



Children *and* Family
Research Center

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Neighborhood Disorder and Childcare Involvement of Nonresident and Resident Fathers

Saijun Zhang, Ph.D.

Tamara Fuller, Ph.D.

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Research Question Development

- Several reasons for concerns about father involvement
 - 1/3 children in families without a biological father
 - Lack of father involvement and child wellbeing
 - Social fathers' replacement function controversial, and many such families do not have any father figure
 - Father involvement promotion and the need to understand influential factors



Research Question Development

- Identity theory (Fox & Bruce, 2001)
 - Father's identity is associated with their perception of role and responsibility, which influences involvement
 - Nonresident fathers have ambiguous paternal identity, which may make them more sensitive to social contexts
- Package deal theory (Townsend, 2000)
 - Father-mother relationship as a dominating factor for involvement

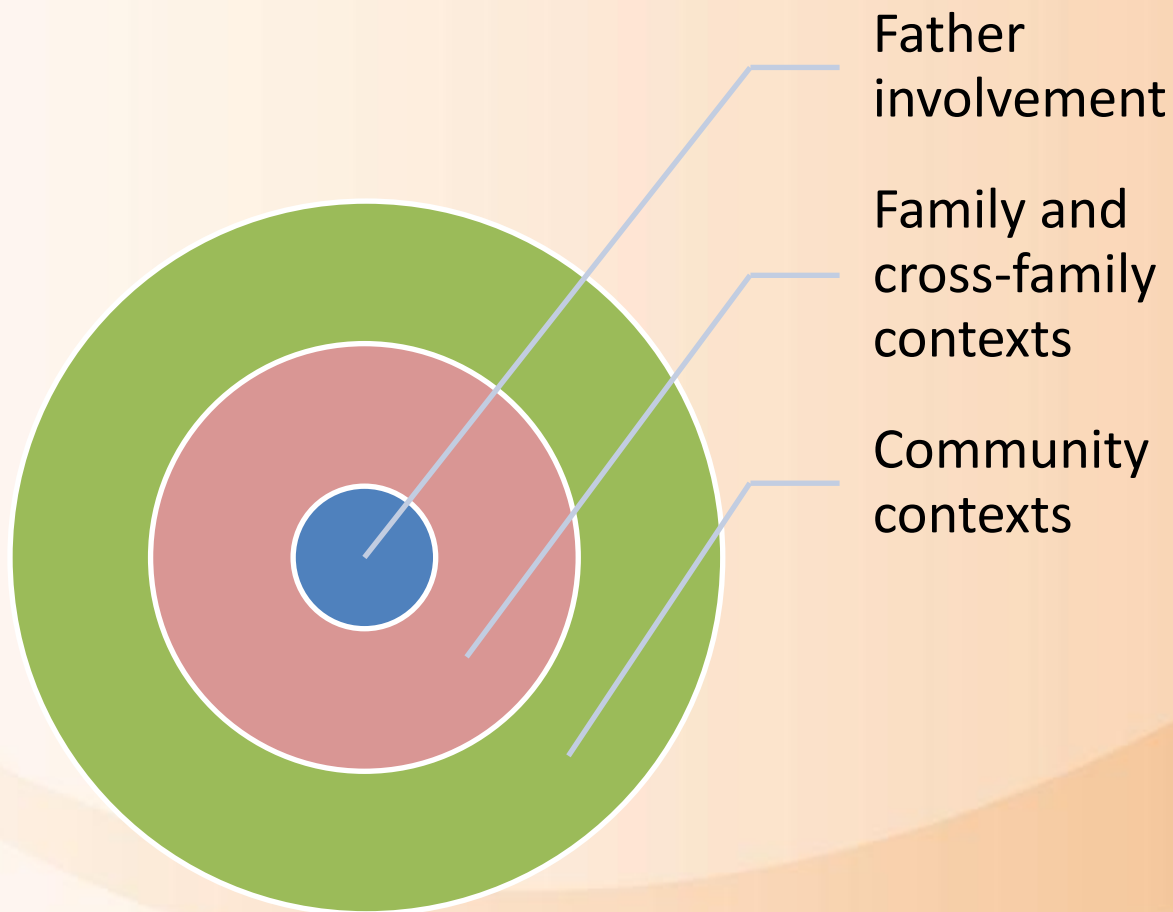


Research Question Development

- Factors affecting father involvement
 - Factors within and cross-family contexts
 - Characteristics of mother, father, and child
 - Mother-father relationship
 - Family social networks
- How about community environment?



Ecological Perspective of Involvement





Limitations of Existing Research

- Few studies examined the influence of community environment on father involvement
- No studies examined whether community environment affect resident father and nonresident father involvement differently



Research Hypothesis

- Community environment affects childcare involvement of resident and nonresident father differently. Specifically, neighborhood disorder is
 - negatively associated with nonresident father involvement
 - not associated with resident father involvement



Data and Sample

- Data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCW)
 - Data introduction (surveyed 5000 newborn families across 20 cities; 4 waves)
 - 775 nonresident father families
 - 1407 resident father families
 - Definitions of resident and nonresident father families
 - Data from two time periods (wave 3 & 4)



Measures

- Dependent variable: father involvement

Mothers' report of father assistance and supportive involvement in childcare (12 items, 12-48). Example questions :

How often does he look after child when you need to do things?"

"How often does he take child places (he/she) needs to go, such as to daycare or the doctor?"

"You and father talk about problems that come up with raising child."



Measures

- Independent Variable: Neighborhood disorder
Mothers' perception of various neighborhood problems (8 items, 8-32), such as the prevalence of
 - drug dealers
 - drunks
 - gang activities
 - people loitering
 - and misbehaving children and adults



Measures

Control variables

- Demographic and health status of mothers, fathers, and children
- Income, household structure, and social support
- Drug/alcohol dependence

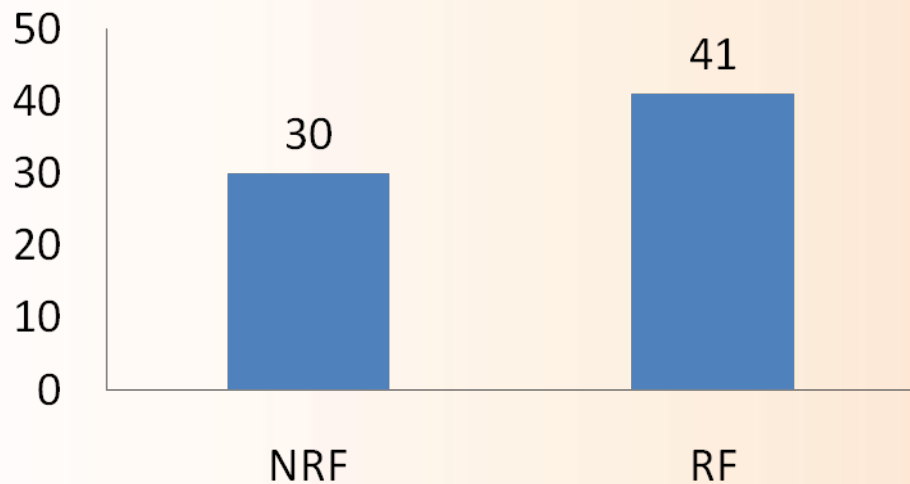


Analyses

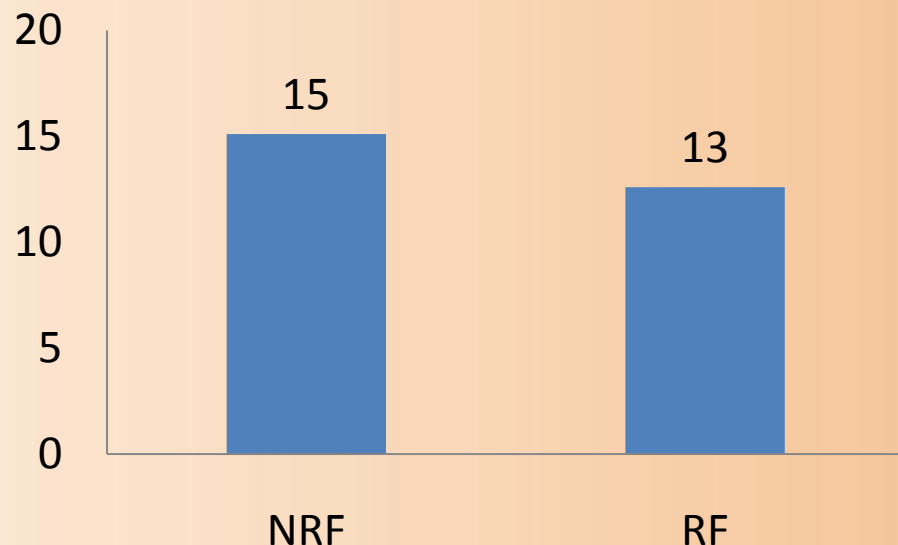
- Missing data imputation
- Descriptive statistics
- Differences between resident and nonresident fathers (t-test and Chi-Square test)
- Ordinary Least Square regression



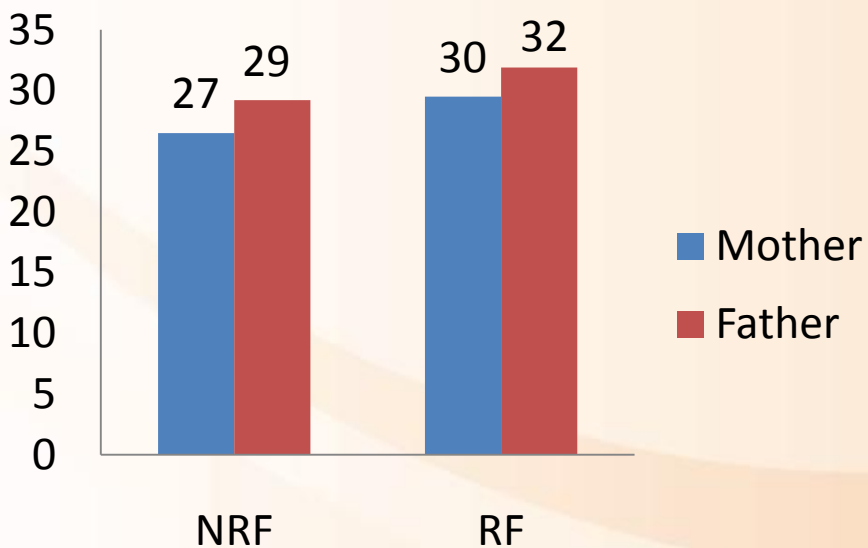
Father Involvement



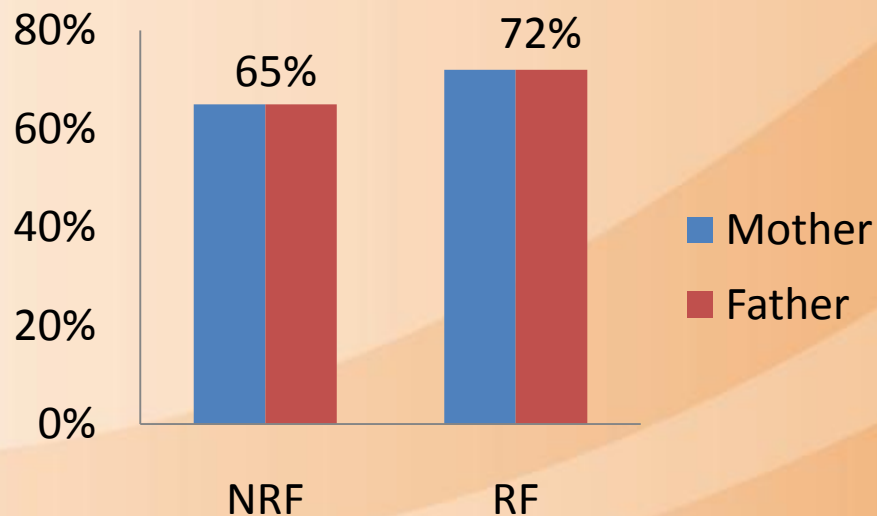
Neighborhood Disorder



Age

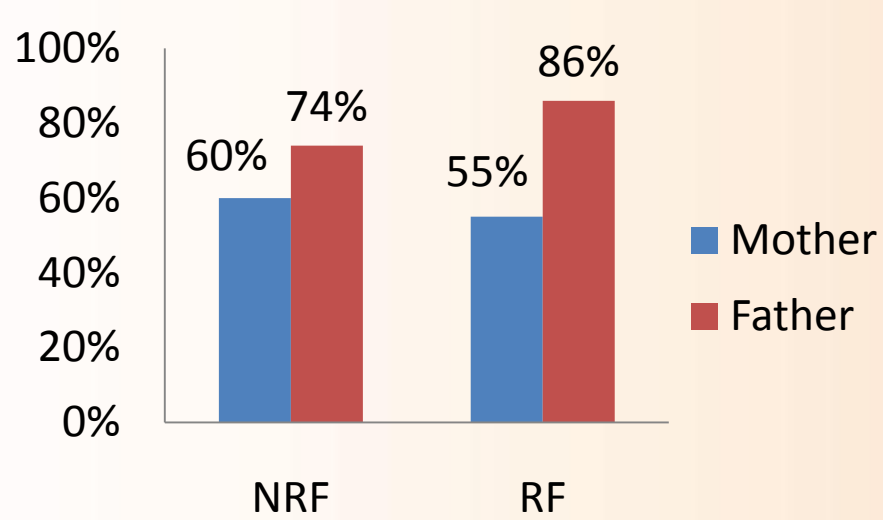


High School & Beyond

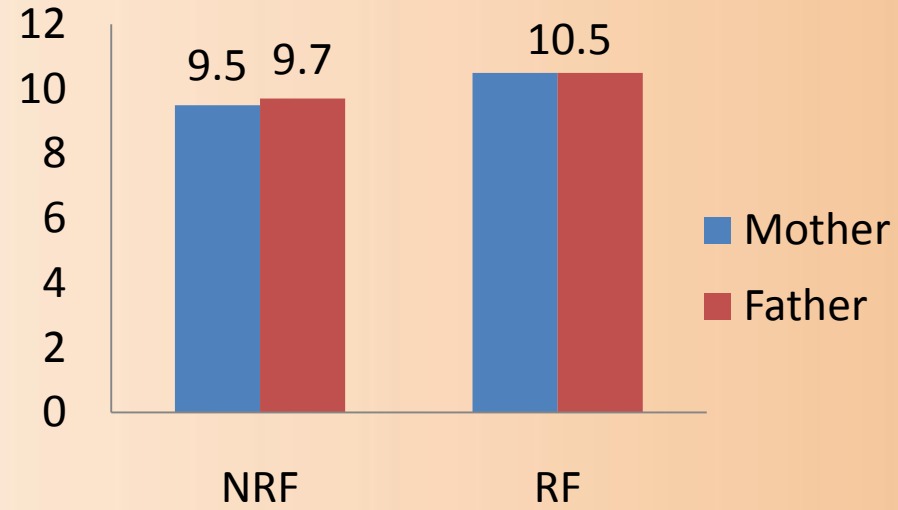




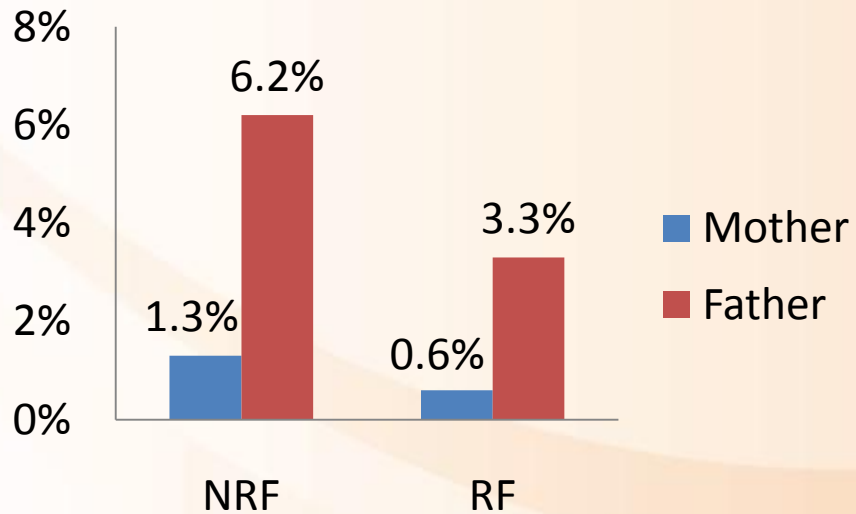
Employment



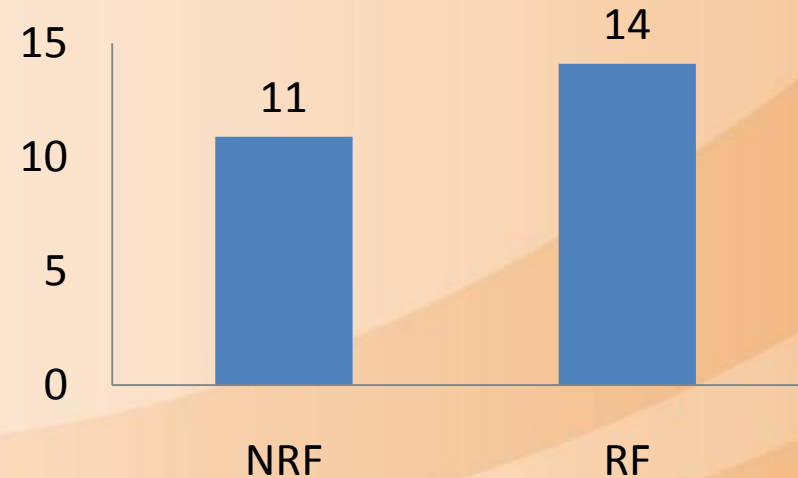
HH Income



Alcohol/drug dependence



Mother social support





Results (Multivariate Analysis)

Variables	NRF Families		RF Families	
	Std. b	P value	Std. b	P value
Neighborhood disorder	-0.103	0.009**	-0.019	0.419
Mother & father relationship	-0.416	<0.001***	-0.295	<.0001***
Married/cohabited with others	-0.123	<.0001***	N/A	N/A
Father household income (ln)	0.075	0.006**	N/A	N/A
Father alcohol/drug dependence	-0.031	0.299	-0.062	0.003**
R ²	.22		.18	

Note: Other control variables not shown; NRF=nonresident father families, RF=resident father families



Conclusions

- Mothers & Children of nonresident father families are likely to live in more disordered neighborhood
- Neighborhood disorder is negatively associated with nonresident fathers' childcare involvement, but is not associated with that of resident fathers



Implications

Policy and service emphasizing father engagement can consider

- Screen the influence of community environment
- Distinguish between resident and nonresident father families
- community environment improvement
- Relocation assistance to nonresident father families