results of the T-test were not statistically significant. For co-parenting relationship race was statistically significant; $F = 4.029$; $p \leq .05$. Because the sample of participants was primarily white, African-American, and Hispanic, with one Native American, the T-test that examined white and nonwhite co-parenting relationships was repeated without the Native American participant included in the nonwhite group. The second t-test results for white and nonwhite were $F = 3.867$; $p \leq .05$.

The results of analyzing the principal variables using one-way ANOVA by marital status (see Table 5. 7) at the time of child birth was that no statistically significant differences were detected.

Table 5.7: Analysis of Variance for Marital Status (N = 72)

Variable	n	SS	df	F	P
Self-efficacy	72			.277	.842
Between Groups		.301	3		
Within Groups		24.637	68		
Total		24.938	71		
Co-parenting relationship	71			.488	.692
Between Groups		1.194	3		
Within Groups		56.622	67		
Total		55.816	70		
Parenting satisfaction	72			.509	.677
Between Groups		3.489	3		
Within Groups		155.394	68		
Total		158.883	71		
Paternal Involvement	72			.671	.573
Between Groups		250.684	3		
Within Groups		8468.029	68		
Total		8718.713	71		

Table 5. 8: Analysis of Variance for Shared Custody Status (N = 72)

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Self-efficacy	72			1.232	.306
Between Groups		1.709	4		
Within Groups		23.229	67		
Total		24.938	71		
Co-parenting relationship	71			.923	.456
Between Groups		2.957	4		
Within Groups		52.859	66		
Total		55.816	70		
Parenting satisfaction	72			2.992	.027
Between Groups		23.598	4		
Within Groups		135.285	67		
Total		158.883	71		
Paternal Involvement	72			1.402	.243
Between Groups		673.327	4		
Within Groups		8045.386	67		
Total		8718.713	71		

Scheffe Pos Hoc Test: Multiple Comparisons

Parent Satisfaction	Mean Difference	<i>SE</i>	<i>P</i>
Shared Custody			
Legal custody	.20202	.92554	1.000
Partial custody	.17424	.82967	1.000
Don't know	1.63477	.53836	.067
Visitation only	.65281	.49117	.778
Don't Know			
Legal custody	-1.43275	.88280	.623
Partial custody	-1.46053	.78171	.485
Shared custody	-1.63477	.53836	.067
Visitation only	-.98195	.40492	.221

Table 5.9: Analysis of Variance for Race N = 72

Variable	n	SS	df	F	P
Self-efficacy	71			.479	.621
Between Groups		.344	2		
Within Groups		24.411	68		
Total		24.755	70		
Co-parenting relationship	70			3.768	.028
Between Groups		5.490	2		
Within Groups		48.812	67		
Total		54.302	69		
Parenting satisfaction	71			.232	.793
Between Groups		1.076	2		
Within Groups		157.687	68		
Total		158.764	70		
Paternal Involvement	71			.393	.676
Between Groups		98.350	2		
Within Groups		8500.552	68		
Total		8598.902	70		

Scheffe Pos Hoc Test: Multiple Comparisons

Co-parenting Relationship		Mean Difference	SE	P
African-American	Hispanic	.78331	.32440	.061
	White	.44896	.21860	.129
Hispanic	African-American	-.78331	.32440	.061
	White	-.33436	.32319	.588
White	African-American	-.44896	.21869	.129
	Hispanic	.33436	.32319	.588

As shown in Table 5.8, statistically significant differences were detected for the variable parent satisfaction, $df = (4, 67)$, $F = 2.992$, $p \leq .05$, when conducting one-way ANOVA, examining the four principal variables by shared custody status. The Scheffe Post Hoc Test found a mean difference between “shared custody” and “don’t know” of 1.63477, std. error .53836, $p = .067$. Statistically significant differences in sample means were detected for the variable “co-parenting relationship”, $df = (2, 68)$, $F = 3.768$, $p \leq .05$ (see Table 5.9) when analyzing the four principal variables by race (without Native American). Results of the Scheffe Post Hoc Test found a mean difference between African-American and Hispanic of .78331, std. error .32440, $p = .061$.

5.4. Path Analysis

Path analysis was conducted to examine a set of psycho-social variables; self-efficacy, co-parenting, relationship, and parenting satisfaction to determine their direct, indirect and total effects in predicting paternal involvement. Bivariate correlations among the principle variables were statistically significant at $p = .05$ (see Table 5.8). These correlation coefficients were used to calculate reproduced correlations. The reproduced correlations were compared to observed correlations in the initial path model. Comparison demonstrated reproduced correlations did not have a difference greater than $p = .05$ from observed correlations. The results of the path decomposition indicate the initial path model was consistent with empirical data and provide support that the four variables in the model are predictive of paternal involvement.

Table 5.10: Observed and Reproduced Correlations for Initial Path Model Paternal Involvement

Observed Correlations	z_1	z_2	z_3	z_4
Self-efficacy (z_1)	1.000			
Co-parenting Relationship (z_2)	.451**	1.000		
Parent Satisfaction (z_3)	.290*	.384**	1.000	
Paternal Involvement (z_4)	.435**	.381**	.694**	1.000
Reproduced Correlations	z_1	z_2	z_3	z_4
Self-Efficacy (z_1)	1.000			
Co-parenting Relationship (z_2)	.451**	1.000		
Parent Satisfaction (z_3)	.173	.384**	1.000	
Paternal Involvement (z_4)	.362	.353	.664	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Comparison of reproduced correlations with observed correlations did not produce a difference greater than .05. Path model is consistent with empirical data.

Two paths, z_1 (self-efficacy) to z_3 (parenting) and z_2 (co-parenting relationship) to z_4 (paternal involvement) were excluded from the proposed path model (see Figure 3.1). Regressions were calculated with each excluded path to see if prediction was improved for the initial model. The path coefficients obtained for each excluded path were not statistically significant, providing additional support for the initial path model.

Table 5.11: Excluded Paths Initial Path Model – Paternal Involvement

Self-efficacy (z_1) to Parenting Satisfaction (z_3)					
Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-efficacy	.383	.306	.155	1.252	.215
Co-parenting Relationship	.517	.204	.314	2.529	.014
$(R^2 = .166)$					
Co-parenting Relationship (z_2) to Paternal Involvement (z_4)					
Self-efficacy	4.601	1.738	.252	2.648	.010
Co-parenting Relationship	.506	1.201	.041	.421	.675
Parenting Satisfaction	4.369	.681	.589	6.416	.000
$(R^2 = .529)$					

Multiple regression was used to assess each causal determinant in the path model. Table 5.12 presents a summary of multiple regression analyses for the variables posited to predict paternal involvement. All predictor variables were statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. The control variables, shared custody and married-residential, were not statistically significant.

Table 5.12: Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Paternal Involvement

	<i>N</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>p</i>
Self-efficacy and Paternal Involvement	72	8.135	2.012	.435	.189	.000
Self-efficacy and Co-parenting Relationship	71	.674	.161	.451	.203	.000
Co-parenting and Parenting Satisfaction	71	.633	.183	.384	.147	.001
Parenting Satisfaction and Paternal Involvement	72	5.142	.637	.694	.482	.000
Shared Custody and Paternal Involvement	72	1.931	2.570	.468	.219	.455
Married-residential and Paternal Involvement	72	-1.115	1.832	.738	.544	.545

The direct, indirect, and total causal effects of the initial path model are presented in Table 5.13 and illustrated in Figure 5.1. The primary endogenous variable of interest was paternal involvement. Parent satisfaction had the largest direct causal effect on paternal involvement, with a path coefficient of .620. The direct effect of self-efficacy was .255. This model explained 54.2 percent of variance in paternal involvement. Parent satisfaction had a considerable contribution in predicting father involvement. Results from these data suggest increases in parent satisfaction by non-custodial fathers were predictive of greater father involvement with their children.

The next endogenous variable in the causal model was parent satisfaction. Co-parenting relationship had a direct effect of .384. The model explained 14.7 percent of

variance in parent satisfaction. Co-parenting relationships that were lower in interpersonal conflict and higher in support of non-custodial fathers by custodial mothers were predictive of greater parent satisfaction experienced by non-custodial fathers.

The final endogenous variable in the model was co-parenting relationship. Self-efficacy had a direct effect of .451, which explained 20.3 percent of the variance in co-parenting relationship. Higher levels of self-efficacy were predictive of co-parenting relationships that were low conflict and high support.

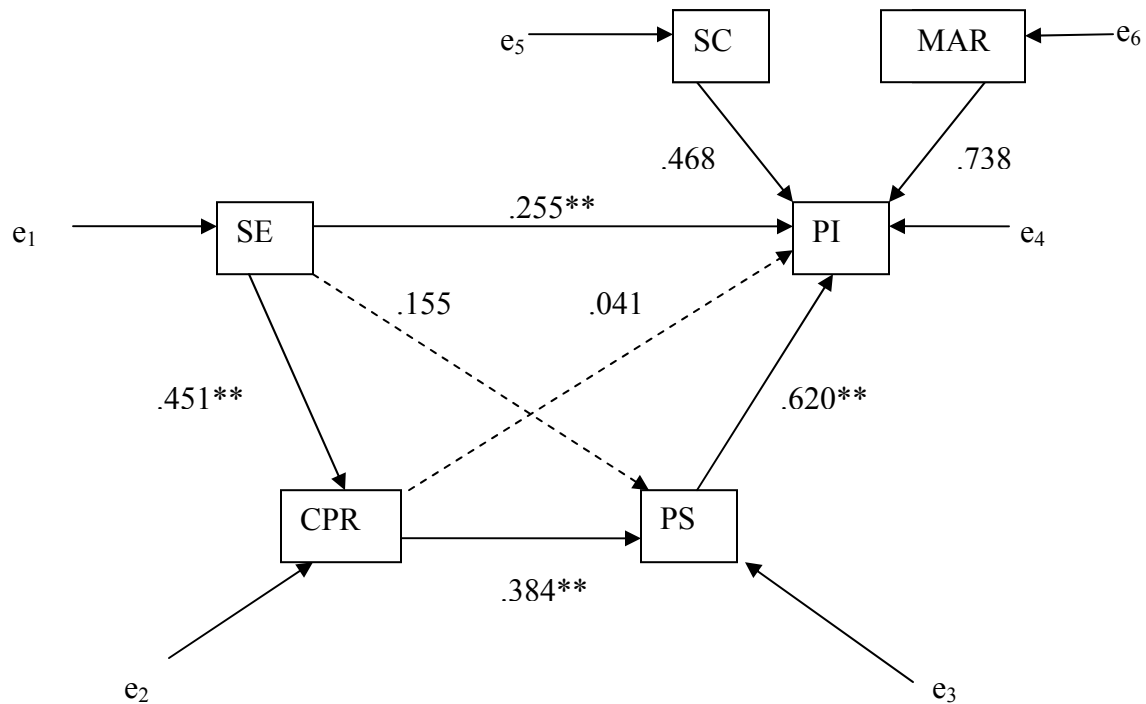
The initial path model for paternal involvement was re-evaluated, controlling the effects of child custody status, “shared custody” and marital status at child birth, “married-residential”. The path coefficients for “shared custody” and “married-residential” were not statistically significant. The results of the regression analyses were presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.13: Summary of Causal Effects for Path Model Paternal Involvement

Endogenous Variable	Determinant	Causal Effects		
		Direct	Indirect	Total
Co-parenting Relationship ($R^2 = .203$)	SE	.451*	—	.451 ⁺
Parenting Satisfaction ($R^2 = .147$)	SE	—	.173	.173 ⁺
	CPR	.384*	—	.384
Paternal Involvement ($R^2 = .542$)	SE	.255*	.362	.617 ⁺
	CPR	—	.353	.353 ⁺
	PS	.620*	.044	.664 ⁺

* Direct effect is significant at the .05 level.

⁺ Total effect may be incomplete due to unanalyzed components



SE = self-efficacy
 CPR = co-parenting relationship
 PS = satisfaction with parenting
 PI = paternal involvement
 SC= shared custody status
 MAR = married status
 e = error

The excluded paths SE to PS and CPR to PI are illustrated with broken lines.

- * Significant at the 0.05 level.
- ** Significant at the 0.01 level.

Figure 5.1: Path Diagram for Initial Model Paternal Involvement with Non-significant Excluded Paths

5.5. Parenting Barriers

At the end of the survey participants were asked to respond to two open-ended questions designed to identify factors they believe affected their involvement with their child. Seventy-four percent of participants stated there were factors which effected their involvement with their children. These factors were categorized and placed in order of greatest frequency (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Parenting Barriers (N = 53)

Frequency of Responses
1. Adversarial relationship with social institutions (<i>n</i> = 15)
2. Parent alienation (<i>n</i> = 12)
3. Work schedule (<i>n</i> = 7)
4. Geographic distance from children (<i>n</i> = 6)
5. Poor relationship with custodial mother's present husband/boyfriend (<i>n</i> = 4)
6. Other (<i>n</i> = 9)

Parenting barriers mentioned by participants more frequently than any other were poor or adversarial relations with representatives from family court and the child custody office and that they were demeaned by the custodial mother in front of the child referred to in the literature as parent alienation. Below are several recorded responses that seemed to capture the perception of most participants who elected to respond to these questions:

5.6. Adversarial Relationship with Social Institutions

Almost one-third of the participants reported that the barriers to their involvement with their children were related to adversarial relationships with social and legal systems such

as child welfare agencies and legal institutions such as family court, office of child support enforcement, and office of child custody. During the interview several participants became agitated and used expletives to describe their existing relationship with the Erie County Office of Children and Youth and Erie County Domestic Section Relations (DRS), Office of Child Custody. One participant articulated, “I never had a chance! I was never gonna get my kid. They (DRS) had their minds made-up before the hearing ever started.”

5.7. Parent Alienation

The process of degrading one parent by the other parent is known as parent alienation (Gardner, 2002). Twelve non-custodial fathers stated they were described or referred to as the “bad guy” to their children. Data collected from participants provide some support for the concept of parent alienation. One participant stated:

“(My) son is becoming of age. He feels that he don't need his father's advices. Mother always down speaking me as a father. Never spent the time we needed together.”

Another non-custodial father asserted:

“If I anger Daniel's mom, she has been known to try and withhold him from me.”

A divorced participant wrote:

“Her mother has moved far away and is getting married to someone else. Got divorced 3 to 4 weeks ago, on 5-15-05 and she doesn't want me to be a part of anything. She said I just get in the way. She also said I ain't fatherly enough. Thanks!”

6. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter Six begins with a brief summary of the study; a restatement of the problem, the presentation of the research questions, a review of the methodology and general results, and the limitations of this study. The bulk of the chapter is focused on the discussion and social work practice and social welfare policy implications which emerged from the research findings described in Chapter Five. Suggestions for future research in the areas of father involvement and parent satisfaction are presented.

6.1. Restatement of the Problem

American children have a higher probability of living with one parent, typically the mother, than children in any other industrialized country. Moreover, African-American children have a higher risk of living in a single mother home and experiencing persistent poverty than their white counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Following separation or divorce father involvement with their children tends to decrease or discontinue (Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Schwartz and Finely, 2005; Seltzer, 1998).

To contribute to the growing literature on paternal involvement this study investigated the following research questions:

1. Do a set of psycho-social variables predict paternal involvement of non-custodial fathers with their child?
2. What are the effects of self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, and parenting satisfaction on paternal involvement?

6.2. Review of Methodology

Utilizing a convenience sample recruited from the Erie Family Center for Child Development Fatherhood Initiatives Programs, this cross-sectional study examined a set of variables posited to predict paternal involvement. Guided by an integration of role and self-efficacy theories, path analysis was used to measure the direct, indirect, and total effects of self-efficacy, co-parenting relationship, and parenting satisfaction on paternal involvement. Moreover, it was posited paternal involvement would covary with child custody status and marital status.

Results of path analysis found parent satisfaction to be the most significant determinant of parental involvement, followed by self-efficacy, and co-parenting relationship. This path model accounted for approximately 54 percent of the variance in paternal involvement. Parent satisfaction accounted for 48 percent of the variance in parental involvement. Regression analysis of the control variables child custody status and marital status on paternal involvement found each to lack statistically significant.

6.3. Limitations of Study

There are several limitations which may have affected the internal and external validity of this study. They are listed below:

1. Sample Size and Sample Procedure
2. Limitations of Path Analysis
3. Measurement Error
4. Model Specification Error
5. Age of Children

6.4. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Data on a minimum of 109 children were needed. The number of children in this study was reduced from 135 to 72, which is well below the suggested number of cases necessary to conduct path analysis. Therefore caution should be used in reading and interpreting data from this sample.

Convenience sampling procedures were used to select participants for this study. Hence, representativeness and the generalizability of results are limited. As reported earlier, it is difficult to locate and survey a representative sample of non-custodial fathers. With limited financial resources, the logistical and legal issues that commonly accompany non-custodial fathers and especially those who attend father support groups (generally low-income men with a history of substance abuse and incarceration) this study does not supply generalizable data. Again, caution is recommended when using information from this study.

6.5. Limitations of Path Analysis

Two major assumptions of path analysis are: (1) no error in measurement and (2) no error in model specification (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Measurement error refers to the inaccuracy in measurement of observed variables. Model specification error refers to inaccuracy in specifying variables that do not belong in the path model or the omission of a variable(s) which should be included. Each is discussed in turn below.

6.6. Measurement Error

Measurement error leads to an overestimation or underestimation of the path coefficients. The self-efficacy scale developed Pearlman and Schooler (1978) measured perceived self-efficacy mastery over life events. Hence, the direct effect of self-efficacy on paternal involvement may reflect inflated or deflated path coefficients. Results of this study may have been improved by the specific measurement of parenting self-efficacy. Kendall and Bloomfield (2005) have recently developed a valid and reliable instrument designed to measure parenting self-efficacy.

6.7. Model Specification Error

According to Tabachnick and Fidell, (2001), if a path model is to accurately reflect the contribution of each determinant to the prediction of the dependent variable, then all relevant determinants must be included in the path model. Baron and Kenny (1986) identified omitted variables as one of the most difficult specification errors to solve. Theoretically, the set of variables used to investigate the initial path model appear sound. Empirical data support the initial path model.

However, the contributions of self-efficacy and co-parenting relationship in predicting paternal involvement were relatively small. It was thought the variables self-efficacy and co-parenting relationship would have a larger contribution in predicting paternal involvement. Explanation of the small contribution may be related to the omission of a latent variable. The participants in this study perceived an adversarial relationship with social and legal institutions. The inclusion of a measure that accurately collected data on the relationships among non-custodial fathers and social and legal

institutions may significantly contribute to the total causal effect and prediction of paternal involvement.

6.8. Age of Children

Data regarding the age of the children were not collected in this study. Father involvement can vary according to age, gender, and child maturation (Harris et al., 1998). In their qualitative narratives research participants reported two factors, related to the age of their child, which may effect their involvement. First, participants stated that their older adolescent children have their own set of teen friends which consume large amounts of time available for visitation. Second, participants reported their older children have decided to restrict or limit their involvement. Many fathers believed this restriction was due to the effects of parent alienation or the developmental process of individuation.

6.9. Discussion

The findings of this study are supportive of the proposed path model. Both self-efficacy and parent satisfaction were direct determinants of paternal involvement. Co-parenting relationship mediated self-efficacy and parent satisfaction. However, there were two unexpected findings that involved the predictor variables co-parenting relationship and parent satisfaction.

6.10. Co-parenting Relationship

The direct path of co-parenting relationship to paternal involvement as a determinant was not statistically significant supporting its exclusion from the initial model. It was initially thought co-parenting relationship would have the greatest magnitude in predicting paternal involvement. However, to the contrary co-parenting had the smallest

contribution. This finding was unanticipated because literature on paternal involvement provides general support for co-parenting relationship as a mediating variable of paternal involvement.

One possible explanation for this result is that state and local child support enforcement systems use wage garnishment, a technique which makes child support collection virtually automatic. Although much has been discussed and written about the punitive nature of current child support collection and enforcement processes, this technique appears to have reduced conflict in co-parenting relationships. This becomes important because research indicates that father's who were compliant with child support orders were more involved with their children (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 2000; Edin, Lein, Nelson, and Clampet-Lundquist, 2000; Hamer, 1998, 2001; Sorensen, 1997).

6.11. Parent Satisfaction

Parent satisfaction was the most significant determinant for paternal involvement. Again, this finding was not anticipated. The aggregate mean score of parent satisfaction was $\bar{x} = 4.99$, which indicated participants were "somewhat satisfied" with their parenting. Participant's parenting satisfaction was a composite of their satisfaction with the behavior of their child, their satisfaction with parenting, and their relationship with the child's mother. The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference in the variable parenting satisfaction by child custody status. Research participants with shared custody status reported more satisfaction with parenting than participants who did not know their custody status. The emerging importance of parent satisfaction to predicting paternal involvement is captured in one participant's comment, "If I have to pay child support I want to be involved with my child!"

6.12. Employment

The participants in this study are working poor. Most participants (75%) had a high school education and a job (64%). Minimally, they were responsible for three children and earned less than \$20,000 in the 2004 calendar year. Many of the participants commented they had a job with wages not designed to support a family. They also complained their jobs did not provide health care benefits or work schedules that afford compatible times for visitation with their children.

Participants who were employed reported their work schedules and the number of hours they worked as barriers effecting their involvement with their children. This is consistent with existing research suggesting income and work related factors (such as work schedules and amount of hours worked) have a negative effect on the relationship between a father and his children (Brayfield, 1995; Halle et al., 1998; Veum, 1992).

During the interview thirty-six percent of the participants (n = 26) reported they were unemployed. In August 2005 the unemployment rate in the United States and Pennsylvania was 5.0. In Erie, PA the unemployment rate was 5.6. The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). According to the Erie Family Center's project director there were several reasons for the extremely high percentage of unemployed non-custodial fathers enrolled in the father initiatives program. The 26 unemployed non-custodial fathers represent an idiosyncratic group of "hard-to-employ" men who were labeled "disabled" because they were taking psychotropic medication, had a history of substance abuse, or because of physical and/or mental limitations. A portion of the unemployed participants were "in-between" employment, generally finding work through temporary employment

agencies, and a smaller percentage of the unemployed men experienced chronic unemployment because they had a criminal record.

6.13. Implications for Social Work Practice and Social Welfare Policy

Most scholars agree there is no grand theory of role. However, there are numerous applications of role concepts that assist our understanding of human behavior and interaction. Within this study the role concepts of self-role congruency, role ambiguity, and role conflict have been used to inform and enhance our understanding of non-custodial fathers and their involvement with their children. Moreover, to address the shortcomings of role theory, self-efficacy theory was integrated to address the issue of personal motivation and the contribution of self-efficacy to father involvement. The integrated theories of role and self-efficacy and the results of this study lead to a number of implications for social work practice and social welfare policy that may increase involvement between non-custodial fathers and their children.

6.14. Social Work Practice Implications

Participants in this study took part in weekly father support groups and received parent education regarding the child custody process and procedures and individual counseling regarding the relationships with the custodial mother(s) of their children. Nineteen non-custodial fathers (26%) or one-out-four participants in this study reported they did not know the child custody arrangement established with his child and the custodial mother. The concept of role ambiguity suggests non-custodial fathers who did not know their child's custody arrangement may have not known, were unclear about their role in child

custody proceedings, or lost satisfaction in performing the role expectations of a non-custodial father. Hence, given the results for three-fourths of the father's in this study, providing non-custodial fathers with parent education focused on child custody procedures, parent rights, healthy co-parenting relationships, and the benefits of father-child involvement may have led to elevated self-efficacy, improved satisfaction with parenting, and increased involvement between non-custodial fathers and their children.

The staff of the Erie Family Center for Child Development reported the topic of child custody procedures is not discussed in every scheduled 12-week group sessions nor is the topic discussed at every father support group site. Some of the men who reported not knowing their child's custody status could have participated in group where the topic of child custody was not discussed. It is, therefore, suggested parent education be offered consistently within a 12 week schedule as a regular part of the educational curriculum administered in all father support groups. Specifically, the parent education curriculum would:

1. provide information and education regarding child custody conciliation, co-parenting, and father involvement.
2. develop or enhance parenting skills and childcare competencies.
3. teach appropriate father roles, values, and attitudes.
4. teach negotiation skills.
5. provide greater opportunities for father involvement through participation in supervised visits, with guided participation in father-child activities. (Only recommended when there is no threat visitation or child custody would be dangerous or detrimental to children).

Erie Family Center staff members believe their fatherhood programs have a unique relationship with Erie County common court judges and with the Erie County Office of Domestic Relations Section (DRS), Office of Child Support Enforcement and Office of Child Custody. Providing the DRS with oral and written fatherhood program progress reports and sharing research and program evaluation outcomes establishes regular communication with court judges and child custody workers. This study suggests this “sharing” of information has created sensitivity to the issues and “voice” of non-custodial fathers.

Of the Erie County children who live in single parent home slightly more than 20 percent have a male as head-of-household. Although this demographic does not distinguish the male’s status as biological father, grandfather, uncle, or older brother, it remains a significant demographic that represents a judicial shift in the child custody tradition of awarding legal, physical, or sole custody to mothers. The percentage of children living in single parent homes in Erie County is 25.8 percent, ranking second in Pennsylvania and slightly higher than the national percentage of 23.4 percent (Danzer and Gamble, 2003). The percentage of single parent homes in Erie County has been higher than the national average for more than a decade.

6.15. Social Welfare Policy Implications

An important implication for social welfare policy, suggested by the results of this dissertation, is to increase the use mediation in child custody disputes. Mediation is an out-of-court resolution process for the settlement of child custody conflicts. Ideally, mediation assists family court and child welfare service providers achieve their primary goal of keeping both biological and adoptive parents actively involved in raising their

child(ren). This conciliation process protects the rights and obligations for children to have both parents participate in their development and decision-making which may affect their welfare. In some instances conciliation may reduce the real or perceived adversarial relationship between custodial and non-custodial parents and court representatives.

In this study parent satisfaction made the greatest contribution to predicting paternal involvement. ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference between non-custodial fathers who reported their child custody status as “shared custody” and those who reported “don’t know”. Non-custodial fathers who stated their child custody status as “shared custody” experienced greater parent satisfaction. Participants who described their child custody status as “don’t know” reported mixed feelings regarding their parenting satisfaction. They also reported lower self-efficacy, greater conflict with and less support from the mother(s) of their children, and had less involvement with their children.

Over half of the non-custodial fathers in this study perceived negative relationships among social and legal institutions and with custodial mothers as the barriers to father involvement with their children. Study participants articulated their belief that involvement with the office of child custody does little to support or protect their involvement with their children. Many non-custodial fathers believed the child custody system favored mothers over fathers when considering child custody arrangements.

Increased use of mediation may encourage non-custodial fathers to participate in crafting child custody arrangements. Their participation may lead them to experience a heightened sense of self-efficacy and satisfaction with parenting, thereby producing greater compliance with child custody orders and greater involvement with their child(ren).

There is a growing literature that reports non-custodial fathers who participate in the decision-making processes regarding their children are more involved with their children.

Results from this study suggest the primary determinant of paternal involvement was parent satisfaction. However, little is known or understood about parenting satisfaction for *all* fathers and less is known about the factors that contribute to parenting satisfaction for non-custodial father. Increased parent satisfaction by non-custodial fathers may provide the necessary motivation for this group of men to initiate or to continue involvement with their children. Greater paternal involvement in custody conciliation may contribute to parenting satisfaction experienced by non-custodial fathers and increase their father-child involvement.

6.16. Future Research: Non-custodial Father Parent Satisfaction and Father Involvement

Conceptually, parenting satisfaction has not been adequately defined in the literature (Coles, 2001; Guidubaldi and Cleminshaw, 1985; James et al., 1985; Johnston and Mash, 1989). Beyond economic provision and co-parenting relationship modest consideration has been given to investigating a variable, such as parental satisfaction, that may also contribute to father involvement.

The notion of father involvement varies between family systems, representatives of family court, and among researchers of father involvement. There is a range of complexity, diversity, and inconsistency found in the father involvement construct. Therefore psychometric scales used to collect data on father involvement must consistently measure items across behavioral, cognitive, and affective domains that make up father involvement (Hawkins et al., 2002; Palkovitz, 1997). Individual and focus

group interviews with differentiated types of fathers (i.e. married, single, divorced, separated, residential, non-residential, custodial, non-custodial fathers) are needed to assess and identify a father's most relevant behaviors, thoughts, and feelings regarding their involvement with their children.

The results of this study suggest parent satisfaction is a major determinant of parental involvement. More fathers, including non-custodial, non-residential fathers, are articulating a greater desire to nurture as well as financial care for and support their children. Their motivations for greater involvement may be linked, in part, to their level of satisfaction achieved when parenting.

To consider parent satisfaction as a significant variable in predicting paternal involvement requires a redefinition of our current construction of fatherhood, father, father involvement and what constitutes responsible fathering behavior. In growing numbers fathers are stating nurturing their children is a satisfying part of the parenting experience (Coles, 2001; Dowd, 2000; Dudley, 1996; Dudley & Stone, 2001; Featherstone, 2004; Furstenberg, et al., 1992; Kost, 2001). Dowd (2000) defines nurture as the, "care — physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual — gauged by one's conduct and the consequences for children's positive development" (p.176). Over time nurturing relationships can produce reciprocal and satisfying relationships for parents and children.

Future research on parent satisfaction as a component of father involvement should use a mixed-model approach that involves qualitative and quantitative methods addressing the following questions:

1. What are the factors of parenting satisfaction for fathers?
2. What are the antecedents of parenting satisfaction for fathers?

3. How do we measure the relationships among non-custodial fathers and social and legal institutions?

During the 1990s, literature on fathers (residential and custodial fathers, non-residential and non-custodial fathers, gay, adoptive, single, cohabitating and step-fathers) enlightened how little we know about fatherhood, fathering behavior, and the impact fathers have on child development. As we improve our understanding of fathers' researchers need to utilize psychometrics that capture the diversity of father involvement and include parenting satisfaction for fathers. Well-constructed evaluation models that provide good descriptions of the processes used by men in families, in parenting relationships, and within father-child relationships, particularly when men establish a family or move from one family formation into another, will serve our collective efforts to improve social work practice and policy interventions for fathers and families as we endeavor to adequately meet the needs of families in the 21st century.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT FLYER

ARE YOU A NON-CUSTODIAL FATHER?

ARE YOU 18 YEARS OR OLDER?

DO YOU HAVE A CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS WHO DOES NOT
LIVE WITH YOU?

If so, then you are invited to participate in

The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement



If you are enrolled in one of the Erie Family Center for Child Development's Fatherhood Programs you may be eligible to participate in a study to help us learn more about non-custodial fathers and the things that encourage father involvement. Parris Baker, a doctoral student attending the School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh will be attending the fatherhood support group meetings to discuss the research study and to pass out surveys. The surveys take approximately 30 minutes to complete. For participating in the study you will receive the following:

- Gannon University Guest Pass that gives you free admission to athletic games and the university recreation center
- Tickets to a Erie SeaWolves baseball game
- Food coupons to McDonald's and Burger King

If you are interested in volunteering please contact your group leader, call the Erie Family Center at 814-874-6990 or Parris at 814-434-9992.

Your participation is voluntary.
All the information collected will be kept confidential.

APPENDIX B

The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement



This study is being conducted as partial fulfillment of requirements for the doctoral program, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh

Principle Investigator: Parris J. Baker, LSW, BCD

**Parris Baker can be reached at the
Erie Family Center for Child Development
1540 East Lake Road, Erie, PA 16533
814-874-6990**

Phone: 814-434-9992 (cell) Email: baker002@gannon.edu



The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement

(Read to Participant) *Please, do not participate in this study if you are under the age of 18, currently involved in active military duty, incarcerated and currently on work release, or you are a patient in a mental health or mental retardation treatment facility.*

Much of what we know about fathers has come from other people. This study is being conducted because I am interested in what you think encourages fathers to be involved with their children. This study is important because what we learn about relationships between non-custodial fathers and their children will come from fathers themselves.

The survey takes approximately 30 minutes for me to complete with you. *Should you decide, at any time that you do not want to participate in this study, you may stop without fear of any harm or penalty, no questions asked.* All the information in the survey will remain completely confidential. The information gathered in this study will be kept locked at The Erie Family Center for Child Development, 1540 East Lake Road, Erie, PA 16533 for a period of five years.

Do you have any questions before we begin? (Address all questions *before* beginning survey)

SECTION ONE: SCREENING OF PARTICIPANTS

Are you currently?

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----|-------|----|
| 1. under the age of 17? | _____ | yes | _____ | no |
| 2. on active military duty? | _____ | yes | _____ | no |
| 3. incarcerated? | _____ | yes | _____ | no |
| 4. on work-release? | _____ | yes | _____ | no |
| 5. a patient in a mental health center? | _____ | yes | _____ | no |
| 6. a patient in a mental retardation center? | _____ | yes | _____ | no |

If you answered *yes* to any of these questions, this survey is complete. Thank you for your participation. You will still receive an incentive package for your time.

SECTION TWO: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Read to Participant) This section asks for information about you and your family that may assist me in understanding some of the factors that may limit or discourage fathers from becoming involved with their children.

1. When were you born? (month) _____ (day) _____ (year) _____
So, that makes you _____?
2. How many children have you fathered? _____ .
3. There are several sections in this questionnaire that will require you to give information on each of your children who is a minor. A minor is a child under the age of 18. Please, tell me the first name only, of each minor child that you have fathered that does not live with you. Using the first name of your minor children will help you respond to the statements specifically to that child and will help me to record that information accurately. Using the first name only also protects and ensures your child (ren)'s confidentiality.

Beginning with your oldest child, who is under the age of 18 yrs, tell me the first name only and their age. This information will be recorded to Form A.

4. Do all of your children have the same mother? _____ yes _____ no
5. Are you currently married? _____ yes _____ no
6. What do you consider your race to be?
7. Look at the following chart and tell me the highest grade or year of regular school that you have completed and received credit for?

None.....00	10 th grade.....10
	11 th grade.....11
1 st grade.....01	12 th grade.....12
2 nd grade.....02	
3 rd grade.....03	1 st year of college.....13
4 th grade.....04	2 nd year of college.....14
5 th grade.....05	3 rd year of college.....15
	4 th year of college.....16
6 th grade.....06	5 th year of college.....17

7 th grade.....07	6 th year of college.....18
8 th grade.....08	7 th year of college.....19
9 th grade.....09	8 th year of college.....20

8. As of today, _____ (enter today's date) are you employed? Yes ___ No ___
9. Look at the following chart of income. For the calendar year, January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004, tell me which letter comes closest to, without going over, your yearly income?
- a. _____ Less than \$10, 000
 - b. _____ Between \$10, 001 and \$20, 000
 - c. _____ Between \$20, 001 and \$25, 000
 - d. _____ Between \$25, 001 and \$30, 000
 - e. _____ Between \$30, 001 and \$35, 000
 - f. _____ Between \$35, 001 and \$40, 000
 - g. _____ Between \$40, 001 and \$50, 000
 - h. _____ More than \$50, 000

SECTION THREE: PERSONAL VIEWS

(Read to Participant) In this section there are seven items. Your responses to the statements in this section will help me understand your beliefs about life in general. Look at the chart labeled *Personal Views Scale*. I'm going to ask you if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements.

1. I have little control over the things that happen to me.
Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____
2. There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.
Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____
3. There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life.
Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____
4. I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.
Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____
5. Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life.

Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____

6. What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.

Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____

7. I can do just about anything I really set my mind to do.

Strongly Disagree _____ *Disagree* _____ *Agree* _____ *Strongly Agree* _____

SECTION FOUR: CO-PARENTING RELATIONSHIP
--

(Read to Participant) There are 12 items in this section. Think of your relationship with the mother (s) of each of your child (ren) over the past 4 months. I am going to ask you questions about the mother (s) of your child (ren) to learn about your relationship with her. Given the following responses, (hand the participant the card with the responses never, almost never, sometimes, most of the time, always, and not applicable) which response best describes your view about the statement for each of your children.

Let's begin with Child 1: _____.

(the first name only, of the oldest minor child listed on Form A).

- a. What was your marital status with [child's name listed above] mother when [child's name listed above] was born?

married _____ living together (not married) _____
separated _____ divorced _____ single, never married _____

-
1. When you and [child's name listed above] mother discuss parenting issues, how often do argue?

_____ never _____ almost never _____ sometimes _____ most of the time _____ always _____ not applicable

2. When you and [child's name listed above] mother are talking to each other how often do you feel anger?

_____ never _____ almost never _____ sometimes _____ most of the time _____ always _____ not applicable

3. When you and [child's name listed above] mother are talking to one another how often is the conversation stressful?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

4. How often do you and [child's name listed above] mother differ in opinion about how to raise [child's name listed above]?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

5. When you need help regarding [child's name listed above], how often do you seek it from [child's name listed above] mother?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

6. Would you say that [child's name listed above] mother is a resource to you in raising [child's name listed above]?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

7. How often are you a resource to [child's name listed above] mother in raising [child's name listed above]?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

8. If [child's name listed above] mother needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, how often do you go out of your way to accommodate her?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

9. How often has [child's name listed above] mother gone out of her way to accommodate any changes in visiting arrangements that you needed to make?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

10. How often do you feel that [child's name listed above] mother *understands* your special needs as a non-custodial father?

___ never ___ almost never ___ sometimes ___ most of the time ___ always ___ not applicable

11. How often do you feel that [child's name listed above] mother is *supportive* of your special needs as a non-custodial father?

_____ never _____ almost never _____ sometimes _____ most of the time _____ always _____ not applicable

SECTION FIVE: CHILD CUSTODY STATUS

In Pennsylvania, there are several categories of child custody. One of these categories is "Visitation". "Visitation" means a legal right to visit your child (ren), but the mother still maintains custody of your child (ren).

Do you currently have "Visitation" only with _____? (the first name only, of the oldest minor child listed on Form A). Complete for each minor child listed on Form A).

Yes _____ No _____

If you do not have visitation custody only with [child's name listed above], which of the following categories of child custody listed below best describe the custodial relationship you have with [child's name listed above]? (List the child custody status of each child. Use additional forms if necessary).

_____ Legal custody refers to the legal right to make major decisions affecting the best interest of a child (ren) under the age of eighteen, including, but not limited to, medical, religious, and educational decisions.

_____ Partial custody refers to the right to take possession of a child (ren) away from the custodial parent for a certain period of time.

_____ Physical custody refers to the actual physical possession and control of a child (ren).

_____ Shared custody refers to a court order awarding shared legal or shared physical custody, or both, of a child (ren) in such a way as to assure the child of regular and continuing contact with and physical access to both parents.

_____ I don't know

SECTION SIX: PARENTING SATISFACTION

(Read to Participant) There are three items in this section. Think of your experiences as a father, with each of your children over the past 4 months. Using the Parenting Satisfaction Scale (hand the card, labeled Parenting Satisfaction Scale, to the participant), answer each of the following questions below by identifying the number in the space left

of the question that best describes your level of satisfaction with parenting. We will complete this section for each minor child listed on Form A, who is under age 18.

Parenting Satisfaction Scale:

1. extremely dissatisfied
2. very dissatisfied
3. somewhat dissatisfied
4. mixed feelings
5. somewhat satisfied
6. very satisfied
7. extremely satisfied

Let's begin with _____.

(the first name only of the minor child (ren) listed on Form A. The Parenting Satisfaction section must be completed for every minor child listed on Form A).

- _____ 1. How satisfied are you with the behavior of [child's name listed above]?
- _____ 2. How satisfied are you with your parenting of [child's name listed above]?
- _____ 3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with [child's name listed above]?

SECTION SEVEN: INVENTORY OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

(Read to Participant) There are 26 items in this section, so it will take a little longer to complete. Think of your experiences as a father, with each of your children over the past 4 months. There are a number of ways fathers can be involved with their children. I am going to read to you different ways that you may use to be involved with your child or children. Using the rating scale (hand card Inventory of Father Involvement rating scale numbered from 0 to 6) numbered from 0 to 6, with 0 meaning that you have no involvement with your child, up to 6, which means that you have a lot of involvement with your child, identify the number that best describes the amount of involvement with each child. If an item is not applicable to your situation, choose "NA" for not applicable. We will complete this section for each minor child listed on Form A, who is under age 18.

If there is more than one child, additional forms, labeled Inventory of Father Involvement, will be used and attached to this questionnaire.

Let's begin with _____.

(the first name only, of the oldest minor child listed on Form A).

	Less involvement				More involvement			
a. attending events that [child's name listed above] participates in (sports, school, church events)...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
b. encouraging [child's name listed above] to read.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
c. providing your [child's name listed above] basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and health care).....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
d. praising [child's name listed above] for doing the right thing.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
e. giving [child's name listed above] mother encouragement and emotional support.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
f. being involved in the daily or regular routine of [child's name listed above] (feeding, driving them places, etc.).....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
g. letting [child's name listed above] know that their mother is an important and special person.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
h. praising [child's name listed above] for something they have done well.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
i. encouraging [child's name listed above] to succeed in school.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
j. being a pal or friend to [child's name listed above]	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
k. accepting responsibility for the financial support of [child's name listed above]	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
l. encouraging [child's name listed above] to do their homework.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
m. disciplining [child's name listed above]...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
n. knowing where [child's name listed above] go and what they do with their friends.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
o. spending time just talking with [child's name listed above] when she/he wants to talk about something.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA

What are some of the things that effect your involvement with [child's name listed above]?

You have completed the survey. Thank you so much for your time and participation.

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT



University of Pittsburgh
School of Social Work

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CONSENT TO ACT AS A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Parris J. Baker, MSSA, LSW, BCD
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Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this research is to learn more about non-custodial fathers and the things that may encourage fathers to become and/or remain involved their children. I am interested in what encourages non-custodial father involvement with children. Much of what we know about fathers has come from other people. This study is important because what we learn about the relationships between fathers and their children will come from fathers themselves. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Who is being asked to take part in this research study?

I am surveying men who are non-custodial fathers and who are enrolled in the Erie Family Center's Father Initiative Programs. The Erie Family Center believes that the most effective way to ensure healthy growth and development of children is to support families and the communities in which they live. The fatherhood programs are designed to empower fathers by providing individual and group counseling, education, information, and support regarding issues of child support, child custody, and visitation.

What procedures will be performed for research purposes?

Screening procedures will determine participant eligibility. For this research study, the screening procedures are listed below:

Please, do not participate in this study if you are currently:

- ***under the age of 18***
- ***do not have any children under the age of 18***
- ***involved in active military duty***
- ***incarcerated***
- ***a patient in a mental health facility***
- ***a patient in a mental retardation treatment facility.***

If you are eligible and decide to participate in this research study you will be asked to give background information about yourself, such as your age, race, number of children, education, and employment; to indicate your beliefs about life in general; to describe your relationship with the mother(s) of your children; to identify the child custody arrangement you have with each of your children; to state your satisfaction with parenting; and to rate your performance as a father.

If you are not eligible to participate in this research study you will still receive the incentives listed below in the section labeled, *Will I be paid if I take part in this research study?*

What are the possible risks, side effects, and discomforts of this study?

It is not uncommon for people to become anxious when asked to disclose personal information. If this should occur, you may discontinue completing the questionnaire and still receive the incentive package.

Breach of confidentiality – the disclosure of personal information; such as your identity, your participation in this research study, and the content of your completed questionnaire, without your permission – is a possible risk. To reduce this risk all interviews and the completion of questionnaires will be conducted individually and privately. All completed questionnaires will immediately be placed and sealed in an unmarked manila envelop.

Because the appeal for your participation in this study was made to all men who attend the Foundations of Fatherhood support groups, it can be assumed by your peers that you were part of this study. However, neither the Principal Investigator, nor any member of the Erie Family Center for Child Development or Domestic Relations Section will identify anyone who has consented to participate in this study.

What are possible benefits from taking part in this study?

You will likely receive no direct benefit from taking part in this research study.

Will I be paid if I take part in this research study?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will complete a questionnaire that will take approximately 30 minutes. For your participation you will be given a gift certificate (one for each of your children) from Burger King, a Gannon University Guest Pass, which allows the participant and guest to attend sporting events, held at Gannon University free of charge, and tickets to an Erie SeaWolves baseball game.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

Any information about you obtained from or for this research study will be kept confidential (private). All information obtained in this study will be locked in storage at the Erie Family Center. The results of this study will be reported in aggregate (group form) only. No participant will be identified by name in any publications of the research results, unless you were to sign a separate consent form giving your permission.

Will this research study involve the use or disclosure of the reasons for my involvement with the Erie Family Center for Child Development?

This research will not involve the use or disclosure of the reasons for your involvement with the Erie Family Center for Child Development.

Who will have access to identifiable information related to my participation in this research study?

In addition to the investigators listed on the first page of this authorization (consent) form and their research staff, the following individuals will or may have access to identifiable information related to your participation in this research study.

- Authorized representatives of the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office may review the data collected for the purpose of monitoring the appropriate conduct of this research study.

- In unusual cases, the investigators may be required to release identifiable information related to your participation in this research study in response to an order from a court of law. If the investigators learn that you or someone with whom you are involved is in serious danger or potential harm, they will need to inform, as required by Pennsylvania law, the appropriate agencies.

For how long will the investigators be permitted to use and disclose identifiable information related to my participation in this research study?

In compliance with the University of Pittsburgh policy that states all research records must be maintained for a period of five years following study completion, the information gathered in this study will be kept locked at The Erie Family Center for Child Development, 1540 East Lake Road, Erie, PA 16533 for a minimum of five years.

Is my participation in this research study voluntary?

Yes, your participation in this research study, to include the use and disclosure of your identifiable information for the purposes described above, is completely voluntary. Note, however, that if you do not provide your consent for the use and disclosure of your identifiable information for the purposes described above, you will not be allowed, in general, to participate in this research study. Whether or not you provide your consent for participation in this research study will have no effect on your current relationship with the University of Pittsburgh or the Erie Family Center for Child Development

May I withdraw, at a future date, my consent for participation in this study?

You may withdraw, at any time, your consent for participation in this research study, to include the use and disclosure of your identifiable information for the purposes described above. You are free to refuse or to stop completing the questionnaire at any time, without the threat of harm or penalty.

If I agree to take part in this study, can I be removed from the study without my consent?

It is possible that you, or more specifically, your questionnaire, can be removed from this research study without your consent. When the questionnaire is completed it will be sealed in an unmarked envelope, therefore it will be impossible to identify the person who completed the questionnaire. Questionnaires that are missing more than 50 percent of the responses will be removed from this research study

Voluntary Consent

All of the above has been explained to me and all of my questions have been answered. I understand that I am encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of this study, and that such future questions will be answered by the researchers listed on the first page of this form. Any questions about my rights as a research participant will be answered by the Human Subject Protection Advocate, IRB Office, University of Pittsburgh at the following telephone number: 1-866-212-2668

By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research study entitled, The Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Please place your initials here to acknowledge that you received a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Initials: _____

APPENDIX D

FORM A

Form A: Study of Non-custodial Fathers and Paternal Involvement

Form A is to be used to record the names of all the children and their mothers, mentioned in Section 2, questions 3 & 4, by the research participant.

1. Child's Name: _____

Age: _____

Mother's Name: _____

2. Child's Name: _____

Age: _____

Mother's Name: _____

3. Child's Name: _____

Age: _____

Mother's Name: _____

4. Child's Name: _____

Age: _____

Mother's Name: _____

5. Child's Name: _____

Age: _____

Mother's Name: _____

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