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Father Involvement, Care, and Breadwinning: Genealogies of Concepts and Revisioned Conceptual Narratives

Andrea Doucet

Faculty of Social Sciences, Brock University, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1, Canada; adoucet@brocku.ca

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Abstract: This paper addresses an enduring puzzle in fathering research: Why are care and breadwinning largely configured as binary oppositions rather than as relational and intra-acting concepts and practices, as is often the case in research on mothering? Guided by Margaret Somers' historical sociology of concept formation, I conduct a Foucauldian-inspired genealogy of the concept of "father involvement" as a cultural and historical object embedded in specific histories, conceptual networks, and social and conceptual narratives. With the aim of un-thinking and re-thinking conceptual possibilities that might expand knowledges about fathering, care, and breadwinning, I look to researchers in other sites who have drawn attention to the relationalities of care and earning. Specifically, I explore two conceptual pathways: First the concept of "material indirect care", from fatherhood research pioneer Joseph Pleck, which envisages breadwinning as connected to care, and, in some contexts, as a form of care; and second, the concept of "provisioning" from the work of feminist economists, which highlights broad, interwoven patterns of care work and paid work. I argue that an approach to concepts that connect or entangle caring and breadwinning recognizes that people are care providers, care receivers, financial providers, and financial receivers in varied and multiple ways across time. This move is underpinned by, and can shift, our understandings of human subjectivity as relational and intra-dependent, with inevitable periods of dependency and vulnerability across the life course. Such a view also acknowledges the critical role of resources, services, and policies for supporting and sustaining the provisioning and caring activities of all parents, including fathers. Finally, I note the theoretical and political risks of this conceptual exercise, and the need for caution when making an argument about fathers' breadwinning and caregiving entanglements.

Keywords: father involvement; care and breadwinning; provisioning; indirect care; genealogies; historical epistemologies; relational ontologies; historical sociology of concept formation

1. Introduction

> Concepts are not answers, solutions ... Instead, they are modes of address, modes of connection, what Deleuze and Guattari (1994) sometimes call "moveable bridges" (p. 32) between those forces which relentlessly impinge on us from the outside to form a problem and those forces we can muster within ourselves, harnessed and transferred from outside, by which to address problems. This is why concepts are created. They have a date, often also a name; they have a history that seizes hold of them in inconsistent ways, making of them new concepts with each seizure and transformation insofar as each concept has borders and edges that link it up and evolve it with other concepts. (Grosz 2011, pp. 78–79)

In 1990, historian Thomas W. Laqueur (1990, p. 205) bemoaned that he was "annoyed that we lack a history of fatherhood", that "history has been written almost exclusively as the history of men

and therefore man-as-father has been subsumed under the history of a pervasive patriarchy", and that "Fatherhood, insofar it as has been thought about at all, has been regarded as a backwater of the dominant history of public power". Although Laqueur (1990, p. 205) admitted that he wrote his chapter in a "grumpy, polemical mood", his reflections resonated with those of other fatherhood researchers and historians who aimed to counteract dominant fathering narratives that employed "deficit" perspectives of fathering (which judged men to be inadequate parents) and presented men only in their roles as breadwinners (for overviews see Hawkins and Dollahite 1996; Dermott 2008), absent fathers (e.g., Popenoe 1996), or "deadbeat dads" (Boumil and Friedman 1996).

Throughout the 1980s and afterwards, fathering scholars, especially in countries in the Global North (LaRossa 1997; Lewis 1986; Pleck 1997), sought to recover positive historical and contemporary fathering narratives, documenting fathers' caregiving potential, capacities, and practices. Across a broad spectrum of theoretical, methodological, and ideological approaches, feminist, fatherhood, and family scholars argued that father involvement has significant generative benefits for children's development (e.g., Lamb 1981), for families, for both men and women (e.g., Chodorow 1978; Okin 1989), and for the attainment of gender equality and wider social change. Gender and feminist scholars speculated that father involvement could overturn the metaphoric and oppositional relationship between "the rocking of the cradle and the ruling of the world" (Dinnerstein 1976, p. 27) and that "the most revolutionary change we can make in the institution of motherhood is to include men in every aspect of childcare" (Ruddick 1984, p. 226).

By the early 1990s, scholarly attention to fathers' caregiving and to the possibilities of "revolutionary change" for men, women, children, and societies was burgeoning. Fathering had become a "hot topic" (Marsiglio 1993, p. 484) in cross-disciplinary scholarship. Today, studies on fathering and caregiving constitute a massive academic research field. While fathering now exists as a parallel and overlapping field with mothering, there are, on my reading, at least two large differences between them. First, considerable effort has gone into defining, conceptualizing, assessing, and measuring "father involvement" or "paternal involvement" over the past thirty years (e.g., Day and Lamb 2004; Lamb et al. 1985; Lamb 2000; Pleck 2010; Palkovitz 2002; Devault et al. 2015; Dermott 2008; Dermott and Miller 2015; LaRossa and Reitzes 1995; Marsiglio et al. 2000). Little attention has been given, however, to the idea of "mother involvement", despite extensive historical, cross-cultural, and contemporary research on how mothers have taken on most of the labor and responsibilities for children. Most concepts of mothering are thus synonymous with mothering involvement. Researchers have instead focused on delineating motherhood as an institution and as an experience (Rich 1995), detailing its diverse representations (Bassin et al. 1996) and its varied personal, political, social, and cultural aspects (Ruddick 1995). The complexity of mothering and its cross-cultural and intersectional variations, such as motherwork and othermothers (Hill Collins 1994, 2000), intensive mothering (Hays 1996), and mothering as "concerted cultivation" (Lareau 2011), have also been taken up by many scholars.

A second, related difference is that whatever the site or set of practices, research on father involvement is largely premised on the separation of care and breadwinning as concepts and as practices. Father involvement is defined by what fathers do as caregivers, with little consideration given to how financial provisioning or breadwinning might also be *part of* caring for children. When attention *is* given to breadwinning, it is seen in a negative light. Rather than highlighting the possible complex conceptual intra-connections between care and earning, emphasis is usually placed on how fathers' earning activities take *away from* their caregiving. Notable exceptions to this include research on low-income fatherhood (see Edin and Nelson 2013) and selected fathering research on breadwinning and care that acknowledges "providing as a form of involvement and care" (Christiansen and Palkovitz 2001, p. 99; see also Eerola 2014; Pleck 2010; Schmidt 2017). I would argue that, overall, as research on fathering and care has proliferated, however, attention to fathers' breadwinning/providing and care entanglements have remained largely unexamined. In contrast, there is a growing body of research and analysis that attends to how mothering responsibilities also

include breadwinning or financial provisioning, especially for low-income mothers and racialized mothers (e.g., Damaske 2011; Hill Collins 1994, 2000; Neysmith et al. 2010). One reason for the lack of attention to breadwinning in contemporary fathering research is that in comparison to care, which is a massive field, breadwinning has rarely been theorized or conceptualized within the social sciences (see Warren 2007). Still, this begs the question: If mothers' caring and breadwinning can be conceptualized as relationalities, why are father involvement and breadwinning so often approached as oppositional binaries?

Guided by the epistemological insights of historical sociologist Margaret Somers (2008, p. 209), I take up this puzzle here by conducting a Foucauldian-inspired genealogy of the concept of father involvement as a cultural and historical object embedded in "histories, networks, and narratives". I explore historical narratives of how the care/breadwinning distinction came into effect, its consequences, and why it matters for how we think about, do research on, and advocate for social change in paid work, care work, and gender equality. My aim is to un-think and re-think conceptual possibilities that might expand knowledges about fathering, care, and breadwinning.

I make three arguments in this paper and lay out one important caveat. First, I argue that the concept of father involvement is founded on an enduring binary opposition between practices and concepts of care and breadwinning. Second, I maintain that in addition to now well-developed narratives of fathering and care, including scholarship on father's caregiving, caring masculinities, and fathering embodiment (e.g., Doucet 2018; Dermott 2008; Ranson 2015; Elliott 2015; Robb 2019), we need fatherhood narratives that attend to the conceptual and practice-based interplay between breadwinning and caregiving. This is especially true in current historical socio-economic contexts, when rising levels of employment precarity, which translate into "care deficits" and "care crises" (Fraser 2016, p. 100), require us to consider how parents' care work and related caregiving services are financially supported. Third, I posit revisioned conceptual narratives that attend to the integration of caring and financially providing for care.

My caveat, which is partly addressed in the genealogical approach that I lay out below, is that the arguments I make here could inadvertently lead to *exactly the opposite* of what I am hoping to achieve. I am aware that I am taking on a conceptually challenging exercise because arguments about how mothering should include breadwinning have supported struggles around gender inequality in paid work and care work. To make similar arguments about fathering could unintentionally let fathers "off the hook" in terms of caregiving, bolster now debunked notions of "separate spheres", and reverse a hard-fought recognition of the potential and power of men's caregiving. It could also obscure the critical role fathers' caregiving has had in promoting gender equality and in changing masculinities, among other socio-cultural benefits. I thus have to make this argument carefully, drawing a conceptual distinction between breadwinning as a broad earning practice and provisioning work directed towards supporting children and family life. Moreover, as I will detail below, my approach to genealogies recognizes the politics and ethics of knowledge making and the effects (both intended and inadvertent) of my claims.

Like all genealogies, this excavation is also undertaken "with a certain degree of caution and humility" (Saar 2002, p. 123, drawing on Saar 2002) because it "unsettles objects that appear to us as self-evident by dislodging them from their usual frames and placing them in new series" (p. 130). A genealogy is a "multi-layered conceptual practice" (p. 115) and the argument I am making needs to attend to the relationality, historicity, and ethico-political character of all related narratives, including conceptual narratives.

This paper is informed by a two-decade-long research program focused on fathering and caregiving as exemplified in three longitudinal studies conducted mainly in Canada, but also in the United States, on caregiving fathers, breadwinning mothers, and families with parents who shared care and earning responsibilities in varied ways across time. These studies included in-depth interviews with fathers who self-identified as primary or shared primary caregivers of children, fathers who took leaves to be at home with their children (by not working, by working part-time and/or in home-based work,

or by using paid or unpaid paternity or parental leaves), breadwinning mothers, and women and men who shared caregiving and earning responsibilities. For these three studies, I conducted or co-conducted interviews (in-depth individual interviews, couple interviews, and four focus groups) with one-hundred-and-forty fathers and fifty-one primary breadwinning mothers (mainly white and middle class parents, but also Indigenous, second-generation immigrant, and gay fathers) with follow up interviews five to ten years later with nineteen men and seventeen women (for details on two of these studies, see (Doucet 2018, 2015, 2016); for details on my study on fathers and parental leave, see (Doucet and McKay)). I do not draw directly on these interview data in this paper, but they do form the conceptual and analytical terrain for the arguments I develop here.

This paper is organized as follows: First, I lay out my genealogical approach to concepts, which is broadly based on that of historical sociologist Margaret Somers and her informing influences, including epistemic reflexivity, relational ontologies, and a Foucauldian-inspired approach to genealogies (e.g., Foucault 1984) and historical epistemologies (Foucault 2002). Second, I develop a historical case study of the concept of father involvement, giving attention to its larger conceptual network, including the concepts of care, breadwinning, and paternal responsibilities. Third, I argue for a conceptual reconfiguration of father involvement, drawing on a small selection of research on fathers and on mothering.

2. Methodology: Genealogies

Although there are many ways to do genealogies, most are loosely influenced by a "Nietzschean/Foucauldian legacy or lineage" (Knauft 2017, p. 1) albeit with a recognition that "readings of Foucault's work have revealed that there is no clearly stated, well-defined or prescribed methodology for investigations" (Reich and Turnbull 2018, p. 13). Genealogical work can be considered "broadly reconcilable with Foucault's" (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p. xii) when it exhibits the following three traits (among others): First, this is the case when genealogical work overlaps with scholarship that is widely defined as "the history of the present" (e.g., Dean 1994; Rose 1999; Scott 1988). Generally speaking, "Foucaultians are not seeking to find out how the present has emerged from the past", but rather "the point is to use history as a way of diagnosing the present" (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p. 4) and "to re-conceptualize the dilemmas of the present, describing the varied pathways that are entangled within the present moment" (Kretsedemas 2017, p. 2). Second, a genealogical methodology aligns with Foucault's when it focuses on contingencies or conditions of possibility rather than on causes, meaning that the emergence of any particular event is thought to be just "one possible result of a whole series of complex relations between other events" (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p. 5). Third, genealogical work is broadly consistent with Foucault's approach when there is a general suspension of judgment.

This last point has proven to be contentious for some scholars, including feminist researchers who draw on Foucault's writing without fully embracing it due to their "reading of Foucault as an antihumanist thinker who refused to engage in normative discussions" and their view that "his theory undermines attempts at social change, because his conception of power obscures the systematic nature of gender oppression" (Deveaux 1994, p. 232). This Foucauldian dimension of genealogical methodologies is also challenged by Somers (2008, p. 22), who is broadly informed by Foucault, yet holds to the view "that the empirical and the normative are mutually interdependent". Somers characterizes her knowledge making practices as a form of *relational and pragmatic realism*, which entails recognizing "the impossibility of an innocent positioning, while striving to achieve a politically-epistemically responsible one" (Code 2006, p. 219). Relational and pragmatic realism is, as Somers (1998, p. 766) puts it, "a minimalist realism" that "presumes that if one is going to be a realist at all—that is, assign mind-independent status to elements of the world—then, by definition (*and humility*), one must be agnostic about the absolute truth of any given theory about the world (emphasis added)" (p. 744). Moreover, this is a vision of knowledge making as negotiated politico-ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements. The questions we pursue, Somers (2008, p. 9) explains, "*are driven by [our] place and*

concerns in the world"; they are "inherently ontological (because they) contain a priori decisions about *how we understand the social world to be constituted* (emphasis added)" (Somers 1996, p. 71).

The genealogical approach that I employ in this paper is guided by Somers (2008, p. 209) *historical sociology of concept formation*, which is a "genealogical accounting of conceptual configurations" that approaches concepts by thinking about what they *do*, rather than what they *are*. It views them as "cultural and historical objects" that "lack natures or essences; instead, they have histories, networks, and narratives". I engage in what Hacking (1990, 2002) and Somers (1996) call "taking a look" at the "relational patterns" (Somers 2008, p. 204) of concepts in order to practice what Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 2) describe as "the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts" and of rethinking "revisionary conceptual frames". The overall aim of such an exercise (the beginning of which I take on here) is to gain a "sense of *how we think and why we seem obliged to think in certain ways* (emphasis added)" (Hacking 1990, p. 362, cited in Somers 2008, p. 254) while also figuring out "how to begin the process of unthinking" (Somers 2008, p. 265).

3. Genealogies of Concepts: A Historical Sociology of Concept Formation

In addition to the broad points made above about Foucauldian-inspired genealogies, Somers' genealogical approach to concepts is guided by the wide and deep fields of epistemic reflexivities, historical epistemologies and the historicity of concepts, and relational ontologies and the relationality of concepts. I briefly lay out my reading of Somers' approach below and then apply it broadly to a case study of the concept of the involved father.

3.1. Epistemic Reflexivities and Concepts

Somers (2008, p. 172) notes: "Social scientists in recent years have come increasingly to recognize that the categories and concepts we use to explain the social world can *themselves be fruitfully made the objects of analysis* (emphasis added)". This process of "turning social science back on itself to examine often taken-for-granted conceptual tools of research" (Somers 2008, p. 172) is part of the process of "epistemic reflexivity" (Bourdieu 1993), which refers to a "constant questioning of the categories and techniques of sociological analysis and of the relationship to the world they presuppose" as well as a consideration of the "'epistemological unconscious' and social organization of the discipline and field" (Somers 1992, p. 41).

Epistemic reflexivity also means turning from questions of "what" to questions of "how", "radically shifting the context of discovery (at least initially) from the external world to the cognitive tools by which we analyze this world" (Somers 2008, p. 265). In the projects that inform this paper, the first twenty years of my research focused on questions of *what*—meanings and practices of fathers' (and mothers') caregiving as well as related concepts and practices (i.e., masculinities, gender equality, embodiment, and gendered divisions of labor) (See Doucet 2018). As I attended more and more to epistemic reflexivities, my questions about *what* I was studying became increasingly intra-connected with questions about *how* I was studying. I focused on how our "conceptual vocabularies and categories, our ways of constructing standards of knowledge, our definitions of significant projects, and our methods of justifiable explanations themselves all have histories" (Somers 1998, p. 56). In addition to the potential they illuminate for thinking about conceptual histories and rethinking new possibilities, these points are connected to historical epistemologies: the second dimension of Somers' historical sociology of concept formation.

3.2. Historical Epistemologies and the Historicity of Concepts

Historical epistemologies are a set of philosophical and epistemological ideas about how "successful truth claims are historically contingent rather than confirmations of absolute and unchanging reality" (Somers 2008, p. 267) and how "things we take as self-evident and necessary . . . simply take on the appearance of being the only possible reality" (p. 10). This approach to historical epistemologies is very similar to what Hacking (2002, p. 8) calls "historical ontologies" or "historical meta-epistemology",

which are different from conventional understandings of epistemology that are often connected to issues of "knowledge, belief, opinion, objectivity, detachment, argument, reason, rationality, evidence, even facts and truth". Rather, historical epistemologies are about how objects, including concepts, come into being as "a series of contingent becomings" (Walters 2012, p. 115).

Somers (2008, p. 268) argues that "Understanding how concepts gain and lose their currency and legitimacy is the task of historical epistemology, which entails reconstructing their making, resonance, and connectedness over time". This means looking at the historicity of concepts, recognizing not only how they came into being, but what keeps them in place, and thinking about other conceptual possibilities. Influenced by "the Foucaultian notion of the historically contingent but nonetheless internal integrity of the cultural pattern or logic", this "does not translate into a coordinated, systemic integrity in the larger domain of culture as a whole, which itself is composed numerous, *often competing conceptual networks* (emphasis added)" (Somers 2008, p. 206.) As I take up below, there are always *other* possible conceptual narratives, which lead, in turn, to differently crafted scholarly narratives.

3.3. Relational Ontologies and the Relationality of Concepts

The third part of Somers (1998, p. 767) genealogical approach to concepts addresses their "relational configurations". This aspect builds on Hacking (2002, p. 24) insight that "concepts are 'words in their sites'" in that "all concepts are located and embedded in conceptual networks" (Somers 2008, p. 257). In other words, a particular concept "is not an isolated object but has a relational identity" and the "subject of research should be the entire conceptual network or the relational site, in which it is embedded" (p. 268). This calls for a relational approach because we can only understand an object (including a concept) "within the space of that network" (Somers 1995, p. 235). Put differently, Somers (2008, p. 206) argues that "concepts cannot be defined on their own as single entities, but only deciphered in terms of their 'place' in relation to the other concepts in the web". Her point, informed by relational theories, including relational sociology (Emirbayer 1997), is that "instead of employing a language of categories and attributes, a historical sociology of concept formation *substitutes a language of networks and relationships to support relational thinking* (emphasis added)" (Somers 2008, p. 207).

Somers (2008, p. 109) relational thinking about concepts and how they do not have "essences" but, rather, "histories, narratives, and networks" is very similar to that of Elizabeth Grosz. Drawing on Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Grosz (2011) maintains that concepts are not connected to truth claims; they are contingent on their changing landscapes, *and any change affects not just the concept but also the landscape*. Their ontological relationalities are revealed in how

> Each concept produces out of its diverse components a provisional but tightly contained consistency that is both an endoconsistency and an exoconsistency, which regulates its relation with its neighboring, competing, and aligned concepts. This means that even a *slight change* (emphasis added) in the relations of these neighboring concepts begins a process of *producing new concepts* (emphasis added). (Grosz 2011, p. 66)

In the context of this paper, this means we must think about the concept of the involved father as part of a relational network of concepts that includes care, breadwinning, and gender equality. These concepts are themselves constituted within and by historical developments, shifting social institutions, changing ideologies about these concepts and practices, and geo-political processes of capitalism and neoliberalism. As these landscapes and neighboring concepts change, or as concepts are introduced from other sites, new concepts and conceptual configurations can emerge.

4. Father Involvement, Care, Breadwinning, Equality: Genealogies of Concepts

In this section of the paper, I am guided by my reading of Somers' genealogical approach, which explores the historicity and relationality of concepts. Like all narratives, this scholarly narrative is selective because "*genealogy entails active practices of selection* (emphasis added)" as "our questions are always the product of our situated selves" (Somers 2008, p. 9). Although historical mappings

must refer to "events, irruptions, discourses, and social practices" that occur within "a particular time space", the mapping process is still, as Dean (1994) argues, "an activity that is irrevocably linked to its current uses" (cited in Somers 2008, p. 10). My overall aim is to map how concepts are embedded in particular histories and are part of "*a structured web of conceptual relationships*" (Somers 1995, p. 229).

Mapping historical epistemologies entails reading history theoretically and conceptually. For this, I draw on feminist theorist Nancy Fraser's account of the different phases of capitalism and her multilayered analysis of two centuries of earning, caring, gender, and intersectionality. She describes three historical phases that she suggests form "an account of the social contradiction of capitalism", reading "today's 'care deficits' as expressions of capitalism's social contradiction in its current, financialized phase" (Fraser 2016, pp. 100–1). The first phase she describes is "the 19th-century regime of liberal competitive capitalism", which created the gendered ideal of "separate spheres" that divide paid and unpaid work, breadwinning and care (p. 100). I focus mainly on the second and third phases she describes: "The state-managed capitalism of the 20th century" and the "globalizing financialized capitalism of the present era", characterized by the "ideal of the 'two-earner family'" (Fraser 2016, p. 104) and rising inequalities in access to care services and supports.

4.1. "Separate Spheres", the "Family Wage", and Fathers and Breadwinning (Early 20th Century)

According to Fraser (2016, p. 108), this historical phase of state-managed capitalism of the twentieth century was typified by "large-scale industrial production", dual processes of "domestic consumerism in the core" (or the Global North) and "ongoing colonial and postcolonial expropriation in the periphery" (or Global South), and the rise of the social welfare state, which "defused the contradiction between economic production and social reproduction" through social welfare and social protection policies. It also exhibited a widespread valorization of "the heteronormative, male-breadwinner, female-homemaker model of the gendered family" (p. 111). Although historical dates for this period vary between and within nations, many commentators, including Fraser (p. 112), argue that it began in the 1930s (after WWI and during the Depression) and that "By the 1980s, prescient observers could discern the emerging outline of a new regime" partly connected to women's rising rates of employment in the formal economy in many countries in the Global North.

Two central ideas that dominated this historical phase were "separate spheres" and the "family wage". American sociologist Parsons (1967) famously promoted the notion of "complementary spheres" corresponding to distinct gender divisions of labor, with women engaging in unpaid care work in the "private" sphere of the home and men taking on paid work (breadwinning) in "public" workplaces (see also Parsons and Bales 1955).

As with all histories, however, there are always alternative narratives. One is that despite the evidence of distinct gender divisions between breadwinning and caregiving (spatially, ideologically, and in practice), these spheres were in fact not as separate as they appeared: women routinely participated in earning or breadwinning and men were involved in caregiving. Fraser (2016, p. 104) herself notes that while the family wage was a dominant ideal, "relatively few families were permitted to achieve it". In North America and some Europeans countries, historical research demonstrates that in many households, women and mothers, especially racialized women and in low-income families, actively contributed to household economies by intensifying provisioning work inside the home (e.g., taking in boarders, caring for others' children, informally selling homemade clothes or baked goods), by participating in family agriculture and businesses, or by working part-time or full-time outside the home for wages (e.g., Tilly and Scott 1987; Bradbury 1984, 1993; Hill Collins 1986). As for fathers, a small literature on fatherhood histories highlights how fathers were more than breadwinners throughout this phase of state managed capitalism. Sources dating back to the 1930s, including diaries, letters, newspaper accounts, and interviews with fathers all reveal that they were, indeed, involved in varied ways in caring for children (see Griswold 1993; LaRossa 1997).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, several theoretical developments occurred in research on fathering, mothering, and care, and new concepts and conceptual narratives began to take shape.

First, the view that domestic labor and care work were indeed "work" entered the scholarly and activist agenda. Instigated mainly by feminist scholars researching mothering and care as well as by particular strands of feminism (e.g., radical feminism and socialist feminism), scholars began to study the meanings and practices of the daily caregiving and domestic tasks of women, both as forms of work and as subjects worthy of scholarly attention (e.g., Luxton 1980; Oakley 2008). The recognition that women continued to be mainly responsible for all dimensions of care, from infant care to eldercare, inspired conceptual innovations highlighting the intra-connections between care and work, including the notion that mothering is not only an act of love, but also labor (e.g., Graham 1983; Luxton 1980).

Second, an acknowledgement of the conceptual integration of paid work and care work prompted many commentators to argue that all societies and economies rely on women's care labor. Initial versions of the feminist concept of social reproduction, a sister to the concept of care, sought to integrate women's labor into broader Marxist analyses of production and capitalist relations (e.g., Hartmann 1981; Molyneux 1979). For example, an early iteration of the concept of social reproduction was "the domestic labor debate", which began in the late 1960s, mainly in the United Kingdom and North America, about how capitalist production and waged labor were intricately dependent on women's unpaid, unvalued, and invisible labor in the home (e.g., Dalla Costa and James 1973).

Third, the late 1970s saw the burgeoning of a field that came to be called the "ethic of care", largely initiated by Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, (first published as an essay in 1977 and then a book (Gilligan 1993)). It was "one of most influential books of the 1980s", because it "revolutionized discussion of moral theory, feminism [and] theories of the subject" (Hekman 1995, p. 1). Early on, the ethic of care sought to move beyond liberal conceptions of the subject as autonomous and independent towards views of subjects as relational and inter-dependent in order to make women's caregiving practices empirically and theoretically visible and to highlight the transformative power of care as a social ethic for both women and men (e.g., Ruddick 1995; Larrabee 1993; Noddings 1984).

A fourth theoretical development in the 1970s concerned the potential for care to be a social ethic for men and for fathers. Countering Parsons' notion of complementary spheres, early examinations of fathering pointed to the deep social and personal problems that ensue when mothers and fathers adopt gendered and largely separate social and domestic roles. This focus on the social costs of constrictive gender roles was well expressed by leading feminist psychoanalytic scholars, including Dorothy Dinnerstein in her classic, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur (1976)*, and Nancy Chodorow in *The Reproduction of Mothering (1978)*. Referring to "sexual arrangements" as the "division of responsibility, opportunity, and privilege that prevails between male and female humans, and the patterns of psychological interdependence that are implicit in this division", Dinnerstein (1976, p. 4) argued that a central "human malaise" thus "stems from a core fact that has so far been universal: the fact of primary female responsibility for the care of infants and young children".

Fathering scholars also picked up on the effects of narrowly prescribed gender roles and the need to study and understand men not only as breadwinners but also as carers of children (e.g., Lamb 1981; Lewis 1986). Socio-economic and demographic changes, such as men's declining wages, increasing male unemployment, sustained growth in women's labor force participation, increasing numbers of two earner families, and changing ideologies associated with men and women's caring and breadwinning activities and identities, all led to an increased interest in reconceptualizing father involvement.

4.2. The "Two Earner Family", Father Involvement, Care, and Breadwinning (Financialized Capitalism of the Present Era)

Fraser (2016, p. 104) argues that "the financialized capitalism of the present era" with its dominant ideal and practices of the "two earner family" is a neoliberal regime that

> Promotes state and corporate disinvestment from social welfare, while recruiting women into the paid workforce—externalizing carework onto families and communities while diminishing their capacity to perform it. The result is a new, dualized organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay for it and privatized for those who cannot,

as some in the second category provide carework in return for (low) wages for those in the first.

This new regime is entangled with widened and deepened concepts of care that attend to shifting socio-economic and geo-political geographies of care, as well as to other conceptual and empirical developments.

By the early 1990s, interest in the concept of care had expanded to the point that feminist theorist Alison Jaggar (1991, p. 83) noted that scholarship on the ethic of care had "become a small industry within academia and outside the academy". Care ethics then moved into a "second wave" (Williams 2001) in which theorists attended more closely to overlaps between care and justice, the socio-economic structuring of care, and the socio-political dimensions and effects of how care is performed, delivered, and managed. An even stronger emphasis was placed on how all care work and care research demands a shift from autonomous, liberal conceptions of subjectivities towards relational, inter-dependent notions of human subjectivities (Kittay 1999; Tronto 1993; Sevenhuijsen 1998). More recently, what could be called a "third wave" of care work is attending to transnational and migrational dimensions of care, "global care chains" between the Global South and North, and newly configured patterns of gendered, classed, and racialized dimensions of caregiving and care-receiving (e.g., Boris and Parreñas 2010; Duffy 2011; Mahon and Robinson 2011).

As noted earlier, Somers (2008, p. 268) genealogical approach is informed by insights from the field of historical epistemologies, which aims to understand "how concepts gain and lose their currency and legitimacy" while also "reconstructing their making, resonance, and connectedness over time". As I detail below, connections between care and breadwinning, and how these connections differ across contexts and diversity, have deepened in several ways over the decades.

Looking back to the early 1980s, as women's employment increased in many countries in the Global North, a surge of attention was given to the indivisibility of women's experiences of earning and caring, as evidenced partly in scholarly work that included "women, work, and family" in their titles or as central themes (e.g., Lamphere 1987; Lewis et al. 1988; Zavella 1987). The focus on this indivisibility has deepened in current scholarship. For fathers, on the other hand, research has consistently demonstrated how, overall, men's working lives and earning capacities are more linear, being largely unencumbered by care responsibilities partly or fully taken on by the women in their lives. This state of affairs has led to different scholarly narratives about fathers' working and caring lives. Men have experienced what Connell (2005, p. 79) has aptly called their "patriarchal dividend", while women have borne "motherhood penalties" (Budig et al. 2012), and "care penalties" (Folbre 2001).

Empirical observations about gendered differences in working and caring experiences led to considerable public debate and scholarship throughout the 1980s and 1990s, including on questions of how to define and measure father involvement and its connection to gender equality and child well-being. One of the most comprehensive definitions of father involvement comes from the scholarship of leading fathering scholars (Lamb et al. 1985, p. 884), who envisioned it as a set of three practices that meet children's needs: "*interaction*", meaning a "father's direct contact with his child, through caretaking and shared activities"; "*accessibility*", defined as "being present or accessible to the child"; and "*responsibility*", which refers to "the role fathers take in making sure that the child is taken care of and arranging for resources to be available for the child" (Lamb et al. 1985, p. 884).

Accessibility has, on my reading, received less attention than the other two dimensions: fathering interaction (or what has also been called "engagement" (Lamb 2000)) and paternal responsibilities. Fathering interaction is connected to the expansion of time use studies, which attempt to measure "the father's direct contact with his child, through caretaking and shared activities" (Lamb et al. 1985, p. 884). Indeed, Pleck (2010, p. 63) notes that the relationship between time and father engagement (as part of fathering involvement) came "full circle" as research on time use "and the way that it typically defined and reported father's engagement in the 1980s, contributed to the initial conceptualization of engagement as fathers' total time spent with his children or a particular child".

The description of paternal responsibility provided above seems to be implicitly connected to breadwinning in its focus on arranging resources and ensuring children's care. Yet, the broader description of this dimension, both in the original article (Lamb et al. 1985) and in subsequent work (e.g., Lamb 2000), plays down the breadwinning dimensions and focuses instead on wider sets of responsibilities that are more about planning and scheduling; these include, for example, "arranging for babysitters, making appointments with pediatricians and seeing that the child is taken to them, determining when the child needs new clothes, etc." (Lamb et al. 1985, p. 884). This research on paternal responsibilities did not include breadwinning because in the 1980s, scholars had "yet to consider paternal behavior in (a) more comprehensive fashion" (Lamb et al. 1985, p. 884) and although financial provisioning "is obviously a precondition for providing goods and services to the child", breadwinning was excluded because "earning income does not automatically translate to it *being spent on the child* (emphasis added)" (Pleck 2010, p. 86).

Feminist scholars also veered away from including breadwinning as part of fathering involvement. As Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2000, p. 87) puts it so well:

> Men are often said to be "taking care of their family" when they earn and bring money into the household. Despite the use of the term *care* in this phrase, breadwinning would not be considered "caring". In fact, economic support has historically been seen as men's contribution in lieu of actual care giving; simultaneously, care giving has been viewed as women's responsibility, an exchange for being supported by the primary breadwinner.

Although these early cautions about the complexities of including breadwinning as part of father involvement and paternal responsibilities do make sense in light of their conceptual "histories, networks and narratives", new contexts and conceptual developments provide opportunities to explore and reconsider concepts, such as a concept of father involvement that includes the parental responsibility of providing for children. Indeed, on my reading, one of the most significant developments in care concepts during this present stage of financialized capitalism, with its growing socio-economic inequalities, is that connections between care work and paid work and between earning and caring have deepened. These developments are part of new theoretical iterations, including a field called "care economies", developed by international feminist scholars and advocated by organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), which now fuses care and work concepts into an "unpaid care work–paid work–paid care work circle" (Addati et al. 2018, p. 10). I believe that these conceptual shifts call for researchers to think, again, about the utility and implications of widening the concept of father involvement to include breadwinning. In the next section of this paper, I highlight some of the scholarly literatures that have helped to create new conceptual narratives that support this move.

5. Revisioned Conceptual Narratives

Grosz (2011, p. 79) writes that "each concept has borders and edges that link it up and evolve it with other concepts". Below, I attempt to draw attention to some of these "borders and edges" and to make a case for revisioned conceptual narratives that challenge the enduring oppositional binaries of care and breadwinning that underpin research on father involvement.

5.1. Widening Father Involvement: Paternal Responsibilities and Indirect Care

Joseph Pleck (2010) recently amended the highly cited conceptualization of father involvement as engagement, accessibility, and responsibilities (Lamb et al. 1985) that he helped to define by extending the meaning and scope of the practices originally envisioned over thirty years ago. He now includes the "fostering of community connections" as "process responsibility", which refers to ensuring that needs are met (Pleck 2010, p. 67). Although Pleck does not explicitly reference ethics of care scholars, overlaps with Sara Ruddick (Ruddick 1995, p. 22) earlier approach to parental responsibilities as a set of processes and practices involving "preservation, growth and social acceptability" are apparent. Pleck's recent reflections also resonate with Joan Tronto (2013, pp. 22–3) writing on "processes of care"

as a series of interconnected practices that are "nested" together: caring about someone's unmet needs, caring for these needs, caregiving or making sure the care work is done, and care-receiving or assessing the effectiveness of care acts.

I am especially interested in how, in widening this definition of father involvement and, specifically, its component of paternal responsibility, Pleck (2010, p. 67) focuses on "*material* indirect care", which, as per its initial formulation, still includes arranging goods and services for the child, but also "purchasing" these goods and services. Pleck (2010, p. 88) acknowledges that although the key focus of fathering research should remain the initial "primary components of paternal involvement" (e.g., engagement, accessibility, and responsibility), "much more study is needed of indirect care", including material care (e.g., breadwinning), mainly because parents' capacity to financially provide for their children "may also benefit child development". He writes: "Whether construed as an aspect of paternal involvement or not, more research on fathers' breadwinning and how it influences developmental outcomes is also needed" (p. 88).

A similar point is made by researchers who study the lives of marginalized or vulnerable fathers. Ethnographic research and interviews that address fathers who fit one or more of the categories low-income, non-residential, and young fathers, highlight how father involvement includes both provisioning or breadwinning and emotional involvement. As Katheryn Edin and Timothy Nelson (Edin and Nelson 2013, p. 7) write from their seven-year research with "disadvantaged fathers" in "America's inner cities" (p. 7): "These fathers now want roles more like conventional mothers' roles" (p. 223). But they also point to what others have called a "paradox of a pattern of involved fatherhood emerging alongside a retreat from family commitment" (Waller 2002, p. 41; see also Gerson 1993), including breadwinning. According to Edin and Nelson (2013, p. 223):

> Meanwhile, mothers have been forced by sheer necessity to take on more of the traditional father's tasks. A cynical interpretation of this attempted role swap is that it excuses the men from financial and moral responsibility—that they're trying to claim a poor man's version of the Disneyland Dad, one that reduces a father to a buddy while skipping the harder tasks of providing financially and setting a good example.

Edin and Nelson (2013, p. 223) also point to the differences in their research study between fathers who live with the mothers of their children, where "live-in fathers look much more like their middle-class counterparts—combining breadwinning with nurturing" whereas men who lived apart from their partners "couldn't flee, or even try to flee, from the breadwinner role and attempt to 'elect' instead to invest in relational fathering".

Overall, a focus on father involvement as defined only by caregiving and care time ignores broader structural constraints within which fathering (and mothering) occur, including those linked to an increasingly precarious labor market. Father involvement will not be fully realized until workplace structures and state policies support men and women in their roles and identities as both caregivers and financial providers (see Fraser 1994a, 1994b; Williams 2010). If policies and public discourses that support men's caregiving are needed, then policies and public discourses that support men's breadwinning—so that they can both provide for and care for their children—are also needed. As Fraser (2016, p. 117) writes, there is a "demand for a massive reorganization of the relation between production and reproduction: for social arrangements that could enable people of every class, gender, sexuality, and color to combine social-reproductive activities with safe, interesting and well-remunerated work".

5.2. Provisioning

Another way of thinking about the connections between care and breadwinning is illustrated in the concept of provisioning, defined as "all the work women do to provide for themselves and others—whether paid or unpaid in the market, home, or community spheres" and "the daily work performed to acquire material and intangible resources for meeting responsibilities that ensure the

survival and well-being of people" (Neysmith et al. 2010, p. 152). The concept builds on the interventions of feminist economists who have studied the many forms that unpaid care work and paid employment take in the lives of women in the Global North and South (e.g., Barker 2005; Power 2004; Taylor 2004)—researchers who have sought to avoid being "impeded by conceptual barriers of public and private spheres that interrupt and thus hide the extent of the work" (Neysmith et al. 2010, p. 164). Provisioning includes "recognized provisioning activities" (e.g., formal and informal labor market activities, domestic labor and caring activities, and formal and informal volunteer commitments in the community), "invisible provisioning activities" (e.g., activities focused on sustaining and advocating for the health of oneself and significant others and looking for and applying for "financial assistance and other resources), and "ensuring safety" for oneself and one's children (i.e., "finding safe housing and dealing with violence against themselves and others") (p. 156).

The concept of provisioning resonates with the metaphor of weaving paid work and care work, which highlights how concepts, practices, and identities are not only connected, but deeply intra-connected for many mothers, especially those in "Native America, Latino, Asian American, and African American families and communities" (Hill Collins 1994, p. 374). Referring specifically to African American women, Hill Collins (2000, p. 71) notes that provisioning is less an issue of "achieving economic parity with their Black male counterparts and more one of securing an adequate overall family income". This echoes other feminist scholarship on motherhood that argues that for many women, caring and earning are not "opposed categories", but are unfolding in constant relationship with one another in "changing patterns over the life course" (Garey 1999, p. 164).

The metaphor of weaving care and earning has been taken up by cross-cultural researchers since the 1980s. Whether they are referring to breadwinning, earning, or provisioning, feminist scholars have argued that just as care *is* work, financial provisioning is intricately interwoven with care. Hill Collins (1994, p. 372) expressed this eloquently when she wrote: "examining racial ethnic women's experiences reveals how these two spheres" of paid work and family are not only connected but "*actually are interwoven* (emphasis added)". In a similar way, Garey (1999, p. 191) wrote that women's care and employment practices and identities are "not independent categories—they are overlapping, connected, interwoven" (see also Balbo 1987; Davies 1990).

These two conceptual moves—to see breadwinning as a form of material indirect care and to envision provisioning as the weaving of care and earning—both enrich and widen the concept of father involvement in a way that resonates with research on the diverse contexts and experiences of mothering and fathering. These new conceptual narratives lead, in turn, to different relational configurations of inter-woven concepts of father involvement, care, and breadwinning.

The genealogical work of un-making and re-making concepts of father involvement, care, and earning can also reconfigure our notions of human subjectivity. Rather than viewing humans as workers *or* as earners (a distinction lodged in concepts like the stay-at-home father/mother (Doucet 2016)), we might view humans as needing to provide and be provided for, to care and be cared for at varied points across the life course. This perspective acknowledges the "secondary dependence in those who care for dependents" (Kittay 1995, p. 11) and the critical role of resources, services, and policies (such as childcare and employment leave policies and social protections for parents) for sustaining the provisioning activities needed to support caregivers and the work of caring. As Fraser (1997, p. 61) argued in the late 1990s, "deconstructing the opposition between breadwinning and caregiving" leads to theorizing and designing policies "for people whose lives include breadwinning *and* caregiving (emphasis added)" (Fraser 1994b, p. 85). This could also inspire a more sustained and convincing socio-political argument for high quality childcare services and state and employer social protection policies that allow people to care *and* to financially provide for that care.

6. Conclusions

This paper has undertaken a genealogy of the concept of "father involvement", guided by Somers' historical sociology of concept formation and wide and deep literatures on Foucauldian genealogies,

epistemic reflexivities, historical epistemologies, and relational ontologies. Genealogical work brings attention to the taken-for-granted concepts and categories that we use in our research, their histories, and their relationalities in wider conceptual webs. I have thus explored the concept of father involvement as a cultural and historical object embedded in my reading of particular "histories, networks, and narratives" (Somers 2008, p. 209) with the aim of un-thinking and re-thinking conceptual possibilities that might lead to expanded knowledges about fathering and care-breadwinning entanglements. This genealogical exercise brings attention to how the concept of father involvement has developed within oppositional binaries of care and breadwinning, rather than through an acknowledgement of the relationality of these concepts. There are sound historical and socio-cultural reasons for this. Father involvement, particularly in mother/father households, has often been synonymous with breadwinning, and most social institutions still consider fathers to be secondary caregivers and treat them accordingly. Although I am cognizant of these lingering narratives about fathering, my main argument, with one caveat, is that breadwinning is conceptually intra-*connected* with care, and can, *in some contexts*, be regarded *as a form* of material indirect care.

The caveat that I cautiously laid out earlier partly explains my many abandoned attempts to write this paper (starting a decade ago as I was analyzing my research interviews with breadwinning mothers). I began this inquiry by asking: If mothers' caring and breadwinning are conceptualized as relationalities, why are father involvement and breadwinning so often approached as oppositional binaries? It is one thing to make arguments, now well supported across several feminist fields, about the intra-connections between mothers' care and breadwinning, but it is another thing altogether to make this same argument about fathers. To point out the relationality of care and breadwinning in fathering poses theoretical and political risks. Its unintended effects could include, for example, a return to a "separate spheres" ideology that genders caring and breadwinning, or the strengthening of still deeply entrenched social and structural gendered inequalities in paid and unpaid work, which have everyday and long-term consequences. I thus reiterate in concluding this paper, that the inclusion of provisioning *as part of* father involvement must attend to the complex relationality, historicity, and ethico-political character of concepts, conceptual narratives, and their wider "relational configurations" (Somers 1998, p. 767). As concepts are "words in their sites" (Hacking 2002, p. 24), my argument for a revisioned concept of father involvement thus requires a close examination, not only of the concept itself, but of its articulations within wider sites, including "the entire conceptual network or the relational site, in which it is embedded" (Somers 2008, p. 268).

This work is more than an academic exercise. Revisioning concepts opens up new ways of thinking and acting. This is because concepts are *performative* in that they not only "describe social life" but "are also active forces shaping it" (Fraser and Gordon 1994, p. 310). Concepts that connect or entangle caring and breadwinning recognize that people are care providers, care receivers, financial providers, and financial receivers in varied and multiple ways across time. Widening our concepts of care and earning can shift our understandings of human subjectivity as relational and intra-dependent, with inevitable periods of dependency and vulnerability across the life course. This also draws attention to how policies, resources, and services that adequately support *all* parents in their roles as caregivers and income earners are essential for the sustenance, growth, and well-being of families and communities.

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