

Fatherhood and Marriage: A Review

Abstract

Fatherhood being one of the most common experiences for American middle-class men, it is remarkable that its cultural meaning for this group has not been fully explored. In this paper, I discuss lines of diverse empirical lines of social science research on fatherhood, with the expectation that understanding the empirical research is vital background to a cultural study of the same. As a strategy to manage the fatherhood literature, I have focused on literature on fatherhood that also considers the role of marriage in the parental function. Taking the frame of normative models of fathering, I address the following areas of research: The significance of marriage in fatherhood; the significance of work in fatherhood; the significance of the timing of the transition into fatherhood; the significance of the tone of the transition into fatherhood; the significance of the relationship between the father and mother; the significance of fatherly involvement in the child's life; the significance of a father's family of origin; the significance of housework in fatherhood; and the significance of extra familial personal relationships in fatherhood.