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Is She the Boss of Us?: Maternal Grandmothers and Father Identity in Fragile Families

Robin S. Högnäs and Heidi Williams

University of Louisville

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Introduction

In recent decades, scholars and policymakers have been attentive to the growing complexity of the family structures in which children are born and reared. Children are increasingly born into cohabiting unions which tend to be more fragile than marital unions and some experience multiple parental partnerships by age 5 (e.g., Carlson and McLanahan 2010)—both increase the likelihood of nonresident biological fathering. Children benefit when their biological fathers are involved positively in their lives (e.g., Lamb 2010), but nonresident fathers tend to be less involved (e.g., Sorensen, Mincy, & Halpern 2000). Research suggests that father identity may be an important determinant of father involvement among both resident and nonresident fathers (e.g., Goldberg Forthcoming; Henly & Pasley 2005), yet the social and contextual factors which shape father identity are not well understood.

Ethnographic and qualitative research has contributed significantly to our understanding of men in families and their roles as fathers. Indeed, some studies have explored the contextual factors associated with father identity, including the role of extended family relationships (Stack 1970; Liebow 2004; Marsiglio & Roy 2012; Edin & Nelson 2013). Even so, qualitative studies tend to be limited in terms of generalizability, and few nationally representative studies have directly considered the role of extended family, particularly the involvement of maternal grandmothers, in how men identify as fathers. Increasing family complexity may mean that extended families, and maternal grandmothers in particular, assume more (grand)child rearing responsibilities; and to the extent that father involvement is a function of father identity (e.g., Goldberg Forthcoming; Henly & Pasley 2005), it is important to understand whether maternal grandmothers' involvement influences father identity. Drawing from family systems and identity theory, and using data from the *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study* (*N*=1,608), we

examine the following research question: Does maternal grandmothers' family involvement—i.e., coresidence with mothers and the provision of financial support—influence paternal stress and how fathers view themselves parents (i.e., father identify).

Theoretical Framework and Background

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory attempts to explain the dynamic role of mothers', fathers', and children's relationships in influencing individual- and family-level outcomes (Minuchin 1974). Parents typically provide care and nurturing for children whose short- and long-term adjustments (and overall outcomes) are affected by the system and its changes (Minuchin 1974; Selzter 1991). Within family systems, however, children might receive nurturance and care from adults other than their biological parents (e.g., extended family), with whom they may live or come in frequent contact (Jones & Lindahl 2011). Ethnographic research dating back several decades certainly suggests that understanding family systems requires a better understanding of the role of extended families (e.g., Stack 1974). Moreover, the growing complexity of families and parental relationships may mean that biological parents, especially mothers, depend increasingly on their families for childrearing assistance.

As more biological fathers live apart from their children (see Carlson & McLanahan 2010), the extent to which family systems include positive relationships between mothers and fathers (and parents and children) is particularly important with respect to child wellbeing. Negative relationships between mothers and fathers may increase the number of barriers that parents, nonresident fathers in particular, face in maintaining involvement with children. For example, among nonresident fathers, research suggests that mothers may serve as gatekeepers of children due to perceived reasons (e.g., father may be a threat to a new partnership or to her

children) and/or known reasons (e.g., father's substance abuse), and not always because of financial constraints (Allen & Hawkins 1999; Sano et al. 2008). Maternal gatekeeping (among other barriers to involvement) may, to some extent, place fathers outside of the family system.

Perry (2009) argues that because U.S. mothers predominantly rear children, it is likely that maternal versus paternal kin will be more involved in the children's lives. This familial involvement may affect fathers' view of their role within the family system, particularly if fathering expectations set by extended family are not met (Perry 2009). The establishment of boundaries between fathers and maternal grandmothers (in terms of familial authority) "may be problematic when participation in the kin network is a structural necessity, rather than an individual or cultural preference" (Perry 2009: 221). Mothers may find themselves in precarious situations with respect to decisions about living alone or with extended kin, how best to rear their children, and negotiating between support from extended family members and the fathers of their children. When maternal grandmothers provide shelter and financial help, they may assume part of the gatekeeping role, further exacerbating nonresident fathers' exclusion from the family system. A central role assumed by maternal grandmothers (and her family) out of necessity may limit the extent to which men view themselves positively as fathers.

Among fragile families (i.e., children are born to unmarried parents), maternal grandmother coresidence is common (see Högnäs & Carlson 2010) and may indicate both strong mother-daughter relationships and grandmothers' power and authority in childrearing decisions. Research suggests that a coresident maternal grandmother may view her position (within the family system) more as a coparent than as an extended family member (Herzog et al. 2007; Marsiglio & Roy 2012). Indeed, grandparents' views about parental roles may influence how daughters view their control over parenting their children, their roles as parents (Jones & Lindahl

2011), and their children's fathers (Herzog et al. 2007). Subsequently, coresident grandmothers potentially influence the relationship between mothers and fathers, the relationship between fathers and their children, and potentially even how fathers view themselves as fathers.

Within three-generation households, grandparents often assume roles of authority (Stack 1975) and while fathers may work hard to meet the expectations of maternal kin, falling short may result in perceived failure or being a bad father. If connections between fathers and their biological children are lost, fathers may distance themselves from families as a way of protecting themselves emotionally. On the other hand, Marsiglio and Roy (2012) argue that

> …even when mothers and maternal kin communicate clear expectations for men to offer some money or clothes, to spend time with a baby, some young men limit their involvement and give priority to what they need in their own lives (137).

The authors suggest that young men may not be ready to settle into their roles as fathers and thus may dissociate with family, particularly maternal kin. It may also be that fathers weigh the costs and benefits of remaining connected within the family system if (or when) they feel that their roles as fathers have been limited or diminished by maternal kin. Decades ago, Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that a person can only feel valued in a setting that supports their self-identity. Without the support of maternal kin (or paternal kin for that matter), men's roles within the family system and their identities as fathers may be compromised.

Identity Theory

In many ways, families (and extended families) are social structures within which grandparents, mothers, fathers, and children develop and negotiate a sense of self and roles within the family structure (Stryker 1980). Identity theory, as it relates to fathers, posits that behavior (e.g., father involvement) is associated with the development of identities and the meanings that men attach to the role of being a father. Not surprisingly, identity theorists posit

that meaning or 'self-perceptions' of men's roles as fathers is intimately connected to social interactions that either reinforce or suppress them in those roles (Henly & Pasley 2005).

Broadly conceived men's perceptions of their roles as fathers and negotiating those roles through social interactions results in the formation of father identity. More specifically, Stryker (1968) and others argue that father identity can be characterized by the salience of, centrality of, or commitment to an identity which may be associated with fathering behavior. While centrality and salience have to do with competing identities (i.e., the importance of a particular role over another) and whether or not a given identity is enacted in a specific social situation (Goldberg Forthcoming; Henly & Pasley 2005; Rane & McBride 2000), commitment has to do with the social relationships associated with the development and maintenance of a given identity (Stryker & Serpe 1994).

Henly and Pasley (2005) argue that "…commitment to father identities should be higher when a greater number of important relationships encourage the enactment of identity-related behaviors" (61). In addition, relationships that discourage the enactment of father identity may negatively influence relationships between fathers and their children. We argue that maternal grandmother involvement has the potential to negatively influence commitment to father identities as grandmothers may (rightly or wrongly) have negative opinions about men's roles as fathers or they may assume control such that fathers' commitment is reduced or weakened.

Intuitively, 'commitment' to father identity, as Stryker (1968) and others conceptualize it, is a complicated process as fathers are embedded in multiple familial and social contexts. Burke (1991) argues that the identity process is based on a person's sense of self and reflected appraisals from others. Alignment between one's sense of self and associated appraisals either reinforce or diminish the identity attached to particular roles (Burke 1991). If others' appraisals

(e.g., maternal grandmothers) and one's own sense of fathering are not aligned, fathers may attempt to balance appraisals with his personal sense of the father role.

As we can imagine, identity maintenance may be more routine for some fathers (e.g., resident fathers, higher SES fathers) versus others fathers (e.g., nonresident fathers, lower SES fathers) and finding the balance between self and reflected appraisals may lead to paternal stress. Paternal stress associated with father identity may be exacerbated if appraisals of fathers' roles are from maternal grandmothers who assume a prominent role within the family system. That is, paternal stress associated with identity maintenance may increase when maternal grandmothers coreside and or provide financial assistance to mothers and children and assume some control within the family. Fathers may find it difficult to balance their self-perceptions as fathers with maternal grandmothers' expectations (or appraisals) of them as fathers (although we cannot measure the later with our data, we speculate that this is the case).

While most of the extant literature emphasizes the role of parents' social interactions in father identity (see Henly & Pasley 2005), few studies (of which we are aware) focus specifically on the influence of maternal grandmother involvement on (commitment to) father identity. We attempt to fill this gap.

Moderating Factors

Variation by Biological Parents' Resident Status

Research suggests that fathers who feel that they share "linked lives" with mothers and their children may view themselves as better fathers (Wilkinson et al. 2009) and resident fathers may find this more attainable. Research further shows that an increasing number of children live apart from their fathers, and many do so by age 5 (e.g., Carlson & McLanahan 2010). Nonresident fathers may find it difficult to maintain high levels of involvement with their

children (Furstenberg & Cherlin 1991; Sorensen, Mincy, & Halpern 2000), the result of which is potential difficulty in negotiating and maintaining a positive father identity. In addition, nonresident versus resident mothers may rely more on her family with respect to childrearing as coparenting with fathers across households (and amid new romantic partnerships and multipartnered fertility) is often difficult (see Carlson & Högnäs 2011). In addition, maternal extended family members' involvement with children, particularly for unmarried parents, may further complicate men's roles as father (Perry 2009) as distance from biological children and decision-making processes and unclear familial roles may lead to conflict and increase father's role ambiguity (Tach 2012). Therefore, we expect that nonresident versus resident fathers have less positive identities when maternal grandmothers are involved.

Variation by Race

Much of the extended family research focuses on African American families because the parenting context is not typically limited to traditional two-parent households (Jones & Lindahl 2011; Marsiglio & Roy 2012; Perry 2009; Stack 1970). Research shows that African American families have well-established patterns of incorporating extended family members in their social and familial processes including the rearing of children (Cherlin 2006; Edin et al. 2009). Gerstel (2011) further shows that African American and Latino/Hispanic compared to White families are more likely to live with or in close proximity to their relatives and have frequent contact with, and provide instrumental support (e.g., grocery shop or domestic work) to, their extended family. Due to economic disadvantage and discrimination, African American and Latino/Hispanic families may rely on familial support networks and exchange relationships for survival (Gerstel 2011; Hogan et al. 1990; Stack 1974). Given this tradition of extended family support and integration, we might expect that maternal grandmothers' involvement (i.e., coresidence with

mothers and financial assistance) positively, rather than negatively, influences African American and Latino/Hispanic fathers' identity. On the other hand, if maternal grandmothers negatively evaluate fathers' roles within the family and assume responsibility as a result, fathers may feel stressed or view themselves less positively as fathers (although our data do not allow us to test the influence of maternal grandmothers' expectations of fathers).

Variation by Socioeconomic Status

We speculate that low-income fathers experience increased levels of stress trying to balance their roles as fathers (i.e., nurturer vs. breadwinner) in non-traditional contexts (i.e., unmarried and co-parental relationships with maternal extended kin). Further, structural barriers (e.g, unemployment and deindustrialization) may limit a father's ability to interact with institutions that provide resources for him to actuate his parental identity (Aneshensel 1996). Fathers may feel increased levels of stress if they feel isolated from support mechanisms or if they view their parental roles as too cumbersome. In fact, "undermining [father's role] from the mother or from a social institution or system may induce many fathers to retreat from responsible fathering unless their own individual level of commitment to fathering is quite strong" (Doherty et al. 1998: 287).

Perry and Langley (2013) argue that fathers who lack access to, and resources for, their children have difficulty gaining entrée to the family system and, subsequently, activating or sustaining their paternal roles. Overall, we expect that fathers' SES (in terms of education) will moderate the relationship between maternal grandmother involvement and father identity. More specifically, we expect that grandmother involvement will negatively influence lower educated men's identities as fathers more than higher educated men's. On the other hand, financial support

from family, even from maternal kin, may be associated with lower levels of paternal stress among lower educated fathers.

Variation by Fathers' Age

Research suggests that young men place emphasis on establishing their own identities (Allen & Doherty 1996), perhaps independent of their nuclear or extended family. Indeed, young fathers experience difficulty in maintaining close relationships with extended family or doing what many scholars call kin work (Marsiglio and Roy 2012). Moreover, young fathers may experience more stress associated with father identity, as some young fathers may link the challenges of being a father to those of their fathers (Roy 2006). We speculate that among young parents, maternal grandmothers assume considerable levels of responsibility for children; and as a consequence, young fathers find it difficult to balance maternal grandmothers' expectations with self-perceptions of their roles as fathers. On the other hand, young fathers, who may struggle with finding and maintaining employment or who are in school, may identify more positively as fathers because maternal grandmothers provide important sources of support (e.g., a place to live, help with finances), thereby reducing potential stress and negative self-perceptions associated with financial hardship.

Data and Methods

We use data from the Fragile families and Child Wellbeing Study—a longitudinal birth cohort study with an oversample of nonmarital births (N = 4,897 total, 3,710 to unmarried parents and 1,187 to married parents)—to examine the association between maternal grandmother involvement and father identity (i.e., paternal stress and how fathers feel about themselves as fathers) between years 1 and 9 following the focal child's birth. The baseline survey was conducted between 1998 and 2000 in 75 hospitals in 20 large U.S. cities. Follow-up

interviews were conducted 1, 3, 5, and 9 years following the birth. Fathers and mothers were interviewed with fairly high response rates (76% of mothers retained by year 9, and 88% of fathers were interviewed at least once). The weighted sample represents nonmarital births in U.S. cities with populations over 200,000. We use both mother reports of maternal grandmothers' involvement and primarily father reports of father identity. Due to missing data on demographic characteristics, we use mother reports of fathers' characteristics where possible. In addition, we use the *ice* command in Stata to multiply impute missing values on our covariates only. We do not impute missing values for our primary independent and dependent variables (i.e., maternal grandmother involvement and father identity).

Father Identity

We use two indicators to measure father identity. First, prior research suggests that stress is an integral part of identity (Burke 1991); therefore, we use paternal stress as an indicator of father identity. Following prior research on maternal stress (see Cooper et al. 2009), we measure paternal stress using 5 indicators. Beginning with the 1-year survey (and in the 3-, 5-, and 9-year follow-up surveys), fathers were asked whether they *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree,* or *strongly disagree* with the following: 'Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be'; 'I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent'; 'I find taking care of my child(ren) is much more work than pleasure'; and 'I often feel tired, worn out, or exhausted from raising a family'. We reverse coded each indicator of paternal stress such that increasing values represent stronger agreement that fathers are stressed as parents. Factor analyses showed that paternal stress items generally loaded well together with an average alpha reliability score of 63 (over years 1 through 9). Our final measure of paternal stress is an average of the four indicators of paternal stress with a range of 1 to 4.

In addition to paternal stress, we measure father identity in terms of how fathers report that they feel about themselves as fathers. In years 3, 5, and 9 of the Fragile Families Survey, biological fathers were asked to rate whether they felt that they were *an excellent father*, *a very good father*, *a good father*, or *not a good father*. We reverse coded how fathers view themselves as fathers such that higher values represent a more positive self-rating of father identity. That is, a father who views himself as *not a good father*=1 and a father who views himself as *excellent*=4. We treat how men view themselves as fathers as an ordinal measure.

Maternal Grandmother Involvement

Maternal grandmother involvement is also measured using two separate indicators. First, maternal grandmother involvement is measured using a dummy indicator for whether (or not) biological mothers' mothers live in the household with them (and in most cases, the focal child). We use a constructed measure of maternal grandmother coresidence for years 1, 3, 5, and 9 of the Fragile Families Survey (see CRCW 2008). In addition, in each wave of the Fragile Families Survey biological mothers were asked whether someone other than the biological father provided them with financial assistance and who provided the assistance. Along with maternal grandmother coresidence, we measure involvement using a dummy indicator for whether (or not) biological mothers received financial assistance from their mothers[1] or their mothers' families.

Covariates

We control for a number of potential confounding factors likely to influence both grandmothers' involvement and biological fathers' identity. We include both time-varying and time-invariant control variables. Among our time-invariant covariates, we include dummy

[1] The original question in the FFS asked whether biological mothers received financial assistance from her parents; however, we used additional information to deduce whether the assistance likely came from the maternal grandmother (e.g., whether mothers' fathers were either deceased or they never met them, whether the mothers' biological parents were together when she was 15 and at the 5-year survey).

indicators for Whites (reference category), African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and others. Given that fathers' education changes little between the baseline survey and year 9, we treat fathers' education as invariant and use the baseline measure to retain more fathers in our analytic sample. In addition, we control for whether or not mothers have children with a prior partner given the potential influence on how involved maternal grandmothers' are with her family (i.e., mothers may need help coordinating efforts across households to coparent children in addition to help from fathers) and the potential influence on the focal child's father.

Among our time-varying covariates, each measured at years 1, 3, 5, and 9, we include fathers' income-to-poverty ratio which ranges from 0 to 15.8. Because childbearing and parenting may differ among younger and older fathers, we include a dummy indicator for whether (or not) fathers are older than age 23. We also control for fathers' self-reported health (1=*poor* to 5=*excellent*) and whether or not fathers have spent time in jail (yes/no). Lastly, research suggests that fathers who have children with a new partner may view the new partnership and child as a new chance as a father (Tach et al. 2013), we control for whether or not fathers coreside with and (or) have new children with new partners at each wave between years 1 through 9 (fathers who have a new child with a new partner, but do not coreside with them are also coded as 1).

Analytic Approach

Our goal is to estimate whether (and how) maternal grandmother involvement is associated with father identity over years 1 to 9 of the focal child's life, net of confounding covariates. We use repeated observations about maternal grandmother involvement and father identity pooled across years 1, 3, 5, and 9 and take advantage of the longitudinal design of the data. We use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) to estimate father identity where paternal stress is

the measure, and Ordered Logistic Regression (OLR) to estimate father identity where how men feel about themselves as fathers is the measure (the latter of which only includes measures from years 3, 5, and 9 because the question was not asked in year 1). Due to concerns about selection, we also estimate random-effects models[2] for both father identity measures. Random-effects models capture variation both between and within persons while controlling for unobserved heterogeneity via the composite error term (treated as a random variable; see Allison 2009).

We estimate 6 models beginning with a baseline model (Model 1), which includes only measures of maternal grandmother involvement (coresidence and financial contributions). We then add race in Model 2, followed by SES characteristics in Model 3. Model 4 adds covariates about other personal characteristics of fathers (i.e., age, health, and incarceration). Next, we add whether or not the mother had a child with a prior partner at year 1 (Model 5). And finally, because we speculate that a change in fathers' coresidence with mothers and childbearing with other partners is likely to influence how he feels about himself as father (to the focal child), we add a dummy indicator for fathers who coreside, and have had a child, with a new partner (Model 6). Our indicator of fathers' multipartnered fertility captures both nonresident status with biological mothers and new multipartnered fertility over time.

Results

Descriptive

We begin by describing the characteristics of our analytic sample. Table 1 shows the weighted means and percentages for our measures of maternal grandmother involvement (i.e., independent variables), father identity (i.e., dependent variables), and covariates. All means and

[2] We intended to estimate fixed-effects models which capture only within-person variation and are the most conservative estimates of how changes in maternal grandmother involvement influence changes in father identity. However, the result of the Hausman test suggests that random-effects models are more appropriate for our full models, and therefore are employed in this paper.

percentages, with the exception of fathers' race and education, are from year-1 reports. Fathers' race and education are from the baseline survey. Moreover, where father reports are missing for race and education, we use mother reports to retain more fathers in our analytic sample.

Approximately 12% of maternal grandmothers lived with biological mothers at the time of the 1-year follow-up survey. Twenty-six percent of maternal grandmothers provided financial assistance to biological mothers. In terms of father identity, the majority of men identified as either *very good* (36%) or *excellent* (36%) fathers. While 17% of fathers identified as *good*, a mere 1% of men identified as *not very good* fathers. Overall, the majority of men identified as being at least a very good father. In terms of paternal stress, our other indicator of father identity, on average fathers reported that they neither strongly agreed nor strongly disagreed with being stressed about parenting.

Shifting to our covariates, our weighted analytic sample includes roughly equal percentages of Whites (31%), African Americans (34%), and Hispanic/Latinos (30%). In terms of education, more than half of the fathers in our sample had a high school degree or less (53%), 24% had some college, and only 23% held a college degree or higher at the baseline survey. The average income-to-poverty ratio is 3.6 (again the range is 0 to 15.8). Overall, on average, our analytic sample includes fathers who are fairly disadvantaged socioeconomically.

Our analytic sample includes mostly fathers who are over the age of 23 (85%); the average age is 31 years (mean not shown). Fathers report, on average, that they are in very good health. Sixteen percent of fathers had spent some time in jail by the time the 1-year survey was administered. In terms of multipartnered fertility, approximately one-quarter of focal children's biological mothers (23%) and fathers (26%) had children with another partner at the 1-year survey.

Table 2 shows change in our father identity measures (i.e., paternal stress and how fathers feel about themselves as fathers) by maternal grandmother involvement (i.e., coresidence with the mother and financial contribution) between years 1 and 9. Among families in which the grandmother lived with biological mothers, paternal stress appeared to decrease slightly as the percentage of maternal grandmother coresidence decreased. At year 1, 12% of maternal grandmothers lived with biological mothers, corresponding to an average paternal stress of 2.2. By year 9, fewer biological mothers lived with their mothers (9%) and paternal stress decreased from 2.2 to 1.7. In terms of how fathers feel about themselves as fathers, fewer report viewing themselves as excellent fathers between years 1 and 9 (54% versus 36% respectively), although maternal grandmother coresidence only changes by about 1 percentage point between years 3 and 9.

Shifting to maternal grandmother contributions (right-hand side of Table 2), mothers who received financial assistance from their mothers decreased from approximately 26% in year 1 to 19% in year 9 (about 7 percentage points between years 1 and 9). While there appears to be little change in paternal stress between years 1 and 9, fewer fathers of biological mothers who received help from their mothers report that they are excellent fathers. That is, approximately 50% report that they are excellent fathers in year 1 compared to 32% who report the same in year 9. These percentages correspond to about a 3 percentage point increase in maternal grandmother contributions between years 3 and 9 (again, the years for which we have data on how men feel about themselves as fathers).

Multivariate Analyses

Table 3 shows results from Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and random effects regression models predicting our first measure of father identity, paternal stress, by maternal grandmother

coresidence, maternal grandmother financial contributions, and covariates (using our pooled sample from year 1 through year 9). We begin with Model 1, which shows the baseline relationship between maternal grandmother involvement and paternal stress. There appears to be a positive, but insignificant relationship between maternal grandmother coresidence and average paternal stress (in both the OLS and random effects models). On the other hand, maternal grandmothers' financial contributions are associated significantly with an increase in average levels of paternal stress. This is true even in the more conservative random effects models, and when we adjust for race differences in Model 2. Overall, the results remain the same once we add socioeconomic status (i.e., fathers' education and income-to-poverty ratio) in Model 3; however, the association between maternal grandmother financial contributions and paternal stress become moderately significant.

The shift to moderate significance once SES is added suggest that once we account for unobserved differences between fathers taking into account individual change over time in the random effects models, the association between maternal grandmothers' financial contributions and paternal stress seems to operate through fathers' SES, at least to some extent. Once we add fathers' age, health, and incarceration in Model 4, the association between maternal grandmother financial contributions and paternal stress is no longer significant in the more conservative random effects models (but remains significant in the OLS models); and this is the case once all of our covariates are included in Model 6 (full model).

In terms of covariates, focusing on Model 6 (full model), it appears that race, SES, age, and health are associated significantly with paternal stress. Consistent with what we might expect given the 'Hispanic Paradox', controlling for all other covariates, Hispanic/Latino fathers report lower levels of paternal stress compared to White fathers. Fathers with some college versus less

than a high school degree and those with higher income-to-poverty ratios also report lower levels of paternal stress. Increases in fathers' higher self-reported health is also associated with a significant decrease in paternal stress. On the other hand, an increase in the number of fathers who spend time in jail (between the year 1 and year 9) is significantly associated with an increase in paternal stress. Surprisingly, multipartnered fertility among mothers and changes in multipartnered fertility among fathers between years 1 and 9 (includes resident status changes between biological mothers and fathers) is not associated with paternal stress. Overall, our full model (6) suggests that disadvantaged versus more advantaged fathers are more likely experience paternal stress. In additional analyses (not shown here), we explore whether the association between maternal grandmother involvement and paternal stress varied by subgroups, particularly in terms of education, age, and race (i.e., we ran Model 6 separately for each group). Our results suggest that there are subgroup differences, and we return to this point in our discussion of Table 5 below.

Turning now to Table 4, we report results from our OLR models (odds ratios) predicting how men feel about themselves as fathers by maternal grandmother involvement. Our baseline OLR results shown in Model 1 suggests that both maternal grandmother coresidence and financial contributions are associated significantly with a decrease in the odds of men feeling more positively about themselves as fathers (OR=.84 for coresidence and .81 for financial contributions). On the other hand, RE results in Model 1 suggest that grandmother coresidence is not associated significantly with how men feel about themselves as fathers. Maternal grandmothers' financial contributions, however, is both negatively and significantly associated with men's views of themselves as fathers once we account for selection in the RE models. As

financial contributions increase, the odds that men feel more positively versus more negatively about themselves as fathers decreases by about .25.

Results in Table 4 remain consistent once we control for SES, other characteristics, and multipartnered fertility. Interestingly, unlike our RE models predicting parental stress, our RE models predicting how men feel about themselves as fathers suggest that even once selection is controlled, maternal grandmother financial contributions (over time) are associated with a decrease in the odds that men feel more positively about themselves as fathers, net of confounding covariates including new coresidence and childbearing with another partner (surprisingly, the latter is associated with less positive assessments about being a father). Overall, the patterns of association between covariates (particularly with respect to education and race) and how men feel about themselves as fathers are similar to the patterns reported in Table 3 where paternal stress is the outcome.

In Table 5, we report results from regression models predicting father identity (i.e., paternal stress and how fathers feel about themselves as fathers) by interactions between maternal grandmother involvement (coresidence and financial contributions) and biological parents' resident status, fathers' education, race, and age. Each set of interactions is estimated in a separate model using the pooled sample over years 1 through 9 (over years 3 through 9 for how men feel about themselves as fathers) and includes all covariates. Beginning with parents' resident status, results suggest that maternal grandmother involvement (in terms of both coresidence and financial contributions), regardless of fathers' and mothers' resident status does not significantly predict paternal stress. On the other hand, the odds that men feel more positive about themselves as fathers decreases significantly among nonresident (compared to resident)

fathers regardless of whether or not maternal grandmothers coreside or provide financial contributions to the biological mother of their children.

In terms of education, grandmother coresidence does not predict significantly father identity regardless of education level. On the other hand, paternal stress decreases among fathers when maternal grandmothers do not provide financial support to mothers. This suggests that fathers who have some college may experience less stress associated with being a parent when the mothers of their children rely on them or are financially independent. Correspondingly, when mothers do not receive financial assistance from their mothers, the odds that men who have a high school degree feel more positively (versus less positively) about themselves as fathers increases significantly (OR=1.26). Overall, in terms of education, it appears that when maternal grandmothers do not contribute financially, fathers who are moderately educated, but who have less than a college degree, identify more positively as fathers.

Next, given that prior research (and results from our multivariate analyses) suggests that race is an important moderating factor associated with extended family relations (e.g., Gerstel 2011), we examine how the relationship between grandmother involvement and father identity varies by race. Surprisingly, there is little difference between African American and White (reference group) fathers, although grandmother coresidence among African Americans compared to Whites is associated with a slight, moderately significant decrease in paternal stress. On the other hand, no grandmother coresidence compared to coresidence among Whites is associated with a slight, moderately significant decrease in paternal stress. Hispanics/Latinos compared to Whites with grandmother coresidence report significantly lower paternal stress regardless of grandmother coresidence. On the other hand, the coefficient for paternal stress among Hispanics/Latinos whose mothers' coreside with their mothers is larger than it is among

those who do not coreside with maternal grandmothers. In terms of how men feel about themselves as fathers, the influence of maternal grandmother coresidence does not appear to vary significantly by race.

A similar pattern of variation holds when we consider maternal grandmothers' financial contributions. Hispanic/Latino fathers are overall less likely to experience paternal stress compared to White fathers. In terms of how men feel about themselves as fathers, African American fathers (compared to White fathers in circumstances where the maternal grandmother contributes financially) report more positive versus less positive feelings about being a father. On the other hand, Hispanic/Latino men report less positive feelings about being a father when maternal grandmothers do not contribute financially. Both of the later associations, however, are only moderately significant.

Finally, prior research suggests that younger versus older fathers experience childbearing and rearing differently (e.g., Roy 2006); therefore, we examine whether the association between maternal grandmother involvement and father identity is moderated by fathers' age. The results in Table 5 suggest that age primarily moderates the relation in terms of paternal stress. Older versus younger fathers are significantly less likely to experience paternal stress regardless of grandmother coresidence (although when mothers coreside with their mothers, the coefficient for younger fathers is negative, but insignificant). In terms of maternal grandmother financial contributions, all subgroups experience increased paternal stress compared to young fathers (<age 23) and no maternal grandmother financial contributions. In terms of how men feel about themselves as fathers, young fathers with mothers who receive financial assistance from their mothers (versus those who do not) feel less positively about themselves as fathers. Overall, our

findings suggest that, at least to some extent, fathers' age moderates the relationship between maternal grandmother involvement and father identity.

Discussion

In this paper, we provide new evidence about the association between maternal grandmother involvement in families and father identity. First, in our descriptive analysis, we find that overall grandmother involvement decreases between years 1 and 9 of the focal child's life. At year 1, 12% of mothers in our sample lived with their mothers, but 9% lived with their mothers by the time their children were age 9. In addition, 26% of mothers received financial assistance from their mothers at the 1-year survey compared to 16% at the 3-year and 19% at the 9-year survey. Grandmother involvement may change over time as a result of mothers' coresidence with a new partner, changes in biological fathers' contributions, mothers no longer having custody of their children, and/or greater independence on the part of biological mothers. We intend to explore these possibilities in future iterations of this paper.

In our multivariate analyses, overall, we find that grandmother involvement, particularly financial contributions, is significantly associated with how men identify as fathers. We examine the influence of maternal grandmother involvement on two indicators of father identity, paternal stress and how men view themselves as fathers. Specifically, we find no significant association between maternal grandmother coresidence with mothers and paternal stress for all fathers. However, the results from our interaction models suggest subgroup differences in levels of paternal stress by education, race, and age. Fathers with some college who have children with mothers who receive no financial assistance from their mothers experience significantly less paternal stress compared to those who have a high school degree and receive financial assistance.

Our interaction models further suggest that Hispanic/Latino fathers experience less paternal stress regardless of maternal grandmother assistance compared to White fathers who receive financial assistance. It may be that closer extended family bonds among Hispanic/Latino families result in less paternal stress when maternal grandmothers are involved, or that extended and nuclear families are more likely to share more in the pecuniary cost of rearing children. Lastly, our interaction models suggest that paternal stress is less prevalent among older fathers regardless of maternal grandmother coresidence, although younger fathers who have children with mothers who receive financial contributions from their mothers experience higher levels of paternal stress.

In terms of how men feel about themselves as fathers, our second indicator of father identity, again, we find that maternal grandmothers' coresidence with mothers is not significantly associated with men's feelings about being fathers once we include all covariates into the model. On the other hand, financial contributions are associated with men having less positive feelings about themselves as fathers, net of all covariates. Moreover, consistent with our expectations, nonresident fathers report less positive feelings about themselves as fathers. Overall, while we expected both coresidence and maternal grandmother financial contributions to significantly influence father identity, financial contributions were much more important in terms of paternal stress and how men view themselves as fathers.

Our findings imply that the balance between maternal grandmother expectations for fathers and fathers' self-perceptions of themselves as fathers may be linked to their ability to provide for their children financially. Some research suggests that financial barriers do not explain all of the variation in why mothers gatekeep or control relationships between fathers and children (Sano et al. 2008), but at some point, mothers turn to their families for help or maternal

grandmothers step in when help is needed. Our study suggests that receipt of this help from maternal grandmothers has important implications for fathers.

Indeed gender norms within families have changed and continue to change and fathers' roles in families are continually shifting in terms of being the breadwinner (Coltrane 2007). Even so, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that, even amid shifting gender norms, financial barriers faced by fathers significantly influence how he views his role as a father and potentially how connected he is to his child(ren). Not only do financial barriers potentially limit time with his child, a father's inability to support his children financially may eventually diminish his fatherly pride (Berger & Langton 2011; Edin et al. 2009) resulting in negative father identity.

Research suggests that father identity is associated with father involvement (Goldberg Forthcoming; Henley & Pasley 2005); therefore, to the extent that maternal grandmothers' financial contributions negatively influence identity, fathers may find it even more difficult to maintain a presence in their children's live despite their efforts to do so. In addition to which, "overemphasis of child support enforcement of lower-income fathers without recognizing the complexities of their economic contexts and role expectations may unintentionally push fathers away from their children" (Sano et al. 2008: 1720). This overemphasis focuses heavily on traditional father duties (i.e., breadwinner) and ignores the prominent familial roles that disadvantaged fathers seek. Edin and Nelson (2013), for example, show that many fathers enjoy participating in everyday childrearing activities (e.g., reading to their children) and highlight their roles as fathers. Even so, when the efforts that some men make in their roles as fathers go unrecognized, they may fear being viewed more as "visiting uncles" than as fathers (Sano et al. 2008) who play a central role in their children's lives.

While this study contributes to our understanding of maternal grandmother involvement and father identity, particularly given that we use nationally representative (when weighted), longitudinal data (which is what largely limits prior studies), this study is not without limitations. As with most studies based on observational data, attrition and missing data are concerns. While 88% of fathers were interviewed at least once, 12% were not, and these are likely more disadvantaged fathers. There is item-missing data on particular measures; however, we account for missing on covariates (only) using multiple imputations. Given the level of missing on a given item for father responses, prior to multiply imputing missing on our covariates, we used mothers' reports where possible to reduce the amount of missing that we imputed. Even so, given our findings about maternal grandmother financial contributions, an underrepresentation of the most disadvantaged fathers in our sample may downwardly bias our results. In addition to missing, we do not have measures for how men feel about themselves as fathers prior to the 3-year survey and thus cannot assess any changes which happened between the first and third year of their child's life. Finally, our sample included only fathers who live in cities with populations of 200,000 people or more, and therefore we cannot generalize to smaller cities or rural areas where both extended family relationships and fathering may be different.

In sum, this paper provides new information about maternal grandmother involvement in families and father identity among both resident and nonresident fathers over the first nine years after an urban birth. We find evidence that maternal grandmothers' financial contributions are associated with men's less positive self-perceptions of being fathers. We intend to continue exploring the mechanisms which underlie this finding and the potential that gendered role expectations continue to underlie how men identify as fathers, at least to some extent.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Maternal Grandmother Involvement, Father Identity, and Biological Fathers' Demographic and Personal Characteristics at the Baseline or 1-Year Survey

	Mean (SD)	%
Maternal Grandmother Involvement		
Maternal Grandmother Coresidence (yes/no)		12
Maternal Grandmother Financial Contributions (yes/no)		26
Father Identity		
How Men Feel about Themselves as Fathers[1]		
Not Very Good		1
Good		17
Very Good		36
Excellent		46
Paternal Stress (Range=1-4)	2.0 (1.0)	
Race/Ethnicity		
White (ref)		31
African American		34
Hispanic/Latino		30
Other		5
Socioeconomic Status		
Father's Education		
Less than High School (ref)		25
High School Degree		28
Some College		24
College Degree or More		23
Father's Income-to-Poverty Ratio (Range=0-15.8)	3.6 (4.8)	
Other Characteristics		
Father's Age > 23		85
Self-Reported Health (Range=1-5)	4.0 (1.0)	
Father Has Spent Time in Jail (yes/no)		16
Multipartnered Fertility		
Mother has children with another partner (yes/no)		23
Father has children with another partner (yes/no)		26
N	1, 226	

Note: All figures are weighted by sampling weights. Ns are unweighted.

[1]How fathers' feel about themselves as fathers is measured at years 3, 5, and 9, and includes more cases than paternal stress which is measured at 1, 3, 5, and 9 (N=1,608). This is likely because some biological fathers were interviewed for the first time in later waves of the survey and due to more random missing on individual indicators of paternal stress.

Table 2: Change in Father Identity (i.e., Paternal Stress and How Men Feel about Themselves as Fathers) by Maternal Grandmother Coresidence and Financial Contribution at Years 1, 3, 5, & 9

	Maternal Grandmother Coresidence (% yes)				Maternal Grandmother Financial Contribution (%			
	Year 1 (12%)	Year 3 (8%)	Year 5 (9%)	Year 9 (9%)	Year 1 (26%)	Year 3 (16%)	Year 5 (20%)	Year 9 (19%)
Paternal Stress (Range=1-4)[1]	2.2 (.73)	1.9 (.67)	1.9 (.52)	1.7 (.54)	2.0 (.67)	2.2 (.77)	2.1 (.75)	2.0 (.69)
N =1,226								
How Men Feel about Themselves as Fathers[2]								
Not Very Good	---	.1	5.4	2.0	---	1.0	1.0	2.0
Good	---	18.5	11.6	13.5	---	11.0	12.5	16.8
Very Good	---	27.6	18.6	48.1	---	38.9	48.9	49.7
Excellent	---	53.8	64.4	36.4	---	49.5	37.9	31.6
N =1,608								

Note : All figures are weighted by sampling weights. Ns are unweighted.

[1]Mean reported for each year, standard deviation in parentheses.

[2]How fathers' feel about themselves as fathers is measured at years 3, 5, and 9, and includes more cases than paternal stress which is measured at 1, 3, 5, & 9. This is likely because some biological fathers were interviewed for the first time in later waves of the survey and due to more random missing on individual indicators of paternal stress.

Table 3: Results from Ordinary Least Squares and Random Effects Regression Models Predicting Paternal Stress from Year 1 to Year 9 by Maternal Grandmother Coresidence, Maternal Grandmother Financial Contributions, and Covariates (N=1, 226)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	OLS	RE	OLS	RE	OLS	RE	OLS	RE	OLS	RE	OLS	RE
Maternal Grandmother Involvement												
Maternal Grandmother Coresidence (yes/no)	.02	.02	.02	.02	.01	.02	-.01	.02	-.01	.00	-.01	.00
Maternal Grandmother Financial Contributions (yes/no)	.07 ***	.03 *	.06 ***	.03 *	.06 ***	.03 †	.04 *	.00	.04 **	.02	.04 *	.02
Race/Ethnicity												
White (ref)		---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
African American			.02	.04	-.01	.01	.02	.00	-.03	-.01	-.03 †	-.01
Hispanic/Latino			-.04 †	-.03	-.09 ***	-.08 *	-.10 ***	-.08 **	-.10 ***	-.09 **	-.10 ***	-.09 **
Other			.13 **	.15 **	.12 **	.14 **	.12 **	.14 *	.11 **	.13 *	.12 **	.13 *
Socioeconomic Status												
Father's Education												
Less than High School (ref)					---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
High School Degree					-.05 **	-.06 *	-.03 †	-.04 †	-.02	-.03	-.02	-.03
Some College					-.13 ***	-.13 ***	-.09 ***	-.10 ***	-.09 ***	-.09 **	-.09 ***	-.09 **
College Degree or More					-.03	-.04	.04	.01	.05	.02	.05 †	.02
Father's Income-to-Poverty Ratio (Range=0-15.8)					-.02 ***	-.01 ***	-.01 ***	-.01 ***	-.01 ***	.01 ***	-.01 ***	-.01 ***
Other Characteristics												
Father's Age > 23							-.10 ***	-.10 ***	-.10	-.10 ***	-.10 ***	-.10 ***
Self-Reported Health (Range=1-5)							-.08 ***	-.05 ***	-.08 ***	-.05 ***	-.08 ***	-.05 ***
Father Has Spent Time in Jail (yes/no)							.12 ***	.06 **	.13	.07 *	.13 ***	.07 **
Multipartnered Fertility												
Mother has children with another partner (yes/no)									.00	.02	.00	.02
Father has children with another partner (yes/no)											.01	.00

†p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 4: Results from Ordered Logistic and Random Effects Regression Models (Odds Ratios) Predicting How Men Feel about Themselves as Fathers from Year 3 to Year 9 by Maternal Grandmother Coresidence, Maternal Grandmother Financial Contributions, and Covariates (N=1,608)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	OLR	RE	OLR	RE	OLR	RE	OLR	RE	OLR	RE	OLR	RE
Maternal Grandmother Involvement												
Maternal Grandmother Coresidence (yes/no)	.84 **	.93	.87 *	.96	.89 †	.97	.90	.96	.90	.98	.91	.98
Maternal Grandmother Financial Contributions (yes/no)	.81 ***	.75 ***	.79 ***	.75 ***	.81 ***	.76 ***	.86 **	.79 **	.87 *	.81 **	.90 *	.85 *
Race/Ethnicity												
White (ref)		---										
African American			.84 **	.66 ***	.97	.82 †	1.00	.88	1.00	.88	1.09	1.05
Hispanic/Latino			.62 ***	.44 ***	.76 ***	.60 ***	.77 ***	.62 ***	.77 ***	.62 ***	.79 ***	.65 **
Other			.79 *	.64 †	.81 †	.64 †	.81 †	.66 †	.87	.74	.88	.75
Socioeconomic Status												
Father's Education												
Less than High School (ref)												
High School Degree					1.29 ***	1.59 ***	1.26 ***	1.51 ***	1.25 ***	1.49 ***	1.27 ***	1.52 ***
Some College					1.28 ***	1.56 ***	1.19 **	1.41 **	1.17 *	1.36 *	1.17 *	1.36 **
College Degree or More					1.42 ***	2.19 ***	1.19 **	1.65 **	1.17 †	1.68 ***	1.13	1.53 **
Father's Income-to-Poverty Ratio (Range=0-15.8)					1.04 ***	1.04 **	1.03 ***	1.03 *	1.03 **	1.02	1.02 *	1.02
Other Characteristics												
Father's Age > 23							1.00	.84	1.02	.89	1.08	1.00
Self-Reported Health (Range=1-5)							1.52 ***	1.63 ***	1.53 ***	1.64 ***	1.52 ***	1.63 ***
Father Has Spent Time in Jail (yes/no)							.69 *	.57 ***	.69 *	.57 ***	.72 *	1.07
Multipartnered Fertility												
Mother has children with another partner (yes/no)									.96	.96	1.01	1.07
Father has children with another partner (yes/no)											.70 ***	.49 ***

†p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 5: Interactions between Parents' Resident Status, Race, Education, and Age and Maternal Grandmother Coresidence and Financial Contributions Predicting Paternal Stress and How Men Feel about Themselves as Fathers

	Father Identity	
	Paternal Stress[1]	How Father Feels about Himself[2]
Interactions with Parents' Resident Status		
Grandmother Coresidence		
Nonresident Father & Grandmother Coresidence	-.01	.52 ***
Nonresident Father & No Grandmother Coresidence	-.01	.49 ***
Resident Father & Grandmother Coresidence	.01	.95
Resident Father & No Grandmother Coresidence (ref)		
Grandmother Financial Contribution		
Grandmother Financial Contribution & Nonresident Father	-.01	.46 ***
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & Nonresident Father	.00	.53 ***
Grandmother Financial Contribution & Resident Father	.04 †	1.13
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & Resident Father (ref)		
Interaction with Education		
Grandmother Coresidence		
Grandmother Coresidence & Less Than High School (ref)		
No Grandmother Coresidence & Less Than High School	.06 †	.94
Grandmother Coresidence & High School	.08 †	.85
No Grandmother Coresidence & High School	.01	1.27 †
Grandmother Coresidence & Some College	-.04	1.15
No Grandmother Coresidence & Some College	-.05	1.12
Grandmother Coresidence & College Degree Plus	.04	1.24
No Grandmother Coresidence & College Degree Plus	.07	1.08
Grandmother Financial Contribution		
Grandmother Financial Contribution & Less Than High School (ref)		
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & Less Than High School	.00	.93
Grandmother Financial Contribution & High School	-.01	1.08
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & High School	-.03	1.26 *
Grandmother Financial Contribution & Some College	-.06	.94
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & Some College	-.11 **	1.18
Grandmother Financial Contribution & College Degree Plus	.01	1.08
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & College Degree Plus	.02	1.10
Interaction with Race		
Grandmother Coresidence		
Grandmother Coresidence & White (ref)		
No Grandmother Coresidence & White	-.08 †	1.19
Grandmother Coresidence & African American	-.09 †	1.18
No Grandmother Coresidence & African American	-.09	1.28
Grandmother Coresidence & Hispanic/Latino	-.22 **	.86
No Grandmother Coresidence & Hispanic/Latino	-.16 **	.94
Grandmother Coresidence & Other	.23 *	.79
No Grandmother Coresidence & Other	.01	1.05
Grandmother Financial Contribution		
Grandmother Financial Contribution & White (ref)		
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & White	-.04	1.08
Grandmother Financial Contribution & African American	-.03	.98
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & African American	-.05	1.21 †
Grandmother Financial Contribution & Hispanic	-.11 *	.96
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & Hispanic	-.13 **	.83 †
Grandmother Financial Contribution & Other	.09	1.10
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & Other	.10 †	.91
Interaction with Age		
Grandmother Coresidence		
Grandmother Coresidence & >23	-.10 **	1.00
No Grandmother Coresidence >23	-.12 ***	1.13
Grandmother Coresidence <23	-.03	1.05
No Grandmother Coresidence <23 (ref)		
Grandmother Financial Contribution		
Grandmother Financial Contribution & >23	.03 *	.94
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & >23	.09 **	1.01
Grandmother Financial Contribution & <23	.14 ***	.66 *
No Grandmother Financial Contribution & <23 (ref)		
N	1,226	1,608

†p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

[1]Estimates are from random effects models from year 1 to year 9, and include all covariates.

[2]Estimates are from ordered logistic regression models from year 3 to year 9, include all covariates, and odds ratios are reported.

Note. Each interaction model was estmated separately.