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Kevin Shafer

*Brigham Young University - Provo*, [kshafer@byu.edu](mailto:kshafer@byu.edu)

Richard J. Petts

*Ball State University*

Casey Scheibling

*McMaster University*

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# Variation in Masculinities and Fathering Behaviors: A Cross-National Comparison of the United States and Canada

Kevin Shafer<sup>1,2</sup> · Richard J. Petts<sup>3</sup> · Casey Scheibling<sup>4</sup>

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## Abstract

Research continues to examine the barriers to and facilitators of positive fathering behaviors. One area recently addressed by researchers focuses on the relationship between masculine norm adherence and father involvement. Yet, little work has examined cross-national variability in this relationship—despite differences in gender norms, fathering expectations, and social policies across countries. The present study considers possible differences in the relationship between masculine norm adherence and fathering behaviors in the United States and Canada—two rich, multiethnic countries with many similarities but some distinct policy and family support differences. Using data from fathers in Canada ( $n = 2057$ ) and the United States ( $n = 2207$ ), our results show that fathers in Canada are warmer, more involved, provide more care, and use harsh discipline less than their American counterparts. Furthermore, the negative association between masculine norm adherence and positive fathering behaviors is stronger among American fathers than Canadian fathers. Overall, our findings indicate the importance of social context for understanding how gender norms shape men's parenting, given that the association between masculine norms and fathering varies in two culturally similar countries with different social policies around family life. Implications for social policy in the two countries and within institutional contexts are discussed.

**Keywords** Father involvement · Masculinities · Cross-national comparison · Canada · Survey research · OLS regression

Shifts in fathering attitudes and behaviors over the past few decades have brought greater scholarly attention to fatherhood (Schoppe-Sullivan and Fagan 2020). An understanding of factors that may motivate or deter positive fathering behaviors is valuable because of the substantial benefit fathers can have for children. Moreover, increased father involvement in childcare may be necessary to achieve greater gender equality in both the home and workplace (Coltrane 2000; Goldscheider et al.

2015; Hofferth et al. 2013). As such, many countries have implemented policies, like paid parental leave with reserves for fathers, to facilitate greater father involvement (Huerta et al. 2014; International Network on Leave Policies and Research 2019). Yet, across social contexts, there is wide variability in political supports for and cultural norms around fathering (Huerta et al. 2014). These differences highlight the need for cross-national research on the barriers to and facilitators of positive fathering behavior.

Cross-national research is valuable in studying the association between gender expectations and father involvement. Although fathers increasingly view themselves as engaged and nurturing parents, traditional masculine norms emphasizing breadwinning, self-reliance, and dominance continue to influence paternal identity and behavior (Marsiglio and Roy 2012; Petts et al. 2018; Townsend 2002). Recent work with U.S. fathers finds that traditional masculine attitudes are negatively associated with positive fathering and with more negative fathering behaviors, such as hostility and harsh discipline (Bulanda 2004; DeMaris et al. 2011; Petts et al. 2018). Similar patterns have been identified in other countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, and France (Doucet 2006;

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✉ Kevin Shafer  
kshafer@byu.edu

<sup>1</sup> Department of Sociology, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, USA

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health, Aging, & Society, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

<sup>3</sup> Department of Sociology, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, USA

<sup>4</sup> Department of Sociology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Gregory and Milner 2011; Miller 2011). However, this previous work is not comparative so that it is unable to assess how the relationship between gender norms and fathering may vary across contexts.

Our study fills this gap in the literature by examining the association between masculinity and father involvement in two countries: the United States and Canada. These two countries border one another, are both high-income members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD), have a shared history, are diverse multiracial and multiethnic societies with sizeable immigrant populations, and are majority Anglophone. At the same time, there are important structural differences between the two countries that may contribute to dissimilarities in fathers' involvement with children and expectations about work, family, and gender roles. To explore the impact of these differences, we use harmonized data from an American and a Canadian sample of fathers to assess: (a) potential differences in adherence to masculine norms, (b) how that differential adherence affects fathering behavior, and (c) what any differences in this relationship might suggest about the importance of political and cultural factors in shaping the paternal role and father involvement.

## Competing Norms of Fathering and Masculinities

*Father involvement* refers to men's engagement with the multiple roles and behaviors associated with fatherhood (Pleck 2010). Today, father involvement continues to be shaped by the cultural expectation that fathers take on an authoritative family role through behaviors such as economic provision and child discipline (Doucet 2014; Townsend 2002). This expectation is buttressed by traditional norms of masculinity which uphold male hegemony and reinforce gender boundaries by valorizing the primacy of work, male dominance, and aggression (Connell 2005; Pleck 1995). Traditional gender roles and beliefs, however, can affect fathering behavior in complex and contradictory ways. On the one hand, fathers who adhere to traditional masculinity tend to be less warm toward children and less involved in their lives (Bulanda 2004; DeMaris et al. 2011; Petts et al. 2018). On the other hand, some fathers who do not ideologically endorse gender equality have been found to be highly involved in childcare (Eerola and Mykkänen 2015; Shows and Gerstel 2009), which may be due, in part, to essentialist beliefs about men's unique impact on children (Jordan 2019; Pleck 2010; Randles 2020). Given these mixed results, it is necessary to further investigate how adhering to masculine norms shapes father involvement.

At the same time, the conceptualization and operationalization of father involvement must also acknowledge progressive expectations around fathering, including

engagement in emotional and instrumental parenting (such as displaying warmth and affection toward children), emotional availability, positive control (an awareness of what children are doing and with whom they are doing it), and hands-on caregiving (Ball and Daly 2012; Doucet 2006, 2014; Marsiglio and Roy 2012). Such norms can require men to reconstruct "masculine conceptions of care" by combining "varied configurations of masculinities and femininities" (Doucet 2006, p. 238). Hence, many fathers are now embracing "caring masculinities," which integrate the valuation of relationships, emotion, interdependence, and nurturance into their masculine identities (Brandth and Kvande 2018; Elliott 2016; Lee and Lee 2018; Ranson 2012; Scheibling 2018). Although studies have thoroughly explored how individual fathers' identities are influenced by new caring expectations, little work has measured how competing norms of fathering and masculinity have effects on different fathering behaviors within and across contexts.

## Cross-National Comparisons of Fathering Behaviors and Masculinities

Although cross-national father involvement research is limited, a handful of studies have considered the role of work-family policies and welfare state supports in explaining cross-national variation in paternal time use. Country-level structural supports for domestic work are associated with egalitarian attitudes toward the division of family labor among men (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al. 2018) and increase the likelihood that male partners will negotiate and share household responsibilities (Thébaud 2010). Intra-country studies also illustrate how political and cultural forces may shape gendered attitudes. In Denmark (Bloksgaard et al. 2015) and Sweden (Hearn and Morrell 2012), generational gaps in gendered norms around family life suggest that political efforts to promote egalitarianism in families contributed to shifts in cultural expectations about masculinity. Demonstrating the relationship between policy and cultural norms, father's solo caregiving significantly increased, regardless of paternity leave usage, after Québec instituted more generous leave policies than in the rest of Canada (Wray 2020). Collectively, these results suggest that cross-national variability in fathering behaviors may be due to differences in social policies, gendered family role expectations, and other structural and institutional factors which act as barriers to or facilitators of parental involvement (see also Craig and Mullan 2010).

## Comparing the United States and Canada

Despite their shared history, geographic proximity, and cultural similarities, important differences exist between the

United States and Canada. Table 1 provides estimates from secondary sources (OECD, Pew Research, Statistics Canada, and World Economic Forum) on the sociodemographic, political, and social contexts of the two countries. Demographically, the United States has a larger non-White population than Canada, whereas Canada has a larger immigrant population. More granularly, the composition of the non-White populations varies across the two nations:

**Table 1** Description of the social context in the United States (USA) and Canada

	USA n or %	Canada n or %
Racial/ethnic minority (% non-White)	27.6%	24.1%
Foreign-born	13.5%	20.9%
Family structure		
Total fertility rate	1.8	1.5
Crude divorce rate	2.9	2
Child living arrangements		
Two parents	66%	78%
Single parent	30%	17%
Other	4%	5%
Children living in poverty	21%	17%
Maternal employment (any for pay work, outside home)		
Youngest child 2 or younger	56%	66%
Youngest child 3–5	63%	72%
Female part-time employment	12%	17%
Gender gap (%) in full-time employment (FTE)	11%	6%
Time men spend on work (in hours/week) <sup>a</sup>		
Paid work	43	36
Housework	10	14
Childcare	8	14
Government guaranteed paid family leave in 2018		
Weeks of paid (FTE) leave	0	35 <sup>b</sup>
Percent rate of allowance	0	55
Public expenditure on family benefits (% of GDP)	1%	2%
Measures of gender egalitarianism		
Gender wage gap in median earnings of FTE	18	18
Gender inequality index <sup>b</sup>	.19	.09
Global gender gap index <sup>b</sup>	.72	.77
Global gender gap rank <sup>b</sup>	51	16
MAS score <sup>3</sup>	62	52

*Note.* All data are from the OECD family database (2017) unless otherwise noted. Reported percentages are within each sample

<sup>a</sup> US data is from a 2016 Pew Research analysis, Canada data is from a 2015 Statistics Canada analysis. Both analyses are of dual-earner, two-parent families with at least one child under 18

<sup>b</sup> Government guaranteed paid leave at time of data collection in Canada

<sup>c</sup> Data are from the 2017 Global Gender Gap report, prepared by the World Economic Forum <sup>c</sup> Data are from Hofstede Insights (accessed at [hofstede-insights.com](http://hofstede-insights.com))

African Americans and Latinos are the largest minority groups in the United States, whereas Indigenous and South Asians are the largest in Canada. Both fertility and divorce rates are lower in Canada than in the United States, and more Canadian children are raised in two-parent families and fewer live in poverty (Proquest 2018; Statistics Canada 2017b, 2018). Canadian mothers are more likely to work outside the home in either full-time or part-time employment, and there is more gender equality in domestic labor among Canadians than Americans. Time diary data from 2015 reveals, for example, that Canadian fathers averaged six more hours per week on child care tasks than their American counterparts (OECD 2017). Such variation in structural factors, including masculine and fathering norms, may play an important but understudied role in shaping father involvement.

Families are also supported differently in the United States and Canada. Policy feedback theories (Campbell 2012; Gangl and Ziefle 2015) suggest that even if individuals do not use a given policy, its existence can alter behavior by shaping cultural norms and codifying social priorities. Overall, family policies may set higher expectations for paternal involvement in Canada than in the United States. Canadian law mandates paid parental leave for mothers and fathers, whereas the United States is the only rich country in the world without paid maternity leave (McKay et al. 2016). In 2018, eligible Canadians were afforded 35 weeks of family leave at 55% of full-time wages, which could be split between eligible partners in whatever manner they chose (International Network on Leave Policies and Research 2019). Relatedly, the Canadian government spends a greater percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on family benefits than the United States and scores significantly better on virtually every measure of gender equality. While the two countries have similar male-female wage gaps, the World Economic Forum's (2018) most recent Global Gender Gap Report found Canada to be the 16th most gender equal country in the world, whereas the United States ranked 51st.

Differences in social inequality are also apparent; low- and middle-income Canadians are better off than similarly positioned Americans (Burton and Phipps 2017) and income inequality is less severe in Canada than the United States (Riddell 2018). Although socioeconomic disparities in social supports (such as access to parental leave) still persist in Canada (McKay et al. 2016), policies that support families and parenting may lead to important differences in the two countries. Accordingly, both Rehel (2014) and Doucet (2014) note that social structures in Canada make the transition to parenthood more similar for men and women which, in turn, results in fewer gendered parenting attitudes and behaviors. In contrast, economic realities and the lack of social supports in the United States make the transition to parenthood highly gendered for Americans, with mothers disproportionately burdened by childrearing (Katz-Wise et al. 2010; Yavorsky et al. 2015).

Although Canada and the United States share deep cultural similarities, there may also be important differences in gender norms and their relationship with family life. Canadians tend to be more family-oriented and endorse individualism and work primacy to a lesser degree than Americans (Grabb and Curtis 2010). By one empirical measure, Hofstede's (2011) cultural masculinity score, the United States (18th) has a more masculine culture than Canada (34th of 67 ranked countries). Although gender egalitarianism remains peripheral in both countries, Canadian men are less likely than American men to have their masculinity challenged for being engaged with their families (Abraham and Tastsoglou 2016; Rutherford 2012). Traditional gendered family roles are reinforced and emphasized in the United States through religion (particularly conservative religious traditions, which tend to be more central to American than Canadian life); the notion that family life is a private, not a communal concern; and highly gendered workplaces (Bibby 2011). These structural and cultural factors are reflected in individual-level attitudes and behaviors. For example, American men are far more likely to endorse the ideals of traditional masculinity than men in other Anglophone countries (Gattario et al. 2015).

Using this framework for understanding paternal involvement, we expect that the relationship between masculine norm adherence and fathering behaviors will vary between the Canada and the United States. More specifically, greater structural and cultural supports for father involvement in the two countries suggest that fathering behaviors may be less aligned with traditional masculine norms in the former than the latter, facilitating important differences between the two countries. As a result, we expect that (a) masculine norm adherence will be negatively associated with positive fathering behavior, (b) positive fathering behavior will be higher among Canadian fathers than American fathers, and (c) the association between masculinity and fathering behaviors will be weaker in Canada than in the United States.

## Predictors of Positive Fathering Behaviors

In addition to broad social and cultural differences between countries, variations in sociodemographic factors may confound the associations between masculinity and fathering behaviors in the United States and Canada. In particular, racial/ethnic identity or immigration status can affect the relationship between masculine norm adherence and fathering. In the United States, for example, Edin and Nelson (2013) found that poor economic prospects, incarceration, and the lack of social welfare supports lead Black fathers to place more value on emotional closeness, social support, and father-child relationship quality; in contrast, White fathers more highly value providing economically for the family. Moreover, although

there is subcultural variability among Latino populations in the United States, many Latinos share masculine norms of *machismo*, along with *familismo*, both of which stress that family needs should take priority over individual desires (Glass and Owen 2010). Diversity in these norms may help explain why non-aculturated Latino men participate in childcare and housework more than their White counterparts (Coltrane et al. 2004).

In comparison, less cross-cultural work on masculinity and fathering exists in Canada. Work among Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) fathers finds that the colonialist policies of family separation, cultural assimilation, and the legacy of historical trauma continues to affect the conceptualization of fathering among Indigenous peoples. Ball (2010), for example, finds that intergenerational concepts of fatherhood, fathering identity, and socialization to the paternal role are lacking in Indigenous communities because of family separation via Canadian residential schools. Canada also has a comparatively large immigrant and refugee population who may have differing views of family and fatherhood.

Paternal involvement and gender attitudes also vary across a number of family characteristics and contexts. Married couples with biological children may have a stronger predilection toward traditional family norms than other family types. Although norms for non-biological and non-residential fathers are not well-defined, there tend to be strong expectations for such fathers to be highly engaged and involved as parents (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Jensen and Shafer 2013; Jones and Mosher 2013; Marsiglio 2004; Townsend 2002). Income and education play an important role in shaping parenting behaviors—particularly in social contexts marked by high levels of economic inequality (Aurini et al. 2020; Lareau 2011). These patterns, coupled with wage stagnation, have made employment patterns, particularly work hours, a significant predictor of father involvement. Notably, this relationship between employment and involvement varies by paternal attitudes about gender and egalitarianism (Kuo et al. 2018; Yavorsky et al. 2015).

Finally, religious fathers are more likely to endorse certain aspects of masculine norms, like the gendered division of household labor. At the same time, religiosity can have positive effects on father involvement (Wilcox 2004). Recent work by Shafer et al. (2019b) identified that the relationship between religiosity and fathering varied by masculine norm adherence in American fathers from a diverse range of religious traditions. In sum, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic, and family characteristics may explain some of the variation in the relationship between masculine norm adherence and fathering behavior, as well as potential differences between fathers from the United States and Canada.

## Method

### Data and Recruitment

We use data from the Fathering Across Contexts Study (FACS), consisting of harmonized surveys on father involvement from the United States and Canada. The U.S. data ( $n = 2297$ ) was collected in late 2015. The Canadian data ( $n = 2112$ ) was collected in early 2018. For both SFNA components, respondents had to (a) be at least 18 years of age; (b) be a residential/non-residential biological or adoptive father, residential stepfather, or residential social father (defined as a nonbiological, nonadoptive father figure in a home with the child's biological or adoptive mother, but not in a marital relationship); (c) have English (US and Canada) or French (Canada only) language proficiency; and (d) have the ability to access the survey via Internet or smartphone. SFNA respondents answered questions about a focal child, defined as the youngest child between ages 2 and 18, for which they are the biological-, step-, or social-father.

Both the U.S. and Canadian surveys are quota samples, which were used to capture various fathering roles in a cost-effective manner. Both the U.S. and Canadian samples were obtained via Qualtrics, a research firm which maintains online opt-in panels in various countries. Researchers can draw upon a pool of 17.6 million panelists in the United States and 1.5 million in Canada (Qualtrics 2019). For SFNA, a subset of panelists was selected for potential inclusion based on their sociodemographic information. These selected panelists were provided with a link to an initial screening site where their final eligibility was determined by their fatherhood status, racial/ethnic identity, age of their youngest child, and geographic residence. Quotas for these characteristics were obtained from the American Community Survey's five-year averages (2009–2014) in the United States and from the 2016 Canadian Census. Panelists who met eligibility requirements were then asked to complete the survey. Notably, quota samples often produce results similar to random samples (Weinberg et al. 2014).

Several data quality checks, including attention filters, identification of careless respondents, safeguards against multiple submissions, and response duration minimums were used in both countries. Sociodemographic information in the SFNA samples was checked for consistency by comparing responses to those provided by panelists to Qualtrics and in other surveys (when applicable) completed by respondents. Post-collection data quality checks for inconsistent and improbable responses were also performed, eliminating approximately 4% of U.S. respondents and 2.5% of Canadian respondents. The final analytic sample was 4264 fathers: 2207 American fathers and 2057 Canadian fathers.

Online opt-in panels may not be fully representative of the populations from which they are drawn, often

underrepresenting marginalized groups within a given population (Tourangeau et al. 2013). In general, the demographic estimates from the full U.S. sample appear similar to those from other national datasets, such as Pew Research's Survey of American Parents and the National Survey of Family Growth. Comparisons between the Canadian data and other surveys of Canadian fathers are more difficult to ascertain given that Statistics Canada has no national survey where fathers are primary respondents. However, the demographic estimates reported in our sample are similar to other quantitative studies in Canada (Ball and Daly 2012).

Opt-in panels may better represent the population with access to the internet via computer or smartphone. In both the United States and Canada, more than 90% of individuals have regular internet access—although marginalized groups disproportionately lack such access in both countries. Yet, because our sampling frame likely underrepresents disadvantaged fathers, any results may represent a conservative estimate of the relationship between masculinity and fathering because marginalized groups, such as ethnic minority and low SES fathers, are more likely to endorse traditional masculine attitudes, on average (Vogel et al. 2011). Although our data are novel for the reasons we noted, we cannot claim that our sample is fully representative in either nation (Yang and Banamah 2014).

### Participants

Information on FACS respondents in the United States and Canada is reported in Table 2. Fully 27% of fathers in both countries identified as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group. Fathers in Canada tended to be better educated: 45% of Canadian fathers in our sample had a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 33% of fathers in the United States. There were also differences in employment. A slightly higher percentage of fathers in the United States (16%) were not employed than in Canada (11%). However, more fathers in Canada work part-time and full-time, whereas American fathers are far more likely to work extreme hours. Fathers in the United States also have higher religiosity scores than their Canadian counterparts, whereas Canadian fathers were more likely to identify as immigrants. The average age of fathers in both countries was under 40 and children were slightly older than 8, on average, in both countries, as well. Substantial differences in the family structures of respondents were observed. American fathers were less likely to be in a first marriage with the mother of the focal child, slightly less likely to cohabit, and far more likely to not reside with the mother. Fathers in the United States reported on non-biological children more frequently, as well. Finally, a slightly higher percentage of fathers in Canada reported on their involvement with female children (49%) than did American fathers (42%).

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics for the sample by country

	United States ( <i>n</i> = 2205) <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> ) or <i>n</i> (%)	Canada ( <i>n</i> = 2253) <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> ) or <i>n</i> (%)	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Warmth	−.06 (.92)	.06 (1.06)	−4.40	1.20
Emotional support	−0.11 (.95)	.12 (1.03)	−4.38	1.39
Positive control	−0.11 (.88)	.07 (1.06)	−3.47	1.43
Caregiving <sup>a</sup>	−.13 (1.05)	0.10 (.95)	−3.52	2.40
Harsh discipline	.29 (.69)	−.30 (1.16)	−.88	3.17
Masculine norm adherence	33.03 (1.16)	28.54 (6.58)	0	66
Racial/ethnic minority	595 (27%)	608 (27%)	0	1
Did not complete HS (ref)	154 (7%)	90 (4%)	0	1
High school graduate	529 (24%)	315 (14%)	0	1
> HS graduate, < Bachelor's	794 (36%)	833 (37%)	0	1
Bachelor's degree or higher	728 (33%)	1014 (45%)	0	1
1st quintile income (ref)	463 (21%)	383 (17%)	0	1
2nd quintile income	529 (24%)	541 (24%)	0	1
3rd quintile income	397 (18%)	428 (19%)	0	1
4th quintile income	441 (20%)	518 (23%)	0	1
5th quintile income	375 (17%)	383 (17%)	0	1
Not employed	368 (16%)	270 (11%)	0	1
Works part-time	175 (8%)	633 (27%)	0	1
Works full-time	947 (42%)	1291 (55%)	0	1
Works extreme hours	752 (34%)	173 (7%)	0	1
Religiosity	33.96 (16.54)	25.03 (17.97)	0	60
Own father involvement	13.84 (10.11)	11.83 (9.37)	0	36
Father is immigrant	110 (5%)	383 (17%)	0	1
Father's age	39.76 (10.39)	38.05 (10.77)	18	85
Prenatal engagement	7.41 (3.29)	6.95 (2.52)	0	10
In first marriage with mother (ref)	1411 (64%)	1712 (77%)	0	1
Cohabiting with mother	331 (15%)	428 (19%)	0	1
Does not reside with mother	683 (31%)	113 (5%)	0	1
Child is non-biological	353 (16%)	203 (9%)	0	1
Child age	8.58 (4.82)	8.14 (5.52)	2	18
Child is female	962 (42%)	1104 (49%)	0	1

Note. ref. = indicates reference category in statistical models

<sup>a</sup> *n* = 2024 (1067 in US, 957 in Canada)

## Measures

### Fathering Behaviors

Fathering behavior was measured based on Pleck's (2010) multidimensional conceptualization of father involvement to include measures of both instrumental and expressive parenting (Finley and Schwartz 2004). We included three measures of instrumental parenting: engaging in caregiving behaviors, positive control of children through monitoring their behaviors, and harsh disciplinary practices such as yelling or spanking. Two measures of expressive parenting were also

included: warm behaviors, such as hugging and praise, and communication with and emotional support provided to children. Questions about father involvement are based on child age, so different questions were asked of fathers with a focal child aged 2 to 8 and 9 to 18. Because there is a paucity of standardized father involvement measures (Shafer et al. 2019a), we ran age-specific exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) for each of the five behaviors by using questions from datasets commonly used for fathering studies such as the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Survey and Survey for Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD). For each fathering domain and

age group, the sample was randomly split, with EFA run on one half of respondents and CFA run on the other. We ran EFA first, and variables for each measure with a factor loading of at least .40 were maintained for the CFA. Factors for each age-specific measure had eigenvalues greater than 1. CFA models confirmed results from the EFA, and all scales included measures with factor loadings of .65 or greater. (See Table 1s for young children and Table 2s for older children in the online supplement.)

Following previous work (Shafer et al. 2019a), we include all fathers in our analysis and created standardized measures around four of the five dimensions of father involvement. In order to create combined measures with developmentally appropriate questions, we standardized measures within child age and then created a combined measure including children of all ages. 2024 fathers, 1175 in the United States and 849 in Canada had young children between the ages of 2 and 8. There were 2434 fathers with older children, aged 9 to 18—1030 in the United States and 1404 in Canada. Developmentally appropriate measures of caregiving were not asked of fathers with older children, so our analyses were restricted to fathers with younger children.

*Warmth* was measured with eight items for young children (aged 2 to 8). Respondents were asked how much (0 = *not at all like me* to 4 = *exactly like me*) statements around expressing love, affection, and kindness toward children reflected their fathering ( $\alpha_{US} = .88$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .89$ ). For older children (aged 9 to 18), warmth was measured with nine items indicating how frequently (0 = *never* to 3 = *always*) fathers engaged in similar affectionate behaviors ( $\alpha_{US} = .92$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .94$ ). *Emotional support* was measured with five items for young children ( $\alpha_{US} = .84$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .79$ ) and six items for older children ( $\alpha_{US} = .89$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .92$ ). Both sets assessed how frequently (0 = *never* to 5 = *everyday/almost every day*) fathers talked about important issues, family matters, and engaged in emotional support.

*Positive control* was measured with four items for young children ( $\alpha_{US} = .72$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .72$ ) and nine items for older children ( $\alpha_{US} = .90$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .92$ ). For young children, items indicated how likely they would be to engage in disciplinary behaviors like giving their child a time out, extra work, or taking away privileges if their child misbehaved (0 = *very unlikely* to 4 = *very likely*). For older children, parents were asked about their knowledge about children's time use, location when not home, financial habits, and ability to get in touch with their children when necessary (0 = *not at all* to 3 = *everything or every time*).

*Harsh discipline* was measured with three items for young children ( $\alpha_{US} = .81$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .85$ ). Like the positive control measure, this construct was measured with items asking how likely the father would spank, hit, or make fun of their child if they misbehaved ( $\alpha_{US} = .91$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .93$ ). For older children, respondents indicated the frequency they engaged in eight possible harsh disciplinary techniques if their child misbehaved (0 = *never* to 3 = *always*). Finally, *caregiving*

was measured only among fathers of young children ( $n = 2024$ ; comparable measures for older children are not available). Seven items asked about frequency in the past week (0 = *never* to 4 = *everyday/almost everyday*) of engaging in activities like helping the child get ready for bed, bathe, or with toileting, grooming, and other caregiving activities ( $\alpha_{US} = .85$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .89$ ).

### Traditional Masculine Norm Adherence

Adherence to traditional masculine norms was measured with Mahalik et al.' (2003) commonly used Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI). The CMNI has been previously validated in multiple studies and has shown consistent reliability and validity across racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups within North America (Kivisalu et al. 2015; Owen 2011). The CMNI consists of 22 items, with two questions for each of 11 masculine domains: success at all costs, restricted emotionality, work primacy, risk-taking behavior, endorsement of violent response, being perceived as straight, sexual activity with casual partners, reluctance to seek help, need to control women, the need to dominate social situations, and the pursuit of status. Example items include "My work is the most important part of my life" and "I like to talk about my feelings" (reverse coded). Each item is measured on a 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*) scale. Responses were summed ( $\alpha_{US} = .79$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .88$ ) to create an overall score ranging from 0 to 66, with higher scores indicating greater adherence to traditional masculine norms. With respect to the CMNI, we acknowledge that there is no single or universal archetype of "traditional" masculinity and that norms, expectations, and configurations of multiple masculinities co-exist and transform across place and time (Connell 2005; Pleck 1995). These attitudes, however, are commonly understood as longstanding signifiers of culturally dominant conceptions of masculinity in North America and remain idealized to varying degrees in both countries. For these reasons, we use this scale of traditional masculine norms for its practical utility despite its conceptual limits with respect to the emergent and contingent nature of gender structures.

### Control Variables

We include numerous control measures that have been shown to be associated with father involvement and masculine norm adherence (Petts et al. 2018). *Racial/ethnic identity* was measured with a dichotomous measure indicating if the respondent was White or a member of a racial/ethnic minority group (Owen 2011). Additional categories were not included because of significant differences in how racial and ethnic identity are measured in the two countries (Statistics Canada 2017b; U.S. Census Bureau 2018a). Additional analyses which include comparable racial/ethnic categories and

within-country analyses (see Table 3s in the online supplement) are consistent with the results presented here.

*Father's educational attainment* was measured with an item indicating if the respondent did not complete high school, was a high school graduate, attended some college or university (including a two-year college/community college, trade school, and university certificate/associate degree), and a bachelor's degree or higher. The nature of the educational attainment question varied between the countries and followed standard Census categorizations for each country (Statistics Canada 2017a; U.S. Census Bureau 2018b). Our classification of educational attainment follows the classification used in prior work comparing the United States and Canada (Lasser et al. 2006; Prus 2011). *Income* was indicated by a categorical measure for within-country quintile using the total household income provided by the respondent. *Father's employment* was measured with dichotomous measures indicating if the respondent was not employed for wages, worked part-time (<35 h per week), or worked full-time in a typical week ( $\geq 35$  h per week).

*Father's religiosity* was measured with the Centrality of Religiosity scale, a 15-item scale measuring the importance of religious and spiritual identity (see Huber and Huber 2012 for information on scale validity). An example item from this scale asks respondents "To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?" Each item is scored 0 (*never/not at all*) to 4 (*very often/very much so*) and summed scores on this measure range from 0 to 60 ( $\alpha_{US} = .91$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .88$ ). *Own father involvement* was measured with nine items from the Nurturant Fathering Scale (Finley and Schwartz 2004). Each item is scored on a 0 (*never*) to 4 (*always*) scale and the summed scale ranges from 0 to 36 ( $\alpha_{US} = .96$ ;  $\alpha_{CAN} = .95$ ). Higher scores indicate that the respondent's father/father figure was perceived to be more nurturing, loving, and supportive. An example item from this scale is: "Did you feel you could confide/talk about important personal things with your father or father figure?"

*Father's immigration status* was measured with a dichotomous measure indicating if the respondent was born in their respective country of residence. *Father's age* was measured with a continuous variable for age at time of interview. *Prenatal engagement* was measured with questions (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*) about father's involvement in 10 activities during the prenatal and early postnatal period, like attending an ultrasound and being present in the delivery room. Responses were summed to provide a count of activities engaged in.

Several family and child characteristics were also included in our models. *Father's relationship with the child's mother* was measured with a set of dichotomous indicators noting if the father was married (or common law married) to the mother of the focal child, cohabiting with the mother of the focal child, or if they did not reside with the mother of the focal child. A dichotomous measure was also included indicating if

the focal child was non-biological or biological. *Focal child age* was measured with a continuous variable ranging from 2 to 18 years of age. *Focal child gender* was measured with a dichotomous indicator (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*).

## Analytic Strategy

We used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to model the relationship between masculine norm adherence and each of the five fathering behaviors. We first ran a main effects model which included our measures of masculinity, country context (Canada = 1 and the United States = 0), and all controls. Next, we assessed whether the relationship between masculine norm adherence and each measure of fathering varied by country through an interaction term. All controls were included in all presented models. OLS assumptions were tested for each model. We found no collinearity in the variance inflation factor. Tests for outliers and leverage values found that six respondents were both outliers and leverage values. These respondents were removed from the final models, dropping the final sample size to 4258. White's test and the Breusch-Pagan test both indicated that heteroskedasticity was present for each outcome. We included numerous potential controls to account for error variance. However, additional controls did not account for heteroskedasticity. As a result, we used a Huber-White-Sandwich estimator to correct the models. Finally, we tested for the normality of error terms and found this assumption was met.

Supplementary models were run addressing potential variability in the relationship between masculine norm adherence and father involvement by racial/ethnic identity, immigration status, and region (U.S. North, U.S. South, Québec, rest of Canada). (Results of these models were substantively similar to those presented here and are available in Tables 3s and 4s of the online supplement.) Approximately 7% of all cases in our data were missing. The percentage missing was highest for income (5.7%), masculine norm adherence (5.1%), and employment (3.4%). No other variable registered above 1% missing. As a result, we used multiple imputation to preserve sample size. The results from 20 combined models are presented. There were no substantive differences between the imputed models and models using listwise deletion.

## Results

Summary statistics are presented in Table 2. We provide average scores for the United States, Canada, and in the total sample. Because the indicators of fathering behavior were standardized, mean scores in the total sample for these measures are equal to zero. Country-level means, however, differ from the overall mean scores. Reflecting on these country-level means and *t*-tests of mean differences, there appears to

be substantial and significant country-level differences in fathering behaviors between the United States and Canada, with Canadian fathers having higher average positive fathering behavior scores than American fathers. Mean warmth in the United States ( $M = -.06$ ,  $SD = .92$ ) is .12 standard deviations lower than in Canada ( $M = .06$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ),  $t(4,256) = 4.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .13$ , whereas the gaps for emotional support, positive control, and harsh discipline are larger. For emotional support, mean levels are .23 standard deviations lower in the United States ( $M = -.11$ ,  $SD = .95$ ) than in Canada ( $M = .12$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ),  $t(4,256) = 11.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .37$ . For positive control, mean levels are .18 standard deviations lower in the United States ( $M = -.11$ ,  $SD = .88$ ) than in Canada ( $M = .07$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ),  $t(4,256) = 5.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .16$ . For caregiving, mean levels are .23 standard deviations lower in the United States ( $M = -.13$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) than in Canada ( $M = .10$ ,  $SD = .95$ ),  $t(2,022) = 4.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .25$ . For harsh discipline, mean levels are .59 standard deviations higher in the United States ( $M = .29$ ,  $SD = .69$ ) than in Canada ( $M = -.30$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ),  $t(4,256) = 20.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .61$ . Mean masculine norm adherence scores are significantly higher in the United States ( $M = 33.03$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) than in Canada ( $M = 28.54$ ,  $SD = 6.58$ ),  $t = 16.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .53$ .

The results of the main effects regression models are presented in Table 3. The table is truncated for presentation, but full results (with controls) may be found in the online supplement (see Table 5 s). To illustrate effect sizes for each outcome, we present standardized (beta) coefficients for all continuous measures, where a one standard deviation increase in the independent variable is associated with a  $\beta$  standard deviation change in the given measure of fathering behavior. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, we found that masculine norm adherence was associated with four of the five fathering behaviors, with results suggesting that embracing traditional masculinity is associated with less frequent father involvement and a greater likelihood of engaging in harsh discipline.

Across outcomes, however, there was substantial variability in the strength of these associations. Specifically, one standard deviation increase in masculine norm adherence was associated with a .163 standard deviation decrease in warmth ( $p < .001$ ), but only a .075 standard deviation decrease in emotional support ( $p < .001$ ) and a .061 standard deviation decrease in caregiving ( $p = .004$ ). Meanwhile, masculine norm adherence was most strongly associated with harsh discipline; a one standard deviation increase in masculine norm adherence was associated with a .420 standard deviation increase in the use of harsh discipline ( $p < .001$ ).

Results in Table 3 also provide support for Hypothesis 2 because Canadian fathers were more likely to act warm, provide emotional support, demonstrate positive control, and engage in caregiving than American fathers. Because all outcome variables are standardized, the coefficients for dichotomous measures indicate standard deviation differences in a given fathering behavior between the reference and measured categories. Warmth scores for Canadian fathers were .334 standard deviations ( $p < .001$ ) higher, on average, than scores for fathers in the United States. The analogous average differences were .272 standard deviations for emotional support ( $p < .001$ ), .215 standard deviations for positive control ( $p < .001$ ), and .379 standard deviations for caregiving ( $p < .001$ ). For harsh discipline, Canadian fathers had an average score that was .383 standard deviations lower than American fathers' ( $p < .001$ ).

In addition, several control variables showed significance (as reported in Table 5 s in the online supplement). Racial and ethnic minorities reported slightly lower average warmth than Whites, but there were no statistically significant differences by race/ethnicity for the other four outcomes. Immigrant fathers were slightly less likely to engage in positive control, but differences between immigrants and the native born were not observed on the other four outcomes. Educational attainment and income were associated with differences in warmth,

**Table 3** Main effects results from ordinary least squares regression models predicting fathering behaviors

Fathering Behaviors	Predictors					
	Masculine norm adherence			Country (ref = United States)		
	$\beta$	(SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	(SE)	<i>p</i>
Warmth	-0.16	(.02)	<.001	0.33	(.05)	<.001
Emotional support	-.08	(.02)	<.001	.27	(.05)	<.001
Positive Control	0.00	(.02)	.870	.22	(.05)	<.001
Caregiving <sup>a</sup>	-.06	(.02)	.004	.38	(.09)	<.001
Harsh Discipline	.42	(.02)	<.001	-.38	(.04)	<.001

Note.  $n = 4258$ ; Models include full controls

<sup>a</sup> Measured only among fathers with young children, aged 2 to 8 ( $n = 2024$ ); Results averaged over 20 imputations; Beta coefficients and robust standard errors presented

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

positive control, and the use of harsh discipline. Religiosity and own father involvement were positively associated with all five fathering behaviors. Fathers showed lower warmth, emotional support, and positive control toward non-biological children. Child age was negatively associated with warmth and emotional support, whereas girls were less likely to experience harsh discipline and tended to receive more warmth from their fathers.

To test Hypothesis 3 that the association between masculine norm adherence and fathering behavior would be weaker in Canada than in the United States, we used interaction terms. The results of the interactive models are reported in Table 4. This table is truncated and does not report the results of control variables, but full results can be found in Table 6 s in the online supplement. As shown in Table 4, there are significant country-level differences in the relationship between masculine norm adherence and three of the five fathering behaviors. There was no statistically significant difference between Canadian and American fathers in the relationship between masculinity with emotional support or with positive control.

To facilitate the interpretability of the significant results found in Table 4, we provide a visualization of the simple slopes among Canadian and American fathers in Fig. 1. We only show these relationships for the three outcomes where significant differences between countries were found. First, masculine norm adherence (see Fig. 1a) has a significantly more negative relationship with warmth in the United States ( $\beta = -.22, SE = .02, t = -11.93, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.26, -.19]$ ) than in Canada ( $\beta = -.05, SE = .03, t = -1.85, p = .064, 95\% CI [-.11, .01]$ ). The relationship between masculine norm adherence and warmth is not significant among Canadian fathers, but the relationship is moderately strong and statistically significant for their American counterparts.

A similar pattern was observed for caregiving (see Fig. 1b). Masculinity was negatively and significantly associated with caregiving in the United States ( $\beta = -.11, SE = .03, t = -4.01, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.17, -.06]$ ), but was not statistically

associated with caregiving for Canadian fathers ( $\beta = .06, SE = .03, t = 1.90, p = .058, 95\% CI [-.01, .12]$ ). In contrast, masculine norm adherence was positively associated with the use of harsh discipline among fathers in both countries (see Fig. 1c). However, the relationship was stronger among American fathers ( $\beta = .58, SE = .02, t = 23.42, p < .001, 95\% CI [.53, .63]$ ) than among Canadian fathers ( $\beta = .24, SE = .02, t = 15.31, p < .001, 95\% CI [.21, .27]$ ). Combined, we find evidence suggesting that masculine norm adherence is more strongly associated with lower levels of positive fathering behavior and an increased likelihood of harsh discipline in the United States than Canada.

## Discussion

Our analysis focused on the similarities and differences in the relationship between traditional masculine norm adherence and five fathering behaviors in the United States and Canada. These two nations share many social, cultural, and political attributes, but also differ in their structural and ideological support for fathering. Three main findings emerged from our analyses. First, adherence to traditional masculine norms was negatively associated with positive parenting behaviors (i.e., warmth, emotional support, and caregiving but not with positive control) and positively associated with the use of harsh discipline. This first result builds on prior literature indicating that traditional visions of masculinity are negatively associated with nurturance and increase the likelihood that men will engage in parenting behaviors that are often harmful to children (Petts et al. 2018; Shafer et al. 2019b).

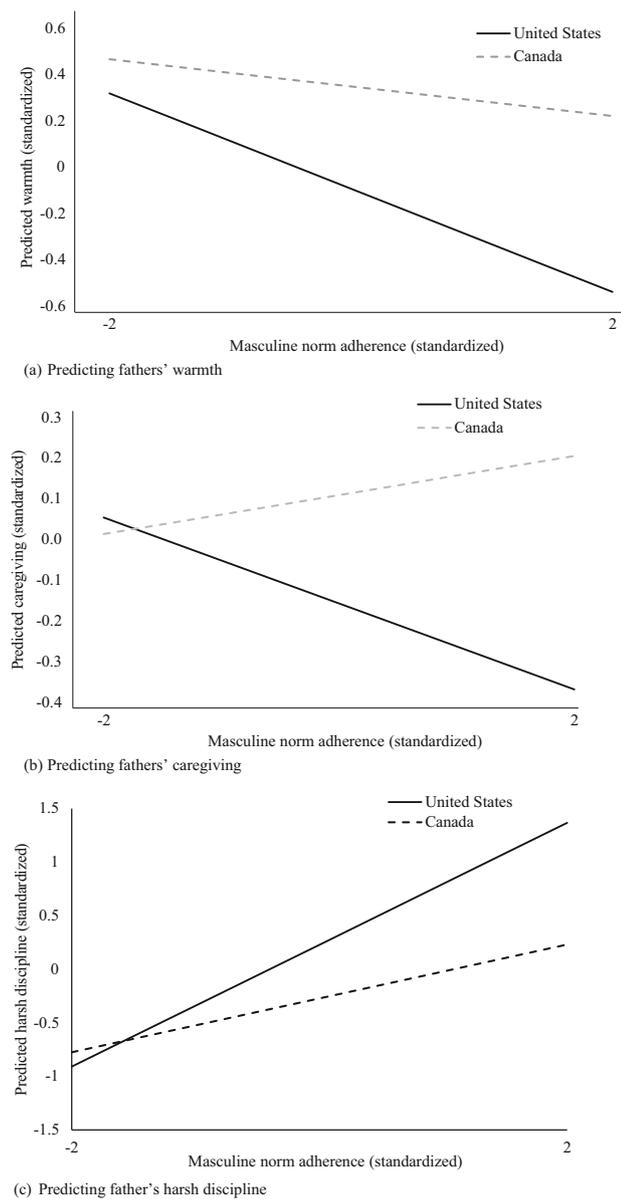
Second, we found that Canadian fathers are more likely to act warmly toward children, provide emotional support, demonstrate positive control, and engage in caregiving than American fathers. Canadian fathers also engaged in fewer harsh disciplinary practices, on average, than American fathers. The greater number of policies and social supports to

**Table 4** Interactive effects of masculine norm adherence and country on fathering behaviors

	Warmth		Emotional Support		Positive Control		Caregiving <sup>a</sup>		Harsh Discipline	
	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>
Masculine norm adherence	-0.21 (.02)	<.001	-.03 (.03)	.251	-0.01 (.02)	.617	-0.11 (.03)	<.001	.57 (.02)	<.001
Canada	.45 (.05)	<.001	.22 (.06)	<.001	.039 (.05)	<.001	.34 (.09)	<.001	-.50 (.04)	<.001
Masculine norm adherence x Canada	0.15 (.03)	<.001	-.06 (.04)	.118	.07 (.04)	.082	.192 (.05)	<.001	-.32 (.03)	<.001

<sup>a</sup> Measured only among fathers with young children, aged 2 to 8 ( $n = 2024$ ); Model includes full controls. Standardized coefficients are presented; Results averaged over 20 imputations; Robust standard errors in parentheses

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$



**Fig. 1** The relationships between fathers' masculine norm adherence and their (a) warmth, (b) caregiving, and (c) use of harsh discipline within countries (Canada and the United States). Masculine norm adherence is reported at low ( $-2$  SD) and high ( $+2$  SD) levels). Significant simple slopes are in black; non-significant simple slopes are in grey

encourage involved fathering in Canada likely help create a sociocultural context that encourages fathers to be more nurturing toward their children (Doucet 2014; Rehel 2014).

Finally, we found that the association between masculine norm adherence and fathering behaviors varied by country. In each case, the total effect of masculine norm adherence on positive fathering behavior was significantly larger for American fathers than their Canadian counterparts. For two (i.e., warmth and caregiving) of the three significant outcomes, masculine norm adherence had a significant negative relationship in the United States, but not in Canada. Although

masculine norm adherence was positively associated with harsh discipline in both countries, the relationship was stronger in the United States than in Canada.

These findings raise important new questions about *why* we found substantial differences in the relationship between embracing gender norms and performing fathering behaviors in two highly comparable Western countries. We propose that answers to these questions might be found in closer examinations of the differences in both country's social policies around childcare, work, and family and in cultural expectations about fatherhood and masculinities in the two countries. Concerning policy, access to parental leave can be influential in shaping views toward gender and parental roles. This interpretation aligns with expectations of policy feedback theories (Campbell 2012; Gangl and Ziefle 2015) because social policies focused on family life may transform men's attitudes toward fathering and masculinity by assigning greater legitimacy and value to nurturance. American fathers, however, have limited access to family resources like parental leave; this limited access may provide less of an impetus for these men to shift their identities and behaviors away from traditional expectations of fatherhood and masculinity that encourage breadwinning (Marsiglio and Roy 2012; Townsend 2002). In contrast, Canadian men are more "structurally situated to parent as women most commonly do" than men in the United States (Rehel 2014, p. 114). This contrast may help explain the differences in fathering behaviors and the role of masculine norm adherence in shaping those behaviors. Indeed, our results substantiate recent evidence suggesting that simply having access to supportive policies for fathers increases fathers' solo time with children (Wray 2020). In other words, even traditionally masculine fathers in Canada may be more involved with children than traditionally masculine fathers in the United States because they are afforded more opportunities to be involved.

Despite the many cultural similarities between the United States and Canada, there are notable differences in cultural discourses surrounding gender, sexuality, and family. In Canada, the increased visibility and acceptance of non-normative gender and sexuality may work to destabilize traditional expectations for men and reshape masculine norms (Greig and Holloway 2012). For example, the government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made strong statements in support of LGBTQ+ rights and public policies (Tremblay 2019). American cultural norms, meanwhile, still strongly emphasize traditional gender roles (Budig et al. 2012), with an enduring emphasis on the ideal of the heteronormative nuclear family (Treas et al. 2014). In contrast to the Trudeau government, the Trump administration has used anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and worked to roll back advances in LGBTQ+ rights. As a result, Canadian fathers may be more culturally encouraged to reject traditional masculine norms in favor of more progressive "caring masculinities" (Brandth and

Kvande 2018; Elliott 2016; Lee and Lee 2018; Ranson 2012; Scheibling 2018). American fathers, on the other hand, may have to negotiate strongly conflicting models of fatherhood and masculinity due to differences in social policy and culture (Petts et al. 2018). The idea that American fathers may be more likely than Canadian fathers to “remasculinize” their parenting roles and behaviors (Jordan 2019, p. 273) may also explain the differences we find with respect to warmth and harsh discipline.

### Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although our study makes an important contribution in illustrating how the association between masculinity and fathering behavior may vary across sociocultural contexts, caution should be weighed against our study’s limitations. First, we used cross-sectional data, meaning that we cannot make causal claims about the relationship between masculine norm adherence and fathering behaviors. Although masculine attitudes are typically rooted in child socialization, changes in these attitudes are not uncommon, particularly during pregnancy and child infancy (Lee and Lee 2018). Similarly, masculine norm adherence and fathering may influence one another, which is best tested with longitudinal data beginning before a child is born and extending across a child’s life course. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, such data do not exist. Second, we were limited to self-report data, which may be biased by men’s adherence to traditional masculine norms or fathers wanting to appear more involved than they actually are. Moreover, because we relied on only fathers’ reports, we were unable to assess degrees of gender difference and equality in the division of parenting labor. Indeed, it is possible that even those fathers who are highly involved in positive fathering behaviors may still contribute far less to childcare overall than mothers, in both the United States (Bianchi et al. 2006) and Canada (Ball and Daly 2012). The inclusion of maternal and child reports in future data would help address these issues. Third, the use of Qualtrics panels limits the generalizability of our results. At the same time, however, we are unaware of any cross-national, representative data that provide multiple measures of fathering quality while including a robust, validated measure of masculine norm adherence.

As a further limitation, the measurement of race and ethnicity reflects the sociodemographic composition of a country, and it is measured differently in the United States and Canada. Compounding the problem, differences in racial/ethnic group size made comparisons problematic, even when there were similar categories in the two countries. As a result, we were limited to a dichotomous measure indicating if a respondent identified as White or with a racial or ethnic minority group in their nation of residence. Future work should further explore cultural variability in the relationship between masculine

norm adherence and father involvement both within and between countries. Similarly, future research addressing masculinity and fathering should consider similarities and differences by immigration status, the potential effects of acculturation, and variability in these relationships across social contexts. For example, the Canadian government adopted an official policy of multiculturalism in the 1970s, whereas the United States government tends to emphasize assimilation (Metz et al. 2016). Finally, our sample is limited to two countries. Additional work should consider the relationship between masculinity and fathering in other countries, across social welfare regimes, and across different cultural models of father involvement. Such considerations will provide additional data on the relationship between masculinity and fathering and help us better understand how it is shaped by social context.

### Practice Implications

Our study has significant implications for future research and for social policies that affect family life. Our results suggest that relatively small policy changes can meaningfully impact men’s parenting. Comparative family researchers group countries by the generosity of their welfare systems, state support of childcare, and spending on family policies. In such analyses, the United States and Canada are typically grouped together as liberal welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990). Yet, as we highlighted earlier, there are still important differences within this category. Although both countries employ relatively austere welfare and social support programs, Canada provides more state support for families and paid family leave as well as has more active government policies that promote gender egalitarianism than the United States. Although these programs may seem modest compared to those employed in social-democratic welfare regimes, such as those found in Scandinavian countries, our results suggest that these programs still prove valuable for increased father involvement. At the same time, such programs may not be a panacea for multiple aspects of family life or gender egalitarianism—but they appear to have a positive relationship with father involvement. We believe our results warrant additional work comparing the effects of social policies in structuring family life in United States and Canada.

Parenting programs targeting fathers are another area where our findings may prove relevant. Fathering programs often employ highly gendered curricula that emphasize traditional masculine norms, economic provision as the primary paternal role, and essentialist perspectives of gender and parenting, and they do little to support fathering quality, engagement in caregiving, or egalitarian co-parenting (Randles 2020). Hence, such programs may benefit from including information on how masculinity shapes both paternal roles and fathers’ willingness to engage in instrumental and expressive

parenting behaviors. We believe that such inclusions may increase father involvement in various parenting domains, leading to benefits for children, mothers, and fathers themselves. From a cultural perspective, increased discourse about masculinity and its effects on parenting may be necessary—particularly in the United States. But, as we have shown, much of this change would require an increased emphasis on community and family, support for alternative conceptualizations of masculinities, and an accompanying decrease in the significance of work and economic advancement.

## Conclusion

The present study extends the literature on fathering and masculinities in important ways. Although fathers in many cultures struggle with the competing gendered expectations of both work and parenthood, we found that the association between masculine norm adherence and fathering behavior varied between the two countries. Although similar in many respects, the United States and Canada differ in how their social, cultural, and political structures are gendered. Our study indicated that these differences may play out in individual families. Canadian fathers are more involved in positive fathering behaviors and are less likely to embrace traditional masculine norms, and these norms play a less significant role in shaping how Canadian fathers appear to parent when compared to fathers in the United States. Overall, our results contribute to the larger literature on gendered family policies by indicating how father involvement is influenced by, and varies based on, the larger social context in which gendered norms and parenting expectations exist.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interests** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Surveys were collected with approval from the first author's Institutional Review Board.

**Informed Consents** in English and French were approved by the first author's Institutional Review Board.

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