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Determinants of Father-Child Time Allocation

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Abstract

This research project evaluated the determinants of paternal-child time allocation. The primary evaluation focused upon a father's time allocation for interacting with his children while engaging in non-market and market activities. The more a father impacts positively and intentionally on the lives of the children the healthier their socialization process will be. Not only the quality of a father's time but also the quantity of time allocation is relevant to the ultimate impact of passing on values and skills to maximize a child's development and capabilities. This research suggests that the quantity of the father's allocation of interactive time with his children is correlated with his market activities and utility function for example in income and working hours. The results indicate that economic determinants influence both the quantity of father-child time allocation and the mother's working and interaction time with implications for policy formation and the articulation of social values in civil society.

Economic and social contexts shape both popular and scholarly conceptions of fathering practices informing our contemporary understanding of family in light of parental time allocation. While many mothers do exceptional work parenting their children and while some children manage to excel under the challenges of father absence it has become clear that father-child time allocation deficits contribute to negative behavioral outcomes in children. American communities are voicing their concerns over many alarming statistics that suggest father absence leads to social and economic poverty in children. Some public organizations promoting social and economic development through research and educational programs report that father absence is responsible for 63% of youth suicides, 90% of homeless and runaway children, 85% of children exhibiting behavioral disorders and 71% of all high school dropouts (Bureau of the Census., Center for Disease Control., & National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools., 2007). While many studies have found negative impacts of decreased father-child time allocation upon child behavioral choices (New York Psychiatric Institute, 2007), little has been done to study the determinants of father-child time allocation. If positive time-allocation in terms of both quality and quantity is essential for effective parental socialization influences on children there is a need to explore ways to enhance and encourage that type of activity. The next section explores the existing theory. The third section discusses data and variables.