



**Fathers' Support Systems**  
**A Comparative and Qualitative Analysis of Higher and Vocationally Educated Fathers'**  
**Involvement with Children's Academic Education**

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### **A Comparative and Qualitative Analysis of Higher and Vocationally Educated Fathers' Involvement with Children's Academic Education**

#### **Abstract**

A growing body of research has considered parental socioeconomic status and its relation to children's educational chances. However, research into the ways in which fathers are involved in their children's education is limited, especially regarding children's (post-)adolescent, tertiary educational period. To understand fathers' role in perpetuating social inequalities through parental educational involvement, the present study fills the gap in existing literature and answers the question: How do the educational involvement and the motives given for this behavior differ between fathers with different levels of socioeconomic status? This qualitative study maps the experiences, attitudes, and reported behaviors of higher educated and vocationally educated fathers regarding their children's academic educational career. Data was gathered in ten in-depth interviews with six higher educated and four vocationally educated fathers. This study finds that vocationally educated and higher educated fathers provide different ways of support to their university-going children. Vocationally educated fathers reported an inability to aid with the educational process directly and instead focused on emotional and practical support. Higher educated fathers focused on active involvement with their children's higher educational career. This is in line with Lareau's works on "natural growth" and "concentrated cultivation." The Dutch context in this study ensures that all fathers highlighted their role as financial guides throughout their children's academic education. The discrepancies in involvement between higher and vocationally educated fathers are important for policy-makers and researchers focused on intergenerational transmissions of social inequalities.

*Key words:* Cultural capital, intergenerational transmission of inequality, paternal educational involvement, (post-)adolescent children, support systems

Considerable attention in academia has been directed towards the ways in which parents' socioeconomic status (SES) and parenting can determine a child's opportunities and outcomes later in life. The environment in which a child grows up largely forms the basis of development and to some extent determines their opportunities, which in turn influence possible outcomes (Bernardi & Ballarino, 2016). Educational attainment is an important factor in determining these outcomes. Furthermore, educational attainment is heavily influenced by parental SES and parental involvement (Roksa & Potter, 2011). Parents' SES, in turn, affects the ways in which parents are involved with their children's lives. For example, parents with high SES are usually more aware of the developmental benefits of intensive parenting generally and involvement with children's education, specifically (Roksa & Potter, 2011; Hango, 2007). These parents tend to have more experience with higher education and insight into navigating educational institutions. Consequently, they can share this knowledge with their children. Furthermore, they may engage in attitudes, motivations, and behaviors regarding educational involvement to prevent their children from downward social mobility. These attitudes and motivations towards downward mobility are important, because they can influence children's chances to remain above "the glass floor," an invisible conceptual barrier that prevents children from downward social mobility (Gugushvili, Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2017). In contrast, parents with lower SES may not be as knowledgeable about the importance of educational involvement for their children's chances in life (Roksa & Potter, 2011; Hango, 2007). These parents may have less access to financial, cultural, and social resources and may therefore transmit disadvantage to their children as opposed to parents that do have access to these resources. However, parents with lower SES may be motivated to maintain or increase children's chances and promote upward social mobility. These motivations for educational aspirations and parents' connected behaviors are crucial for

children's chances, as increased efforts may allow children with low parental SES to break through a "glass ceiling." Inequalities in parents' resources and involved behavior are problematic, because parental involvement is a crucial aspect of the intergenerational transmission of inequality in terms of educational attainment and career outcomes. Below I will discuss why I pose that fathers' SES and involvement in particular may have a significant role in perpetuating inequalities.

The last decades have seen a polarization of fatherhood and involvement of fathers that has not been seen in the same levels for mothers (Settersten & Cancel-Tirado, 2010; Edin, Tach & Nelson, 2015). On the one hand, a share of fathers shows increased involvement with their children beyond financial support of the family (Lengersdorf & Meuser, 2016). On the other hand, certain fathers have been retreating from their parental role entirely (Eggebeen, 2002). Especially higher educated fathers with more resources are able to involve with their children's educational development (Settersten & Cancel-Tirado, 2010). Since lower educated men may have less resources in terms of, for instance, experience with (higher) education, knowledge of educational institutions, time, or finances, they may be unable to adhere to high levels of involvement with their children's education. Nonetheless, these fathers may be involved in ways they see sufficient and are capable of. Because of differences in paternal involvement, children benefit from their father's resources differently. The polarization between high SES involved fathers and low SES retreating fathers is detrimental because it deepens the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. Given that this polarization in terms of involvement is more strongly visible amongst fathers than mothers, research on fathers' parenting mechanisms and involvement with children's education is increasingly important. Rather surprisingly, there has not been extensive research on how fathers' parenting mechanisms, manners of involvement and

behaviors specifically may influence the transmission of inequalities.

Most research has focused on the role of mothers in this regard (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris, 1997); Roksa and Potter, 2011). This is surprising, as research also shows that fathers are “more likely to be more cognitively stimulating than mothers” and have a determining role in connecting their children to the outside world (Kim & Hill, 2015, p.920). This implies that fathers' parenting has unique characteristics that may influence a child's educational career (Paquette, 2004). The mechanisms underlying fathers' parenting and behavior during early childhood years that Paquette outlines are likely to continue throughout their children's lives into adulthood, which is what the present study aims to scrutinize.

In research on educational involvement and the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantages, the focus is largely on the effect of parenting on the development of young children in pre-school, primary and secondary school (Paquette, 2004; Kim & Hill, 2015). This provides a limited view because parenting continues throughout adolescence and young adulthood (Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Christensen, Evans & Carroll, 2011). A child's early school years are incredibly formative for their development, but the period during which they decide for their further education, follow tertiary education, and transition onto the labor market may be just as significant. This period is especially formative because it is the start of the transition from education to the labor market and from youngster to adult, a process which is becoming increasingly troublesome for many (Walther, 2006). Therefore, parents may also play a significant role in these transitional times. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sanders, “[p]arents are sometimes explicitly reflective, aware, and active in relation to their decisions about being involved in their children's education” (1997, p.6). Research into parents' role in such a crucial stage for children's tertiary education and career can uncover whether parents take

active measures to progress their child's education. Fathers' involvement can be especially important in this period since children need to make the transition from child to young adult and become connected to the 'real' world of higher education and the labor market. Having a father with high SES – who has more knowledge of and experience with educational institutions – may be particularly salient and beneficial when engaging in tertiary education as opposed to during children's early education. It is therefore likely that the intergenerational transmission of inequality becomes even more visible during this transitional phase in young adult's lives.

In short, the lack of research considering fathers' educational involvement, fathers' role within the intergenerational transmission of resources, and the lack of research focusing on tertiary higher education provides a limited and one-sided view on parenting mechanisms, behaviors, and the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. This study aims to fill this gap by answering the following research question:

How do the educational involvement and the motives given for this behavior differ between fathers with different levels of socioeconomic status?

This research shifts the focus from parental educational involvement in children's early education towards children's higher *academic* education. It considers academically educated children in order to provide an understanding of paternal involvement which is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to provide insights into how fathers with low SES are involved with children that have transcended their parental SES and hence focuses on upward social mobility. On the other hand, this research can provide an understanding of how high SES fathers support their academically educated children and seeks to grasp the mechanisms behind preventing downward social mobility as well as promoting upward social mobility.

Considering fathers' influence on children's higher education is important and useful for

various parties. The results may enlighten those in the field of sociology of inequalities and the family because it can give insight into fathers' contribution to children's education, the mechanisms behind paternal involvement in education, and the ways in which fathers influence the transmission of inequalities. Since this study focuses on parenting of young adults in higher education, it may also be useful for researchers in the field of andragogy, who can use this research's results to understand fathers' influence on young adults' educational career.

Andragogy emphasizes the importance of self-motivation and agency of the (young) adult (Loeng, 2018). Specialists in the field may benefit from this research because it adds to theories of motivation and aspiration from a different perspective, namely that of fathers. Furthermore, this study can benefit parents, because the results can uncover parenting behaviors that are beneficial to increasing their children's educational and occupational chances. Lastly, the insights this research can provide regarding fathers' behaviors with regards to their children's education can also be a source of information for student counselors and educational policy makers because it may highlight underlying mechanisms of the student's transition period from secondary school to higher education.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### *Glass ceilings and glass floors: The impact of paternal involvement on social mobility*

Certain levels and types of parental involvement may contribute to the maintenance of a "glass ceiling" and a "glass floor" (Gugushvili, Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2017). The concept of a "glass ceiling" is well-known in theories of social inequalities and social mobility. It means that social heritage (such as disadvantages related to SES) determines an individual's possibilities and especially limitations for moving up the social ladder (R.V. Reeves and K. Howard, 2013, p.3; D. A. Cotter, J. M. Hermsen, S. Ovadia and R. Vanneman, 2001, p.1). According to this



idea, there is an invisible barrier that limits upward mobility for people of lower socioeconomic origin. The somewhat lesser-known concept of a “glass floor” means that rather than disadvantages, intergenerationally transmitted advantages prevent individuals of higher socioeconomic origin from downward mobility (R.V. Reeves and K. Howard, 2013). Since this research differentiates in SES of fathers of academically educated children, it is interesting to explore whether certain mechanisms of fathers' involvement may have aided these children to break through the glass ceiling and overcome transmitted disadvantages of social origin. Fathers may have been involved with their children's educational achievements and may have felt they aided or limited their children when these encountered (invisible) barriers. Attitudes and behaviors that contribute to retaining similar or higher SES and educational attainment may relate to educational aspirations parents have for their children. The attitudes and behavior, such as types of support, that fathers highlight during interviews can provide insights into the mechanisms that uphold or reject the phenomena of “glass ceilings” and “glass floors.”

*Educational aspirations: Fathers' aims for their children*

As mentioned in the introduction, fathers' involvement with their child's education has been found to be positively related with their children's educational achievements and longer-term socioeconomic success, especially for lower-educated fathers (Hango, 2007). Parents' educational aspirations for their children are an important motivation for increased involvement (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000). As stated in the “Wisconsin model of status attainment” (Trebbels, 2014, p.48), people constantly consciously and subconsciously aim to maintain or improve their SES. Aspiring to maintain or improve status for themselves also translates into aiding their children in maintaining or increasing that status through, for instance, education. In maintaining that status, educational and occupational aspirations are significant.

According to Kristinn Hegna, “educational aspirations are changeable orientations influenced by a combination of structural background characteristics and assessments of capabilities, opportunities, resources and barriers during adolescence” (2014, p. 593). Some of these capabilities, opportunities and resources are determined by parents’ level of education and motivation. In addition, Marina Trebbels argues that significant others, like parents, are important in determining the level of educational and occupational aspirations of a child because such aspirations are transmitted from parent to child (2014). Transmission of aspiration rests on processes of socialization, among which especially “‘adoption’ processes” are important (Trebbels, 2014, p.49). Through adoption processes, parents communicate their expectations of educational and occupational attainment to their children (Trebbels, 2014). Parents’ aspirations for their children could translate into direct and conscious decisions to aid with educational attainment and entry onto the labor market. The ways in which respondents describe their communication of such aspirations and the reported actions to aid their children can provide a thorough understanding of the mechanisms of adoption processes. These decisions and corresponding tactics are likely to differ for fathers with higher and lower SES. This depends on fathers’ experiences, beliefs, and knowledge of the academic arena. Their beliefs and experiences will be communicated towards and internalized by their children (Trebbels, 2014). Consequently, this can affect their children’s aspirations, expectations, motivations, beliefs and even confidence. The ease with which fathers are able to involve with academic education depends on the presence of cultural capital.

*Cultural and social capital: Fathers’ knowledge of and experience with the academic world*

Cultural and social capital are concepts coined by Pierre Bourdieu which indicate the resources people can have that help them navigate certain spaces and processes. Cultural capital

relates to skills and knowledge of, for instance, university processes or accepted behavior in certain areas which individuals inherit from their parents and, in turn, pass onto their children (Lareau, 2015). According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is transmitted from parents to children through processes of socialization (1986). Annette Lareau argued that three aspects of cultural knowledge were particularly important in her assessment of young people in education, namely “knowledge of the rules of the game,” the “sense of entitlement to ask for help” and “knowledge about the workings of [for instance, educational] institutions” (Lareau, 2015, p.2). Social capital is also important because it entails social networks and “social ties with individuals who have access to highly valued resources” (Lareau, 2015, p.3) Social capital is significant if we look at the role fathers may have as connectors to the outside world, especially with regards to adolescents’ transition to adulthood, a time during which networking is important. Fathers with higher educational attainment and other highly valued resources, such as an esteemed occupation, a stable family situation and high income may have more cultural and social capital than fathers who have attained less education or have less social ties with other people that do have such highly valued resources. Since cultural and social capital are transmitted from parents to children through socialization, these children either benefit or suffer from their parents’ (lack of) cultural and social capital (Lareau, 2015). Parents’ cultural capital also influences the extent to which they are able to navigate higher education and help their children in this regard. Consequently, those parents with lower SES and less cultural capital may be less effective in assisting their children throughout their educational career. Nonetheless, increased parental involvement in other aspects, such as emotional support, may help children.

*Paternal involvement: Who is responsible for a child’s educational attainment?*

According to Grolnick and Slowiaczek, parental involvement is “the dedication of

resources by the parent to the child within a given domain,” such as the domain of education (1994, p.238). Parental involvement is important for children’s higher education choices through distinct mechanisms. One of these is parental encouragement, which is related to the previously discussed aspirations parents have for their children. As reported by Cabrera and La Nasa, parental encouragement becomes apparent through a motivational and a proactive way (2000). The former, motivational aspect of parental encouragement shows in the educational expectations parents have for their children and how these expectations are communicated towards them (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000). In this regard, a father’s own level of education may be significant as this forms their views on what is necessary in order to be successful. It is also important because it indicates their knowledge of educational systems. It is expected, then, that fathers with lower levels of education may also have lower expectations for their children’s educational achievement. Fathers with higher levels of education may likewise have higher expectations and hopes for their child. Expectations and hopes influence parental encouragement. The latter, proactive parental encouragement, becomes apparent through proactive involvement in school matters, such as discussing university opportunities and putting aside money for further education (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000). This active involvement could also come about in terms of connecting children to certain networks, transferring economic resources, tutoring or paying for tutoring, guiding in choosing schools and studies, and other ways.

Furthermore, an important aspect to involved parenthood depends on whether parents believe their role to extend towards being more involved with their child’s educational career (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). There are three ways in which parents can view this responsibility. Firstly, they can deem their (young-adult) child’s educational career as that child’s

individual responsibility. Secondly, parents may view educational attainment mainly as a responsibility of the involved educational institutions. Lastly, parents may see themselves as primary responsible people for their child's educational career and success. These distinctions are important in assessing attitudes towards parental involvement with education. According to Lareau, parents with lower SES tend to motivate "natural growth" ... "which allows children to grow up in a more spontaneous manner and gives schools the primary responsibility for developing children's cognitive skills" and educational development (Roksa & Potter, 2011, p.301; Lareau, 2003). Conversely, parents with high SES tend to acknowledge the importance of their involvement throughout a child's educational career and do not treat educational attainment solely as the responsibility of the educational institution or the child (Roksa & Potter, 2011). This type of parenting revolves around "concerted cultivation," (Roksa & Potter, 2011, p.301; Lareau, 2003, p.2-4) which fathers may display through active support and involvement with education.

#### *Fathers' role as a guide throughout educational careers*

As introduced earlier, research suggests that fathers' parenting is unique and significant for a child's development. Paquette highlights the importance of fathers' distinct parenting and contrasts this to the influence of mothers' parenting. According to Paquette, fathers "encourage risk taking while simultaneously protecting their [children] from danger," (Tamis-LeMonda, 2004, p.220) and encourage the development of their child's "openness to the outside world" (Paquette, 2004, p.194). Paquette introduces this concept from an essentialist perspective (meaning that because of their biological sex men are inherently different in their parenting), but this distinct parenting may also underscore the ways in which gender roles determine parenting practices and levels of involvement. Regardless of essentialist or constructivist notions of

fathering, fathers' pivotal role in providing the "bridge to the outside world" and enhancing their child's skills to manage this world may be especially significant for young adults in transitional phases. This role may become especially apparent in active and conscious decisions to aid their child to ease the transition from secondary to tertiary education or from education to the labor market.

Departing from this theoretical framework, this research explores how fathers make sense of their involvement (or lack thereof) with children's academic education. The aim is to uncover fathers' educational aspirations they may have for their children and their reported communication of such aspirations towards their children. It also explores the types of support these fathers may (or may not) use throughout their children's educational career. Lastly, it analyzes fathers' attitudes and behaviors towards their responsibility in being involved with their child's tertiary education. Considering different levels of educational attainment among the respondents allows for similarities and differences between fathers with higher educational attainment and fathers with lower educational attainment to become apparent.

### **Data collection and research methods**

This research intends to acquire information on the mechanisms and behaviors of fathers' involvement with their children's higher tertiary education. In the following section, I will elaborate on the approaches used to finding respondents, obtaining and analyzing data.

#### *Sampling and recruitment*

This research aims to scrutinize differences in fathers' involvement and motives by SES. To make sure that any differences found can indeed be attributable to SES, I have tried to keep the sample as homogenous as possible on other characteristics. For this reason, the sampling has been of a purposive nature. It was unnecessary to recruit respondents that are reflective of the

general population, but certain elements had to be equal, which is why criterion sampling has been used. For instance, SES of the respondents varied (in terms of highest level of education acquired and employment) but racial and ethnic background and marriage status were comparable across the sample. Without this homogeneity, distinguishing and theorizing meaning behind certain parenting practices would have been difficult as this could have clouded the difference in SES of fathers. Socioeconomic status (SES) is a broad concept, which in this research was measured by the highest level of education attained (Oakes & Kaufman, 2017).

Recruitment of participants took place over the course of April and May of 2020. Considering the global Covid-19 pandemic during this period, most recruitment and all data collection took place online. Sampling and participant recruitment were done in various manners. I approached multiple websites and internet fora that centered around parenting in any way, such as VDRS.nl and Emancipator, who then redistributed the call for respondents. Furthermore, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram) were used to distribute a call for respondents. Another employed technique was that of snowball-sampling. Each respondent was asked to spread the message and to consider asking acquaintances that would possibly fit in the recruitment criteria, which resulted in additional respondents.

These sampling and recruitment methods have led to the recruitment for interviews with a total of ten respondents ( $N=10$ ). The aim was to interview five participants that had a diploma of at least higher vocational education level and five participants whose highest level of education obtained was lower vocational training. Although it was relatively simple to find suitable and enthusiastic fathers with higher obtained levels of education, it proved difficult to obtain an equal number of interested fathers without higher tertiary educational attainment. Nevertheless, due to intensified efforts, my sample consisted of six fathers that had completed at

least higher vocational education and four fathers with lower vocational education at the most. Four respondents had an academic degree (WO), two completed higher vocational education (HBO), two had finished general secondary education (MAVO), one respondent had completed secondary vocational education (MBO) and one graduated from high school at the senior general secondary education level (HAVO). From this point onwards, the fathers with at least a higher vocational diploma are referred to as Higher Educated (HE). Fathers with lower vocational degrees maximum will be indicated with Vocationally Educated (VE). The participants were all autochthones and either married or cohabiting and co-parenting. All participants had at least one child currently studying at university, ranging from having just started their bachelor to currently finalizing their PhD.

#### *Collecting and analyzing data*

In order to gather data, I have conducted semi-structured, recorded interviews with the respondents. The interviews were guided by questions and concepts relevant to the research, but still allowed the interviewee to bring up important information. The major benefit of semi-structured interviews is that it allows for new, possibly very relevant information to come up, which is less likely in a structured interview (Bryman, 2016). In order to comply with the Dutch government's restrictions on social contact and public transport, the interviews were held online. To simulate the atmosphere of a face-to-face interview and to allow for the researcher to see the respondent's facial expressions, the software application for video calls Skype was used. With consent of respondents, the gathered auditory data was recorded for subsequent analysis. The interviews lasted 45 minutes on average and focused on uncovering fathers' attitudes and behaviors with regards to their involvement with their children's academic education.



## Results

The research question focused on fathers' educational involvement, motives given for this behavior, and the ways in which these attitudes and behaviors differ between higher educated and vocationally educated fathers. The coding process revealed several overarching categories that give insight into these topics and answers to the research question. This results section first touches briefly upon some of the similarities found between the two groups of fathers. After that, I will elaborate on the differences that emerged between higher educated and vocationally educated fathers, focusing on recurrent themes.

### *1. Attitudes towards and motivations for paternal educational involvement*

#### **1.1. Educational aspirations – Similarities**

With regards to educational aspirations, fathers' attitudes and especially the indicated communication of such attitudes towards their children are significant, because they may influence a child's choice in study, motivation, and persistence to attain higher levels of education through socialization (Trebels, 2014). Within this topic, certain similarities became clear between vocationally educated fathers and higher educated fathers. With regards to educational and occupational aspirations, all respondents mentioned that they think tertiary education is important for their children's general development, chances in life and chances on the labor market, specifically. The respondents' SES did not seem to impact their attitude on the importance of education for the labor market. In addition, most fathers mentioned that their child's happiness with their degree choice is important, but generally alongside a good prospect on the labor market, not in lieu of it.

The fathers' wish for their children to follow a tertiary educational degree is in line with existing literature on educational aspirations, which state that people generally aim for

themselves and their loved ones to maintain or improve SES (Trebbels, 2014). Because the respondents varied in level of education themselves, it was expected that they would vary in their level of educational aspirations for their children, too. Although there were variations in levels of educational aspirations, these did not necessarily seem to be intrinsically linked to the respondents' levels of education, but rather to their children's expected capabilities. For instance, Bram (HE), Thijs (HE), Daniël (HE) and Edwin (VE) all expressed the importance of their children putting in maximum effort. Others, too, emphasized that as their children's higher educational attainment was in line with their previous education and capabilities, this was what they had expected. When asked how they would find it if their child had not entered higher education, Thijs (HE) and Edwin (VE) put it as follows:

[I]f my children did not have the cognitive abilities to get a higher vocational or academic degree, I would find it fantastic if they got a lower vocational degree, but I do think you have to get the most out of yourself, and it should be a very well-considered choice. –  
Thijs (HE)

I always tell my children... I've always told them eh, try to always give it your best shot. Look, if at some point you reach a limit, yes that's possible, but I really hated it if they would cut corners. ... [F]or me it's important to see what your daughters can do. Because for all you know, you have a daughter that is not as good at studying, that's no big deal. –  
Edwin (VE)

These respondents considered their children's capabilities and, in various ways, communicated educational aspirations to their children and tried to motivate their child to cultivate their talents to the extent that was possible. This is where fathers with lower vocational education and higher

educated fathers started to differ. All but one of the fathers mentioned the importance of tertiary education, but there were differences in the *motivations* behind these aspirations and the stated *communication* of these aspirations to their children. I will discuss these differences in the following sections.

## 1.2. Educational aspirations – Differences in motivation

For vocationally educated fathers, a recurrent motivation for aspiring for their child to follow an academic degree was the idea that the attainability is currently much higher than in their own youths. Some of these fathers aimed for their children to obtain a similar or higher level of education than their own. Because the culture surrounding education had changed and the importance of education for the labor market had increased, their children could and should study. Gert (VE) and Jan (VE), for instance, pointed at a cultural shift in educational attainment. Gert (VE) said: “I come from a different generation, in which learning or studying was not really promoted. In the past, going to lower general secondary education [MAVO] was quite an achievement.” Similarly, Jan (VE) reflected on his own experiences and mentioned: “[My parents] were so-called “old school” and eh, they said we should go and work, that’s better.” ... “So education was really discouraged at home, that’s what it comes down to.” Furthermore, André (VE) highlighted the increased demands for entering the labor market:

I think it’s a shame, sometimes, because there are people who aren’t as good at studying, but learn through practice, but these days, that’s not really possible anymore. You need to have diplomas for everything. Whereas in my time you could get a job and work your way up in a company by following classes or courses ... nowadays you actually have to have those papers in advance. – André (VE)

It is unsurprising that higher educated respondents did not identify changing times as a core motivation for their educational aspirations for their children. After all, unlike the other group of respondents, they had obtained a higher vocational or academic degree. Instead, a recurrent motivation for the educational aspirations these fathers had for their children relates to the previously mentioned concepts of socialization and the reproduction of cultural capital. For these fathers, their expectations were shaped by the fact that they (and their partner) had been and still were involved with higher tertiary education. When asked about their academic aspirations and expectations for their children, Bram (HE) and Daniël (HE) said:

I think that's because we both, my wife and I, we both come from that [academic] area and you kind of have a bias that you think well, they might do something else but it could very well be that my children drift that way, too. – Bram (HE)

[They're] raised in a climate where two ambitious parents are busy with work, and besides... Where we both... I did an academic degree when the eldest was too young to really experience it, but of course she's heard the stories. And their mother did her MBA when they were little. ... So I'm afraid that in such a climate, they'll have learned from that. – Daniël (HE)

As parents are important in determining a child's own educational ambition, growing up in an academically inclined family can, through socialization and internalization, influence a child's educational career (Trebbels, 2014). Adoption processes are the ways in which parents communicate their aspirations and expectations to their children. As such, communication is incredibly important. I will discuss this theme below.

### 1.3. Educational aspirations – Differences in communication

Vocationally educated fathers and higher educated fathers reported different ways of communicating their educational aspirations to their children. All vocationally trained fathers focused on their children's agency and independence in choosing a degree. André (VE), Jan (VE), Gert (VE) and Edwin (VE) all repeatedly stated that their children's agency and independence limited them in their influence and also in their necessity to be involved. Jan (VE) exemplifies this:

I would have just really thought that [not continuing education] would have been a shame, but someone like her... They're 18. You can't force them, all you can do is tell them you think it's a shame if they don't. – Jan (VE)

This focus on a child's independence, agency, and adult age was recurrent and especially salient throughout interviews with vocationally educated fathers. This indicated a certain attitude towards the responsibility and necessity of parental involvement that vocationally educated fathers seemed to share. This attitude falls in line with Lareau's previously mentioned parenting style focused on "natural growth" (Lareau, 2003, p.2-4) and corresponds with the social process of "individualization" as outlined by Ule, Živoder, and Du Bois-Reymond (2015, p.330). This will be elaborated on in the discussion.

Although higher educated fathers did give their children agency in their choices, many reported that they would clearly communicate their disappointment and tried to actively motivate the child. When asked about how he communicated his expectations to his children, Thijs (HE) said that they know full well, because he would retreat his support if his children would not work hard (enough). Daniël (HE) said: "Let me put it this way, if she had said that she would not go and study, well, we would have had a few good conversations about that." The majority of

higher educated fathers, although generally accepting of a child's agency and choices, demonstrated a certain pressure to adhere to the socially expected trajectory (meaning that a child in pre-university secondary education is supposed to continue in academic education). These attitudes correspond with Lareau's concept of "concerted cultivation" and fit into the social process of "familialization" (Lareau, 2003, p.2-4; Ule, Živoder, and Du Bois-Reymond, 2015, p.330). Keeping these differences in motivations for and communication of educational aspirations in mind, it was necessary to analyze the ways in which respondents reported to support their children's educational careers. In the following section, I will discuss the overarching theme *Fathers' support*. This section illustrates the similarities and differences in the ways fathers reported to support their children.

## 2. *Fathers' support*

During the interviews, respondents answered questions on how they supported their child during the transition from high school to university, during their time at university, and with the transition from school to work. Fathers revealed various types of support, such as financial, emotional and practical support, among others. These types of support were subcategorized into three themes: Financial support, Active and direct educational involvement, and Passive and indirect educational involvement. The results in this overarching category are structured according to respondents' representation within the themes. Regarding financial support, nearly all fathers, regardless of level of education, positioned themselves as "financial guides." Slight differences between vocationally and higher educated fathers became clear in terms of their attitude towards gendered parental roles. Mainly fathers with higher vocational and academic degrees expressed support that could be labelled as active and direct educational involvement.

Passive and indirect educational involvement was more prevalent among fathers with lower vocational education.

## 2.1 Financial support

With regards to financial support, all but one of the respondents, regardless of SES, mentioned having supported their children financially throughout the entirety of their studies. Most fathers paid for either (part of) children's tuition fees, housing, and/or groceries. Thijs (HE) illustrated this as follows: "I have to make the situation [to study] optimal. And that optimal situation means that I make sure that she doesn't have to worry and I can provide her with the cost of living." Fathers' focus on financial support during interviews seemed to position them and their unique paternal role as "financial guides" in their children's higher educational phase. Many fathers described their supportive role to differ from their partner's. Some similarities and differences between vocationally educated and higher educated fathers became apparent in this regard, but all centered around ensuring their children's financial stability.

Vocationally educated fathers described parenting dynamics that highlighted stark differences between them and their partners. While talking about their parenting dynamics, Gert (VE) said:

[My wife] has other qualities, you know. ... She cares for her, eh, I don't know. She would... Well you might recognize this. On Sunday night [my daughter] would leave, and my wife would put cheese and ham and bread on the counter for my daughter to bring home, you know. And fathers put €50 on the counter for them to take, you know. –  
Gert (VE)

Similarly, Jan (VE) described that him and his wife had different areas of expertise:

Eh, my wife was great for my daughters, they had more contact with my wife. But they came to me for a side-job, I helped with that. ... For me, I was more concerned about their living situation, financial worth, etc. And with my wife, it was more about their study and those kinds of things. – Jan (VE)

Interestingly, higher educated fathers often said their parenting styles and levels were equal to their partner's. However, when talking about direct educational support, the significance of higher educated fathers as financial guides in the family became clear. With regards to offering guidance while their child was selecting a study program, most higher educated fathers mentioned that their partner was focused on whether a program would be “enjoyable,” make their child “happy,” or “what kind of classmates” they would get. Some higher educated fathers noted that they were more focused on a study's labor market prospects and future financial situation of a child than their partner. In this regard, Thijs (HE) noted:

My wife is much more outspoken in that regard. She would be much more focused on advising: “You should do whatever you love to do.” And I would definitely still be looking at the opportunities that a study has for the labor market. – Thijs (HE)

The focus on the father as a financial guide fits well into the normative narrative of the traditional gender roles within families in the Netherlands. This will be reflected on in the discussion.

## **2.2. Active and direct educational involvement**

Fathers' active and direct educational support was generally intended to directly support children with their education, such as through active guidance during the transition from high school to university and involvement with the content and progress of the study. Examples of



types of support that were directly related to educational parental involvement are checking essays, discussing the content of courses, and checking up regularly on children's educational progress. Fathers with higher tertiary education were represented extensively in comparison to vocationally educated fathers.

Considering that higher educated fathers may be more knowledgeable and experienced in the process of academic education and have the cultural capital to navigate this arena, their focus on active and direct educational involvement was rather unsurprising. Where fathers without experience in the academic context perhaps lacked the knowledge and experience, higher educated fathers reported high levels of active guidance, especially throughout the transition from high school to university and the study choice. All but one of the higher educated respondents mentioned that they accompanied their children to orientation days at universities and helped their child in the process of choosing a study. Especially Bram (HE), Daniël (HE), and Thijs (HE) would be actively engaged during orientation days at universities and would ask questions to staff and students. Although they pointed out that they did not purposely steer their child towards an educational track, their active engagement could have influenced the decision. Bram (HE) indicated that his child must have felt slightly pressured while choosing a study, even if he did not mean to steer her:

We went to the information session for the program she's in now, eh, and in that whole process I noticed that it was quite hard to eh, hide my own fun and curiosity and "oh, that's so interesting" and "oh, if I could do it again..." I mean, these are things I never literally mentioned to her that way... I was aware of the fact that I had created ideas with this study and I shouldn't force them on her. But yeah, you're definitely enthusiastic about a program, and she has noticed that, without a doubt. – Bram (HE)

Although most fathers pointed out that they did not want to be a “pushy” parent, certain higher educated fathers did mention high levels of direct involvement in the form of interest in educational progress. Thijs (HE), for instance, demonstrated a sense of pride if his children performed well:

If I hear grades and I think they're good, I'll say “[wow], that's awesome!” And I'm performance oriented in such a way that I'll ask them things like “are you still on track for a cum laude graduation?” You know, I'll ask those sorts of things. So... I like that. But that's mainly out of interest. – Thijs (HE)

The last type of support that higher educated fathers were engaged in, contrary to fathers without higher vocational or academic degrees, was the use of their network for their studying child (e.g. for an internship) or in the transition from university to the labor market. This is an example of the significance of social capital. Although not all higher vocationally or academically educated fathers said they would *want* to use their network, most say they would be *able* to. This is in contrast with fathers with lower vocational education, most of whom reported not to have the ability to use their network at all. The academically educated Daniël (HE), for instance, said the following:

“I wouldn't actively use [my network] in the sense that, well, ‘I'll arrange a job...’ Or well, actually, maybe I would, you know... Notify them. But because of my employment history, and also in the academic world nationally, I have connections there so it could definitely be that I point that out, give advice, those sorts of things.” – Daniël (HE)

In this sense, social capital is deemed important because these fathers have the ability to actively help their child not only throughout the educational process but also in the transition from

university to the labor market. As previously mentioned, in contrast with higher educated fathers, vocationally educated fathers were rather engaged with passive and indirect types of involvement and support. This will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.3. Passive and indirect educational involvement**

The types of support mentioned by fathers that were not directly related to children's educational career were subcategorized within passive and indirect educational involvement. This means that there was either an absence of educational involvement or that fathers focused on types of support that do not directly relate to the child's educational career. Examples of these types of support are offering a safety-net, emotional support, and practical support. Unlike fathers with higher tertiary education degrees, vocationally educated respondents explained that they were not intensely involved with their children's higher education directly because they were unable to or because their children did not need any help. André (VE) said: "I'm not really consciously concerned with that, or something. I don't feel like they really need that support. So I just think well, they'll manage." Some vocationally educated fathers portrayed their support during children's educational career as a safety-net. If a child requested help or reported issues, these fathers would provide support. Jan (VE) illustrated this as follows: "I've always told them that if they needed anything, tutoring or something, to please let me know because we don't see it. The level that they study we can't keep up with, I'm just being honest." This also indicates that the children's level of education denied him to be involved with their education directly, a sentiment that multiple vocationally educated fathers shared.

According to these fathers, support mainly came about in practical or emotional ways. For instance, in the absence of the ability to provide direct educational support, these fathers helped their children move houses, ensured their children had food throughout the week, repaired

something in their student house, or drove them to their internship daily. Gert (VE) gave the example that he had driven his child to the university's orientation day, but had not engaged at all and was there solely for practical reasons. Fathers offer these types of practical support to relieve their children's stress during stressful periods during their studies.

Furthermore, emotional support was a focal point for vocationally educated fathers. Although some higher educated fathers did mention that they provided emotional support, this seemed, contrary to vocationally trained fathers, not one of their main supportive priorities. One of the main reasons for providing emotional support during children's educational careers for vocationally educated fathers was the importance of stability, support and safety for being able to succeed in their studies. Gert (VE), Jan (VE) and Edwin (VE), in particular, repeatedly pointed at the importance of emotional support. Gert (VE) illustrated his way of relieving his daughter's stress as follows: "I would tell her: 'You can do this, you can do this.' Even though I doubted that at times. But that's the helping hand that she gets." Like Gert (VE), both Jan (VE) and Edwin (VE) heavily focused on emotional support throughout the interviews:

At a certain point you can't remove all of the stress, because in the end, if they have to take an exam, they'll have to do it themselves. I *can* [emphasis added by respondent] make sure that there is peace and calm surrounding them. And, like I said, take a week or two weeks off. Yes, we definitely had those moments. – Jan (VE)

What can we add? ... All we can see is how they're doing, how they're feeling. So we, or at least I, look at my children like, how are they actually doing? And on the basis of that I'll start to ask questions like, "hey, I'm noticing you're not feeling so well? I notice you're complaining or something. Shouldn't you take it easy?" You know, that type of support. – Edwin (VE)

The strong focus on passive and indirect educational involvement within interviews with vocationally trained fathers may be connected to the previously mentioned inability to provide direct educational involvement, but also to attitudes towards children's independence, agency and responsibility. Like educational aspirations, fathers' support fit into certain parenting styles. Where active and direct educational involvement is more closely related to "concerted cultivation," passive and indirect educational involvement is more apparently supportive of parenting styles of "natural growth" (Roksa & Potter, 2011, p.301; Lareau, 2003, p.2-4). Similarly, these patterns in attitudes towards parental involvement seemed to fall in line with larger social processes of "familialization" and "individualization" as defined by Ule et al (2015). As previously mentioned, these processes will be reflected on more extensively in the discussion.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

Research regarding social inequalities has paid insufficient attention to the role of paternal involvement in the transmission of inequalities. Existing research that has considered fathers' roles in children's educational careers has only focused on early education. I argued that this narrow view is problematic, because fathers may have a unique role in creating a bridge to the outside world and in providing their children with the necessary support to succeed in their higher educational career and later in life. Fathers' unique role may come about *especially* during children's higher educational career, because children transition into adulthood and make significant choices. The present study fills this gap in existing literature. To provide insights into the ways and levels of paternal educational involvement, its underlying mechanisms, and its implications for the transmission of inequalities, I answered the following question: How do the educational involvement and the motives given for this behavior differ between fathers with

different levels of SES? Ten interviews with vocationally educated and higher educated fathers of academically educated children portrayed similarities and differences concerning their attitudes and ways of providing educational support. The following paragraph provides a brief overview of these results.

First, most fathers, regardless of level of education, aimed for their children to put in maximum effort with regards to their educational career. However, the motivations for these aspirations differed between vocationally and higher educated fathers. Most vocationally educated fathers attributed their high aspirations for their children to increased possibilities in education. Unlike vocationally educated fathers, higher educated fathers portrayed a sense of social pressure regarding their children's educational career. For children that grew up in an academically inclined household, aspirations were based on the socially expected trajectory of academic tertiary education. Subsequently, fathers' expectations and motivations shaped the way they communicated this to children. Communication of aspirations is important, because it influences children's ambitions and choices towards higher educational attainment. Higher educated fathers put more effort into convincing their child of making 'appropriate' educational choices than vocationally educated fathers. Again, social pressure was apparent in higher educated fathers' answers. Vocationally educated fathers gave their children free reign and deemed them responsible for their educational career. This attitude towards responsibility was not shared by higher educated fathers, who portrayed more persistence in guiding their children through choices and obstacles. Similar patterns emerged in the types of support fathers reported. Unexpectedly, all fathers reported to financially aid their children and centered themselves as "financial guides" throughout their children's educational career. However, the two groups of fathers also differed in ways of showing support. Vocationally educated fathers emphasized

emotional and practical support. In part, they regarded this as more important, but it also resulted from an inability to engage more directly with children's education. The results showed that higher educated fathers were more concerned with active and direct educational guidance, which they exemplified by helping their children choose a suitable study, showing interest in the content of children's academic education, and proofreading assignments.

### *Theoretical Implications*

As anticipated, differences between vocationally and higher educated fathers largely seemed to rely on fathers' social and cultural capital, which shaped their parenting styles. Vocationally educated fathers' lack of experience with academic education prevented these fathers to (directly or indirectly) aid their children with "the rules of the game," or socialize their children throughout their youths (Lareau, 2015, p.2; Trebbels, 2014). In contrast, higher educated fathers' focus on active and education-related support within interviews can be explained by their high levels of social and cultural capital and personal experience with higher educational institutions. Although their focus on directly related educational support does not mean these higher educated fathers did not provide any emotional or practical support, it does indicate that it was not their priority. That paternal involvement was in line with Lareau's work became apparent not only in fathers' educational expectations and aspirations, but also in attitudes towards parental responsibility and in the types of support they offered.

Furthermore, the results provided support for the association of SES and parenting styles as illustrated in the theoretical framework with regards to "concerted cultivation" and "natural growth" (Lareau, 2003, p.2-4). The consistent focus on active and direct involvement with children's higher education in interviews with higher educated fathers supports the idea that these fathers' engaged in the process of "concerted cultivation." Vocationally educated fathers

portrayed parenting styles which fall in line with the “natural growth” principle, as they base their (lack of) involvement on their children’s independence, agency, and adult age regarding their responsibility for educational attainment.

These attitudes are also in line with the larger social processes of familialization and individualization (Ule et al., 2015, p.330). According to Ule et al., attitudes towards parental involvement with regards to education may vary depending on the social processes of individualization and familialization (2015). Individualization is a process “where children are regarded as individual actors who reflexively shape their own biography and are also responsible for their [self-development],” including their educational career (Ule et al., 2015, p.332). Familialization is a social process which entails that children and children’s development are understood to be largely their parents’ responsibility. In this context, parents are “children’s confidants and advisers for psychological as well as educational problems” (Ule et al., 2015, p.331). Higher educated, actively involved fathers engaged more in the process of familialization of parental educational involvement. Conversely, fathers with lower SES illustrated preferences for a more individualized approach. Ule et al. (2015) connected these social processes and attitudes towards educational parental responsibility to regional European differences and educational systems, but did not formulate a strong link between parents’ level of education and engagement with these processes. The present study provides evidence of such a connection and suggests that there are differences in attitudes within countries, too.

Aside from differences between higher and vocationally educated fathers, this research has also found similarities between the groups based on their shared cultural context. For one, this research is situated in the Netherlands, a country in which parental styles stem from cultural norms which long centered the father as the “male bread-winner” and financial head of the



family and the mother as the responsible parent for childcare and housework (Pfau-Effinger, 2004, p.392). This context is reflected in the conversations with these fathers. As the results show, fathers recurrently mentioned their support, aspirations, and involvement to revolve around financial support and even put it in contrast with their partner's focus on emotional support. Furthermore, within their active guidance in the transitions from high school to university and from university to the labor market, higher educated fathers placed extra focus on their role as financial guides. This support, the use of their networks and the guidance in helping their child choose a study with ample (financial) opportunities reflect the Dutch cultural context. These aspects are not only in line with Dutch cultural norms, but also provide support for the expectation that fathers have a unique role in their children's academic educational career and in preparing their children for adulthood. As this Dutch context is based on traditional gender norms, it would be interesting to conduct similar research in countries that have different gender norms and policies. In Italy or Spain, for instance, gender roles stem from the same breadwinner model and are still quite traditional (Hagqvist, Nordenmark, Pérez, Trujillo Alemán, Gillander Gadin, 2017; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). However, these countries also favor familialization regarding parenting (Mínguez, 2013). Changes in context may indicate different paternal roles and attitudes towards parents' responsibility regarding children's higher education. Countries with more gender equal attitudes towards parenting, such as Sweden, may show less uniqueness in fathers' roles (Pfau-Effinger, 2004). Thus, for an exhaustive view of fathers' attitudes and the ways in which varying gendered parenting norms shape paternal educational involvement, cross-national research is recommended.

Furthermore, the differences and similarities found in this study have certain implications for research on the transmission of social inequalities. Higher educated fathers' ability to guide

their children actively throughout their educational career is significant because it indicates that these fathers did, indeed, play an important role in upholding their children's educational successes and preventing them from falling through the glass floor. This is important for understanding the processes of social mobility within families of higher and lower SES and as such can be used as a basis for future educational policies that aim to equalize educational opportunities.

### *Limitations*

Certain limitations of the present study should be considered. For one, it is important to note that although this research thoroughly analyzed fathers' experiences with educational involvement and subsequent support systems, it cannot give any indication as to how *effective* certain types and levels of support are with regards to children's experiences within academic institutions. Although active and directly related educational support may provide children with the tools and knowledge to navigate their educational career, children may be more appreciative of intensive emotional support. The results give indications of the ways in which higher educated fathers aimed to uphold the glass floor and the ways in which vocationally educated fathers may have helped their children to break through the glass ceiling. Nonetheless, there are many other factors at play here, which the present study cannot account for. To further dissect the mechanisms behind paternal involvement with children's higher education, it is necessary to conduct research into the experiences of the studying children. For instance, what kind of paternal support do these children perceive as valuable and favorable? What role do partners, siblings, or educational institutions play? In order to acquire a thorough understanding of children's academic careers and the mechanisms behind paternal involvement, these questions need to be asked and cross-generational, cross-disciplinary research is required.

A second limitation to this study pertains to the division of respondents into two groups, which may have provided a rather black and white image of the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of fathers with regards to educational support. As previously mentioned, the respondents' level of education ranged from a high school diploma to multiple master's degrees. The Dutch educational system knows a large variety in levels of education and educational institutions. Therefore, the division made between vocationally educated on the one hand and higher educated on the other may have disregarded the variety of the respondents. Similarly, the use of level of education as a sole indicator for socioeconomic status (SES) may have given a somewhat distorted view of the respondents. In some cases, a respondents' level of education did not completely match, for instance, income or social status. As other indicators are important in determining fathers' cultural and social capital, the focus on level of education may have decreased the nuance necessary within these concepts. However, as this study focused on cultural and social capital with regards to knowledge of and experience with academic institutions, I believe level of education was an appropriate measure for SES.

Lastly, the recruitment and sampling methods were limited to online techniques, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Dutch government's social distancing regulations. Online recruitment of participants may have caused selection bias, because it increased the likelihood of interested and involved fathers to participate. However, the data showed variation in levels of involvement, which suggests that this bias was not detrimental to the quality of the study. The same regulations required the interviews to be held online. On the one hand, the lack of personal contact may have negatively influenced establishing rapport and the relationship between respondent and researcher which can be crucial to obtaining honest data (Bryman, 2016). On the other hand, this method reduced issues of planning, timing, and travelling. Respondents were

also in the comfort of their own home. Respondents seemed comfortable in sharing personal and emotional information.

### *Conclusion*

Regardless of these limitations, this study's main strength is that it gives clear and valuable insights into the experience of fathers in children's transitional phase from child to adult. This process is becoming longer and harder for many children, who remain young adults for longer parts of their lives. Decision-making processes, responsibility, and significant preparation for becoming an adult and entering the labor market are all part of this transition. A more lengthy and troublesome transition can require more parental guidance, especially with regards to educational choices and barriers. All fathers were in some way still involved with their children's lives and will remain to be, regardless of the fact that they are adults. Longer transitional phases entail that fatherhood keeps changing. The transition from child to adult may be more difficult for children with low parental SES than those with high parental SES, depending on the amount and types of parental guidance they receive. In this regard, fathers' ability to provide financial support is significant too. Although all respondents of this study were able to provide financial support, this is not universal. Policy-makers should therefore reflect on this when considering policies that increase social inequalities, such as the discontinuation of governmental student grants. Thus, the present research can be of use for educational policy-makers and for professionals in the field of andragogy, family sociology, and youth studies, as they give valuable perspectives on changing attitudes and behaviors.

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**APPENDIX I****CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH****PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

Project title: Fathers' Support Systems: A Comparative and Qualitative Analysis of Higher and Vocationally Educated Fathers' Involvement with Children's Academic Education

Name, email of student: Marthe Schippers, 510288ms@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Renske Keizer, [Keizer@essb.eur.nl](mailto:Keizer@essb.eur.nl)

Start date and duration: January-June

Is the research study conducted within DPAS            YES

**PART II: TYPE OF RESEARCH STUDY**

Please indicate the type of research study by circling the appropriate answer:

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Research involving human participants.  | YES |
|    | If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research?  | NO  |
| 2. | Field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants.                | NO  |
| 3. | Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). | NO  |

**PART III: PARTICIPANTS****Where will you collect your data?**

I intend to collect my data from interviews with respondents found through online platforms

**What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?**

I hope to recruit 10 interviewees.

**What is the size of the population from which you will sample?**

Unsure, this depends on the amount of fathers of students online.

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study to be withheld from them? NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? NO
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)?

YES

7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent?  
NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? NO

**If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.**

I have answered 'yes' to question 6, because my research will differentiate the respondents and their answers based on racial/ethnic origin (if possible, the respondents will all have the same ethnic origin and no immigration background), socioeconomic status (measured in terms of highest level of education obtained), and their relationship with their partner will be assessed as well (in order to equalize respondent group). All of these are necessary, because there needs to be as little variation between participants as possible aside from socioeconomic status in order to be able to test relationships and mechanisms and not get a clouded image.

**What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).**

All participants are explicitly asked to consent to the interview and handling of their data via an informed consent letter. Each interview starts with recorded informed consent as well.

**Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.**

I do not expect any hazardous consequences to arise. However, perhaps emotional feelings of inadequate parenting if respondents (fathers) feel their parenting may not be (good) enough compared to others, or shame if they believe their educational level and knowledge to be insufficient could arise. This can be prevented by ensuring that, throughout the data collection process, the researcher remains objective and does not come across as judgmental.

#### **Part IV: Data storage and backup**

##### **Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?**

In a file on my laptop and on my external hard-drive, both of which are secured with a password.

##### **Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?**

I, Marthe Schippers, am responsible for management, storage and backup of data.

##### **How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?**

Each time after handling data on computer it will be backed up on my personal external hard Drive.

##### **In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?**

I will remove names and other explicit personal data from the recordings and transcripts.

Respondent's names will also not be used in the eventual end product of the master thesis.

Where possible, minor details that may reveal anything of the respondents' personal information and are not necessary for the results will be changed.

#### **PART VI: SIGNATURE**

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at

appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored.

The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student:

Marthe Schippers



Date: 21-03-2020

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Renske Keizer

Date:

## **APPENDIX II: Informed Consent Form**

### **Informatie- en toestemmingsformulier**

#### **Gegevens onderzoeker**

Naam: Marthe Schippers

E-mail: 510288ms@eur.nl

#### **Contactgegevens functionaris gegevensbescherming EUR**

E-mail: [privacy@eur.nl](mailto:privacy@eur.nl)

#### **Toelichting onderzoeksproject**

In het kader van de afronding van de MSc Social Inequalities worden onderzoeksgegevens verzameld. De verzamelde gegevens hebben betrekking tot vaderschap en betrokkenheid bij het onderwijs van hun volwassen kinderen.

#### **Toestemming betrokkene**

Hierbij geef ik,

(naam betrokkene)

toestemming voor het verzamelen, bewaren en analyseren van de gegevens die op basis van het interview worden verzameld. Ik ben op de hoogte van het feit dat uitsluitend de student en de supervisor (Prof. Renske Keizer) van de student toegang heeft tot de verzamelde gegevens. Deze gegevens worden maximaal 3 maanden bewaard. Ik geef de onderzoeker toestemming mij te vragen om gegevens met betrekking tot mijn gender, opleidingsniveau, beroepsstatus, inkomen, gezinssamenstelling en etniciteit, en deze gegevens geanonimiseerd te verwerken in het onderzoek.

***Rechten betrokkene***

Ik ben mij ervan bewust dat ik inzage heb in mijn eigen gegevens en ik de verwerking van de persoonsgegevens kan laten rectificeren, wissen of beperken. De toestemming om mijn gegevens te gebruiken kan ik op ieder moment intrekken.

Door het ondertekenen van dit formulier geef ik aan dat goed is uitgelegd waar dit onderzoek over gaat, waar het toe dient en dat ik toestemming geef om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek.

Datum:

Handtekening: