Religion and Fatherhood:
Exploring the Links between Religious Affiliation, Gender Role Attitudes & Paternal Practices

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Abstract
By comparing evangelical, Catholic, and mainline Protestant fathers with secular fathers, this study examines the connections between religious affiliation, gender role attitudes, and paternal practices using data from the 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH). Multivariate analysis indicates that evangelicalism was associated with positive paternal expressive interaction with children and a strict paternal disciplinary style. These associations held even when gender role traditionalism was not controlled for. However, evangelicals were not more involved in parent-child activities than other religious fathers. Rather, religious affiliation, in general, was correlated with greater paternal involvement. Finally, the positive relationship between religion and paternal involvement held even when the gender role traditionalism of evangelicals was not controlled for.

Introduction
In the last decade, fatherhood has been the object of increased public and scholarly concern (Marsiglio 1991; Gerson 1993; Popenoe 1996). Most of the recent attention devoted to fathers has focused on "new" fathers who are more involved with childcare as well as egalitarian in their gender role attitudes (Lamb 1987; Pleck 1987; LaRossa 1988) or on "bad" fathers who have retreated from familial involvement and financial support for wives/partners and their children (Furstenberg 1988). However, scholars of the family have made little effort to explore the relationships between religion and fatherhood.
This is surprising given the symbolic and functional significance religion has attached to the family—especially, in recent years, among evangelical Christians. At the political level, the religious right has made support for the "traditional family" the lodestar of its political engagement (Wuthnow 1988; Hunter 1991). At the cultural level, evangelical churches have focused considerable attention on the needs and concerns of families (Hunter 1987; Lienesch 1991; Browning 1995). One consequence of this concerted focus on the family has been the emergence of an evangelical fatherhood script that emphasizes paternal involvement, expressiveness, and a strict disciplinary approach (McNamara 1985; Hunter 1987; Lienesch 1991). Nevertheless, except for research on the evangelical disciplinary approach (Ellison and Sherkat 1993a; Ellison and Sherkat 1993b; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal 1996), little work has been done that would indicate whether or not the fatherhood script advanced by evangelicals is associated with distinctive practices (for work that bears indirectly on this issue, see Alwin 1986; Clydesdale 1994). Thus, the key question that this study examines is whether or not a distinctive pattern of paternal socialization—active and expressive involvement as well as a strict disciplinary style—has emerged among evangelical fathers, both in comparison to secular as well as Catholic and mainline Protestant fathers.

The relationship between evangelicalism and paternal socialization is all the more intriguing because evangelicalism is also associated with gender role traditionalism (Thornton 1985; Peek, Lowe, and Williams 1991), which—if the literature on gender and fatherhood is correct—should contradict the evangelical culture's commitment to active and expressive childrearing. In other words, evangelicalism may be directly associated with higher levels of active and expressive involvement and, through its gender role traditionalism, indirectly associated with lower levels of these very same practices. Accordingly, this study tests whether evangelicalism's gender role traditionalism renders evangelical fathers no different than other fathers with respect to paternal involvement and expressiveness. Thus,
the answer to the question of whether or not evangelical fathers are distinctive hinges on the respective, perhaps contradictory, associations that religious affiliation and gender role attitudes have with paternal socialization.

I test a number of hypotheses related to this question using data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), focusing on a subsample of married fathers. Because the NSFH offers an extensive range of measures regarding parental socialization, this study is able to offer a fairly detailed assessment of the links between religious affiliation, gender role attitudes, and paternal practices. In particular, this study examines a range of measures across two modes of fatherhood: (a) \textit{paternal involvement}, which measures the father's involvement in one-on-one interaction, youth activities, dinner, and basic care; and, (b) \textit{paternal style}, which indicates the style of father-child interaction, including emotional expressiveness, use of corporal punishment, and valuation of obedience.

**Theoretical Issues**

THE NEW RELIGIOUS DIVIDE & THE FAMILY

As Robert Wuthnow has argued in \textit{The Restructuring of American Religion} (1988), a new religiocultural divide has emerged since World War II between cultural conservatives and progressives. Whereas the most fundamental religious divisions in America were once over matters of religious belief, they now center around basic questions of epistemology and morality. Differences between Protestants and Catholics have largely been subsumed by differences between conservative religionists--made up principally of evangelicals--and liberal religionists--made up principally of mainline Protestants and Catholics. Moreover, this divide is centered around competing models of family life and attendant norms of gender and sexuality (Thornton 1985; Wuthnow 1988; Hunter 1991).

Religion's influence on the symbolic clash over the family, and related political developments, have garnered the most attention in the literatures on
religion, gender, and family. But more basic questions about the relationship between
religion and family conduct have gone largely unexamined (for similar arguments,
see McNamara 1985; Alwin 1986). With the exception of an article by Alwin (1986) that
only touched on the implications of this divide, there have been no recent efforts to
develop a comprehensive portrait of the relationship between the contemporary
religious scene and the most central task of the family: parenting. By exploring the
ways in which this religiocultural divide plays out among fathers from the three
dominant American religious traditions--evangelical, mainline Protestant, and
Catholic--as well as among secular fathers, the present study offers an important
contribution to the ongoing study of religion, gender, and family life.

Evangelicalism

The literature on evangelicalism indicates that the family is accorded great
symbolic importance (Hunter 1987). The family is viewed as an embodiment of the
love God has for his people. It is also seen as an institution that has been ordained by
God for the cultivation of marital love, the transmission of faith from one generation
to the next, and for the care and socialization of children. In the last two decades,
evangelical groups have heightened their focus on the family because they believe
that the cultural shifts of the 1960s and 1970s have placed the "traditional family"
under tremendous strain. Books, videos, sermons, and ministries such as Focus on the
Family press the theme that the family is threatened and must be supported at all costs
(see Hunter 1987: 76-83; Ellison and Sherkat 1993b).

This public culture of this religious familialism suggests that men are being
couraged to avoid the emotional and practical distance from family life
traditionally ascribed to the breadwinner role. Although evangelical groups
generally stress men's 'traditional' role as the primary breadwinner and head of
household, they also place a great deal of emphasis on men's role as husbands and
fathers. For instance, an evangelical specialist had this to say about the father: "Is Dad
necessary? You bet he is! He is part of a God-designed team and his teamwork is essential to the personal growth of his children” (Benson cited in Hunter 1987: 79).

Specifically, fathers are supposed to model the love that God has for humankind with their wives and children. On the one hand, this means taking an active and expressive role in family life. Fathers are encouraged to be involved in the lives of their children and to praise them. But, on the other hand, since God's love also includes the just correction of sin, fathers are supposed to be strong disciplinarians. A spirit of self-control and obedience among children, this script suggests, depends upon fathers' willingness to identify clear rules and back them up with a spanking if necessary (for a more detailed discussion of the parenting script among conservative evangelicals, see Hunter 1987; Lienesch 1991; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal 1996). In sum, then, evangelicalism is associated with a public fatherhood culture stressing active involvement, expressiveness, and a strict disciplinary orientation.

Mainline Accommodation and Support

With some exceptions, a common orientation to the family has emerged among mainline Protestants and Catholics. This orientation might be described as one of accommodation and support. Motivated by values like tolerance and freedom of conscience, members of the mainline have largely accommodated themselves to the shifts in family organization and practice of the last three decades (Roof and McKinney 1987). At the same time, the religious traditions that inform their lives do stress an ethic of unconditional love that may make them somewhat more committed to family life than those Americans who are not religious (D'Antonio 1983). Nevertheless, the public culture of mainline Protestant and Catholic parenting is only slightly different from that of the larger culture.

Compared to evangelical churches, mainline Protestant churches have not been able to articulate a vision of the family and promote pastoral policies that are significantly different from the ones found in the larger culture (Browning 1995).
The reasons for this phenomenon are complex but two processes seem to account for mainline Protestantism accommodation to the larger culture. The first is that, operating in light of a religious ethic of prophetic justice, mainline Protestant churches have largely focused their energies on social justice in the last three decades (Wuthnow 1988; Berger and Berger 1984). Among other things, this has meant that issues of a more personal nature--such as the believer's responsibilities to his or her family--have received little attention.

Second, due to their location in the middle and upper ranks of the American class structure, mainline Protestants have been at the forefront of recent cultural change. Accordingly, mainline Protestant churches have generally adopted a stance that accommodates the "new morality" of expressive individualism that influenced America after the 1960s, and which was attended by progressive attitudes regarding the family, sexuality, and gender (Roof and McKinney 1987; Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens 1994). As a consequence, the mainline Protestant culture of parenting is largely indistinguishable from that of their secular counterparts. This orientation stresses children's autonomy and minimizes expectations of obedience (Alwin 1986); it also does not make any explicit demands on fathers in terms of involvement or expressiveness.

As Lenski's (1963) work suggests, American Catholics were once known for their high regard for authority, tradition, and the family--including the extended family. Although it is hard to know how much of this orientation was caused by religious factors and how much of it was caused by ethnic factors, Catholics had a distinctive familial orientation that included an expectation of obedience from children, the use of corporal punishment, high interaction with members of the extended family, and high fertility.

But in the last three decades, the distinctive Catholic family orientation has largely eroded. Three processes seem to have contributed to this erosion. First, in the face of post-Vatican II changes in the Catholic Church and recent cultural shifts
outside the church, Catholics have embraced a more independent attitude towards
authority in general and church teaching in particular—especially over matters of
sexuality and marriage (D'Antonio and Cavanaugh 1983; Greeley 1977). Second, the
socioeconomic mobility that many Catholics have experienced has reduced much of
the ethnic component of Catholic distinctiveness (Alba 1981; Lieberson and Waters
1988). Third, at a pastoral level, clergy in the American Catholic Church have shied
away from addressing family issues, partly as a consequence of the controversy
surrounding *Humanae Vitae* (Greeley 1990). For these reasons, Catholic family culture
has come to resemble mainline Protestants in its attitude towards parenting (Alwin
1986).

Previous Research and Hypotheses

The question remains, however, of whether the cultural differences between
evangelicals and Catholics as well as mainline Protestants are associated with
distinctive evangelical paternal practices. As Swidler (1986) has argued, values don't
always translate into action. I will suggest three hypotheses regarding the
associations between religious affiliation and, respectively, paternal involvement,
expressiveness, and disciplinary orientations.

The only recent work that has been done on the connection between religion
and parental involvement found no relationship between conservative religious
belief and parental involvement (Clydesdale 1994). But since this study only used one
measure of educational involvement, the applicability of its findings are probably
limited. Given that evangelical churches promote familial involvement and mainline
Protestant and Catholic churches are comparatively silent on the family, I predict
that evangelical fathers are more involved with their children than mainline
Protestant, Catholic and secular fathers.

However, although mainline Protestant and Catholic denominations have not
done much to promote a particular familial culture, attendance at mainline Protestant
or Catholic churches may be indicative of a broader profamilial habitus--
enshrining marital commitment, involvement in youth and home activities, and
worship ("the family that prays together, stays together")--among parents. In other
words, religious involvement may be the result of an exogenous familial commitment
rather than vice versa (see Thornton, Axinn, and Hill 1992; Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy,
and Waite 1995). For this reason, I predict that mainline Protestant and Catholic
fathers are more involved in the lives of their children than secular fathers. In sum,
I hypothesize that (1) mainline Protestant and Catholic fathers will be more involved
(one-on-one activities, youth activities, dinner, and basic care) than their secular
peers but less involved than evangelical fathers.

To date, there has been no effort to explore the link between emotional
expressiveness among fathers and their religious affiliation. However, the limited
ethnographic data on this subject (Stacey 1990; Bellah et al 1985) suggests that the
evangelical stress on family life has resulted in a distinctive familial style where men
attempt to express the love they have experienced from God in their relationships
with their wives and children. Given the comparative Catholic and mainline
Protestant silence on parenting, I hypothesize that (2) evangelical fathers are more
expressive (hugging and praising) with their children than mainline Protestant,
Catholic, or secular fathers.

The research on religious affiliation and styles of discipline is more extensive.
Alwin (1986) found that evangelicals were not significantly different from other
parents in their valuation of obedience but his results were based on a sample limited
to Detroit. By contrast, a more recent study using a national sample found significant
differences between evangelical and mainline Protestants in their valuation of
obedience (Ellison and Sherkat 1993b). Other studies have found that evangelicals are
more likely to use corporal punishment than other Protestants (Ellison and Sherkat
1993a; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal 1996). Thus, I hypothesize that (3) evangelical
fathers are more likely than mainline Protestant, Catholic, and secular fathers to
embrace a strict style of discipline, encompassing higher rates of yelling, corporal punishment, and expectations of obedience.

The Variegated Effects of Gender Role Attitudes: Background and Hypotheses

The indirect effect that religious affiliation has on fathering through its relationship with gender traditionalism is also an object of interest. Evangelicalism's conservative biblical style of interpretation and its high valuation of the traditional family has helped shape a subculture where traditional gender role attitudes are more common than they are in the rest of the culture.4

For men, gender role traditionalism has been associated with an identification with the "good-provider role" (Bernard 1981). The literature on gender and the family suggests that the good provider role is associated with economic provision and emotional distance from the family. In Bernard's formulation, "Loving attention and emotional involvement in the family were not part of a woman's implicit bargain with the good provider" (1981: 5). Based on this understanding of the relationship between traditional gender role attitudes and familial involvement, scholars of gender and the family have assumed that a traditional gender role orientation is associated with less emotional expressiveness and with less paternal involvement with family life.

Previous research has established a strong connection between evangelicalism and gender role traditionalism (Thornton 1985; Peek, Lowe, Williams 1991). Accordingly, I hypothesize that (1) men from an evangelical background will be more traditional in their gender role attitudes. I also predict that (2) gender role traditionalists will embrace a stricter style of discipline, since conservative cultural attitudes are associated with a greater concern for authority (Hunter 1991).

While there has been no research on the connection between traditional gender role attitudes and emotional expressiveness among fathers, the research on the link between gender traditionalism and paternal involvement is mixed. One study
found a modest negative relationship between gender traditionalism and one measure of paternal involvement (Marsiglio 1991). But others have found no such relationship (Coverman 1985; Barnett and Baruch 1987). I suspect that one of the reasons that the research has come to mixed conclusions is that the measure of gender role attitudes has often been misspecified (see footnote). By specifying my measure of gender role attitudes differently, I hypothesize that, consistent with the literature's expectations, (3) men who have a traditional orientation to the gendered division of labor in the family will be less involved and less expressive than their peers. Finally, I test the hypothesis that (4) evangelicalism's positive relationship to involvement and expressiveness is obviated by its indirect negative effect, via gender role traditionalism, on these two areas of paternal practice.

Methods
DATA

The data used in this study are taken from the 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) conducted by the Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison (See Sweet, Bumpass, and Call 1988). The survey sampled 13,017 randomly selected U.S. adults using face-to-face interviews and a self-administered questionnaire. A secondary respondent questionnaire was provided to the partners of primary respondents when the couples were living together. The statistics and analyses used for this study are based on weighted data, while sample sizes are reported for frequency counts.

This study is limited to married fathers who were (a) currently living with one or more children aged 18 or younger and (b) residing with their legal wife. I excluded fathers living alone or with nonlegal partners because I wanted a sample that shared a similar family structure. The analysis sample includes 2,986 married fathers who were primary or secondary respondents, and whose spouses responded to the self-administered survey. The sample was divided into two groups--fathers who only had
children four and under \( n = 811 \), preschool), and fathers with children aged five to eighteen \( n = 2175 \), school-age), regardless of whether or not they had children four and under--because the survey used different questions for these two groups. I performed separate analyses on the fathers of preschoolers (only) and the fathers of school-age children. Table 1 provides a description of the sociodemographic characteristics of these two groups.

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**TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics on Independent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children Aged 0-4 (only)</th>
<th>Children Aged 5-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Protestant</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Role Attitude</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Attitude (1-5)</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.14)</td>
<td>(1.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father's Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (18-77)</td>
<td>30.54</td>
<td>39.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.81)</td>
<td>(7.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (1-6)</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.34)</td>
<td>(1.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife's Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income (1-5)</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.45)</td>
<td>(1.52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approximately three-fifths of the fathers in the preschool sample are, respectively, evangelical (21%), Catholic (22%), or mainline Protestant (18%). Nearly one-third are secular (32%) and a small minority are, respectively, other Christian (4%), Jewish (3%), or other (1%). Two-fifths of the fathers of school-age children are Catholic (21%) or mainline Protestant (20%), while almost a quarter are evangelical (24%). A little more than a quarter are secular (27%) and, once again, a small minority fall into the other Christian (5%), Jewish (2%), or other (1%) categories. The fathers in the preschool sample are slightly more progressive than fathers in the school-age sample regarding gender role attitudes but both groups come close to averaging [3]--"neither agree nor disagree."

**VARIABLES**

**Dependent Variables**

I grouped the dependent variables into the following two categories (see Table 2):

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**TABLE 2: Descriptive Statistics on Dependent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Aged 0-4 (only)</th>
<th>Children Aged 5-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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a Mean descriptive statistics. Standard deviations are in parentheses.
**Involvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one activities (1-6)</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth activities (0-1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner (0-7)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic care (0-5)</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Style**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive interaction (1-4)</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yell (1-4)</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of corporal punishment (1-4)</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternal valuation of obedience (1-7)</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean descriptive statistics. Standard deviations are in parentheses.*

*This coefficient refers only to parents who have children aged 5-18 and children under the age of 5.*

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**Paternal involvement.** The frequency with which fathers reported doing father-child activities were assessed with three items for fathers of children aged four and under (only) and four items for fathers with at least some children aged 5-18. Fathers of preschool children were asked how frequently they engaged in leisure activities away from home, playing at home, and reading to their children. Fathers of school-age children were asked how often they engaged in leisure activities away from home, playing or working on a project together, having private talks, and helping with reading or homework. Responses ranged from 1 (never or rarely) to 6 (almost every day). For both subgroups of fathers a single measure of child-centered one-on-one activities was created by averaging responses, for fathers of school-age children, to working/playing, reading/homework, private talks, and leisure activities (Cronbach’s alpha = .76), and, for fathers of preschool children, to playing, reading, and leisure activities (Cronbach’s alpha = .46).

Fathers of school-age children were also asked how many hours they spent in youth activities associated with school, church, community organizations (such as the
boy scouts), or athletic teams. Since the largest proportion of parents reported no hours and only a small minority reported two or more hours (summed across the four domains), participation in youth activities was recoded as a dichotomous variable—at least one versus no hours per week. Fathers of school-age children also reported the number of dinners (0-7) shared in the previous week with "at least one of the children." Basic care was constructed by measuring the number of hours fathers of preschool children spent taking care of responsibilities such as bathing, feeding, and dressing a child.

*Paternal style.* Fathers were asked how frequently they hugged, praised, yelled at, or spanked a child (never, seldom, sometimes, and very often, coded from 1 to 4). The extent of a father's positive emotional expressiveness was analyzed by constructing a single measure averaging hug/praise (Cronbach's alpha = .61 for fathers in preschool sample, .60 for father in school-age sample). The father's disciplinary approach was examined by separately examining the frequency of yelling and spanking. The disciplinary approach was also determined by measuring the father's valuation of obedience from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Independent Variables

*Religion.* I divided the sample into the following religious categories: evangelical, Catholic, mainline Protestant, other Christian, Jewish, other religion, and secular. My categories are defined using three measures: expressed denominational affiliation, biblical literalism, and attendance. Because I view religion through an institutional lens that sees religion as operational when it effects individual participation in the institutional life of a religious body (see Roof and McKinney 1987; Chaves 1993), I only included persons in a religious category if they attended a religious service at least once a year. Those who expressed no religious preference or who did not attend a religious service once a year were coded as secular, which was
the dummy variable in my model. And since the NSFH specification of denominational affiliation is imprecise, I used a measure of biblical literalism to determine whether or not some Protestants should be qualified as evangelical or mainline.

Evangelical Protestants are those Christians who are members of denominations which identify themselves as evangelical, have historically been affiliated with organizations such as the National Association of Evangelicals, and have conservative theological doctrines. The following denominations were classified as evangelical: Baptist, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed, and a number of other fundamentalist and evangelical denominations. Since some of the denominational classifications in the NSFH were imprecise (for instance, Southern Baptists were not distinguished from Northern Baptists) some of the classifications may be in error.

Mainline Protestants included members of the following groups: Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of the Brethren, Reformed Church, and those who described themselves as Protestant. However, because there are conservative Lutheran and Presbyterian (sub)denominations, I used a measure of attitudes toward the Bible to code all biblical literalists in those two traditions as evangelical. Likewise, I coded all those who called themselves Christian or Protestant without naming a denomination as mainline Protestants when they were not biblical literalists and as evangelical when they were biblical literalists. The Catholic designation refers to Roman Catholics.

I reserved the designation "other Christian" for members of the five minor traditions among American Christians: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Eastern Orthodox, Church of Christ Scientist, and Unitarian-Universalists. The Jewish designation refers to Jews, while those fathers designated as "other" are members of religious groups outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition, namely, Islam, Hinduism,
Buddhism, and new religious movements (my religious coding scheme is based on Kellstedt and Green 1993).

*Gender Role Attitudes.* Gender role attitudes were determined by measuring fathers’ attitudes towards the breadwinner role. Specifically, they were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement: "It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family." Answers were recoded from their original format to 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

*Control Variables.* The following variables were controlled for: age of the father, age of the youngest child, and number of children—all of which are associated with religious affiliation (Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy and Waite 1995; Thornton 1985). I also included measures of paternal employment, education (1=no high school diploma; 2=high school diploma or G.E.D.; 3=some college; 4=college graduate; 5=graduate school; 6=doctorate), household income (divided into quintiles), and race (black/others), all of which are associated with religious affiliation (Roof and McKinney 1987; Kellstedt and Green 1993). Finally, I also controlled for the wife's work schedule (whether she worked full, part-time, or not at all), which is also associated with gender role attitudes (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983).

**Analyses and Results**

Because many of the dependent variables were based on ordinal indicators, I first estimated models using ordered logistic regression to determine what, if any, relationships might exist between independent and dependent variables. In testing for relationships, I relied on two sets of models to determine 1) whether religious affiliation is significant without controlling for gender role attitudes and 2) whether religious affiliation and gender role attitudes have contradictory effects on paternal socialization. The first set of models tested whether or not religiously-committed fathers were different than secular fathers (who served as the comparison group) without controlling for gender role attitudes, which are strongly correlated to
religious affiliation. This allowed me to determine whether or not evangelical fathers were significantly different than their peers even when their conservative gender role attitudes were not controlled for. The second set of models also looked at religion but included a measure for gender role attitudes, thereby enabling me to see if gender role attitudes muted the influence of religious affiliation. This two-step process thereby allowed me to test my hypotheses regarding religion and gender role attitudes.

After finding significant relationships between religious affiliation, gender role attitudes and my dependent variables in most of my models, I then estimated models using Ordinary Least Squares regression (which is easier to interpret) to see if the relationships were similar. Since the results were similar, I report results derived from my two sets of models in OLS. The only regression models where I did not use OLS were the models measuring paternal involvement in youth activities. Since I used a dichotomous variable (some participation in youth activities or none) in those models, I used logistic regression to estimate the effects of religion and gender role attitudes on paternal involvement in youth activities.

Because I was interested in interreligious differences in all of my models, I also tested for significant differences between the evangelical, Catholic, and mainline Protestant coefficients. A number of models indicated that there were significant differences between these three groups.

Finally, I approached the analyses of paternal expressiveness and disciplinary orientation differently even though these dimensions of paternal socialization were based on similar measures (reports of hugging, praising, yelling, and spanking). Separate regression models for the two measures of positive interaction--father reports of hugging and praising--were compared with regression models combining those measures to see if there were significant differences in the relationships between the independent variables and the two dependent measures. Since none were found, I only report the results of models based on a composite measure of positive
interaction which averages father reports of hugging and praising (see Table 8 below). Likewise, I ran separate regression models of two measures of disciplinary style--father reports of yelling and spanking--and models combining those two measures. Since there were substantial differences in the effect of religious affiliation between the two measures, I report different models for each of the variables (see Tables 9 and 10 below).

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES

To test my hypothesis that there is a relationship between religion and gender role attitudes, I estimated a model of fathers' attitudes towards the traditional division of labor in the family (Table 3). As expected, evangelical fathers exhibited more TABLE 3: Regression Models for Father's Conservative Gender Role Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children Aged 0-4 (only)</th>
<th>Children Aged 5-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Religious Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>.303*H</td>
<td>.414***H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.122)</td>
<td>(.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>-.070LLL</td>
<td>.133LLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.115)</td>
<td>(.075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>-.131LLL</td>
<td>-.024LLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.119)</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>.982***</td>
<td>.697***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.180)</td>
<td>(.142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>-.440†</td>
<td>-.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.235)</td>
<td>(.227)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.368)</td>
<td>(.327)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Father's Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.192***</td>
<td>-.131***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.040)</td>
<td>(.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.019***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.008)</td>
<td>(.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>-.139</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.136)</td>
<td>(.082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>-.252</td>
<td>-.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.180)</td>
<td>(.124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.257</td>
<td>-.232**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, evangelical fathers exhibited more liberal attitudes towards the traditional division of labor in the family.
traditional gender role attitudes. Somewhat surprisingly, I also found modest indications of gender traditionalism among Catholic fathers of school-age children. This anomaly, however, detracts little from my finding that evangelical fathers are significantly more traditional in their attitudes towards gender roles because coefficient tests indicated that evangelical fathers were significantly more traditional than both Catholics and mainline Protestant fathers in both subsamples. These results confirm the literature's general finding that evangelical groups are associated with more traditional attitudes toward gender.

PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT
I have argued that the evangelical religious affiliation is associated with greater paternal involvement and that traditional gender role attitudes are associated with lower levels of paternal involvement. Tables 4 and 5 offer modest support for my hypothesis that evangelical fathers are more involved while Tables 6 and 7 do not. Tables 4 and 7 offer support for my hypothesis that gender role traditionalism is associated with less involvement while Tables 5 and 6 do not.

Although no significant relationships were found regarding religious affiliation or gender role attitudes for fathers of preschoolers (only) in Table 4, Tables 4 and 7 offer support for my hypothesis that gender role traditionalism is associated with less involvement while Tables 5 and 6 do not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on One-on-One Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Aged 0-4 (only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reading, playing, outings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)Unadjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender role attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20
significant relationships were found for fathers of school-age children regarding paternal involvement in one-on-one activities (homework help, talking, playing, outings). Model 4 indicates that evangelical and mainline Protestant fathers of school-age children were more involved in one-on-one activities than secular fathers. But, contrary to my expectations, Catholic fathers were not significantly more involved than secular fathers. Furthermore, coefficient tests revealed that evangelical fathers were not significantly more involved than mainline Protestant or Catholic fathers. This result indicates that religious affiliation in general--rather than an evangelical affiliation in particular--is associated with greater paternal involvement in one-on-one activities for fathers of school-age children (as the Jewish and other Christian coefficients also suggest).

As hypothesized, Model 4 also indicates that gender role traditionalism is associated with lower paternal involvement in one-on-one activities. However, Model 3, which does not control for gender role attitudes, shows that the negative indirect effect of evangelical affiliation, via gender role traditionalism, is not significant.
enough to diminish the direct positive effect of evangelical affiliation. Evangelical fathers are still more likely to be involved in one-on-one activities than secular fathers, even when the negative effects of gender role traditionalism are not controlled for.

Like Table 4, Table 5 indicates that religious affiliation in general rather than an evangelical affiliation in particular was associated with high paternal involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Unadjusted</th>
<th>(2) Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>.677*** (.168)</td>
<td>.677*** (.169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>.430* (.179)</td>
<td>.430* (.179)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>.494** (.177)</td>
<td>.494** (.177)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>.884** (.296)</td>
<td>.884** (.301)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>.079 (.476)</td>
<td>.079 (.476)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>1.770* (.863)</td>
<td>1.764 (.864)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender role attitude</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>-.000 (-.059)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father's Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.320*** (.053)</td>
<td>.320*** (.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.008 (.010)</td>
<td>-.008 (.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>-.096 (.194)</td>
<td>-.096 (.194)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>.262 (.301)</td>
<td>.262 (.302)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.105 (.190)</td>
<td>-.105 (.190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife's Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>.295*</td>
<td>.295*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
involvement in youth activities for fathers of school-age children. Almost every religious group of fathers was more likely to be involved with youth activities than secular fathers. However, contrary to my hypothesis, coefficient tests revealed that evangelical fathers were not significantly more involved than mainline Protestant or Catholic fathers. Also contrary to my expectations, gender role traditionalism was not associated with lower levels of involvement in youth activities. This also means, of course, that the evangelical affiliation did not have negative indirect effects on involvement, as the coefficients in models 1 and 2 indicate.

Tables 6 and 7 do not lend any confirmation of my hypotheses regarding religious affiliation since religious affiliation has no effect on dinner involvement or paternal involvement in basic care. Table 6 also disconfirms my hypothesis about the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Unadjusted</th>
<th>(2) Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed Part-time</strong></td>
<td>.345* (1.165)</td>
<td>.345* (1.164)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Household Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Unadjusted</th>
<th>(2) Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>.096* (.047)</td>
<td>.096* (.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Youngest Child</td>
<td>-.015 (.017)</td>
<td>-.015 (.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>.168* (.067)</td>
<td>.168* (.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercept</strong></td>
<td>-1.770</td>
<td>-1.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>1543</td>
<td>1543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

* Logistic regression estimates, metric coefficients. Standardized betas are in parentheses.

† p < .10   * p < .05   ** p < .01   *** p < .001

---

**TABLE 6: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on Dinner Involvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Unadjusted</th>
<th>(2) Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Aged 5-18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.142)</td>
<td>(0.143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>0.186</td>
<td>0.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.150)</td>
<td>(0.150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>0.219</td>
<td>0.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.144)</td>
<td>(0.144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.243)</td>
<td>(0.246)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.413)</td>
<td>(0.412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.509)</td>
<td>(0.508)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender role attitude</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.047)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>-0.315†</td>
<td>-0.315†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.162)</td>
<td>(0.162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>-0.356</td>
<td>-0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.238)</td>
<td>(0.238)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.416**</td>
<td>-0.419**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.160)</td>
<td>(0.161)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife's Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.113)</td>
<td>(0.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>-0.117</td>
<td>-0.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.138)</td>
<td>(0.140)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>-0.096*</td>
<td>-0.097*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Youngest Child</td>
<td>-0.072***</td>
<td>-0.072***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.049)</td>
<td>(0.049)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.904</td>
<td>5.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^a\) OLS regression estimates, metric coefficients. Standardized betas are in parentheses. Please see Table 3 for a complete description of the other notations used in this table.
uniformly negative effect of gender role traditionalism since it was not related to lower levels of participation in dinner. However, congruent with my hypothesis about the effect of gender role attitudes, Table 7 indicates that traditional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on Basic Care (feeding, bathing, dressing, etc.)^a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Children Aged 0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)Unadjusted                  (2)Adjusted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Factors</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.132)</td>
<td>(.132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.127)</td>
<td>(.127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.135)</td>
<td>(.134)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.212)</td>
<td>(.217)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.206)</td>
<td>(.205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>-.720***</td>
<td>-.707**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.199)</td>
<td>(.207)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender role attitude</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>-.096*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.044)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.070†</td>
<td>-.087*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.038)</td>
<td>(.038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.009)</td>
<td>(.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>-.605**</td>
<td>-.622**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.190)</td>
<td>(.189)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>-.397</td>
<td>-.412†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.246)</td>
<td>(.244)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.479*</td>
<td>.461*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.194)</td>
<td>(.196)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife's Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>.380***</td>
<td>.337**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.107)</td>
<td>(.110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>.286*</td>
<td>.261*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.114)</td>
<td>(.114)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Characteristics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Household Income  -.162**  -.159***  
                 (.036)     (.051)  
Age of Youngest Child  -.104**  -.101**  
                       (.036)     (.036)  
Number of Children  -.069  -.055  
                    (.051)     (.051)  
Intercept       3.419  3.768  
R^2           .107          .112  
N            1095  1095  

a Please see Table 3 for a complete description of the notations used in this table.

gender role attitudes were associated with lower levels of involvement in basic care. Still, the negative effects of gender role attitudes were not significant enough to have any significant consequences on evangelical fathers (see Model 1), thereby signaling that the negative indirect effects of evangelicalism, via gender role traditionalism, were not large enough to significantly change the evangelical coefficient.

Four general conclusions regarding paternal involvement can be drawn from this data. First, religious affiliation in general--as opposed to an evangelical affiliation in particular--was associated with greater paternal involvement. Second, these religious associations were only significant for fathers of school-age children, which suggests that religious fathers' involvement increases, relative to secular fathers, as the children age.11 Third, as expected, traditional gender role attitudes were associated with lower levels of involvement in home activities and basic care. However, contrary to my hypothesis, gender role traditionalism had no impact on paternal involvement in youth activities and dinner. The nonfinding in these two categories may be attributed to the fact that these areas of paternal involvement are part of the 'traditional' father repertoire. Fourth, although evangelical affiliation had an indirect negative effect on fatherhood involvement via gender role traditionalism, that effect was not large enough to outweigh evangelical affiliation's positive effect. This means that
evangelical fathers were significantly more involved with their children than secular fathers despite their gender role traditionalism.

PATERNAL STYLE

Expressive Interaction

I argued that evangelical fathers were more likely to be expressive than mainline Protestant, Catholic, and secular fathers because of their emphasis on modeling God's love to their children. Table 8 generally confirms this hypothesis.

---

**TABLE 8: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on Expressive Interaction (hugging, praising)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Unadjusted</th>
<th>(2) Adjusted</th>
<th>(3) Unadjusted</th>
<th>(4) Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>.144**</td>
<td>.161**</td>
<td>.152***</td>
<td>.150***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.055)</td>
<td>(.056)</td>
<td>(.036)</td>
<td>(.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>.058L</td>
<td>.054L-L</td>
<td>.024LLL</td>
<td>.023LLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.063)</td>
<td>(.063)</td>
<td>(.041)</td>
<td>(.077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
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<td>.068L</td>
<td>.044LLL</td>
<td>.044LLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.063)</td>
<td>(.063)</td>
<td>(.040)</td>
<td>(.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
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<td>.041</td>
<td>.172*</td>
<td>.168*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.105)</td>
<td>(.105)</td>
<td>(.069)</td>
<td>(.136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>.102†</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.189*</td>
<td>.191*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(.053)</td>
<td>(.055)</td>
<td>(.086)</td>
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<td>-.047</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.182)</td>
<td>(.179)</td>
<td>(.158)</td>
<td>(.253)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender role attitude</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>-.045**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.005</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.017)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father's Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>.013</td>
<td>.047***</td>
<td>.048***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.013)</td>
<td>(.014)</td>
<td>(.011)</td>
<td>(.011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.013***</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.119**</td>
<td>-.119**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.109)</td>
<td>(.110)</td>
<td>(.046)</td>
<td>(.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>-.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.140)</td>
<td>(.141)</td>
<td>(.066)</td>
<td>(.066)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evangelical fathers of school-age children are significantly more expressive (hugging, praising) with their children than mainline Protestant, Catholic, and secular fathers in this subsample. Evangelical fathers of preschool children are significantly more expressive than Catholic and secular fathers but not more expressive than mainline Protestants (see Model 1).

I also argued that gender traditionalism was associated with lower levels of expressive interaction. This was true for fathers of preschool children (only) but not for fathers of school-age children. Perhaps gender role traditionalists leave most of the expressive interaction to their wives when the children are in preschool years but then increase their expressiveness as the children enter the school-age years. Finally, the negative indirect effect that evangelicalism had on expressive interaction for fathers of preschool children, via gender role traditionalism, did not significantly reduce its overall positive effect (see Model 1).
I argued that an evangelical affiliation and that gender role traditionalism were associated with a strict disciplinary approach—namely, higher rates of yelling and corporal punishment as well as higher expectations for obedience.

Contrary to my expectations, I found that evangelical fathers were not more likely to yell at their children than other fathers (Table 9). In fact, evangelical fathers of school-age children were significantly less likely to yell at their children.

---

**TABLE 9: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on Yelling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Factors</th>
<th>Children Aged 0-4 (only)</th>
<th>Children Aged 5-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Unadjusted</td>
<td>(2) Adjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>-.173 (.105)</td>
<td>-.167 (.105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>-.097 (.096)</td>
<td>-.098 (.096)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>-.106 (.107)</td>
<td>-.109 (.107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>-.118 (.186)</td>
<td>-.102 (.189)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>-.105 (.271)</td>
<td>-.115 (.276)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>.268† (.162)</td>
<td>.270† (.158)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender role attitude**

| Conservative               | -.017 (.036)            | .007 (.019)        |

**Father’s Characteristics**

| Education                  | -.041 (.036)            | -.044 (.036)       | -.019 (.016)     | -.018 (.016)    |
| Age                        | -.005 (.008)            | -.005 (.008)       | -.015*** (.003)  | -.013*** (.003) |
| Employed Full-time         | -.103 (.087)            | -.106 (.156)       | .008 (.064)      | .008 (.064)     |
| Employed Part-time         | .061 (.190)             | .057 (.191)        | .075 (.096)      | .075 (.096)     |
| Black                      | -.180 (.153)            | -.188 (.154)       | -.114* (.058)    | -.113† (.058)   |

**Wife’s Characteristics**

| Employed Full-time         | -.078 (.087)            | -.087 (.090)       | .115* (.045)     | .119* (.046)    |
than secular fathers. Furthermore, gender traditionalism had no effects on paternal reports of yelling. Perhaps evangelical fathers of school-age children resort to yelling less than the rest of the population because they view yelling as a sign that they are out of control.

However, paternal use of corporal punishment and expectations of obedience were more consistent with the hypotheses I offered. As predicted, evangelical fathers reported higher levels of corporal punishment than secular, mainline, and Catholic fathers (Table 10). Surprisingly, mainline Protestant fathers of school-age children

\[ \text{TABLE 10: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on Paternal Use of Corporal Punishment (spanking, slapping)} \]

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{Children Aged 0-4 (only)} & \text{Children Aged 5-18} \\
\hline
\text{Unadjusted} & \text{Adjusted} & \text{Unadjusted} & \text{Adjusted} \\
\text{Evangelical} & .340**H & .303**H & .222***H & .196***H \\
& (.102) & (.099) & (.050) & (.050) \\
\text{Catholic} & -.045LLL & -.039LLL & -.041LLL & -.050LLL \\
& (.097) & (.097) & (.053) & (.053) \\
\text{Mainline} & .031LLL & .047LLL & .115*L & .118* \\
& (.103) & (.103) & (.050) & (.050) \\
\text{Other Christian} & .223 & .129 & .203* & .159† \\
& (.266) & (.267) & (.088) & (.086) \\
\text{Jewish} & -.195 & -.139 & .149 & .172 \\
\end{array}
\]

\[ a \] Please see Table 3 for a complete description of the notations used in this table.
were more likely to strike their children than secular fathers. Gender traditionalists reported consistently higher levels of corporal punishment. Thus, the direct and indirect effects of evangelical affiliation increased the likelihood that fathers would use corporal punishment.

Paternal valuation of obedience was also largely consistent with my hypotheses (Table 11). Evangelical fathers consistently valued obedience more than secular
fathers, and evangelical fathers of preschool children (only) also valued obedience more than mainline Protestants. Surprisingly, Catholic fathers consistently valued obedience more than mainline Protestants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 11: Regression Models for Effects of Religious Affiliation on Paternal Valuation of Obedience.(^a)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Children Aged 0-4 (only)</td>
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<td>Children Aged 5-18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(1) Unadjusted</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(2) Adjusted</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(3) Unadjusted</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>(4) Adjusted</strong></td>
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<td>.142† (.082)</td>
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<td>.324* (.159)</td>
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<td>.287***H (.082)</td>
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<td>.489* (.210)</td>
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<td>.192** (.058)</td>
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<td><strong>Father's Characteristics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-.555** (.195)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.077 (.109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.076 (.109)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>-.586† (.336)</td>
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<td>-.539 (.335)</td>
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<td>-.027 (.155)</td>
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<td>-.008 (.155)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>.496* (.200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.580** (.211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.286** (.092)</td>
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<tr>
<td>.310** (.093)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wife's Characteristics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>-.109 (.132)</td>
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<td>.007 (.132)</td>
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<tr>
<td>.054 (.065)</td>
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<td>.132* (.065)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed Part-time</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.239† (.143)</td>
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<td>-.209** (.080)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-.173* (.079)</td>
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<td><strong>Household Characteristics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.111* (.049)</td>
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<tr>
<td>.105* (.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.046* (.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.042† (.022)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Regression models include effects of religious affiliation and other variables. All coefficients are unstandardized, with standard errors in parentheses. **p < .01, *p < .05, †p < .10.
obedience more than secular fathers, and Catholic fathers of school-age children valued obedience more than mainline Protestant fathers. This suggests that Catholic distinctiveness regarding concern for authority may be resurfacing, perhaps because of the recent Catholic influx into the U.S. from Latin and Central America as well as Asia. As hypothesized, gender traditionalism was consistently associated with higher valuations of obedience among fathers. This suggests, once again, that an evangelical affiliation had a direct and indirect positive effect on paternal valuations of obedience.

In general, then, evangelicalism was associated with a distinctive parenting style encompassing high levels of expressive interaction and a strict disciplinary approach. The distinctive evangelical style held regardless of whether or not evangelicalism's indirect effects through gender role traditionalism were controlled for. Somewhat surprisingly, I also found that Catholic fathers valued obedience at rates significantly higher than the rest of the fatherhood population, that mainline Protestant fathers of school-age children were more likely to use corporal punishment, and that evangelical fathers did not resort to yelling more than other parents. Finally, consistent with my hypotheses, gender role traditionalism was associated with lower levels of positive interaction and a more authoritarian approach to discipline.

Discussion and Conclusions
This study sought to address the role that conservative religion takes in shaping a culture of fatherhood, insofar as it has a direct effect through its familial orientation and an indirect effect through its gender traditionalism. In particular, one question animated the study: whether evangelical fathers, in comparison to mainline Protestant, Catholic, and secular fathers, have a distinctive approach to paternal socialization--characterized by active involvement, expressiveness, and a strict approach to discipline. To answer this question, I examined fathers' behavior and attitudes across a range of measures from one-to-one interaction to paternal expectations of obedience.

The findings of this study may be summarized as follows: 1) there is a distinctive culture of fatherhood among evangelical fathers characterized by high levels of expressive interaction and a strict disciplinary approach but their levels of paternal involvement are not significantly higher than those of other religious fathers; 2) the distinctiveness of this "religious factor" held regardless of whether or not the effects of gender role traditionalism (which is associated with an evangelical affiliation) were controlled for; 3) religious affiliation in general, rather than an evangelical orientation in particular, was associated with higher levels of paternal involvement; and, 4) gender role traditionalism was associated with a stricter orientation towards discipline and with lower levels of positive interaction and paternal involvement--though only in areas not traditionally associated with fatherhood.

These findings are significant in two ways. First, contra Alwin (1986), they suggest that religious affiliation continues to be important for a number of parenting practices. This is especially the case for fathers hailing from evangelicalism. This finding suggests that the symbolic importance that the religious right has accorded to the family has made a difference for the way in which members of these groups approach family life.
Second, in contrast to earlier research on the effect of gender role attitudes for father involvement (Coverman 1985; LaRossa 1988), I was able to demonstrate a fairly consistent relationship between gender role traditionalism and paternal involvement and style. Consistent with the expectations of the literature on the "new father" (Pleck 1987), I found that gender role traditionalism generally was associated with less involvement (though not in areas where fathers have traditionally played a role), less positive interaction, and a stricter disciplinary interaction. My findings may be related to the fact that I specified a measure of gender role attitudes that was narrower than measures used in previous work (see, for instance, Coverman 1985 and Marsiglio 1991).

The conclusions of this study must, however, be qualified in light of two possible sources of error. First, the study is based on recollections of parental behavior. It is possible, then, that there may be systematic discrepancies between reports of behavior and actual behavior--especially in light of the symbolic attention that family life gets from evangelical religious groups. Accordingly, future research on the link between religion and fatherhood could benefit by using studies which gather data through the time diary method. Second, the denominational criteria used in the NSFH did not allow me to specify church membership as precisely as I would like to. Hopefully, future data collection involving the family will specify more precisely the denominational affiliations with which Americans identify.

Nevertheless, the results presented here suggest that a distinctive culture of fatherhood has emerged among evangelicals. This culture is all the more interesting because it often combines an active and expressive style of fatherhood with a traditional gender role orientation, thereby confounding societal expectations that "new fathers" be progressive when it comes to gender equity. The distinctive fusion of gender traditionalism and active paternal socialization--especially for fathers of school-age children--documented here among evangelicals suggests that evangelical churches may be recreating a premodern model of familial organization where
fathers combined leadership in the family with the active tutelage of their children--especially older children (for a discussion of premodern fathers, see Furstenberg 1988). Future research will have to see if, in fact, postmodern conservative religious families resemble premodern families.
References


* I would like to acknowledge the technical help of Donna Sulak in conducting this research. John Green, Sara McLanahan, Robert Wuthnow, and members of the Religion and Culture Workshop at Princeton University provided valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

1 There are resurgent conservative movements among mainline Protestants and Catholics that stress support for the "traditional family." This conservatism is particularly strong among some Catholics, who have been emboldened by Pope John Paul II's championing of the family. Nevertheless, religious conservatives currently constitute a minority in both communities.

2 However, the recent influx of Latin American, Central American, and Asian immigrants may be replenishing "ethnic Catholicism" in ways that the literature has largely ignored. The implications of this trend for Catholic family culture could be significant.
For a similar argument, see Clydesdale (1994).

It is probably also the case that men and women with traditional gender role orientations are attracted to evangelicalism--especially since evangelical Christianity is one of the most important institutional sources of legitimation for traditional gender role orientations. This line of analysis would be in keeping with the argument advanced by Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, and Waite (1995).

For instance, Marsiglio and Coverman formulated their measure by combining attitudes to the gendered division of labor in the family ("man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family") and to mothers working outside of the home ("Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother works outside of the home."). A high score on the latter attitude is assumed to be an indication of traditionalism but it is possible that men and women with egalitarian attitudes and a strong familial orientation would agree with this statement and with one that expressed a similar sentiment about father absence. Thus, in my study I only employ a measure of the first attitude regarding gendered division of labor in the family to examine the link between gender traditionalism and fathering. Two national surveys conducted from 1985 to 1986 indicate that there is about a 10 percent gap among men between supporters of a gendered division of family labor and opponents of working mothers of preschoolers. More men were opposed to working mothers than were supportive of a traditional gendered division of labor (see tables in Thornton 1989: 876). This gap lends credence to my hypothesis.

The date of the survey precedes recent religious movements like Promise Keepers, which encourages men to be more involved with their families. Thus, it is probably the case that evangelical fathers have gotten more involved with their children since the collection of this data.

Secularization is a controversial subject but I think that Chaves (1993) helpfully defines secularization at the individual level "as a decrease in the extent to which
actions of persons are subject to religious control." By this definition, those who have no regular contact with a religious institution would seem to qualify as secular.

8 Among other Christians, the following groups were the largest: Mormons (70%), Jehovah's Witnesses (21%) and Eastern Orthodox (6%). Thus, the other Christian group is made up largely of the most culturally conservative Christians.

9 Because these three groups—other Christian, Jewish, and other—make up such a small portion of the sample, it is doubtful that my findings can be used to make inferences about these groups.

10 I only report coefficients for religious affiliation and gender role attitudes in Tables 3-12. For a complete set of coefficients, including the effects of my control variables, please see the appendix.

11 The small sample size associated with fathers of preschool children (only) is an alternative explanation for the nonfinding of religious effects among this group.

12 The finding that evangelicals were less likely to yell at their children but more likely to use corporal punishment suggests that evangelical fathers value a strict but controlled style of discipline. If this is true, this strict but controlled style of discipline matches the exhortations of evangelical family experts like James Dobson (see Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal 1996).