The admiration of fathers: using factorial vignettes to explore differential assessments of parenting quality

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Abstract

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Informal evidence suggests the existence of a fatherhood premium in social rewards (e.g. compliments and praise). The goal of this study is to assess the existence of a social premium for fathers, and examine its relationship to tangible rewards. Original factorial vignettes were distributed to a sample of US adults, and linear and logistic regression were run to assess the relationship between gender of parent and social rewards, and between parent quality and tangible rewards. The inclusion of a gender essentialism measure (the belief in innate differences between men and women) and other respondent characteristics allows for the exploration of additional associations. Results from this analysis do not suggest a fatherhood premium in social rewards. However, the results do provide evidence for interesting relationships between respondent characteristics, such as respondent gender and gender essentialism, and the conferral of social and material rewards.

Tables and Figures

Introduction

Katie Wheeler's husband received so much praise for taking their child to the doctor that she felt compelled to write an article about it (Wheeler 2018). ScaryMommy published an article in 2017 titled "12 Things Dads Get 'Extra Credit' For That Moms Do Every Damn Day", listing tasks such as babywearing, changing diapers, and putting kids into matching clothes. (Broadbent 2017). Popular media are rife with similar examples. And it's not just women noticing. Billy Killgore (2018) writes that he receives frequent verbal high fives from strangers while out with his children at the grocery store. And Christopher Scanlon (2018) laments the unfairness of the 'daddy bonus' he has received simply because his wife had a child. These accounts highlight the admiration fathers now get for doing things mothers have always done.

From these anecdotes, we can see that some fathers who parent while engaged in everyday activities experience a more positive response from the public than mothers do when engaged in the same activities. This positive response can come in the form of social rewards like encouraging comments or smiles, in a lack of the negative comments that many mothers experience from strangers in public places (Hanawalt 2017, Villalobos 2017), or in material rewards like promotions and raises (e.g. Killewald 2013).

Movies, television, blog posts, and articles feature these incidents. But beyond fictional or individual experiences, is this phenomenon widely observed? Do adults in the US feel more positively towards fathers than mothers? If so, in what circumstances can be this be observed? And do these positive reactions translate into tangible rewards for fathers?

The current cultural understanding of parenting is centered upon mothers. As an example, think about the different meanings of the words 'mothering' and 'fathering.' Mothering involves the accomplishment of the bulk of childrearing tasks (and most do), while fathering is a biological phenomenon. These cultural understandings of what mothering, fathering, and parenting are then shape our expectations of what mothers, fathers, and parents should do. Because these understandings are based on the belief that

mothering and parenting are synonymous (or thereabouts) (Grolnick and Gurland 2002), the expectations for mothers and fathers are not the same. And because we expect different things from mothers and fathers, when they do similar things (like take their children to a doctor's appointment), perceptions of their parenting and the social rewards they garner are different. As the perceived parenting experts, women are held to higher standards than fathers, and the expectations for father's parenting skill and involvement are much lower.

Research documenting the differential treatment of fathers and mothers is extensive. Mothers face notable penalties when trying to find a job (e.g. Correll, Bernard, and Paik 2007), in the workplace (e.g. England, Bearak, Budig, and Hodges 2016), and while fighting for custody (e.g. Meier 2020). These studies, and others, show that mothers are held to higher standards and penalized for their motherhood status (e.g. Dias, Chance, and Buchanan 2020). Additionally, material premiums afforded to fathers are documented, but seldom the focus of study (see Mari 2019 for an exception). Colloquial evidence, like that mentioned above, would lead us to believe in the extension of a fatherhood premium to social rewards for fathers in their everyday parenting efforts. This study is the first to both focus on and connect the fatherhood premium in social and material reward contexts.

The purpose of the current study is to assess the existence of a fatherhood premium when men positively deviate from parental expectations. Drawing from the literature regarding how status affects expectations, behavior, and assessments of behavior, I develop hypotheses about the fatherhood premium such as: fathers will receive higher parent quality scores than mothers when they are engaged in the same parenting tasks. I then test such assumptions with the use of original vignettes that elicit parenting quality scores from a sample of US adults, as opposed to a convenience sample of college students. This strengthens my study by avoiding reliance on college students' internalization of cultural understandings of parenthood. Unlike previous research, this study operationalizes key tenets of parenting like effort and warmth, and collects new data on respondents' beliefs, namely, an item that captures variation in gender essentialism, the belief that a person or particular trait is inherently male and masculine or female and

feminine (Meyer and Gelman 2016). These survey data also create the ability to assess the impact of respondent evaluations on material rewards to parents. Spurred by the types of stories shared above, and bolstered by expectation states theory, this project is the first to empirically study the existence of a fatherhood premium in social *and* tangible rewards.

Theory and Relevant Empirical Findings

Expectation states theory seeks to explain how status beliefs about groups affect people's evaluations of others in situations. This theory's first iteration involved collectively focused groups like juries and work groups. When individuals join a group with no knowledge of their group members, they use expectations garnered from status characteristics to make judgments about others and to set social hierarchies (Correll and Ridgeway 2006). These hierarchies generally follow stereotypes about leadership, power, and influence (Johnson, Dowd and Ridgeway 2006). More broadly, the theory offers an account for why inequalities by gender, race, and other status characteristics remain so durable (Ridgeway 2011). This theory understands these expectations states as largely unconscious, and has been expanded to include non-collective settings (Bernard and Correll 2010).

As a continuation of expectation states theory, expectancy violation theory extends the understanding that stereotypes (i.e. status beliefs) provide information about individuals and their competency and behavior. But behavioral expectations are not always correct. People can and do fail to meet these expectations, or exceed them. Although, in principle, a mismatch between expectations and what people are observed doing could lead observers to 'update' their status-group beliefs, this is not what expectancy violation predicts. Rather, when expectations do no align with observation, evaluations become driven by how much a person "under-"or "over-performed" in relation to the direction of the initial stereotype. *Positive behavior done by those negatively stereotyped will receive even higher evaluations, and negative behavior done by those positively stereotyped will result in even lower evaluations* (Jussim, Coleman, and Lerch, 1987; emphasis added). Bettencourt, Dill, Greathouse, Charlton and Mulholland (1997) examined violations of gender expectations in an experiment using resumes. They found that both men and women

were rated more extremely when they violated stereotype expectations. Similarly, Hentschel, Braun, Peus, and Frey (2017) found that male leaders were rewarded for their transformational leadership style (a style associated with women). Parenting, however, has rarely been the focus of this theoretical perspective.

Parenting is a unique arena in which to apply expectation states theory, as it primarily deals with gender, but does not conform to typical gender status beliefs of superiority. Whereas traditionally men are seen to hold more power and expertise (Hopcroft 2002), parenthood is an exception. The belief that women are naturally more nurturing and caring leads to a belief that women are superior as parents, particularly to young children.

Although compared to fathers, mothers are believed to have exceptional parenting abilities, they are also held to account for a specific mode of parenting. Within expectations states theory, gender is understood as a diffuse status characteristic. "Widely shared cultural beliefs about gender have been shown to include expectations that men are diffusely more competent at most things, as well as specific assumptions that men are better at some particular tasks (e.g. mechanical tasks) while women are better at others (e.g., nurturing tasks)" (Correll and Ridgway 2006:32). Mothers, then as the 'better parents', are expected to be the more caring and involved, while the expectations for fathers are, generally, less well defined. Following predictions of expectancy violation theory, when mothers violate the expectations of parenthood, they are punished more severely than fathers would be for the same objective quality of parenting. This means that the yardstick used to measure the quality of parenting is different for mothers and fathers.

These shifting or double standards have been explored in the context of custody (Villicana, Garcia, and Biernat 2017; Chesler 2011) and neglect (Walzer and Czopp 2011), and for working parents (Okimoto and Heilman 2012). When mothers fail to meet the basic expectations of parenting, they are punished more severely than fathers. Walzer and Czopp (2011) detail an extreme example of mothers being more harshly sentenced than fathers when a child dies from being left in a locked car. When studying divorce and custody, Chesler (2011) used interview and state data to explain that while mothers were more likely

to gain majority custody, this pattern only held if the father did not contest. In cases of abuse or neglect, the threshold at which women lost all parental rights was much lower for mothers than fathers.

As an extension of Chesler (2011), Villicana, Garcia, and Biernat (2017) use factorial vignette experiments to examine the shifting and double standards of parenting determining custody allocations. They also find that while women are always more likely to be granted majority custody, women are penalized for lapses in parenting quality (i.e. meal preparation failures, and being late to pick up their children from school) both in terms of subjective parenting quality and with regard to the dependent variable of custody. Men, however, were not penalized for these parenting failures, their quality assessments and custody allocations remained constant. Men and women, however, were judged differently on objective parenting measures. Mothers were assumed to spend much more time on a variety of parenting tasks. Subjective assessments of parenting quality were equal for mothers and fathers, even though women were expected to spend more time in parenting.

Parenting Expectations, Judgments, and Consequences

The above discussion highlights theory and evidence in support of a 'fatherhood premium' in the subjective judgments of parenting quality. However, most existing scholarship remains theoretical or limited to decisions rendered by judges or juries in the context of child custody. How salient are judgments about parenting quality shaped by stereotypes about mothers and fathers for other judgments or decisions? And do subjective judgments about parenting that support a fatherhood premium have diffuse consequences for who gets what, in terms of not only social rewards but tangible rewards?

Within work settings, Correll, Bernard, and Paik (2007) found evidence for these shifting standards as mothers were held to higher objective standards than fathers in order to be considered for hiring. Analogously, Okimoto and Heilman (2012) learned that working mothers were held to different standards when judged on parenting quality and interpersonal appeal. Fathers, however, were not held to these same standards.

This motherhood penalty translates to a real loss of wages, about 5% per child (Budig and England 2001). However, while mothers are penalized at work, there is ample evidence that a premium exists for working fathers. Glauber (2008), Hodges and Budig (2010), and Killewald (2013) use the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to explore the relationship between wages, gender, and parenting status, and find that fathers earn more than their childless counterparts. Ridgeway and Corell (2004) argue that these penalties boil down to a shared belief that motherhood interferes with work, and as such, motherhood is a negative status characteristic in those contexts. There is also evidence that fatherhood is in direct conflict with ideal worker norms, as new fathers around the globe tend not to use parental leave (Nakazato 2017; Karu and Tremblay 2018; Marynissen, Mussino, Wood, and Duvander 2019). Reasons for this phenomenon include lack of policies at either the governmental or organization level, but also a belief that men will be penalized upon return of leave. Men report that these penalties are not explicit, but more a "feeling" that they get which discourages from taking leave if it is available (Kaufman 2018).

The gender wage gap is widely studied (see Miller and Vagins 2018 for a review). But evidence suggests that in addition to wage benefits, men also experience subjective and objective benefits when engaged in stereotypically feminine paid employment. The glass escalator (Williams 1992) and the pedestal effect (Peretz 2018) explore this relationship. Instead of just evading harsher punishment, these men are reaping the benefits of expectancy violations. Peretz (2018) coined the term 'pedestal effect' to describe the privileges accorded to men working in gender violence justice work. He observed that men in the movement received higher subjective assessments including unearned praise, attention, and expert status for engaging in work that has historically been done by women. In essence, they violate gendered expectations and are rewarded for it within their field.

In parenting research, however, fathering expectancy violations have never been the focus of study. Based on the evidence from Correll et al (2007) , Killewald (2013), and Peretz (2018) we would expect to see a fatherhood premium when using experimental survey design to assess quality of parenting. Within the US, current understanding of high-quality parenting includes concepts of intensive parenting (Faircloth

2014), and concerted cultivation (Lareau 2003). These approaches require a child-centered approach that involves a high amount of effort and warm attention from parents (Ishuka 2019). Parents who show effort and warmth when engaging with their children should receive higher social rewards. The premium for fathers, however, may be tempered by respondent's opinion regarding gender essentialism. Gender essentialism is the belief that any differences observed between genders is the result of differences in the essential nature of men and women (Meyer and Gelman 2016). A person with a high belief in gender essentialism would understand parenting differences in families as part of parents gendered nature, skills, and choices. Women would be seen as better parents because it is part of their nature. Conversely, even if a man shows a high amount of involvement or warmth, they may be assessed as the lower quality parent simply because they are a man, or because being a warm attentive parent goes against masculine norms.

My study is the first to highlight the fatherhood premium in parental quality assessments, and the first to include the evaluator's gender beliefs in the analysis. Importantly, this study is not based on a convenience samples of college students. Previous experimental survey studies rely heavily on the idea that universal schemas of motherhood, gender, and parenthood are shared by college students, yet the assumptions underlying such studies are largely untested. My study utilizes a sample of US adults, with a nationally representative distribution of gender and race categories. The responses gained from these evaluators are used to explore the relationships among parenting effort, warmth, evaluator gender beliefs and judgments of parenting quality. My specific hypotheses are as follows:

Hypotheses

Assessments of parent quality will be equal for vignette parents

Following the results of Villicana et. al. (2017), I expect that average subjective assessments of parents to be equal.

There will be a fatherhood premium for high effort and warmth, such that the positive impact on parenting quality assessment will be higher for fathers than mothers.

Given our understanding of expectancy violation theory, those vignette fathers showing warmth and effort will be rewarded for surpassing expectations of parenting quality. High parent quality

judgments are a premium akin to the social rewards enumerated above. As fathers exceed parent quality expectations, they will be judged more highly in the direction of their positive expectancy violation.

Mothers quality scores will suffer when effort and warmth are low
Because women are expected to be primary care takers, and optimal parents, lack of warmth or effort will be penalized by lower quality scores. As vignette mothers fail to meet their parenting quality expectations, they will be judged more harshly in the direction of their expectancy violation.

Highly rated fathers are more likely to receive votes for the neighborhood award than are highly rated mothers.
Given the premium afforded men and fathers in a plethora of contexts cited above, I predict that fathers will be more likely nominated for a tangible reward, even when receiving the same level of social reward (i.e. parent quality score) as mothers.

The higher gender essentialism score of the reviewer will negatively impact the fatherhood premium
Because gender essentialism is the belief that men and women are naturally different, instead of rewarding men for being warm and diligent parents, those with high gender essentialist beliefs may think that warm fathers are going against their natural state of being, and instead may punish fathers for being too warm or attentive (Haltom 2020).

Data, Measures and Methods

Description of Survey

This survey was created using Qualtrics survey software and administered to a subset of their existing panel of respondents. Qualtrics is a popular platform for fielding both market and academic surveys. Benefits of this platform compared to other often used platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk include the ability to design complex survey experiments, and access to a guaranteed high-quality panel. For this project, both the survey and data quality were ensured and monitored by a Qualtrics Project Manager. The price per respondent is higher than crowdsourced survey panels, but Qualtrics manages all aspects of recruitment and data collection. Qualtrics also guaranteed response quality, which checks the survey

completion rate and respondent's speed and removes incomplete data points, or respondents who finish the survey too quickly. The survey data were collected in April and May of 2020. Randomized factorial vignettes were created to assess the causal relationship between parenting effort, parenting warmth, gender beliefs and resulting parenting quality judgments in a completely new way. There were 343 respondents, who assessed a total of 646 vignettes.

Factorial Vignettes

A factorial vignette survey provides a pseudo-experimental way in which to study contextual influences on people's judgments (Wallander 2009). A factorial vignette allows for random variation in variable dimension levels in order to assess the impact of each variable on the outcome, without worrying about naturally occurring correlation. Respondents in this study were presented two vignettes, via Qualtrics' online survey platform. Each respondent was randomly presented with a set of matching vignettes. By manipulating gender, effort, and warmth, factorial vignettes allow for the inference of a causal relationship between these variables and the subject's judgment of the character's parenting quality. These factorial vignettes have a 2x2x2 design. The dimensions include vignette parenting gender (woman/man), parenting effort (low/high), and parenting warmth (none/present). In addition, measures of respondent characteristics include gender essentialism, and supplementary characteristics such as age, race, gender, number of children, partner status, type of dwelling, type of community, and political orientation.

Outcome Measures

There are two dependent variables. First, quality of parent was assessed for each vignette. After reading a vignette, the respondent was shown a 0-10 Likert scale to assess parent quality of the vignette character. Each respondent assessed two different vignette parents (i.e. Michelle and Richard), but with randomization as to who they evaluated first. Second, the respondents were asked which person (from each vignette) they would like to vote for in an election for community member award. The respondent

was asked if they would rather vote for Michelle or Richard for the award, again these names appeared in random order. They could also select a 'Don't Know' option that always appeared third.

Vignette Characteristics The primary independent variables are those manipulated within the vignette: gender of parent, parenting effort, and parenting warmth. Gender is indicated by name choice. By combining information on race-neutral names ("What Baby Names Tell Us" 2017) with the most popular names in 1983 (now of an age to have school-aged children) ("Top Baby Names of 1983"), the names Richard and Michelle are used to indicate gender of parent.

Parenting effort is operationalized by engaging with the children during outdoor play. High effort is described as playing outside with the children in the snow, while low effort is remaining inside while the children play outside. Effort is included as a gender-neutral parenting task. Effort is necessary in order to be perceived as a good parent (Epstein 2010).

Warmth is operationalized by differential responses to a child's minor injury. The parent will either be described as 'giving loving attention' or as 'telling the child they are fine and sending them back to play.' Warmth is included as a gendered parenting task. Mothers are expected to be warmer and more caring than fathers. The presence or absence of both warmth and effort was randomized, and the vignettes were displayed in a paired fashion, such that a vignette including high warmth, but low effort for Richard would be shown in conjunction with a vignette for Michelle describing low warmth, but high effort.

Respondent Characteristics

Gender Essentialism Inspired by Cech (2013), a gender essentialism score was constructed from multiple questions. Four questions are asked after the vignettes have been completed to assess the respondent's beliefs in natural differences between men and women: 1) generally, men and women have different strengths; 2) men and women are naturally talented at different things; 3)working is ok, but family and home life are better suited for women; and, 4)having a family is ok, but some types of employment are better suited for men. The response categories of strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor

disagree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree followed each statement. With a Cronbach's alpha of .79, and relatively high face validity, these questions were compiled into a gender essentialism score ranging from 4 (low belief in gender essentialism) to 20 (high belief in gender essentialism).

Additional data measures collected include education level, political orientation, community type (large city, suburb, small city, rural area), dwelling type (single-family home, condo, apartment, other), race, number of children and relationship status.

Sample The Qualtrics Survey Data Panel was used to collect 343 respondents with an even distribution of gender, and a nationally representative sample of race. Because each respondent assessed two vignettes, this results in a sample size of 686 observations for the parent quality dependent variable, but only 343 observations for the material reward dependent variable.

Procedure Following a brief introduction and receipt of consent, quota and retention questions (age, gender, and race) are asked. Once appropriate demographics were determined, the respondents were then introduced to a scenario involving a snowy day that has closed schools and roads. Following that were two random variations of the primary parenting vignette. Example below.

Table 1. Factorial Vignette, where parenting gender = woman, parenting effort is high, and parenting warmth is present.

> Michelle is an outstanding community member and attentive neighbor. Michelle is staying home with her elementary-aged children.
> Michelle plays outside with the children in the yard, taking them for sled rides. Then Michelle makes them all lunch.
> When one of her children gets a minor injury, Michelle provides gentle and caring attention to the child before sending them back outside.

After the vignette, respondents were asked, "What quality of parent is Michelle?" and then presented with a slide ruler from 0-10. Immediately following, a second vignette is presented for the other vignette parent

(in this case, Richard), containing the same story but with alternate levels of warmth and effort; Richard is subsequently rated on quality of parenting. The respondents are then asked which candidate they would rather vote for; Richard, Michelle or Don't Know. The survey continues with gender essentialism questions, and finally with the remaining demographic questions listed above.

Data Analysis

Linear regression was run on the parenting quality outcome for ease of interpretability (Auspurg and Hintz 2014). Each of the eight versions of the factorial universe was assessed at least 40 times, large enough to comfortably conduct hypothesis tests. Due to the repeated nature of the data (each respondent assesses two vignettes), and the need to include time invariant variables (i.e. respondent characteristics) into the model, random effects were used to control for unobserved heterogeneity within subjects. Estimates in Table 6 can be interpreted linearly. An increase of one unit in each independent variable corresponds to a unit increase or decrease in parent quality score. Parent quality scores are not distributed symmetrically and tend to be high. Further diagnostic work will be done to see if results are affected by this general lack of variability in the data.

Multinomial logistic regression was used to assess the relationship between parenting quality scores and respondent votes. Multinomial logistic regression is used when the dependent variable has more than 2 unordered categories. The resultant output should then be understood as multiple comparisons. Coefficients can be interpreted as factor increases in the likelihood of voting for one candidate compared to the Don't Know category.

Results

Table 2 shows the distribution of survey responses for the respondent sample. The average age of respondent was 38.4 years, with 37% having at least a college degree. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the sample is white, and roughly half identified as men and half women. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the sample is partnered, and 56% have at least one child. The majority (36%) lives in a suburb near a large

city, with 64% living in a single-family home. Qualtrics' data panel included representative demographic variation in race, gender, and Hispanic identity. Compared to the general US adult population, this sample is similar in age, only slightly more educated, slightly more likely to be partnered, less likely to live in a city, and slightly more liberal (census.gov, Saad 2019).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Parenting Quality Survey. US Adults. Qualtrics Online Panel, 2020

		N (%)		*Mean (s.d.)*	
	Age	343		38.41	(15.82)
Race	White	254	(74.05 %)		
	Black	52	(15.16%)		
	Other	20	(5.83%)		
	Hispanic	62	(18.08%		
Gender	1=Man	171	(49.85%)		
	0=Woman	172	(50.15%)		
	Number of Children	343		1.16	(1.35)
Relationship Status	1= Partnered	183	(53.35%)		
	0=Single	160	(46.65)		
	1=College Degree +	129	(37.61%)		
Political Orientation	1= Liberal	126	(36.73%)		
	Conservative	105	(30.61 %)		
Dwelling Type	Single Family Home	220	(64.14%)		
	Apartment	92	(26.82)		
	Condo or townhouse	30	(8.77%)		
Community Type	Large City	100	(29.15%)		
	Suburb near a large city	124	(36.15%)		
	Small city or town	69	(20.12%)		
	Rural area	86	(12.54%)		
	Gender Essentialism Score (4-20)	342		14.51	(3.71)
	Parent Quality (0-10)	686		7.13	(2.33)
Voting Outcome	Richard	135	(39.36 %)		
	Michelle	150	(43.73%)		
	Neither	58	(16.91%)		

Bivariate Analyses Table 3 shows that mean parent quality is higher with the addition of warmth and effort as a vignette dimension. These differences are statistically significant at the .05 level. However, mother and father quality are not significantly different across all levels of warmth and effort (Table 4). This data supports the first hypothesis, that average parenting quality scores will not vary by gender. A one-way ANOVA also clarifies that the variance of parent quality does not significantly differ depending on the gender of the described parent (data not shown).

Table 3: T-tests Mean Differences in Rated Parent Quality by Warmth and Effort

	MEAN	SE	P-VALUE
LOW WARMTH	6.41	.126	.000
HIGH WARMTH	7.85	.114	
LOW EFFORT	6.72	.126	.000
HIGH EFFORT	7.53	.122	

Table 4: T-tests Mean Differences in Rated Mothers and Fathers Quality by Warmth and Effort

	MOTHER QUALITY		FATHER QUALITY	
MEAN SCORE	7.22		7.03	
	Effort Low	Effort High	Effort Low	Effort High
LOW WARMTH	6.23	6.77	6.08	6.59
HIGH WARMTH	7.28	8.47	7.37	8.26

Table 5 reports the results of testing for differences in mean parenting quality by respondent characteristics. Women respondents judge parent quality significantly lower than men respondents, and Black respondents give significantly lower scores than non-Black respondents. Partnered and college educated respondents give significantly higher parent quality scores than their non-partnered and non-college educated counterparts.

Table 5. T-tests for Mean Differences in Parent Quality by Respondent Characteristics

	MEAN	DIFFERENCE	S.E.	P-VALUE
WOMAN	6.86	-.53	.132	.001
MAN	7.39		.118	
NON-BLACK	7.21	.57	.094	.011
BLACK	6.64		.252	
NON-PARTNERED	6.85	-.52	.131	.001
PARTNERED	7.37		.120	
NO CHILDREN	7.05	-.14	.136	.227
CHILDREN	7.19		.118	
NO COLLEGE	6.88	-.66	.114	.000
COLLEGE	7.54		.138	
NON-LIBERAL	7.01	-.31	.111	.053
LIBERAL	7.32		.150	

Multivariate Analysis: Parent Quality

With linear regression, this study is able to explore the causal relationship between vignette characteristics (gender of vignette parent, level of warmth, and level of effort), respondent characteristics

(e.g. gender essentialism and gender identity) and the parenting quality measure. Table 6 reports findings from this first step in the multivariate analysis. In order to estimate the influence of vignette and respondent characteristics on voting patterns, multinomial logistic regression was used.

Results of estimating a baseline model of parent quality by the vignette dimensions of parent gender, effort, and warmth are shown in Model 1. Effort and warmth are associated with positive and significant increases in parenting quality score across all models. The impact of warmth and effort (high effort and warmth =1) does not change with the addition of respondent characteristics (Model 2 and 3), which is exactly what we would expect with random assignment of variable dimension levels. It also does not vary when controlling for gender essentialism or other respondent characteristics. Model 1 also shows that the gender of the vignette parent (0=woman) does not affect respondents' assessments of parent quality. Interactions added in this or any model between vignette parent gender and effort, and vignette parent gender and warmth are not significant. These interactions address the second and third hypotheses that posit the existence of a motherhood penalty for low effort and warmth scenarios, and a fatherhood premium for high effort and warmth scenarios. The lack of significance in these interactions indicates a lack of support for these hypotheses.

Results estimating the parent quality ratings with the addition of the gender essentialism measure are shown in Model 2. Gender essentialism is significantly associated with providing a higher parent quality score. The substantive increase is modest, but the relationship remains robust across all models. An interaction of gender essentialism score and parent gender is not significant, indicating a lack of support for the final hypothesis postulating a relationship between gender essentialism score and a fatherhood premium such that a higher gender essentialism score would negatively impact the fatherhood premium in parenting quality scores.

The addition of respondent characteristics to explore their influence on parenting quality score appears in Model 3. Several of the estimates in Model 3 reflect findings found in the t-tests shown above in Tables 3-5. Those respondents with partners and a college degree assign higher parent quality scores, even while

holding effort, warmth, and all other factors constant. Similarly, women and Black respondents provide significantly lower parent quality scores than do men, or white respondents. Gender of respondent is only marginally significant, with men reporting higher parent quality scores. And more conservative respondents assign significantly lower parent quality scores.

The introduction of interaction variables in Model 4 shows that the impact of respondent gender and warmth of the vignette parent are dependent upon one another. Both variables are coded as 0/1, with men and the presence of warmth in the vignette coded as one. From this coefficient we can see that compared to women, judgments made by men about parent quality do not respond as positively to warmth cues—in fact, it appears that men's higher ratings are parent quality observed in Model 3 wash away in the high-warmth condition (.896 + (-.979) = -.083) Further exploration of this relationship shows that the positive impact of warmth differentiates scores between gender groups, but the impact of respondent gender disappears when only looking at those vignettes in which warmth is present. An illustration of this interaction is shown in Figure 1. Effort, however, does not have this impact. Women still report lower parenting quality scores than men, regardless of whether effort is present in the vignette. Additional three-way interactions were explored that included gender of parent; none of these were significant.

Table 6 includes the Wald Chi Square statistic for each model, compared to the null model. The substantial increase in Chi-square between models indicates the benefit of adding additional variables to explain respondent assessments of parent quality. Of note, the Chi-square difference between Model 1 and Model 2 indicates that the addition of gender essentialism alone significantly strengthens the model fit (CHI2(2)-CHI2(1)= 18.63, df=1, 0<.001. Similarly, the improvement in fit between Model 3 and Model 4 would indicate the benefit of adding the warmth and respondent gender interaction variable (CHI2(4)- CHI2(3) =11.49, df=2, p<.005.

Table 6: Regression on Parent Quality Score

	MODEL 1 **N= 686** **CHI2 (3) = 96.91**	**MODEL 2** **N=684** **CHI2 (4)= 115.54**	**MODEL 3** **N=666** **CHI2 (17)= 168.07**	**MODEL 4** **N= 666** **CHI2 (19)= 179.56**
VIGNETTE CHARACTERISTICS				
EFFORT (1=HIGH)	.791 (.167)***	.786 (.165)***	.747 (.164)***	.914 (.231) ***
WARMTH (1=HIGH)	1.42 (.167)***	1.42 (.165)***	1.43 (.164)***	1.93 (.231) ***
PARENT GENDER (1=MALE)	-.121 (.167)	-.127 (.165)	-.146 (.164)	-.122 (.163)
GENDER ESSENTIALISM (4-20)	--	.090 (.022)***	.094 (.024) ***	.094 (.024) ***
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS				
R GENDER (1=MALE)	--	--	.288 (.177) *	.896 (.290) **
RACE (WHITE REF)	--	--		
BLACK			-.675 (.276) **	-.675 (.275)**
OTHER			.163 (.203)	.163 (201)
AGE	--	--	.0023(.006)	.003 (.005)
POLITICAL AFFILIATION (1=VERY LIBERAL)			-.217 (.071) **	-.217 (.070) **
CHILD (NO/YES)	--	--	-.214 (.190)	-.215 (.189)
PARTNERED (1=YES)				.364 (.188) **
COLLEGE DEGREE (1=YES)			.445(.189)**	.445 (.188)
DWELLING (SINGLE FAMILY REF)	--	--		
APARTMENT			-.239 (.195)	-.199 (.195)
OTHER			.453 (.303)	.453 (.301)
COMMUNITY (LARGE CITY REF)	--	--		
SUBURB			-.037 (.208)	-.037 (.207)
SMALL CITY			-.418 (.256)	-.418 (.255) *
RURAL			.091 (.299)	.091 (.297)
WARMTH*R GENDER				-.979 (.327)**
EFFORT * R GENDER				-.236 (.327)

Note: *** p<.001 **p<.05 * p<.1

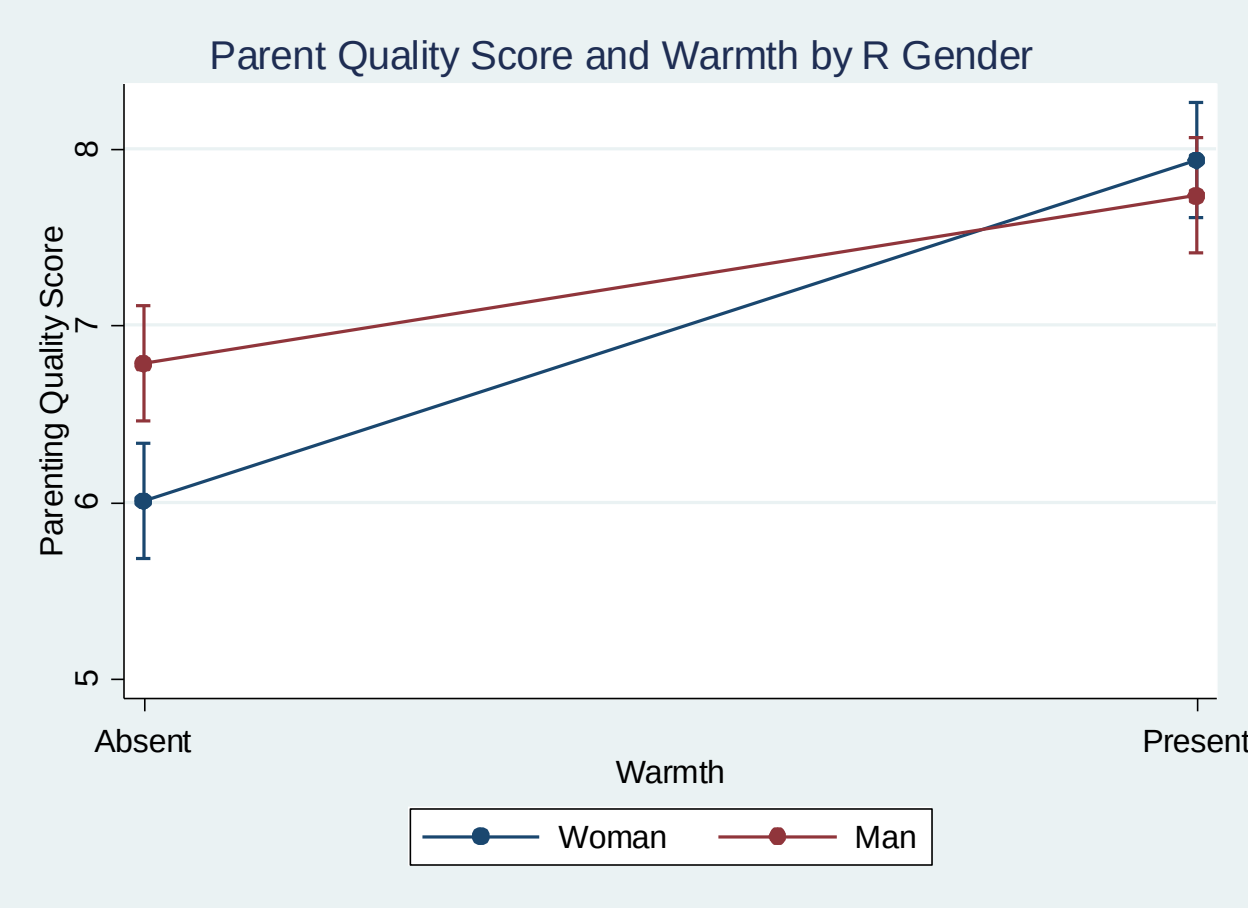

Figure 1. Parent Quality Score and Warmth by Respondent Gender

Multivariate Analysis: Award Votes The final analyses assessed the relationship between vignette characteristics and the outcome variable asking the respondent who they would vote for a in a community award election. Respondents were given the options: Richard, Michelle, or Don't Know. Given the repeated nature of the data, in that each respondent was given two vignettes, but only one outcome question, the parent quality data have been sorted and coded into female and male parenting quality, and the sample size has been reduced by half. Female quality and male quality variables indicate the vignette character's gender, and not that of the respondent.

Results estimating the impact of parenting quality scores on the likelihood of voting for Richard or Michelle compared to Don't Know are shown in Table 7. Female parent quality scores are positively associated with voting for Michelle. Male parent quality scores are positively associated with voting for

Richard. This relationship is maintained when those who selected the Don't Know category are removed from the analysis. Multinomial logistic regression is still the model of choice due to being better able to address the hypotheses. The disaggregation of female and male parenting quality scores into multiple categories (shown in Model 2 and Model 3) was included to explore a non-linear relationship with the log odds of choosing one parent or another for a civic award.

The baseline relationship between parent quality scores and the likelihood of voting for either candidate is shown in Model 1 of Table 7. Higher male parenting quality scores are positively and significantly associated with an increased likelihood of voting for Richard compared to Don't Know. And higher female quality scores are significantly and positively associated with an increased likelihood of voting for Michelle compared to Don't Know. Using a Wald test, the 4th hypothesis– highly rated fathers will be more likely to be voted for than highly rated mothers– was assessed. The lack of differentiation between the female quality scores impact on voting for Michelle from the male quality scores impact on voting for Richard means respondents are not more likely to endorse fathers over mothers for wider social recognition in response to perceived parenting quality. The relationship between parenting quality score and predicted probability of voting for either Michelle or Richard is shown in Figure 2.

Model 2 and Model 3 show the continued disaggregation of parenting quality scores by percentile groupings. Model 2 includes lower and upper categories representing those at or below 25th and above 75th percentile. Results are only shown for the corresponding parenting quality score with gender on the ballot (e.g. male quality scores are shown in relation to likelihood of voting for Richard), though both sets of quality scores were included in the model. This is done for simplicity, as the negative effect of a positive score for the other parent is not hypothesized. A higher than average male parenting quality score is associated with a positive and significant change in the likelihood of voting for Richard. The analogous results are true for voting for Michelle. Likewise, a lower than average parent quality score is significantly, negatively associated with voting for Richard or Michelle. Model 3 shows the disaggregation with the 10th and 90th percentiles shown. Though all female and male quality coefficients

were calculated for both Richard and Michelle, only the matching gender coefficients are shown. Further disaggregation sharpens the coefficients, but lessens the statistical significance in poor parenting quality scores decreasing the likelihood of voting for Richard compared to Don't Know. The results for voting for Michelle are similar. Wald tests on coefficients in Model 2 and Model3 were conducted, with no differences in coefficients detected.

Table 7: Multinomial Logistic Regression of Award Nomination on Parenting Quality Scores

	MODEL 1 **N= 343** **LR CHI2(4) 142.07**	**MODEL 2** **N=343** **LR CHI2 (8)= 136.73**	**MODEL 3** **N=343** **LR CHI2(8)= 81.33**
VIGNETTE CHARACTERISTICS	*REFERENCE = DON'T KNOW		
RICHARD		--	--
FEMALE QUALITY	-.234 (.089) ***		
MALE QUALITY	.422 (.089) ***		
MICHELLE		--	--
FEMALE QUALITY	.504 (.097) ***		
MALE QUALITY	-.263 (.087) ***		
RICHARD ^^	--		--
MALE QUALITY BELOW MEAN		-.133 (.446) ***	
MALE QUALITY ABOVE MEAN		1.28 (.471) ***	
FEMALE QUALITY BELOW MEAN		NR	
FEMALE QUALITY ABOVE MEAN		NR	
MICHELLE^^	--		--
MALE QUALITY BELOW MEAN		NR	
MALE QUALITY ABOVE MEAN		NR	
FEMALE QUALITY BELOW MEAN		-1.22 (.462) ***	
FEMALE QUALITY ABOVE MEAN		1.05 (.422) **	
RICHARD^^	--	--	
MALE QUALITY 10TH PERCENTILE			.049 (.629)
MALE QUALITY 90TH PERCENTILE			1.71 (.502) ***
MICHELLE^^	--	--	
FEMALE QUALITY 10TH PERCENTILE			-1.11 (.614) *
FEMALE QUALITY 90TH PERCENTILE			1.16 (.469) **

*Note: ^^ Analyses included all variables, but coefficients are not shown. NR= not reported. All reported coefficients were tested for equivalence between Richard and Michelle, and were found to be of similar impact. *** p<.001 **p<.05 * p<.1

The impact of vignette characteristics on voting behavior is assessed in Model 1 of Table 8. Male parenting quality is significantly and (at the .000 level) associated with an increase in likelihood of voting for Richard, while the analogous result is found for Michelle. Parallel to the parenting quality coefficients

in the Table 6, a test comparing the impact of female parenting quality and male parenting quality on the likelihood of gendered voting has an equivalent impact between Richard and Michelle when controlling for effort and warmth. Tests were also run to assess the equivalence of the impact of warmth and effort on voting for either Michelle or Richard, and these, too, showed no statistical difference.

Model 2 in Table 8 specifies the full model. Including all vignette characteristics and respondent characteristics shown in linear regression Model 3 of Table 6. The below table only reports the coefficients for respondent gender and gender essentialism score. An increase of 1 unit in gender essentialism leads to a .165 factor increase in the likelihood of voting for Richard compared to choosing Don't Know, and a .228 factor increase in the likelihood of choosing Michelle compared to choosing Don't Know. These coefficients are not significantly different from one another.

Table 8: Multinomial Logistic Regression of Award Nomination on Parenting Quality Scores

		MODEL 1 N=343 LR CHI2 (8)=147.79	**MODEL 2^^** N=333 LR CHI2 (36)= 212.96
VIGNETTE CHARACTERISTICS		*****REFERENCE = DON'T KNOW	
FEMALE PARENTING QUALITY			
	RICHARD	-.183 (.094) *	-.205 (.107) *
	MICHELLE	.497 (.104) ***	.565 (.118) ***
MALE PARENTING QUALITY			
	RICHARD	.369 (.095) ***	.271 (.107) **
	MICHELLE	-.265 (.094) ***	-.403 (.114) ***
EFFORT			
	RICHARD	.028 (.344)	-.047 (.393)
	MICHELLE	-.414 (.340)	-.740 (.394) *
WARMTH			
	RICHARD	.631 (.362) *	.815 (.429)*
	MICHELLE	.294 (.362)	.227 (.429)
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS		*REFERENCE = DON'T KNOW	
GENDER ESSENTIALISM			
	RICHARD	--	.165 (.059) ***
	MICHELLE	--	.228 (.058) ***
GENDER (1=MAN)			
	RICHARD	--	.970 (.402) *
	MICHELLE	--	-.263 (.411)
RACE (WHITE REF)		--	NR
AGE		--	NR
POLITICAL AFFILIATION (1=VERY LIBERAL)		--	NR
CHILD (NO/YES)		--	NR
PARTNERED (1=YES)		--	NR
COLLEGE DEGREE (1=YES)		--	NR
DWELLING (SINGLE FAMILY REF)		--	NR
COMMUNITY (LARGE CITY REF)		--	NR

Note: ^^ The full model was run, with all respondent characteristics, but those results are NR=not reported *** p<.001 **p<.05 * p<.1

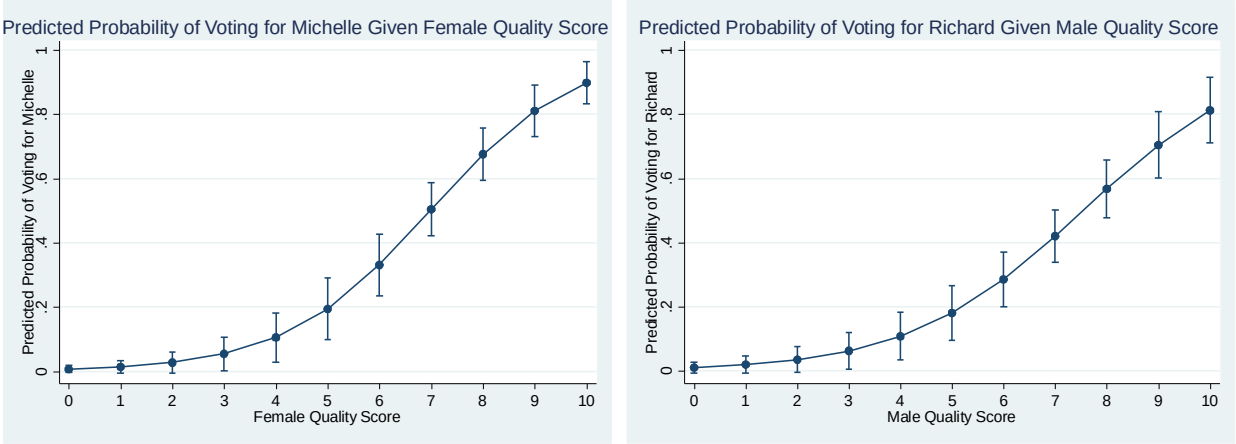

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities for Award Vote by Gendered Parent Quality Score, with all other variables at the mean

Discussion and Conclusions

While only the first hypothesis in this paper garnered any support, this data highlights interesting relationships regarding parenting. While there is no direct evidence for a fatherhood premium in either social or tangible rewards within this particular study design, the fact that gender essentialism shows such an impact on the assessment of parenting quality indicates that perhaps this relationship is worth further exploration. While respondents did not choose different parenting quality scores based on the gender of the parent in the vignette, their own beliefs about the naturalness of gender did impact their parenting quality scores. Though no significant interaction was found between gender essentialism and parenting gender, it does bring to mind possible issues of priming or desirability bias. Future study design would perhaps benefit from innocuous vignettes being interspersed with the vignettes of interest. Similarly, while the order of vignettes was randomized, keeping record of the order in which vignettes were presented to respondents would allow for some exploration of within-subject influences unavailable with this data.

Another relationship of interest includes the association between respondent gender and the presence of warmth on vignette parent quality scores. Warmth and effort were conceptualized as gendered and non-gendered aspects of parenting, respectively. While both effort and warmth were positively associated with

higher parenting quality scores, only warmth showed an interaction with gender of respondent– such that the presence of warmth had a higher impact on parent quality score for women than it did for men. This is particularly interesting given the relatively low parenting quality scores women gave compared to men. Further studies that include multiple gendered parenting dimensions within vignettes could shed some light on this phenomenon. Additionally, a larger sample could potentially disentangle how warmth mattered to particular populations of women.

While, again, the fourth hypothesis was not found to be statistically significant in the data, there did seem to be some traction in the relationship between parent quality score and for whom the respondent voted. From the coefficients in Table 7 you can see that the positive impact of a higher than average parent quality score is greater for men, than for women. And while a Wald test is not significant, the face validity of 1.28 being higher than 1.05 is hard to ignore. Similarly, with extremely low parenting scores we can see the negative impact for women (-1.11) is much less than that of men (-.049), albeit not statistically different. Additionally, within Figure 2, although the numbers do not appear to be sharply different, the relative shape of each curve hints at a different relationship between parenting quality and voting, depending on the gender of the character in the vignette.

While not the driving force behind the creation of the hypotheses, other respondent characteristics do seem to matter a great deal in both social and material rewards. Political orientation and partner status of the respondent are statistically significant in predicting vignette parent quality and which vignette character was voted for. Similarly, having children appear to matter in multiple contexts. Again, a larger sample size would allow for a deeper look into these relationships, and into patterns for types of respondents.

The relatively small sample size, and low numbers of racial minorities (though similar to the breakdown of the US), makes it impossible to fully explore racial differences hinted at in the bivariate analyses. While there appears to be a difference between black respondents, particularly black women respondents, and non-black respondents there was not enough power to further explore this phenomenon.

Limitations: The lack of hypothesis support leads to a number of possible scenarios. First, perhaps my hypotheses were all incorrect. This would mean that the anecdotal evidence that inspired this study has no empirical basis, and that empirical findings of a fatherhood premium in other realms (like wages) do not translate to social and other types of practical rewards. I find this unlikely, given the wealth and strength of evidence highlighted at the beginning of this paper. Second, and as mentioned above, perhaps my relatively small sample size did not maximize the ability to explore certain relationships. Third, perhaps my vignette was not adequately operationalized, i.e., my manipulation was not strong enough. Ishuka (2019) recently used a vignette experiment to assess what types of behaviors counted as 'good' parenting. They found that, by and large, everyone agrees on what a good parent is, and that it does not matter if the parent is a mother or a father. This indicates to me that conceivably my treatment was not strong enough to elicit gendered assumptions on parenting. Perhaps, for example, the presence or absence of warmth is not enough to signal a good parent or a bad parent (indeed lack of variation within my parent quality score would indicate this).

Going forward, more complicated vignettes with more extreme levels to the dimensions might elicit more variation, and incite stronger feelings toward the vignette characters. Lastly, and as mentioned above, perhaps my vignette and surveys were too obvious. Having the parenting quality questions asked back to back would mean that my respondents would remember what score they gave the other gendered parent, and their sense of social desirability (i.e. not wanting to appear sexist) prevented them from giving different answers. Similarly, having the voting survey item directly after the parenting quality questions may have indicated to respondents that the parenting quality score was important to their assessment of voting. Ultimately, the lack of hypothesis support likely results from a combination of all factors listed above.

While colloquial evidence of a social premium for fathers exists, this finding was not borne out in this empirical test. And although observed evidence of a material premium to fathers exists, the type of material reward exhibited here does not follow the same pattern. It could be that my study and data are

fundamentally different from these previous studies. Perhaps the world has changed, and motherhood and fatherhood are no longer understood as different things. Regardless of the reason, none of the hypotheses were supported by this vignette study. However, interesting relationships were delineated, and future directions show great promise.

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