

Roles of fathers in children II

Overview for today

- Empirical studies on mothers and fathers:
 - Kaczynski, K. J., Lindahl, K. M., Malik, N. M., & Laurenceau, J. P. (2006). Marital conflict, maternal and paternal parenting, and child adjustment: a test of mediation and moderation. *Journal of Family Psychology, 20*, 199-208.
 - Martin, A., Ryan, R. M., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2010). When fathers' supportiveness matters most: Maternal and paternal parenting and children's school readiness. *Journal of Family Psychology, 24*, 145-155.

Summary

Different points of views on fathers

- **Paquette (2004)**
 - Uniquely important (Activation and RTP)
 - Unique behavior of Fathers' parenting (or interactions) with their children
- **Kazynski et al. (2006)**
 - Equally important as mothers
- **Martin et al. (2010)**
 - Secondly important
 - But mothers are the most important

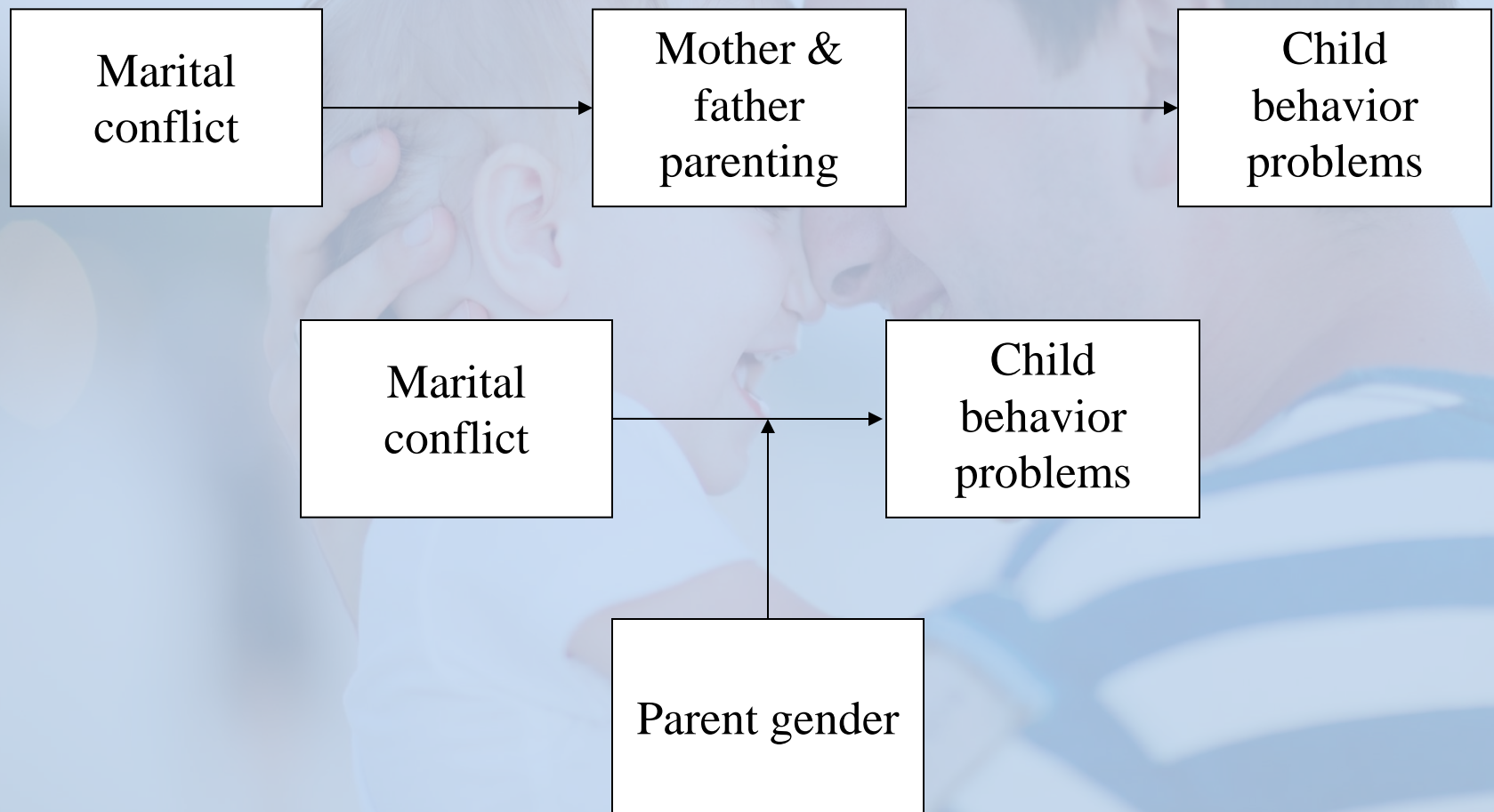
Kaczynski, Lindahl, Malik, & Laurenceau, (2006).
Marital conflict, maternal and paternal parenting, and child
adjustment: a test of mediation and moderation

Two aims of the study:

1. Parenting was examined as a **mediator** of associations between marital and child adjustment.
2. Parent gender was examined as a **moderator** of associations among marital, parental, and child functioning.

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Theoretical explanations:

- **Family systems theory:**
 - Relationship among family members are interrelated.
 - Disruptions in one relationship (marital) is reflected in another relationship (parent-child)
 - “**spillover hypothesis**” : negativity from the marital domain is carried into the parenting domain and ultimately affects child adjustment.

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Theoretical explanations:

- **Social learning theory:**
 - Children learn dysfunctional behavior patterns by observing their parents.
 - Externalizing behavior problems
- **Emotion security theory:**
 - In conflictual family environment, children develop insecure feelings.
 - Internalizing behavior problems

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Additional explanations:

- “the relation between marital conflict and disrupted parenting behavior may be stronger for fathers than for mothers”
 - **Kaczynski et al.:** Less adaptive parenting strategies: power-assertive or coercive behavior
 - **Umemura:** Mothers as the primary caregiver vs. fathers as the subsidiary caregiver
 - Therefore, father has more freedom to decide whether he is or isn't involved in parenting.

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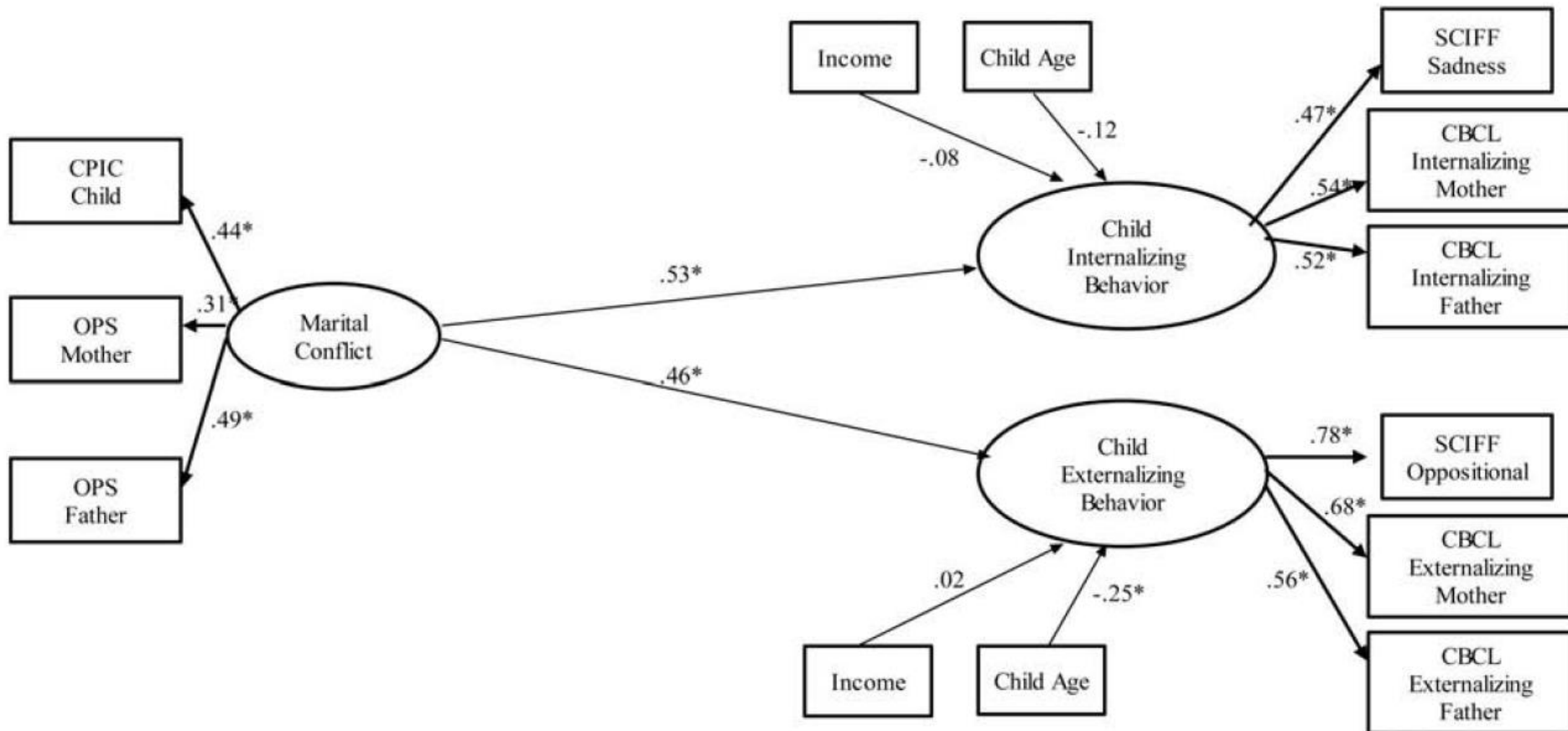
Mediation:

- Parenting **fully** mediated associations between **marital conflict** and **child internalizing and externalizing behaviors**.

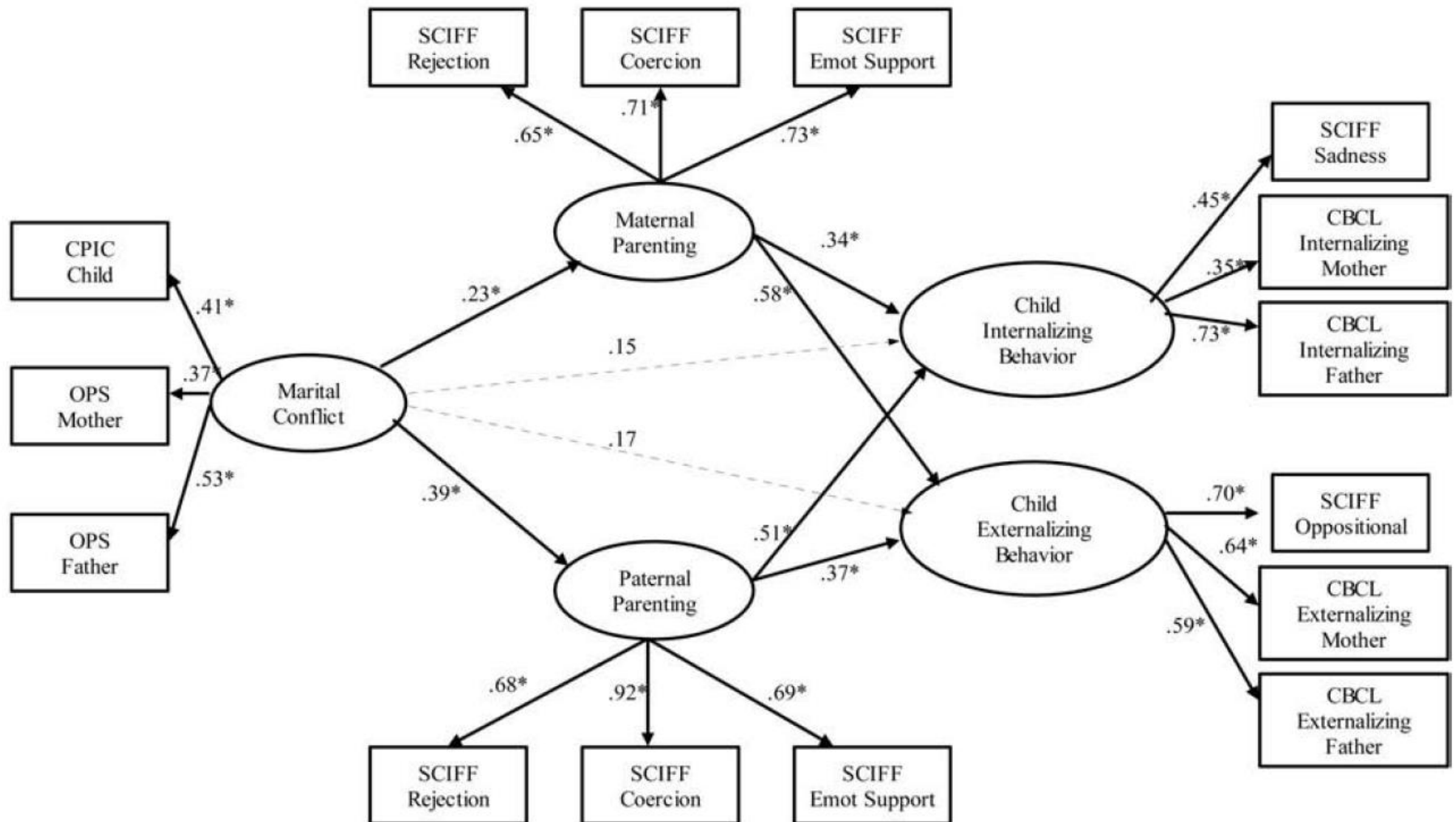
Moderation:

- **Parent gender** did moderate associations when families with **boys** were evaluated, with the association between **marital conflict** and **parenting** stronger for **fathers** than mothers.
- **Fathers' parenting** may be more strongly related to **internalizing behavior**, and **mothers' parenting** may be more strongly related to **externalizing behavior** in **boys**.

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- **Do results of the study apply to any kind of marital conflict or is there some way of solving marital problems which isn't so influential for parenting behaviours?**
- I suppose it is quite rare to see marriage without conflicts. Let's say it is also very improbable to prevent child from being influenced by them (at least directly by observing them, or even by feeling some tension between the parents). But is it necessary parenting being a mediator between them? Full mediation found in this study gives answer "yes", but would it be still full mediation for example if the parents knew about this influence? In other words, is there some way how to be a good parent even if conflicts in marriage are unresolvable at the moment?

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- The study suggests that fathers' parenting may be more closely linked with marital conflict than mothers' parenting.
- I am wondering why. Does it mean that mothers are less involved in marital conflict and not as influenced by it as fathers are? OR could it be that mothers' and fathers' reactions to marital conflict differ in quality (not quantity) and the way fathers react to this conflict has bigger influence on their parenting for some reason? For example: The marital conflict might be generally causing higher level of stress in mothers and withdrawal/low involvement in fathers. The reaction of fathers (withdrawal/low involvement) might influence parenting in greater way than high level of stress and that would explain why fathers' parenting is more closely linked to marital conflict. But that is just one of many possible explanations. Have researchers already found out what might be causing this phenomena?



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According to Kaczynski et al. (2006) fathers' parenting affects maternal conflict more than mothers' parenting but only for boys. Authors suggest that possible explanation is that boys perceive fathers' behavior as possible abandonment of the family which would be serious threat to boys' emotional security. Does this mean that girls interpret the situation differently, or that possible abandonment of the family doesn't threaten their emotional security?

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- Kaczynski, Lindahl, Malik, and Laurenceau (2006) found that boys are more vulnerable when it comes to parental marital conflict and react with internalizing and externalizing behaviour. I always thought that girls usually internalize and boys externalize. Were the results of this study due to the insufficient size of the sample of girls or do girls generally react less to parental conflict?

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Kaczynski, Laurenceau, Lindahl and Malik suggest that spillover hypothesis is valid. I understand that when a parent experiences marital conflict it affects the child no matter whether it's the father or the mother because their support decreases. They say they didn't find much difference between the gender of the parent. I have to ask in that light again about the gay families. Because in this light it seems that it is better for the child having same sex parents without marital conflict or with a minor one than different sex parents experiencing a conflict.

Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn (2010).

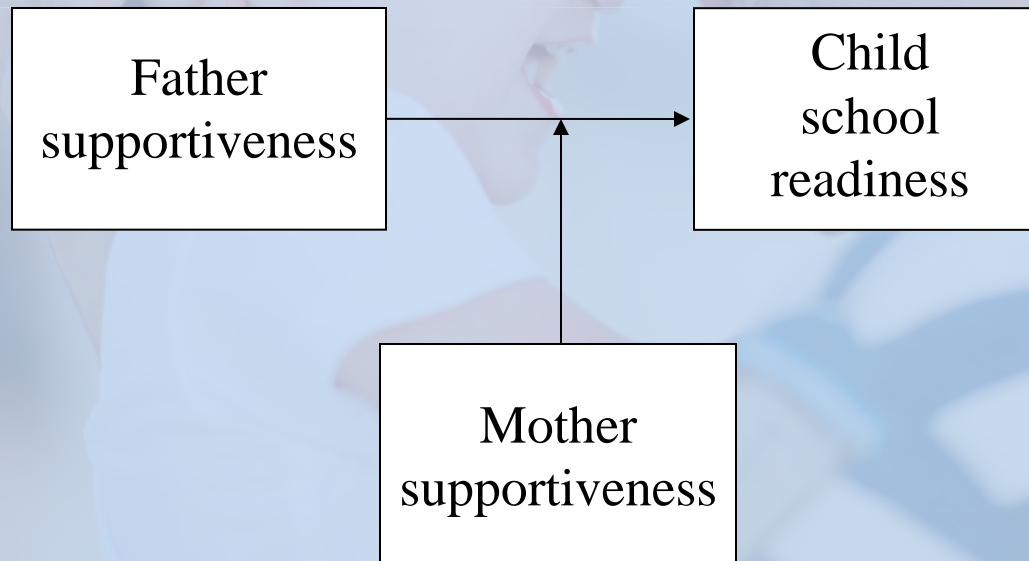
When fathers' supportiveness matters most: Maternal and paternal parenting and children's school readiness.

The aim of study:

- Whether the effects of fathers' supportive parenting on children's school readiness are greater when mothers are least supportive.

The important premise for this study:

- Mothers are typically children's primary caregivers because they spend more time interacting and engaging with children during the early years.

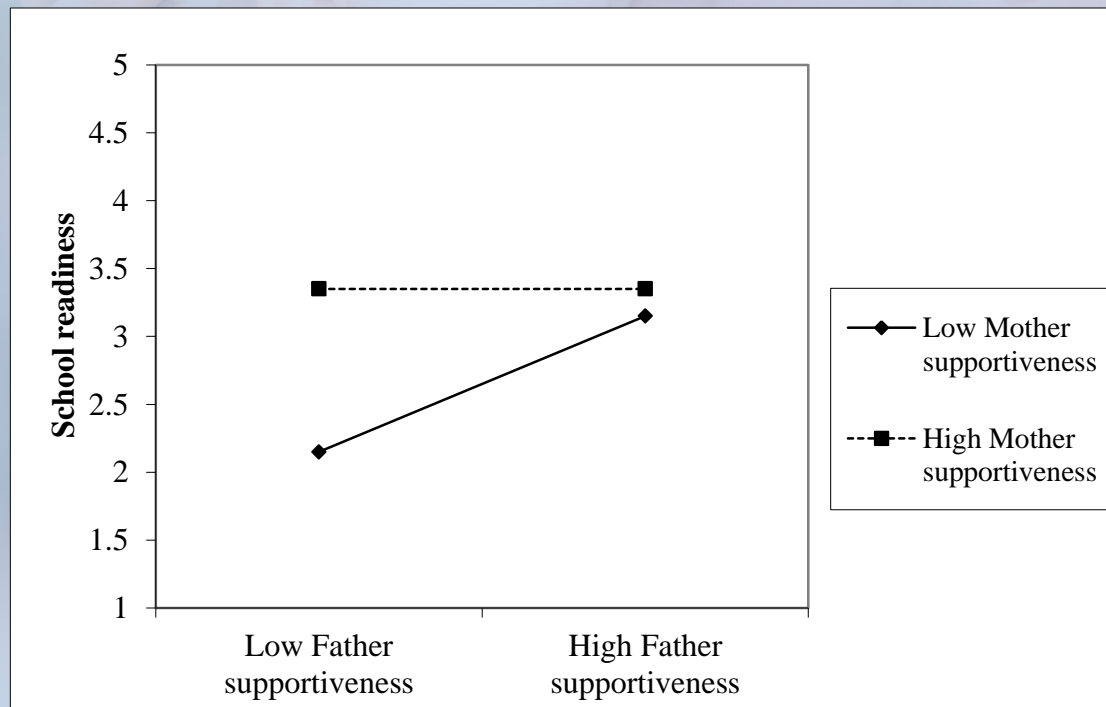


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Bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994)

- Mothers' parenting behaviors have a stronger effect than fathers'
 - The mother as the primary caregiver

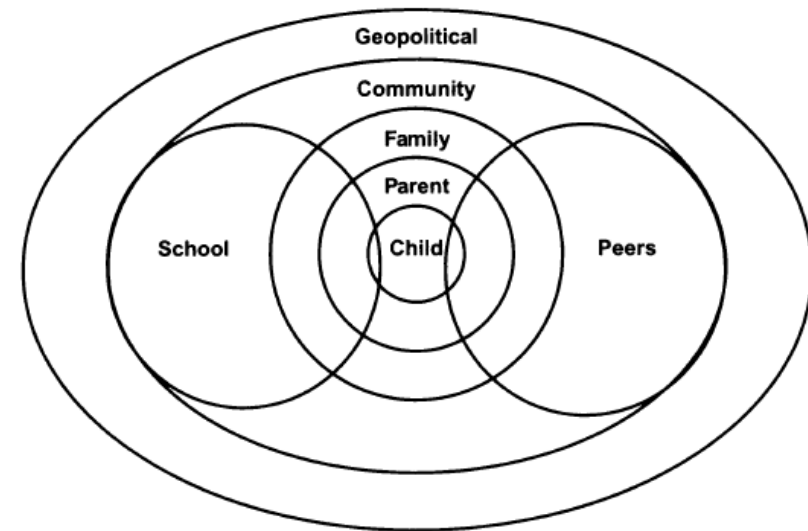


Figure 4. Social-ecological model of context.



Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn (2010).

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Attachment theory (Main, 1990; Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005)

- When mothers provide an insensitive caregiving, children learn insecure attachment strategies.
 - Low self regulation, ineffective relationship building, etc.
- Fathers' sensitive parenting elicit alternative secure attachment strategies.

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Paternal scaffolding

- Maternal scaffolding: providing support children need.
 - Similar to Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development"
- If mothers don't do this, father's scaffolding offers important skills for schools.



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- Outcomes:
 - academic and social dimensions of school readiness.
 - Teacher-rated
- Predictors:
 - Mothers' and fathers' supportive parenting
 - Assessed in dyadic parent–child videotaped sessions

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Results:

- Fathers' supportiveness was associated with children's school readiness only when mothers scored average or below on supportiveness.
- Mothers' supportiveness was similarly associated with children's social school readiness when fathers scored average or below on supportiveness. **However**, mothers' supportiveness was associated with children's academic school readiness even when fathers scored above average on supportiveness.

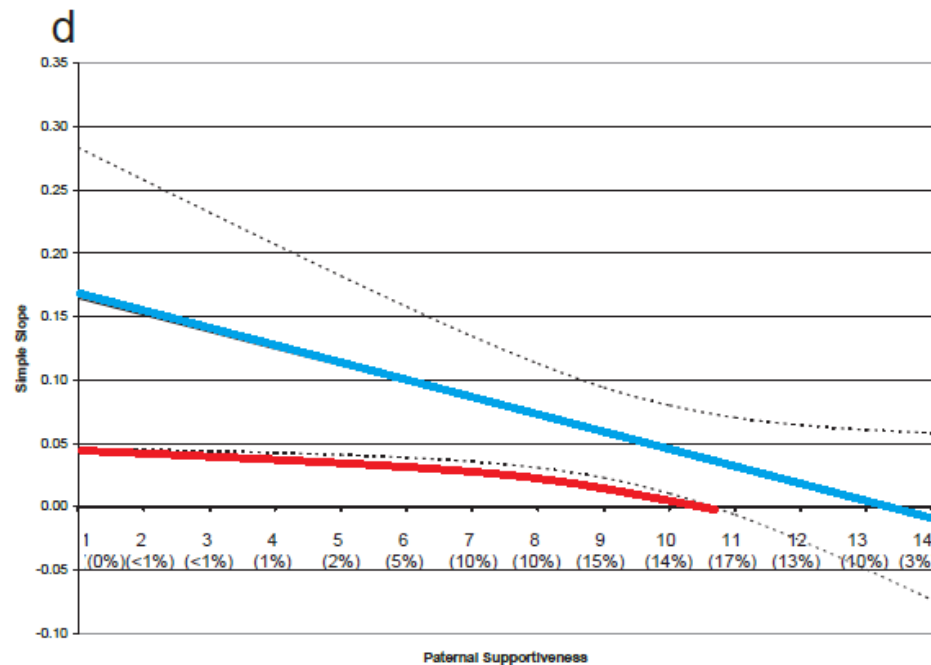
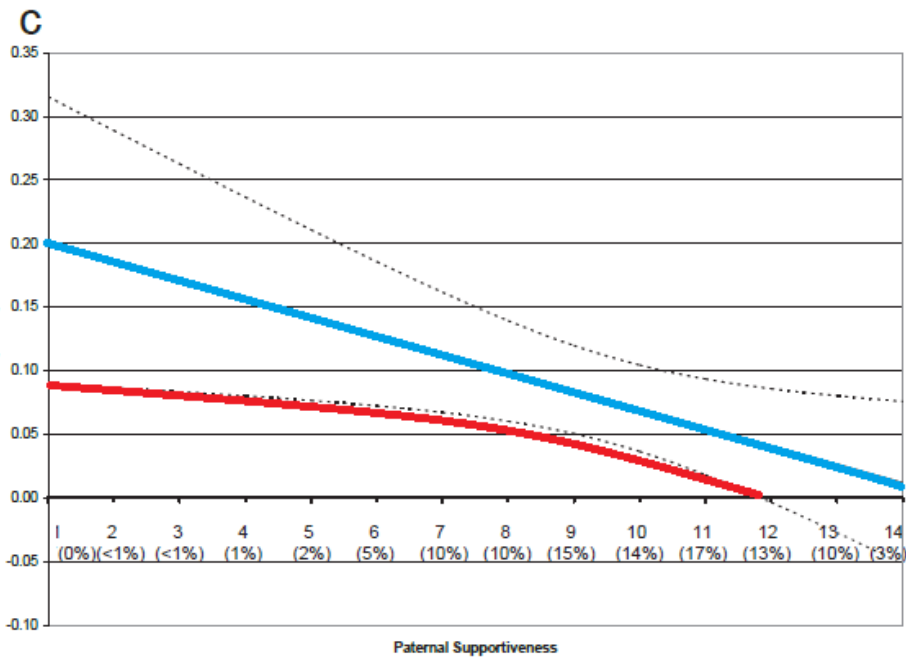
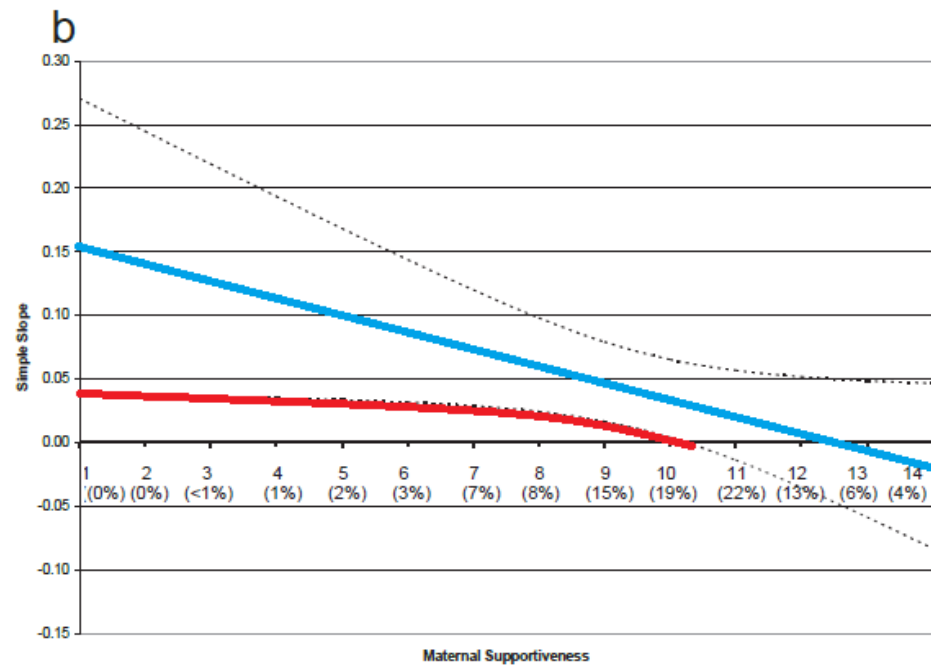
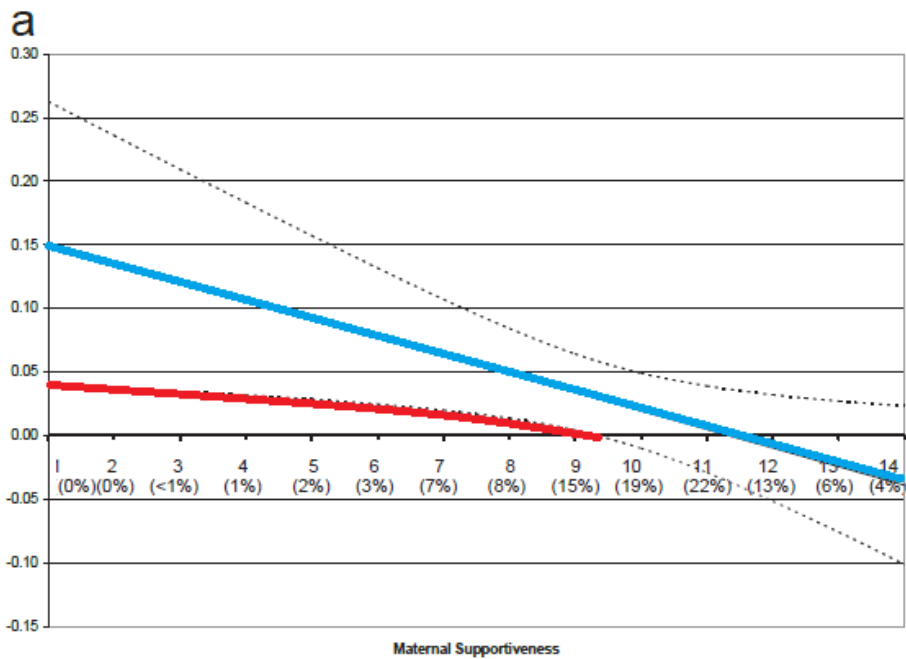
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Table 1
Results of Regression Models of Child Outcomes at Kindergarten and First Grade on Parenting at 54 Months

Variable	Kindergarten						First grade								
	Teacher-rated academic competence			Teacher-rated social competence			Teacher-rated academic competence			Teacher-rated social competence			Academic achievement tests		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Maternal supportiveness	.07	.02	.17***	.05	.02	.11**	.06	.02	.13**	.05	.02	.11**	.06	.02	.15***
Paternal supportiveness	.02	.01	.05	.04	.02	.09*	-.01	.02	-.04	.01	.02	.03	.01	.01	.03
Maternal Supportiveness \times Paternal Supportiveness	-.01	.01	-.09*	-.01	.01	-.08*	-.03	.01	-.14***	-.02	.01	-.09*	-.01	.01	-.06
Mother White	.12	.11	.04	.07	.11	.02	.17	.11	.06	.15	.10	.05	.17	.10	.06
Parental education	.23	.06	.17	.21	.06	.16***	.26	.06	.20***	.16	.06	.12**	.25	.05	.20***
Biological father	.22	.15	.05	.36	.15	.09*	.18	.14	.05	.37	.15	.10*	-.10	.14	-.03
In poverty	-.21	.11	-.08	.14	.11	.05	.00	.11	.00	-.01	.11	-.00	-.06	.11	-.03
Child sex	-.17	.07	-.09*	-.02	.07	-.01	.06	.07	.03	.09	.07	.05	-.07	.06	-.04
N	648			666			671			678			696		
R ²	.17			.09			.12			.09			.12		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.



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Interpreting interaction effects:

<http://www.jeremydawson.co.uk/slopes.htm>

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Paternal supportiveness	.02	.01	.05	.04	.02	.09*	-.01	.02	-.04	.01	.02	.03	.01	.01	.03
Maternal Supportiveness × Paternal Supportiveness	-.01	.01	-.09*	-.01	.01	-.08*	-.03	.01	-.14***	-.02	.01	-.09*	-.01	.01	-.06
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- **Conclusion:** fathers may influence child development most as potential **buffers** against unsupportive mother parenting.

Summary

Different points of views on fathers

- Paquette (2004)
 - Uniquely important (Activation and RTP)
 - Unique behavior of Fathers' parenting (or interactions) with their children
- Kazynski et al. (2006)
 - Equally important as mothers
- Martin et al. (2010)
 - Secondly important
 - But mothers are the most important



Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn (2010).

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Martin, Brooks-Gunn, & Ryan (2010) suggested, that supportive fathers are more engaged in activities with the children, when mother is unsupportive. This sounds to me as if mother was more important for the child in first place and in all domains and only if she fails, then the supportive father shows up. In which situations or activities is father needed in the first place and when he fails, the mother should show up and be supportive?



Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn (2010).

When fathers' supportiveness matters most: Maternal and paternal parenting and children's school readiness.

Martin, Ryan and Brooks-Gunn (2010) supported with their research the hypothesis, that fathers' supportiveness matters in families where the level of mothers' supportiveness is low. Can we assume, that supportiveness of anyone else form the family can work the same way?

Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn (2010).

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- **If mother supportiveness is most important, is child of divorced “good mum” better than child of conflict marriage?**
- In this study is written that father's supportiveness matters only when mother's supportiveness is not so good. I wonder if father's supportiveness is not important for child, maybe could be better only supportive mum without dad, than mum and dad who support child less.



Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn (2010).

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According to study of Martin & Ryan (2010) if children have one adequately supportive parent, it is enough for children's healthy development. So is it better for the child, if he/she grows with only one supportive parent and has no contact with the other one unsupportive parent or if he grows in family with one supportive and unsupportive parent (who can still in some way contribute to the child - for example: gender role)?



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Authors say, that the fathers' supportiveness matters most in families where the level of mothers' supportiveness is relatively low. As the authors measured that through a parent-child play and almost exclusively among upper-class families, how would the results change, if also minorities or other ethnicities were included in the study? Their ways of playing with children might be very different from the majority due the lack of finances and other stuff.

Roles of fathers in children II

- All good things go together: Good parents have good children.
- Theories:
 - family systems theory
 - attachment theory
 - social learning theory
 - Emotion security theory
 - ecological theory
 - transactional model